



Vol. 10, No. 1, Fall 2012, 1-17
www.ncsu.edu/acontracorriente

The Generation of '72: Latin America's Forced Global Citizens

Brantley Nicholson

University of Richmond

Sophia A. McClennen

Pennsylvania State University

A very poignant moment stands out in Cristina Peri Rossi's "La influencia de Edgar A. Poe en la poesía de Raimundo Arenas." In a confrontation between the child narrator and her exiled father, the voice of the child-narrator breaks with the impersonal third person account and delivers an unexpectedly pithy knockout line: "Estoy segura de que lo que piensas acerca de nuestra generación es completamente falso" (52). The idea of generational rupture is certainly not a new feature of literary transformation, but there is something in the bold and decisive way that this line is delivered, something in the notion that the father cannot understand his child, that characterizes the break that takes place in the literary generation we refer to in this collection as the Generation of '72. In contrast to the generational testimonies and World Literary schematics that stand on either side of the Generation of '72, there have been no critical

collections, definitive testimonies, or telltale autobiographies dedicated to the authors that fall between the *Boom* and the recently famed anti-*Boom*: Roberto Bolaño and the Generation X that is generally subsumed under the monikers *Crack* and *McOndo*. While this group has, at times, been studied as the post-boom or the writers of the postmodern turn, we think that there is value to be added to those approaches by framing this cohort of writers through particular attention to their historical context, one which, we argue, heralded a substantial shift in many of the intellectual practices and political realities that had previously influenced literary work.

The term “Generation of ’72” is an extrapolation from the framework that Cedomil Goic created in his structuralist reading of the Latin American novel in his sweeping analysis of the evolution of Hispanic letters, *Mitos degradados* (1992).¹ In his formal reading, Goic analyzes literary trends and peaks in Latin American narrative by dividing writers and intellectuals into groups based on the year in which they were born. A group, for Goic, spans fifteen years, and their name is based on the year twenty-three years after the youngest member of a generation was born, presumably around the time that the generation’s writers would become intellectually and artistically conscious. Within the “Novela Contemporánea” of the twentieth century, for example, the “Generación de 1927” consists of writers born between 1890 and 1904, such as the *Boom* predecessors in which, “Eduardo Mallea, Miguel Angel Asturias, Leopoldo Marechal, Roberto Arlt, Borges, Agustín Yáñez, Carpentier, Manuel Rojas, Enrique Amorín son los destacados representantes...” (231). Following are the two generational tiers of the *Boom*, the first, the “Generación de 1942,” born between 1905 and 1919 consisting of Cortázar, Onetti, Droguett, Bombal, Arguedas, Roa Bastos, and Rulfo, and the second, “Generación de 1957” whose members include, García Márquez, Donoso, Fuentes, and Julio Ramón Ribeyro.” While unarguably rigid, Goic’s framework is useful for exploring Latin American literary trends as collective responses to institutional and historical pressures that affect intellectuals as they mature. Goic, for example, separates Cortázar, Onetti, and Bombal from García Marquez and Fuentes, a rare critical division. He considers the urban narratives and “neorealista” tendencies that exhibit a “realismo tradicional” and a “polémico nacionalismo literario” of the former to contrast with the

¹ While Goic originally lays out this framework in *Historia de la novela Hispanoamericana* (1972), he updates the categories for *Mitos degradados* (1992).

“irrealismo” of the latter that “se distingue por su renovada conciencia de la autonomía de la obra literaria y de la especificidad de la literatura”, and whose “mundo destaca por la radicalización de esa autonomía por el distanciamiento que lo extraño, fantástico o grotesco, proporciona al mundo narrativo” (236).

Goic’s last generation is the “Generación de 1972,” whose writers were born between 1935 and 1949. While he offers early candidates for his “Novísimos Narradores”—Vargas Llosa, Severo Sarduy, Reinaldo Arenas and Alfredo Bryce Echenique—judging by the one brief paragraph that he dedicates to this generation, it was too early to give the group a fleshed out reading or to successfully indicate which authors would leave their mark on the region or the world. And the formal characteristics that he uses to classify them are not as developed as they could be. Neither entirely off the mark, nor fully descriptive of the “Generación de 1972,” he writes that their “disposición narrativa envuelve dos términos contrapuestos: uno de rígida y simétrica construcción, con otro de fluidez y movilidad en el montaje de tiempos y espacios diversos”, and that they, “ilustran sectores sociales y humanos en su variedad y complejidad con ambiciosa contemplación de totalidad” (238).

