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Monograph «Violence and Identity Representations in Latin America»

> En pocos segundos, comenzaron los alaridos, las carreras, los tropezones. Nadie sabía muy bien cómo reaccionar. Algunos pocos se agacharon a atender a los heridos. Los policías y los soldados actuaron con violencia: hicieron su trabajo. Cumplieron con su entrenamiento. Entraron en la multitud repartiendo golpes, gritos, empujones. Un oficial llegó incluso a disparar hacia el cielo. Una ráfaga contra las nubes. Pero Latinoamérica se parece muy poco a las películas, incluso a sus propias películas. Las balas al aire sólo provocaron más histeria, más estampidas.
> Alberto Barrera Tyszka, «Balas perdidas»

The articles that comprise the current monographic section revisit from different disciplines and cultural registers the forms of exclusion implicit in the technologies of violence as correlative to identity fictions in Latin America. It is not accidental, then, that all the texts collected here bear witness to the arbitrariness that underlies identity discourses, their metaphors and representations. Nor is it by chance that each of the texts revisits the epistemological violence that is exercised in the "foundation" of subjects, bodies, memories, communities and nations which, as the epigraph states, bear little resemblance to their representations and which are far from the supposed normality of a social contract, far from forms of individual and collective recognition that are claimed to be "natural" and necessary.

In "Body Cultures: the Venezuelan 'Holy' Family", Javier Guerrero —guest specialist for this monographic issue— revisits the violence exercised in the metaphors of the "national Venezuelan body", from the articulation of recent events that took place in that country, in which the deformation of the body of the "Venezuelan holy family" became the signifier. From the metaphor of a national fracture, this signifier has restored and re-founded the conservative origins of a nation and an imaginary that excludes in its heteronormative and hegemonic reorganization all racial, sexual and class dissidence of the subjectivities that resist normalization and recognition by power discourses. The body is also the place where Diego Falconí places the forms of violence exerted on subjects whose sexualities discuss the heteronormativity and patriarchy as defined in the canon of Andean literature of the beginning of the 20th century. In "Pablo Palacio: Body Violence on Impossible Identities of the Andean region", Falconí covers two stories of the Ecuadorian writer to account for a fiction whose characters inhabit the border of representation, precisely because of their resistance to being codified within parameters that violate their visibility, through the control and surveillance of bodies and sexualities. In front of these parameters, the impossibility of the representation of difference-inhabiting identities is recognised.

Representation is also central for Carlos Garrido Castellano in his "Celebrated, Dispossessed and Adored. Representations of the Hero's Tragic Destiny in Contemporary Caribbean Visual Imageries". Here he approaches the strategies of three Caribbean artists —Marcos Lora Read (Dominican Republic), Javier Castro (Cuba) and Ebony Patterson (Jamaica)— who take the hero's defeat as starting point to re-write the discourses that have exerted violence from their colonial origins on Caribbean imageries, and which continue to exert their power in the imposition of contemporary neoliberal and globalised economies on peripheral societies and territories such as the Caribbean islands. If in the texts of Guerrero and Falconí representation determined the boundary with which the technologies of violence reinforce the norm, the order and the social contract, Garrido's study is able to show through the work of these artists that there is a subversive element in defeat; the hero stops being the idealization of a homogeneous group, to start signifying the cross-border identities and conflicts that characterise contemporary Caribbean societies. As we will see, Garrido celebrates from the work of these artists the possibilities of an aesthetic, political and symbolic resistance with which contemporary art in the Caribbean discusses the limits between high and popular culture, and mostly de-ritualizes heroism in making individuals —who recognise themselves in inequality, exclusion and the periphery— victorious in defeat.

The transgressive possibilities of outlaw subjects take Sonia Barrios Tinoco in "The Construction of Identity from Violence: Joaquín Murrieta's Corrido" to inquire into the figure of a hero whose defeat was reappropriated by a borderline collective other —first the Mexican, then the Chicano— who restores their dignity in violence as counter-hegemonic response and identity counter-discourse. Thus, from a survey of the oral and written registers that immortalised the figure of this villain, Barrios shows how processes of symbolic resistance operate in the identity fictions of minority collectives, oppressed and crossed by cultural differences; she also reveals how the logic of violence can reassert and empower the very same subjects who inhabit the space of abjection, the "atravesados" of Anzaldúa, those who live in the forbidden territory of the border: "the squint-eyed, the perverse, the queer, the troublesome, the mongrel, the mulato, the half breed, the half dead", all those subjects who trespass the limits of the norm and in whose actual being and inhabiting that border lies the threat of violence. In this same context we find the work of Patricia Carmello in "Mixed World, Rebel World: on Violence in *Grande Sertão: veredas* [The Devil to Pay in the Backlands], by Guimarães Rosa", who re-reads one of the most important fictions in Brazilian literature to investigate the intricacies of an imaginary and subjects excluded from the official records of a modern nation that looked for Juscelino Kubitschek's development project. In addition and above all, the work reflects on the violence that occurs in the fragmentary memory and the relevance in fiction, associated to the repression exerted on those groups that do not have the right to remember and construct their own history/ies. Finally, it is also towards the registers of memory, the discursive fictions and language's ability to name or hide imposed in repressive systems that Erika Martínez Cabrera directs her attention. In "Speaking to the Hollow: Silence and Memory in the Last Argentinean Dictatorship" the author shows how the Argentinean dictatorship imposed its terror in the control of the linguistic signifier with its repeated necessity to exert violence through the denial of those lives erased from the system of social intelligibility. Violence, as Judith Butler points out, renews itself in front of its apparent inexhaustible object.

The pathway suggested by these texts and points of views forces us to bring up other forms of violence for discussion, those exerted on bodies and identities in Latin America that even though they are not studied in these essays cannot be left aside in the reflection on the political relevance of representation and epistemic violence of identities. So, in addition to the research carried out in the texts that make up this monographic section, it is essential to find tools that could help us understand and intervene from our critical position the massacre of women in Ciudad Juárez, the multiple murders that occur in Mexico because of drug trafficking, as well as the logics behind the popularity of young gangs in areas of extreme poverty of Central America and the United States. On the other hand, we must also consider from an ethical and responsible position how to think about urban and institutional violence in Venezuela, without condemning crime and its protagonists to otherness. The challenge lies without a doubt in how we approach a more inclusive —and even more ethical—proposal in relation to the possibilities of restoring citizenship agreements, if identity and the discourses that construct it restore its epistemological violence when fear is the only experience shared that defines the ways of collective non-coexistence of subjects in cities like Caracas… How do we understand differences then? What language is spoken by the rules? What does it mean to be human in this context? Who has the right to inhabit life? How do we claim the right to inhabit life in these scenarios of violence? Still today —more than ever— it is in these and other contexts that the answer lies in the recognition of differences.

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