

Arizona Journal of **Hispanic**  
**HCS** **Cultural**  
**Studies**

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**Special Edition**

**The Past Awakened: Cultural Reimagination in  
the Global Hispanophone**

Guest Editor: Víctor Sierra Matute

**Volume 29, 2025**

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ISSN: 1096-2492

Printed by Thomson-Shore — Sheridan, A CJK Group Company



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# In This Issue

The essays in this volume, while addressing diverse topics, emphasize the significance of experience and critique prevailing power structures. The 2025 issue comprises four essays in the main section, two interviews, and a special section titled “The Past Awakened: Cultural Reimagination in the Global Hispanophone.” The main section is dedicated to poetry and film, offering critical insights into representations of anorexia and personal trauma, the Basque conflict in cinema, Puerto Rican colonial resistance, and depictions of social exclusion in Madrid’s *chabolas*. These interventions share an attention to trauma (personal or collective), the construction of marginalized identities, and alternative historical narratives that challenge dominant discourses.

Beñat Doxandabaratx’s “Shadows of Silence” analyzes the Basque film *Negu hurbilak* (2023) to investigate the fictional depiction of the aftermath of the Basque conflict. It follows an unnamed ETA fugitive, hidden in a rural village that becomes a “non-place” through cinematic form and an emphasis on secrecy and anonymity. The author examines how the four directors invite viewers to interpret the film’s pacing, tense atmosphere, and ambiguity, thereby underscoring the power of collective memory and solidarity among the rural inhabitants.

The subsequent essay, “From Under the Bed to the Center of the Room,” by Laura Cesarco Eglin and Kristina Medina-Vilariño, examines Roque Raquel Salas Rivera’s poetry to challenge U.S. colonialism and linguistic hierarchies in Puerto Rico. The two collections show decolonial poetics at work (equally powerful in translation), unpacking the conflicted contexts of post–Hurricane María and the colonial oversight, better known as PROMESA, imposed by federal law in 2016. The authors attend to content and form, positioning poetic discourse as an instrument of resistance and a framework for decolonization.

David Foshee, in “Constructing Exclusion,” examines 1950s cinematic representations of *chabolas*—precarious spaces built by rural migrants (*chabolistas*)—in a comparative study of four films. While these films reinforce the “geography of exclusion” (Sibley) of these communities and their marginalized inhabitants, he concludes in a comment on the documentary *Flores de luna* (2008), the *chabolas* have not only endured but also thrived, ultimately becoming integral to Madrid’s social fabric.

The main section concludes with Irene Gómez Castellano’s “The Mathematics of Anorexia.” It focuses on the formal architecture of trauma in Olivia Martínez Giménez de León’s poetry collection, *Los años del hambre* (2023), which delves into the personal memory of sexual abuse and anorexia to reflect on a journey shaped by pain and obsession. Gómez Castellano’s analysis reflects on the poet’s “anorexia aesthetics” to connect “compulsive numeric accountability” to the representation of external and internal violence and the recognition of a fragmented self.

This issue features two interviews with contemporary Latin American filmmakers—Liliana Paolinelli, a director and writer from Córdoba, Argentina, in conversation with Marcus Guilherme Valadares and Britta Anderson. The second interview is with Francisco Huichaqueo Pérez, a

Mapuche filmmaker, professor, and curator, conducted by Dilan Erteber and Caglar Erteber. These conversations explore how their personal histories, cultural identities, and aesthetic philosophies shape their cinematic and artistic works. The interview with Francisco Huichaqueo Pérez centers on his concept of indigenous cinema as a form of “medicine” and a “circular gaze.” In contrast, the interview with Paolinelli focuses on her exploration of human relationships, identity, and intimacy, specifically through the lens of feminine and lesbian experiences.

The 2025 special section “The Past Awakened: Cultural Reimagination in the Global Hispanophone” is commemorative, revisiting a decade of critical work on the Global Hispanophone (2015-2025). As a field of study, it has drawn critical attention to cultural histories and archives from regions shaped by Spain’s imperial presence beyond the traditional Spain–Latin American axis. This section includes a dedicated introduction by Víctor Sierra Matute, eight essays, and an afterword by Benita Sampedro Vizcaya. Other contributors include Monica Styles, Paula Park, Natalia Villaroel Torres, Yasmina Aidi, Cristina E. Pardo Porto, Susana Castillo-Rodríguez, and Adolfo Campoy-Cubillo.

As the authors in this section remind us, the Global Hispanophone, as a field and critical framework, brings together the study of cultural production, political history, religion/religiosity, and memory studies to foreground aspects of the Hispanic legacy in global connections that have been ignored by the canon. Much of the work featured is distinctive for its attention to voices and images from transoceanic and transcontinental regions once colonized by Spain. Colonization and expansion altered European transimperial relations and, in the colonial territories, marked the identities of future generations. Benita Sampedro Vizcaya underscores key regions: “Africa (Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Western Sahara, Ceuta, Melilla, Equatorial Guinea...), Asia (Philippines, Mariana Islands...), and other Atlantic, Pacific, or Mediterranean localities in between” (289). One can trace the impact of migration, multilingualism, and hybridity on cultural production in these geographies. In this special section, the present meets its violent past, and the colonial roots of enduring political movements are exposed. Other forms of women’s agency are revealed, and history is revised through unexpected objects that rewrite colonial knowledge. Geopolitical tensions permeate our reading through a transpacific/trans-Mediterranean journey that culminates in conflict-ridden continental regions. Beyond these geographies, the essays unpack tensions in Hispanic cultural studies by presenting discourses, performances, and events as cultural expressions that are neatly tied to political acts of profound significance for us today.

I would like to convey my heartfelt gratitude to our team: Agustín Cuadrado (Managing Editor), Ellen Deemer Pérez (Assistant Editor), along with our committed senior and production editors, and our newly appointed book review editor, Caglar Erteber. As I wrap up these comments, I am pleased to announce that Professors Tamara Mitchell (University of British Columbia) and Isabella Vergara C. (University of Michigan) are editing the 2026 Special Section titled “The Space between Sounds: Silence as Expression in 20<sup>th</sup>- and 21<sup>st</sup>-century Latin American Literature and Culture.” We warmly invite future submissions and welcome proposals for special sections to continue enriching the journal’s intellectual conversations and contributions to the field.

**Santa Arias**  
*Executive Editor*