
REVIEWS

Reviews are published in alphabetical order according to the name of the author reviewed.

Sravani Biswas. *R. K. Narayan's Malgudi Milieu: A Sensitive World of Grotesque Realism*. Cambridge Scholars, 2018. 194p.

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R. K. Narayan, who produced numerous novels and short stories in English throughout much of the twentieth century, was often pigeon-holed (thanks in part to his well-meaning friend Graham Greene) as a comic-realist and an almost Chekhovian documenter of “authentic” Indianness. Narayan’s enduring creation of the town of Malgudi and its inimitable characters, like those of Faulkner’s Yoknapatawpha County and García Márquez’s Macondo, may have something to do with this assessment. But as Sravani Biswas observes in her book, to assume that Narayan’s novels present *the* picture of small-town India, and that his deceptively simple style matches this modest subject matter, is to overlook a vital feature: their “polyphonic” world.

This polyphony explains Biswas’s apt application of Bakhtin’s central concepts of dialogism, heteroglossia and carnivalesque to the interpretation of Narayan’s fiction. She points out that unlike his noted Indian English contemporaries, novelists Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand, Narayan did not express the “oracular form of nationalism” and social justice that characterizes the periods of late colonialism and, after 1947, early independence. While Biswas acknowledges these important modes of literary realism, with an understandable main focus on issues like casteism, poverty, and industrialization, Narayan instead chose to follow the idiosyncratic antics of his characters in the “particular geographical space” of their small market town as it slowly experiences change. It’s rare to find historical figures or industrialists in Malgudi. Instead, we meet multifaceted people like Krishna, the grieving widower of the eponymous (and autobiographical) *The English Teacher* (1945), whose “self-critical,” “double-voiced” introspection exemplifies the psychic nuances that famously distinguish Narayan’s work (43-44); and Raju, the inventive, self-centered, but strangely appealing huckster in 1958’s *The Guide*. Krishna and Raju are signature Narayan characters who, as Biswas

puts it, “can live only by co-existing with numerous other existences,” and who, therefore, act in spontaneous yet entirely credible ways that lead to unexpected, and often comic, consequences (59).

After a useful introduction that contextualizes the times in which Narayan wrote and situates Biswas’s Bakhtinian-Marxist critical reading, the first chapter, “Narayan and the Indian Middle Classes,” examines his depiction of Malgudi as a town whose location and natural surroundings invite visitors from all over India, especially once the British build a railway station there. Malgudi is dragged into the circuit of “colonial” and then postcolonial “capitalism” with its middle-class tradespeople and entrepreneurs who deal in printing presses, sign-painting, tourism, traveling theaters, taxidermy, and circuses. But Narayan is more interested in the complex relationships between these individual (and increasingly individualistic) agents of change and the often traditional-minded townspeople, who are intrigued yet “confused” (35) by the societal implications of these material changes.

“Structures of the Polemic,” the second chapter, argues that Narayan, especially in *The English Teacher* and *Waiting for the Mahatma*, depicts a Malgudi whose residents must contend with the competing ideologies, or polemics, about nationalism. Located in southern India, Malgudi is both linguistically and geographically distant from the nation’s capital of New Delhi, a condition that accentuates its residents’ sense of marginalization, but which, for this very reason, makes their “common” lives more representative of the vast majority of Indians at the time (66). Paradoxically, Narayan’s “grotesque realism,” as Biswas calls it (65), is an indirect, ironic “polemic” (67) against forms of monological nationalism.

Biswas addresses Narayan’s well-known anti-heroes in the third chapter, “Subversion of the Heroic.” We grudgingly sympathize with these “roguish,” transgressive characters whose outsider (and, we might add, trickster-like) perspective is a foil for societal hypocrisies, even as they exhibit their own serious shortcomings. Biswas rightly describes Vasu in *The Maneater of Malgudi* as an “extreme case of selfish acquisitiveness” (86), which would seem to place him beyond the limits of even Narayan’s ironic vision. But paradoxically, argues Biswas, Vasu “is redeemed by” this same egotism, for in being “a participant in history,” he reflects many of the foibles of his class, which include, according to Marx (whom Biswas cites for corroboration), the fortuitous demolition of feudalism (88).

