

- Hofmann, S. (2010) 'Corporeal Entrepreneurialism and Neoliberal Agency in the Sex Trade at the US-Mexican Border'. *Women's Studies Quarterly* 38(3/4): 233–256.
- Katsulis, Y. (2008) *Sex Work and the City: The Social Geography of Health and Safety in Tijuana, Mexico*. University of Texas Press: Austin, TX.

Kummels, Ingrid (ed.) (2012) *Espacios mediáticos: cultura y representación en México*, Edition Tranvía–Verlag Walter Frey (Berlin), x + 410 pp. €36.00 pbk.

*Espacios mediáticos: cultura y representación en México* (Mediatic Spaces: Culture and Representation in Mexico) is the first publication of the International Research Training Group 'Between Spaces. Movements, Actors and Representations of Globalisation', an interdisciplinary programme supported by various institutions in Germany and Mexico. The variety of its contents and its authors' affiliations are indicative of this transatlantic locus of enunciation, though its disciplinary perspective is predominantly anthropological. Coordinated by Dr Ingrid Kummels of the Freie Universität Berlin, the collection contains thirteen essays dedicated to the production, circulation and reception of an array of cultural practices, including photography, dress, cinema, *corridos* (traditional ballads), indigenous video, *lucha libre* (wrestling), and museums and their artefacts. As Kummels signals in her introduction, the interventions gathered here succeed in examining how various and often marginalised social actors appropriate and modify these practices in response to local conjunctures. Indeed, a chief virtue of *Espacios mediáticos* is its ability to demonstrate how the toponym of its title is neither homogenous nor fixed, but a kind of nodal point that sets its inquiries on specific practices and places in dialogue with one another; 'Mexico' emerges here less as a site of production than as a product itself, one that enters into constant tension with multiple ethnic, racial, political and transnational markers of identity. Much as curator Alexander Brust notes in his study on community museums in Oaxaca – '[e]l museo debe ser de la comunidad y no simplemente encontrarse en una comunidad' (the museum ought to be of the community and not simply find itself in a community) (p. 234) – one wonders if there exists a preposition that adequately captures the relationship that links culture and representation to Mexico.

*Espacios mediáticos* is divided into four thematic groups, which are more suggestive than descriptive; for example, Deborah Dorotinsky's study of images of childhood in the system of rural education in 1930s Mexico opens the second section, titled '*Representaciones mediáticas de la nación y de la transnación*', (Mediatic Representations of the Nation and Transnation) although it is more aligned with the three essays of the first unit than those that follow it, namely curator Maria Gaida's account of a counterfeit Mayan sculpture's reception in 1960s Berlin and Bernd Hausberger's survey of representations of the Mexican Revolution in world cinema. The other organising principle of the collection is chronological: it opens with Deborah Poole's fascinating study of photography and costume in 1920s Oaxaca, and the five subsequent chapters also focus on the first half of the twentieth century, while the remaining seven examine contemporary culture.

A common problematic shared by the second half of this collection is anticipated and put into relief by Paula López Caballero's intellectual history of how Milpa Alta, a *delegación* of the *Distrito Federal*, (a borough of Mexico City) became over the course of the twentieth century a privileged site for studying a restrictive and supposedly authentic vestige of pre-Columbian culture. This process has occurred through the participation of locals and Mexican and foreign intellectuals, and involved the codification of certain

practices (such as poetry recitals in Nahuatl) and the exclusions of others (such as dance). What the essays of the second half of *Espacios mediáticos* foreground, whether tacitly or directly, are the complex social and affective networks that link and, in some cases, mutually sustain the present-day production of a metropolitan academic discourse and certain localised forms of cultural production. Indeed, one could almost say that, until the somewhat enigmatic inclusion of the final essay of the volume, Gabriela Zamorano Villarreal's excellent study of the use of video in rural Bolivia, these studies on the contemporary moment characterise a fraught conflation of the anthropological desire to study alterity and that of its subjects, who, as Kummels notes in her introduction, '*se apropian de las tecnologías comunicativas y de los símbolos que circulan globalmente*' (appropriate communications technologies and technologies that circulate globally) (p. 12). This is most notable in José Alfredo Jiménez and Alex Köhler's exposition of collaborative video projects in Chiapas, in which their alternating, first-person singular interjections ('Yo, Axel, estuve en condiciones que me permitieron seguir estudiando más allá de la educación básica', (I, Axel, was of socioeconomic conditions that permitted me to continue my studies past basic education) p. 325) call attention to the subject positions that their self-designated decolonial project critique. In the following essay Florian Walter discusses how the documentary film *On the Road with Maruch* emerged through a partnership with the film's eponymous subject, and the colour photograph that precedes it, taken by Walter, depicts Maruch de la Cruz Pérez reading a copy of Walter's thesis about *On the Road with Maruch*. One wonders how a theoretical intervention about emerging forms of co-labour (to use Jiménez and Köhler's term) might offer a critique for helping advance future projects. Regardless, *Espacios mediáticos* points to new and potentially productive forms of cultural agency, and it is for this reason that the collection will be of great interest to those working in/on/about Latin America in various disciplines.

