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# Reviewed Work(s): Satire in Colonial Spanish America: Turning the New World Upsidedown by Julie Greer Johnson

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Review

Reviewed Work(s): Satire in Colonial Spanish America: Turning the New World Upside down by Julie Greer Johnson

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lack thereof. I personally would like to have seen included some of the following names: Donoso, Ferre, Fuentes, Pacheco, Poniatowska, Sabato, Skarmeta, and Vargas Llosa. And feminist scholars will more than likely take issue with the decision to include only six women out of the forty-five writers represented.

My principal criticism of this volume, however, is the lack of introductory comments on the authors and works. The editor has stated in his "Prefacio" that these introductions have purposely been omitted because the volume is expected to be used in conjunction with *Handbook of Latin American Literature*, where the necessary information on the authors and works can be found. It seems impractical, however, to expect students still struggling with the language to search in a separate volume (probably on reserve in the library) for information that could easily be provided in the anthology. Thus, the absence of introductions will, I suspect, leave many students in a temporal and spatial vacuum while, at the same time, placing an unnecessary burden on the instructor.

But these defects notwithstanding, *Literatura hispanoamericana* provides an impressive amount of excellent materials chosen by a leading expert in the field.

George R. McMurray  
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**Julie Greer Johnson. *Satire in Colonial Spanish America: Turning the New World Upside Down*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993. 203p.**

Por diferentes razones, el estudio de la sátira no ha ocupado nunca un lugar preeminente en las historias de la literatura hispana, y mucho menos en el período colonial. Estas premisas hacen que este libro sea recibido con agrado. Los autores que Johnson estudia son: Cristóbal de Llerena, Mateo Rosas de Oquendo, Juan Rodríguez Freile, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Juan del Valle y Caviedes, Alonso Carrión de la Vándera, Esteban Terrella y Landa, y Francisco Javier Eugenio de Santa Cruz y Espejo. El libro está dividido en tres partes: siglos dieciseis, diecisiete y dieciocho. En

este sentido hay que destacar el estudio del siglo XVII, ya que la atención de la crítica ha estado dirigida tanto al XVI, el primero tras la conquista, el de las crónicas, o el XVIII, de asentamiento criollo y previo a la independencia.

La premisa principal de Johnson con respecto a esta sátira es: "their literary dismantling of imperial Spain as the indisputable symbol of political and religious power and as the primary source of social and cultural dynamics in the New World" (xvii). Según leemos en el subtítulo estos autores pusieron el Nuevo Mundo boca abajo. La crítica trabaja del siguiente modo, describe el texto y subraya los puntos que sustentan su tesis, pero esto no es tan fácil según se exponen los datos. La explicación simbólica de Johnson se presenta como un análisis histórico, pero en definitivas cuentas, lo que hay es pensamiento y estética modernos; y no es basa en la moderna historiografía, que no está presente en la bibliografía del libro, por ejemplo para el siglo XVII, el trabajo ya clásico de TePaske y Klein de 1981. Así, España no es más que la otredad ya explicada por Octavio Paz, por ejemplo, al comentar un *entremés* de Llerena (p. 30), la crítico lee el *entremés* como si de un verdadero libro de historia se tratara. Una de las palabras clave que usa Johnson es *subversive*, pero no se ofrecen datos históricos que sustenten esta subversión. Otro ejemplo: "the obsessive legalism of the Spaniards that slowed the process of colonial administration and at times impaired its ability to function altogether" (p. 61). Esta es una lectura contemporánea sobre la función de la burocracia en el estado moderno, que no se debería aplicar a la necesidad de crear una legalidad de corte occidental en las nuevas colonias.

Daniel R. Reedy en su "foreword" a *Satire in Colonial Spanish America* explica el proceso de la tesis de Johnson, pero él advierte que "this process should not be construed necessarily as the product of a *conscious* political stance by writers from diverse periods of time and different regions of the viceregal world. Rather, their attitudes *seem* to be the result of an *unconscious* and individual orienta-

tion away from the cultural, political and intellectual dominion of Spain and towards a sense of personal freedom as individuals and as societal groups" (p. x, mi énfasis). Creo que la lectura de Reedy de este libro es la única posible, porque exige del lector que crea en el inconsciente político que los autores reproducen a través de sus textos. Pero esto conlleva no pocos riesgos, ya que todo deviene una cuestión de fe. Por ejemplo, un paradigma que se repite en el libro en más de una ocasión es que el conquistador al ser tamizado por la literatura satírica se convierte en un *pícaro*, pero la definición que de éste se da es la de "rascal" (Lazarillo), sin embargo esta definición no tiene en cuenta los condicionantes históricos y sociales del pícaro tal como los presenta José Antonio Maravall en su *La literatura picaresca desde la historia social* (1986), que, por cierto, podría poner en contacto la figura del conquistador y el pícaro sin tener que recurrir a la sátira, en tanto que personajes motivados por la movilidad social. Otro ejemplo es la mujer, quien era frecuentemente el motivo de sátira misógina, pero el punto de partida de Johnson es el del modelo de mujer de la sociedad victoriana; gracias a esta distorsión, la que presentan los satíricos es mayor que la que en realidad ocurrió si se nos hubiera presentado la realidad de la mujer colonial a través del espacio y del tiempo de la colonia.

En resumen, este libro se presenta como "the first comprehensive examination of satire in the colonial era" (x). Este es su enorme mérito, amén de atraer una más que necesaria atención hacia un grupo de escritores que piden un mayor reconocimiento. Será de esperar que otros textos críticos sigan al de Johnson.

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**Dolores Moyano Martín, Ed. *Handbook of Latin American Studies: No. 52: Humanities*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993. 934p.**

Many researchers may be familiar with the *Handbook*, which has been around nearly sixty years, but *Chasqui*

editors felt that newer colleagues may want to know about it; and all readers will want to learn about changes in it. Every two years a team of scholars collaborates on this Humanities reference volume. Begun in 1935, *Handbook* issues prior to 1979 were edited by numerous learned societies and eventually by the Library of Congress. The University of Texas Press is now the publisher, though the Library of Congress still does the compiling. The volumes published during odd-numbered years (1991, 1993, but with even numbers, #50, #52) deal with the Humanities. During even-numbered years (1990, 1992) the odd-numbered issues, #49, #51, are dedicated to the Social Sciences. I know many of the contributing editors of the literature sections, and they have excellent reputations as researchers in literature. The work that they accomplish in assembling this volume every two years is truly monumental.

The book's organization is that of a commentated [annotated] bibliography of articles and books published during the previous biennium. Some entries of this number of the *Handbook* were for works published as early as 1985, but the majority were dated 1987–90. The sections of the *Handbook* are written in the language preferred by the Contributing Editors, but English prevails, except for seven sections written in Spanish (principally concerning literature and philosophy). The subject categories for volume 52 are somewhat similar to previous editions and include art, history, language (linguistics), literature, music, and philosophy—including numerous subdivisions (periods, regions, genres, etc.) of these disciplines. The areas, epochs, and languages include those of Latin America in proportion to intellectual productivity. I discovered that the section books translated from Spanish and Portuguese was extremely valuable and has continued to grow in recent years. The comments on the translations are perspicacious and objective (often an outside review is cited). Also, there is a section on works recently published dealing with theory of translation (pp. 708–711), which I found useful to share with colleagues and students.

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