

Letter from the Editors

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We are pleased to present the 22nd edition of *Lucero*, our third year as an open access digital journal available online. As we write, the global academic community is poised to celebrate the 6th 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 contamination as a means of exploring Hispanic and Lusophone textual and cultural production, the articles, reviews, and interview that comprise this 22nd issue represent broad perspectives and varied methodological approaches to a critical term loaded with interdisciplinary and theoretical possibilities. The intention of this issue is to bring together diverse social, geographic, environmental, cultural, and textual exchanges ripe for theorization through the concept of contamination. While a pejorative trope in political discourse, contamination is relevant not only to contemporary global and local crises but also to longstanding literary debates of genre, form, and the quality of literariness itself. The interventions featured here approach contamination from these various perspectives, embedding this issue in global debates and contributing further to prominent literary discussions of originality, legitimacy, and purity of textual form.

Opening this volume, Juan Caballero's "The Borgesian monad contaminated and Buenos Aires photobombed: Pablo Katchadjian's *El aleph engordado* and Pola Oloixarac's *Las teorías salvajes*" explores the notion of contamination as a parodic tool through which Katchadjian and

Oloixarac question Argentine history's rigidity and what has now become its normativized narrative. In the case of *El aleph engordado* contamination becomes synonymous with plagiarisms and textual—or formal—infiltrations, raising questions of originality and legitimacy. In Caballero's discussion of *Las teorías salvajes*, contamination takes the shape of a geographical and sentimental corruption of the Argentine imaginary.

Focusing further on the question of form, Carlos Rojas's "Los ensayos de Octavio Paz y la revuelta de los significantes" works through contamination as a key metaphor to understand the formal rupture of the essay genre within Octavio Paz's collection of essays. Through the theme of contamination, Rojas explores the ways in which Paz's essays individually and collectively move away from the "traditional essay" through the manipulation of genre norms and the incorporation of diverse forms. This experimental approach to textual form serves to question the discursive boundaries of the essay and even the boundaries of the genre itself, forcing the reader to question the limits and potential of essay form.

Silvia Roig's piece "¿Qué significa vivir en un *Estado de derecho*?: vida contaminación y muerte en *Salón de belleza* de Mario Bellatín" understands contamination within the context of the physical body and the politics of urban space. Situating the text within Giorgio Agamben's theoretical economies of biopolitics, Roig's piece explores how the modern state constructs bodily reality in order to then proceed with its purportedly logical annihilation.

Also exploring contamination as it relates to the body and state institutions, Megan Corbin's article "Neutralizing Consent: The Maternal Look and the Returned Gaze in *El infarto del alma*" discusses issues of consent and the authorization of bodily and amorous desire within Chile's Philippe Pinel psychiatric hospital. Examining Diamela Eltit and Paz Errázuriz's photo-activist efforts to draw attention to the residents of the hospital, Corbin suggests that the layering of consent in the text calls on its readers to rethink social contamination, exclusion, and the ethics of institutionalization.

As a direct engagement with the topic of contamination as a global issue, Luis Cordero-Sánchez interviews the Spanish writer José Manuel Caballero Bonald, an author whose oeuvre has dedicated numerous pages to the natural surroundings of Andalucía. While also discussing the question of literary contamination in terms of genre, Cordero-Sánchez

engages Caballero Bonald in a passionate conversation that navigates literature, nature, the social, and the writer's relationship to and concern for these global issues as our physical surroundings are being devastated.

Three review essays round out this volume: Krista Brune's appraisal of Robert Patrick Newcomb's *Nossa and Nuestra America: Inter-American Dialogues* (2012), Julie Ward's assessment of Nathaniel Gardner's English translation (2012) of Elena Poniatowska's *Querido Diego, te abraza Quiela*, and Dexter Zavalza Hough-Snee's approximation to Harley Erdman's bilingual edition (2012) of Tirso de Molina's *La celosa de sí misma*. Moving away from pejorative political definitions of contamination, these reviews posit the term as linguistic and cultural contact. Brune explores how Newcomb places two Spanish American and two Brazilian writers in dialogue to demonstrate Pan-Latin American attitudes toward Brazil's unique position in the Americas. Ward and Hough-Snee explore how translation and bilingual republication reconstitute Poniatowska and Tirso's respective works for Anglo audiences and expand the readership of these authors.

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.

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Co Editors-in-Chief, *Lucero* Vol. 22