

**José Antonio Gurpegui, ed.: *Interpreting the New Milenio*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2008. 291 pp.**

*Interpreting the New Milenio* is a collection of essays the intent of which is to include an ample body of work representative of where the field of Chicano Studies is at the start of the new millennium. This aim is well satisfied by José Antonio Gurpegui with a varied sample of critical pieces that follow a structural logic based on both chronology and themes, allowing for consideration of various genres including chronicles, poetry, autobiography, narrative fiction and other forms of cultural expression such as spirituality and food in Chicano culture.

The first part of the collection, “Enfoques de revision histórica,” begins this coherent analysis of the state of Chicano culture by looking to the past. Notable are the pieces centered on the colonial period and the XIX century in what is now the U.S. Southwest. Among these, Carmen Gómez Galisteo’s commentary on the choice between English and Spanish for Chicano writers as possibly rooted in the tradition of undervaluing Spanish accounts of “discovery” compared to the privilege given to those produced in English by British explorers.

Part two, “Lenguas nuevas, verbos viejos,” focuses on bilingualism and biculturalism in works by Sandra Cisneros and Rolando Hinojosa. In the case of Hinojosa, Giuliana Arcidiacono addresses his self-translations or “recreations” as examples of a positive model of integration. Part three, “Construcciones masculinas,” begins with a well-documented study of the Chicano masculinities by M. Aishih Wehbe Herrera, while the remaining essays deal with Guillermo Gómez-Peña’s poetry and Alfredo Véa’s Vietnam-based novel *Gods Go Begging*.

“Legados, sonidos, y apetitos culturales” extends the diverse nature of this collection and of the Chicano experience beyond its obvious borders. It is here that the presence of the Virgin of Guadalupe in Chicano and Riqueño texts, the possible links in the experience of Chicanos/Aztlán and migrant Arabs/Alándalus, and Ry Cooder’s concern for the Chicano experience are explored. Part five, “Chicanas en su poderío discursivo o mediante la espiritualidad,” also addresses borders but with regard to discursivity and spirituality. This section is highlighted by Tey Diana Rebolledo’s lively essay on “dark gifts,” secrets, and *locas* that in Chicano culture are the means to express particular ways of knowing. These gifts — *curanderismo*, clairvoyance, *conocimiento* — for instance, are brought to light not just in the literary examples that Rebolledo offers, but in direct reference to her personal experience.

The personal aspects of Rebolledo's essay create a logical segue to part six: "Autobiografía más allá del yo." This section addresses the autobiographical as well as the narrative "I" in Chicano fiction, from Chuck Tatum's overview of contemporary Chicano autobiography, to specific readings of works by Arturo Islas, Cleofas Aramillo, Frances Esquibel Tywoniak, and Rudolfo Anaya. Of particular interest is the work of José Antonio Gurpegui on *Bless Me, Última*. This essay poses an interesting challenge to traditional readings of Anaya's best known work by way of the postmodernist context it offers. While acknowledging that the novel can be seen as related exclusively to Chicano reality, Gurpegui further proposes that it be linked to postmodernist trends because of the historical coincidence shared by the rise of postmodernism and Chicano literature. As contemporaries of each other, Gurpegui argues convincingly that the impossibility of absolute truth with which the novel concludes can be linked to a postmodern aesthetic. An important aspect of Gurpegui's analysis is that it suggests other such reinterpretations, especially with regard to what has traditionally been considered the Chicano literary canon. The final two sections, "Teorías y teóricos" and "Lo fronterizo fluctuante," continue in this theoretical vein as they include essays on memory, immigration and the furor caused by Samuel Huntington's *Who Are We?*, among others.

The volume as a whole offers a worthwhile read as it serves as barometer for the current state of Chicano literary and culture studies. With an impressive list of scholars that represent institutions of higher learning from the United States, Spain, Germany, the Netherlands, Mexico, Poland, and Italy, *Interpreting the New Milenio* is an important affirmation of the far reach that Chicano literature and culture have already achieved.

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