

Hay que reconocer que el presente volumen contribuye con sus temas transdisciplinarios y sus nuevas formas precursoras al campo de investigación. Se acerca a la obra de Frida Kahlo con una verdadera seriedad, trascendiendo interpretaciones bien conservadoras y métodos positivistas al respecto, y aplicando teorías (trans-)culturales conformes al tiempo de la artista misma, representando así un acercamiento distinguido y loable.

Dirk Brunke
(Ruhr-Universität Bochum)

Rike Bolte / Susanne Klengel (eds.) (2013): *Sondierungen. Lateinamerikanische Literaturen im 21. Jahrhundert*. Frankfurt a.M. / Madrid: Vervuert / Iberoamericana, 280 páginas.

Explorations. Latin American literatures of the 21st century is an anthology (2 introductory articles, 12 analytical articles and an interview with Lina Meruane) that strives to explore the tendencies of particular Latin American authors who continue, transform or go beyond the post-boom aesthetics of McOndo and the Crack generation. In their introduction, editors Rike Bolte and Susanne Klengel elaborate on 21st century literature and they state that one main characteristic feature of the new millennium is that – in contrast to the affirmative discourses of Latin American alterity that characterized boom-literature – the authors focus here upon what they define as "world literature" or "global literature" (7), something which can be regarded as a reaction to the implications of the evermore economically, ecologically and medially globalized Latin American social context with its strong migration movements and the loss of the connection between identity and region/nation/Latin America ('emigrated literature'). The analyzed works of prose literature show a conscious negation of limiting their content and aesthetics to a specifically Latin American context. The central theoretical reference of this anthology is the theory developed by German cultural theorist Ottmar Ette. His terms "literature in movement" (2001) and "literature without permanent residence" (2005) exemplify the general direction of this theoretical framework.

Michi Strausfeld – the *grande dame* of the German editorial scene, passionately and successfully dedicated to promoting Latin American literature and its translation – gives a very personal and useful survey of the literary developments in the last six decades and their reception in Germany. As for the literature of the 21st century, Strausfeld makes a number of pertinent observations, while emphasizing that ten years is not enough to talk of definite characteristic features: i.e. variety of genres, topics of continental/global or specifically subject-

related context rather than national interest, no longer committed intellectuals such as Mario Vargas Llosa. Strausfeld pays special attention to the fact that female writers now have equal opportunities in the field of literature. The twelve essays confirm Strausfeld's observations.

Ingrid Simson's article 'Roberto Bolaño's version of memory: Silence, irony and emotional emptiness in *Nocturno de Chile*' reads this short novel (2000) as an exceptional variant of *memoria*-literature because the narrator-protagonist is a sympathizer of Pinochet's dictatorial regime. His emotional emptiness, indifference and absolute narcissism constitutes an example of the so-called "literature of coldness" (60), which Simson also reads in a metapoetic way as questioning the social commitment of intellectuals – the protagonist himself is a literary critique. A comparable 'coldness' is detected by Stefanie Fleischmann in Tomás González' *Los caballitos del diablo* (2003). The semantics of emotional coldness and the negation of empathy in the novel's nameless protagonist is the crucial point of this narrative. Although the reader is encouraged to think about why the protagonist constructs a paradise-like *finca* to lock out the brutal social reality of the *narco*-stricken Medellín of the 1970s, there is no discourse about the background of his emotional coldness. The same narrative technique of withholding essential information is applied by Ricardo Chávez-Castañeda in *La conspiración idiota* (2003). Christiane Quandt's concise analysis illustrates that the narration's poly-perspectivity and its fragmented narrative structure produce a high degree of disorientation and a situation in which the reader is asked to look for narrative coherence. The anonymous first person narrator hesitates to deliver the crucial piece of information – the reader has to wait until the very end of the story until he knows the reason why the protagonists were split up – and pursues a narrative style of fragmentation, illustrating his cut-up memory and hybrid identity. Gesine Müller goes a step further with her worthwhile analysis of Raphaël Confiand's *Adèle et la pacotilleuse* (2005) and her theory of identity. In her various publications, Gesine Müller has already explored the Caribbean as a Latin American region with a high output of innovative theory, taking into consideration the term "in-between" from post-colonial studies (215). A "pacotilleuse" – a female merchant travelling between the islands of the Antilles – is taken as a symbol of what Müller calls "archipelisation", a metaphor for the overcoming of closed national borders (214) and for a farewell to all identity-constructing models. That the topic of identity is still prevalent in literature is also shown by Susanne Klengel's convincing investigation into the inverted Mexican *Bildungsroman*, *El huésped* (2006) by Guadalupe Nettel. The first-person narrator Ana tells the story of her social decline from middle class bourgeoisie to a marginalized life amongst the poor and blind who live in the subway tunnel system of Mexico City. The unreliability of the narrator is a manifestation of Ana's

