

1-17-2018

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MLA, 2015. ISBN: 978-1-60329-192-7.

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Recommended Citation

Herbozo, Jose (2018) "Kerr, Lucile, and Alejandro Herrero-Olaizola, eds. Teaching the Latin American Boom. New York: MLA, 2015. ISBN: 978-1-60329-192-7," *Dissidences*: Vol. 8 : Iss. 13 , Article 1.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.bowdoin.edu/dissidences/vol8/iss13/1>

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The word ‘Boom’ labels a commercial, political, and artistic impact generated by a group of 20th Century fiction writers during the late fifties and sixties in Latin America. A formation that offered a confluence of literary, ideological and commercial innovations simultaneously, the Boom still represents the last consensual period of literary excellence in Spanish. Despite this recognition, however, its connection to previous, contemporary and posthumous events still require attention from scholars and readers. Considering how the lack of consensus affects its study, *Teaching the Latin American Boom* constitutes a work that favors an informed discussion about a cluster of phenomena that has influenced posterior trends of literature, in Spanish and globally.

The volume begins with a succinct but comprehensive introduction to the Boom’s most decisive features. In agreement with other classic contributions, Kerr and Herrero-Olaizola define the Boom as a confluence of the following processes: an initial attention to Jorge Luis Borges’s works in the early 1960s; the literary and commercial success of works by Julio Cortázar, Guillermo Cabrera Infante, José Donoso, Carlos Fuentes, Gabriel García Márquez, Manuel Puig, and Mario Vargas Llosa; its controversy in the context of the Cuban Revolution; its intertextuality with Euro-American modernism; and its dissemination through Spanish publishing houses –mainly Seix Barral– to a –back then– disconnected Spanish-speaking world.

Teaching the Latin American Boom is organized in five sections. The first one, “Framing the Boom,” approaches to the Boom’s context of emergence. Naomi Lindstrom opens the first section with an essay on teaching the Boom in the 20th century Latin American generalist classroom. To delineate the Boom’s aesthetics, Lindstrom proposes a class that recreates the initial reception to Boom texts by reading them alongside works published throughout the 20th Century. The analysis of the Boom’s context continues in Debra Castillo’s essay, which analyzes the figuration of a masculine ideal at times celebrated or criticized in fiction-making. From a different perspective, Sara Castro Klaren’s article proposes teaching Donoso’s, Fuentes’ and Vargas Llosa’s fictional and nonfictional texts by describing how self-reflexive narrative strategies aid in the dramatization of problems other than those of the individual. Castro Klaren suggests teaching the Boom’s self-narratives to dismantle the commonplace which identifies the author’s persona with the text’s narrator. Lastly, Lucille Kerr expands the corpus of Boom texts to less canonical phenomena to problematize the imaginative/real dichotomy from which most students read fiction. Kerr designs a class in which short stories by Borges and Cortázar and excerpts from Boom’s novels are read in relation to works such as *I, Rigoberta Menchú*, and novels by Rosario Ferré and Ana María Shua.

The second, “Texts and context for the Boom Classroom,” discusses teaching Boom texts preceded by a strong body of criticism. Gareth Williams’ essay faces one of the harshest challenges in the Boom classroom by addressing Arguedas’ *oeuvre* in dialogue with pre and Boom approaches to cultural difference. Williams’ text addresses the difficulties of teaching a prose such as that by Arguedas’, which fictionalizes realities alien to urban or upper-class backgrounds by imitating Andean orality in Spanish and Quechua. Laura Demaría’s essay approaches to Cortázar’s fictional work focused on fictionalizations of everyday life in which literature is also discussed. Demaría recommends different ways of dealing with a body of work

that is often reduced to decontextualizing labels such as ‘fantastic’ and ‘bohemian,’ among others. Likewise, Marcy Schwartz’s article proposes reading Cortázar’s *Rayuela* as a synthesis of his different concerns. Schwartz proposes an interpretation that highlights the figuration of everyday life, emphasizing how the musical, artistic and political dimensions of *Rayuela* appear in other Cortázar’s works. An essay by Roberto Ignacio Diaz attends to the impact of baroque aesthetics in Latin American Literature by commenting on Cabrera Infante’s *Tres Tristes Tigres*. Diaz identifies how formal experimentation and baroque aesthetics are crucial to the dramatization of social change in La Havana. Lastly, Bruno Bosteels’ essay reads García Márquez’s *No one writes to the Colonel* to demonstrate how the compartmentalized production of value adopts non-capitalist forms. Considering the pedagogic horizon of this volume, Bosteels recommends pre and post Boom texts which evince an alienated coexistence with the status quo in post-post Boom narratives.

