

INTRODUCTION

Anti-Literature

MALIGNED, DIVISIVE, yet irrepressible, productive discussion on the literary in Latin American studies hinges on a critique of what is meant today by “literature.” This book produces a counterframework for reassessing the politics of representation and margins in Latin American experimental writings from the 1920s to the present, and aspires to theorize the subversive dimensions of multimedial, minoritarian, and feminine writing procedures as a worthwhile, *anti-literary* task.

Anti-Literature articulates a rethinking of the fundamental concepts of what is meant by “literature” in contemporary posthegemonic times. Advancing an understanding of the legacies, power, materiality, and relevance of literature at a time when influential critics bemoan its divorce from questions of social justice, my conceptualization of anti-literature posits the feminine, subaltern, and multimedial undoing of what is meant by “literature.” Through a multilayered theoretical analysis that engages the work of such writers as Clarice Lispector, Oswald de Andrade, the Brazilian concrete poets, Osman Lins, and David Viñas, the book addresses the problematic of experimental writing as a site for radical reflection under contemporary conditions. Always *in theory*, that is, questioning, at each step what constitutes “literature” and its relationship to other disciplines, this study’s attention to Brazil provides an important case of comparison and expansion for the field. In particular, I explore the importance of Brazil to the ongoing discussion

about the “nature” of Latin American literature and the need for a globally minded, inter-American framework. My thesis is that modern Latin American literature is no longer characterized by the old ideas of “literature” as an exalted form of individual expression and “high” culture, but by new ideas (politically progressive in nature) about the importance of authors, groups, and media long marginalized and thought to be exemplars of “low” culture. By paying especial attention to Brazilian and Argentine anti-literature as crucial to the rise of a new kind of thinking about literature, this book endeavors to change the larger discussion about the historical projection and critical force of Latin American literature.

The rationale informing this volume turns on a fundamental problematic: the ongoing dominance of traditional approaches to the Latin American literary, and the absence in the field concerning a sustained interdisciplinary reflection on Brazilian and Spanish American experimental writings. In similar fashion, studies of what is known as “avant-garde” in the field often turn on long-standing identitarian narratives that seek to “found” the literary as an autonomous subject that is at last capable of “provincializing” the European. There is no universal “new narrative” in the 1960s, just as there is no such thing as a universalization of Latin American literary vanguardism. If Brazilian and minor Latin American writers have always known this, their radical contributions have long been ignored. Indeed, Brazil functions as an all too often internalized outside in Latin American studies. As a reassessment of the projection of literature in the field that underscores the need for a sharper, more comparative, and inter-American mode of thinking, my conceptualization of anti-literature is grounded through theoretical, historical, and, above all, close materialist readings of Brazilian and Argentine experimental texts from the 1920s to the present. What is more, this volume engages a unique, diversified corpus of texts that includes the visual arts, concrete poetics, film scripts, and literary works that defy genre, representation, and the word-center.

Anti-Literature is organized as a broad-based discussion of theoretically informed work on Latin American historical, cultural, political, and social processes. It seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the literary, and responds to recent scholarship on the legacies of the avant-garde.¹ The book is, therefore, not simply a “literary” account, but a thoroughgoing critique of the historical projection of what is meant by “literature” in the field, as it combines historically situated close readings of experimental texts and multilayered theoretical analysis that probe the limits and possibilities of the literary as a site for radical reflection and reaction to contemporary conditions.

