

## Introduction

### Possibilities of Literary History

#### (Im)Possibilities?

A reader looking at the cover of this issue of *Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies* may wonder: how to propose nowadays a collection of essays devoted to literary histories in Portuguese?<sup>1</sup> Is it not true that a reasonable consensus exists regarding the impasses of the genre of literary history?<sup>2</sup> Indeed, David Perkins's rhetorical question—"Is literary history possible?"—seems to have synthesized the present state of the discussion. Perkins goes on to explore "the aporias of the form or, in simpler terms, the insurmountable contradictions in organizing, structuring, and presenting the subject; and the always unsuccessful attempt of every literary history to explain the development of literature that it describes."<sup>3</sup>

Nonetheless, recently some experiments have been attempted in the once tranquil realm of literary history. The goal of this issue, therefore, is to contribute to this contemporary discussion. *Literary Histories in Portuguese* also aims to engage in dialogue with the series of literary histories published by Harvard University Press since the release of *A New History of French Literature* in 1989.<sup>4</sup> Volumes to follow included those edited by David Wellbery<sup>5</sup> and then by Greil Marcus and Werner Sollors.<sup>6</sup> Thus, to produce a literary history implies establishing an intertextual dialogue with the literary history genre itself. Accordingly, *Literary Histories in Portuguese* intends to problematize both the normative concept of literature as well as the act of writing literary history. In its monographic section, the contributors have developed an array of new possibilities and focused on relevant case studies concerning this relevant topic.

Indeed, a set of theoretical assumptions governs the organization of this issue of *Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies*, which tries to offer alternatives to the composition of and reflection on literary histories. Therefore, we should start by rendering clear the theoretical framework we are proposing. In particular, the essays in the monographic section are committed to shedding light on a theoretical dimension in order to broaden the usually narrow understanding of the task of writing literary histories.

First and foremost, the very concept of “literature” should be an object of reflection, instead of being understood as a given whose history could then be narrated in linear terms. In other words, rather than assuming a normative understanding of literature, which could be “applied” to different historical circumstances, the diversity of historical meanings taken by the concept of literature should be brought to the fore and properly discussed. This principle should allow for an active rereading and thus rewriting of key controversies of cultural history, as they should be associated with conceptual disputes over the definition of literature.

At the same time, the idea of literatures in Portuguese as an “autonomous” entity should be called into question, in order to denaturalize the automatic association between one given language and its literary manifestations. We propose that literature has to be studied from and within an axis of cultural, political, and economic relationships, characterizing a comparative as well as an interdisciplinary approach. Literary history, in fact, should always be of a comparative nature—especially when it deals with only one national literary history.

We should emphasize, within that horizon, relationships that are formative of literatures in Portuguese, stressing their relative location in the world of Portuguese language. Instead of privileging the writing of the national literary history of Portugal, or of Brazil, or of Mozambique, or of Angola, and so forth and so on, we should privilege the study of the interrelations and crossings that constitute the lusophone predicament. Therefore, we should attend closely to the Portuguese presence in Brazilian and Portuguese-speaking African literatures; the Brazilian presence in Portuguese and Portuguese-speaking African literatures; the growing and welcome influx of Portuguese-speaking African literatures in Portugal and Brazil. Last but not least, we cannot forget an increasing wealth of literature produced by Portuguese-speaking immigrants, usually in a foreign language, especially English.<sup>7</sup>

In other words, our task is to produce an ever more complex portrait of literary exchanges, including the need to acknowledge the plurality of conceptions of literature itself.<sup>8</sup>

Another question relates to modes of appropriating diverse literary traditions developed within the universe of lusophone culture, stressing the associations of these forms with similar techniques of appropriation engendered in other cultural universes. We could, among many possible examples, put Oswald de Andrade’s *antropofagia* and Fernando Ortiz’s *transculturación* side by side, casting

light on the uniqueness of a given cultural strategy precisely by the contrast with another cultural circumstance.

Finally yet importantly, we should privilege the study of the emergence and consolidation of the literary system in Portuguese, a phenomenon that necessarily transcends national borders and engages several languages and national literatures. Once more, this broadened perspective would allow for a much-needed reconsideration of key moments in the lusophone cultural history. Machado de Assis's strong and polemical reception of Eça de Queirós's *O Primo Basílio* deserves a detailed analysis,<sup>9</sup> which should unveil a moment of tension in the emergence of a lusophone literary system,<sup>10</sup> especially within the hegemonic centers of the so-called Republic of Letters.<sup>11</sup>

The concern with the establishment of a literary history with an emphasis on a comparative approach does not mean neglect of the uniqueness of particular experiences. Rather, such an approach should allow, even through contrasting lenses, for the renewed clarification of that specificity.

