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Suzanne Bost, *Shared Selves: Latinx Memoir & Ethical Alternatives to Humanism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2019, \$25.00). Pp. 147. ISBN 978 0 252 08462 1.

Laura E. Pérez, *Eros Ideologies: Writings on Art, Spirituality, and the Decolonial* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019, \$27.95). Pp. xv + 209. ISBN 978 0 8223 6938 7.

In their respective monographs, Suzanne Bost and Laura E. Pérez explore alternative modes of humanism and relationality within Latinx literary and visual cultural production of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Through literary and aesthetic explorations, Bost and Pérez surface alternative notions of the human that diverge from the humanism that emerged in the Enlightenment period, wherein the Western European man became the model of reason, agency, and individualism. Bost and Pérez's texts present aesthetic formulations of relationality divorced from a desire to master and claim ownership of the other, and instead project models of interrelationality. From this central issue, the two scholars diverge in their formal, archival, and argumentative approaches to their studies.

In *Shared Selves: Latinx Memoir & Ethical Alternatives to Humanism*, Bost contends that Latinx memoirs present aesthetic and political critiques of humanism, and craft "other-than-humanisms" in their attention to embodiment, situated communal networks, care, and agency. Bost holds up the work of Judith Ortiz Cofer, Irene Vilar, John Rechy, Aurora Levins Morales, and Gloria Anzaldúa as examples of "memoir," rather than the "transparent representation of a self" found in autobiography (12). Through the aesthetics of memoir, Latinx authors take up the genre as "a political tactic that performatively challenges the myth of the individual and requires us to think more expansively about Latinx life" (Bost 4). For Bost, Latinx memoirs exhibit "decenterings of the self as critiques of the Humanist hubris that keeps many people from recognizing the nonhuman (and even the human) others with whom we share our being" (8). While Bost is not interested in discarding the notion of the human wholesale, her aim is to "understand how we can rethink the human through its relations with other-than-human agencies and ecologies" (9).

Shared Selves – which is split into four chapters – features one interdisciplinary framework within each section to develop Bost's notion of "other-than-Humanism." In the opening chapter, Bost links the work of Judith Ortiz Cofer and Irene Vilar with feminist theory and demonstrates the ways in which the authors "create friction more than seamless narratives" through poetic fragmentation and discussions of mental illness and abortion (25). For Bost, these authors "ultimately undermine 'the ethos of individualism' and the American Dream," which disrupts the possibility of a coherent identity under the specter of migration, racism, misogyny, and colonization (20).

In chapter 2, Bost turns to John Rechy's *oeuvre* in conjunction with queer theory, which is, for me, the most generative chapter, as Bost provides a refreshing reading that reroutes notions of Latinidad through Rechy's descriptions of queer ecosystems. As Bost notes, many consider Rechy's work narcissistic and not concerned with questions of racial formation, and for this reason it is frequently left out of the Latinx literary canon. Through her critical lens, Bost surfaces Rechy's narratives as "trajectories of abjection," wherein "individuals are replaced by revolutionary actants sustaining an ecosystem that counters the ontologies and epistemologies of 'mainstream' society"

(72). Bost's attention to "other-than-human networks" compels us to read for Mexican American identity through El Paso as an "ecosystem" (72). Such a reading moves beyond transparent discussions of race and ethnicity and into a relational and aesthetic model of Latinx narrativity.

The following chapter considers ecocriticism within the literary and digital landscape of Puerto Rican author Aurora Levins Morales. Bost surfaces "ecological memoir" within Levins Morales's thematic engagement of health, food, and survival, and presents her website as an "other-than-human" entanglement that extends forms of memoir and interrelationality. Bost contends, "Communal authorship, narrative therapy, and digital exchange expand the boundaries of literary genres for twenty-first-century cultural expression" and extends the notion of healing "either through the broad dissemination of their therapeutic content or as commercial objects exchanged for products that sustain the author's life and health" (76–77).

