

CHAPTER 22

# Mexican / American

## *The Making of Borderlands Print Culture*

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### BETWEEN LANGUAGES AND NATIONS

Even a single issue of one of the hundreds of forgotten newspapers from the Spanish-speaking borderlands speaks volumes about the life of its public. Take the unassuming front page from the Friday, 4 January 1901 number of *El Labrador* (The Labourer), published in Las Cruces in what was still the New Mexico Territory (see Figure 22.1): the leftmost of its five columns was a directory of professional services (headed by a lawyer, Pinito Pino, who happened to be the paper's editor as well), followed by advertisements for two competing bakeries, a photography studio, and "Dr. Dalton's Aural Clinic" in Chicago to treat the hard of hearing, illustrated by comical line art. The second column prominently billed the first instalment of *Malditas Sean las Mujeres* (Cursed be Women), a "novela original" by Manuel Ibo Alfaro; the space after its final lines in the fourth column was occupied by brief notices about how to contact the paper's subscription agent, and a plug for Don Barbaro Lucero, who claimed to mill the best wheat in the Territory. Beneath, double-column boxed ads referred readers to agent D. A. Creamer to buy their tickets for the upcoming midwinter carnival in El Paso, and to the jeweller P. H. Curran to buy silver knick-knacks as the traditional Epiphany gift (*aguinaldo*) for one's workers. Along the right, next to display ads for Mexican and Cuban cigars, a pharmacy, and a clothing store, readers were advised that Hilario F. Bennett of El Paso was licensed to practise in both New Mexico and Texas, paying "special attention to legal issues in the Republic of Mexico"; his office offered "translations from English to Spanish and vice-versa." This page of *El Labrador* exemplifies the ways in which the print culture of Mexican / America both resembles and deviates from main currents in the US. As with other small-town papers, it anchors its readers firmly in local space, regional products, and immediate social concerns, even as it extends their sphere imaginatively to the nearest



If the profoundly transnational and bilingual character of such publications has pushed them to the margins of the history of US print culture, it is to the detriment of that story. Within this still largely unexplored archive are examples of nearly every evolving form of print: religious, didactic, and political publications; elite and popular literary fiction and poetry; and consumer-driven ephemera of all kinds. Some sixty-five per cent of US Latinos are of Mexican origin—and although there are many Latino subcultures, each with its own distinct history, the points of commonality among them have been fostered, in no small part, by a shared language. Even as print media have entered an overall state of decline, the market for Spanish-language publications continues to flourish: *La Opinión* of Los Angeles, the largest such daily in the country, is still owned by the same family that started its media empire as Mexican exiles in 1913 in San Antonio. Nor was that a “first”: the Hispanophone press is the oldest in North America, with Spanish pamphlets published in Boston in the 1690s and a steady trickle of books and periodicals appearing throughout the colonial and early national periods along the eastern seaboard as well as in the far-flung outposts of the declining Spanish empire, from Alta California through the river valleys of the Colorado and the Río Grande around the arc of the Gulf Coast. *El Misisipi*, the first known newspaper, appeared in 1808 in the Louisiana territory that had just been severed from New Spain, two years before that colony declared itself the independent nation of Mexico.

Unlike immigrant groups that have embraced a hyphenated ethnic label such as “Irish-American”, relatively few persons of Mexican descent—whether one, two, or eight generations in the US—identify primarily as “Mexican-American.” Some 80,000 residents of present-day Texas, New Mexico, southern Colorado, Arizona, and California did not immigrate to the US when territorial treaties were made with Mexico in 1848 and 1852 but rather became Americans by fiat. Denied civil rights in the segregated Southwest for decades after this uneasy repatriation, some communities retained linguistically particular names for themselves: *tejano*, *nuevomexicano*, *californio*. The porousness of the border with Mexico, over which trickles or floods of migrants have passed at different times, also affected the classic American assimilation pattern, since it facilitated contact with, and often multiple returns to, the homeland. Even as the pan-Hispanic movement swept the globe in the decades after the war of 1898 to emphasize the common cultural ancestry of all *hispanoamericanos* (playing down their indigenous and African heritage in the process), many in the US clung to the simplicity of the term *mexicano*, which conjures up not only the modern nation-state but the deeper roots of the Nahuatl-speaking Mexica people. The indigenous pronunciation, meh-SHEE-ca-no, is the probable origin of the popular term “Chicano”, widely adopted during the civil rights movement of the late 1960s and 1970s to affirm the dominantly indigenous, rather than “Hispanic”, backgrounds of most US Mexicans.

Accordingly, the long tradition of Spanish-language print culture was not at first a primary focus of scholars influenced by the Chicano Movement. Oral, visual, and performative expressions were viewed as more authentically syncretic cultural forms—although, as we shall see, “oral” and “literate” culture overlap and mutually inform

each other. Later initiatives like the Recovering the US Hispanic Literary Heritage Project have considerably altered this picture, which now includes novels, memoirs, plays, and poetry collections, many of which first appeared in periodicals. This archive requires a transnational and multilingual frame of analysis, moving not only between American English and a Mexican Spanish marked by its indigenous understory, but between the kinds of spatial scales that are posed on that front page of *El Labrador*: from town and region to the centres of power in both US and Mexican publishing. My unhyphenated term “Mexican / American” is meant to signal the dynamism of textual objects and cultural actors as they move between such scales, sometimes literally, across borders, and sometimes among mutable forms of self-identification. The relative ease of communication, not only between the US and Mexico but among various Spanish-speaking enclaves within the US, explains why Spanish-language publishing entered a boom era in the 1920s and 1930s, precisely as the number of periodicals in other languages was beginning to decline. Spanish was not the sole language of many Mexican / American readers, as the vestigial presence of English in newspapers like *El Labrador* suggests; some periodicals included English-language content (or more rarely, facing-page translations) in a way that places their readers along a continuum of bilingualism and biliteracy. These artefacts, then, carry important information about the differential power and prestige that certain language uses have carried over time. But given the still-dominant equation of “Americanness” with the English language, it is no accident that the two authors from this period who are most widely included in American literature anthologies, and who are hence made “representative” of Mexican identity—María Amparo Ruíz de Burton and María Cristina Mena—wrote in English.

