

SEVERO SARDUY AND THE NEO-BAROQUE IMAGE OF THOUGHT IN THE VISUAL ARTS

BY ROLANDO PÉREZ

Severo Sarduy never enjoyed the same level of notoriety as did other Latin American writers like García Márquez and Vargas-Llosa, and his compatriot, Cabrera-Infante. On the other hand, he never lacked for excellent critical interpretations of his work from critics like Roberto González Echevarría, René Prieto, Gustavo Guerrero, and other reputable scholars. Missing, however, from what is otherwise an impressive body of critical commentary, is a study of the importance of painting and architecture, firstly, to his theory, and secondly, to his creative work.

In order to fill this lacuna in Sarduy studies, Rolando Pérez's book undertakes a critical

approach to Sarduy's essays—*Barroco, Escrito sobre un cuerpo*, "Barroco y neobarroco," and *La simulación*—from the stand point of art history. Often overlooked in Sarduy studies is the fact that the twenty-three-year-old Sarduy left Cuba for Paris in 1961 to study not literature but art history, earning the equivalent of a Master's Degree from the École du Louvre with a thesis on Roman art. And yet it was the art of the Italian Renaissance (e.g., the paintings as well as the brilliant and numerous treatises on linear perspective produced from the fifteenth to the sixteenth century) and what Sarduy called the Italian, Spanish, and colonial Baroque or "neobaroque" visually based aesthetic that interested him and to which he dedicated so many pages.

In short, no book on Sarduy until now has traced the multifaceted art historical background that informed the work of this challenging and exciting writer. And though *Severo Sarduy and*

the Neo-Baroque Image of Thought in the Visual Arts is far from being an introduction, it will be a book that many a critic of Sarduy and the Latin American "baroque" will consult in years to come.

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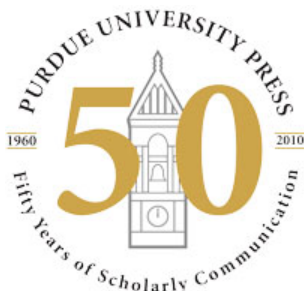
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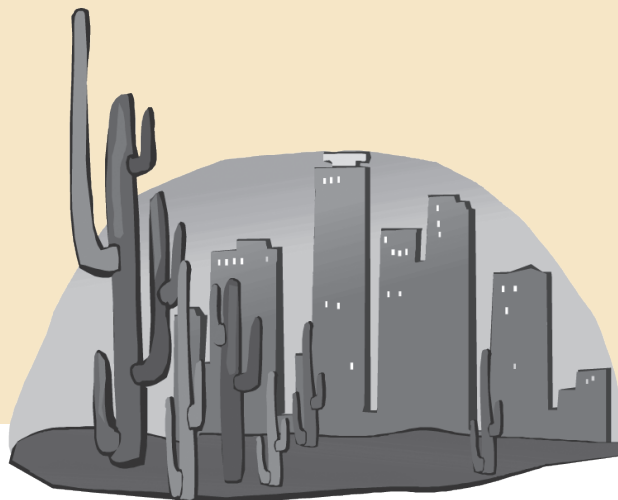
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BY CECILIA ENJUTO RANGEL

The presence of urban ruins in modern poetry awakens readers to the real-life remains of violence and destruction in our cities. The attacks in New York on September 11, 2001, and in Madrid on March 11, 2004, provoked diverse political reactions, but the imminence of the ruins triggered a collective historical awakening. An awakening can take the shape of bombs in Kabul and Baghdad, or political change in government policies, but it is also palpable when poetry voices a critique of the technological warfare and its versions of progress. Contemporary events and modern ruins are reminiscent of the political impact that the Spanish Civil War and two World Wars had on poetry.

In *Cities in Ruins: The Politics of Modern Poetics*, Cecilia Enjuto Rangel argues that the portrayal in poetry of the modern city as a disintegrated, ruined space is part of a critique of visions of progress and modernization that developed during the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. Enjuto Rangel analyzes how Charles Baudelaire, Luis Cernuda, T. S. Eliot, Octavio Paz, and Pablo Neruda poeticized ruins as the cornerstones of cultural and political memory, and used the imagery of ruins to reinterpret their historical and literary traditions.

Enjuto Rangel's book offers an original interpretation of how modern poems historicize ruins and avoid narcissistic readings of destruction.