Bost's final chapter explores Gloria Anzaldúa's personal archives through the lens of disability studies to interrogate the question of agency. Bost discusses Anzaldúa's unpublished 276-page manuscript written in the 1980s entitled *La serpiente que se come su cola* (The Snake That Eats Its Own Tale), wherein the subject dies and comes back to life multiple times, suggesting the formation of a plural self (103). Bost draws connections between disability studies and Anzaldúa's engagement with the figure of the Aztec goddess Coatlicue to consider "agency as openness, a porousness," which does not move past human agency but grapples with the entanglement of life and death (117). Overall, Bost's engagements with feminist, queer, new-media, and disability studies offer expansive insights into notions of Latinx relationality.

Laura E. Pérez's *Eros Ideologies: Writings on Art, Spirituality, and the Decolonial* presents the central notion of "eros ideologies" through sprawling meditations with and alongside a range of Latin American and US Latina/o art. Each visual text exemplifies "ideologies that center eros in positive relationships of interdependence and identity with humanity as a species that shares a common life force with the rest of the world" (10). This theme serves as the connective tissue for Pérez's archive. For Pérez, eros is the primary "energy" within the erotic, "the energy of attraction, of complementarity, of identity across difference, the desire to merge, to unify in various degrees, from good connections, to the blissful loss of self, to orgasm, and to peaceful abiding with nature" (16). Pérez traces this notion of desired shared recognition throughout her text.

Eros Ideologies impresses upon the reader a deep appreciation for Latin American and US Latina/o art. Pérez foregrounds each section with full-color images and crafts a loose formal structure which intentionally allows the reader to enter the text at any chapter. Pérez alternates between robust engagements of an artwork – its history, community context, and political intervention – and poetic, meditative reflections alongside the art. Such meditations are an attempt to

practice writing and reflection as a plentiful garden: a coexistence of different forms of knowing and expressing, a welcoming and integrating into the processes of thought and analyses, feelings, intuitions, hope, and faith in the verdant power of creativity and eros to make ourselves a way forward toward greater flowering of individual, collective, and planetary well-being. (xx)

If methodologically Bost presents relational ways of being through selected texts and interdisciplinary lenses, Pérez registers such an "ideology" of mutuality through the formal conceit of "coexistence." At times, Pérez's unconventional structure comes

at the cost of theoretical clarity, though it is a worthy objective to formally enact more opaque modes of knowledge production.

Pérez tackles a wide range of issues related to Latin American and US Latina/o visual culture, including, but not limited to, the exclusivity of museums, the representation of sexual violence, public and collaborative art projects, and the role of indigeneity within Chicana art. While I cannot do justice here to the twenty-one chapters in Pérez's text, each filled with their own discussions of numerous influential artworks, I will sketch a few notable sections which exemplify Pérez's contribution to Latinx studies and visual cultures.

While Pérez discusses the work of widely celebrated artists like Frida Kahlo, Ana Mendieta, and Ester Hernandez, Pérez often grounds her work in lesser-known US Latina/o art of the San Francisco Bay Area and southern California. In chapter 6, "'Ginas on the Atelier,'" Pérez discusses the political challenges of Oakland-based artist Faviana Rodriguez's "vagina-centered feminist art" as it relates to representations of sexual violence and transgender inclusivity (41). In chapter 9, "The @-Erotics in Alex Donis's *My Cathedral*," Pérez addresses the controversial exhibit in San Francisco's Galeria de la Raza in the historic Mission District, which featured diametrically opposed historical figures in eroticized, queer embrace, such as Hitler and an African man, and Queen Elizabeth and an Indigenous woman. While I remain personally uncertain of the affordances of Donis's work, a core aspect of Pérez's eros ideologies is that they "heal the wounds of mutually exclusive binary oppositions" (76). In chapter 11, "*Maestrapiece*: Picturing the Power of Women's Histories of Creativity," Pérez features the collaborative mural created for San Francisco's Women's Building, *Maestrapiece* (1994). Pérez argues that *Maestrapiece* is more committed to the surrounding community than to the sensibilities of the art world, and thus exemplifies eros ideologies (85). Pérez thus demonstrates that eros ideologies are collaborative and "cross-cultural," and "work toward an equitable plurality rather than an exoticification of culturally specific characteristics as exceptional differences to white culture" (89–90). Finally, in chapter 17, "Fashioning Decolonial Optics: Days of the Dead Walking Altars and Calavera Fashion Shows in Latina/o Los Angeles," Pérez pays homage to the rich tradition of communal-performance Calavera Fashion Shows, which draw connections between self-authorship, spiritual practice, and communal critiques of social repression (157). In each of these contemporary examples, Pérez demonstrates how local California artists utilize eros ideologies to grapple with the shifting landscapes of feminist Chicana art and Latinx communities.