### Criticisms and Alternatives

In a relevant essay for this issue, Paulo Franchetti reflects on the "apogee and decline of literary history." After analyzing the crisis of the genre, he raises some criticisms concerning an effort focused on literary and cultural history previously sponsored by *Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies: Brazil 2001*.<sup>12</sup>

In Franchetti's words: "It does not seem to me that the outcome can eliminate the aporia in the title, which brings twice the national factor. In the assembled essays, the question of national identity emerges repeatedly, and Brazilian Literature is portrayed as the main character."<sup>13</sup> The criticism is sound, and this current issue of *Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies* tries to advance an alternative to the seemingly unavoidable obsession with the national factor.

Precisely regarding this dilemma, Helena C. Buescu and Miguel Tamen edited *A Revisionary History of Portuguese Literature* with an innovative approach. This effort—especially the introduction by Tamen, "Ghosts Revised: An Essay on Literary History,"<sup>14</sup> and the afterword by Buescu, "Literary History: Are We Still Talking"<sup>15</sup>—remains an important instance in the necessary effort toward developing a theoretical foundation for the project of writing literary histories in Portuguese. Tamen's warning regarding the aporias of traditional literary history must be taken into account: "It can therefore be said that literary history, from its inception, and by definition, has been national, communitarian and cul-

tural, as its main result was the formation of a specific, teachable knowledge of national cultural communities."<sup>16</sup>

Paulo Franchetti's reservations, it is worth repeating, are correct, once the omnipresence of the national determination has indeed limited the scope of the genre of literary history. Helena C. Buescu's suggestion seems to open up new paths of thought: "... if we consider literary history to be also a process of questioning itself, that is, if we mainly understand it as an epistemological activity."<sup>17</sup> The epistemology of literary history should question both a normative concept of literature and the naturalization of the national determination in the definition of the task of writing literary histories.

As a matter of fact, the essays gathered in the present issue of *Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies* try to cope with the challenge of reflecting on two key points. On the one hand, there is the narrative character of every literary history.<sup>18</sup> On the other, there is the association with a unique national space—or with a wider locus, engendered by a common language or by the constant and constitutive access to the same cultural and literary repertoire. Indeed, *Literary Histories in Portuguese* aims to provide a theoretical framework within which the narrative of the historical process of a given literature may be conceived under a new perspective.

As the subject is complex, we must move forward gradually, analyzing previous examples of alternative literary histories.

### Experiences and Impasses

In his reading of Denis Hollier's *A New History of French Literature*, David Perkins coins the term *postmodern encyclopedia*.<sup>19</sup> The term synthesizes the fragmentary organization of this new literary history. In tune with the criticism raised by Franchetti, such an organization purports to refuse national determination, while maintaining the geographic space of the nation as a nonassumed axis of the myriad entries that make up the volume.

Hollier defines the problem eloquently: "One of the most selfless of today's humanitarian institutions is called *Médecins sans Frontières*, Doctors without Borders. Literature, however, selfless or not, never comes without borders. Not only, as Rousseau said, does language distinguish humans from animals, but also, as he added, languages distinguish nations from one another."<sup>20</sup>

Thus, the three assumptions that supported traditional literary history would be questioned by the model of the postmodern encyclopedia as an effort to es-

cape national determination. David Perkins didactically summarizes the issue: “. . . literary works are formed by their historical context; that change in literature takes place developmentally; and that this change is the unfolding of an idea, principle or suprapersonal entity.”<sup>21</sup>

Therefore, to say it more directly, the postmodern encyclopedia would go against a normative conception of literature and, above all, it would reject the teleological notion associated with the predominance of the concept of nation. Therefore, against totality, a frequent discursive effect of normative conceptions, the postmodern encyclopedia invests in the fragmentary, and incompleteness becomes an important value. However, ultimately, at least according to Perkins, Hollier’s experiment was not wholly successful.<sup>22</sup>

Likewise, the project of *A New History of German Literature* sought to move away from the ghost of totality. In the words of David Wellbery, this gesture implies “a forceful critique of traditional literary history: a critique that proceeds not from a formalist rejection of history but from a radicalization of the idea that literature is historical. The date each poem or work of literature bears is internal to the work itself, the temporal center around which it crystallizes.”<sup>23</sup> This statement on the radical historicity of literary history is particularly important and should allow for an innovative understanding of the problem.

