

Annie Mendoza. *Colombian Diasporic Identities: Representations in Literature, Film, Theatre and Art*

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Colombian Diasporic Identities: Representations in Literature, Film, Theatre and Art makes a significant contribution to identity studies. It provides an in-depth exploration of *Colombianidad/Colombianess* across diverse texts, by studying authors such as Patricia Engel, Jaime Manrique, Daisy Hernández, Julián Delgado Lopera, John Leguizamo, Juan Andrés Arango García, and Gonzalo Fuenmayor. Each of the five chapters explores various dimensions of diasporic identity, challenging established hierarchies, dismantling preconceived stereotypes, and questioning conventions and practices of othering.

One of the major contributions of this book is its expansive theoretical approach and application. It applies a diverse framework to each text, uncovering profound intertextual connections across trauma, feminist, gender, queer, race, ethnicity, and displacement theories. The rigorous analysis of each text highlights the role of intersectionality in shaping the diverse identities of Colombian diasporic characters, while also challenging heteronormative and hierarchical racial constructs to enhance visibility and belonging beyond conventional frameworks. Overall, this book demonstrates a comprehensive and intricate critique of the rigidity and authority surrounding issues of *Colombianidad* and *Latinidad* in the works of Colombian diaspora artists, and presents questions to broaden this field of study.

The first chapter examines Patricia Engel's novels, *Vida* (2010), *It's Not Love, It's Paris* (2013), and *The Veins of the Ocean* (2016). Focusing on female characters/voices, it shows how these texts offer profound critiques of the traditional notion of *Colombianidad* by questioning the complex and hybrid identities that emerge from the convergence of cultural influences and migratory experiences. This chapter further analyzes notions of authority and authenticity highlighting how Engel's literary narratives challenge established structures and emphasize the inherent tensions in identity construction for the Colombian and Caribbean diaspora. The study of the role that language normativity plays in these texts, along with issues of marginalization and belonging, highlights the enforcement of "standard" Spanish as a mechanism of power *vis-à-vis* Spanglish and code-switching as acts of resistance. The detailed analysis of these three novels,

illustrates how the Colombian diaspora often feels trapped between a yearning to belong to an idealized national heritage, and a sense of uprootedness that—rather than loss, trauma, exploitation—resists acculturation to transform identity and, in some instances, achieves realization.

The second chapter presents a series of thought-provoking questions about Colombian and Caribbean identity, along with queer identities in the homeland and the diaspora. It focuses on works by Jaime Manrique, Julián Delgado Lopera, and Daisy Hernández, offering a meticulous analysis of how their texts question identity expressions related to gender, masculinity, and the prevailing heteronormative cultural ideology. This chapter delves into the intersectionality of race, ethnicity, gender, and queerness by studying Manrique's black diasporic experiences and those of the characters in his works. Delgado Lopera's novel *Fiebre tropical* (2020) furthers the study of language codes and structures such as drag terminology. Furthermore, it examines queer identity and the struggles of self-acceptance, belonging, and resilience through the lens of generational trauma and family toxicity. The last section is dedicated to Hernández's novel *A Cup of Water Under My Bed* (2015), which focuses on a queer Latina of Colombian and Cuban heritage. This segment examines how identity in this context is multifaceted, incorporating elements of bilingualism, bisexuality, and ancestral heritage, spiritual resistance, and cultural preservation, each contributing to a complex sense of self.

Chapter three contextualizes the barbershop as a masculine space and haven of male performance in the film *La Playa D.C.* (2012), directed by Juan Andrés Arango García. The study of the main text begins with an examined juxtaposition of Pepón Osorio's installation *En la barbería no se llora* (1994). The exploration of car maintenance subculture draws parallels to the representation of black hair. The analysis of Blackness and racialized beauty aesthetics *vis-à-vis* issues of masculinity and *Colombianidad* contrasts this film with others that exoticize the Colombian Pacific region through plots of prevailing violence and drug-trafficking.

Chapter four examines John Leguizamo's Broadway play *Ghetto Klown* (2011), directed by Fisher Stevens, to focus

on Latinx performers in the entertainment industry in the United States. The chapter title, “Remixing, repeating and reinterpreting: John Leguizamo on being a *Ghetto Clown*,” reflects a creative interpretation of Leguizamo’s play, drawing a parallel to a DJ’s performance to highlight and contrast critiques regarding the adaptation and repurposing of his material across different plays. This study highlights the challenges that Latinx actors and performers encounter while showcasing and deconstructing how Leguizamo’s work amplifies their visibility.

The fifth chapter presents the transcription of an interview conducted by Annie Mendoza with artist Gonzalo Fuenmayor, along with samples of the artist’s works that include installations and charcoal drawings/paintings such as *The Unexpected Guest*, *Macondo*, and *La Buena puntería*. His works, artistic materials, and techniques engage with themes of exotization and hybridization to explore the notion

of belonging, while challenging and resisting the stereotyping of his *Latinidad*.

This book showcases extensive research and critical close readings across spatial and temporal dimensions, spanning literature, art, film, performance, and music. The identity constructs examined in this book foster nonconforming and intersectional possibilities, challenging rigid classifications while embracing the diversity of cultural, social, racial, gender, sexual, and spiritual identities. Furthermore, this seminal book invites fellow scholars to delve into Colombian diasporic identities and explore the works of emerging authors, artists, and performers who engage with themes of Latinx identity in the U.S. and globally. This work fosters further research on migration, language fluidity and hybridization, and cultural assimilation of Latinos/as/x across different cultural and geographical contexts.