Without denying the inherent interest of their work or that of other Spanish-language writers who will be mentioned here, it is my contention that a focus on authorship will produce an impoverished view of the literary field of Mexican / America, and its power to describe and call into being complex social networks. The “original novel” serialized in that 1901 issue of *El Labrador*, for instance, was a reprint of an 1858 work by a writer of popular historical romances in Spain; *Malditas Sean las Mujeres*, Alfaro Ibo’s best-known work, was eventually filmed as a Mexican weepie in 1936 (and probably screened at a cinema in Las Cruces). While its “recovery” in *El Labrador* does not yield a new Mexican / American *author*, it offers valuable insight into a *readership* and its tastes. The use of the term “original” to describe the serialization reflects an ideology of literary culture that promoted recirculation as a form of reinvention: *Malditas Sean las Mujeres* was not written *for* New Mexicans, but it was a novelty *to* them. In this chapter, I will first survey key periods in the development of this print culture, in its regionally distinctive iterations. In the second section, I will sketch three general areas for further research that would cut across studies of individual publications or regions. I have not included here the important body of manuscripts, letters, and life writing from *mejicanos* of the period, since they did not participate in the public sphere of print.

## CHRONOLOGICAL AND REGIONAL OVERVIEW

### **Natives and Exiles: From the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo through North America's Civil Wars (1848–1872)**

The eminent historian Nicolás Kanellos divides Spanish-language print culture into the “native”, “immigrant”, and “exile” press as a way of underscoring its exceptional status among other “ethnic” presses, as well as its transnational ties (2000: 28–31). Certainly some communities were (as the old joke about English goes) divided by a common language: in 1850s San Antonio, for instance, the editors of *El Bejareño* and *El Ranchero*, each of whom claimed to speak for the local *tejanos*, reserved as much bile for each other as for the courts that were treating their land claims unfairly. Each wave of migrants from Mexico, whether intending to stay in the US permanently or not, has included all ends of the political spectrum from conservative Catholics to radical anarchists, and the variety of print organs they funded, founded, and read reflects this diversity. From the point of view of the user, however, the distinctions between the “native”, “immigrant”, and “exile” press—which are distinctions of editorial position—can be difficult to draw with clarity, if not actually irrelevant. Printing presses available to a linguistic minority population were generally affiliated with a newspaper, but they also necessarily served multiple market sectors that might have been more specialized in the English-speaking world—producing pamphlets and broadsides, taking in job printing from social, religious, and political clubs and mutual aid societies, and often selling books. Whether run by a “native” who lived on the border prior to 1848 or by a recent émigré, a publishing business had to manoeuvre between different constituencies, including Spanish speakers from other nations.

The early days of US print culture in Spanish, as in English, are closely linked with the development of commerce and the drive for political sovereignty. Advocates of local representation brought the press to present-day Texas in 1813, and separately to Monterey, California, and Santa Fe, New Mexico in 1834. As the promises of protection of property, civil rights, and language rights embedded in the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo were increasingly ignored in practice when Anglo settlers rushed into California and Texas, a more activist press developed. Francisco P. Ramírez, a young journalist who built *El Clamor Público* (*The Public Outcry*, 1855–1859) out of the Spanish section of the *Los Angeles Star*, would be a powerful advocate for Latino civil and cultural rights, while also encouraging readers to learn English and participate in the democratic process. In Texas, the Spanish press followed the exploits of Juan Cortina, a wealthy *tejano* rancher who became so enraged by Anglo-American persecution of Mexicans that he occupied Brownsville for six months in 1859, proclaiming it the Republic of the Rio Grande.

Local tensions were always, however, embedded in geopolitics—particularly during the 1860s, which saw the confluence of two extraordinarily divisive events in the bordering nations: the war between the States, and the French occupation of Mexico in support of Emperor Maximilian, who unseated the liberal reformer Benito Juárez in

1862. Juárez had taken the reins of the presidency at the same time as Abraham Lincoln, and the Spanish-language press often represented the names and images of the two leaders together. Juárez's government-in-exile moved as far north as El Paso del Norte (now Ciudad Juárez), and many of his supporters turned to the US print infrastructure to strengthen international support for the *Reforma* cause. The *Juar-ecistas* brought new talent and capital to the existing Spanish-language press, encountering a local *mexicano* population weathered by more than a decade of far-reaching transformations of land use and social arrangements (including ideas about race and caste) under the American regime. In post-Gold Rush California, courts, squatters, and vigilante groups threatened property, identifying Mexicans as "Indian" or "colored" as a way of stripping them of legal rights. San Francisco was the most vigorous centre of print culture in the newly created state, and Francisco P. Ramírez reappeared there in 1865 to take the editorial helm of *El Nuevo Mundo*, a paper founded by Liberal exiles. Ramírez brought his knowledge of the concerns of *californios* to these new, more cosmopolitan readers: next to a notice of a meeting of the Chilean miners' society might appear, for instance, a lofty poem on love or a popular new literary form in Mexico City: the *novela de entregas* (serial novel). The prominent writer J. M. Ramirez, who had also fled to San Francisco, republished two of his own novels serially in *El Nuevo Mundo* after they had appeared in book form in Mexico City (Leal 2006: 199).

Not only in San Francisco but throughout California and Nevada in the 1860s, the Juárez loyalists held meetings of "Zaragoza Clubs" where patriotic poems were declaimed, using print media to disseminate them in newspapers and as broadsides; the titles of Brownsville's *Republican* and *Zaragoza*, both begun in 1865, also attest to the widespread influence of these Mexican liberals and their affiliation with the party of Lincoln. Nonetheless, the English-language press in California expressed suspicion that among the *mexicano* population were secret "Copperheads", or Confederate sympathizers. For, perhaps surprisingly, many more soldiers of Mexican origin fought for the Confederacy than for the Union, by a 3:1 ratio. Many *tejano* border dwellers (very few of whom held slaves) had themselves rebelled against distant governance from Mexico City and thus felt that the war called them to defend an important principle of local sovereignty. Moreover, Texas was a strategically important route for the Confederacy to move guns and income-producing cotton to market—through Mexico. Some Texas Mexicans were well aware that the privileges of whiteness did not always extend to the Spanish-speaking: Juan Cortina, for example, provided material aid to the clandestine Unionists in Texas. Colonel Santos Benavides, the highest-ranking *tejano* officer in the Confederacy, defeated Cortina militarily and then occupied his former "republic" in Brownsville to guard a shipment of cotton headed for Mexico by way of Matamoros, but it is a sign of the mutability of alliances along the border that both Cortina and Benavides, who belonged to the same landed social class, also fought for Juárez in Mexico.