Goic’s preliminary understanding of post-*Boom* literature seems to affirm Donald Shaw’s in depth theorization of a similar generation and their return to a realism that ponders sociopolitical totalities. For Shaw, whose post-*Boom* writers are typified by Antonio Skármeta, Rosario Ferré, and Gustavo Sainz, there is a formal breach between Goic’s “irrealistas” and the “Generación de 1972” that has as much to do with the political reality of the time as any attempt to formally rebel against their predecessors. The “*Pinochetazo* in Chile,” as he puts it, along with the *Guerra Sucia* around the River Plate, the insurrections in Central America, the massacre at Tlatelolco in 1968, and rising feminist discourses in Europe and the Americas, induce a break with both the glossy social distancing that had come to exemplify *Boom* literature and the stereotypical and voiceless female characters that had filled its pages.²

In theoretical and social terms, Idelber Avelar gets more specific about post-*Boom* writers, describing the group as intellectuals confronted

² Two works serve for a thorough understanding of Donald Shaw’s theorization of post-*Boom* literature: *The Post-Boom in Spanish American Fiction* (1998) and *Antonio Skármeta and the post-Boom* (1994).

with the doubly arduous task of finding a formal voice in an editorial economy steeped in the style of the *Boom* giants on one front and faced with the political realities of a wave of dictatorships and economic shock treatment amidst which they come of age on the other. It is a generation that, for the first time in twentieth-century Latin America, experiences the roundly negative aspects of globalization and whose writers make less voluntary trips to the cosmopolitan center than enter into acquiesced global citizenship through political exile. The battles of writers that for Avelar include Ricardo Piglia, Diamela Eltit, Silviano Santiago, and Tununa Mercado are both formal and political. They attempt to consolidate a voice that will capture the violence experienced in the seventies and eighties, while seeking out what Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub would refer to as an “authentic listener” through literature.

This collection aims to both affirm and move-beyond the primary readings presented by Goic, Shaw, and Avelar. It presents an attempt to update theoretical approaches to the Generation of '72 and to explore how its collective aesthetics holds up, as dictatorships give way to neoliberal democracies. The list of authors presented here is not meant to be a rigid schematic, but rather a jumping off point. Many authors have come and gone from this volume's short list. Our goal is not to define, canonize, and exclude but, along with the greatly talented scholars that have agreed to contribute to this collection, to add to the growing conversation on contemporary Latin American letters. With that in mind, the authors that comprise the Generation of '72 and receive criticism in this collection consist of Luisa Valenzuela (1938), Antonio Skármeta (1940), Ricardo Piglia (1941), Cristina Peri Rossi (1941), Ariel Dorfman (1942), Fernando Vallejo (1942), Osvaldo Soriano (1943), Reinaldo Arenas (1943), and Diamela Eltit (1949).³

Between National and post-National Aesthetics

The Generation of '72 stands out from their predecessors and followers in many ways. They mark the first Latin American generation to experience a widespread post-war economic globalization that will lead to a darkening of the hemispheric cultural goodwill that the *Boom* enjoys. They

³ Exploration of Brazilian authors from this time period is of particular necessity. David William Foster is leading a National Endowment for the Humanities sponsored seminar on the topic in 2013 and has an article forthcoming with the *MLA* entitled “Brazil and the Boom.”

are the first generation to, *en masse*, consider popular culture to be a viable aesthetic register that can be used for the sake of resistance as much as a tool of coloniality. More so than any other generation, they experience a rapid ideological ascension, following the Cuban Revolution in 1959 and the election of Salvador Allende in 1970, and collapse, following the coup in Chile in 1973 and the spread of dictatorships that will follow. They are presented with the task of mourning while questioning the very limits of a literature that undergoes a double affront through the strict control of symbolic systems by authoritarian regimes and the influx of new cultural referents that the abrupt liberalization of Latin American economies causes. They struggle to find and maintain a literary identity in the wake of publishing houses' expectation of them to reproduce *realismo mágico*, on one hand, and to maintain regional and national identities while in exile, or to perform the regional while increasingly becoming global citizens, on the other. And beyond Latin American precedent, they are forced to express the exposure and fragility of a life in exile while their literary vocabulary experiences the turbulence of exile itself. In short, the Generation of '72 collectively negotiates tension between the regional and the global in a way that no other twentieth century cultural movement is forced to do so in Latin America.

