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*Pliegues del yo: Cuatro estudios sobre escritura  
autobiográfica en Hispanoamérica* by Sergio R. Franco  
(review)

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reproductive anatomy being dissected and opened up in ways “that are simultaneously abhorrent and appealing” (157, 17). The epilogue to this chapter interestingly contrasts the use of “dissective narratives” with anatomical imagery in the work of Baltasar Gracián, finding that this baroque, philosophically oriented writer “does not use it to express anxiety of interiority,” but rather as an “accepted metaphor” that was now “mature enough to be deployed for many purposes” (164).

Reflecting on the work of the authors treated in his masterful book, Fernández’s Conclusion observes how their relationship to the interior representations they create are “simultaneously self yet alien, recognized as familiar but disallowed” (166). Similarly, they relate to the power of the modernizing state in ways that can be best understood as “ambiguous, often contradictory,” sometimes drawing on or acquiescing to systems of control, in other instances criticizing or resisting them (171). Fernández also considers the contribution of “dissective narratives” to the emergence of the modern novel, noting that bodies in *Don Quijote* are at times described in anatomical terms that clash with the “private inner world” of Cervantes’s knight (170). The book includes a comprehensive list of Works Cited, and learned Notes that provide useful primary and secondary references, and expand on the book’s theorization and close readings of literary texts. Fernández’s innovative, expertly researched, and clearly written book will not only appeal to scholars and students of Golden Age Spanish literature, but anyone interested in early modern approaches to the human body and its interiority, as a physical and figurative source of meaning.

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**Franco, Sergio R. *Pliegues del yo: Cuatro estudios sobre escritura autobiográfica en Hispanoamérica*. Santiago de Chile: Editorial Cuarto Propio, 2015. 309 pp.**

Sergio R. Franco’s *Pliegues del yo: Cuatro estudios sobre escritura autobiográfica en Hispanoamérica* (2015) moves beyond the murky waters of truth-value and authenticity in its examination of twentieth- and twenty-first-century Spanish-language autobiographical texts. To do so, Franco considers the economic, sociopolitical, and cultural contexts in which the autobiographical impulse has ebbed and flowed in the Latin American literary tradition of the past century. *Pliegues del yo* takes a multidisciplinary approach to its assessment of a wide range of texts, including memoirs, diaries, causeries, and visual media, examining these primary sources from a host of theoretical vantage points and disciplines, including semiotics, historical materialism, philosophy, philology, and, of course, literary criticism. The four chapters stand as individual inquiries unified by their shared interest for texts in which the author and narrator share the same “yo.”

Chapter one, “La emergencia del discurso autobiográfico en Hispanoamérica,” begins with a brief outline of how seventeenth-century Latin American autobiographical texts served as a strategic manner of appropriating subjectivity once denied to particular demographics—for instance, in the case of *Comentarios Reales*

*de los incas* (1609) of mestizo Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, or “Respuesta a Sor Filotea de la Cruz” (1691) of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. Relatedly, there is brief mention of the nineteenth-century autobiography utilized as a means of incorporating oneself into the national imaginary, as in *Recuerdos de provincia* (1850) of Domingo Faustino Sarmiento (22). Franco then shifts to a discussion of twentieth-century autobiographical impulses, describing how capitalism and bourgeois culture during late modernism led to the figurative “death of the author” in postmodernism (27). The remainder of the chapter explains the resurgence of the autobiographical impulse in the latter half of the twentieth century, with “el deseo de reconocimiento” as one of the principal motivations of many autobiographical texts (30). To comprehend this trend, Franco turns to feminist scholar Nancy K. Miller’s “Changing the Subject” (1986): “The postmodernist decision that the Author is dead, and subjective agency along with him, does not necessarily work for women and prematurely forecloses the question of identity for them. Because women have not had the same historical relation of identity to origin, institution, production, that men have had” (28). Franco’s reading extends this critique to other “subalternizados” (30), referencing testimonial narrators, Leftist militants, and homosexual and women authors in patriarchal societies. Finally, Franco discusses other catalysts behind the resurgence of *lo autobiográfico*, such as economic motivations, questions of old age, and self-justification for posterity.