The New Mexico territory was likewise divided in allegiance, although with many fewer outsiders arriving there after 1848 than in California or Texas, the region retained much of its linguistic and cultural integrity. Most newspapers still appeared

partly or wholly in Spanish, though they were not necessarily under the editorial control of the *nuevomexicanos* themselves (Meléndez 2005: 23). In Jesuit parochial schools and many public schools instruction was in Spanish, helping to create a literate public for what would become a renaissance of local print culture later in the century. The religious orders (which were generally opposed to Juárez) continued to issue prayer books, catechisms, and other materials. The western portion of the territory, present-day Arizona, broke off to ally with the Confederacy, which sent an army that was later pushed back by Unionist Californians and New Mexicans—many of them *mejicanos* on horseback.

The tensions of loyalty that the Civil War and the Wars of the Reforma raised for Mexico / Americans are reflected in the passionate fictions of María Amparo Ruíz de Burton—who on the eve of Guadalupe-Hidalgo had married a US Army captain and accompanied him back east. Her first novel, *Who Would Have Thought It?*, was issued in 1872 by the Philadelphia mega-publisher J. B. Lippincott, anonymously so that the English readership she was angling for would not dismiss her because of her Spanish name. Incorporating many fictional conventions from the sensational pot-boiler to the satirical novel of manners, *Who Would Have Thought It?* highlighted widespread prejudices about Mexicans by revealing its heroine, Lola Medina, to be not the abjected Indian she appeared, but a blue-eyed Mexican elite girl whose wildly coincidental adventures disguised her true identity. The novel is set during the Civil War, but by portraying abolitionist New Englanders as hypocritical, greedy, and racist, the novel demands that the loyalty of border dwellers not be taken for granted. The male romantic lead—a Union hero—sees past his family's prejudice to embrace Lola and her equality with them. By taking a detour to Maximilian's Mexico, it also illustrates the deep intertwining of local identities with transnational events.

### **Railroads, Reconstruction, and the Early Porfiriato, 1872–1899**

Although many members of the *Reforma* press did return to Mexico when Juárez came back to power in 1867, the ties they had developed with local communities helped establish a renewed sense of cultural connection between the nation of Mexico and the US borderlands. Few Spanish newspapers in Texas recorded these tensions and multiple alliances during Reconstruction, but the name of one of the most enduring—*El Liberal* of Río Grande City (1872–1875)—reveals how powerful the influence of the party of Juárez remained. At the same time, Porfirio Díaz was following an already well-worn path in launching his military rebellion from the Texas Gulf Coast; in 1876 he would oust Juárez's successor, Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada, from the presidency and go on to control Mexico for more than three decades. Throughout the *Porfiriato*, his opponents would cluster on the Texas border, using the power of print to buoy their cause. *Tejano* journalist Catarino Garza became a folk hero, a kind of Juan Cortina with a pen, as his outraged exposés of the mistreatment of *mejicanos* both in the US and in Díaz's Mexico brought him to lead a small band of Texas separatists on armed raids in the 1890s.

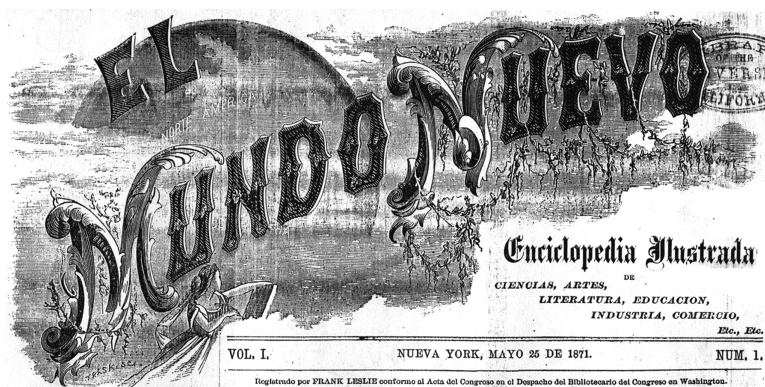


Figure 22.2. Nameplate, first issue: *El Mundo Nuevo* (New York illustrated magazine), 25 May 1871.

One of the principal agents of socio-economic change that had been detrimental to most *mejicanos*, the railroad, also ironically enabled a great expansion of the distribution of Spanish print materials. By the mid-1880s there were dozens of Spanish-language newspapers in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona—and more importantly, they communicated reliably with each other. In California, where the pre-1848 population had intermarried and assimilated more than elsewhere, there was less and less demand for Spanish-language papers, although *La Crónica* of Los Angeles would last for two decades, from 1872 to 1892: Kanellos notes that the paper's staunch defence of the language was not disinterested, since it also held “the concession for printing public notices in Spanish for the city government” (2000: 93). In *The Squatter and the Don* (1885), Ruiz de Burton explicitly links the decline of the *californios* to the unjust treatment of large *rancheros* in the land courts, abetted by rapacious railroad interests. But her lack of access to the wider reach of the East Coast publishing houses doomed this second novel (issued by a small San Francisco bookseller) to even greater obscurity than the first—despite the fact that it was timed perfectly to capitalize on the vogue of the California past set off by Helen Hunt Jackson's wildly popular *Ramona* (first serialized in 1884, and subsequently a mass-publishing phenomenon). The misty vision of Jackson, already “branded” as an author, carried infinitely more weight than that of an actual California Mexican, even one who had met Lincoln.

If the East Coast publishing centres of New York, Boston, and Philadelphia did not embrace writers from the borderlands, neither did they completely ignore Greater Mexico—at least as a subject for the new vogue of “local color” in fiction and travelogue. Ever in search of new markets and products, publishing mogul Mrs Frank Leslie hired a Cuban-American to edit an illustrated biweekly magazine, *El Mundo Nuevo/La América Ilustrada* (1871–1875) (see Figures 22.2 and 22.3) that would target domestic Spanish readers as well as international ones; it was distributed across the Southwest by the American News Company (see Gruesz 2002: 185–92). While fairly cosmopolitan in outlook, *El Mundo Nuevo* followed *Harper's*, *Scribner's*, and other magazines in soliciting features that showcased Southern California and



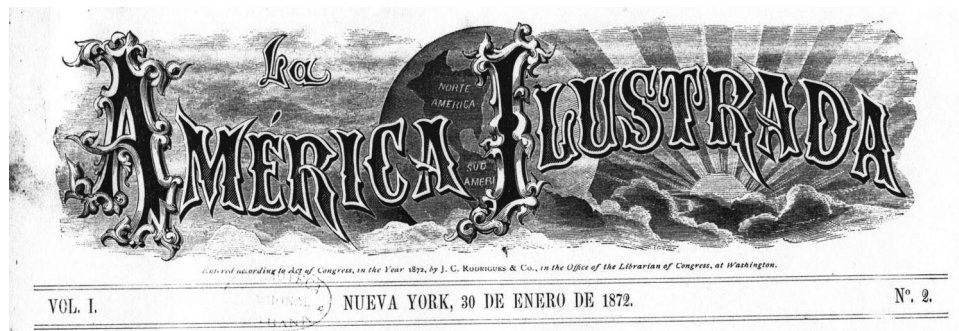


Figure 22.3. Nameplate: *La América Ilustrada*, (the successor illustrated magazine to the above) 30 January 1872.