Critical studies focusing on the nature of literature in the field remain marginal. Ángel Rama's *Transculturación narrativa en América Latina* (1982) was a watershed study that at once concerned itself with defining the nature of Latin American literature in terms of identity, and largely gave shape to the contemporary dissatisfaction with literature's institutionality, historical projection, and link to culture in the field. Let me briefly recast Rama's arguments in order to frame my arguments about anti-literature. As an activity inaugurated by Creole patricians at the dawn of the nineteenth century, Latin American literary writing is conceived by Rama as a decolonizing search for cultural representation, independence, and originality. While, to be sure, Latin American literature emerges as an elitist affair, for Rama, it evolves in the mid-twentieth century as a universal cultural ground—especially with the international success of the Latin American “Boom” novel—by rediscovering and translating its popular roots, or better put, by “transculturating” the diverse subaltern cultures of the interior.² One can liken Rama's evolutionary model for Latin American literature to the image of a developing nation-state advancing in time from the legacies of colonial backwardness to modernity. In sum, Latin American literature's historical project, for Rama, was to overcome its formal and cultural dependency on European ideas by modernizing its writing procedures, and culturally, by expressing the original life-worlds of its autochthonous peoples. Like the state, Latin American literature is seen as an apparatus that incorporates and represents the diverse voices of the nation.

I will return to Rama's culturalist account of Latin American literature in chapter 1 in my reassessment of Clarice Lispector as a renegade, anti-literary writer, but for now, let me briefly consider four of the most influential book-length studies that challenge Rama's evolutionary model. These are: John Beverley's *Against Literature* (1993), which, taking a cultural studies approach, concerns itself with “a way of thinking about literature that is extraliterary, or . . . ‘against literature’” (2). Moreover, Beverley's landmark book, *Testimonio* (2004), interprets subaltern testimonial writings not as hierarchical forms of “literary” expression, but as real forms of truth and agency: “Testimonio appears where the adequacy of existing literary forms and styles . . . for the representation of the subaltern has entered into crisis” (*Testimonio* 49). On the other hand, influenced by Beverley's anti-paternalist critique against literature, as well as by Alberto Moreiras's deconstructive reading of the very notion of Latin American literary writing in *Tercer espacio* (1999), Brett Levinson's *The Ends of Literature* (2001) examines the part played by literature within contemporary Latin Americanist thought and seeks to show, in the context of the neoliberal demise of the sovereign

state during the 1980s, that literature in Latin America now functions as a double sign whose privileged status as universal ground for Latin American culture is doomed to closure. Latin American literature operates as a double sign of closure for Levinson because, first, its “literariness” or figurative status takes one to the boundary of common sense through defamiliarization. Literary writing is not representational; it does not speak for the people, as was assumed in Rama, but disrupts common sense through its inherent procedures of translation and “analogy,” that is, literature is “the bearer of the relation or likeness between (at least) two fields of concepts, one that neither concept can represent or disclose” (27). Second, literature not only frustrates common sense and fixed opinions, but significantly doubles as an institution tied to markets, conformity, and class-based idealism, because it claims prestige, authority, and transcendence: “[I]t always claims to transcend the common, the languages/forms in circulation and in public, indeed lending itself to the appropriations that support conservatism and existing class, as well as other hierarchies” (28). Finally, for Levinson, insofar as Latin American literature does not represent, in essentialist fashion, an original cultural identity, it constitutes an apposite figure for the translation of the ever-shifting, and relative, crisscrossing of worlds (pre-Hispanic, European, and modernity). Indeed, the pervasive “return to origins” narrative in Latin American literature, for Levinson, embodies not the expression of lost origins, as many have thought, but rather the inexorable trace of hybrid historical inheritance and “the incapacity to lose or translate origins” (17). However divergent the critique of Rama’s theory of Latin American literature, the abovementioned cultural theorists have highlighted a larger historical phenomenon that has led to impasse in the field: the exhaustion and limits of the historical representational project of Latin American literature as a paternalist, state-centered, and limited project.³ Inspired by this dissatisfaction and the corresponding appeal to interrogate the problematical nature of Latin American literature in hitherto unstudied ways, my goal in this book is to pose the problem of anti-literary modes of writing in modern Brazil and Argentina as part of a crucial, unexamined countertradition. Moreover, I argue that an assessment of anti-literature not only challenges classical, monological, and long-entrenched hierarchical notions of literature but changes the larger discussion about the “nature” of Latin American literature and allows us to reconceptualize the problem of writing the subaltern, the feminine, literary politics, and the literary debate in Latin American studies today from a distinctly comparative and original Brazilian context. As already indicated, reflection on Brazilian writers within the framework of Latin American studies remains rare. To the extent that the divorce persists, this volume endeavors to not only reenergize and redirect

the critique of literature in the field, but to work unexamined connections between Brazilian and Spanish American literature.⁴