The final chapter, “Narayan’s Open-Ended Novels,” more fully

probes, through an astute reading of *The Guide*, the inconclusiveness that characterizes so many of his works. For instance, after the ex-prisoner Raju cynically turns himself into a self-serving version of a holy man and begins, much to his surprise, to attract larger and larger numbers of gullible devotees, he grows into his role. By the end of the novel, we aren't sure if he has genuinely embraced the spirituality he had initially concocted, or if he's still a con at heart. Our ambivalence, as Biswas perceives, reflects the fact that Raju, too, is influenced by a world in flux. The world's agency—such as that of the worshipful crowd that comes to Raju in genuine search of spiritual blessing—meets and responds to Raju's own agency, so that both are changed in unexpected ways.

This is a welcome contribution to the large, and growing, corpus of Narayan criticism. A few aspects warrant attention, such as the absence of novel titles in the index, and of chapter numbers; and some pages rehearse points made in others. I would have liked to see a fuller comparative discussion of other notable novelists whom Biswas rightly cites, namely Rao and Anand, by engaging with Rumina Sethi's fine monograph *Myths of the Nation* (1999). But these observations in no way detract from Biswas's insightful commentary.

Joan Clifford and Deborah S. Reisinger. *Community-Based Language Learning: A Framework for Educators*. Washington DC: Georgetown UP, 2019. 207p.

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Students excel when they are given opportunities to use their second language outside of the classroom. This can often be an arduous task for teachers to incorporate into their classes, but the authors advocate for implementing community-based language learning (CBLL) into curricula, and outline concrete steps and guidelines for using the community as a partner to aid student learning and advancement. One of its great advantages is that students are exposed to different communities and diverse groups of people who live nearby. The idea is not simply to offer another authentic source of input, but rather to have them work with community organizations and

members to grow in other areas as well. The process is not to achieve a linear objective—for students to know x/y/z—but for a more cyclical process of providing a chance for them to challenge their knowledge and understanding of different cultures. The authors include ample testimonies of previous students who experienced culture shock within their own community. After tutoring a student who was later deported, one student began to question their own thoughts about the fairness of immigration laws. Reactions vary among participants; some experience more dissonance, while others may appreciate that working with a refugee family may not mean aiding them linguistically or culturally, but being a friend to the family. The student tutor wrote that her lesson was understanding that she could not change their world, it was not her job; her job was just to be there for the family.

The goal of CBLI is to help students grow in their language use and cultural awareness, but that is easier said than done. The authors do a wonderful job of supplying the tools for teachers to begin developing their own courses. For CBLI to work, the community must be involved. This is essential and crucial. The authors identify some organizations to get involved with. However, the larger stress is in creating and maintaining these relationships. CBLI works best when both the students and the community benefit from the program. Some organizations may not be able to adequately support training and educating students to aid in their work. For those that can support students, it is essential to keep in close contact with them to make sure everything is running smoothly, to check student progress regularly and to evaluate the benefit for the community members in case changes or additions need to be made to make it more worthwhile. Once relationships are well established and understood, all parties can benefit.

CBLI offers a wide array of invaluable experiences for students, making it difficult for instructors to assign grades. Again, the authors do an excellent job of describing many tools and theories for how to tackle this problem. They suggest many checks for instructors to consider how certain concepts pertain to their particular community and class, as well as activities and questions to pose to their classes. The main recommendation for creating activities based on CBLI is to provide opportunities and ask the students to reflect upon them. This can take place in various mediums, from blogs to presentations to essays, each with their own advantage, but the idea is to have students process what they may be confronting and better identify their own needs and growth. It is important for teachers to give feedback

throughout the year to help the student better understand and analyze their own experiences. It is also useful for teachers to explain that the program will look different for all of the participants to remove the illusion that they will have some grand breakthrough. Each student will learn something valuable, but there is no one goal. Teachers should also take the time to discuss privileges and powers that may come forth during the process, so as to not shock the students and to help them process these revelations. Overall this book is an excellent, useful and informative tool for the advocacy, implementation and instruction of CBLL programs.

Mabel Moraña. *The Monster as War Machine*. Translated by Andrew Ascherl. Amherst, NY: Cambria, 2018. 532p.