New Mexico as exciting new areas for agricultural development and tourism. It also explicitly targeted female readers with sections on fashion, as did the New York monthly *Las novedades*, which also published serial fictions from the 1890s through 1910. While such magazines attempted to capture the most affluent slice of the Spanish readership by glossing over the social tensions and political disagreements among them, they did present a vigorous defence of “Hispanic culture” and the Spanish language that stands in stark contrast to mainstream representations like the 1899 sketch “The Greaser” in the *Atlantic Monthly* (see Rivera 2006).

With the strong influence of the religious press, the New Mexico Territory was not unequipped to counteract the alternately romantic and primitivist stereotypes that many settlers and tourists, influenced by their magazine reading, brought with them after the opening of the railroad in 1879. The long-lived monthly *La Revista Católica* (1875–1962) from Las Vegas often published cultural material, but it would not be until 1917 that Santa Fe had its own cultural weekly, the *Revista Ilustrada*, to promote arts and literature and to compete with the New York periodicals. Aided by the railroad’s cheap and quick distribution along the Rio Grande corridor, Spanish papers flourished from Santa Fe southward to Albuquerque and Las Cruces; by the early 1890s, there were thirty-five Spanish papers and eleven bilingual ones (Meléndez 2005: 26). In their pages are represented a range of genres, from serialized popular fictions to poems submitted by local talent, that speak to the lived continuum of oral and literate forms—as the strong traditional recitation culture was reinforced in the schools, and the “news” in poetic form that was once delivered by travelling balladeers appeared in print as well. Meléndez cites the example of J. M. H. Alarid, who not only competed in traditional oral competitions as a *bardo*, or “poet-balladeer”, but also submitted written poems on topical subjects like the railroad for his editor friends to publish (pp. 36–9).

As my opening citation from *El Labrador* intimates, these papers in the New Mexico and Arizona territories maintained a fine line between advocating for the Spanish-speaking community and trying to foster good relationships with local businessmen, including Anglo-Americans. Newspaper exchange had been a common practice since

the early days of the Spanish-language press: unable to fill their pages with locally produced material, editors cut-and-pasted essays, poems, and serialized novels from other papers they received, and in so doing helped spread cultural and political ideas and literary trends from Mexico to an audience that had never known the place. (This pattern of “re-Mexicanizing” still takes place through the Spanish-language media, as does its opposite: the Americanization of Mexican popular culture.) La Prensa Asociada Hispano-Americana (The Associated Hispanic-American Press), founded in 1891, formalized and intensified the longstanding practice of newspaper exchange while modernizing the looser copyright practices of old. Bilingual, well connected, and with strong cultural pride, these journalists were influential in the “Hispanic revival” of the Southwest at the turn of the century, celebrating the community as descendants of the Spanish explorers who had come to the area three hundred years before—thereby dissociating themselves both from the Native Americans and from newer immigrants from Mexico who had come to work on the railroads and in the mines. During the War of 1898, the self-identification as “Spanish” that was fostered by the local print culture backfired, as many residents strove to assert that their political loyalties lay with the United States, even if they spoke, read, and defended the “language of Cervantes”.

### **The Road to Revolution and “Mexico de Afuera”: 1900–1920 and beyond**

While the railroad facilitated more reliable and direct contact among different Mexican-origin communities across the Southwest, it also brought new migrant labourers and thus new potential readerships. These migrants settled not only in the pre-1848 borderlands but in hub cities like Topeka, Kansas; Kansas City and St Louis, Missouri; and Chicago. The weekly *El cosmopolita* started publication in Kansas City in 1914, and numerous Spanish newspapers began to appear in Chicago, which became an extraordinary magnet for Mexican labourers starting in the 1920s. A mattress-factory owner there cited the fact that one of his workers received a neatly wrapped copy of *El Universal*, the Mexico City newspaper, by daily mail as proof that the factory employed the “better class” of Mexican (Arredondo 2008: 141). Behind this elitist remark loomed the reality of downward mobility suffered by many of the roughly one million Mexicans who would relocate to the US during the Mexican Revolution in search of work, but it also speaks to the new opportunities for reaching—and expanding—the print-consuming public. Rates of literacy in Mexico itself remained relatively low during the Díaz regime, awaiting post-Revolutionary educational reforms, but the many mutual aid societies that sprang up in these new Mexican enclaves accelerated the process as members read handbills and newspaper items aloud to each other.

Already-established patterns of publishing and distributing politically volatile material across the porous Río Grande border continued, particularly in Corpus Christi, Brownsville, Laredo, El Paso, and Eagle Pass. Persecuted groups under the *Porfiriato*, in particular labour activists, often worked productively with *tejanos* on the other side in framing their local struggles within larger political contexts. Union organizer Nicasio

Idar, who founded *La Crónica* in 1909, suffered attacks from the Texas Rangers when the paper agitated against segregated classrooms and theatres. Jovita Idar, his daughter, was part of a small but well-organized group of activists for women's rights that also participated in borderlands print culture, as Clara Lomas has documented. Overlapping with the anti-Díaz movement but also embedded in other global political movements, Ricardo and Enrique Flores Magón produced an impressive body of work in their anarchist newspaper *Regeneración*. After being banned in Mexico City, they revived editions of *Regeneración* all over the US and Canada, from San Antonio to St Louis to Los Angeles. Flores Magón's travels and arrests—he died in Leavenworth Prison—are important case studies in government censorship, as the newspaper's "subversive" content made it ineligible for second-class postage (Kanellos 2000: 22).