Methodologically, this book desires to move beyond static notions of literature through theoretically informed readings of Brazilian and Argentine anti-literary texts. My aim, however, is not only to unearth pariah traditions, but to argue for the necessity of a multidisciplinary approach that engages some of the most influential cultural theorists and ideas that have led to the crisis of the idea of Latin American literature in the first place. As I will show in my arguments, insofar as anti-literature subverts monological conceptions of literary writing (i.e., literature understood in terms of a strict form-content divide, in terms of the traditional culturalist paradigm, and in terms of rigid genre separation), we need to create a new typology of the text and methodology of reading that understand literary form as a verbal, vocal, and visual complex of perception that structurally dialogues with other media and marginalized social groups. Concerned with anti-literary writing's powers of perception and alliance with other regimes of signs, an important theoretical strand that I examine in this book is the notion of posthegemony, which Jon Beasley-Murray broadly defines as the questioning of the categories of the nation-state and hegemony as the organizing principles for an analysis of culture and politics (xvi). While I will explore Beasley-Murray's ideas more fully in their relationship to Haroldo de Campos's anti-literary prose poem *Galáxias*, in chapter 4, it is important to note that posthegemonic reflection on the Latin American literary today places emphasis on affect against representation, that is, on the dual power of bodies to affect and be affected.⁵ In this book, I posit the idea of anti-literature as a multidisciplinary, minoritarian, and multimedial "body" of writing that produces affects and new modes of perception. This idea will, in effect, challenge current, fixed conceptions of literature in the field, and will contribute to the larger discussion/impasse about literary politics.

However, it should be clear that the prefix *post-* designates not so much a chronological dimension ("after" hegemony), but rather a *critical* and *differential* signifier. In this sense, a reading of anti-literature's subversive potential can be considered posthegemonic, but only if we are to read for the text's affective, feminine, multimedial, and subaltern threads. Literature behaves as anti-literature, I argue, precisely when it subverts not only social and cultural norms, but itself: literature is not literature, at least not the way we have been trained to read it as a culturalist regime of representation. My contention is that it is only by accounting for this relation of nonidentity—literature is not literature—that we can begin to read again, anew. This book's analysis of the different genres and media that Brazilian and Argentine anti-literary writers assemble—feminine writing, poetry,

film, nonverbal anti-poetry, baroque ornamentation, and so on—deepens our understanding of what is meant by “Latin American” literature as well as what it means to read.

Moreover, in our move against the grain of traditional identitarian interpretative practices, we will see that anti-literature’s subversive potential does not rest in a transparent identification with a particular political ideology, or social/cultural identity, as was the conventional wisdom in Latin American literary studies for several decades. As already indicated, the long-standing “originary” linkage between literature and culture in Latin America has been marked as questionable due to the fact that it presupposes a paternalistic representational regime or, in the words of Patrick Dove, “a monolithic, idealized view of literature” (23).⁶ Such a teleological image of literature has fettered the field’s critical horizons. *Anti-Literature* is concerned with creating a new perspective for literary studies. It does so by conceptualizing the critical force of anti-literary modes of writing while addressing urgent debates in Latin American studies and literary and filmic production: subalternity, feminine writing, posthegemony, concretism, affect, experimental poetics, marranismo, and the politics of aesthetics.