While the Generation of '72 has been marked by ambiguity and few definitive accounts, José Donoso's *Historia personal del Boom* (1972) and Jorge Volpi's *El insomnio de Bolívar* (2010), representing generations that stand on either side of them, offer robust and celebratory renderings of their respective generations.⁴ Not wholly literary, this owes a great deal to Latin America's position in the ebbs and flows of the geopolitics of the past sixty years. Donoso and Volpi's experience with the same political and cultural globalization that haunted the Generation of '72 has inarguably played to their favor more than it has hindered them.⁵ The generations

⁴ Volpi's *El insomnio de Bolívar* may be written in a tongue-in-cheek tone, but it is nonetheless celebratory and, generationally speaking, self-affirming. We consider the employment of irony a part of the evolution of universal literary tone, moreover. What was the destabilization of the ego for the *Boom* is the prevalence of irony for the Generation X.

⁵ Two quotes point to the benefit of internationalism for the Boom and the Gen. X. The first being José Donoso's claim in *Historia personal del Boom* that "Al decir "internacionalización" no me refiero a la nueva avidez de las editoriales; ni a los diversos premios millonarios; ni a la cantidad de traducciones por casas importantes de París, Milán y Nueva York; ni al gusto por el potin literario que

represented by Donoso (*Boom*) and Volpi (Gen.-X) are part and parcel of a literary cosmopolitanism and Latin American socioeconomic globalization that opened new avenues of literary exposure, fostered global intellectual exchange in a largely peaceful setting, and founded an unprecedented wealth of publishing forums. One might argue that the writers associated with the *Boom* inherit airs of the privileged intellectual abroad from their *modernista* predecessors, no matter how bohemian their aesthetics might have played out. And while the writers associated with the Gen.-X enjoy Latin American home cities that have become recently minted cosmopolitan spaces themselves, members of the Generation of '72 have been forced to travel to cosmopolitan centers in Europe and North American under duress rather than as part of an iconography of a national and post-national cultural world.

Politically speaking, the *Boom* carved out a niche during a three-fold cultural investment produced during the Cold War, whose incipient phases lent themselves more to literary expansion than repression: the soft-power inflected investments made by North American cultural institutions, similar tactics used by Cuba through the Casa de las Américas, and the burgeoning interest in Latin American writers by Spanish publishing houses during the Franco Regime. As the *Boom* began its ascent, editors in Madrid and Barcelona dreamt up prizes that would help market a Latin American literature in order to fill a cultural void left in Spain under Franco and, in the midst of the Cold War, North American philanthropic

ahora interesa a un público de proporciones insospechadas hace una década; ni a las revistas y películas y agentes literarios de todas las capitales que no esconden su interés; ni a las innumerables tesis de doctorado en cientos de universidades yanquis de que están siendo objeto los narradores de Hispanoamérica, cuando antes era necesario ser por lo menos nombre de calle antes de que esto sucediera. Aunque nadie sabe qué vino primero, el huevo o la gallina, a mí me parece que todas estas cosas positivas y estimulantes en un sentido más bien superficial—siempre de dimensiones muchísimo menores a las creadas por la leyenda paranoica—, han sido consecuencia de, y no causa de, la internacionalización de la novela hispanoamericana” (17). The second is from Jorge Volpi’s *El insomnio de Bolívar*, “Qué tienen en común, entonces? Quizás una relación con el Boom nada traumática, casi diríamos natural: todos admiran a García Márquez y a Cortázar y, en bandos antagónicos, a Vargas Llosa o a Fuentes, pero del mismo modo en que se rinden ante escritores de otras lenguas, Sebald o McEwan, Lobo Antunes o Tabucchi; ninguno siente la obligación de medirse con sus padres y abuelos latinoamericanos, o al menos no sólo con ellos; ninguno se asume ligado a una literatura nacional—Fresán define: mi patria es mi biblioteca—y ninguno cree que un escritor latinoamericano debe parecer, aya, latinoamericano” (156).

institutions, namely the Rockefeller Federation, the Center for Inter-American Relations, and the American Association of University Presses, began a soft-power campaign in a battle for hearts and minds. This showing of “cultural good will”, as Deborah Cohn puts it, facilitated the inter-American exchange of literary icons and the opening of new reader markets to Latin American authors, leaving an indelible mark on the international literary canon.⁶