The patron of this literary history could be Paul Celan, with his sharp aphorism “Jedes Gedicht ist datierbar.” The radical singularity of the experience of both the writing and the reception of a literary text is thus recovered, for *every poem is datable* both in the act of its creation and in the countless moments of its reception.

The patron of this literary history could also be Erich Auerbach, especially in his thoughtful rejection of abstract concepts and theoretical, grandiloquent transhistorical overviews, which subtly he links to the structure of the legend as opposed to the writing of history.<sup>24</sup> In Auerbach’s perception: “To write history is so difficult that most historians are forced to make concessions to the technique of legend.”<sup>25</sup> According to Wellbery’s insight, this is the case for most literary historians.

However, a decisive question remains to be discussed: how could one qualify a text as being literary, once regulatory concepts are rejected? If we radicalize the principle of contextualization, then how to rely on a concept of literature that paradoxically would remain identical to itself throughout history? In seeking to provide an answer, David Wellbery adopts a dual strategy. First, he defines the

traits of traditional literary history that are to be avoided: “continuous narrative time, the cultural space of the ‘nation,’ and imaginative writing.”<sup>26</sup>

It is worth rendering explicit the naiveté of this threefold naturalized association. Actually, it is grounded upon a tautological movement that equates geographical boundaries with a given language in order to create a fixed image of national identity, always identical to itself; therefore, it is immune to historical changes, although paradoxically rooted in a particular historical development. Against this framework, Wellbery proposes an equally threefold and yet symmetrically inverted articulation: “. . . the changing conceptions of time and tradition that inform the self-understanding of writers and readers. Historical time is not a homogeneous medium that the historians can simply presuppose, but is itself in flux . . . the larger linguistic, cultural and political unities within which literary activities operate . . . the changing configurations of the media of storage and transmission.”<sup>27</sup> This model of literary history encompasses the changing conceptions of the object while keeping an eye open to the transformations that occur in the materiality of communication,<sup>28</sup> stressing the interaction between new media and the social process of production of texts and their reception. Wellbery also establishes a productive dialogue with the groundbreaking approach inaugurated by Friedrich Kittler’s *Discourse Networks*,<sup>29</sup> one of the most thought-provoking books produced in the complex crossing among several disciplines: literary history, media theory, cultural and intellectual history.

In 2004, the same year as Wellbery’s publication, another important development emerged for the project of producing alternatives to the writing of literary history: *Literary Cultures of Latin America: A Comparative History*, edited by Mario J. Valdés and Kadir Djelal. In the general introduction, symptomatically entitled “Beyond Literary History,” Valdés proposes, “The people of Latin America have diverse and extremely rich literary cultures that bring together three traditions into one heterogeneous flux.”<sup>30</sup> In other words, instead of a normative concept of literature, the reconstruction of this complex flux demands the simultaneous incorporation of different traditions.<sup>31</sup>

Therefore, the complex junction of Amerindian, European, and African legacies would have produced a radical heterogeneity with which traditional literary history would be unable to cope. The concept of literary history is then replaced by that of literary cultures—and, here, plurality is a key concern. In this context, it is possible to associate, among many other possibilities, the concepts of

cultural cannibalism (Oswald de Andrade); transculturation (Fernando Ortiz); literary transculturation (Ángel Rama); heterogeneity (Antonio Cornejo Polar); Macunaíma's literature (Mário de Andrade); cannibalistic literature (Roberto Fernández Retamar); cultural heritage (Pedro Henríquez Ureña); and multiple temporalities (Antonio Candido).

Indeed, the creation of potential dialogues among variegated critical traditions may be an alternative to the discipline of literary history. After all, such parallels would at least trigger a constant and healthy reevaluation of one's own theoretical presuppositions. Recently, Dobrenko and Tihanov have given theoretical and empirical concreteness to this possibility: "In order to grasp the difficulty of the subject, it is sufficient to compare the different dimensions of the concept of literary criticism in various Western cultures."<sup>32</sup> This comparison leads to a much more complex perspective on the history of the concept of literature itself.

Actually, the act of going beyond literary history, in its traditional discursive practice, had already been outlined in another attempt, aimed at writing the history of Spanish literature after the civil war. The book's title is revealing, *A New History of Spanish Writing: 1939 to the 1990s*. The outstanding change stands out: *Writing* instead of *Literature*. According to the editors: "This *New History* looks at 'Spanish literature' in the period 1939 to the 1990s, but also at frontier genres, such as the journalistic essay, and at texts so loosely—or recently—connected with the notion of literature that we have chosen to leave the word 'literature' out of our title and to avoid rehearsals in our narrative of caveats and redefinitions."<sup>33</sup>

The broadening of the scope deserves to be highlighted, for it is a main theoretical drive of the recent experiments in literary history, whose common ground, in spite of remarkable differences, is the detachment from any concern with the search for a supposed *literariness*. This concept, omnipresent since its coinage by Roman Jakobson within the context of so-called Russian Formalism, has lost favor from the 1980s onward, and remains valid today only as a synthesis of the sort of theoretical approach that ought to be avoided.

