

*Latin American Gothic in Literature and Culture*. Edited by Sandra Casanova-Vizcaíno and Inés Ordiz. Abingdon: Routledge. 2018. 270 pp.

The contribution of this volume goes beyond the fields of Latin American literature and culture for it provides not only new ways of understanding representations of the Gothic in Latin American cultural production but also complements studies of the 'globalgothic' as theorised by Glennis Byron, Fred Botting and Justin D. Edwards in *Globalgothic* in 2013. More generally, the collection, which is divided thematically into five sections and includes a total of seventeen chapters, provides a treasure-trove of readings of the Gothic: where else would readers be able to encounter duplicitous vampires in Guatemalan literature (Chapter 5), tropicalized vampires in Colombian horror films (Chapter 7), or English vampires in Peruvian novellas (Chapter 14)? The whole panoply of monsters and familiar gothic tropes examined here are 'very much rooted in local realities and histories, and often linked to different processes of modernization' (7) across all regions of Latin America (Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica, Puerto Rico, Colombia, Peru, Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Chile), while, at the same time, draw upon American and European traditions and trends of the Gothic and partake of a global cultural flow of the Gothic.

In their introduction to the collection, the editors Sandra Casanova-Vizcaíno and Inés Ordiz aim to counter established critical debates around Latin American Gothic fiction, where there has been a certain tendency to marginalise 'different forms of non-mimetic literature' (2) and to privilege realism as the favoured aesthetic mode to deal with questions around identity, history and nation. In order to stake out their critical intervention, the editors distinguish the Gothic from magical realism, which has been presented historically as 'a vindication of Latin American literature's place in the global literary canon' (3), and from fantastic literature. As part of their theoretical positioning, Casanova-Vizcaíno and Ordiz successfully contend with the looming influence of *Antología de la literatura fantástica* (1965) and the place of its authors – Borges, Bioy Casares and Ocampos – in Latin American literary criticism as well as with established notions such as 'lo real maravilloso' coined by Carpentier.

Literary texts (mainly, novels and short stories) remain the main object of attention. Films are the focus of analysis for four contributors. A number of chapters fall back on to an identification and close reading of themes, motifs and tropes, devices and conventions, privileging therefore textual analysis over other methodological approaches. The aim of these pieces is to show how the Gothic functions to disrupt and challenge prevailing institutions, national narratives and histories. The opening chapter, 'Civilisation and Barbarism and Zombies: Argentina's Contemporary Gothic' by Ordiz, is a case in point. Other chapters such as Olga Ries' 'Rural Horrors in Chilean Gothic' adopt a larger approach to their subject by charting 'a particular set of recurring Gothic motifs' (27) in the works of several authors ranging from the 1870s to the 2010s. Mexican and Brazilian canonical figures, whose works are not traditionally or necessarily associated with the Gothic mode, are revisited through the lens of the Gothic as in the case of Juan Rulfo in Alcalá González's chapter and Machado de Assis in Guardini Vasconcelos' contribution.

The stronger essays in the collection are those that are theoretically sound, robust in their historical and cultural claims and illustrated with textual analysis. In this respect, the authors engage with the central questions posed in the introduction in a more explicit and original

manner. The chapters by Soledad Quereilhac, Persephone Braham and Kerstin Oloff expand on and supplement productively some of the principal methodological and theoretical debates laid out by Vizcaíno-Casas and Ordiz. By focusing on the short stories of Eduardo Wilde, Eduardo Holmberg, Leopoldo Lugones and Horacio Quiroga, all of whom shared links with the scientific world, Quereilhac examines how these authors integrated into the genre the new scientific realities with a sensibility inherited from the Gothic tradition. Questions of circulation and consumption, production and reception, offer a comprehensive and nuanced reading of the Gothic in Argentinean short stories at the end of the nineteenth century. Braham and Oloff remind us that colonial and postcolonial milieus are systematically Gothic. While Braham considers the novels of Puerto Rican/Dominican writer Pedro Cabiya as examples of the denunciation of ‘the depredations of international market economics on both the physical landscape and the bodies of its [Caribbean] inhabitants’ (236), Oloff explores the formal and affective dimensions of the work of Haitian writer Marie Vieux Chauvet Amour (1968) from an eco-critical framework of analysis to reveal the systemic links between ecological degradation, the exploitation of female workers and violence against women throughout the colonial period in Haiti.

Overall, this volume is a welcome contribution to our understanding of the emerging study of the Gothic in Latin America as well as to discussions of the globalgothic which will challenge perceptions of the Gothic as an Anglo-Saxon cultural phenomenon and mode, opening therefore fresh interdisciplinary perspectives for further research. In addition to its obvious inclusion in readings lists of Latin American literature courses, it would also be timely and valuable for scholars interested in transnational and transcultural approaches to literary and cultural history.

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