Let us now consider Jacques Rancière’s conception of the sensible and its relationship to the mixed regimes of signs at play in anti-literary texts. By the sensible, Rancière refers to “the system of self-evident facts of sense perception that simultaneously discloses the existence of something in common [*l’existence d’un commun*] and the delimitations that define the respective parts and positions within it” (*Politics* 12; *Le partage* 12). The sensible denotes “a common habitat” (*la constitution d’un monde sensible commun, d’un habitat commun*) (*Politics* 42; *Le partage* 66). It describes the system of implicit rules for seeing, speaking, and making that unite and divide a community. Before official politics, the community is first a sensible realm, governed by rules and habits of perception. The distribution of the sensible is therefore not simply an ethos, or system of rules for social behavior, but rather a space of possibilities that is essentially polemical, plural, political, and perceptual. Rancière’s basic argument is that art and literature constitute inventive “cuts,” or ruptures within the order of the sensible, and thus intervene as “dissensual” forms of subversion (*Dissensus* 202).⁷ Art intervenes as a struggle over experience. The politics of literature does not reside in the opinions of writers or in expressing messages, but rather turns on enabling words with the power of framing “a common polemical world”: “what links the practice of art to the question of the common is the constitution, at once material and symbolic, of a specific space-time, of a suspension with respect to the ordinary forms of sensory experience” (*Dissensus* 153; *Politics* 23).

