

INTRODUCTION

BORDER WAR AS STASIS

In 1978, war almost broke out between Argentina and Chile. The conflict is rarely remembered, a historical blip eclipsed by the enduring legacy of South America's brutal military dictatorships. The film *Mi mejor enemigo* (My best enemy), directed by Alex Bowen, reimagined what happened in this war-that-wasn't for twenty-first-century viewers. The film follows a group of Chilean soldiers tasked with finding an old border fence in the seemingly endless grasslands. Their compass breaks, and they lose radio contact with their regiment. The lost soldiers wander through the Pampas until they come across a similarly lost group of Argentines. Both dig trenches on either side of what they imagine to be their territory, although the commanding officers are finally forced to admit, in the words of the Argentine to his Chilean counterpart: "Neither of us knows where the border is."¹

Because they can't find the border, they decide to create one (fig. I.1). In a tense scene, the Chilean officer confronts the Argentine about selfish and unfair treatment. A tight reverse shot reduces the scale of the

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impending war down to a duel. Even though they had decided on the border only moments before, the Argentine declares tersely: “You are invading my territory.”² The officer begrudgingly concedes, ordering his subordinate to take “two *small* steps toward the Atlantic,” clarifying to the obviously confused soldier, “That way, man.”³ The soldiers decide to burn a line of fire in the grass to seal the pact. But the wind suddenly picks up, carrying the fire across the dry grass. Panicked soldiers hurry to stamp it out and avoid territorial losses. Effectively, they recreate the process of border arbitration in miniature. Their border is a fiction, but a fiction they believe in—a fiction for which they risk their lives.

The Other Border Wars argues that the border is this fiction, sustained on both sides by steady belief even in the face of death. It examines twentieth-century border wars in Latin America and their circulation and negotiation in culture. Latin American borders—some established and upheld since the colonial period, some since the nineteenth century, some only since the 1930s—organize political and cultural space, shaping both internal and external conflicts. Once they are established, they tend to be reinforced by these same internal and external forces. This book departs from the hypothetical question: What happens if we examine border conflict while suspending belief in the border? After all, like the lost soldiers, the closer one gets to the border, the more difficult it is to find. Today’s borders are especially diffuse, sometimes overwhelmed by frequent crossings of goods and people, sometimes frustrated by unclear or disputed demarcations. Globalization has made contemporary borders more ambiguous but also more contentious.

None of this is new to the Mexico–US border, which has long been viewed as an area of contention and a rich object of study. Since Gloria Anzaldúa’s seminal *Borderlands/La frontera*, the northern Mexican and southern US border has been understood as a space of rich cultural exchange. For Anzaldúa, the border is a metaphor, traversing categories of race, ethnicity, language, and sexuality. Yet scholars of Latin American studies have been slow to apply Anzaldúa’s approach to other borders in the region. Latin American borders are generally considered peaceful, and problems are often minimized either by focusing on domestic unrest or by invoking *hermandad*, fraternity, among Latin American nations, especially in opposition to Global Northern powers. Political scientists in particular celebrate the region as peaceful compared to Europe. For instance, David Mares contrasts the relative infrequency of international disputes to the ongoing low-intensity insurgency and civil warfare that he calls Latin America’s “violent peace” (ix–xiv).⁴ This “violent peace”

has been an implicit focus in much of Latin American cultural studies as well, with literature and film seen primarily as useful depictions of internal conflicts like civil wars, revolutions, and armed insurrections. As a consequence, twentieth-century border wars have been considered minor or incidental. *The Other Border Wars* pushes back against this current, instead casting border conflict as critical to understanding Latin American culture.

After all, internal conflicts are inextricably entwined with external ones. Domestic pressures in the United States, for instance, shape the relationship to the Mexican border as much as, or perhaps even more than, international relations. Returning to the Beagle Conflict depicted in *Mi mejor enemigo*, the dispute between Argentina and Chile encapsulates in miniature the political and legal legacies at work in Latin American border conflicts and serves as an introduction to the common language and themes undergirding border disputes in this book. A variety of factors—internal, external, colonial, and contemporary—influenced the development and outcome of the conflict. Its origins in colonial territorial divisions, independence-era statecraft, and response to European and US pressures make it a model of the simmering tensions at borders throughout the region during the twentieth century.

