

series is inspired by and dedicated to, have attempted to breach a long standing vacuum of ineffable emotions and thoughts.

The concept of *diaspora* implies, in and of itself, the displacement of the Jews from Palestine after the Babylonian exile. Debora Cordeiro Rosa adds to this the writings of more contemporary dislocations of Jews to Latin America. In her article "Diaspora and Identity in Latin American Jewish Writing", she considers the concept of "Jewishness" (63) in Latin American Jewish authors such as Saúl Bluman, Isidoro Blaisten, Margo Glantz, and Clarice Lispector.

In "Three Waves of Immigration: Waving (Wavene) the Flag of Patriotic Fervor," William O. Deaver, Jr. identifies the waning spirit of the Cuban culture in the United States. Deaver likens the Cuban exile experience in the US to the experience of US Southerners. He indicates that cultural assimilation becomes the protection against cultural marginalization for both groups.

Humberto López Cruz also touches on the concept of assimilation in his article "Cuban; American Literature: Suspicion of a Rupture in the Assimilation Pattern?", but sees a new trend, in the works of Robert G. Fernández and Virgil Suarez, that deviates from the traditional course of assimilation for Cuban-American literature. He also proposes a new way of referring to those who have spent the majority of their life in the United States despite being Cuban exiles—Cuban; American, rather than the hyphenated term, in order to acknowledge the interface between the authors' Cuban and United States identities. He would disagree with Deaver that the Cuban culture in the US is waning, but rather see this new tendency as an evolution of it.

Finally, Gustavo Pérez Firmat, the author of *Life on the Hyphen* (1994) and *Cincuenta lecciones de exilio y desexilio* (2000), examines the effects of time on bicultural writers in his article "Growing Old Bilingual". In particular, he considers what he calls "later-in-life on the hyphen" and he offers his own experience as a bicultural writer as evidence to the idea that the trend of most young bicultural writers towards "coming-of-age" stories will eventually evolve and affect the relationships that these authors have with the languages they speak or write.

Lourdes Betanzos
 Auburn University

LaGreca, Nancy. *Rewriting Womanhood: Feminism, Subjectivity and the Angel of the House in the Latin American Novel, 1887-1903*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State UP, 2009. ISBN 978-0-271-03439-3. 202 pp.

Nancy LaGreca's latest work examines three Latin American novels by women writers publishing during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In *Rewriting Womanhood*, LaGreca posits that Refugio Barragán de Toscano, Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera, and Ana Roqué challenged traditional beliefs of the literate public and ruling class in Mexico, Peru, and Puerto Rico. In her view, these female novelists succeed by a number of factors including critiquing the seemingly ubiquitous domestic ideal for women: the Angel of the House.

Organized into six chapters, the book juxtaposes the historical and social contexts in Latin America with the lives and literary production of Barragán, Cabello, and Roqué. Offering a general overview of women's roles in nineteenth-century Mexico, LaGreca's first chapter discusses the tenure of José de la Cruz Porfirio Díaz (the Porfirian era) and the rise of Positivism, a scientifically driven social philosophy employed by Díaz's advisors. She effectively explains that early feminism in Mexico was countered by both positivist and religious rhetoric touted mainly by male figures of authority.

Fittingly, in her second chapter, the critic analyzes Barragán's *La hija del bandido* (1887) and the unique disruptions of power and perspective it portrays. Currently the earliest known woman novelist of nineteenth-century Mexico, Barragán chooses marginal spaces "to present the counterhegemonic notion of feminine agency" (60). In doing so, LaGreca argues, the author allows the opportunity for María (the novel's protagonist) to question and disobey rules of the dominant Mexican culture during the time of publication.

Focusing on the national and private struggles for independence, LaGreca opens her third chapter describing the role of women of the bourgeoisie in Peru's wars of independence with Spain (1817-1825). However, as she explains, in the postindependence period (between 1826 and 1845) there appeared to be a movement to limit women's rights and freedoms. Her reading suggests that even though many Peruvian politicians welcomed women's education, these "programs" were never intended to change women's role in the symbolic order of

broaden their horizons, but rather to make them better Angels of the House" (90).

