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Echevarría es que la monstruosidad barroca y la marginalidad barroca han servido mejor que otras epistemologías para representarnos dentro de la civilización occidental. Y no es que creamos, creo que tanto Echevarría como yo, que existe una jerarquía por la que existe un centro clásico y mejor. Dicen los economistas de ahora que la empresa y el mercado no son una pirámide, sino una compleja tela de araña en la que los puntos cardinales y el centro o no existen o se diluyen, en definitiva, una red con interminables interrelaciones entre sí. Creo que esta metáfora es también válida para nuestra cultura, para nuestras culturas.

Esta colección de ensayos cubre trabajos que van desde 1970 a 1991, y se nota, y lo que es un defecto desde el punto de vista de la organicidad, es una virtud ya que se puede seguir la historia de un intelectual reflexionando sobre el fenómeno de nuestra modernidad y de las luchas para autorrepresentarnos. El libro estudia literatura española y literaturas americanas, y establece lazos y conexiones entre ellas.

Los diez artículos de la colección estudian a *Celestina*, la picaresca en las *Novelas ejemplares* de Cervantes, *El castigo sin venganza* de Lope de Vega, dos artículos sobre *La vida es sueño*, *Espejo de paciencia* de Silvestre de Balboa, un trabajo sobre Juan de Espinosa Medrano, el Lunarejo, *El siglo de las luces* de Alejo Carpentier, *Motivos* de Nicolás Guillén y *Cobra* de Severo Sarduy. A partir de aquí, los intereses del lector priman, y unos preferirán unos estudios sobre otros. A mí me parecen muy pedagógicas las notas de historia de la literatura, por ejemplo, el segundo artículo sobre Calderón es muy interesante como reflexión sobre la posición de los poetas barrocos en la historia de la literatura española e hispanoamericana y las diferentes reacciones que han provocado. Otro artículo magnífico es el que trata sobre Nicolás Guillén, en el que se estudia lo inclusivo del lenguaje de Góngora, cómo para él la belleza no estaba en la servil imitación de los clásicos, sino en traer todo a la literatura, la novedad, lo que hoy llamaríamos cultura popular, por ejemplo, traer el español de los esclavos negros a la literatura, y que es de esa tradición de la que puede servirse la poesía negra de Guillén. Valga el siguiente párrafo a modo de ejemplo:

This aesthetics of difference is another way of saying that the Baroque incorporates the Other; it plays at being Other . . . The Baroque assumes the strangeness of the Other as an awareness of the strangeness as an awareness of the strangeness of Being. Being is being as monster, at once one and the other, the same and different . . . An awareness of otherness within oneself, of newness. In this way the Baroque is a phenomenon parallel to Descartes's meditation on the self as thinking subject that questions all received knowledge. The feeling of being in the baroque is more concrete than Descartes's *cogito*; it is more tangible. It is a sense of one's own rarity, of oddity, of distortion. Hence the plurality of New World

Culture, its being-in-the-making as something not quite achieved, of something heterogeneous and incomplete, is expressed in the Baroque. (198-99)

Este estudio es el mejor que existe hasta el momento sobre el fenómeno neo-Barroco y uno de los llamados a convertirse en clásicos del estudio del Barroco.

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Menocal, María Rosa. *Shards of Love: Exile and the Origins of the Lyric*. Durham: Duke UP 1994. xv + 294 pp. ISBN 0-8223-1419-3.

María Rosa Menocal's most recent work succeeds in its noble aim to carry the reader on an inspired and inspiring journey beyond the "horse latitudes" of traditional medieval historical-literary studies. Extremely well read, the author cleverly combines centuries-old (Dante) and contemporary (Todorov) works, ancient (*kharja*) and modern-day (Eric Clapton's "Layla") love songs, to support her well developed argument that love lyrics in the vernacular can be and often indeed are an act of political engagement. The prestige afforded such song and poetry in what are today considered marginalized languages such as Catalan or Mozarabic has for centuries been limited, as "the mode of being medievalists is dictated not by those paradigmatic modes of medievalism, but by the modalities of Renaissance historiography" (26). This 1492-oriented approach to historical and poetic scholarship has generated tremendous momentum, but all at the same latitude. Menocal's first chapter, "The Horse Latitudes," exposes the perils of sailing a route that is familiar yet inherently inescapable, lest the explorers dare to lighten their vessel by sacrificing a significant portion of the valuable cargo. This mental image created in the title of the introductory chapter alludes to the age of exploration (also an age of *exile*) and serves also as a metaphor for the author's aim in writing *Shards of Love*. As she explains, even Columbus encounters the Horse Latitudes, "either of two belts or regions in the neighborhood of 30 degrees North and 30 degrees South . . . characterized by high pressure, calm and light baffling winds" where sailors, caught in these "sailing ruts, began throwing everything overboard to lighten the ship and restore movement. Even the precious horses . . ." (10). The dramatic act of casting horses over the side of an endangered ship constitutes a fitting metaphor for the accomplishments achieved in the skillful, thoroughly documented argument presented in *Shards of Love*.