At the other temporal end, Volpi’s “young writers” navigated the late development of post-Washington Consensus Latin America without the responsibility of witnessing the trauma that its incipient phases caused intellectual communities in the Americas. As has been the case with the *Boom* writers, if the young Latin American author lives abroad today, it is to be close to publishing houses in Barcelona or within budget-flight striking distance of London and Berlin, not due to political or economic exile, even by the loosest of definitions. And with the exception of the *novelas de la dictadura* that form part of the late-*Boom* corpus in texts such as Augusto Roa Bastos’ *Yo el supremo* (1974) and Elvira Orphée’s *La última conquista de El Ángel* (1977) and the occasional use of dictatorships on the wane as a backdrop to Bildungsroman or cyberpunk novels, such as in Alberto Fuguet’s *Mala onda* (1991) or Edmundo Paz Soldán’s *El delirio de Turing* (2003), a realist rendering of globalization’s dark side in the last third of the twentieth century is notably absent from either group. A realist rendering of life in times of terror, shock economics, and forced-exile rests solely on the shoulders of the Generation of '72.

Lived experience has a lot to do with this. When Julio Cortázar moves to Europe during the *Rayuela* years, it is under strikingly different terms than when, two decades later, Peri Rossi will follow suit. When José Donoso and Mario Vargas Llosa go to Princeton it is with a different degree of necessity than when Ricardo Piglia does the same. And when Ariel Dorfman writes *Konfidenz* (2002), a novel set in World War II Paris, fragility and darkness fill the narrative in a way that does not convey in Volpi’s attempt at the same genre and setting in *En busca de Klingsor* (1999). There is a marked

⁶ In her article, “A Tale of Two Translation Programs: Politics, the Market, and Rockefeller Funding for Latin American Literature in the United States During the 1960s and 1970s.” *Latin American Research Review* 41.2 (2006): 139-64, Deborah Cohn goes into detail about the rise of Area Studies and its philanthropic outposts in the United States and the implications that this had for Boom literature.

contrast between the literature produced in times of globalization and that which stems from the duress of acquiesced global citizenship.

Indeed, the Generation of '72 experiences a stark contrast in political realities with their predecessors: less the cultural good will associated with soft power and more the harsh reality associated with global civil war. By the seventies, the international circulation of knowledge did not so much favor intellectuals and left-leaning writers and artists in Latin America as it did a technocratic elite with authoritarian tendencies. What went global was not literature and cultural artifacts so much as strategies associated with widespread oppression. Myriad quotes have come to light from Henry Kissinger that attest to the disposability of Latin American leftists, their inability to govern themselves, the C.I.A.'s waging of a "campaign of terror" in the sixties in Chile, half a decade before Allende was even elected, along with the clear contradictions of promoting democracy through dictatorships. The United States Government's shift away from the attempt to win hearts and minds through cultural exchange in Latin America can, perhaps, best be summed up by the point-blank vote of confidence that Kissinger gives Pinochet when he meets him at the Organization of American States General Assembly in 1976: "My evaluation is that you are a victim of all left-wing groups around the world and that your greatest sin was that you overthrew a government which was going communist" (56).⁷ Contemporary scholarship on the Cold War in Latin America highlights to what extent the transnational and globalized properties associated with authoritarian networks such as Operation Condor usurped former avenues of cultural exchange.⁸ In the edited volume, *In from the Cold: Latin America's New Encounter with the Cold War* (2008) Daniela Spenser discusses how globalization played to the favor of oligarchies and autocrats more than democracy promoting cultural institutions, writing in particular about the Argentine Junta's ability to export their tactics to outposts of leftist and right-wing conflict in the rest of Latin America:

In its crusade to transnationalize the dirty war, the Argentine military exported arms, counterinsurgency doctrine, and expertise

⁷ This exchange is taken from Gilbert Joseph and Daniela Spenser's *In from the Cold: Latin America's New Encounter with the Cold War* (2008).