schizophrenia and her constant shifting between reality and insanity. Guadalupe Nettel's story ends in the underground with a worm's-eye-view as it were, on society, evoking ideas of the *pícaro* style of narration. Marco Thomas Bosshard investigates another form of this inverted narrative view in his remarkable article on Luis Rafael Sánchez' novel *Indiscreciones de un perro gringo* (2007) and Lucía Puenzo's *El niño pez* (2004). In both texts, dogs are the narrators. They show not only an ironic, parodistic way of narrating, but also of dealing with the heritage of magic realism and the modern world. These novels with their "perspectiva canina" (242) ask the reader to take a position as if they were reading a García Márquez' magic realism novel. At the same time they break up the common level of expectations of both magic realism and the McOndos and Crackeros because they follow a demythifying agenda – Sánchez demythifies the modern myth of Bill Clinton. Bosshard argues that the texts imply a re-politicization of literature.

Whereas all these novels 'tell' something, Berit Callsen investigates Mario Bellatin's experimental novels *Flores* and *Shiki Nagaoka, una nariz de ficción* (2001) and proves that it is not the narration of events which is the main focus of this self-reflexive text, but the topic of perception. The narrative distance between narrator and diegesis is immense. Auctorial narrators, who keep their distance from the narration, may be a reflex to the ever dominating depiction of violence, as also seen in the collection of short stories *De fronteras* by Claudia Hernández (2007). Alexandra Ortiz Wallner argues that the genre of the short story allows for a concise representation and therefore a specifically forensic perspective on the shocking realities of violence. A dehumanized society which has accepted the omnipresence of death, violence and the commercialization of the body – as also in the neo-baroque novel *Fruta podrida* (2007) by Lina Meruane – is reflected in the cynical and sober tones of narration. Rike Bolte ventures a feminist and ecocritical reading of Lina Meruane's novel, convincingly arguing that Meruane utters her feminist ecocriticism by means of neo-baroque literary strategies. Neo-baroque and feminist writing is also present in *Dedo negro com unha* by Daniel Pellizzari (2005). Furthermore, Georg Wink shows in his article that this brilliant piece of post-modern non-sense literature with its extremely high degree of playful intertextuality cannot be classified as 'Brazilian' literature, confirming the idea of 'global literature'. Ida Danciu analyses Antonio José Ponte's novel *Contrabando de sombras* (2002) and situates it between fantasy and carnivalesque-grotesque writing. In her wonderful article on Andrés Neumanns *El viajero del siglo* (2009), Jenny Haase outlines and paradigmatically applies Ottmar Ette's theory. This historical novel – set in 19th century Romantic Germany – draws a monumental allegory of the literatures without fixed residence. The protagonists and the narrator lead a discourse about

literature and define it as *per se* open and transnational, stating that literature cannot be located geographically and culturally.

Reading between the lines – despite the fact that all the authors of this anthology state that this is a vain venture – the authors of all articles cannot resist drawing general conclusions about the tendencies of Latin American literature of the 21st century: narrating a world without stating its emotional or ethical relevance (167), coldness as a topic and as a characteristic feature of the narrators, a tendency to leave collectiveness behind and to focus on the needs and afflictions of the individual (203), a tendency to focus on things which are perceptible (151), strong intertextuality, polyphony, dialogicity, reference and fare-well to literary traditions. I strongly recommend this anthology to any reader interested in Latin American literature, its latest developments, its most influential authors and, above all, in current literary and cultural theories applicable to these new literary tendencies. Although name-dropping sometimes seems to have become a current tendency of scientific (neo-baroque?) writing, this compilation of articles is extremely helpful reading for lecturers and *aficionados* to find their way around the still undiscovered jungle of post-post-modern Latin American writing.

Martina Meidl

(Alpen-Adria-Universität Klagenfurt)

Javier Ordiz (ed.) (2014): *Estrategias y figuraciones de lo insólito en la narrativa mexicana (siglos XIX-XXI)*. Berna: Peter Lang, 231 páginas.

El presente volumen abarca ocho ensayos dedicados a la literatura fantástica y géneros colindantes en el México de los siglos XIX-XXI. Les preceden una sinopsis brindada por José Carlos González Boixo y una aproximación teórica por David Roas.

Frente a la tendencia de igualar lo "fantástico" con lo "maravilloso", prevalente en la crítica anglosajona, Roas propone una taxonomía diferenciada y próxima a la tradición crítica francesa y lusitana. Contradiendo a Todorov, no concibe como efecto principal de lo "fantástico" –la primera de cuatro categorías propuestas– la vacilación del lector entre una lectura racional y otra irracional. El mayor impacto de lo fantástico reside, según Roas, en la puesta en cuestión de nuestra noción de realidad.

La diferencia entre lo fantástico y lo "maravilloso", la categoría segunda, es neta. El concepto de maravilloso dibujado por Roas corresponde a la terminología empleada por Freud y Todorov, entre otros. Como híbridos pueden considerarse los géneros del maravilloso cristiano y del