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After Jeffrey Jerome Cohen edited the seminal publication, *Monster Theory: Reading Culture* (1996), this particular critical approach has been gaining traction in academic circles. Andrew Ascherl's translation of Mabel Moraña's 2017 book *El monstruo como máquina de guerra* is the latest entry in the conversation. In the introduction, Moraña describes the Monster as "constructed as a collage in which disparate origins and qualities come together" (13). In folklore, literature, art, and popular culture, the figure of the Monster is a complex concept, known for its hybridity and heterogeneousness. Likewise, Monster Theory can be described as a patchwork of many different critical and philosophical approaches, and Moraña's book does a thorough job of incorporating them. As may be obvious from the work's title, she draws from Deleuzian ideas; however, she also views monstrosity through sundry lenses such as psychoanalysis, post-Marxism, poststructuralism, deconstruction, semiotics, and postcolonialism.

Monsters appear in numerous ancient texts—*Gilgamesh*, Greek and Roman mythology, the Bible, *Beowulf*, etc.—and continue to be central characters all the way up to contemporary fiction, film, and television. Moraña begins her survey by glossing over older iterations and focusing in-depth on the Monster as it appears in the post-Renaissance, the Enlightenment, the Romantic Era, the 19th century, the Modernist Era, and up to the Post-

War Period. After tracing the evolution of the Monster through time, she spends the next few chapters applying the aforementioned critical disciplines to Monster Theory. For those unfamiliar with Monster Theory, the first half of the book will serve as an excellent starting point. The chapters present an exhaustive summary of earlier criticisms. For the same reason, those who have had previous forays into the discipline will likely find little that has not already been said. It may instead read like a greatest-hits compilation of leading critics.

The final two chapters are where Moraña does break new ground. In “Monstrosity, Representation, and the Market,” she examines the concept of performativity and the capitalist consumption of the Monster as it “exists in the tense and contradictory interstice of the unfolding/refolding of its presence in public space” (285). Drawing examples as disparate as Michael Jackson and David Bowie, the Elephant Man, and other so-called “freaks,” zombies, and the “yuppie vampires” of 80s and 90s films such as those seen in Anne Rice’s *Interview with a Vampire*, she argues that the “visually striking, fluid, border, *undecidable*, countercultural image[s]” disrupt hegemonic perception of gender, sexuality, and numerous forms of Othering (288). This is complicated, however, by the capitalist space in which they exist, so that these figures are “progressively trivialized insofar as they are connected to mass markets that commodify teratological representation and submit it to the dynamics of supply and demand” (286).

The lengthiest and perhaps most innovative chapter, “Monsters on the Market,” follows, in which Moraña turns her focus towards Latin America, which is “particularly fertile ground for the absorption of the transnational discourse of monstrosity, inspiring the creation of new wondrous and terrifying prototypes of regional horror” (321). Using Alberto Moreiras’s concept of “savage hybridity,” she discusses the unique portrayal of the cyborg in Latin American literature, the vampire in Spanish-language films, and the “tropical zombie” of the Caribbean, which is much closer to its historical roots in voodoo than the monsters of George Romero’s movies and their successors in the United States and Great Britain. In each instance, the Monsters “express the discontent and rebellion of a world *monstered* by capitalism” (327).

Pivoting from European monsters given a cultural reworking, Moraña then turns to folklore of indigenous peoples. Specifically, she discusses the *chupacabra* (a ravenous hybrid possessing reptilian and canine

features), the *jarjacha* (a many-headed, nocturnal beast), the *pishtaco* (a creature who subsists on blood and fat of humans), and the *condenado* (the undead spirit of a person who has committed atrocities in life). All are noteworthy for their hybridity as well as their similarities to vampires and zombies—nourished by an anthropophagous diet, with the exception of *chupacabras*, who mostly feed on livestock and wild animals. The amalgam of familiar organisms blended together to create an uncanny being is fitting, as Latin America struggles with its own problematic fusion of native culture and that imposed upon its inhabitants by European settlers; the cannibalistic aspects mirror a community which has seen its own culture and natural resources poached and drained in the name of European prosperity and capitalism as a whole.