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Tierney, Dolores (2007) *Emilio Fernández: Pictures in the Margins*, Manchester University Press (Manchester and New York), x + 198 pp. £50.00 hbk, £14.99 pbk.

At once a chronicle and a reassessment of Emilio Fernández' career, this book is an in-depth study of one of Mexico's most critically acclaimed and recognised film directors. By exploring the complex, at times ambiguous, process of construction and signification in some of his canonical films produced between 1943 and the 1950s, Dolores Tierney sheds light on the mythology contained in the director's assertion '*¡el cine mexicano soy yo!*' ('I am the Mexican cinema!') (p. 1). More than wilful self-definition, this claim is evidence of the synthesis of personal prestige and cultural nationalism that has shaped the reception and evaluation of his work in Mexico and abroad. To that effect, the author combines detailed, close textual readings with a review of critical paradigms to propose new interpretations and, in the process, challenge those based on selective, homogenising assumptions about authorship and national cinema.

As indicated by their titles, Chapters 1 ("Poor reception" and the popular: the history of classical Mexican cinema and its scholarship') and 2 ("El indio" Fernández: Mexico's marginalised golden boy and national auteur') cover the development Mexican cinema

from 1886 to the 1940s and the director's professional activities. Concurrently, Tierney undertakes a critical assessment of the popular culture and auteurism, designed to reveal their impact on Mexican film historiography and Fernández' scholarship. With this approach, she sets up a contextual and methodological framework aimed at putting to the test unquestioned claims about thematic coherence, cultural authenticity and conservative nationalism. As she states, her goal is to 'counter the moral intentionality that is said to characterise most of Fernández' work' (p. 35) by exploring tensions, fissures and inconsistencies in the films by means of a meticulous study and an engagement with their multivalent meanings and aesthetic wealth.

A case in point is Chapter 3 ('Calendar María: hybridity, *indigenismo* and the discourse of whitening'), in which Tierney counters conventional readings of *María Candelaria*. Rather than insisting on essentialist notions, she proposes that its 'representation of the *indígena* embodies a hybrid and incoherent identity' (p. 75). To demonstrate how the film draws at once on pre- and post-revolutionary discourses, she identifies numerous citations and formal affinities with the visual production and ideologies of *indigenismo* and modernisation. Reinforced by cinematic lighting, framing, costume and speech, this reflexivity reproduces binary racial and moral stereotypes that were disseminated equally by Mexican and Hollywood cinema. In the brief, but not less significant commentaries on *Maclovía* (1948) and *La perla* (1945), she acknowledges both the films' representational links with the idealised and folkloric portrayals current in the 1930s and their critical perspectives on assimilation, resistance and individual identity, thus countering evaluations that disregard the ambiguities of *indigenista* discourses and aesthetic complexity of Fernández' films.

Similarly, in Chapters 4 and 5, she moves beyond standard evaluations about gender by concentrating on the re-negotiations of masculinity ('Gender and sexuality in the Revolution: *Enamorada*') and femininity ('Gender, sexuality and the Revolution: *Salón México*, *Las Abandonadas* and *Víctimas del pecado*'). An attentive analysis of stylistic and generic features sustains her counter-arguments on the films' representation of gender constructs and male-biased themes of post-revolutionary Mexican cultural nationalism. Particularly relevant are the comments drawing on revisionist readings of the melodrama and musical genres that reveal the musical numbers in *Salón México* and *Víctimas del pecado* as destabilising instances because they either posit the mutual interdependence of moral and social dichotomies or assert alterity, namely the Afro-Mexican presence or the cabaret dancer's erotic agency.

Chapter 6 ('Progress, modernity and Fernández' "anti-modernist" utopia: *Río Escondido*') constitutes in my view the best example of Tierney's revisionist undertaking. As she notes, the film 'threatens the myth of the revolution (and more significantly Alemán's discourse of progress and modernity) in its depiction of the underdevelopment of Río Escondido' (p. 150). Disjunctions between the past and the present set up in the opening sequences underline the tensions between the portrayal of rural realities and the state-sanctioned iconography of nationalism, in the same way as representations of the barren landscape and oppressed, but not passive, villagers signal aesthetic and narrative discrepancies with previous rural films 'to reveal the stalling of the Revolutionary process' (p. 156).

The scholarly significance of *Emilio Fernández: Pictures in the Margins* resides in Tierney's ability to focus on divergences, not just parallels, between the films and high-light local, national and transnational convergences in the director's work. Moreover, her analysis is validated by a systematic dismantling of the biographical obfuscations that nourish the 'Fernández' legend and the critical grids that overlook the multiple, complex