For most of the century, both Argentina and Chile had sporadically claimed the islands of Picton, Nueva, and Lennox at the eastern edge of the Beagle Channel and the southern tip of South America. In 1971, both countries submitted their arguments to a binding arbitration court overseen by a neutral mediator, who was, as determined in previous treaties, the British sovereign, Queen Elizabeth II. Why, after decades of apparent apathy, did the sovereignty of the islands seem suddenly important? An Antarctic land grab was looming with the threat of encroachment from powerful countries seeking to argue that some territories did not belong to anyone—were *res nullius*—and were therefore claimable. Both Argentina and Chile sought a definitive resolution in their favor to avoid neo-imperialism in the region. At stake was the definition of property and the question of how international law determines an area as either unowned or sovereign territory.⁵

In 1977, the British court handed down its binding decision, with all three islands awarded to Chile.⁶ Argentina withdrew its support from the mediation and planned to invade the islands and other strategic locations in Chilean Patagonia. They called the attack, set to begin December 22, 1978, *Operación Soberanía*, “Operation Sovereignty.” The name reveals that Argentina viewed the border as the limit of sovereignty and its claim to the islands as justified under an international system in which sover-

eignty is inviolable. A threat to sovereign waters necessitated a response on sovereign soil. In a final effort to avoid bloodshed, Pope John Paul II offered to arbitrate the dispute under the auspices of the Vatican. The two clearest incarnations of sovereignty—queen and pope—had been called on to settle this dispute that came from the continent’s imperial past. They embodied the staying power of political theology, imported from Europe to the Americas with the first European settlers and still decisive centuries later. The pope’s arbitration was ultimately successful in avoiding armed conflict between the military governments led by two of Latin America’s most notorious dictators, Jorge Rafael Videla and Augusto Pinochet. When, in 1984, Pope John Paul II’s arbitration court came to largely the same conclusion as the queen’s, awarding the three islands to Chile but giving Argentina maritime rights, Argentina accepted. The country had been soundly defeated in the Falklands/Malvinas War of 1982 and had little appetite for conflict. Argentina and Chile subsequently signed and ratified the Treaty of Peace and Friendship.

Contrary to the film *Mi mejor enemigo*, there was no bloodshed. Electoral democracy returned to Argentina in 1983 and to Chile in 1990. This minor border conflict—and the major border wars this book examines—depended on a definition of sovereignty, and hence bordering, that emerged from much older legal systems. Sovereignty was transferred from the Spanish empire to independent nations via the principle of *uti possidetis juris*, providing for the transfer of territorial limits from colony to nation-state at independence. When the dispute flared again in the twentieth century, the imperial powers of pope and queen—icons of political theology—in negotiation with newer autocratic sovereigns—US-backed anti-communist dictators—were again called upon to resolve the border question, eventually giving way, at least nominally, to the people. The Beagle Conflict epitomizes the tension between sovereignty and democracy characteristic of all of the armed border conflicts that *The Other Border Wars* examines. Each of the conflicts raises major political and cultural questions, including the nature and importance of sovereignty in light of European political theology and imperialism; the balance or imbalance of internal and external forces, past and present, legal and cultural; and the meanings of democracy in relation to violence.

I explore these questions by approaching border conflict from the perspective of stasis, meaning civil strife, rather than from the perspective of *polemos*, or international conflict.⁷ This terminological shift implies a method, adapted from Mexico-US border studies and globalization studies, that privileges the border as a site of conflict, exchange, negotiation, and differential enclosure and flow. Yet it does not take the

border as a given. Although it may seem counterintuitive, approaching border wars from the perspective of internal conflict imparts a rich field of meaning through which to understand past and present conflicts. *The Other Border Wars* uses the following three related definitions of stasis to argue for a suspension of the border as the organizing principle of cultural and political life.