In short, *The Monster as War Machine* is a thorough survey of Monster Theory and a welcome entry into this relatively new vein of critical approaches. It can serve as an entry point to newcomers and, in its closing chapters, turn the focus towards a part of the world that has thus far been relatively absent in the conversation.

Saad Mohamed Saad, editor. *Estudios en torno a la traducción del Quijote. Libro conmemorativo del IV centenario de la muerte de Cervantes*. Granada: Comares, 2018. 176pp.

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Es significativo que esta compilación de artículos haya sido editada por el Instituto Egipcio de Estudios Islámicos de Madrid junto con la editorial Comares de Granada. Cervantes, quizás queriendo evitar la represión de la Santa Inquisición, comenta en el capítulo IX que el libro es una traducción de la *Historia de don Quijote*, escrita por un historiador árabe. El *Quijote* surge como una maniobra de traslación de un idioma a otro así que un libro sobre algunas de las traducciones realizadas al árabe, francés, inglés y alemán supone una labor muy necesaria. Nos hallamos ante un caleidoscopio de ejemplos y versiones que nos ayudan a entender con más profundidad las ironías de Cervantes.

En el primer capítulo Saad hace un análisis de la dificultad de traducir ciertos aspectos humorísticos en la obra para concluir que existen tres técnicas: la amplificación, la elisión o el cambio del mecanismo hilarante. Expone Saad que:

...el humor quijotesco se basa principalmente en la confusión entre la realidad y la ficción que se produce en la mente de nuestro caballero andante, dando pie así a la mayor parte de las situaciones jocosas en la novela (11).

Resulta fácil traducir los segmentos humorísticos en los que la hilaridad se basa en cierto rasgo lingüístico con parangón en la lengua meta (19), a veces, cuando no existe esta equivalencia, la persona que traduce ha de recurrir a la amplificación. Sin embargo, hay una aseveración cuestionable. En uno de los diálogos, Sancho confunde a Sara con Sarna y a la hora de traducir este fragmento al árabe, uno de los autores utiliza el nombre Matusalén, a lo que Saad objeta que parece poco probable que una persona sin educación manejara el nombre de un personaje poco conocido en su cultura, cuando la expresión “más viejo que Matusalén” es bastante popular.

El libro está repleto de ejemplos que muestran el conocimiento del texto cervantino y un increíble dominio de ambas lenguas por parte de sus autores. En el segundo capítulo, tras analizar con detenimiento giros lingüísticos y palabras de doble sentido utilizadas por Cervantes, Ahmad Shakif defiende que las traducciones árabes analizadas son fieles intentos de reproducir el texto de origen, se sitúan en un plano denotativo, no son capaces de identificar unidades fraseológicas del español y, a veces, se caracterizan por ser unívocas, frente al discurso de doble sentido que caracteriza al *Quijote*. La propuesta de Shakif se basa primero en que las traducciones al árabe tienen que apoyarse en material adicional (comentarios, notas a pie de página, epílogos o introducciones sólidas) y segundo en que se estimule la conciencia literaria en la cultura meta para para que la persona que lea el texto de Cervantes pueda entenderlo en profundidad. Hay quien sostiene que el *Quijote* quizá se compusiera para ser leído (como se hacía con las obras de caballería que Cervantes parodió) y no publicado. En esta época esto era común, como demuestran las obras de teatro de Shakespeare. El *Quijote* se halla repleto de frases hechas y dichos del pueblo en boca de Sancho. En árabe, las formas del idioma hablado se consideran como variantes dialectales y al utilizar el árabe clásico las traducciones del habla de Sancho suelen situarlo al mismo nivel lingüístico que su amo. Shakif comenta que aunque el lector conozca la

lengua hablada, detectarían las transgresiones lingüísticas que no pertenecieran al árabe clásico.