The scholars and poets, past and present, who are of interest to the author of *Shards of Love*, are precisely those who have known exile in one

sense or another and who have taken scandalous steps to generate forward momentum in the field of Romance Philology, such as Dante, Erich Auerbach, Ramon Llull, Ramón Menéndez Pidal and Ezra Pound, among many others. Of particular significance to Menocal's thesis is the exiled Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia*, a work which renders its author the modern Medievalist's "most immediate professional ancestor" because it resists exegetical, institutional interpretation (12); perversely defending the superiority of the ungrammatical mother tongue, the voice of the "scruffy" street singer (101). Menocal asserts the strong presence of an anti-institutional counterculture in the Medieval Period. The observation that such a phenomenon exists in the tenth through thirteenth centuries, the author notes, is not as significant or groundbreaking as the argument that this counterculture is more widespread than historians have suggested. There are indeed rambunctious, "disobedient children" hard at their work in the Medieval Period (131). Several writers have been erroneously historicized as pious, respectful or conformist simply due to the success of their labors. Aside from the example of Dante, Menocal points out that the troubadours, who sing in the scandalous mother tongue, have been assimilated into the sometimes misleading "mainstream narrative" and even elevated to the status of our "venerable ancestors" (38). Traditional historiography favors the narrative. Medieval history, Menocal staunchly asserts, has a significant basis in the vernacular lyric — a background which defies the unity of the mythical master narrative yearned for by some historians past and present, such as Curtius or de Rougemont.

The Horse Latitudes of medieval historical discourse are littered with unifying grand narratives. Such histories discard that which is marginal, that which does not lend itself to definition of the dominant institutions. Inclusion of Provençal, Arabic and Catalán love songs in this master narrative subverts the historian's efforts; the mention of these scandalous bastard children disrupts the harmony of the orderly, dark picture commonly conjured up by the expression "Medieval Period." The tendency toward history as narrative, Menocal cleverly explains, places emphasis on the "father" tongue, be it Latin or some unknown, extinct language; for *Romania* has "a single father but many mothers" (122). The shift from a lyrical to a narrative mode results in the marginalization of the popular within the historical framework.

Before she concludes *Shards of Love* with an extensive, descriptive list of "Readings and Sources," the author draws a final connection between Medieval Arabic song and late twentieth-century rock music. Throughout the development of her thesis, Menocal frequently associates medieval lyric love song with Postmodernism. Her analysis of the lyrics in Eric Clapton's "Layla," which have their history in a deeply rooted Arabic folk tradition, further stiffen the sails that propel the reader out of the metaphorical "sailing ruts." The words composing the title of this exciting guidebook through

the "ruts" and far beyond them — "shards," "love exile" and "origins" — have in common the poetic elements of struggle and resistance. "True sailing is not dead," Menocal declares in the chapter entitled "The Horse Latitudes" (51). Throughout *Shards of Love*, the author implies that the reader holds in his or her hands the navigational tool for re-exploration of medieval territories that, for many generations, scholars have neglected. Thanks to the captivating, thoroughly enjoyable presentation of Menocal's thoughtful research, however, an exciting future for medieval studies looms large on the horizon.

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Bergmann, Emilie L. and Paul Julian Smith, eds. *¿Entiendes?: Queer Readings, Hispanic Writings*. Durham, North Carolina-London: Duke UP, 1995. 429 pp. ISBN 0-8223-1615-3.

Este libro constituye, sin lugar a dudas, un verdadero banquete mariconil. Continuando los estudios iniciados en dos volúmenes que le anteceden (*Gay and Lesbian Themes in Latin American Writing*, de David William Foster y *Latin American Gay Literature: A Biographical and Critical Sourcebook*, editado por el mismo autor), *¿Entiendes?* pasará a la historia de la crítica literaria hispánica como un primer paso importante en la elaboración de conjunto de una teoría maricona para las textualidades de nuestros países.

Desde su magnífica introducción para "entendidos" en la contracultura lesbiana y homosexual, se percibe la necesidad de historiar reclamando un espacio propio dentro de una diacronía estrictamente latina; sin alienar necesariamente a otras y a otros que pudieran estar interesadas/os en esta especificidad literaria. Siguiendo de cerca la idea del pánico a lo homosexual, desarrollada por Eve Kosofsky Sedwick en su *Epistemology of the Closet*, los primeros ensayos dedicados a Borges, a la diseminación argentina de la homosexualidad (1809-1914), a Julián del Casal, a Luis Rafael Sánchez y a Manuel Ramos Otero; reclaman un contracanon que va a completarse más tarde con figuras como Federico García Lorca, Alejandra Pizarnik, Teresa de la Parra y Gabriela Mistral. Predomina en este volumen un *corpus* hispanoamericano ya que además de García Lorca y de Cervantes la otra autora estudiada de la Península Ibérica es la catalana Carmen Riera.

Se incluye aquí también el quehacer chicano en autoras como Cherrie Moraga y su deconstrucción de La Malinche y de la Virgen de Guadalupe. En la exploración de un cuerpo lesbiano se analizan las leyendas de las fotos de Marcia Ochoa para ir de la imagen al verbo y al cuerpo en un sistema de signos que desarrollarán una nueva territorialidad lesbiana. Junto a lo chi-