After Díaz was finally forced out of Mexico in 1911, along with many of his partisans, a conservative press appeared as well. Ignacio Lozano's *La Prensa*, established in San Antonio in 1913, ridiculed Zapata and Villa and lamented the loss of the "order" and "progress" that had been watchwords of the regime. Recognizing that the marketplace for printed materials in Spanish was wider than those who shared views with the owner and his seasoned Mexican editor, Teodoro Torres, Lozano established a publishing house, the Casa Editorial Lozano, which had the most sophisticated distribution system in the country. Other small publishers and retailers followed suit, as San Antonio became the major source in the Southwest for everything from prayer cards to scripts for religious pageants, secretarial manuals, works on animal husbandry, and pot-boiler romances. Within just two years, *La Prensa* was the largest-selling Spanish-language periodical in the United States, surpassing even the Caribbean-origin enclaves of New York City; and in 1926 Lozano also set up *La Opinión* in Los Angeles as a sister paper, with a distinct editorial staff but sharing a number of feature stories.

The local rival to *La Opinión*, *El Heraldo de México* (1915–1952), saw itself as more working-class but shared with Lozano an editorial tendency to remind readers frequently that they were still "Mexican" and needed to retain the purity of their Spanish—and their values—no matter how long their sojourn in *yanquilandia* would turn out to be. One border editor coined the term *México de afuera* (Mexico outside itself) to describe this enclave sensibility, which is best expressed in a characteristic literary genre of this moment, the *crónica* (chronicle)—a short, satirical sketch of urban life that compares the spiritual and moral climate of the US unfavourably with that of Mexico. *Cronistas* like Julio Arce (writing as "Jorge Ulica"), Benjamín Padilla ("Kascabel"), and Catalina Dulché Escalante ("Catalina d'Erzell") wrote serio-comic warnings about how naïve Mexican emigrants, especially women, could be corrupted by the temptations of the US urban life. Arce, the most successful of these, syndicated his columns "Cronicas Diabólicas" from the San Francisco papers he edited, *La Crónica* and then *Hispano América*. They were published throughout California, the Southwest, and the Midwest, and also found an audience in Mexico—where Escalante, the most popular woman in the group, actually remained even though her works were published in the US (see Baeza Ventura 2006).

There is much more work to be done on the multiple appearances of these widely circulated *crónicas*, as there is on the fictional works that are also associated with *México de afuera*. Daniel Venegas's short novel *Las aventuras de Don Chipote, o cuando los pericos mamen* (The Adventures of Don Chipote, Or, When Parrots Breastfeed), serially published in *El heraldo de México* in 1928 after his own literary magazine flopped, shares the satirical tone of many *crónicas*. In a more realist vein, the novel *El Sol de Texas* (The Texas Sun, 1926) by former field worker Conrado Espinoza was also originally published in instalments. For both Venegas and Espinoza, the logical conclusion led only one way: back to the homeland. In the sense that both novels warn against the exploitation of Mexican labourers in the US and depict border-crossing as the starting point of a contest of starkly polarized values, they share much with the classic Chicano narratives that would emerge after the Second World War but imagine other outcomes to those conflicts.

Like all ideologies, the cultural preservationism of *México de afuera* writers was weakened in practice: alongside editorials that urged against adopting the local “pocho” (assimilated) Spanish slang in *El Heraldo de México*, readers could find advertisements promising newer, faster ways of learning English—alongside translated words from Mark Twain, Hollywood gossip, notices for local jazz clubs, and ads for skin whiteners, syphilis remedies, good-luck amulets, and Spanish-speaking Japanese-American eye doctors. Interpellation as consumers vied with editors' cultural agendas for the attention of these new readers, and not surprisingly, consumerism won: by the late 1920s a more assimilated, mainly English-speaking, middle class had formed.

#### DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The history of this long trajectory of Mexican / American print culture is still very far from being filled in. There have been numerous studies of individual periodicals, with an emphasis on their editorial positions; some regional studies; and a few in-depth treatments of specific genres like the *crónica*. The Houston-based Recovery Project, headed by Kanellos, has reprinted in book format many of the works originally published in periodicals, encouraging critical readings of them as discrete texts but, as a consequence, de-emphasizing the mutability of their multiple appearances across different print contexts. In closing, I will briefly suggest some modes of inquiry that would cut across regions, time periods, and genres to yield a more precise sense of how texts and ideas were produced, circulated, and consumed, and how the market for print materials reflected networks of social expression in Mexican / America.

#### **Publishing Centres and Peripheries: New York and Mexico City**

An exclusive focus on “border” periodicals and their local audiences can obscure the extent to which their efforts were influenced by both national publishing centres, New York and Mexico City. The late nineteenth-century magazines contained a great deal of writing about place: both the urban drama and the quaint regionalist story appeared in

fictional and non-fictional versions. Like the Cuban José Martí, Mexican travellers would record their impressions of the contradictions of race, poverty, and segregation in the Gilded Age: José Rivera y Río published his novelistic exposés of what he saw as the cold and calculating northern city-dweller, *Los dramas de Nueva York* and *El hambre y el oro* (Hunger and Gold), in Mexico City in 1869. In the late 1880s Francisco Santamaria would collect his *Crónicas del destierro, desde la ciudad de hierro: Diario de un desterrado mejicano en Nueva York* (Exile Chronicles from the Iron City: Diary of an Exiled Mexican in New York). There needs to be more comparative work done on the way these great urban centres of national publishing represented each other. But original works were also published in Spanish for the first time in New York: *De sangre azul* (Blue-Blooded) by the Mexican Lucio Pinares in 1892, and the collection *Aroma tropical: Leyendas y cuentos mexicanos* (Tropical Scent: Mexican Legends and Tales) by Luis Avellaneda and Dolores Bolio (1917), among others. The house of Appleton led the production of Spanish-language textbooks and manuals for the Latin American export market, and did in-house translations of popular English novels. Yet while Mexican journalists were interested in New York publishers as potential models for modernizing their own production technologies (Guillermo Prieto's travel narrative lingers longingly on his tour of the Harper Brothers building), the prestigious eastern magazines seemed interested only in "primitive" Mexico.