En cuanto al capítulo que trata de la traducción al alemán del *Quijote*, Cuartero Otal y Larreta Zulategui analizan algunos elementos árabes (palabras de origen árabe, nombres propios, alusiones a la religión musulmana, a los moros, moriscos y mozárabes) y comentan que la islamofilia de Cervantes quizá lo puso en el punto de mira de la Inquisición. Cervantes pudo acercarse y convivir con la cultura árabe, como dice Goytisolo, desde la atalaya privilegiada, literaria y vital, de su cautiverio argelino. López, en el capítulo que trata sobre la traducción del Quijote al Francés, examina el opúsculo que Biedermann hizo sobre la traducción al francés de Viardot (1836-1837). Biedermann fue consejero del rey Federico Augusto II de Sajonia (1797-1854), encargado de negocios en París, Leipzig y España y conocedor de la lengua y la literatura españolas y francesas. Sus observaciones se pueden entender como un barómetro de las relaciones franco-españolas a lo largo del tiempo, ya que trascurrieron muchos años desde que se escribió el texto de Cervantes hasta que se tradujo al francés. Este opúsculo fue ignorado en las distintas traducciones posteriores que se realizaron en francés, produciéndose así un vacío referencial a pesar de que el texto se planteaba no como una crítica sino como una contribución a la labor de Viardot.

El último capítulo es un análisis de cinco traducciones al inglés del hilarante fragmento con que concluye el capítulo XXV del libro, donde Don Quijote se queda desnudo como prueba de amor a Dulcinea. El objetivo de este capítulo es pedagógico ya que su autora, Conde-Parrilla, defiende la necesidad de recuperar los textos clásicos en el aula para estudiantes de educación infantil y para fomentar la creatividad de futuras personas que se encarguen de traducir a los clásicos. Releer estos textos en momentos como los que vivimos es tarea necesaria. Las generaciones venideras se beneficiarán de ello y quizás podamos salir de esta sinrazón en la que el mundo se encuentra y que, según Cervantes, llevó a Don Quijote a perder la cordura: “La razón de la sinrazón, que a mi razón se hace, de tal manera mi razón enflaquece, que con razón me quejo de la vuestra fermosura”. *Estudios en torno a la traducción del Quijote* es un buen ejemplo de ello y aplaudimos su tarea caleidoscópica de análisis de un texto clásico tan lleno de aristas y rincones en los que iluminar tanto sinsentido.

Lisa Scherff and Leslie S. Rush. *Student Research Done Right! A Teacher's Guide for High School and College Classes*. Denver: McRel International, 2018. 95pp.

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“Grandma Joy, Do you know what my Nemesis is?” queried my 16 year old grandson. My first thought was that maybe he was studying the manual for his upcoming driver’s license test, or perhaps playing some new computer game with a character based on the Greek goddess of retribution. I responded, “No, Quinn, what is your Nemesis?” to which he replied, “MLA Style.”

You might imagine my delight, not only as a grandparent, but also as an editor, that high schoolers take MLA style seriously! I gave him his own copy of the 8th Edition of the *MLA Handbook*, and told him that I know plenty of college students, and journal contributors too, whose downfall is still MLA style. Thank goodness for the dedicated teachers that start our students off on the right foot from an early age and for suitable resources to lead them to success.

You might also imagine my delight when *Student Research Done Right! A Teacher's Guide for High School and College Classes* showed up for review. Although the target audience is secondary school and early college English teachers, this basic compilation of research methods and exercises can also be used by teachers of other languages who are introducing and refreshing their students’ research techniques in college first year seminars, world language and literature classes, and international student orientation classes.

Early chapters set the foundations for research practices that will last a lifetime. RAVEN, a mnemonic device, evaluates the credibility of sources, including online texts. By analyzing the author’s reputation, ability to see, vested interest, expertise, and neutrality, students become aware of the trustworthiness of sources. Another technique, the rhetorical précis, with its structured four-sentence paragraph and one-page practice template, develops summarizing skills that form the basis for abstracts and annotations. One of the most useful research habits is writing annotated bibliographies; many years after reading a document, researchers can review their annotations without re-reading the entire text. Often literary researchers find that an annotated bibliography can replace the traditional “review of literature” article sections

and book chapters.

Short, but essential, discussions of how to formulate research questions and the differences between qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods research initiate students into the research process. Data collection through surveys, including ethics and human participant proposals, is briefly explained. After these critical preparatory skills are learned, classroom exercises and assignments address practical questions with activities for student practice in writing a literature synthesis paper, an explanatory or argumentative text, discursive argumentative writing or an academic paper with accompanying oral defense.