Chapter two, “Cultura visual y escritura autobiográfica en Hispanoamérica: tres usos de lo fotográfico,” examines autobiographies accompanied by photographs, putting in tension the autobiography as a text written by one person—in whom “concurren el autor, el narrador y el personaje” (49)—and the accompanying photographs, which introduce authorial strain given that, except in the case of self portraits, the protagonist/subject featured in the image is distinct from the operator of the camera (49). The chapter undertakes a reading of three modalities of visual/textual autobiographies: autobiographies supplemented by photographs (photo as graphic paratext); autobiographies wherein photographs are part of the narrative diegesis (the text actively comments on them); and autobiographies that establish a parallel between the act of writing and that of taking a photo. To elucidate how each of these modalities function, Franco analyzes Gabriel García Márquez’s *Vivir para contarla* (2002), Augusto Monterroso’s *Los buscadores de oro* (1993), Mario Vargas Llosa’s *El pez en el agua* (1993), José Donoso’s *Conjeturas sobre la memoria de mi tribu* (1996), and Salvador Elizondo’s *Autobiografía precoz* (1966), among other late-twentieth-century works.

Focusing on the Mexican tradition, the third chapter, “Autobiografías precoces: Nuevos escritores mexicanos presentados por sí mismos,” turns to the 1966-68 series of the chapter’s post-colon. This collection of autobiographies serves as an entry point for a critique of the patriarchal, homophobic cultural milieu of twentieth-century Mexico. I would argue that this is Franco’s most intriguing study, as it assesses what was arguably a failed moment of anti-institutionalism. The works that comprise “Autobiografías precoces” are irreverent in their rejection of autobiographical conventions—the eleven authors are young, not particularly famous (at the time), and their autobiographies are concise (around sixty pages)

and provocative. Moreover, the impulse behind the series does not align with the motivations outlined by Franco in chapter one. Instead, the project begins with a *manifesto* outlining the hope to “dar a conocer en páginas autobiográficas la fuerte personalidad de los jóvenes escritores mexicanos del momento, para que el lector . . . acuda desde luego a conocerlos en su obra” (102). The project smacks of *anti-autobiografía—a la antipoesía* of Nicanor Parra—and Franco does an admirable job of reading the counter-cultural intentions of the group with a critical eye for hegemonic tendencies, noting, for example, the conspicuous lack of women authors (103); the extreme masculinity and homophobia of some contributions (179); or that, despite the ostensibly anti-establishment posturing of the series, the majority of the contributors “llegaron, en mayor o menor grado, a distinguirse en las letras de su país” (207).

The final study of Franco’s text, “*La tentación del fracaso*, de Julio Ramón Ribeyro: segundo acercamiento,” considers Peruvian Ribeyro’s work (three volumes published between 1992 and 1995 that collectively treat 1950-78), not only as an autobiographical diary, but, more importantly, as a sustained meditation on the form and nature of the diary as genre. This chapter revisits Franco’s 1999 study on Ribeyro, undertaking this *segundo acercamiento* because, for Franco, Ribeyro’s work is “la más acabada expresión del diario de escritor en la prosa hispanoamericana” (20). Franco’s reading considers various formal and thematic components of *La tentación del fracaso*—details of amorous affairs; analyses of “written portraits” that require “una lectura cubista;” the deterioration of the text’s formal structure, which mirrors Ribeyro’s physical deterioration from cancer—and the chapter ends with an analysis of Ribeyro’s experience as an author on the outside of the Latin American *boom*.