In the following chapter, LaGreca highlights the relationship between Cabello's *Blanca Sol* (1888) and the Cinderella fairy tale. Specifically, she targets two secondary characters in Cabello's novel to underline the author's rewriting of womanhood by recoding social signifiers, such as gender stereotypes, in ways that cast doubt on negative hegemonic views of a proactive, intelligent Peruvian woman.

LaGreca, with her fifth chapter, turns her focus to Puerto Rico's oppression of women during the nineteenth century. She emphasizes the particular control of women's bodies under both Spanish and US rule by providing examples of restrictions enforced by the government and church. Frequently disguised by medical discourse, these limitations, such as stifling women's dress, curtailing dance, and choosing lighter-skinned partners, served as social regulation by the ruling class.

In her final chapter, LaGreca presents an in-depth reading of Roqué's *Luz y sombra* (1903) by drawing attention to the subversive form of female sexual agency throughout the text. The epistolary nature of the novel facilitates the process of subjectivity and thus lends "itself to a reevaluation of feminine identity because of its intimate tone and the metafictional effect that reading the correspondence between two women creates" (155). Female sexual desire, the critic successfully points out, is portrayed in a more realistic fashion in Roqué's text and thus aids in the rewriting of sexuality and womanhood.

Easily readable and thoroughly researched, *Rewriting Womanhood* offers some viable and logical deductions about late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century women novelists in Latin America who propose nontraditional models for female identity.

Graham Ignizio
Union College

Mayor Marsán, Maricel. *Rumores de Suburbios*. Miami: Ediciones Baquiana, 2009. ISBN: 978-0-9823917-4-7. 80 pp.

Con estrategias teatrales, Maricel Mayor Marsán nos adentra en las vidas y valores de suburbios, pintando primeramente un escenario

que a simple vista se antoja agradable, cómodo. Describe la vida acomodada de los que viven en los vecindarios pudientes en las afueras de la ciudad. Aclaro que la autora emplea estrategias teatrales porque el ambiente se introduce antes que los dramas humanos individualizados. Excepto por algunos niños y adolescentes —que en realidad son al principio parte del paisaje— sus dos primeros poemas: "Los suburbios" y "Verano en los suburbios" describen la quietud, los jardines bien cuidados, las casas amplias y bien pintadas, el vuelo de los pájaros, el calor, la tarde apacible. A primera vista, se presenta una vida envidiable que responde a lo que los medios de comunicación nos han presentado como el ideal de convivencia social americano. De hecho, al final del primer poema la autora señala: todo parece calmado, casi perfecto, una película de *Hollywood* al comenzar (10). No obstante, ya, entre toque y toque del escenario que se pinta, nos presenta elementos que causan inquietud: "pestillos, bisagras, candados y rejas", nos habla de los que "se ausentan de prisa" y de los que "repiten movimientos aprendidos en la MTV".

Las mujeres de esta sección, como las que describe en "La reina de los suburbios", están ocupadas con sus compras y sus visitas al psicólogo y al gimnasio; mientras los hombres, algo ausentes del vecindario y la familia, parecen trabajar largas horas para escapar el vacío y sostener el nivel económico que, al parecer, es lo único que le da sentido a sus días. Todo ello nos sugiere vidas profundamente inseguras, ansiosas y vacías (en contraste con el apacible escenario alrededor). Peor aún, revela una población con ciertos estándares económicos sostenidos por conflictos bélicos. En su poema "Suburbios" la autora señala:

*Y en un lugar muy distante
los soldados en guerra se pierden
entre el desierto
y las bombas que diezman.*

...

Cadáveres de ojos yertos con nostalgia de suburbios. (12)

Como trasfondo al escenario de aparente sosiego y afluencia de los suburbios, están los soldados que matan y mueren en lejanas guerras como sucedió con las dos guerras recientes contra Irak. El verso de la autora, "El verano asusta" (12), bien podría leerse: "El suburbio asusta