This work is a brilliant composite of Modernity's major poetic quests for meaning. The notion of ruins brings the literary, historical, and political issues to the fore with a scholarly depth that is matched by the breadth and urgency of the poetic statements examined. —Ronald Puppo, University of Vic

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CABALLERO NOBLE DESBARATADO: AUTOBIOGRAFÍA E INVENCION EN EL SIGLO XVI

BY JOSÉ LUIS GASTAÑAGA PONCE DE LEÓN

First-person narrative does not always fall under the genre of autobiography. In the centuries before the genre was defined, authors often patterned their personal narratives after prestigious discourses, such as hagiography, historiography, and the literary miscellany. *Caballero noble desbaratado: Autobiografía e invención en el siglo XVI* [*Noble Knight Disrupted: Autobiography and Invention in the Sixteenth Century*] analyzes several first-person narratives from Spain and the conditions of their writing and reception. It focuses on the sixteenth-century *Libro de la vida y costumbres* [*Book of Life and Customs*] by Alonso Enríquez de Guzmán (1499–1547), the knight of the title.

One chapter looks at antecedents to the central work: the late fourteenth-century *Memorial* by Leonor López de Córdoba, who narrates difficult passages of her life; the *Breve suma de la vida y hechos* [*Brief Summary of the Life and Deeds*] by Diego García de Paredes, who speaks of duels and battles as an object lesson in honor and courage for his son; and *Cautiverio y trabajos* [*Captivity and Travails*] by Diego Galán, a tale of captivity and flight in Muslim lands that constitutes an early example of fictionalized autobiography. The study also examines the influence of writers like Bartolomé de Torres Naharro, Antonio de Guevara, and Pedro Mexía and the vitality of lyric poetry on both sides of the Atlantic.

Although the Biblioteca de Autores Españoles has devoted a volume to Enríquez de Guzmán, there has never been a book-length study dedicated to this author. This book fills that gap and constitutes a valuable contribution to the study of autobiography in Spanish.

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NOSSA AND NUESTRA AMÉRICA: INTER-AMERICAN DIALOGUES

BY ROBERT PATRICK NEWCOMB

Is Brazil part of Latin America, or an island unto itself? As "*Nossa*" and "*Nuestra América*": *Inter-American Dialogues* demonstrates, this question has been debated by Brazilian and Spanish American intellectuals alike since the early nineteenth century, though it has received limited scholarly attention and its answer is less obvious than you might think. This book charts Brazil's evolving and often conflicted relationship with the idea of Latin America through a detailed comparative investigation of four crucial Latin American essayists: Uruguayan critic José Enrique Rodó, Brazilian writer-diplomat Joaquim Nabuco, Mexican humanist Alfonso Reyes, and Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, one of Brazil's preeminent historians. While these writers are canonical figures in their respective national literary traditions, their thoughts on Brazilian–Spanish American relations are seldom investigated, and they are rarely approached from a comparative perspective.

In "*Nossa*" and "*Nuestra América*," Newcomb traces the development of two parallel essayistic traditions: Spanish American continentalist discourse and Brazil's solidly national exegetic tradition. With these essayistic traditions in mind, he argues that Brazil plays a necessary—and necessarily problematic—role in the intellectual construction of "Latin America." Further, in traversing the Luso-Hispanic frontier and bringing four of Latin America's preeminent thinkers into critical dialogue, Newcomb calls for a truly comparative approach to Luso-Brazilian and Spanish American literary and cultural studies.

"*Nossa*" and "*Nuestra América*" will be of interest to scholars and students of Latin American and Luso-Brazilian literature and ideas, and to anyone interested in rethinking comparative approaches to literary texts written in Portuguese and Spanish.

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WINNER OF LASA MEXICO SECTION'S 2010 HUMANITIES BOOK PRIZE

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by Ignacio Sánchez Prado

On October 8, 2010, the Mexico Section of the Latin American Studies Association awarded *Naciones intelectuales* the 2010 Humanities Book Prize for "outstanding work of scholarship on Mexico." In this outstanding book, Sánchez Prado explores the processes and works that laid the foundations of a new literary modernity in the wake of the Mexican Revolution.

PSRL 47. 2009. X, 321 pp. ISBN 978-1-55753-538-2 PAPER \$43.95 IN SPANISH

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