Teachers will appreciate student writing examples that illustrate finished products from actual classes and serve as guides for how to structure assignments. Students will appreciate and retain the techniques since they are accompanied by useful memory prompts and learning devices. Staying on the “research arrow” from research question, to literature review, to research method, to results, to interpretation, discussion and implications will keep many a researcher on track and will keep their aim on target. This slim, well-organized guide helps us get what we all want, *Student Research Done Right!*

Huei Lan Yen. *Toma y Dada: Transculturación y presencia de escritores chino-latinoamericanos [Give and Take: Transculturation and the Presence of Chinese-Latin American writers]*. West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue UP, 2016, 164 pp.

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At the age of two, Manuel was taken from Peru to China by his step-father, Lau. Manuel's mother and absent biological father were *Kueis*, a term used by the Chinese in Peru for non-Chinese Peruvians. Lau gave Manuel a Chinese name, Uei-Kuong, and raised him in China. At the age of 22, Lau was executed during the Maoist Cultural Revolution of the 1960s, and his son Uei-Kuong decided to return to Peru, the country of his birth. He spoke very little Spanish and was not familiar with Peruvian culture. Chinese Peruvians were astonished at someone speaking fluent Cantonese with Uei-Kuong's physical characteristics: “*los ojos hundidos, la piel cobriza, la nariz muy pronunciada*”

[deep-set eyes, copper skin, very pronounced nose] (83). To them, he looked like a Kuei, and they had trouble trusting him in everyday and business life. He seemed equally strange to other Peruvians because although he looked like them, he couldn't speak Spanish and his mannerisms seemed odd. This short story, "La Conversión de Uei-Kuong" [The Conversion of Uei-Kuong] by Peruvian author Siu Kam Wen is one of many culturally-focused examples of Chino-Latin American literature from the late 1800s to the present analyzed by Huei Lan Yen in *Toma y Dada*.

Yen employs a transcultural framework to interpret the "*La Conversión*" short story which indicates that the main character, Manuel (Huei Lan), has to face "*doble impedimentos*" [double impediments] of his physical appearance and language/mannerisms as he seeks to develop his identity among both Chinese and Kuei communities in Peru (83-84). Yen defines the process of transculturation as "*la interacción y el diálogo entre lo uno y lo diverso como claro reflejo de una sociedad multicultural*" [the interaction and dialogue among the one and the many as the clear reflection of a multicultural society]. The term was first conceived by Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz in 1947. Throughout, Yen explores the transcultural merging and converging of thought and experience, seeing it as "*una clave*" [a key] for understanding Chinese Latin-American literature and cultural/national identity (1-2).

Transculturation begins with contact among cultures. Latin America's rich diversity includes indigenous, Africans, Europeans, Criollos (from Spain), and mixtures of these and other groups. Yen laments how the contributions of Chinese Latin-Americans have been so greatly overlooked. The subtitle emphasizes their significant "*presencia*" [presence] in life and literature. How and when did they arrive? The most significant movement of the Chinese into Latin America occurred during the 1800s when slavery was gradually being abolished, but there was still a great demand for cheap labor for mining, railway construction, and cotton and sugar plantations. Chapter One reviews the history of Chinese laborers called *coolies* [coolies], a disparaging term identifying indentured laborers. Although considered extremely loyal and hard-working, they suffered severe hardship and maltreatment. From 1847 until the early 1900s, over 160,000 Chinese arrived in Cuba and forced to work up to 21 hours a day, often tortured by *palo, cuchillo, y látigo* [stick, knife, and whip]; those too weak or sick to work were abandoned in the streets as beggars (25). Yen considers the work of the following significant authors: Regino Pedroso, Cuba; Siu Kam Wen, Peru; Óscar Wong, Mexico;

and Carlos Francisco Changmarín, Panama.