The first definition of stasis explored here: stagnation, stoppage, lack of change, status quo. Long before the twentieth century, national and international legal systems coalesced around European definitions of sovereignty exported to the Americas during the colonial period. The Beagle Conflict, for instance, emerged from treaties and systems that settled into place over the course of centuries. As German jurist Carl Schmitt writes, Latin America's legal sphere was seen as essentially European: "The Latin American states that arose [during the nineteenth century] assumed that they, too, belonged to the 'family of European nations' and to its community of international law" (Nomos 286–87). During the early nineteenth-century wars of independence and the later nineteenth-century international wars—notably the War of the Triple Alliance in 1864–1870 and the War of the Pacific in 1879–1883—Latin America established largely static limits between territories. By the turn of the twentieth century, Latin American borders were substantially the same as they are now, with the critical exception of the Bolivia–Paraguay border, finally decided after the Chaco War. Subsequent territorial disputes were mostly confined to the diplomatic sphere, and Latin American states assumed a fixed shape.

Over time, political scientists argue that territorial stagnation brings unity and coherence to bordered land masses, leading to regional and national senses of identity (Hassner). If the territory is in dispute, however, this cohesion increases the likelihood of conflict. Intractable disputes, such as the conflict over the Falklands/Malvinas Islands, become more contentious as a result. As Ron Hassner writes of intractable territorial disputes, "As these conflicts mature, the perceived cohesion of the disputed territory rises; its boundaries are perceived as becoming more clearly defined; and the availability of substitutes for the territory appear to decline" (110). The border's physical stasis makes negotiation and compromise less likely. The gradual process of entrenchment sharpens the disputed territory's boundaries and increases its perceived value, leading to war as an outlet for unfinished business, as described most famously in Carl von Clausewitz's 1832 treatise *On War* as "the continuation of policy by other means" (87).

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By the twentieth century, Latin American political geography had become static and many border disputes had been settled. Geographical limits were codified into law. As Walter Benjamin's "Critique of Violence" argues, "If . . . conclusions can be drawn from military violence, as being primordial and paradigmatic of all violence used for natural ends, there is inherent in all such violence a lawmaking character" (283). Military violence, whether the violence of imperialism or of warfare, creates the law, and the law then maintains the status quo. Michel Foucault's 1975–1976 lectures advance Benjamin's observation by inverting Clausewitz's proposition in the present: "Politics is the continuation of war by other means. Politics . . . sanctions and reproduces the disequilibrium of forces manifested in war" (16). The legal order becomes the unquestioned violence that undergirds society. War is no longer just at or beyond the border; it has saturated political organization. Force is inscribed in everyday life.

This situation leads to Latin America's "violent peace," only visible in rare moments of overt confrontation. These moments of violent confrontation then illuminate a collage of forces coming to bear on the border. As we will see in chapters 1 and 2, the emergence of a stagnant geographical border implies the tenuous hold of the map on national space and the written word as an enclosure of cultural difference that is necessarily partial and incomplete. Geographically stagnant borders serve as key sites for examining the violence of enclosure. As Fredric Jameson writes, "War is . . . the potentiation and becoming-actual of . . . occulted virtualities: the presence of those absent enemies which peacetime and daily life confined to newspaper or television news when their existence intersected at all with my own" (*Valences* 595). With the outbreak of hostilities, latent conflicts spring into view, calling into question the codified violence of the legal and political order. Border wars provide a unique opportunity to carry out "the interpretation of society and its visible order [in] the confusion of violence, passions, hatreds, rages, resentments, and bitterness" (Foucault 54). Fiction, film, poetry, plays, and visual art depict these moments of simultaneous violence and stagnation, emphasizing ongoing tension at borders and within the legal order.

This leads to the second definition of stasis: an internal conflict, uproar, or internecine dispute. This second definition is perhaps the most difficult to grasp when considering border conflict because, since ancient times, European thinkers working from classical models have insisted on the categorical difference between internal and external conflict, *stasis* and *polemos*. Famously, Thucydides laid the foundation for a differentia-

tion between civil and external wars in his account of the Peloponnesian War.⁸ In Book V of *Republic*, Plato likewise distinguishes between war among the Greeks and war with barbarians. The former is considered *stasis*, a civil war that manifests an illness in the polity, whereas the latter he terms *polemos*, a war with a true enemy. Aristotle considers and modifies this distinction when he elaborates on its opposite, friendship, in *Politics*.⁹ Since ancient Greece, the border has long served the key function of dividing an ordered polity from its barbaric exterior. More recently, classicist Nicole Loraux's *Divided City* presents *stasis* as an important precursor to democracy, describing how amnesty in the wake of civil conflict formed the basis of Athenian politics. Schmitt has also expanded the significance of *stasis* in political theology to mean an uproar or rebellion of the One against itself (*Political Theology II*), so that for Loraux, *stasis* precedes democracy and for Schmitt, it marks the unfolding of political theology.¹⁰ For both, *stasis* profoundly affects the shape of the political order.

