Annotated Bibliography for Silvia Moreno-Garcia's *Mexican Gothic*

Please feel free to use these resources as entry points into the novel as well as for understanding its literary, historical, and theoretical contexts.

Gordon, Avery. *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*. U of Minnesota P, 1997.

In this monograph, Gordon explores contemporary ramifications of hauntings from a sociological perspective. Gordon considers hauntings to be "a constituent element of modern social life" that is "neither pre-modern superstition nor individual psychosis"; rather, she argues that a haunting is a "generalizable social phenomenon of great import" (7). She writes, "The way of the ghost is haunting, and haunting is a very particular way of knowing what has happened or is happening" (8). According to Gordon, the complex relationship between history and memory caused by ghosts is further exacerbated by overarching (and in some ways invisible) metanarratives such as capitalism and racism. This phenomenon is so pervasive, in fact, that Gordon insists hauntings and ghosts are *defining* characteristics of postmodern life. For the purposes of her project, Gordon cites the post-1945 period as the beginning of postmodernism, and she categorizes this historical moment as "the arrival of significant reconfigurations of our dominant Western organizational and theoretical frames," such as "poststructuralism, postcolonialism, post-Marxism, postindustrialism, postmodernism, [and] postfeminism" (9). Gordon's work speaks to many of *Mexican Gothic*'s most compelling themes (particularly memory, ghosts, and the past's effects on the present) describing how experienced memory and inherited memory inform contemporary understanding(s) of haunting.

Holden, Philip. "The 'Postcolonial Gothic': Absent Histories, Present Contexts." *Textual Practice*, vol. 23, no. 3, 2009, pp. 353-72, https://doi.org/10.1080/09502360902753013. Accessed 6 Mar. 2022.

Holden examines the construction and the value of the theoretical and genre-based intersection he refers to as the postcolonial Gothic. His argument is largely informed by twenty-first-century literary scholars' work analyzing the employment of Gothic tropes in postcolonial texts. For Holden, in particular, the correlation between the postcolonial and the Gothic is all too obvious: "Clearly many—and indeed, perhaps, the majority—of literary texts that are studied under the rubric of postcolonial literatures contain supernatural or otherwise irreducible elements that challenge textual and social rationalities" (354). More specifically, Holden advocates for "a commitment to *historicism* in order to understand the specific purchase" of those Gothic elements (353, emphasis added). In this way, Holden insists that historic contextualization should precede the thematic analysis of postcolonial texts to explore how, exactly, a text's Gothic elements contribute to its overall project(s). When applied to *Mexican Gothic*, Holden's work inspires a more thorough investigation of how the novel's Gothic elements contribute to its aesthetic, narrative, historical, and thematic aims.

Olcott, Jocelyn. *Revolutionary Women in Postrevolutionary Mexico*. Duke UP, 2005.

Olcott's monograph effectively narrates the multiple iterations of Mexican feminism, focusing on Mexican feminists' attitudes, values, and activism after the 1910 revolution. Three chapters are devoted to the inspirations and developments of postrevolutionary feminisms in specific

regions (Michoacán, Comarca Lagunera, and Yucatán), and the rest of the work highlights the significance of prominent Mexican feminist activists and movements. Olcott's work can be usefully put in conversation with *Mexican Gothic* because it describes and contextualizes some of the local factors that may inform Noemí Taboada's understanding and embodiment of postrevolutionary Mexican feminism, such as her desire for self-sufficiency, her embrasure of her own femininity, and her pursuit of higher education. Locating these elements within their cultural and historical contexts can help students better understand Noemí's characterization as well as the controversial nature of her beliefs, attitudes, opinions, and actions in early 1950's Mexico City (a more progressive, urban environment) compared to El Triunfo (a more conservative, rural environment).

Procter, James, and Angela Smith. "Gothic and Empire." *The Routledge Companion to the Gothic*, Routledge UP, 2007, pp. 95-104.

In this chapter, James Procter and Angela Smith explain the relationship between postcolonial and Gothic literatures, emphasizing how Gothic tropes and elements (such as monstrosity) can be "reclaimed as a positive resource of subversion" within writings about empire and, by extension, empires themselves (95). Echoing Michael Hardt's *Empire* (2001) and Antonio Negri's *Multitude* (2004), Procter and Smith contend that monstrosity can function as a generative contaminant and a "source of energy and resistance to the structures of empire" (95). The Postcolonial Gothic, they explain, "might be said to cite and write back to familiar Gothic texts (including imperial ones) in order to unsettle or in some ways disturb their grand narratives of colonial mastery/degeneration, relocating the horror from the locus of the colonised to the violence and abuses perpetrated by empire" (96). To support their thesis, Procter and Smith identify Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997) and Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) as examples of the postcolonial Gothic. Because *Wide Sargasso Sea* has been described as a kind of spiritual predecessor to Moreno-Garcia's novel, Procter and Smith's inclusion of Rhys's work invites a similar postcolonial Gothic reading of *Mexican Gothic*. (This chapter might function as a helpful precursor or supporting piece to Holden's article.)