Orientalism is an outsider discourse based on naive, stereotypical observations of the East, while portraying the West as a superior civilization (18). Regino Pedroso turns these observations of the “exotic other” around through a transcultural process of auto-orientalism (much like the term autobiography), telling his own story and the story of the Chinese people in Cuba as an insider. Yen sees Pedroso’s 1933 poem “*El Heredero*” [The Heir] as communicating both resistance and cultural redefinition (61-63). The poem is addressed to “*mi anciano tío*” [my elderly uncle] by “*un hijo de la Revolución*” [a son of the Revolution]. His uncle asks, “*Hijo mío, de todos mis tesoros, ¿qué ambicionas, qué anhelas?*” [My son, of all my treasures, what are your ambitions, longings?]. In response, the young man first lists the stereotypical riches associated with China: jade palaces, Kintechin porcelain, silk tunics, and ivory beds, but says that what he truly desires are the intangible elements of his uncle’s books of philosophy and rare Hoang-hi manuscripts, and the recognition of the hunger, blood, and sweat suffered through the forced labor of his *culí* ancestors in Cuba.

Siu Kam Wen was born in 1951 in Cantón. When he was eight years old his mother immigrated to Peru to reunite the family with his father. Wen explores the dynamics of transcultural change among first and ongoing generations of Chinese Peruvians. For example, in Wen’s 1979 short story “*El deterioro*” [The deterioration], Yen takes notice of the generational rupture between father and son as each experiences cultural change differently (78-80). Don Augusto, the owner of a modest Lima bodega, discovers that his son Héctor is skimming money from the family business, lamenting “*¡Y vaya a ver en qué ha gastado ese dinero! ¡Pues en libros!*” [And look at how he’s spending that money! For books!]. Don Augusto is bothered because Héctor speaks more fluent Spanish than he does and worries that Hector is growing up losing important Chinese values while taking on what Don Augusto perceives as undesirable customs and vices. He doesn’t want Héctor to grow up like other *tusans*, Chinese born in Peru. Meanwhile, Héctor wants to be the owner of his own reality, not continuing to work in the family business, but free to make his own decisions about marriage, life, and career. Héctor’s cultural change is moving too fast for his father, who believes the proper confucian role for his son is to obey and conform his life to family goals.

Óscar Wong’s father was Chinese and his mother Chiapaneca, from the Mexican state of Chiapas. He was sometimes asked why his poetry did

not seem to have “*elementos orientales*” [oriental elements]. Yen quotes one of Wong’s humorous replies in which he points out his two favorite drinks: “*el té de jazmín y el café chiapaneco*” [jasmine tea and Chiapaneco coffee]. Yen reads Wong’s poetry as the natural insertion of his Chinese cultural heritage into the historical and cultural experiences of Mexican society. Wong’s Chiapaneco poetry is informed by underlying Chinese symbolism, Taoism, yin and yang (unity of opposites). In one of Wong’s characteristically Taoist poems, “*Hablo de mí*” [I speak of myself], he is both a quiet lake and a volcano, a leaf traveling through the air and also resting on the soil, a man immersed in the debris of change. For Wong, culture and identity carry many superficial disguises, always transforming into new realities.

In comparing Carlos Francisco Changmarín of Panama to the other three authors, Yen points out that Changmarín is the only one who does not make a single reference to his ethnic Chinese identity in his literary work. He creates his own artistic name, Changmarín by combining his paternal surname Chang and his maternal surname Marín in order to indicate a fusion of Chinese and Panamanian cultures with the freedom to explore his own identity through his close observations and experiences with the natural beauty of Panama and the everyday life and struggles of working-class people and young people in his own homeland and throughout the world. In his historical novel *El guerrillero transparente* Changmarín held up Victoriano Lorenzo as a national unifying hero for Panamanians, a leader of marginalized campesinos and women at the turn of the 20th century. For Changmarín, all of the cultural groups of Panama should be the active creators of the country’s literature and society, not allowing themselves to become passive agents of someone else’s determination.

Some literary critics, such as Lane Ryo Hirabayashi, have asked whether the work of these Chinese-Latin American writers should be situated in the field of Latin American Studies or Asian American Studies (153). For Hwei Lan Yen, the answer is clear: Latin American Studies. Although marginalized by the dominant culture and its laws, customs, and traditions, Chinese-Latin Americans developed identities and literature which creatively reacted to the challenges and opportunities they faced while also remolding the cultural identity of the countries in which they worked and lived.