

Kagan's book insightfully captures and narrates the historical ambivalence of American attitudes toward "the Spanish element in our nationality." It makes a major contribution to the growing literature on Spain in America, on American engagement with the Hispanic world, and on the current challenges, in Whitman's words, of truly appreciating "the sterling value" of the contributions of Spanish and indigenous peoples to America's "composite identity of the future."

IVÁN JAKSIĆ, *Stanford University*

FERNANDO DEGIOVANNI. *Vernacular Latin Americanisms: War, the Market, and the Making of a Discipline*. U of Pittsburgh P, 2018, 248 pp.

Within the fields that renegotiate the borders of Hispanic studies, alongside a true explosion of scholarship on Latinx studies, recent years have witnessed a renewed interest in redefining the limits and the scope of Latin America and Latin Americanism. Books such as Mariano Siskind's *Cosmopolitan Desires* (2014), Nathalie Bouzaglio's *Ficción adulterada* (2016), and Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo's *Latin America: The Allure and Power of an Idea* (2017) have all advanced new readings of canonical works of literature, while questioning to different extents the need to sustain a geopolitical entity that is seen as both artificial and too constraining—that is, Latin America itself. Among these interventions, Fernando Degiovanni's *Vernacular Latin Americanisms: War, the Market, and the Making of a Discipline* seeks to debunk altogether the very foundational narrative behind the emergence of Latin Americanism in the early twentieth century.

Degiovanni argues that Latin Americanism did not come out of the tradition of essay writing on continental identity by key figures such as José Martí, Rubén Darío, and José Enrique Rodó, but rather out of the construction of Latin American literature as a specialized field of knowledge first in American universities and then also in Latin American countries from 1900 to 1960. Instead of highlighting the region as a privileged place of enunciation (a tradition that can be traced from Rodó to Nelly Richard and Hugo Achúgar), he claims that the emergence of Latin Americanism is to be found in institutional initiatives and academic discourses that sought to shape the continent as a territory of peace against the backdrop of a series of armed conflicts, from the Spanish-American War in 1898 to the Cold War.

In doing so, Degiovanni boldly opposes the famous works of Martí and Rodó to the more anonymous efforts of American university professors and high school teachers who promoted the study of Spanish and Latin American literature in the United States during the early twentieth century, as well as to the continental endeavors of somewhat forgotten cultural figures active in Latin America roughly at the same time. This polemic twist gives way to what is perhaps Degiovanni's most provoking hypothesis: that while it is generally accepted that there is no Latin Americanism without Latin America, it is no less true that there is no Latin America without Latin Americanism. In other words, Degiovanni's approach to Latin Americanism (as well as those of the foundational figures he analyzes)

could be deemed as performative, insofar as he is more concerned with what Latin America *does* than with what Latin America *is*. Hence the notion of “vernacular Latin Americanisms” that gives the book its title, for the word “vernacular” evokes the local and historically situated, rather than the normative or exemplary (5).

The first two chapters of the book focus on the academic trajectory of Jeremiah Ford, a professor at Harvard University who first called his students to pick up the study of Latin American literature in the 1910s, and Alfred Coester, a high school teacher and occasional CIA spy who wrote the first-ever history of Latin American literature in 1916. The academic careers of Ford and Coester are examined as part of the Dollar Diplomacy that brought together politicians, scholars, and businessmen to foster US expansionism. But Degiovanni also turns to Latin America itself to study the work of Manuel Ugarte and Rufino Blanco-Fombona. Although these figures have been forgotten by contemporary scholarship, Degiovanni unearths the great deal of attention their continental literary projects received in the 1920s, strongly opposing American agendas in the region, and even seen by the United States as a threat to their own interests.

Throughout the book, Degiovanni combines close reading with historical analysis to strengthen his arguments through an impressive archival research of manuscripts, letters, and unpublished academic records. Following this method, chapters 3 and 4 carefully examine the ideas of Federico de Onís and Américo Castro, both of whom tried to underscore the comparative advantages that the study of Peninsular literature had in contributing to American control over Spain’s former colonies. Degiovanni argues that their contributions to Hispanism must be understood as self-justifying academic strategies in the context of the rise of Germany as a global cultural actor since the Great War.

The last three chapters of the book look into the work and lives of Latin American intellectuals from the 1920s to the 1950s. Chapter 5 reviews the consequences of the University Reform movement, which shaped the first transnational Latin Americanist scholarly projects born in the region in the late 1920s. Degiovanni focuses on the Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana and its leading figure, Luis Alberto Sánchez, who supported a number of cultural activities to promote the study of Latin American literature, including publishing houses, athenaeums, and *universidades populares*. Chapter 6 follows Pedro Henríquez Ureña into the United States, where he arrived in 1940 to deliver the Norton Lectures at Harvard University. Degiovanni examines Henríquez Ureña’s role as a cultural interpreter within the Good Neighbor Policy implemented by Roosevelt. Finally, chapter 7 examines Enrique Anderson-Imbert’s best-selling *Historia de la literatura hispanoamericana* (1954), published while he was a professor at the University of Michigan, as a reaction against the consolidation of governments in Latin America, which he thought of as totalitarian.