It is not surprising, then, that María Cristina Mena's stories for the *Century*, which appeared between 1913 and 1916, focus not on her own experience as a middle-class emigrant but on village life in Mexico. The stories rely on her byline's implied authority as "native informant", yet Mena came from a different caste than the humble Indian and *mestizo* (mixed-race) subjects she wrote about. The critical attention Mena's writings have received has rightly focused on her complex relationship to eastern literary culture, but their connections to the New York Spanish-language magazines, to the representation of "Indianness" in Mexico City, and to borderlands periodicals need to be drawn out in more detail. How should we understand the "trade gap" between publishing centres and peripheries during a period when magazines looked to rural regions for the raw material of local colour, and how did this function across languages? What sort of interest might consuming readers in Las Cruces, for example, have had in reading them?

These questions are particularly acute with respect to California, the site of an intense campaign to represent the colonial and Mexican past. With her two "Glimpses" into pre-American California published in the *Century* in 1891, the elderly *california* Brígida Briones provided further source material for the romantic vision that Jackson had popularized and that Frank Norris, George Wharton James, and Gertrude Atherton would continue to propagate in the early twentieth century. Descendants of the distinguished Vallejo family, too, published mythic versions of "Spanish Arcadia" in English in local histories and in small, specialized journals like *The Northern Crown* and *Motorland*. A significant but lesser-known foray into fictionalizing the California past was actually issued from Lozano's San Antonio press: Adolfo Carrillo's *Cuentos californios*, published around 1922 (and later reprinted in

Mexico City, but never to date translated into English). Carrillo offers a scathing portrait of the cultural devastation suffered by the Mexican population after 1848 in his revisionist version of the Gold Rush (in the story “Oro y sangre” [Gold and Blood]), where it is John Marshall’s Mexican fiancée who finds the first gold nugget. Intuiting the bloodshed and environmental degradation it would set off, she rejects Marshall, who kills her in a frenzy and is haunted by her ghost. After fleeing Mexico City in 1886, Carrillo had worked as a journalist and printer all over: Cuba, New York, Brownsville, Texas, Madrid, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. With this contribution to the local-colour fad, might he have been saying something about how a publishing centre draws raw material from, while defining itself in opposition to, its peripheries? By thinking comparatively about the development and circulation of specific genres—the *crónica* of urban street life as well as the place-specific *cuento*—we can begin to plot the ideological coordinates of literary space across national and linguistic boundaries.

### **Building Audiences for Popular Fiction: Serialization, Translation, and Republication**

The example of *Malditas Sean las Mujeres*, billed as an “original novel” but a republication of a known author’s work, suggests that the meaning of the term “original” was more open-ended in the borderlands, where there was both more licence and more incentive to pirate, adapt, copy, translate, and otherwise redistribute material gathered by editors and publishers. The as-yet-unsettled argument over what constitutes the first Mexican / American novel arises from these practices. One standard reference text gives “the first Chicano novel” as *Deudas pagadas* (Debts Repaid), which was serialized anonymously in the *Revista Católica* of Las Vegas, New Mexico in 1875 (Leal 1989: 73), but this turns out to be a republication of a popular *costumbrista* romance by the Spanish author “Fernán Caballero” (Cecilia Böhl de Faber). Meléndez is more inclined to give the laurel to Eusebio Chacón, author of two romantic “novelitas” that were issued together in a slim volume issued from the press associated with a Santa Fe newspaper, *El hijo de la tempestad* (The Son of the Tempest) and *Tras la tempestad, la calma* (After the Storm Comes The Calm), in 1892 (2005: 146–52). If one includes the border-crossing print entrepreneurs in Texas, however, Chacón’s work is contemporary with a set of novels issued by the anti-Díaz publisher Jesus Recio, who produced cheap books in Río Grande City, Texas for Mexican writers whose works could not be published there, most notoriously Heriberto Frías’s *Tomochic*, an indictment of the Díaz government’s massacre of an Indian community. Other productions from Recio’s press, which still awaits a full study, include *Memorias de un estudiante* by Alejandro Villaseñor y Villaseñor (reprinted in New York in 1893, suggesting that someone brought a copy there) and *La guerra contra la paz, o la nueva Attila* (The War on Peace, or the New Attila). Many novels about the Mexican Revolution that would later come to be considered “classics” in Mexico, including Mariano Azuela’s canonical *Los de abajo* (The Underdogs, first published in a newspaper in El Paso in 1915), also issued from border publishers like Lozano.

However, there may be an earlier candidate than all these. Aurelio Luis Gallardo, a playwright and journalist who lived in San Francisco in the late 1860s, was said to have first published his novel *Adah, o el amor de un angel* (*Adah, or the Love of an Angel*) in instalments in a California newspaper before his death in 1869. It was eventually issued by the well-connected Mexico City publisher Ireneo Paz—grandfather of Octavio Paz and the author, as well, of a fictionalized life of the California bandit Joaquín Murrieta—in book form in 1900. The novel is principally an exploration of heightened emotional states, but suggestively, its narrator is a melancholic Mexican exile who lives in an (unnamed) foggy, English-speaking city overlooking the Pacific Ocean. The coincidence of time and place, as well as suggestive references to the theatre, cross-dressing, and the “exotic” background of its dual heroines, point to some link with actress, poet, and celebrity Adah Isaacs Menken, who performed in San Francisco while Gallardo lived there. (She also spoke Spanish.) With the advent of more and more digitization projects—the single US copy of this novel was added to Google Books between the time this chapter was begun and ended—it is possible that more tantalizing clues about the serialized version of *Adah* may emerge.

Another important contribution of high-quality (and widely accessible) digitization to reconstructing the networks of textual circulation lies in advertisements for printed products. An 1876 issue of Brownsville’s *El Progreso* (see Figure 22.4), for instance, informs us that the editorial office carries the “Universal Masonic Library”, as well as “Biblical novels”, devotional works, and a “musical weekly” of sheet music titled *Bouquet de Melodías*. The *Agencia de publicaciones y libros del “Progreso”* also carries the Barcelona series, the “Museum of Novels”. An ad for the Chapa Mercantile Company in a San Antonio paper from 1917, in contrast, lists language books at its head—conversation and grammar books in English. The priority given to that category suggests a readership that saw itself involved in a transition towards some measure of bilingualism and eventually biliteracy. The “Language” section in the book list is followed by “Literature” (meaning poetry) and the “Popular Library” (with five times the titles in “Literature”). There is a section of history books, one of “Novels by celebrated authors”, one for “Occult sciences”, and one for “Police novels from Buffalo Bill”: at sixty cents each one of the least expensive categories. This ad gestures at the existence of early pulp fiction translated from English: a rich and under-researched topic. Even cheaper, however, are the “Novenas”, or saints’ lives, at a dime apiece, and five-cent prayer books. In California’s *El Heraldo de México*, a free copy of a historical novel by Mexican writer Vicente Riva Palacio was offered as a subscription bonus in half-page display ads with dramatic photographs; the same ad appeared in some Texas newspapers as well (see Figure 22.5).