The logical consequence of this attitude is found in the latest volume published by Harvard University Press, *A New Literary History of America*. The difference in the title, only subtle in appearance, represents an authentic requiem to traditional literary history and, to some extent, it radicalizes the replacement of

the term *literature* by writing, as we saw in the previous models. Its editors claim: "This book is a reexamination of the American experience as seen through a literary glass, where what is at issue is speech, in many forms."<sup>34</sup> The vantage point is literary, although the emphasis is on speech, in many forms—and, once more, plurality becomes a value in itself. The explanation may seem sophisticated, but the underlying reason is more traditional than the most traditional literary history! Comparing their project with the previous ones, edited by Denis Hollier and David Wellbery, the editors justify their choice of a *new literary history of America* instead of a *new history of American literature* as follows: "The earlier projects began in the eighth century and moved forward to trace the organic literatures of organic societies that long preceded the emergence of the modern French and German nations. A *New Literary History of America* begins early in the sixteenth century; the nineteenth and twentieth centuries dominate the story it tells, and this is the story of a made-up nation that in many ways preceded its society. Its literature was not inherited but invented. . . ."<sup>35</sup>

In this case, it is as if the act of abandoning traditional literary history did not correspond to a sophisticated theoretical apparatus but rather to a hopelessly historical lack of historicity—in this predictable constellation, the redundancy imposes itself. Yet every nation is made-up,<sup>36</sup> it cannot be otherwise, unless we would indulge in an embarrassingly naive understanding of European cultural history as naturally superior just by being European. Indeed, this tautological reasoning belongs to a nineteenth-century mentality. After all, as Ernst Renan lucidly recalled, the *organic* character of a nation—let us adopt Marcus's and Sollors's vocabulary—is not a matter of an unquestioned heritage, which seems to imply a careful preservation of a common cultural memory, usually transmitted through a specific repertoire. Thus, a radically different process takes place in the invention of national feelings of belonging: "Forgetting, I would even go so far as to say historical error,<sup>37</sup> is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation, which is why progress in historical studies often constitutes a danger for [the principle of] nationality."<sup>38</sup>

By the same token, all traditions are invented,<sup>39</sup> and therefore that cannot be the decisive factor in establishing such a key distinction between proposing "a new history of American literature" and engaging in the production of "a new literary history of America."

Of course, the contributors to this issue of *Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies* move in a very different, almost opposite, direction.

## About this Volume

Let us now clarify a fundamental theoretical inspiration for *Literary Histories in Portuguese*, namely, the vision proposed by Wlad Godzich and Nicholas Spadaccini in a book titled *Literature among Discourses*: “If the construct of literature . . . is to be the focus of our inquiry, this inquiry can proceed according to its own structure, a structure that has the value of a periodization: a) before literature; b) literature among discourses; c) the institution of literature; d) the hegemony of literature; e) literature under attack.”<sup>40</sup>

This structure of thinking is even clearer than the model put forward by David Wellbery, and may indeed provide an innovative ground upon which to develop future projects of literary history. After all, if any transhistorical notion of literariness is rejected, at the same time is preserved a decisive concern with the reconstruction of discursive constellations in order to seize the particularity of the production and reception of “literature.” Instead of relying on an a priori definition, Godzich and Spadaccini concoct what could be called a definition a posteriori of “literature”—therefore, *literature among discourses*.<sup>41</sup>

Finally, as we write this introduction, Noé Jitrik is serving as general editor of an ambitious project, which is producing *Historia Crítica de la Literatura Argentina* (Critical History of Argentinean Literature) in several volumes. The third volume, *El Brote de los Géneros* (The Emergence of Literary Genres), shares this approach and reconstructs the process of differentiation of genres, the result of which is the clarification of what is conceptually meant by and, above all, socially received as literature in a given historical moment. In the words of Alejandra Laera: “This volume considers the history of Argentine literature, in a critical sense, from certain general assumptions. Firstly, it is understood as a process. . . . Finally, this perspective aims to reveal, in the emerging processes it studies, the constant elements, precisely in contrast to the diversity and the variations.”<sup>42</sup> In other words, the aporias and dilemmas of literary history have to be fully acknowledged, and yet they may be faced creatively. It is our hope that *Literary Histories in Portuguese* will become a relevant reference in this contemporary debate.