⁸ Lois Hecht Oppenheim's *Politics in Chile: Democracy, Authoritarianism and the Search for Development* (1993) serves as a good source for details on the Chilean "campaign of terror" in the sixties.

in the practice of state terror. To advance its goals, the military counted on a well-constructed network of like-minded Latin American, North American and Asian anti-Communists, and also on conservative domestic civil society. In the process, the military established a wide international network, which included the sharing of logistical information and the ideas and techniques of counterinsurgency war, as well as an illegal trade in arms, drugs, and money laundering independent of the United States. (385)

With the River Plate area no longer serving as an exporter of an iconography of Latin American cosmopolitanism, but as a source of tactics of oppression, and with Chile taking a rapid shift from a country associated with internationally lauded idealist poets and committed writers to being a puppet government of the C.I.A., writers that come of age in the seventies in the Southern Cone especially offer a darkening of global and cosmopolitan themes in their work.

To write with allegory based in the sustained residue of melancholic connection to the home space marks a break from the *novela de la dictadura* that is more narrowly concerned with the apparatuses of power and the textual characterization of the cult of dictators on one generational side and the benefit of the literary navigation of the cosmopolitan marketplace from home on the other. The Generation of '72 stands between writers that fall into line with incipient and comparatively benevolent Cold War programs and cultural globalization in terms of the *Boom* and subsequent generations, such as the *McOndo* and *Crack* who come of age after the return to democracy and are unconcerned with the effect that neoliberal globalization has on memory on the other. For the former, the cosmopolitan rite, in keeping with the Latin American tradition, consists of a trip to major European capitals, where one can become universally lettered in the high aesthetic register of nation building. For the latter the same market forces that erode the memory of authoritarian atrocities for the Generation of '72 allow them, for the first time in Latin American history, to be cosmopolitan in the singular and universal sense *from home*, and to earnestly celebrate post-national popular aesthetics. The Generation of '72, by contrast, receives less subsidized translations, world literary prizes, and effortless international communication and travel, and more the fulfillment of a hemispheric paranoia that views ideas and intellectualism with enmity. It is not for

nothing that John Beverley marks the de facto end to the *Boom* as September 11, 1973.

A New Idealism

When the characters in the Peri Rossi short story alluded to above travel to a nondescript Spanish city, they do not experience the pride of homeland but are surprised by the barbarian nature of the Spaniards themselves, whose only place for South Americans in their economic and symbolic economy is to paint themselves as caricatures of indigenous subjects and beg for money. The existential low-tide her characters experience exposes fissures in the foundational promises of post-Enlightenment civilization and the binary thinking that has long dictated Latin America and its relationship to cosmopolitan centers. Neither civilized, nor barbarian, Peri Rossi alludes to a generation altogether desensitized to such simplified modes of thought. And she does so in spirited terms. The narrator explains:

Esta era otra raza, provista de una singular resistencia, y en la matriz original, habían asimilado las enseñanzas de íntimas, oscurísimas derrotas; en el útero materno habían aprendido la tristeza, el fracaso, la desolación, y cuando vieron la luz del mundo, supieron cómo vivir a pesar de todo ello. Concebidos en noches amargas, en noches de pena, persecución, incertidumbre, miseria y terror, concebidos en casas que eran como calabozos o en calabozos que eran tumbas, en camas que eran ataúdes, los sobrevivientes de esas noches de torturas y de dolor, nacían con el signo de la resistencia y de la fortaleza. (59)

The failure of the aesthetic and political promises of the civilizing State are central to the work of both Peri Rossi and her peers. Charged with political meaning, aesthetics and civilization, for them, are not always positively inflected. In Chile, it is the *aesthetic* implication that Allende's government will careen toward chaos, breaking with order that the technocratic elite will discursively use to prop up its neoliberal policies.⁹

⁹ In Chile, the Catholic Church's tendency to side with progressive and socially inclusive governmental policies in the second half of the twentieth century caused liberal economists and the technocratic elite to use the discourse of chaos and order as a way to frame their policies for a popular audience. For more, see

Colombian governing elites use similar tactics, beginning as early as the nineteenth century and developing into a contemporary semantics of cleanliness versus squalor. And in Argentina, aesthetics have always been invoked in order to philosophically frame violent political projects, including Sarmiento's use of a civilizing hierarchy in which French and English affectations anchor his arguments.