As these examples suggest, we need to know much more about the role print culture played in the development of marketing to (and by) Mexican-origin populations in the US, especially during the crucial period in which “México de afuera” met “México nativo” and many migrants and exiles became residents and citizens. Many border periodicals also testify to the rise of bilingual advertising, and the ways in which the English-speaking marketer comes to understand the Spanish-speaking customer.

**Agencia**  
**DE PUBLICACIONES Y LIBROS**  
**DEL "PROGRESO"**

**OBRAS EN PUBLICACION.**  
**JULIA.**

Novela histórica y de costumbres, original de M. Martínez de Castro. Se publica por entregas semanarias de 432 páginas, y 24 cuando va una estampa de las que se han de repartir y que presentarán los croquis de los campamentos, de las fuerzas mexicana y americana en algunas de las batallas que tuvieron lugar en la época de la invasion, así como el plano general de los lugares invadidos.

Está publicado el primer tomo y mas de la mitad del segundo; puede verse un ejemplar en esta Agencia.

**MUSEO DE NOVELAS.**

Laura Molino de la Vega, Editora.

PROSPECTO

Al llegar á las playas hospitalarias de este hermoso país, traigo por único patrimonio una colección de buenos libros de los que en las primeras capitales de Europa han sido recibidos con el mejor éxito á que un autor puede aspirar.

La MUJER DE FURGO, por ejemplo, ha llegado en Paris á su 23ª edición, y tan verdad es esto que á primera vista parece exagerado, que al dar circulación á estos prospectos envío al despacho de los Sres. J. Rivera, hijo y C<sup>o</sup>, calle del Coliseo, bajos de la gran sociedad, uno de los ejemplares originales de dicha edición "Vigésima Novena," para que esté á la vista de los interesados y del público en general.

La traducción al español de este libro de Adolfo es tan castiza y á la parte tan fiel, como ha sido posible hacerla. Su impresión será bastante esmerada, así como la de los otros que formarán la colección selecta que anuncio al público.

Con la MUJER DE FURGO alternará la hermosa novela de Alejandro Dumas (hijo) intitulada: JUSTICIA DE DIOS; y probablemente una de las últimas de Alfonso Karr, las dos enteramente desconocidas en México; pero desde ahora garantizo á mis suscritores de ambos sexos, que en el primer trimestre del Museo de Novelas quedará terminada la MUJER DE FURGO, no excediendo el valor de la obra de unos diez ó doce reales para los abonados en México; con una diferencia cortísima fuera de la capital, franco el porte.

**BASES DE ESTA PUBLICACION.**

El MUSEO DE NOVELAS dará á luz por ordenes las obras mas notables que se publiquen en Europa y América, haciéndose de ellas al efecto traducciones especiales, correctas y esmeradas, por distinguidos literatos.

Cada entrega constará de cuarenta páginas en 8<sup>o</sup> y su correspondiente cubierta, siendo su precio nueve centavos en la capital y solamente diez centavos, fuera de ella, franco de porte.

La primera entrega aparecerá á principios de enero de 1876.

Se garantiza la conclusion de toda obra que empiece á publicarse en este MUSEO.

**POBRES Y RICOS DE MEXICO.**

**Novela original de J. Rivera y Rio.**

Todo lo que constituye esta obra está tomado del natural, y que cuanto en ella aparece es exclusivamente mexicano.

Al hacer su autor la apoteosis de la virtud, inclinándose ante el humilde hogar de los pobres en que se encuentra tan estimable bien, sabe que en regiones elevadas existen criaturas bastante-mente orgullosas, pero tambien suficientemente infelices que ignoran el nombre de sus verdaderos padres; conoce la esfera de donde han salido los monederos falsos, los ladrones y los plagiarios de mas nota; señala, en fin, los privilegiados nestos en que viven los explotadores y corruptores de la sociedad, á cuyo rango pertenecen algunos de los que han asaltado los templos y las casas de los particulares.

Esta novela eminentemente social presenta tipos nacionales dignos de conocerse y de que les alcan-

Figure 22.4. Advertisements for novels in *El Progreso* (Brownsville), 22 February 1876.



**ABSOLUTAMENTE GRATIS**  
remitiremos un ejemplar de la hermosa novela mexicana de Miguel Arce, titulada

**¡LADRONA!**  
a toda persona que antes del día 13 de Febrero pague una suscripción de "La Prensa" (Edición Diaria) por tres meses, por seis meses o por un año.

Los suscriptores de San Antonio tienen también derecho a esta oferta, pudiendo pasar a nuestras oficinas a hacer el pago de su suscripción y a recoger el libro.

Procure usted desde luego adquirir un ejemplar de esta novela, haciendo el pago de su suscripción sin pérdida de tiempo. Esta oferta principió el día 1o. del año y personas que pagaron una suscripción en Diciembre están ya haciendo nuevos pagos para tener derecho a este soberbio regalo. ¡Ladrona! forma un volumen de 286 páginas, esmeradamente impreso en magnífico papel alemán y con carátula a dos tintas.

**TENEMOS** la seguridad de que el mejor regalo que podemos ofrecer a los lectores de LA PRENSA es el libro de Miguel Arce, porque

**¡LADRONA!**  
la incomparablemente amena novela mexicana que hoy presentamos llenos de satisfacción, es no solamente una novedad literaria, una obra inédita que tiene el interés de lo desconocido, sino también el más noble y gallardo esfuerzo de uno de los literatos jóvenes, de la actual generación. Al lanzar ¡LADRONA! a la publicidad sentimos estas dos alegrías: la de ser los editores de la mejor novela mexicana que se ha publicado últimamente, y la de haber tenido la suerte de obtenerla en condiciones de darla como un MAGNÍFICO, INSUPERABLE regalo a nuestros suscriptores.

