

hace una reflexión sobre los avances y retrocesos en el campo del derecho entre la república, el franquismo y la reinstauración de la democracia en España.

Una cuestión presente en el conjunto de estos textos es la necesidad de usar un vocabulario común para abordar el asilo y el exilio, puesto que términos como asilado, refugiado, exiliado, desplazado, etc., son con frecuencia utilizados con diferentes acepciones. Ya sea desde el derecho o la historia, precisar el significado de esas locuciones se torna una tarea necesaria. Finalmente, cabe señalar que a pesar de la irregularidad en la naturaleza y la factura de los trabajos reunidos en este volumen, visto en su conjunto se trata de un esfuerzo más por comprender un tema que ha dejado una honda marca en la historia de México.

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ADRIANA A. BOCCHINO, *et al*: *Escrituras y exilios en América Latina*. Mar del Plata: Estanislao Balder, 2008.

“Toda la literatura argentina del siglo XX ha sido escrita por exiliados,” wrote Juan José Saer in 1997. Though deliberately outrageous, Saer’s dictum calls attention to the impressive spate of literature produced by refugees of Argentina’s Dirty War. A generation of writers wrenched from their culture and their past, among them Miguel Bonasso, Humberto Costantini, Mempo Giardinelli, Daniel Moyano, Hector Tizón, Luisa Valenzuela and David Viñas, responded in their writings to the situation of exile. It is chiefly this body of texts that led scholars at the Universidad de Mar del Plata, beginning in 2002, to study the interplay of exile and the texts it inspires. Their essays, centered on but not limited to figures from the Argentine diaspora, form the core of *Escrituras y exilios en América Latina* and aim both to illuminate individual texts and to theorize about the particularities of exile literature as a genre.

It is by no means obvious how to characterize exile literature, particularly in an age when literary theory conjures away the figure of the writer. Adriana A. Bocchino’s ambitious and abstract theoretical first chapter attempts to reconcile postmodern literary theory with the premises of exile literature. This is a tall order, since current theory eclipses the writer, while exile texts stubbornly compel one to attend to the circumstances of the person who authored them. To her credit, Bocchino insists that, in the case of exile writing, extraliterary conditions of production cannot sensibly be excised from the text itself. Yet, heir to a tradition of philosophical double binds, she casts as paradoxical and problematic this relationship of writer to text. Her discussion, which is hard to follow and appeals neither to examples nor to previous critical work on exile literature, argues strenuously against any simplistic link between the writer’s experience

and the texts themselves. To wrest meaning from the experience of reading exilic writing, she recommends the kind of allegorical reading Walter Benjamin used to construe messages of hope from baroque German *Trauerspiel*.

Happily, the essays that follow Bocchino's overwrought theory do collectively provide a coherent vision of the genre. Sandra Lorenzano, in a passionate and lucid essay about ArgenMex writers, views it as constituted by "textos que . . . pretenden dar cuenta de la situación del exiliado a través de relatos que buscan reconstruir la memoria individual inmersa en una historia social y colectiva, vinculada a un *antes* del exilio, así como reflexionar acerca del exilio como marca, como huella en la propia vida" (p. 180). This formulation brings together several traits that other contributors to the volume arrive at severally: an implicit acknowledgment that this sort of writing, testimonial at least in part, relies on the writer's own circumstance and that it comments on exile; a linking of individual turmoil to a collective trauma; and a view of time as riven by forced departure from one's homeland. To these features Emiliana Mercère, analyzing Daniel Moyano's 1983 novel *Libro de navíos y borrascas*, adds two other characteristics of exile texts – a particular view of space as divided into a proscribed but yearned-for "inside" and the "outside" into which the subject has been expelled, and a preoccupation with language itself as a potential casualty of exile.

Insistently, language comes to be metaphorized in this book as a *place* that will substitute for the lost utopia of an exile's native land. Mónica Marinone, in a study of Paraguayan writer Augusto Roa Bastos, calls Roa's writings "ese *locus* donde todo resultaría posible, aún la permanencia" (p. 36). Gabriela Tineo, in one of two essays in the volume that focus not on exile from the Southern Cone but on the cultural banishment that slavery in the Caribbean entailed, shows how Puerto Rican novelist Edgardo Rodríguez Juliá "reterritorializes" Black historical memory. His 1984 novel *La noche oscura del Niño Avilés* purports to recover, simultaneously, knowledge of a physical place – the lost city of Nueva Venecia, founded by escaped slaves – and a textual archive documenting its existence – a linguistic trace that becomes a metaphor for the place itself. The epigraph to Mercère's essay, a quotation from T. W. Adorno, restates this idea: "Quien ya no tiene ninguna patria, halla en el escribir su lugar de residencia."

Although exile writing comprises one form of cultural restitution, it is not the only kind of literature that does so. The odd inclusion of two essays about runaway slaves in Caribbean literature inaccurately casts the *cimarrón* as exile, conflating slaves' true exile from their original African cultures and their voluntary escape from colonial masters. It muddies the waters to confuse such different kinds of departure from a social world.