Since the classical period, two world wars and later globalization caused political theorists and philosophers to reconsider categories of violence. In the wake of the Second World War, philosopher Emmanuel Levinas began to use the term *polemos* to describe violence not only engulfing the European continent but also permeating the Western philosophical tradition. In *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas interprets two Heraclitus fragments as the basis for the philosophical view that posits *polemos*, or war, as the foundation of existence.¹¹ For Levinas, *polemos* unites key thinkers in continental philosophy, leading most damningly to Martin Heidegger, who explicitly refers to Heraclitus's fragments on *polemos* when writing in Nazi Germany. Heidegger's association with the Nazis beginning in 1933 resonates with his rendering of *polemos* into German as *Kampf*, later abandoned for its Nazi resonances not least with Adolf Hitler's autobiography *Mein Kampf* (Fried 30–32). As a result of this contaminated Western philosophical tradition, Levinas argues that ethics must supersede ontology. For Levinas, *polemos* and the conflictual nature of existence must be set aside in order to make way for the ethical relationship with the other.

Levinas's observation has also been taken up in Latin American studies, where it has become foundational in decolonial theory. In *Against War*, Nelson Maldonado-Torres critiques European modernity as originating in and expanding through a "paradigm of war," where "by paradigm of war I mean a way of conceiving humanity, knowledge, and social relations that privileges conflict or *polemos*. . . . The paradigm of war can be characterized in terms of the privilege of conflict or the

celebration of the reduction of the singularity of individual entities and subjects to the generality of the concept, to Being, to an ethnos, or to a totality in philosophical reflections” (3). Polemos manifests the violence intrinsic in the Western philosophical tradition, especially translated into the Global South. With Levinas, Maldonado-Torres sustains that ontology is violence, but he goes a step further to claim that philosophy, especially European philosophy, causes physical violence. For him, philosophy sits at the base of empire, which is itself a machine for eliminating difference. Imperial remnants in the Global South must be philosophically decolonized.

The problem with Maldonado-Torres’s approach, explored further in chapter 3, is that the oppositional—polemical—structure of war is inscribed in the book’s title: *Against War*. Maldonado-Torres, and decolonial theorists more generally, sustain a polemic against polemic—a war against war. In order to overcome this circularity, Maldonado-Torres proposes an “ethics of love” that approaches others as singularities. The world is not knowable through a universal concept of humanity or a central division of friend and foe but rather through a universality of difference. As in the case of the border, however, claiming resistant differences risks reinforcing these differences. The very distinction between self and other, identity and difference, is often the cause of violence.

The Other Border Wars argues that theoretical work that opposes war cannot argue against war. It cannot make war the enemy. Instead, conceptual work must consider the philosophical, legal, and historical circumstances that come to bear on specific conflicts while questioning their categorization and function in the present. By examining war from within rather than viewing it as a condition imposed from outside, Latin American border conflicts speak to the philosophical and political currents shaping the region and its idea of borders into the present.

This leads to the third definition of stasis: displacement, redirection, and multiplication. Resonant with recent changes under globalization, this third definition comes from the rhetorical tradition, in which stasis is an argumentative procedure used to define and work through a dispute. Border mediation typically follows a similar process in order to define physical boundaries and sovereign rights. Contemporary bordering in particular often also involves movement and negotiations about trade and labor. In *Border as Method*, Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson suggest that contemporary borders are shifting and multiplying. Borders increasingly differentiate flows of people and goods so that border enforcement stretches into remote corners; for instance, when government

agents raid a workplace hundreds of miles from the nearest border. The border comes to the people. In US Latinx communities, the phrase “We didn’t cross the border; the border crossed us” has become a rallying cry (qtd. in Mezzadra and Neilson xi, 270). Mezzadra and Neilson describe this contemporary situation as “a proliferation but also a heterogenization of borders” (3). The border serves to control labor and consumption so that, as Mezzadra and Neilson explain, borders are points of both stoppage and flow (3). Borders articulate contemporary global capitalism, organizing space, labor, politics, and culture.