Far from fostering a collective will in the State, aesthetics, for the Generation of '72, is a double-edged medium. Literature, for its writers, does not consist of a tool in nation, or even region, building, nor does it offer a clear path to collective catharsis, in a regional literature that has long used its literary archive to work through philosophical problems. By contrast, literature, for the first time as a regional medium, becomes comprised of, on the one hand, what Nelly Richard refers to as "signos que guardarán en su interior una memoria lingüística de los choques nacidos de tantas desarmaduras de sentidos", and on the other, a poetics that balances the novel cultural affect in global popular culture, the depiction and influences of exile, and a second look at universal political projects (17).¹⁰

In many ways, the Generation of '72 offers a novel poetics of Latin American citizenship, one that is trapped between the codified regionalism of the *Boom* and the privileged navigation of the global market of the *Crack* and *McOndo*. Caught in multiple cultural and economic flows of globalization, they offer a literature that resonates well beyond regional boundaries and speaks to the pushing and pulling, masking and unmasking, lettering and 'unlettering' of globalism, culminating in a new faith in literature, and in turn a new poetics, that is at times unexpectedly hopeful and at others critically poignant. It ties together a literary response from a group of writers that turned to a socially committed literature precisely at a time in which the Latin American aesthetic and political citizen appear to die a simultaneous death. Neither indicative of a swan song nor fresh naiveté, the Generation of '72 works toward a poetics that navigates the labyrinth of globalism and feels out a literary response that resonates increasingly with audiences who experience the ecological,

David E. Hojman, *Neoliberalism with a Human Face?* (Liverpool, England: University of Liverpool Press, 1995).

¹⁰ Nelly Richard goes into depth about the crisis of the arts and the radicalization of poetics both during and after Pinochet's regime is in power in Chile in her book *La insubordinación de los signos: cambio político, transformaciones culturales y poéticas de la crisis* (1994).

political, and economic hang-ups of cosmopolitan modernity in their own right. And readers can turn to the Generation of '72, as Richard would claim, to navigate the ruinous archives of memory from the regional perspective.

It is an uneasy aesthetics filled with irony that the Generation of '72 produces. They, at once, are the first generation to take popular media seriously, *en masse*, and are presented with the problem of critiquing the largely imperial culture from which popular mediums emanate. They are caught between the publishing effortlessness of the *Boom* and the pop-cultural fluency of those born a decade after them. Neither fully at ease in soirees at the Balcells' nor the blogosphere, the Generation of '72 leaves a telling aesthetic inscription of the not so comfortable phase of incipient globalization. Not indicative of a publishing culture that fosters violent tomes for export, nor young enough for political oppression to act simply as a bildungsroman backdrop, the Generation of '72 marks a group whose collective poetics captures the difficult terms of the movement of the aesthetic and economic border to Latin America for the first time.

Contributors

The theorization of the Generation of '72 began with Brantley Nicholson's doctoral thesis at Duke University and has since developed in conversation with Sophia McClennen. And it is a framework that has benefited from the invaluable consideration this edition's contributors have given it. By poking and prodding the idea, the scholars included in this collection have explored its limits while giving the Generation of '72 the critical attention that they have long been due.

In his chapter, Patrick Dove narrates Ricardo Piglia's intellectual and literary formation in the less than serene Argentine sixties and seventies. Arriving back to his home country from Paris where he had studied with Roland Barthes, Piglia seemed set to carry on the long tradition of transferring cosmopolitan knowledge to the *porteño* capital. And arming an editorial board for the journal *Los libros* with the likes of Héctor Schmucler, Carlos Altamirano, Beatriz Sarlo, Germán García and Miriam Chorne was a good start. But then the political and cultural ground on which he stood underwent a seismic shift, and the local intellectual, following the 1971 "Nixon Shock, had to deal with a local setting in which, according to Dove, "national capitalism and import substitution industrialization [were] supplanted by transnational capitalism and

financial speculation.” Piglia responds literarily by pulling from popular media, such as the noir novel, and pitting the high rationality of political idealism against the reality of Argentine life. It is in Piglia’s recent work, *Blanco nocturno*, for Dove, that we witness the erosion of active political self in the oft futile actions of Piglia’s recurring detective, Emilio Renzi.

Global citizenship is at the heart of Leila Lehnen’s elucidating study on Osvaldo Soriano’s post-national novels, *La hora sin sombra* and *Una sombra ya pronto serás*. Parsing the tension between national and global cultural flows, Lehnen’s examination of Soriano addresses one of the more complex themes taken on by the Generation of '72: that of the forced global citizen. National iconographies dark and folkloric spaces, such as the Argentine Pampa, are hollowed out as “liquid modernities” and replace the relative stability of national economies. This reification of spatial symbolic charge acts as a literary analogy for life under both the Junta and Menem, for Lehnen, speaking to the erosion of the basic functions of citizenship and the nation-state.

