



# *English Studies in Latin America*

## **Directors' Note**

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## Directors' Note

Andrea Casals and Allison Ramay

*"The rabbit ears of earth become audible"* (Lana Bella)

Dear Readers,

For this issue's cover we have chosen a memorable quotation by Virginia Woolf that resonates with the academic essays, review and poems for this issue, all of which speak to the potential of literary acts to impact their readers. Our authors for this issue reflect on what Woolf considered the "incessant shower of innumerable atoms", those which seem to inspire, and be inspired, by literary creation. In Paulo Lorca's essay on Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, he leads us through the labyrinth-like and disquieting concept of time as represented by Woolf and as proposed by her contemporary Henri Bergson. Molly Petrey shares with us a close reading of Cherríe Moraga's play *Shadow of a Man* and shows us how Moraga incites her viewers and readers to heal a community that has been damaged by phallocentrism. And Felipe Muñoz invites us to read Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian* through the character of the kid, bringing us to a unique narrative of hope within the novel. Considering well-known pieces by Woolf, Moraga and McCarthy, the authors for this issue have taken on the challenge of writing on topics and themes that have been considered by critics before them and they bring to these previous conversations meticulous, insightful and unique close readings that we hope will delight our readers.

With this 10<sup>th</sup> issue we are also happy to present to you our new and improved website. Redesigning our journal's site prompted *White Rabbit's* team to ponder our mission and the value of reflecting on literature and cultural productions in English from the Southern Hemisphere, particularly from Latin America. It seems a happy coincidence that the three selections of poetry that we include in this issue stimulate these considerations even further. Chilean poet Diego Alegría offers a translation of some of his poems by Teodoro Ortúzar Cox. Publishing a translated poem broadens its reception possibilities, but it also problematizes concepts such as translation, appropriation and interpretation. And it is not only the language translation challenge, but the cultural translation that both the translator and the readers complete. The original images that emerge from translation, but also the instability of meaning that arise, is a statement in itself of the possibilities of cross-cultural interpretation, which is what we look for at *White Rabbit: ESLA*.

Along these lines, Lana Bella, a poet who declares herself as living bi-continently, offers a poetic meta-reflection: “English is my day-to-day language”, she writes, followed by “that I barely understand. / Vietnamese, the tongue of my mother's land is the one in / sleepwalking, I dream of home [...]” (“Ru”), contemplating the promises and limitations of a bilingualism, yet also seemingly contradicting herself when writing an intimate poetic narrative in that “other” language. In the following poem, Bella goes on with the meta-reflection, considering the writing process, as if the poet was writing herself out when releasing the poem “towards the edge of the unknown” (“Small and smaller”); that is, the unknown readers who will interpret as they will.

Gregory O'Brien offers a sequence of travel poems visiting Easter Island, previously published in *Whale Years* (Auckland University Press, 2015). The title of the series itself invites us to consider cultural translation processes: “Rapa Nui / Easter Island / Isla de Pascua”. In the first poem, the poet addresses the ocean and declares “when I think of you, first / I think of Neruda's swaying captains” (“*Del Pacífico Sudeste*”). The statement moves us, in Chile, to wonder what impression of Pablo Neruda readers overseas cherish, just like we may speculate what idea of

Shakespeare, Robert Frost or Alice Munro we may discern here. In the poem “Tangerine” the speaker not only questions language and cultural interpretation, but even interdisciplinary translation: “My botanist friend, she / questions my deliberations. / The banana, she tells me is hardly a plant [...] I devote the rest of the day to / eating mandarins, at least / I think they are mandarins”. Bananas are not plants, and tangerines are mandarins?

In this issue we also have a book review for Marco Katz’s *Music and Identity in 20<sup>th</sup>-century Latin America* (Palgrave, 2014), written by Camilo Gonzalez. Reading Katz from the southern hemisphere, Gonzalez highlights Katz’s capacity to engage and inspire reflections on a “convergence of identities” all over America through a close and expansive look at music and literature.

In these writers’ makings, and in the spirit of *ESLA*, we treasure the kaleidoscope of interpretations that cultural productions foster! We invite you to read the essays, poems and review with “audible ears”, and contribute your own colors to this never static kaleidoscope of cross-cultural readings and rewritings.

Sincerely,

The Directors of *White Rabbit: English Studies in Latin America*

Andrea Casals and Allison Ramay