Wallace, Diana, and Andrew Smith. "Introduction: Defining the Female Gothic." *The Female Gothic: New Directions*, edited by Diana Wallace and Andrew Smith, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, pp. 1-11.

Here, Wallace and Smith provide a brief history of the Female Gothic literary traditions from the term's conception in 1976 to 2009. Despite its contentious history, Wallace and Smith contend that contemporary understandings of the Female Gothic encompass a variety of feminist ideas and approaches, including traditions that have previously been understood as women's Gothic, feminist Gothic, lesbian Gothic, Gothic feminism, and postfeminist Gothic (1). Wallace and Smith's work offers helpful summaries of several flagship Female Gothic texts, including Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979), emphasizing how these texts have helped shape (and continue to shape) literary critics' understandings of women writers, characters, and readers of the Gothic. In order for this subgenre to continue to be productive, Wallace and Smith posit that the Female Gothic should remain a "broad and fluid category" (11). This introduction can help *Mexican Gothic* readers contextualize the novel within both Gothic and feminist traditions. (For more on the intersections of the Gothic and feminist theory, see Wallace's "'The Haunting Idea': Female Gothic Metaphors and Feminist Theory," also included in this collection.)

Young, Robert J.C. "Colonialism and the Politics of Postcolonial Critique." *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction*, Wiley and Sons, 2016, pp. 1-12. *Wiley Online Library*, https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.purdue.edu/10.1002/9781119316817.ch1.

In this chapter, Young provides an extensive yet accessible introduction to postcolonialism, emphasizing how colonial histories and the resulting neocolonial powers inform contemporary understandings of decolonial theories and activisms. Young cites the Global North's "economic domination" of the Global South as the most influential tenets of postcolonial studies (6); however, he contends that postcolonialism expands European Marxism's project of critiquing "objective material conditions" by analyzing the "subjective effects" that those material conditions have on groups of people living within (and, in some instances, outside of the Global South). In this way, Young insists, "Postcolonial cultural critique involves the *reconsideration* of this history, particularly from the perspectives of those who suffered its effects, together with the defining of its contemporary social and cultural impact" (4, emphasis added). This critique "focuses on forces of oppression and coercive domination that operate in the contemporary world," such as "the politics of anti-colonialism and neocolonialism, race, gender, nationalisms, class and ethnicities define its terrain" (11). This chapter models several historical, political, cultural, and theoretical frames for reading *Mexican Gothic*.

Additional Resources for Teaching *Mexican Gothic*

On Teaching & Teaching Literature

Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST). *Universal Design for Learning Guidelines*. 2018, https://udlguidelines.cast.org/. Accessed 3 Mar. 2022.

Fuss, Diana, and William A. Gleason. *The Pocket Instructor: Literature, 101 Exercises for the College Classroom*. Princeton UP, 2016.

Hamilton, Sharon. *Essential Literary Terms: A Brief Norton Guide with Exercises*. 2nd ed., W.W. Norton & Co., 2017.

Lang, James M. *Small Teaching: Everyday Lessons from the Science of Learning*. 2nd ed., Jossey-Bass, 2021.

On the Female Gothic

Ellis, Kate Ferguson. *The Contested Castle: Gothic Novels and the Subversion of Domestic Ideology*. U of Illinois P, 1989.

Paige, Lori A. *The Gothic Romance Wave: A Critical History of the Mass Market Novels, 1960-1993*. McFarland and Co., 2018.

Wallace, Diana. "'The Haunting Idea': Female Gothic Metaphors and Feminist Theory." *The Female Gothic: New Directions*, edited by Diana Wallace and Andrew Smith, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, pp. 26-41.

On Mexican Feminism

Marcos, Sylvia. "Twenty-Five Years of Mexican Feminisms." *Women's Studies International Forum*, vol. 22, no. 4, 1999, pp. 431-33, https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-5395(99)00036-9.

Smith, Stephanie J. *Gender and the Mexican Revolution: Yucatan Women and the Realities of Patriarchy*. U of North Carolina P, 2009.