Perhaps the largest lingering question I was left with was Pérez's stance on visual representations of indigeneity within Chicana art. This question emerged most clearly in chapter 13, "Undead Darwinism and the Fault Lines of Neocolonialism in Latina/o Art Worlds," when Pérez addresses the critique that Chicana feminist artists over-romanticize or naively oversimplify indigeneity. In response, Pérez contends that these critiques stem from post-structuralists who subscribe to "cultural Darwinism," "the Eurocentric premise that the cultures of politically, economically, and socially dominant peoples are the result of nature's own law of survival of the fittest 'races'" (113). Pérez primarily addresses a specific critique from an unnamed Chicano male artist who "publicly disparaged references to indigeneity in Chicano work in general as passé and naïve, a sure sign of backwardness, nostalgia, nationalist romanticism, and idealism" (117). Pérez argues that this perspective promotes assimilation, denies the contributions of indigenous worldviews, and incorrectly relegates

such perspectives to the past. What seems to be lost in this analysis, however, is the need for specificity when discussing indigenous cultures. While this was not one of the points raised by the unnamed male artist, it bears stating that there are crucial historical and contemporary distinctions between the racialization of Chicana/Latina populations in the US and that of First Nations and Native communities, not to mention the many urgent political and legal concerns their communities face that Latina communities do not. In a text concerning contemporary art and literature and their political concerns, these issues warrant investigation, particularly when considering indigenous cosmology, as Pérez does.

In both *Shared Selves* and *Eros Ideologies*, Bost and Pérez refer to indigenous worldviews imbued within the aesthetic and political work of their archives; however, the lack of specificity, I fear, risks undermining the political stakes of the artworks, as well as obscuring contemporary Indigenous scholarship and the material urgency of decolonization.

While Bost's and Pérez's texts differ greatly in their stylistic and scholarly approaches to Latina cultural production, both scholars seek to honor the aesthetic interventions of Latina artists and authors as part of their political projects. Both scholars highlight generative contributions to artistic practices of interrelationality, and do not reduce these artists to their political messages. In methodologically distinct ways, Bost and Pérez celebrate the ways in which Latina artists offer notions of being-with and surviving which embrace multiplicity, duality, and creatively laboring amidst and beyond suffering.

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Maryanne A. Rhett, *Representations of Islam in United States Comics, 1880–1922* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020, \$135.00 cloth, \$40.95 paper). Pp. 137. ISBN 978 1 3500 7324 1, 978 1 3501 9627 8.

Rhett's work takes the reader into a particularly knotty period for the discussion of immigration and its representation in American popular culture. Sitting between the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the Immigration Act of 1924, Rhett's book works through struggles of definition and national identity that occupied much of the political imagination and energy of both popular and elite political discourse. Rhett is able to draw out that complexity through her analysis of the cartoons she includes, bringing together very neatly ideas of how empire was racialized, sexualized, and gendered. This is worked on throughout the book, situating comic representations within broader discussions, allowing the reader to see how these representations engaged with contemporary resonances. Approaches to the First World War are nicely handled in this regard, especially with the debates around whether or not to declare war on the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent shifts in the characterization of "the Turk" and Islam that resulted from entry into the war. On the threat of the coming "race war" between the Islamic world and Christianity (in chapter 5), however, I would have liked to see this more concretely embedded in contemporary anxieties around race more generally through reference to eugenics and Nativism; chapter 4 adeptly engages with questions of women and orientalism, so it would