While borders are changing rapidly now, a gradual shift has been going on for quite some time. Two world wars eroded the legal principles of territorial integrity established in the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia, and a new system emerged that slowly transformed understandings of sovereignty. Rhetorical stasis became part of geopolitical positioning. Writing in 1953, Schmitt decries the decisive shift away from a concrete order based on territory: “Every legal system, every unity of order and orientation requires some concept of property guarantees, of *status quo* and *uti possidetis*. The Geneva institution also appeared to guarantee the territorial integrity of each member. . . . Yet other, not formally recognized, but nevertheless effective principles, such as the right of free self-determination of peoples, stood in the way of the legitimacy of this territorial *status quo*, and essentially jeopardized its unproblematic and unequivocal nature. . . . The essential difficulty . . . lay still deeper, and concerned the question of what the *status quo* should be” (Nomos 245). The territorial status quo comes into question with the emergence of principles such as self-determination that interrupt the essentially imperial order. Schmitt assumes that the European legal framework carries over to the Americas but runs into difficulty when the territorial status quo is threatened. A staunch opponent of both communism and liberal democracy, Schmitt hears the threat of the people in this change and foresees a dark future, heightened under globalization as the balance of power shifted toward the United States. As he feared, the understanding of the nation-state as a “bordered power-container” (Anthony Giddens, qtd. in Elden, *Birth* 3) would decay so that the state no longer had a monopoly on violence.¹² Under this new regime, the democratic power of the people would become a threat to the international legal order.

In 1963, the near-simultaneous introduction of the concept of “global civil war” in Hannah Arendt’s *On Revolution* and Schmitt’s *Theory of the Partisan* revealed that the nature of organized violence was changing in political theory as well as international jurisprudence. According to some commentators, the classical difference between *polemos*

and *stasis* had become obsolete. The emergence of political bodies such as the League of Nations, Organization of American States, and United Nations revealed what Schmitt feared; namely, that sovereignty—along with inherited concepts of borders and war—was becoming diffuse, spread into supranational organizations. As international cooperation grew along with softer forms of neo-imperialism, borders weakened and warfare became subject to greater influence from other countries. Some, like Schmitt, sought to hold on to the assurances of bordered sovereignty. In *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty*, however, Wendy Brown shows that the proliferation of border-based violence, heated rhetoric, and lengthening walls are a direct and paradoxical outgrowth of the diminishing power of the border under globalization. People seek to reinforce the border because of its weakness. Like Schmitt, they fear a threat to sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Today, the border has been undermined, displaced, multiplied, and moved. *The Other Border Wars* examines the antecedents of this contemporary situation in chapters 4 and 5 as a border beholden to imperial political geography transforms from dictatorship to democracy, through the neoliberal consensus and into the present. The displacements characteristic of rhetorical stasis appear in cultural production through figures of ecstasy—etymologically *ecstasis*, or displacement outside of the self—and *metastasis*—the border's spread to new sites. Hence, while borders may seem unchanged, *The Other Border Wars* examines the often drastic changes in their political and cultural importance.

The three definitions of stasis used here aim to explain how bordering works in present-day Latin American culture and politics, examining the past to understand the current configuration of borders in dialogue with Latin American cultural studies, border studies, philosophy, and political theory. The argument is that stasis is the underlying force in border conflict, and that stasis is the foundation of the political sphere manifested in culture. The method is to examine border conflict in context while suspending the force of the border. This approach requires the double movement of acknowledging the border as a source of conflict while taking care not to assume that the border is in a specific geographical place, has a specific importance, or organizes politics and culture in a particular way. After all, border wars imply conflict about where the border really is and how it functions.