La novela mexicana basada en hechos históricos estaba en suspenso desde que dejaron de moverse las plumas pintorescas y emocionantes de Mateos, de Irineo Paz, de Chavero y las ilustres de Payro, Altamirano, Riva Palacio y Salado Alvaréz. No cometemos ningún desacierto al decir que Arce es un continuador de la obra de esos novelistas. Arce reanuda el hilo de la novela que habla de guerras y campañas, y que durante cuarenta años dejó de hacerse sencillamente porque no había material, ni quien quisiera tomarlo y darle vida.

En ¡LADRONA! volvemos a encontrar el tipo audaz de nuestros querrellosos, el glorioso soldado que pelea por las instituciones con una lealtad y una bravura muy mexicanas, y de paso saboreamos escenas de la vida pueblerina que tienen el encanto indelible de todo lo nuestro, de lo que nos habla al alma con la voz del recuerdo.

¡LADRONA! es de los libros que se leen con avidez, que se guardan con cariño y que se sacan una vez y otra vez del librero para volver a sentir las emociones que nos dieron. Es de los que prenden en el espíritu y a él se afianzan de tal suerte que ya no nos dejan nunca.

Si usted es ya suscriptor de "La Prensa" y desea recibir en calidad de obsequio la novela ¡Ladrona! basta con que renueve su suscripción antes de que termine el plazo que señalamos. No pierda esta única oportunidad que le ofrecemos; remita el pago de su nueva suscripción desde luego, no importa que aún no esté vencida, pues pagando su nuevo abono antes del día 13 de Febrero, tiene usted derecho a recibir ABSOLUTAMENTE GRATIS esta primorosa novela.

**SI NO ES USTED SUSCRIPTOR DE NUESTRO PERIODICO, PIDA CUANTO ANTES UNA SUSCRIPCION. TAMBIEN A LOS SUSCRIPTORES NUEVOS LES REGALAREMOS UN EJEMPLAR DE ¡LADRONA!**

No deje usted para mañana lo que puede hacer hoy. Esta es una oferta sin precedente, pues se trata de un gran obsequio de los que solo "La Prensa" puede hacer a sus suscriptores. ¡LADRONA! es un libro que usted no querrá quedarse sin leer. Nosotros le ofrecemos un ejemplar. ¡Aproveche usted la ocasión que se le presenta de adquirirlo gratis!

Nos permitimos suplicar a nuestros lectores que hagan esta noticia del conocimiento de todos sus amigos, para que se suscriban a "La Prensa" antes del 13 de Febrero. A TODOS, ABSOLUTAMENTE A TODOS los que paguen una suscripción mientras dure esta excepcional oferta, les obsequiaremos un ejemplar de ¡Ladrona!.—Vea usted los precios de suscripción en la segunda página.

Nosotros pagamos los gastos de correo que origine el envío de la novela.— Los suscriptores de fuera de los Estados Unidos deben agregar al importe de su suscripción 10 centavos, en moneda de este país, para los gastos de certificación del paquete.

Figure 22.5. Display advertisement offering a free sensational novel as a subscription bonus in *La Prensa* (San Antonio), January 13, 1925.

Tracing circulation and distribution sources in more detail—not only for validated genres like the novel, but for paraliterary and ephemeral works as well—can draw out the cross-fertilization of ideas that occurred between regions and nations, between publishing centres and peripheries.

#### MYTHOLOGIZING THE PAST ACROSS GENRES AND MEDIA

Rather than opposing or superseding performative, visual, and oral forms of expression, print has an important role in the borderlands of recording and even instantiating what later comes to be seen as a “folk tradition”. Enrique Lamadrid has documented a particularly suggestive case of the synchronicity of oral and literate forms in the circulation of an *indita* (traditional prayer poem or hymn), “La indita de San Luis Gonzaga”. This poem, imploring God to protect the New Mexican regiment, was originally published in a newspaper in 1898. But over the years, the specific reference to the Spanish-American War has fallen away, and the poem has “reverted” to oral tradition, as it is now performed ritually by Native dancers during processions on the saint’s feast day. In recent years the prayer for soldiers’ safety has been reworded to refer specifically to Desert Storm and to more recent wars (2002: 167).

Some of the best-known “folk legends” of Mexican / America—those of outlaw figures like Juan Cortina, Tiburcio Vásquez, Joaquín Murrieta, Vicente Silva, and Gregorio Cortez—have been recorded in multiple forms, including print as well as oral performance, music, theatre, and dance. The Joaquín Murrieta story is an exemplary case: the vengeful *californio* inspired numerous sensational newspaper accounts and dime-novel stories in English in the 1840s, continued to circulate on the popular stage, and then returned to print—but re-imagined outside of California—in Irene Paz’s *Vida y aventuras del más célebre bandido sonoreño Joaquín Murrieta* (Life and Adventures of the Sonoran Bandit Joaquín Murrieta), published in Mexico City in 1904 (see Leal 1999). Murrieta also figures in the tradition of the *corrido*, a popular song form that among its other functions helped spread news from one community to another. Américo Paredes’s *With His Pistol In His Hand*, an analysis of the *corrido* of Gregorio Cortez, a *tejano* tenant farmer who killed a sheriff in retaliation in 1901, is widely considered the foundational work of Chicano literary theory. Paredes used the competing press accounts to demonstrate that neither textual nor oral culture has an exclusive claim on historical truth; print culture was a source of evidence for him rather than the focus of his investigation. One effect of the canonization of Paredes’s folkloric investigation has been, however, to elevate oral and communal memory over print as the authentic expression of Mexican / America. Paredes’s work shows that the production of a resistant cultural difference comes about through the process of constant adaptation and translation on the border—but I would add that this process is visible in print circulation as well.

Like Paredes, I conclude that the richness of this period in Mexican / American culture will probably never be measurable in terms of books—but it may be seen in the larger networks of print culture. Traditional periodizations of US literary history

privilege novels and fictional trends (such as “Realism” and “Naturalism”), and by these measures Spanish-language print culture will always suffer in comparison. While the recovery of literary works from this archive will no doubt continue, it need not be envisioned in the codex form, which necessarily shoehorns dynamic and complex networks of text (and image) that were originally published in larger-format newspapers, or octavo-or quarto-sized magazines, into an alien format. Perhaps there is a great opportunity at hand in the fact that the history of Latino literary culture is being written during the age of digitization, introducing a new set of research tools as well as, potentially, new formats for non-linear (re)publication that might make some of these dynamic networks of print culture more visible. As American literary studies proceeds on its “transnational turn”, scholars who are willing to cross the language barrier may encounter powerful insights about the workings of popular print in the US by looking carefully at this archive.

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