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Introduction

On behalf of the Editorial Board, I am pleased to present the XLIV volume of *Mester*, which offers a focus on the subject of Mass Media, Culture and Society. Our aim with this theme is to engage critically with the way society has responded to mass media discourses, studying the interplay between “high” culture and mass and popular culture. The main objective is to bring together a series of studies that deal with mass media’s influence in culture and society from diverse manifestations and moments in history, paying particular attention to mass media’s political, esthetic and social implications.

As a result of our call for submissions, this issue of *Mester* offers the reader five articles, an essay and one interview dedicated to the theme of mass media centered around Peru, Cuba and Chile. To start, Marlon Aquino analyzes the topic of cloning in Clemente Palma’s science fiction novel XYZ as an allegory of the dangers of modernity in the Peruvian society of the 1930s. Aquino explores the echoes between biological cloning and mental or cultural cloning, e.g., the loss of individuality, the uniformity of taste, and the overall consequences of mass reproduction in human relations. Luis Fernando Chueca Field studies Peruvian poet Roger Santiváñez’ *Symbol* in the context of the schizoid register, which he describes as a fragmentation and fracture to any linearity in the text, a multiplication of voices and levels of consciousness, and an incorporation of high and low class jargon, among other characteristics. The schizoid register is a consequence of the decomposition of the Peruvian society of the 1980s, post internal armed conflict.

Sarah Piazza argues that *Cien botellas en la pared* by Cuban writer Ena Lucía Portela erodes a clear distinction between high culture and mass culture by the inclusion of a discussion of popular music in the body of the novel and the footnotes to the 2010 edition. Piazza also examines the use of elements of the romance and crime novel, as well as the incorporation of the “novel within the novel” theme in Portela’s text. These aspects extend to the author’s metafictional concerns with what it means to be a Cuban writer.

María Belén Contreras and Rodrigo Zamorano’s article explores the ethical consequences of the use of “autoficción,” which allows the author to narrate a veiled moralizing view of Chilean history of the last

century. According to them, Alejandro Zambra's *Formas de volver a casa* attempts to shorten the distance between fictional author and empirical author, which in turn, conditions the reading of the novel. Finally, Ezequiel Trautenberg argues that Alberto Fuguet's *Se arrienda* represents Chile during the transition to democracy through the lenses of culture and economics. Trautenberg maintains that the film's temporal structure, polyvalent title, and epigraph establish its allegorical qualities.

Paula Thomas' interview with Alberto Fuguet showcases him as a prime example of a multifaceted artist who has managed to maintain an equilibrium between distancing his work from mass media and integrating it. The interview focuses on the influence of American pop culture in Fuguet's work, the importance of *Se arrienda* and *Missing* in his oeuvre, his cinematographic career, as well as the place of the city of Santiago in his artistic production.

Following Thomas' interview, we offer an original essay by the Chilean author and filmmaker. While it resembles a film review, it is, as he calls it, a "remix" of his latest book, focused on movies and memory titled *VHS (unas memorias)*, published in 2017. It is a fun, at times fragmented, but coherent and versatile articulation of his incursion in the world of movies while growing up. This is an intimate text, a trip to Ivan Reitman's film, which offers up a platform to express Fuguet's cinephile commemoration of the 1970s. We finalize this volume with four book reviews that examine important works recently published in Mexico, Chile, and Germany.

This issue of *Mester* would not have been possible without the support from the UCLA Department of Spanish and Portuguese, the Del Amo Foundation, and the Editorial Board. I am also personally grateful to our Faculty Advisor, Professor Verónica Cortínez, for her constant encouragement and thoughtful advice. Finally, I would like to express our appreciation for the continuing support of the GSA Publications Office at UCLA directed by Stacey Meeker and David Pederson, who generously provided guidance throughout the publishing process, as well as the excellent work of our layout editor, Bill Morosi. We recognize and commend the authors included in this volume for their contributions and hope that the reader will benefit from and enjoy their work.

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