The third section, “Disseminating the Boom,” offers an approach to aspects overlooked in the study of the Boom, such as the editorial processes, the Brazilian and Cuban cultural scenes, and the initial reception of Boom novels in languages other than Spanish. Ignacio Sánchez Prado first proposes teaching the Boom following Pascale Casanova’s *The World Republic of Letters*, Franco Moretti’s *Modern Epic*, David Damrosch’s (Ed.) *Teaching World Literature*, among others, which evaluates the cosmopolitan aspirations of fictional and non-fictional reading and writing. A second text by Maria Helena Rueda addresses teaching the Boom in relation to the label ‘magical realism’. To overcome this misleading association, Rueda proposes reading pre and post Boom books together with texts identified as magical realism. By doing so, Rueda problematizes the commodification of tradition-modernity tensions in the region. From a different perspective, David William Foster and Cesar Braga-Pinto address the situation of Brazilian literature in relation to the Boom. Foster points out the exclusion of Brazilian fiction from the study of the new Latin American novel despite the cultural affinities we have with Portuguese-speaking countries. Foster recommends several readings of Brazilian fiction which would successfully evince literary and cultural affinities. Braga-Pinto revises Lispector’s fiction in the context of the Boom, the Brazilian literary canon, and its international reception and translation, demonstrating the parallel condition of exceptionality and affinity with the Boom that defines Lispector’s work. Two more articles complete this section: one by Judith Weiss studying the influence of Cuban *Casa de las Américas* and the Boom phenomena; and one another by Maria Eugenia Mudrovcic that contextualizes the Boom after the polemics among Arguedas and Cortázar. In her text, Weiss invites a reading of artistic production from the 1960s and 1970s in relation to the Casa de las Americas’ role in fostering a transnational Hispanic intellectual circuit. On a different note, Mudrovcic uses the Arguedas-Cortázar polemics to recommend creating a class focused on the tension among modern and pre-modern poetics and identities in Latin America.

The fourth section, “Legacies of the Boom,” contextualizes four post-Boom literary events that repeat the Boom’s main features. Román de la Campa’s article considers the legacies of the Boom in relation to its literary commodification, its impact in the study of Spanish in the US, post Boom and McOndo writers, and contemporary Latin American and Latino Literature. In a similar fashion, Diedra Reber explores the emergence of the McOndo manifesto and anthology as a negation of the Boom and in the light of the neoliberal turn of the 1990s. Without explicitly doing so, both articles indicate a preeminence of the Boom manifest in its capacity to present situations and realities that are still relevant. Unlike its elder pairs, most contemporary writers have delivered artifacts that, by speaking the languages of neoliberal modernization, respond to circumstantial interests and anxieties. As these articles mention, there is still an innovative

number of literary authors –some of them mentioned, some not– who maintain a polemical continuity with major Boom’s features. The final two articles study teaching Boom texts in relation to other cultural trends. Maria Cristina Pons’ article considers how to teach the new historical novel in relation to the Boom. By emphasizing how the Boom was parallel to other artistic, commercial and epochal polemics, Pons proposes a class which revises the poetics of historicity present in historical narratives which is common to pre and post Boom writing. Lastly, co-editor Alejandro Herrero-Olaizola discusses audiovisual material available on YouTube that is relevant to the teaching of Boom fiction. Herrero-Olaizola covers the use of film adaptations, interviews, documentaries, and other related media in the classroom.

Teaching the Latin American Boom comprises valuable approaches to the teaching of a period that can become a challenge in itself. In relation to other volumes, such as Ángel Rama’s edited book *Más allá del Boom*, *Teaching the Latin American Boom* provides intellectual and pedagogic strategies that are necessary to foster a fair image of the most important chapter of 20th Century Latin American literature. While it may be argued that some essays concentrate more in the academic discussion than in teaching strategies, the volume brings together a portrait of the Boom that does justice to its relevance in Spanish American and other literatures.