

Letter from the Editors

JACQUELINE BIALOSTOZKY
DEXTER ZAVALZA HOUGH-SNEE

We are pleased to present the 23rd edition of *Lucero*, our fourth year as an open access digital journal available online. As we write, the global academic community has recently celebrated the 7th International Open Access Week promoting open access (OA) as the new standard in scholarly periodicals publishing. Eliminating traditional limitations to journal access and making peer-reviewed scholarship available worldwide free of charge, the OA initiative has been a part of the University of California's scholarly tradition since its inception. Here at Berkeley, we at *Lucero* are proud to stand committed to open access scholarship alongside our colleagues who digitally publish peer-reviewed titles such as the *California Italian Studies Journal*, *L2 Journal*, and *nineteen sixty nine* (among others who are currently undergoing the print-to-OA transition). All of these journals are archived and accessible via [eScholarship](#), ensuring the continued availability and circulation of past numbers for years to come.

Taking the "short form" as its point of departure for exploring Hispanic and Lusophone textual and cultural production, the articles and review that comprise this 23rd issue represent broad perspectives and varied methodological approaches to brief aesthetic and structural forms rife with interdisciplinary and theoretical possibilities. The intention of this issue is to bring together diverse textual exchanges ripe for theorization through the concept of brief interventions, either as literary criticism or as analyses of brief literary forms, ranging from the short story and the *folletín* to the prose essay and periodical publications. The interventions featured here take prose works of reduced extension as their point of departure to explore

Opening the number is Juan Carlos Moraga Vidal's meditation on popular literature and liberal ideology in nineteenth century Madrid, titled "Madrid siglo XIX: Capital cultural del sueño liberal". Emphasizing the collaborative power of several short literary forms such as print

journalism, the short essay, and periodical serial literature such as the *folletín* while reflecting upon temporally brief forms such as the *zarzuela*, Moraga Vidal demonstrates how these forms and their authors collaborate to construct notions of a modern, urban Spanish citizen predicated upon liberal ideology. Moraga Vidal focuses his attention on texts produced prior to the apex of the Spanish realist novel in the late nineteenth century, seeking to demonstrate how short forms anticipated and indeed paved the way for canonical realist authors such as Galdós and Pardo Bazán.

“Fernando Vallejo’s «*La virgen de los sicarios*»: The Inferno of Bare Life” by Leticia Nini Villaseñor understands such liberal ideology to rest at the foundation of the tremendous violence found in Vallejo’s representation of Medellín. Using the short-form essay to interrogate the text through the theoretical concepts of Giorgio Agamben (*Homo Sacer*), Carl Schmitt, and Walter Benjamin, Villaseñor explores the “physical and metaphysical reconfiguration of the body within [...] alternate systems of laws” (14).

Ignacio Aguiló’s “Sabios, super-crips y escucha profunda: Representaciones de la discapacidad como otredad en la banda experimental argentina Reynols” further complicates the textual limitations of the short form by focusing on the Argentinean rock group Reynols and the media’s attempts to interpret and represent the group’s drummer, who has Down Syndrome. The author aims his analysis at an eclectic mix of short texts—journalism, New Media, and self-marketing materials—that define, construct, and represent the group, arguing that the seemingly dissonant discourses found in these varied cultural materials ultimately complement one another in the construction of a Foucaultian “régimen de normalidad” (25).

Rounding out the articles in this volume is Plínio Tadeu de Góes Jr.’s “Axé: Multiple Meanings with a Sole Essence Found in the Unity of Body, Nature and Spirit” which seeks to interpret a single word: “*axé*”. De Góes employs the word to interrogate the complex relationships between religion, music, popular culture, and politics within the African diaspora in the Americas, with special emphasis on *axé*’s influence in Brazil, Northeastern South America, and the Caribbean. Teasing out the linguistic, cultural, and political etymology of *axé*, the author explores the musical and cultural practices of Northeast Brazil’s popular classes by reading the genre as a text intimately tied to a short literary form—song lyrics—in spite of a long and rich cultural history.

The articles are punctuated by a single review, Juan Sebastián Ospina León's appraisal of Matthew Karush's «*Culture of Class: Radio and Cinema in the Making of a Divided Argentina, 1920-1946*», which closes the volume. Keeping with the volume's theme of alternative forms of mediation, Ospina León discusses Karush's brilliant analysis of radio, film, and audio recordings in relation to the Argentine public's seduction by North American modernity, a phenomenon that greatly affected cultural production in the southern cone for decades to come.

This volume is the product of many individuals' collaborative efforts. We must thank the members of the editorial board, the many peer-reviewers who generously contributed to the evaluation and selection process, the faculty and staff of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, the Townsend Center for the Humanities, the Graduate Assembly, eScholarship, and our contributors for enabling this number. Special thanks must also be extended to our graphic design and web team for their technical expertise. *Lucero* would not be possible without the invaluable support and contributions of these individuals and institutions.

Jacqueline Bialostozky and Dexter Z. Hough-Snee

Co Editors-in-Chief, *Lucero* Vol. 23