caer necesariamente preso de las posiciones dicotómicas que caracterizaron la historiografía de la isla caribeña a partir de la revolución cubana. Dicho esto, *Broadcasting Modernity: Cuban Commercial Television, 1950-1960* representa un trabajo importante que contribuye a una mayor comprensión entre los nexos que unen la historia de la televisión con la historia social y cultural de la segunda mitad del siglo XX.

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MARY KAY VAUGHAN: ***Portrait of a Young Painter: Pepe Zúñiga and Mexico City's Rebel Generation***. Durham: Duke University Press, 2015.

Mary Kay Vaughan's biography of Mexican painter Pepe Zúñiga is a labor of love and friendship, which explains perhaps its unique take on twentieth-century Mexican history. At the heart of *Portrait of a Young Painter* is the coming of age story of Pepe Zúñiga from his early childhood in provincial Oaxaca through his formative years in cosmopolitan Mexico City. A final chapter is dedicated to his mature work as evidenced in several exquisite color prints. Although a well-known and well-respected painter, Zúñiga belongs to what Vaughan calls the "sandwiched" generation: artists who came to prominence in the 1970s and 80s after the vigorous debates over the purpose of art that pitted the social realism of the revolutionary muralists (especially Rivera and Siquieros) against the neo-humanism of *ruptura* artists like José Luis Cuevas, Rufino Tamayo, and Zúñiga's mentor Benito Messeguer, and before the heyday of the experimental mixed media, installation, and performance art that characterized the Mexico City art scene in last two decades of the twentieth century. According to Vaughan, the sandwiched generation has produced "a highly conscious individualized art, an expression of personal feelings and visions, sentiments and ideas, biographies and memories, and their imagined unconscious within orthodox format of composition, technique, and standard Western notions of beauty" (218). While this artistic philosophy might seem relatively conservative in retrospect, perhaps even to the artists, they nonetheless saw themselves at the time as an avant-garde "rebel generation" committed to a cosmopolitan art that expressed universal human values, although often in expressly Mexican terms.

In the hands of a skilled, knowledgeable, and conscientious biographer—and Vaughan is all three—the sandwiched generation's creative focus on subjective human experience contributes fascinating, important, and otherwise inaccessible insights into issues of identity, subjectivity, and agency. As is usually the case,

these issues are especially apparent at the intersections of gender, race, and class. Here, the biographer's tactful treatment of the fraught issue of domestic violence avoids clichés about working-class male insecurities expressed through the domination of women, a characteristic of so-called "protest masculinities." At the same time, she recounts Pepe's vigorous rejection of his father and grandfather's use of this male prerogative, and the centrality of that rejection to his construction of a modern "feminine" subjectivity. As the dark-skinned child, Pepe confronted racist attitudes—especially acute with regard to working-class men—both within and outside his family circle. As a young adult, however, his indigenous appearance and Oaxacan origins added an aura of authenticity to his artistic persona and to his work. Vaughan situates these intersectional categories in a family and community context that is often left out of more conventional accounts. This rich contextualization exposes the complex and contradictory ways that categorical intersections work to form subjects and condition (enable and constrain) their agency.

Vaughan's insistence on the central role played by family and community in Zúñiga's coming of age also offers up valuable insights into the migrant experience and thus complicates and deepens our understanding of Mexico's great migrations from rural to urban areas and from provincial cities to the capital. Migration studies scholars have struggled to label different generations of migrants. By most definitions, Pepe's parents, who were born and raised in Oaxaca and moved to Mexico City as adults, are typical first generation migrants. So too is Pepe's older brother Chucho, an important voice in this biography. For this first generation, migration to Mexico City represented an entrance into a "modern" lifestyle that was nonetheless strongly flavored by traditional gender roles: for his father, the freedom to explore new modes of consumption (fashion, cinema, etc.) and new forms of masculine subjectivity; for his mother, the need to master the intricacies of the informal urban economy and social services bureaucracies in order to provide for the family. Pepe and his younger siblings and cousins—born in Oaxaca but raised in Mexico City's Colonia Guerrero—had a much different relationship with their place of birth, which they regarded with a mixture of trepidation, nostalgia, and pride. For this in-between generation, life in the big city offered a chance to *superar*, to better themselves, at a time when economic expansion, the so-called Mexican "miracle," was providing opportunities for the ambitious children of poor migrants (among others) to enter into the middle class and to entertain expectations of self-fulfillment.

As the work of one of our foremost historians of Mexican education, it is hardly surprising that *Portrait of a Young Painter* deals brilliantly with Zúñiga's formative years. Indeed the discussion of the transformative impact of state-sponsored education initiatives and cultural apparatus on Zúñiga and his "rebel

generation" is a revelation. To insights from her earlier work on state-sponsored education, Vaughan adds a rich description of the ways in which radio and television programming provided parents and children with a shared language and conceptual framework for proper childhood "development." Even more revealing is her exploration of the role of urban popular culture in transforming the lives of working-class consumers, including Pepe's father José, an omnivorous, well-informed aficionado of an astonishingly wide range of films that included Mexican golden age classics, Hollywood productions, and even imported art house films–a love he passed along to his equally devoted son.

Vaughan's agreement to respect her subject's reticence about certain aspects of his life was a necessary condition for his frankness about many other things. It was also the smart and ethical thing to do. There are however limitations inherent in this approach, especially with regard to gender relations and sexuality. While Zúñiga is quite open about the "aesthetic eroticism" in his work and quite critical of Mexico (including his parents) as "a hypocritical country in sexual matters," he has little to say about own intimate relationships or the source of the homoerotic elements apparent in his paintings (226). And when he credits his Greek experience–which occasioned a series of paintings of a male prostitute–with freeing his artistic sensibilities, Vaughan cannot stifle her indignation: "But how could he say his aestheticization of affectionate sexuality came exclusively from his European experience, with Mexico cast into the darkness of repression? Were not his best paintings a visual expression of the Mexican *danzón* he had learned and loved–a controlled performance of sexuality, the more beautiful for its graceful insinuation?" (229). The list of Mexican influences on Zúñiga's aesthetic eroticism continues on for a long paragraph, but the point (and the author's frustration) is clear enough. In the end, however, Vaughan gives her subject the last word. Together they have given us a wonderful book!

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