In his article on Ariel Dorfman’s recent novel *Americanos: Los pasos de Murieta*, John Riofrio makes the compelling and innovative argument that in the Generation of '72, and Dorfman’s work specifically, we witness a unique form of Latin American realism, one that sidesteps the post-modern naval-gazing and cynicism associated with the generations on either side of them. Neither uninitiated in the cerebral dicta of the post-1968 intellectual world nor the experiential reality of actually lived globalization, the Generation of '72, for Riofrio, writes new foundational fictions, calling on allegory, long a tool in Latin American political collectives, to negotiate the tension between the national and the global, the regional and the Pan-American, the psychologically stabilizing and the traumatic. If the Generation of '72 inherits anything from postmodernism, according to Riofrio, it is an analytical skill set that breaks with meta-narrative—Dorfman claims in *Other Septembers, Many Americas* (2004), for instance, that “one of the prevalent visions in our lands is that of a continent where the past devours the future and forces eternal repetition”—and not the insistence on narcissistic literary games.¹¹

Elias Geoffrey Kantaris works through the formal and philosophical tension embedded in Luisa Valenzuela’s under-explored novel, *Como en la*

¹¹ For more see, Ariel Dorfman, *Other Septembers, Many Americas: Selected Provocations 1980-2004*. London: Pluto Press, 2004.

guerra, weighing the text against Valenzuela's larger body of works. Skillfully picking up on themes of Sophocles' *Antigone* in *Como en la guerra*, Kantaris uses Lacanian psychoanalysis to address the recurring analogy of the fatherless child. This useful revisit to the Oedipal paradigm, for the Generation of '72 *qua* the exilic experience, adds to the formal and sociological analysis of Valenzuela's navigation of the post-*Boom* publishing marketplace. Always already "half-buried," this is a group that seeks epistemological anchors while the in-rush of novel global signifiers reifies national and regional experience.

In her chapter, María Rosa Olivera Williams revisits Cristina Peri Rossi's experimental novel, *La nave de lo locos*, in order to examine the doubly fragile state of the female in exile. Focusing on the inscription of the real and symbolic body during the Operación Condor, and more specifically the Año de la Orientalidad, Olivera Williams weaves a tactful and rich analysis of the exilic body throughout her essay, culminating in what she reads as Peri Rossi's desire to reconstruct imaginaries of the present and future. This mark will be made, she argues using Peri Rossi's own words, "si no en el muro de la catedral, sí en el bastidor de la mente." (21)

José Agustín Pastén's claim that Diamela Eltit is the greatest writer of her generation would feel bold, if not argued with such depth and measure. Opting to write on, perhaps, the Generation of '72's most abstruse writer, Pastén neatly categorizes Eltit's works, pairing her formal evolution with both the political context in which her corpus was written and the publishing cultures and reading publics that she many times antagonized. Spanning Eltit's work with the politically committed avant-garde group, CADA, and her recent novel *Jamás el fuego nunca*, Pastén makes a strong argument that, despite the crowded post-dictatorial literary field in Chile, Eltit has left a lasting inscription on the Latin American canon that speaks both precisely and abstractly to the existential vicissitudes of the late-20th century Southern Cone.

Randolph Pope uses the collective works of Antonio Skármeta as a metric with which to gauge how the world's perception and expectation of Latin American intellectual subjectivity has evolved, sometimes erratically, since the end of the Cold War. This sociological analysis of Skármeta and his need to morph formally alongside the rapidly shifting Latin American aesthetic landscape traces the Generation of '72's collective unease with World Literary schema and economies of prestige. Imagistically skipping

from a young Chilean writer in the sixties that cannot convince his Californian contemporaries that Chile and Argentina are different countries to Skármeta's recent triumphs at the Los Angeles and Paris Opera Houses, Pope points out that global success, for this generation, is always cut with an undercurrent of irony. And the literature that, early on, was so infused with "a tone that was unmistakably theirs" has grown increasingly opaque as it has received augmenting international attention.

