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Argentina: Stories for a Nation (review)

Daniel Balderston

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in the second half of the eighteenth century, and prosecutions of religious dissent became more uncommon, as the Inquisitors concentrated mostly on censorship. He points out, however, that the French Revolution, the Napoleonic invasion, and conservative elements in the newly independent Latin American nations reinforced Catholic orthodoxy for a time, but the overall trend was toward greater freedom of conscience and choice in religious matters.

The thesis that a long tradition of religious tolerance existed throughout the Spanish and Portuguese Empires is intriguing, yet the evidence presented in *All Can Be Saved* leaves the reader with a series of unanswered questions. How representative were these dissident common folk, and how widely accepted were their unorthodox beliefs? After all, people brought before the Inquisition were guilty of actions that most citizens apparently accepted as transgressions or even serious crimes, for without popular support the Inquisition's power would have withered, as it did by the late eighteenth century. Moreover, Schwartz admits that these dissenters were likely a minority in their own societies, and it is difficult to determine from the Inquisition cases presented just how these unorthodox ideas shaped popular attitudes throughout the Iberian Atlantic world over time. In addition, how did these ideas change over time, and what was the nature of their relationship to the spread of religious tolerance by the late eighteenth century? Even a quantitative analysis of these cases (which Schwartz self-consciously decides not to employ) would have provided few convincing answers to such questions. Nonetheless, Stuart Schwartz has provided an ambitious study of religious tolerance and dissidence that encompasses the whole Iberian Atlantic world over a long time period, and his provocative thesis will undoubtedly provoke controversy and stimulate new research.

KENNETH J. ANDRIEN
The Ohio State University

KAMINSKY, AMY K. *Argentina: Stories for a Nation*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2008. 283 pp.

Amy Kaminsky's earlier books consolidated her reputation as an original and wide-ranging critic of Hispanic literatures. *Reading the Body Politic* (1992) is an important intervention in debates about gender and sexuality in Latin American literature. In *After Exile* (1999), she told the story of Latin American exile literature—a fairly familiar story by now—through looking at literary production not in Spanish but in the languages of countries where some of the exiles ended up (particularly Swedish, since that is a language she herself knows well). Her anthol-

ogy *Waterlilies* (1995) is a fascinating selection of women's writing from Spain from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries. And now she has published *Argentina: Stories for a Nation*, which focuses on representations of Argentina in a wide variety of literatures, including, but certainly not circumscribed by, its own national literature.

In this book, Kaminsky looks mostly at representations of Argentina in literary texts in English, French, Yiddish, German, and Italian (as well as some in Spanish by Spaniards as well as by Argentines), and in films made by directors as diverse as Alan Parker, Martin Donovan, and Wang Kar-Wai. Some of the texts she looks at are rather repellent: this is the case with Lawrence Thornton's trilogy on the Argentine Dirty War, or the earlier travel essays by Count Keyserling. Kaminsky's readings of them, though, are patient and intelligent. She explains (better than anyone else has to date, in any language) what Victoria Ocampo thought she saw in Keyserling, and how the (rather comic) misunderstandings between them culminate in Ocampo's rebuttal of Keyserling's account of Argentina, published some years after the latter's death. Kaminsky compellingly shows how important Argentina has been to the world imagination, from Sholom Aleichem and Isaac Bashevis Singer to Claudio Magris and Judith Katz. Kaminsky's work is well-grounded in Argentine writing on Argentina, but she brings together a fascinating international body of texts that show that Argentine self-representations were far from the only ones.

The book is organized in eleven fairly short chapters. The first, "Bartered Butterflies," focuses on the ways in which Victoria Ocampo submits to Virginia Woolf's exoticizing fantasies of the Argentine pampas by sending her some preserved butterflies (from Brazil!). The second, on identity narratives, focuses particularly on Graciela Scheines's and Hugo Biagini's book-length essays on Argentine culture, teasing out of them a fascinating discussion of Argentina's cultural dependence on external images of itself. The third, "Imperial Anxieties," considers British images of Argentina from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, particularly in Wilde, Conrad, and Christie. The fourth, "Europe's Uncanny Other," examines how Argentina is gendered female, and rendered Indian, in works that range from Claudio Magris and Sylvia Iparraguirre to Nathan Englander, Azorín and Carmen Nestares. The fifth concerns Victoria Ocampo's complex relations with Count Keyserling, whose "othering" of her country she does not respond to publicly until after his death. Chapter six, "The Race for National Identity," analyzes representations of race, including the comic strip that features the Indian cacique Patoruzú and the representation of Blacks and Indians in *El gaucho Martín Fierro*. The seventh chapter, "The Other Within," concerns representations of Jewishness in Argentine culture from Borges and Magris to Antonio Muñoz Molina and Dominique Bona, including discussions of visual artists Michiko Hoshino (Japan), Vija Spekke (Lithuania-Italy) and Jules Kirschenbaum (US); a fascinating section

focuses on images of Argentina in the novels of Judith Katz and Isaac Bashevis Singer. The eighth, "The Outlaw Jews of Buenos Aires," continues the analysis of Singer and Katz, showing how they (and earlier, Sholem Aleichem) grapple with the presence of Jewish groups in "white slavery" and prostitution in Argentina early in the twentieth century (also the subject of a well-known historical study, Donna Guy's *Sex and Danger*). The ninth, "Dirty War Stories," focuses on international representations of the military dictatorship of 1976–1983, with particular attention to Lawrence Thornton's Dirty War trilogy (of which the first novel, *Imagining Argentina*, was the best known), Douglas Unger's *Voices from Silence*, and Manuel Vázquez Montalbán's *Quinteto de Buenos Aires*; an eloquent final section concerns V. S. Naipaul's essay "The Return of Eva Perón." The tenth, "Violent Exclusions," analyzes films such as Robert Duvall's *Assassination Tango*, Wang Kar-Wai's *Happy Together*, and Martin Donovan's *Apartment Zero*, showing how these works explore the connections between sexual repression and state violence. The final chapter, "The Persistence of Memory," continues this exploration of cinematic representations by looking at Alan Parker's *Evita* (and the much earlier *Down Argentine Way* and *You Were Never Lovelier*); the final pages sum up the ways in which Argentina is represented as familiar and other in works by Blasco Ibáñez, Dominique Bona, and several recent films on tango.

Kaminsky's work is polemical in the best sense of that term. She grapples with the ways in which familiar explanations are inadequate, looking at things from different angles. Even as early as *Reading the Body Politic* her account of the uses of feminist theory in the field of Latin American literature grappled with linguistic and cultural difference, though ultimately the kind of gender analysis that she argued for, and the word *género* itself, did come to the fore in work on the topic in Latin America. In recent work, she brings layers of complexity to her discussions of sex, gender, sexuality, national identity, and linguistic self-fashioning. Kaminsky once again in *Argentina: Stories of a Nation* reveals her intellectual curiosity and wide-ranging knowledge, bringing together texts and problems that no one had thought to bring together before; she finds connections, and explores tensions, in a way that I can only call eloquent.

DANIEL BALDERSTON
University of Pittsburgh

HOOPER, KIRSTY. *A Stranger in My Own Land: Sofía Casanova, a Spanish Writer in the European Fin de Siècle*. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt UP, 2008. 235 pp.

Female writers and female writing have always been topics of interest for critics and scholars alike. It appears, however, that Spanish female writers and their