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## In This Issue

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# In This Issue

This is the tenth volume of the *Arizona Journal of Hispanic Cultural Studies*, which until now has been printed and distributed in the traditional way, arriving in a series of compact boxes hand-delivered to the journal office every year like Christmas presents to be shared, opened and marveled at by our team of editors and proofreaders. Only a handful of us are aware of just how many people were involved in the production of this and every issue – those who submitted articles, the many readers who unselfishly and anonymously give their time to evaluate the many submissions, those who write the books and review them, and those proofreaders who pore over every page looking for the stray unfortunate turn of phrase or unclear documentation. It is immensely thrilling to learn that the ideas worked through in the pages of the journal make their way into classroom discussions, are considered for their possible merits and deficiencies in the work of scholars across the globe, and are disseminated through time and space among the circuit of information connections that make up our diverse intellectual community.

With this issue we go digital, entering a new phase in the life of the *Arizona Journal*. The decision to go on-line was not an easy one. Executive Editor Malcolm Compitello, whose father worked for a press located under the Brooklyn Bridge for many years, in addition to being involved on the intellectual side of journal editing, was in love with the mechanical process itself. I was concerned about what would happen to the journal's circulation and that we would lose some control over the content and layout if the journal were given over to others. Only after many consultations with editors of other Hispanic Studies journals and our friends at the Council of Editors of Learned Journals were we convinced that such a virtual leap would increase our readership and allow our Hispanic Cultural Studies community to grow and, more importantly, diversify even further.

The definition of the field is in constant flux, responding to new institutional, political and intellectual shifts and reconsiderations. In the realm of theory, we at times manage to look past our obsession with the new long enough to look at previous concepts of culture and its production and reception. Sometimes, however, these previous theories seem inadequate to the task of describing the new technologies and increasingly fragmented subcultures that employ them. This new technology has sparked debates about issues that lie at the heart of Cultural Studies itself, and most of these issues have to do with materiality. One of the things that I have found to be most pervasive in the work of those who engage in Cultural Studies is the following question: how does one balance close textual analysis with the historical, social and economic information that provides a sufficient context within which the text can be understood? In other words, how does one respect the particularities of a text while emphasizing its materiality? The essays in this volume provide us with a variety of models. Maribel Álvarez, for example, in her essay "Food, Poetry, and Borderlands Materiality: Walter Benjamin at the Taquería" gets

straight to the point when she argues that the problem with many attributions of the magical realist style to literatures concerned with subaltern positions (as well as with other similarly metaphorized cultural zones such as the U.S.-Mexico border) is the tendency to steer interpretation in a direction that favors the colorful, quaint, and other-worldly imprint of ethnic storytelling, at the expense of more specific material and historical considerations.

The entirety of this volume of the *Arizona Journal*, in fact, can be seen as a series of struggles to make a new compact with the concept of materiality and everyday life. It is appropriate that in this our first digital, on-line volume, J. Andrew Brown explores two recent Latin American novels about hackers and hacker ideology, rethinking the Latin American technological landscape in light of the neoliberal policies that have facilitated the spread of computer culture and the users who support, abuse and subvert it. Daniel Chávez “globalizes tequila” in his discussion of representations of the neoliberal reconversion of land and labor in recent Mexican television. Monika Szumilak explores the political and cultural project of the Madrid feminist collective “Precarias a la deriva,” whose understanding of actual urban space (here the neighborhood of Lavapiés) and how it can be represented on-line provides a new and powerful forum for the sharing of ideas about how to promote social justice on both the local and global scales. Both canonical and more popular, recent novels are put in a new light in this issue as well. Matthew Marr looks at José Ángel Mañas’s bestseller *Historias del Kronen* through the lens of the homoerotic found in Brett Easton Ellis’s *Less than Zero*, *American Psycho* and post-punk music. Nicola Gilmour examines the ongoing renegotiation of Spain’s relationship to its Islamic past in Antonio Gala’s *La pasión turca*, examining the novel as a dissenting vision of Spain’s current construction of its national identity as a thoroughly European nation. José Domínguez Búrdalo looks for a new reading of Juan Goytisolo’s novel *Señas de identidad* through a understanding of Goytisolo’s non-fiction and autobiographical writing. Eugenia Afínoguénova similarly traces a theory of the time-space dialectic of everyday life in the poetry and political essays of Manuel Vázquez Montalbán.

Along these same lines, the hybridization of high and popular culture in the género chico in the late Nineteenth century is put into greater context by Lucy Harney, who argues for a new way to look at the dynamics of mass entertainment genres in order to demonstrate how social, political and market factors provide mechanisms of both control and resistance among the producers and audiences in Spanish theater. Eva Woods provides an innovative way to understand a complicated film, Benito Perojo’s 1926 *El negro que tenía el alma blanca*, as structured around contradictory modes of representation relying on eighteenth-century natural science and the Nineteenth-Century classification of difference with new and daring interpretations of racial difference, sex and gender roles that were infiltrating Spain in the 1920s under the labels of negritude, the “New Woman” and cosmopolitanism. As we prepare to send the contents of the journal via a new medium to destinations even more unknown than in the past decade, the sense here at the *Arizona Journal* is that we are losing our connection to the material. Will we miss our shining shelves lined with copies of past issues? But then again, as many of these essays so expertly remind us, our ownership and control of the material world was never as secure as we thought. Pilar Aymerich, the Catalan photographer whose photograph of smiling clandestine union leaders looking directly into the camera, taken in the Spring of 1976, graces the cover of this issue, says in the interview with Maria Nilsson that she realizes that her photographs are open to interpretation, dependent on and vulnerable to context, and that referential links are weakened with time. We thank her for sharing her work with us and will do our best to take a cue from her as we construct our own interpretations and meanings.

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