The coming chapters consider contested borders in Central and South America in order to examine the political and philosophical concepts that underpin notions of sovereignty and globalization. Instead

of viewing the border as a space of articulation through identity and difference, *The Other Border Wars* departs from the idea that crossing, recrossing, and interrupting metaphorical borders between categories of identity often reinforces the divisions these borders create.¹³ This insight emerges from Mexico-US border studies—the site of the most contentious and visible border conflict in the United States—and resonates with questions about the nature of sovereignty, labor, language, migration, representation, and consumption. *The Other Border Wars* takes aim at the conceptual foundations of bordering through stasis. Dimitris Vardoulakis writes that stasis is the basis of the political: “Stasis underlies all political praxis” (*Stasis* 121). Drawing on Loraux and Jacques Derrida, Vardoulakis argues that it is important to consider stasis before the state because “*stasis comes before any conception of the state that relies on the ruse of sovereignty*” (*Stasis* 11). By foregrounding stasis, this book highlights conflicts that have been obscured by preestablished borders, political theology, and sovereignty claims.

Three case studies track the development of the border through stasis: the 1932–1935 Chaco War between Bolivia and Paraguay; the 1969 Soccer War, or Hundred Hours War, between El Salvador and Honduras; and the 1982 Falklands/Malvinas War between Argentina and the United Kingdom. Chapters 1 and 2 focus on the Chaco War, which is particularly important because the end of the war marks the last major change in Latin American territorial borders. The war also involved European and US intervention on behalf of diplomatic and oil interests while shaking soldiers’ religious, philosophical, and political beliefs, much as the First World War did in Europe. In chapter 1, I use hypostasis, the assumption of form in philosophy and theology, to describe the formation of the border as boundary of the national body politic. In Christianity, hypostasis refers to the word made flesh, God’s incarnation in human form. I argue that Augusto Céspedes challenges complete bodily enclosure in the stories “El pozo” (The well) and “La paraguaya” (The Paraguayan woman) from the collection *Sangre de mestizos* (Mestizo blood) while Adolfo Costa du Rels’s *Lagune H.3*, released in Spanish as *La laguna H.3* (Lagoon H.3), reveals the Chaco as an expansive void, both physical and spiritual. Most tellingly, Augusto Roa Bastos’s *Hijo de hombre* (Son of man) filters the war through the Christian salvation story to show that Paraguayan national incarnation, assumed to be finished after the war, remained incomplete. The Chaco border represents the partial enclosure of the nation in flesh, depicted by Roa Bastos as Paraguay’s living death. Hypostasis grounds later conceptions of stasis, rooted in the political theology of God and king.

Chapter 2 examines the more recent legacy of the Chaco War. After the war, neither Bolivia nor Paraguay had coastal outlets, and geographical isolation cut both countries off from commerce. Landlocked, the soldiers' thirst in the arid Chaco turned into a thirst for oil, development, and trade in more recent decades. Wilmer Urrelo Zárate's novel *Hablar con los perros* (Talking to dogs) depicts the violence of consumption through the trope of cannibalism borrowed from indigenous Tupi and Brazilian avant-garde traditions. For Urrelo Zárate, the mouth is a site of consumption, consumerism, and narrative. Urrelo Zárate leaves no space for the vanguard. Instead, the desire to consume oil and flesh leads to violent extraction. Static social class and an unequal division of wealth represent the war's legacy. In contrast, Paz Encina's experimental film *Hamaca paraguaya* (Paraguayan hammock) portrays mouths as apertures and sites of narrative discontinuity. The Chaco War appears in the relationship between two people sitting, together yet separate, in a hammock that represents the temporal suspension between the Chaco War and the present moment.

Chapter 3 moves to the 1969 Soccer War, also called the Hundred Hours War, between El Salvador and Honduras. While short and sensationalized, the war offers a glimpse into how Cold War economic integration and peacekeeping efforts backfired, contributing to an ongoing low level of violence in Central America. Roque Dalton's poetry from the time of the war to his untimely death in 1975 presents the hostilities as the result of a demographic and wealth imbalance. Dalton sets out to correct this imbalance and account for the people's perspective. In a strongly etymological sense, he conducts demographic writing, in which he accounts for the movement of the people, the Greek *demos*, through what he sees as a Central American stasis. Yet Dalton also hints that something escapes his text, mimicking the squatters and undocumented migrants who lacked textual proof of belonging to land and nation. Horacio Castellanos Moya picks up on Dalton's approach in the novel *Desmoronamiento* (Breakdown; Collapse). The novel charts the arc between Honduran political discord before the war, the Soccer War itself, the Salvadoran Civil War, and ultimately, the liquidation of fixed assets and flight from Central America by middle- and upper-class people who could afford to migrate north to Mexico and the United States. For Castellanos Moya, the 1969 war feeds into El Salvador's prolonged internal conflict and Central America's ongoing economic and political hardship.