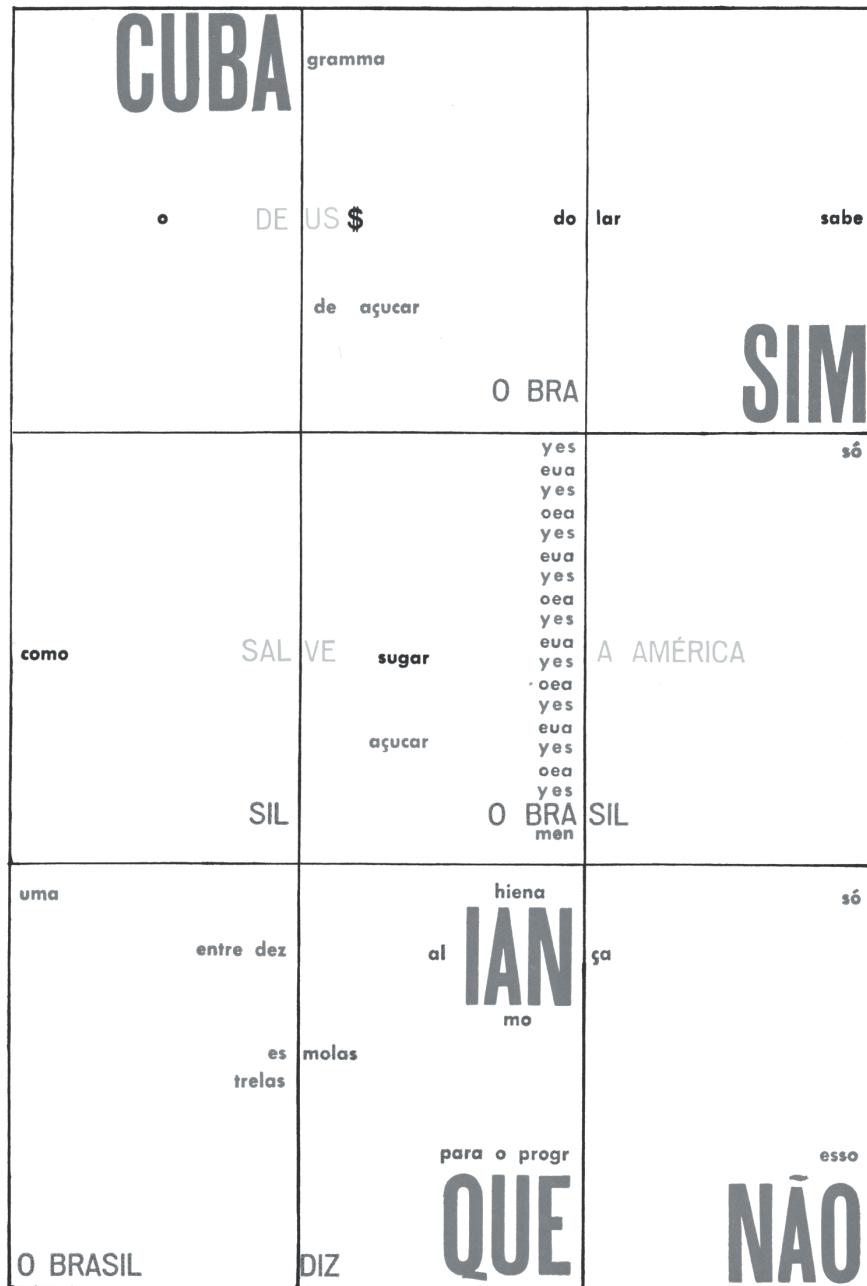


Fig. I.1. "cubagramma," by Augusto de Campos. From *Invenção: Revista de Arte de Vanguarda*, no. 2 (1962). Courtesy of Augusto de Campos.

The politics of anti-literature and its specific affair with the sensible comes into focus through reflection on the limits of the literary medium. Consider Augusto de Campos's "cubagramma" (1962). Concerned with articulating an inventive, transgressive, and polysemic mapping of the polemical status of Cuba in Latin American political debates during the 1960s, Campos's constellation poem problematizes official political representations, pointing to margins and multiple modalities of writing, reading, and mediating the impasse of intellectuals regarding politics.

This poetic field is organized in nine quadrants through six colors—a prominent red that points to Cuba and its revolution, a green that metonymically points to Brazil, and the colors marine, orange, yellow, and "Old Glory Blue."⁸ Syntactically, words become fragmented, cross-sectioned, and intercepted by the quadrants and contrasting colors. There are no stanzas but semantic blocks that, like Deleuzian rhizomes, produce offshoots of sense and half-sense—abrupt lines of semantic flight that turn the poem into a laboratory of readings that encircle the prominently displayed, yet fragmented syntagma in bold red: CUBA/gramma SIM IAN QUE NÃO (CUBA/grammar YES YAN-KEE NO). The accentuated visual limits and divisions to the poem-design not only allow the reader to construct multiple readings vertically, horizontally, through color combinations, and across the quadrants, but call attention to the poem's "concrete grammar" and compositional coordinates.

It could be said that the poem's compositional character takes on protagonism over the poem's field of representation. Indeed, the word *gramma* constitutes a double entendre. *Grámma*, from the Greek, refers to letters, to that which is designed, and to the written register. In the second quadrant, it also clearly refers to grams as units of measure, constituting a poetic play with Cuban sugar and US neocolonial interests in the 1960s. In addition to graphing the poem's "grammar," the poem displays, in phonetic fragments and metonymies of color, the neocolonial political context that includes the nation-states of Cuba, Brazil, and the United States. Foregrounding the stakes of the poem as a radicalized medium that condenses multiple regimes of signs, it is significant that *gramma* also suggests the official newspaper of the Cuban Communist Party, the *Granma*.

No doubt "cubagramma" articulates a self-reflexive, anti-literary mediation of a prominent political problem in the 1960s. Far from presenting a poetic resolution to the poem's inquiry on the Cuban Revolution and its possible "alliance" with an increasingly revolutionary Brazil in 1962, where the masses were fast gaining agency, the poem first maps its structural and syntactic grammar—the building blocks, colors, and limits of composition—as an interpellation of the reader to critically mediate this political impasse

from the standpoint of construction, as opposed to abstract schemata and official polities. Far from speaking for the nation-state and the people, as one is wont to say of identitarian accounts of Latin American literature, Campos's poem suspends ready-made solutions and the imposition of the ideological, inscribing across the poem's colored words and political field a modifiable present for the reader.

