

Hulme, Peter. *The Dinner at Gonfarone's: Salomón de la Selva and His Pan-American Project in Nueva York, 1915-1919*. Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 2019. 397pp.

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The Dinner at Gonfarone's: Salomón de la Selva and His Pan-American Project in Nueva York, 1915-1919 takes a deep archival dive into the life and work of Salomón de la Selva, a Nicaraguan poet who immigrated to New York at the age of thirteen, and whose poetry collections, *Tropical Town and Other Poems* (1918) and *El soldado desconocido* (1922), have been overlooked in literary histories of the Americas, failing to register in one tradition or the other due to his liminality as a Nicaraguan who wrote in English. This book recalibrates de la Selva's centrality as both a translator—a veritable bridge between two cultures—and conduit for a Pan-American poetic movement in New York in the decade of the 1910s. Methodologically sound, and targeted yet capacious in scope, the book delineates the local and hemispheric circuits that converge in New York, making it an exciting complement to scholarship that explores the rich literary panoramas of Latin/o American New York in the early twentieth century. Organized chronologically by year (1914-1919), *The Dinner at Gonfarone's* is comprised of seven chapters, an introduction, and an epilogue. The first chapter sets the cultural scene of New York, highlighting notable people, places, events, and trends of the era (a schema that is replicated in each of the book's chapters). Salomón de la Selva is the primary protagonist of the book, and he also functions as a prism through which Hulme brings to life the cultural currents and geopolitical climate of Pan-Americanist projects in New York and throughout the hemisphere.

Chapter two reviews the turbulent era of U.S. imperialism in Latin America and the Caribbean between 1898-1914, and provides a succinct primer on the resonance of ideologies of the two Americas vis-à-vis Ariel and Caliban allegories (as they appear in the work of José Enrique Rodó and Rubén Darío), as well as the competing Hispanist and Latinist discourses that de la Selva and other Latin American writers living in New York at the time confronted and crafted. By underscoring the fine line that poets like Darío and his compatriot de la Selva had to walk while promoting Pan-American ideals in an embittered climate of U.S. intervention, Hulme sheds much needed light on a poetic Pan-Americanist project spearheaded by de la Selva that, while certainly not oblivious to the political and commercial version deployed by and for the benefit of Washington, grappled to reconcile the politics of resentment and rapprochement.

Chapter three brings together Darío and de la Selva, who coincided in New York in 1914-1915, in order to reconstruct a literary geography of the significant social circles (such as *tertulias* in apartments) and cultural associations (such as the Poetry Society of America and the Hispanic Society of America) that Latin American writers in the metropolis frequented. In addition to revisiting Darío's writings on New York and the Americas writ large, Hulme also provides new details about other acclaimed Latin American writers who were residents of and sojourners to the metropolis, including Pedro Henríquez Ureña and José Santos Chocano.

Chapter four shows de la Selva trying to get his own poetic projects off the ground, and examines his extensive correspondence with patrons and fellow poets, such as Archer Huntington, the founder of the Hispanic Society of America who often bankrolled the Nicaraguan's translation endeavors, and Edwin Markham, whose influence is brought into new focus through de la Selva's archive. In addition, this chapter reviews other important Spanish and Latin American writers in New York like Juan Ramón Jiménez, Martín Luis Guzmán, José Juan Tablada, and Fabio Fiallo.

In Chapter five, de la Selva emerges as a central player in the literary circles of New York, where, at a 1917 dinner in honor of writers from South and Central America at the National Arts Club in Gramercy Park, he directed an incisive critique of U.S. interventionist policies in his home country to Theodore Roosevelt, who happened to be in attendance. This chapter also delves into de la Selva's extensive correspondence with American poet Edna Millay.

Chapter six situates de la Selva as a catalyst of a burgeoning Pan-American network of magazines, including a bilingual one that he himself launched titled *Pan-American Poetry*. This chapter also chronicles de la Selva's desire to fight with U.S. forces in World War I to represent what he called 'Pan America', but, because the American military would only enlist U.S. citizens, the Nicaraguan joined the British Army, trained in Nova Scotia, and did not have the chance to realize his dreams of glory on the battlefield. He also published his first collection of poems, *Tropical Town* (1918), a book that had fallen through the cracks but here is astutely reframed as an invaluable resource for poetry about U.S. intervention in the region from someone with a bicultural perspective.

Chapter seven argues that by the time de la Selva returned to New York at the conclusion of the conflict, the influence of Latin/o American communities and print culture was picking up traction. And it is this chapter that details the event that gives Hulme's book its title, the Pan-American literary dinner hosted at Gonfarone's restaurant in Greenwich Village in 1919, which de la Selva organized. The final chapter of the book touches on the rest of de la Selva's life and legacy after his New York years, which includes the publishing of another book of poetry, *El soldado desconocido* (Mexico, 1922),

and reflects on the relatively little impact the Pan-American work he undertook had in the long run. Since the book references such a rich variety of characters, there is also a useful biographies section at the end.

The Dinner at Gonfarone's taps into a massive trove of previously unsourced archival materials that provide new insights into de la Selva's professional and personal lives (including his love interests), and facilitate a more profound and nuanced understanding of the different strands and strains of Pan-Americanism in New York. Thoroughly researched and heavily footnoted, the book weaves together epistolary content, textual analysis, and cultural and political geographies into a narrative that focuses on de la Selva, but also zooms out to give a more expansive view of the cross-pollination between Latin American and U.S. poets. Such attention to this cultural interplay problematizes neatly-cut national identities, canons, and aesthetics that tend to relegate American literature from Latin American literature, and vice versa. In this way, de la Selva surfaces as a remarkable figure of Latina/o literature, even though the author makes clear that he chooses not to intervene in critical debates concerning Latin/o/a/x nomenclatures and chronologies, but opts instead to situate de la Selva within the field of trans-American literary studies, of which this book is a stellar example. In featuring an ensemble of writers from the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Honduras, Cuba, and Chile alongside de la Selva, Hulme brings the polyphonic contours of early twentieth century Latin/o American New York into sharp relief. For this reason, *The Dinner at Gonfarone's* makes a singular contribution to charting the cultural history of New York and appreciating with more clarity both the perils of Pan-Americanism and the possibilities of its poetic alternatives.