One weakness of *Pliegues del yo* also constitutes one of its greatest strengths, as Franco approaches his subject with a wide lens. He references an impressive number of autobiographical works from nearly every Spanish-speaking country in Latin America, but he undertakes a comparatively small number of close readings of those works—a problem particularly salient in chapters one and two. Similarly, his critical bibliography is extensive, but he sometimes neglects to detail how the critical texts operate in his readings. Occasionally this leads to sweeping statements that would benefit from unpacking. For instance, in the chapter three reading of Juan Vicente Melo, Franco associates the formal strategy of *resonancia*—thematic and lexical repetitions—with *lo musical* and asserts that, “Isomórficamente, Melo utiliza repeticiones que demarcan un territorio protegido mediante una barrera sónica; es lo que Deleuze y Guattari denominan un *ritornello* (*Mil mesetas* 318–58)” (188). Franco then cites a segment of Melo’s text, but does not return to Deleuze and Guattari or further develop the concept of *ritornello*. In this way, Franco’s text proffers pathways for critical analysis, but often without undertaking the laborious work of explicating in detail, for instance, Deleuze and Guattari and then performing a close reading of Melo’s text in light of their theoretical terms. Despite this, the study serves as an excellent reference work for autobiographical production in Latin America of the past century. *Pliegues del yo* is ambitious in scope and will serve scholars of *lo autobiográfico* as a fruitful reference

point, both in terms of locating primary literary texts and identifying key theoretical interlocutors.

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**Garibotto, Verónica.** *Crisis y reemergencia. El siglo XIX en la ficción contemporánea de Argentina, Chile y Uruguay (1980-2001)*. West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue UP, 2015. 228 pp.

Julio de 2016. Mes del bicentenario argentino. Mientras termino la lectura de *Crisis y reemergencia* de Verónica Garibotto, recibo el que fuera, según la anécdota familiar, el libro que mi padre compró con su primer trabajo a los diez años en Helvecia, una colonia suiza al norte de la provincia de Santa Fe, Argentina. Se trata de una biografía de José de San Martín publicada para la colección infantil Billiken en los años cincuenta. El libro llega a mi manos por el entusiasmo que la figura de “El libertador” despierta en mi hija de cinco años después de haberlo conocido como personaje de “El asombroso mundo de Zamba”, serie animada en la que un niño en edad escolar recorre la historia argentina desde el periodo independentista hasta el presente. Y el análisis de Garibotto comienza entonces a articular, en relación a la anécdota personal pero también excediéndola, una serie de respuestas y miradas posibles a estas fascinantes y constantes vueltas al siglo XIX y sus figuras dentro del imaginario popular y la literatura nacional, a ese sistema de representación y enunciación que se inaugura con el nacimiento de las naciones sudamericanas y que parece retornar en múltiples voces, reversiones y transformaciones, en cada etapa de la historia del Cono Sur.

*Crisis y reemergencia* analiza la ficción contemporánea de Argentina, Chile y Uruguay en la que el pasado fundacional del siglo XIX surge como una “formación ideológico-discursiva” (8). Garibotto plantea un recorte temporal que comienza con los años posteriores a las dictaduras militares de Uruguay y Argentina, pasa por el neoliberalismo de los noventa y culmina con la primera década del siglo XXI para demostrar que la ficción de estos períodos, al mismo tiempo en que recurre a episodios, figuras y valores de la sociedad decimonónica como matriz narrativa, confirma también el agotamiento de esos modelos literarios, políticos y hasta críticos (Garibotto aborda eficazmente las prácticas literarias junto con aquellas que definen su propio trabajo como crítica en este libro). Aunque reconoce que las relecturas del siglo XIX comienzan mucho antes (y diría yo, casi conviven con la temporalidad misma del *largo siglo XIX*—que sería entonces escrito y reescrito en paralelo), la autora señala que es a partir de los años ochenta y los cambios históricos entonces acontecidos cuando los preceptos decimonónicos en torno al Estado, la nación y el lugar de la literatura (y del escritor) en la sociedad se “reescriben” y “desplazan” con más intensidad. Siguiendo la mirada material de la historia que propone Walter Benjamin en su proyecto de los pasajes, Garibotto plantea la necesidad de no limitarse al análisis de las metáforas y símbolos de la narrativa contemporánea que remiten al siglo XIX (lectura alegórica) y concentrarse, en lugar de eso, en las