In her chapter on Fernando Vallejo, Juanita Aristizábal examines the Generation of '72's take on global cultural and political projects. Focusing on the contrast Vallejo strikes between his dandy narrator and the actually lived cityscapes of Medellín, Aristizábal shows how the painter of modern life in Colombia would come to view the modernist destruction with which he is readily associated as quaint. Covering Vallejo's life works, Aristizábal furthers this critical take on universal modernisms in highlighting the plurality of popular voices that Vallejo captures. As the *vox populi* upends the Colombian lettered city, for Aristizábal, we witness a simultaneous trivializing of global cultural standards and a subtly idealist chronicling of life in post-Violencia Colombia.

Lázaro Lima revisits *Antes que anochezca* on the anniversary of its publication twenty years ago in order show why boilerplate political monikers do not stick to this polemical autobiography. Lima proposes that Arenas' autobiography has been too narrowly subjected to left and right readerly expectations that have failed to see the text as Arenas' attempt to fashion his own literary history in relation to the Cuban and the Latin American literature canon. In "The King's Toilet: Cruising Literary History in Reinaldo Arenas' *Before Night Falls*" Lima argues that cruising and "the arts of cruising" for Arenas conforms to a broader history of anti-authoritarian "libertinaje mental" initially posited by Jorge Mañach. For Arenas, Lima argues, both the arts of existence and the literary arts as indispensable to Arenas' aesthetic practice and conditions his insistence on the civic liberties that are required to instantiate it. Insofar as *Antes que anochezca* acts as a guide to Arenas' life and work, the ontological Arenas births the cultural icon Arenas from his deathbed, a finessing of the symbolic economy not out of step with the Generation of '72 and its writers tendency to take up literary rather than real arms.

Works Cited

- Avelar, Idelber. *The Untimely Present: Postdictatorial Latin American Fiction and the Task of Mourning*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999.
- Baumgarten, Alexander. *Aesthetica*. Frankfurt: Hildesheim, 1961.
- Breckenridge, Carol A. Sheldon Pollock, Homi K. Bhabha, and Dipesh Chakrabarty, ed. *Cosmopolitanism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002.
- Casanova, Pascale. *The World Republic of Letters*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004.
- Cohn, Deborah. "A Tale of Two Translation Programs: Politics, the Market, and Rockefeller Funding for Latin American Literature in the United States During the 1960s and 1970s." *Latin American Research Review*, 41.2 (2006): 139-64.
- Donoso, José. *Historia Personal Del Boom*. Buenos Aires: Sudamericana-Planeta, 1984.
- Dorfman, Ariel. *Other Septembers, Many Americas: Selected Provocations 1980-2004*. London: Pluto Press, 2004.
- English, James F. *The Economy of Prestige: Prizes, Awards, and Circulation of Cultural Value*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2005.
- Felman, Shoshana and Dori Laub. *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Fuguet, Alberto and Sergio Gómez, ed. *McOndo*. Barcelona: Grijalbo Mondadori, 1996.

- Goic, Cedomil. *Historia De La Novela Hispanoamericana*. Valparaiso, Chile: Ediciones Universitarias de Valparaiso, Universidad de Chile, 1972.
- . *Mitos Degradados*. Atlanta: Rodopi, 1992.
- Manzoni, Celina, ed. *La Fugitiva Contemporaneidad: Narrativa Latinoamericana, 1990-2000*. Buenos Aires: Corregidor, 2003.
- Moretti, Franco. *Signs Taken for Wonders: Essays in the Sociology of Literary Forms*. London: Verso, 1988.
- Richard, Nelly and Alberto Moreiras, ed. *Pensar en la postdictadura*. Santiago: Editorial Cuarto Propio, 2001.
- Oppenheim, Lois Hecht. *Politics in Chile: Democracy, Authoritarianism, and the Search for Development*. 1993.
- Angel Palou, Pedro, Eloy Urroz, Ignacio Padilla, Ricardo Chaez Cstaneda, and Jorge Volpi. "Manifiesto Crack." *Lateral. Revista de Cultura*. 70, 2000.
- Rossi, Cristina Peri. *La Tarde Del Dinosaurio*. Letras De Exilio. Barcelona: Terceto, 1984.
- Schiller, Friedrich. *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004.
- Shaw, Donald. *Antonio Skarmeta and the Post-Boom*. Nanover, New Hampshire: Ediciones del Norte, 1994.
- . *The Post-Boom and Spanish American Fiction*. Saratoga Springs, NY: SUNY Press, 1998.