There are some remarkable consistencies to be noted throughout Degiovanni’s book. First, although most of the cultural figures whose trajectories he examines were marked by travel and displacement, they tend to avoid the rhetoric of exile. Degiovanni himself is inclined to study their drifting lives more as historical conditions of transnational intellectual projects than as favored places of

enunciation. Besides, in spite of these figures' extremely different ideological stances (ranging from Américo Castro's imperial nostalgia to Luis Alberto Sánchez's socialism), Degiovanni underscores the fact that they all conceived of the marketplace as a driving force to advance their own projects. Furthermore, they all shared the belief in the privileged position of literature to understand Latin American culture (as opposed to the study of history, in the case of Alfred Coester, or the advocacy for mass culture, in the case of Henriquez Ureña, to cite just two examples). Degiovanni's non-autonomous narrative of the origins of Latin Americanism is paradoxically built upon the work of scholars who did not give up on the specificity of the literary vis-à-vis other cultural practices, even though they did not advocate for literary autonomy themselves.

As is the case with all groundbreaking books, *Vernacular Latin Americanisms* is commendable not only for the ideas it advances but also for the questions it poses and the paths of inquiry it opens up. Degiovanni's counter-narrative of Latin Americanism invites us to further investigate the role played by material infrastructure and even particular objects in the construction of Latin America as a specific field of study. Degiovanni certainly touches on this when he claims that Manuel Ugarte's cultural projects would not have been possible had it not been for the development of continental telegraphic networks (24), or, when reading Luis Alberto Sánchez's memoir, he highlights the importance of the new aero-commercial industry in bringing Latin American countries together (127). These claims point to potential research on other technological developments that paved the way for transnational intellectual conversations in Latin America, as well as to the renewed study of certain objects that were also part of the economic and cultural exchanges that Degiovanni describes. From passports to indigenous artifacts, from postcards to construction materials, these objects would be part of what one could call, following Bill Brown, the "object culture" of Latin Americanism.

As for the many questions *Vernacular Latin Americanisms* poses, there are at least two which will likely come to the readers' mind. The first one might be especially poignant to those who are, like the characters in Degiovanni's book, literary scholars. Indeed, the traditional narrative of Latin Americanism that Degiovanni undermines is strongly associated with certain key works and movements in Latin American literary history—take, for instance, Rodó's *Ariel* and *modernismo*, or Ángel Rama's *transculturación narrativa* and the boom. How does Degiovanni's counter-narrative—made of American high school teachers, CIA spies, and displaced intellectuals—set the ground for new concepts to reread said literary movements? In other words, do these marginalized figures offer critical tools equally effective to reexamine the literary canon? And if not, in which ways does their work help us create such tools?

Finally, the challenge to rethink the relationship between Latin Americanism and continental identity brings up a pressing question that is both theoretical and institutional. How can Latin Americanism relate to Latinx studies, given the fact that they often seem to be distinctive fields? Degiovanni's approach to Latin Americanism as a set of historically situated discourses and strategic alliances, rather than as a defense of a fixed homogeneous identity, can help bring down

institutional barriers that may be as artificial as the disciplinary narrative that *Vernacular Latin Americanisms* aims to confute.

LUCAS MERTEHIKIAN, *Harvard University*

LORI BOORNAZIAN DIEL. *The Codex Mexicanus: A Guide to Life in Late Sixteenth-Century New Spain*. U of Texas P, 2018, 228 pp.

What is time? Is time the possibility of all events? If so, what is the fate of human beings, a species both cursed and blessed with memory and imagination? Dividing time into past, present, and future is how many human societies have anchored themselves, as they manage and organize the temporal flow, tether memory to the past and assign imagination to the future. But what about the relationship between the past, present, and future? A corporeal existence ensures that we carry with us always and everywhere a very particular past, that of the origin and development of our individual body. Living inside of this personal time capsule offers almost nothing to help us with both the human collective in time nor to develop an understanding that time existed before our bodies and will extend beyond them. When Norbert Elias published *Über die Zeit* in 1984 (translated as *An Essay on Time* in 2007), he pointed to the importance of the calendar and the clock as the great organizing mechanisms of social time, means through which any human group could coordinate its activities, like planting and harvesting, to ensure its survival. The calendar does more: in extending a count back through time, it offers a means to connect the past to the present, and holds out, in its reliable repetition, a promise of the future. The calendar allows a structure for commemoration, so that the past is even more strongly anchored to the present. Moreover, solar and lunar calendars, perhaps the most common ones known today, are marked by naturalism. Like a photo-realist painting, whose authority derives from closely mimicking human visual experience, calendars take their power from their alignment to the perceived movement of the celestial bodies. They thus offer a way of naturalizing what could be the arbitrary nature of human event. Set into solar time, a birthday becomes anchored in time, consistently available for annual commemoration, offering the first point of a span of life dates, ready for historical reflection.

In Mesoamerican societies, two calendars were used to record time, the solar-year calendar (xiuhpohualli) and the 260-day tonalpohualli. These were recorded pictographically in manuscripts, with the years of the xiuhpohualli forming the backbone of annals-style histories. The tonalpohualli was a sacred calendar, used to understand how the cycles of past time colored the present-day moment and what they augured for the future. Once ubiquitous, only eleven pre-Hispanic tonalpohualli survive today. But calendric manuscripts continued to be produced during the sixteenth century, and Lori Boornazian Diel's new book is a close study of one of these. Produced by indigenous scribes in Mexico City who still employed traditional pictography, the 102-page *Codex Mexicanus* is devoted mainly to a xiuhpohualli (18–87), recording events from the departure of the Mexica from the mythic homeland of Aztlan, through the events of the Conquest,