NIALL H. D. GERAGHTY. *The Polyphonic Machine: Capitalism, Political Violence, & Resistance in Contemporary Argentine Literature.* Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 2018. 304 pp.

This monograph takes novels by César Aira, Marcelo Cohen, and Ricardo Piglia published between 1979 and 1998, and explores the "colonizing forces of contemporary neoliberal globalization" (11). The book doesn't just deal with what the Argentine literary texts under discussion mean, but with how they connect. It considers "the elusive fragments of Argentine political history" woven into them (5).

The monograph is straight out of the Cambridge (UK) stable, not just because it brilliantly combines theory from the French and Latin American (Argentine) traditions, but also because it is Deleuze and Guattarian. Thus, it's not about Aira *et al.* objecting to capitalist violence in a conventional manner (e.g., calling for State power to be reined in). Such objections would be the "molar" aspects of politics that form ordinary historical time, Chronos. Rather, *pace* Deleuze and Guattari, it's about the "molecular" level, here the "philosophical conceptions of resistance described in each text [that] more properly belong to the time of Aion" (12). The system called capitalism is made of myriad molecular processes of extraction, capital flows, labour power, and desire. Aion subtends Chronos.

The readings of the novels are subtle and sophisticated, such as when Geraghty teases out the Joycean and Macedonio Fernándezian qualities of Piglia's *La ciudad ausente*. The book's argument is that Aira's and Cohen's texts explore ways of resisting capitalist violence but that, counterintuitively, Piglia's texts are the culmination of such attempts – counterintuitively, because Piglia's came before. In Geraghty's Deleuze and Guattarian terms, Piglia's work is "the twist in the Möbius strip that returns all the authors to a single plane of immanence" (15).

We could quibble with certain things. Does Piglia's *Respiración artificial* explore the philosophical structures that sustained the Junta through the last dictatorship (164)? Or does it operate at a more general, philosophical level, like Geraghty's book? And does the novel really deal with the Kantian rather than Cartesian conception of the cogito, given that its critique addresses the authoritarianism of the absence of doubt?

The book's core concerns capitalism and resistance. Commenting on Aira's novel *Ema, la cautiva*, Geraghty says that, in allowing Ema to liberate herself from dependence on men by becoming an independent farmer, Aira recognises that capitalism liberated women from traditional roles. However, Geraghty concludes that in her transition, Ema merely imitates the inventive ways in which capitalism produces more insidious kinds of unfreedom. The book is thus caught between, on the one hand, Deleuze's

molecular becomings-other, that is, those processes by which subjects aren't confined to Being, to being self-same, but rather produce rapprochements with others, and, on the other hand, the dream of surpassing capitalism altogether, which amounts to Being, that is, to being-not-capitalist. It's the dream of total opposition, which means total destruction of the thing one believes one opposes. Apropos of Aira's figuration of schizophrenia's potential to destroy capitalism: "Aira's total destruction is also liberatory in that it implies the possibility of starting anew, unencumbered with the constraints of the capitalist system" (78).

There are insightful moments concerning the limitations of "French" Theory. The actions of the two protagonists of Aira's *La prueba*, Mao and Lenin, Geraghty says, don't suggest any alternative societal organisation. Likewise, Badiou's political philosophy and schizophrenia *pace* Deleuze can't offer concrete alternatives but can only seek to "abolish or dislocate the dominant state of affairs" (76). Cohen's stories similarly indicate the limitations of becoming-other as an act of resistance (129). However, two pages later, on Cohen's texts, Geraghty writes: "the central characters … come to the realization that the inside and the outside of the enclosures are essentially indistinct; they are merely representative of a total system that is seemingly inescapable" (130).

Despite interesting observations on Argentine capitalism (eight out of its ten major corporations are subsidiaries of multinational corporations, 109), the 'revolution' in question, in the literary texts as in Geraghty's monograph, isn't against capitalism (which is primarily an economic system and would presumably demand an economic critique), but rather against conventional ways of thinking about capitalism, resistance, and literature. Geraghty thus conflates capitalism with other things. It's not that capitalism is "connected" to such things; it's that they are the same thing. "Political economy and libidinal economy are one and the same economy" (126). This represents a very contemporary form of immanence that raises intellectual critique to the level of economics and politics. Geraghty: the production of alternative narratives "is an act of resistance that counteracts those disseminated by the repressive regime" (185). Because Geraghty is admirably self-critical, he notes that Piglia's texts can do only so much, that aesthetics can't correct all of capitalism's ills, and that "the final act of resistance must take place outside the confines of the text" (187– 88). The book ends with this idea, though the shape of this resistance must remain unclear.

Ultimately, Geraghty sides with Deleuze's notion of the "literary machine" as a "revolutionary machine-to-come" (191). The authors attempt to "invent new ways of being that are inherently opposed to the philosophical systems they discover" (199). Piglia attempts to "overcome

the cogito, the Kantian conception of law, and the incipient control society by engaging a radically different conception of time" (200); readers' resistance will be a "revolutionary intervention." On the penultimate page, Geraghty cites Guattari's notion that resistance to capitalism "requires the collective production of unpredictable and untamed "dissident subjectivities" rather than a mass movement of like-minded people" (211).

Even if this ultra-abstract form of resistance remains hard to imagine, the intellectual verve of this book does not. It contains very well written, brilliantly argued commentaries on the three writers, weaving them together in insightful and unexpected ways, aided by Geraghty's impressive command of the secondary criticism and expert knowledge of the Argentine political and cultural scene.

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SUE E. HOUCHINS AND BALTASAR FRA-MOLINERO, EDS. AND TRANS. *Black Bride of Christ. Chicaba, an African Nun in Eighteenth-Century Spain*. Nashville: Vanderbilt UP, 2018. 305 pp.

In *Black Bride of Christ,* Sue E. Houchins and Baltasar Fra-Molinero present the first English translation of the 1764 edition of the *Compendio de la vida ejemplar de la Venerable Madre Sor Teresa Juliana de Santo Domingo*. *Vida* recounts the life story of the African nun Teresa Chicaba (c. 1676-1748), a former slave. According to the author, Juan Carlos Miguel de Paniagua, the narrative is based on Chicaba's poems and autobiographical writings, and the conversations the hagiographer and the nun shared. *Vida* became the foundational text in her beatification process.

The translation is preceded by an Introduction that is divided into two sections: "Context and Exposition of the *Vida*" and "Discussion of the *Vida* by Chapters." The Introduction provides historical information on the nun's African origins in La Mina Baja del Oro (West Africa) and the Ewe society, and her enslavement as a child. Then, it sheds light on her life in Madrid in the household of the Marquis of Mancera, her rejection by several convents due to her race, her initial marginal position in the convent of *La Penitencia* in Salamanca, and her subsequent fame as a miracle worker. In addition, it explores the intertextual connections of Paniagua's *Vida* within an Afro-diasporic framework to elucidate the complexity and hybridity of this text. *Vida* not only depicts the nun's dual African and European background, but also displays characteristics of the hagiographic genre and the as-told-to slave narrative.