

In This Issue

The Varieties of Scholarly Experience

Comprising a four-essay guest edited special cluster, four interviews with a number of notable cultural figures, two original and rigorously-argued essays, one unique pedagogical perspective piece (with accompanying syllabus) and an *AJHCS* editorial on peer-review, this volume of the *Arizona Journal of Hispanic Cultural Studies* (#15) is perhaps the most evenly-robust collection of scholarship we have published to date.

This volume's regular-section essays are strikingly novel in their approach. Julie M. Dahl's "Suicidal Spaniards in Moody Portugal and Other Helpful Stereotypes: Imagology and Luso-Hispanic Studies" launches from a story by Enrique Vila-Matas—wherein a Spaniard travel to Lisbon "because it is the best place to jump to one's death"—to address a one-hundred and fifty year old image of a sad Portugal. Blending fictional and extraliterary representations of cultural place, this essay serves also as an introduction to the field of Imagology or Image Studies—understood as "the study of national and ethnic characteristics or stereotypes in cultural and textual production [...] the study of how one nation imagines another in discourse." Natalia Jacovkis's "Novela negra y estado de excepción en Argentina: *Últimos días de la víctima* de José Pablo Feinmann" wonderfully employs Giorgio Agamben's work in an analysis fusing culture, politics and the detective genre. Jacovkis mobilizes the notion of a "state of exception" (i.e. "a state devoid of law, a zone of anomy in which all legal determinations—and above all the very distinction between public and private—are deactivated") as a compelling point of entry into the form and action of Feinmann's 1979 novel.

This volume's innovative special cluster—"Violence in the 21st Century: Scenes from Fiction, Exhibits and Installations," guest edited by Dianna Niebylski and Paola Ehrmantraut—is a welcome meditation on the intersections between violence, history, politics and culture. The insightful introduction penned by the editors themselves—titled "Violence in the 21st Century: Scenes from Fiction, Exhibits and Installations"—makes clear that violence is a complex and multivalent term, drawing upon work by theorists and critics such as Moraña, Reguillo, Avelar, Agamben, Foucault, Žižek and more. The four essays that follow trace divergent but equally compelling paths through a number of Latin American cultural landscapes. Lori Cole's "At the Site of State Violence: Doris Salcedo's and Julieta Hanono's Memorial Aesthetics" reads both a staged, commemorative artistic piece from Colombia and a video installation from Argentina as a way of asserting "a phenomenological relationship to site that at once centralizes the absent body and invites viewers to participate in a collective historical reflection." Ehrmantraut's transatlantic contribution "Aftermath of Violence: Coming to Terms with the Legacy of the Malvinas/Falklands War" reads two recent exhibits—at the British Imperial War Museum in London and at the headquarters

of the Argentine Armed Forces in Buenos Aires—mixing discussions of political violence and social responsibility while attending to the cultural nuances implicit in commemorative display. Niebylski's "Blood Tax: Violence and the Vampirized Body in *Impuesto a la carne*" is both a careful and illuminating reading of a difficult 2010 novel just as it is a critique of the violence associated with neoliberal practices as they have unfolded in Chile. The final essay—Carolina Rocha's "Systemic Violence in Claudia Piñeiro's *Las viudas de los jueves*"—uses the work of Žižek, Foucault and more to elucidate how structural violence, social prejudice and xenophobia come together in a recent 2005 novel set in a gated community.

In our interviews section, Mischa G. Hendel presents discussions with two writers from Equatorial Guinea—the only African nation where Spanish is an official language—Justo Bolekia Boleká and Juan Tomás Ávila Laurel. New readers will be interested to know that these 2008 interviews in essence build upon a special section on "Equatorial Guinea and Spanish Letters" previously published in volume #8 (2004) of the *AJHCS*. While a substantial introduction written by Hendel here provides a concise contextualization for the interviews, what stands out in each case is the difficult yet important role of the writer, situated in relation to a nation without presses and libraries that has suffered from dictatorship, torture and lack of freedoms. Each writer also compellingly discusses the numerous issues surrounding his writerly craft as well as his relationship to multiple languages and territorial identities. Stuart Green interviews the two most well-known MCs in Spain—Frank T (Franklin Tshimini Nsombolay) and El Chojín (pronounced *el tʃo'jin*) (Domingo Edjang Moreno)—as a way of tying together discourses on rap, racism, immigration and cultural influence. These 2010 interviews highlight the transnational scope of much contemporary rap and hip-hop as Frank T and El Chojín reference such figures as Chuck D (of Public Enemy), KRS-One, Malcolm X, Kool Moe Dee, LL Cool J and more during their meditations on political commitment, authenticity, and musical genre.

Our pedagogical perspectives piece for this volume is sure to become a touchstone for teacher-scholars who continue to embrace the "spatial turn" in Hispanist criticism. Susan Divine's "Hispanic Cities on Film: Urban Theory in the Freshman Seminar"—co-written with student Benjamin Jones—emphasizes the work of urban geographer David Harvey while incorporating numerous other sources relevant to cities and social/economic/cultural difference (e.g. Zukin, Dear, Massey...). While the essay itself works through the potential benefits for students and reflects astutely upon how the class actually unfolded as taught in the context of a liberal arts college—referencing specific writing assignments, class discussions and more—a syllabus is also included as an appendix. Together, essay and syllabus alike provide a concrete starting point for professors who would like to create similar classes but who may not know precisely where to begin.

Finally, an *AJHCS* position paper co-written by Benjamin Fraser, Malcom Alan Compitello and Eva Karene Romero makes explicit the vision of peer-review process that has governed the journal since its formation in 1997. We also want to take this opportunity to thank our meritorious peer-reviewers for their service to the journal and to the field as a whole. As this volume shows—perhaps more than any previous volume of the *Arizona Journal*

of Hispanic Cultural Studies—we continue to welcome a variety of scholarly formats for consideration: including not only original research essays, but also proposals for special sections (or clusters), interviews, pedagogical perspectives, suggestions for featured artists and more. In closing, two announcements... We would like to remind our readers of our new web site—azjhcs.coh.arizona.edu (inaugurated in 2010)—and also of our continuing publishing relationships with Dialnet, JSTOR and Project Muse. Interested readers should also keep an eye out for an edited volume anticipated to appear in print within the year titled *Capital Inscriptions: Essays on Hispanic Literature, Film and Urban Space in Honor of Malcolm Alan Compitello*. Orders for this book are currently being accepted at Juan de la Cuesta (see our new website for details—under the “What’s New” menu heading) as a way of honoring the numerous contributions made by the *Arizona Journal’s* Executive Editor to the field of Hispanic Studies broadly considered.

Benjamin Fraser
Managing Editor
College of Charleston