As we can see from Campos's insistence on the radicalized medium as a condition of possibility for recasting what is normatively meant by literature and politics, anti-literary works disturb the common sensible fabric, the customary regimes of perception, identification, and interpretation that establish what is understood by literature. In *Anti-Literature*, I show that the choice is never between literature and politics, or between literature and the other arts. Rather, at stake, I argue, is a subversive, anti-literary understanding of form, understood as a combination of creative forces or interplay between distinct media. All of this amounts to recasting the fundamental problem that pulses through this volume: that anti-literary works articulate an exodus from the regime of visibility of the Latin American literary regime and its cultural politics of mastery and cultural identity, resurgent during the 1960s in Latin America and still prevalent in the field, as many influential accounts of Latin American literature exemplify. Indeed, it might be said, following David Viñas, that for all its merit the Boom discursive formation has hindered the field's critical horizons and impeded the voices of minoritarian writers ("Pareceres" 28, 16). Irrespective of the position one takes regarding the superbly innovative novels of Gabriel García Márquez, Mario Vargas Llosa, Carlos Fuentes, and Julio Cortázar, a regime of interpretation has emerged in their wake that persists in positing the Boom as *the* exemplary Latin American literary subject and key to the canon. While it outstrips the purposes of this introduction to delve deeper into this prickly subject directly, suffice it to say that the Boom's well-documented exclusions—concerning women's writing, Brazil, and minoritarian works—remain an urgent gap in the field that this volume seeks to address.⁹

Against linear unity, accordingly, the structure of this book takes on the shape of the collage or constellation so as to register disparate yet interconnected events of writing. Behind historically grounded analyses that chart the polyvocal procedures of writing at stake in each work, one discerns what could be likened to an interstellar conversation among mutant stars. Opening onto all discourses and producing multiple regimes of signs, to invoke the galactic image of writing at stake in the volume's penultimate chapter dedicated to Haroldo de Campos, these are works that throw light over literature's limits and excess. The constellation, no doubt, denotes the interplay of levels, discourses, and intervals between literature, politics, and theory.

As a figure that crosses the limit and the clear-cut rules of representational logic, the constellation dismisses any unitary subject matter for literature.

OVERVIEW

In diverse ways, the historical case studies contained in this volume place in question the traditional image of literature. There is a traditional image of literature in Latin America. It is a regime of representation that endeavors to speak for the marginal, the feminine, and the regional other. Literature becomes a vehicle to translate and integrate an intractable field of difference. Implicit in this image is a method for locating and thinking difference through representations. Affirming the primacy of identity, this image is typically national and identitarian, but has taken on a variety of avatars since the nineteenth century whose analysis far outstrips the purposes of this introduction.¹⁰

In chapter 1, I provide a new investigation of the problem of writing the feminine and the subaltern in Latin American studies today through a reading of Clarice Lispector's hitherto unexamined, anti-literary legacy. If, according to Lispector, "literature is a detestable word" and the task of the writer consists in "speaking as little as possible," I engage the recent proliferation of bibliographic research to foreground the difficulty Lispector had in assuming the problematic of politics, literary vanguardism, and commitment during the 1960s and 1970s (*Outros* 165). My countergenealogical portrait highlights Lispector's personal crisis that led to the writing of *A hora da estrela* (1977), her final work and testimony, on which much of her international fame rides. Just as Lispector's final work articulates a critique of literature and a new vision of writing in regard to the subaltern and the feminine, I draw on the work of John Beverley, Gareth Williams, Alberto Moreiras, and Bruno Bosteels to situate the importance of a subalternist framework in rethinking literature and its crisis. Accordingly, I argue that the task of regrounding literature in its specific concern with the sensible calls on a new framework that rehistoricizes works such as Lispector's through their singular, heterodox enunciative procedures. I then turn to the problem of writing the feminine in Lispector by juxtaposing her radical compositional procedure with the writings of Hélène Cixous, Marta Peixoto, and Luce Irigaray. Through a reading of the metaliterary and the feminine in *A hora da estrela*, I argue that Lispector's writing articulates a "fluid" relation to language and politics that defies a unitary, representational, and hence colonizing subject of writing. As an interrogative call to a feminine, reflexive, affective, and creative mode of relationality and social dwelling, a new image of writing at stake in Lispector is ushered forward—one concerning not only the politics of literature, vanguardism, and subalternity in Brazil

in the 1960s and 1970s but of subversive composition and the question of taking positions in the present.