Chapter 4 turns to the 1982 Falklands/Malvinas War between Argentina and the United Kingdom.¹⁴ The war can be traced back to Argentina's peculiar relationship to Spanish and British imperialism, which

I explore through Susana Thénon's "Poema con traducción simultánea español-español" (Poem with simultaneous Spanish-Spanish translation). Likewise, Rodolfo Enrique Fogwill's *Los pichiciegos* (The armadillos; published in English as *Malvinas Requiem*) establishes the major tropes of the war as an anti-imperial and anti-authoritarian conflict, as Malvinas structures the Argentine state and nationalism. Carlos Gamerro's *Las Islas* (The islands) transposes the Malvinas War to sites on real and virtual planes in Buenos Aires during the 1992 commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the war and the five hundredth anniversary of Columbus's arrival, incorporating videogames, hackers, and transnational finance. For Gamerro, the only escape from the war is an extreme out-of-body experience, a type of ecstasy—ecstasis—brought on by MDMA, the recreational drug also known as Ecstasy. The spread of Malvinas into every corner of the country by the late 1990s shows that borders, even old imperial ones, have undergone a significant symbolic shift by the end of the twentieth century. What was once an old imperial conflict has now become a source of ongoing discord as the political body of the Argentine state is displaced outside of its own borders.

Chapter 5 examines the legacy of the Falklands/Malvinas War after 2001. From 9/11 in the United States to the political and financial crisis in Argentina, 2001 marked a rearrangement of political and economic structures. In Argentina, Malvinas returned to mainstream political discourse with the support of popular films like *Iluminados por el fuego* (Enlightened by fire; released in English as *Blessed by Fire*). Yet global political shifts also made Malvinas more difficult to pin down than earlier testimonial accounts were. Now, the war's legacy appears at unexpected and incongruous sites, as in medical metastasis when cancer manifests in distant organs. Lola Arias's trilingual play *Minefield/Campo minado* and subsequent film *Theatre of War/Teatro de Guerra* disarticulate testimony and translation as mechanisms of solidarity. Patricio Pron's *Nosotros caminamos en sueños* (We sleepwalk; We walk in dreams) uproots the Malvinas conflict completely, laying bare its connections to the military-industrial complex. Together, Arias and Pron suggest examining the past from the perspective of an outsider. They advocate taking a third-person perspective to challenge the role of the border under globalization as borders shift and multiply.

Throughout the book, I trace the emergence of the border as a locus of stasis: a geographical status quo accompanied by cultural and political nuance and dynamism. The borders wars I examine are rooted in Spanish colonialism, a legal and discursive background that continues to operate in spite of changes during the twentieth and twenty-first centu-

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ries. Against this backdrop, I have selected conflicts that are especially resonant with issues in contemporary border studies. For instance, the question of consumption, especially oil consumption and smuggling, appears in the Chaco War; labor, migration, and documentation appear in the Soccer War; and the confrontation between Spanish and English, Global South and Global North, appears in the Falklands/Malvinas War. These “other” border wars are not meant to be comprehensive and do not encompass all of Latin America’s twentieth-century border disputes. Notably, the conflicts between Peru and Ecuador in 1941 and 1995 do not appear nor do border disputes involving Nicaragua, Brazil, or Colombia. The book does not aim to be a compendium of cultural studies of all Latin American border conflicts. Rather, the aim is to examine border conflicts to see how to study the border without affirming the border—that is, how to understand the border through stasis rather than *polemos*. Throughout the book, I gesture to a constant tension between a variety of forms—legal, textual, philosophical, political, and embodied—and what escapes them as nothingness, lack, omission, or undocumented vacancy.¹⁵ By analyzing these tensions, I argue that replacing *polemos*—tied to border binaries—with stasis—a more ambiguous and plural conflict—allows a richer portrait of the border today.