

“CAPÍTULO DE UNA NOVELA EN PRENSA”:  
TEASER CHAPTERS AND MARKETING  
STRATEGIES IN VICTORIA OCAMPO'S *SUR*

*by*

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ONE of the greatest contributions to Latin American literary culture in the twentieth century came in the form of Victoria Ocampo's literary journal *Sur* (1931–92).<sup>1</sup> With an unparalleled life span—when compared with similar literary magazines of the time—and an astounding list of international authors who lined its pages, *Sur* is an exemplar of literary excellence. Countless scholars and critics have discussed the pivotal role of *Sur* in introducing international writers to Latin American readers and simultaneously putting Latin American writers on the map for international readers.<sup>2</sup> Above all, there has been a marked interest in examining *Sur*'s impressive networks (Willson; Larkosh; Majstorovic [2013]), its lasting impact on Latin American letters (King [1981; 1986]), and its political stance (Majstorovic [2005]). However, to date there has been no consideration of the marketing tactics employed by Ocampo to help sell the books that she produced with her publishing firm of the same name, Editorial *Sur* (1933–85).<sup>3</sup> While a close examination of all of these marketing strategies is out of the scope of this paper, I focus on one particular method that points to Ocampo's deep-seated understanding of the book industry as well as to her life's work to popularize both national and international works of great renown.<sup>4</sup> More specifically, I examine the function of pre-publication—or teaser—book chapters in the literary journal *Sur*. In particular, I analyze which Editorial *Sur* books were excerpted in the literary

1. The most fruitful publication period of *Sur* was from 1931 through 1966. During this thirty-six-year period Ocampo produced 302 issues, whereas only sixty-seven issues of the journal she had founded appeared from 1967 through 1992. Ocampo herself passed away in 1979.

2. See Meyer; King (1981; 1986); and Willson. Less critical attention is given to Ocampo's publishing house, Editorial *Sur* (1933–79).

3. Editorial *Sur* published its first works in 1933 and continued to produce ten (or more) books a year until the early 1970s. By 1985, there were no new works published under its name. The firm was reestablished in 2005 and has since published a number of titles under this imprint.

4. I am currently working on a larger project about the history of Editorial *Sur* that details the following marketing strategies: commonplace advertisements for Editorial *Sur* within the literary journal *Sur*; advertisements on the cover flaps of *Sur* for Editorial *Sur* works; book reviews of Editorial *Sur* works in *Sur*; inserted flyers for Editorial *Sur* books; and the promotional sashes (or bands) that adorned many Editorial *Sur* books.