Chapter 2 provides a new investigation of the problem of literary politics through a reassessment of David Viñas. Whether through his novels, film scripts, plays, or highly regarded critical essays that fused a sociological examination of the conditions of intellectual production with a heterodox writing style that defied the “myth of literature,” Viñas introduced a new image of writing in Latin America and a polemical way of posing problems. And yet, because of Viñas’s defiant character and adherence to a critical Marxian perspective, critics have overlooked the subversive character of his novels and film scripts. Conflating political viewpoint with experimental composition, these critics have interpreted Viñas’s literary production through a representational optics and order of reasons that limit “literary commitment” to the production of messages. Accordingly, I show how the dis-encounter with Viñas’s literary politics turns on a fundamental misreading of his relationship to Jean-Paul Sartre, Marxism, and cinema. On the other hand, I explore how Viñas’s novels restore immanence to the mediation of the political and social field. By examining his adaptation of narrative montage technique and recourse to parody, I elucidate how Viñas’s will to write the historical constitutes an always open process. My argument is that to “give body” to writing, following Viñas’s materialist motto, means not the incarnation of a mechanical Marxist thesis but precisely this: to make of the literary work a milieu of mediation bearing on the minoritarian and violence in history (*Sarmiento* 134). At stake is a new image of “political” writing in Viñas—one that maps history, politics, and writing while undoing the power of their oft-unquestioned teleological effects. Accordingly, in an engagement with Jean-Luc Nancy’s conception of literary finitude, I provide a theoretical examination, for the first time, of the subversive stakes and affective force of Viñas’s montage narrative technique in the film script turned novel, *Dar la cara* (1962).

In chapter 3, I provide a new reading of Oswald de Andrade’s cannibal that charts its subversive avatars in Brazilian concrete poetry from the 1950s to the present. Shifting the terms of discussion on the legacy of anthropophagia through a reading of Andrade’s poetry, I argue that the critical force of his cannibalistic poetics lies not in identity but in its self-reflexive, multimedial defiance of representational logic. Second, I investigate how the Brazilian concrete poets resuscitate Andrade’s poetics to take what they famously called the “participatory leap” into politics during the 1960s.

The Brazilian concrete poets constitute an understudied, subversive chapter in Latin American studies. Indeed, it could be said that no literary tendency exemplifies more powerfully the theoretical complexity of

the historical Latin American avant-garde movements. As an anti-literary project, I show how Brazilian concrete poetry breaks down and blurs the lines separating traditional literary genres and constitutes a visual, verbal, and vocal poetic field of immanence in order to engage the reader with the problem of politics, revolution, subjectivity, subalternity, and vanguardism. Hence, drawing from a diverse array of multimedial poems, I illustrate how the largely misunderstood participatory leap hinges on the ways in which the Brazilian concrete poets “devour the nonpoetic” so as to renovate poetry in a public sphere in crisis. Such a poetics constitutes a new image of vanguard writing in Latin America—one that abandons the collective, representational, word-centered function to engage what the concrete poets deemed the postliterary, postverbal era of late capitalism. Marking the limits of literature even as it opens an outside space to consumption in late capitalism, I conclude by elucidating the continuity of the anthropophagic, properly political preoccupation in concrete poetry as an untimely matter of counterconstructing the present with a reading of Augusto de Campos’s iconic poem “mercado” (2002).

Chapter 4 investigates the crisis of the Brazilian avant-garde during the years of the military dictatorship (1964–85) through an assessment of Haroldo de Campos’s monumental prose poem *Galáxias* (1963–76). Challenging the prevailing view that posits the text’s conflictive relation between “autonomy” and concrete intervention in history, I examine the text’s intertextual dialogue with numerous literary, philosophical, and political sources (Dante, Japanese Buddhism, the Brazilian concrete poets, the military regime’s propaganda) and how the work investigates the culture industry and the crisis of the impoverished subaltern. Through a comparative, close reading of the *Galáxias* with Ferreira Gullar’s “street guitar” political poetry of the 1960s, I suggest the ways in which a thinking of materiality in the *Galáxias* (as affect, as self-reflexive intertextual galaxy, and as concretism) allows us to reconceptualize the literary debate in Latin American studies today from a distinctly Brazilian context.

