

Editors' Note

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Welcome to the twenty-third issue of the *Publication of the Afro-Latin/American Research Association* (PALARA), a multi-disciplinary journal that publishes research and creative works relevant to African Diaspora Studies in the Americas. This issue is a double one comprised of articles on various themes on Afro-Latin American cultural and literary studies as well as a thematic issue on *Afro-Latin American and Afro-Latinx Cinema* hosted by guest editor Vanessa K. Valdés, Professor of Spanish and Portuguese and Director of the Black Studies Program at The City College of New York—CUNY.

The special issue of PALARA centers research on contemporary film in the Afro-Latin American Diaspora and explores black subjectivities from a cinematographic lens. The authors present film of the present and engage with past themes illustrating in some cases the advancement of the cinematic portrayal of blacks in Latin America/Hispanic Caribbean. In other instances, it conveys that more needs to be done. Most importantly, the authors shed light on films not typically analyzed and bring awareness and attention to new works in Mexico, Colombia, and Cuba.

The second issue of this volume comprises analyses of works primarily from the Southern Cone. Valérie Benoist's "Sister Ursula de Jesús' Equal Economy of Salvation" expands knowledge and narratives of seventeenth century nuns in Colonial Latin America through the analysis of the *vidas* (spiritual autobiographies) of the little known black Peruvian nun, Sister Ursula de Jesús. Benoit argues that Sister Ursula's *vida* "differs from more conventional ones by defining her blackness as an essential ingredient in the construction of her trope of suffering."

Alain Lawo-Sukam's "African Immigrants in Argentina Post-Slavery: An Old-New Odyssey" analyzes African immigration in Argentina by expanding it to include not only Sub-Saharan African immigration but also North African immigrants as well as those from South Africa. Lawo-Sukan's analysis is comprehensive and spans centuries of African immigration to a nation that has historically denied the presence of Afro-descendants.

The issue features two timely book reviews, one of a manuscript and the other of a collection of poetry. *Afro-Asian Connections in Latin America and the Caribbean*, edited by Luisa Marcela Ossa and Debbie Lee-DiStefano, brings to the forefront

the little research that has been published on the Afro-Asian Diaspora in Latin America and the Caribbean. In her comprehensive review, Christine Lee notes that the co-edited volume "expands on current notions of *mestizaje* by focusing on the personal and communal bonds that were forged between subjects of African and Asian descent from the mid-nineteenth century onwards." The co-edited volume promises to be a current and future resource for those who desire to engage with the Spanish-speaking Afro-Asian Diaspora.

Warrick Lattibeaudaire's review of Dr. Paulette A. Ramsay's *Star Apple Blue and Avocado Green*, spotlights the poetry of the well-known African diaspora scholar. Filled with images of fruit and products of the Caribbean landscape as the title suggests, the poetic volume is populated with several female characters that highlight the experiences of women throughout the diaspora.

Finally, as we close the decade and look forward to next year, we would like to highlight an important upcoming milestone. ALARA (Afro-Latin/American Research Association) will celebrate its 25th anniversary in 2020 and this moment promises to be a special year as we recognize the work of the association's founders, namely Marvin A. Lewis and the late Laurence Prescott. *The Publication of the Afro|Latin American Research Association* was an important intellectual creation of the association and as we move into our twenty-third year of continuous publication we wish to honor this important legacy. The commemoration of the founding of ALARA will start with the Thirteenth Biennial International Interdisciplinary Research Conference that will be held August 4 – 8, 2020 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. This year's theme will be "Resilience, Climate Crisis, and Social Justice," which relates to the devastating impact of Hurricane Maria in 2017 and the overwhelming strength displayed by Afro-descendant communities across the island. We look forward to great conversations and proud celebration of ALARA's twenty-five-year history.

The Editors