

*The Effects of the Nation: Mexican Art in an Age of Globalization.*

Edited by CARL GOOD and JOHN V. WALDRON. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001. Photographs. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. vi, 248 pp. Cloth, \$64.50. Paper, \$19.95.

This collection addresses the idea of the Mexican nation as articulated in twentieth-century visual and literary production. Most of its essays, however, examine art and literary works produced at the borders of the nation and its aesthetic canons. While each essay can be read by itself, the collection achieves cohesion through the authors' shared concern with disrupting the imagined integrity of "Mexico."

In his introductory essay, Carl Good observes that, although they are focused on the aesthetic production of the nation, the essays problematize the nation as an "organic entity." This introduction is a dense and thought-provoking meditation on the problem of studying the "nation" within an increasingly globalist poststructural critical discourse. In contrast to the theoretical forays of the introduction, each of the subsequent essays engages closely with visual or literary works, examining them in temporal or spatial juxtapositions. This backward/forward and often transnational gaze brings the disruptive quality of the works examined into relief. The works studied thus resonate both within and against the canonical definitions of the nation, providing the authors a critical distance at a moment when engagement with the nation as a "disciplinary pretext or conceptual framework" (p. 1) is, by most accounts, no longer viable.

Olivier Debrouse sets the context for the volume with an overview of how curatorial conceptions of Mexican art have contributed, along with the visual arts, to the construction of a notion of "Mexicanness." He exposes the politics of building national identity "upon the ruins" of indigenous culture (p. 21) and aptly shows the fictitiousness of the perceived "artistic continuity" (p. 32) of Mexican high art, seen as founded on and nurtured by indigenous culture, colonial art, and folk art. While Debrouse is pessimistic about the likelihood of a completely new approach to Mexican artistic production, he suggests that even without rejecting such "unfocused continuities" outright (p. 33), artists, curators, and scholars might still achieve a critical understanding of "Mexicanness" by locating works that evoke continuity within deconstructive juxtapositions.

Deconstructive juxtaposition, identified by Debrouse as a critical tool, is taken up in the essays that follow. Juan Bruce-Novoa examines the career of Swedish-born sculptor Mathias Goeritz, active in Mexico from 1949 to 1990. Bruce-Novoa shows how Goeritz worked simultaneously within the artistic community and against the grain of the "national thematics" of Mexican art (p. 43). Karen Cordero Reiman examines the use of corporeal imagery in the art of Sylvia Gruner and Gerardo Suter, contrasting their articulations of a postmodern body, informed by their

status as first- and second-generation immigrants, against the use of the mestizo body in postrevolutionary Mexican muralism. From another angle, Monserrat Cralf Boadella examines transnational migration in the work of the Canadian artist René Derouin, who has engaged in a prolonged creative dialogue with Mexico.

Several essays touch upon the construction of gender, and four undertake this analysis directly. Susan C. Schaffer and Rebecca Biron examine the silencing of women's voices in Mexican literary narration. Schaffer rereads Elena Poniatowska's *Querido Diego, te abraza Quiela*, a fictionalized biography of Diego Rivera's first wife, Russian-born artist Angelina Beloff, against Bertram Wolfe's misogynist treatment of Beloff in his 1963 hagiography of Rivera. Biron repositions the writer Elena Garro in relation to Mexican literature while investigating how that position was conditioned by Garro's relationship with Octavio Paz. In a related vein, Danny J. Anderson examines the gender politics of the market-driven Mexican publishing world by interrogating the juxtaposition between "light" (and therefore feminine) literature, and that which is considered "serious," experimental, and masculine. Anderson shows that "light" literature often possesses an incisive formal and feminist critical edge. Debra Castillo's essay on Tijuana writer Rosina Conde shows that Conde's use of liminality as a motif is facilitated by her own location on the border of the culturally centralized nation. Identity as hybrid and liminal is also examined by Rolando Romero, who considers the Chicano as alien in Ridley Scott's 1982 film *Blade Runner*. Finally, Jacobo Sefami challenges the literary and historical center of the nation. His examination of David Huerta's poetic meditations on the Tlatelolco Massacre of 1968 reinvigorates the demythologizing impetus of the collection. Sefami shows Huerta's work to be as informed by politics as it was by the prevailing cosmopolitan literary aesthetic of his generation.

This collection, whose strength lies in the theoretically informed approach of the authors, representing both Mexican and U.S. scholarly perspectives, will be useful to scholars and graduate students interested in grappling with the aesthetic production of the nation from a critical and multidisciplinary approach.

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