Drawing on recent discussions of the Latin American Boom, chapter 5 deploys the paradoxical case of Brazilian writer Osman Lins to chart a new framework for interrogating the politics and impasse of the literary in Brazil during the 1960s and 1970s. If I begin with a discussion on the heretofore unpublished polemic between Lins and Haroldo de Campos concerning the “anti-vanguard” character of Lins’s novel *Avalovara* (1973), it is to foreground what I conceptualize as the nonunitary, baroque, and subalternist antinomies of anti-literature. Upending all teleological models, I argue that this is the secret residing in Lins’s baroque, anti-literary poetics: a new mapping of subalternity that wrests from transculturation’s torpor a

forceful thought of the political. In my examination of Lins's intensely experimental "Retábulo de Santa Joana Carolina" (1966), I throw light on the means by which Lins blends multiple regimes of signs such as medieval *cantiga* poetry, theater, and the visual arts to engage the structural violence of exploitation and subalternity in the Brazilian Northeast. Situating my argument within the debate on the legacy of the Boom, I engage Rancière, the Latin American Subaltern Studies Group, and the writings of José Rabasa to address Idelber Avelar's influential reading of the Boom as a discursive formation that prizes the figure of the demiurgic writer. For Avelar, the Boom is understood as the site in which Latin American writers seek to restore the literary's "aura," understood as Latin American literature's historical task of creating a lettered elite and representing the people, in a postliterary society marked by the crisis of the state (29). In contradistinction, I examine how Lins's baroque poetics intensely negotiates violence and authority through enunciative ensembles that are anti-representational and anti-literary. Just as with Viñas in Argentina in the context of the fiercely politicized years of the 1960s, I conclude by showing how subalternity in Brazil is imagined by the literary otherwise—not so much as an object of ideology but as a figure of tension for a new poetic and political word.

Anti-Literature concludes with an examination of Haroldo de Campos's poem "O anjo esquerdo da história" (1998), which Campos composed following the massacre of nineteen members of the Landless Workers Movement (MST) by the military police in the state of Pará. I examine how "O anjo"—as theoretical inquiry, denunciatory poem, and avant-garde experiment—is constructed through a montage accretion of images that incessantly call attention to the limits and force of literature. Accordingly, interested in wresting a sensorial language from the remains of the subaltern dead whose truth it knows it cannot name, Campos's poem will overthrow all literary ontology. More specifically, the poem will be concerned with creating a language that is adequate to the incalculable horror of the event, even as it attempts to reactivate subaltern affect and the MST's revolutionary forms of struggle. In an engagement with Walter Benjamin, John Beverley, Gareth Williams, Sebastião Salgado, Giorgio Agamben, Michael Hardt, and Antonio Negri, I elucidate how Campos's poem configures an investigation of the materiality of poetic discourse that opens the life-world pertaining to words in all their sensory, semantic, historical, and political dimensions. In other words, even as the poem posits its limits in its inquiry to redeem subaltern tragedy, I show how Campos makes of the poem an untimely configuration of sensation that resists history, from its margins, as a politics against "literature." Extending the threads of our research to the present impasse over the literary question in contemporary Latin American studies and to

Brazil's largest social movement of more than 5 million landless peasants, I argue that the achievement of Campos is to have produced a politically inspired limit-work that approximates a liberated image for reframing the crisis of the social bond. Going beyond the looking glass of literature and the state, it is a radical work, then, about justice, about literature's untimely role in reactivating subaltern affect, and a contemporary form of subalternist, anti-literary force that hooks up literature to revolutionary forms of insurgency and ways of reimagining the past in a perilous present.