In the monographic section of this issue, Remo Ceserani, a leading scholar on literary theory, discusses the recent changes in the theoretical and practical approaches to literary history, providing an indispensable overview of the problem. Carlos M. F. da Cunha develops an important reflection on two recent histories of literature, introducing the category of literary geography in con-

junction with the consideration of asymmetrical cultural relationships. Frans Weiser studies Rubem Fonseca's short story "Intestino Grosso" (Large Intestine) in order to propose the thought-provoking notion of internal literary history. Isaac Lourido aims at contributing to the renovation of the discipline of literary history through the development of a historiographical model grounded in systemic theories. Jobst Welge focuses on the paradoxical relationship between particularity and synthesis in the practice of literary history, highlighting the central role of the modern novel for the contemporary epistemological situation faced by the genre of literary history. José Luís Jobim keenly calls into question the issue of national affiliation, mainly through a critical appraisal of some key categories, such as "imitation," "autonomy," "originality."

The reader, therefore, will be able to reevaluate the (im)possibilities of the genre of literary history through the rich and diverse collection of essays assembled in this issue.

The three subsequent permanent sections provide a wealth of perspectives and topics.

"Essays" and "Reviews" offer a broad spectrum of themes and approaches, reiterating the commitment of *Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies* to voice the plurality and diversity of the lusophone universe.

The final section, "Fiction," features two young and already consecrated names. Carola Saavedra, one of the most acclaimed young authors of Brazilian contemporary literature, offers a powerful short story, "Brief Beginning of the World (Episode in Three Movements)." Michel Melamed, an award-winning Brazilian artist, considered one of the most outstanding talents of his generation, closes the issue with an authentic manifesto, regurgitophagy, a radical linguistic experiment, which also unfolds a much-needed reconsideration of techniques of cultural appropriation in a globalized world.

#### NOTES

We would like to thank José Luís Jobim and Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht for their comments and criticisms on an earlier version of this introduction. We also would like to thank Jason Warshof for suggestions concerning the style.

1. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht has deepened the dilemma by questioning not only literary history as a genre but also, and more broadly, the discipline of history: "It's about time, at least for professional historians, to respond seriously to a situation in which the claim that 'one can learn from history' has lost its persuasive power. . . . In the closing

years of the twentieth century, people no longer consider history to be a solid ground for everyday decisions about financial investments or environmental crisis management, about sexual mores or preferences in fashion." "After Learning from History," In 1926: *Living at the Edge of Time* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 411.

2. The same scholar has written a voluminous history of Spanish literature, whose introduction is symptomatically entitled "Noch eine Geschichte der spanischen Literatur?" (Yet a History of Spanish Literature?). Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *Eine Geschichte der spanischen Literatur*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1990), 9.

3. David Perkins, *Is Literary History Possible?* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), ix.

4. Denis Hollier, ed., *A New History of French Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989).

5. David Wellbery, ed., *A New History of German Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005).

6. Greil Marcus and Werner Sollors, eds., *A New Literary History of America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).

7. See the Portuguese in the Americas Series, edited by Tagus Press, for a relevant overview of this literature. Representative of this voice are contemporary authors such as Katherine Vaz (*Our Lady of the Artichokes and Other Portuguese-American Stories*, 2008) and Luana Monteiro (*Little Star of Bela Lua: A Novella and Stories*, 2005).

8. See José Luís Jobim, *Literatura e Cultura: Do Nacional ao Transnacional* (Rio de Janeiro: EDUERJ, 2013).

9. See João Cezar de Castro Rocha, *Machado de Assis: Por uma poética da emulação* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2013).

10. John Gledson proposes an insightful reading of the episode in "Machado de Assis e Eça de Queirós: A crítica de 1878 e a internacionalização do romance," in *Eça & Machado*, ed. Beatriz Berrini (São Paulo: Editora da PUC-SP, 2005), 115–32.

11. Of course, the reference is to Pascale Casanova's book *The World Republic of Letters* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).

12. João Cezar de Castro Rocha, ed., *Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies* 4, 5 (2001), *Brazil 2001: A Revisionary History of Brazilian Literature and Culture*.

13. Paulo Franchetti, "História literária: Um gênero em crise," *Semear*, 7 (2002): 262.

14. Miguel Tamen, "Ghosts Revised: An Essay on Literary History," *Hispanic Issues* 18: xi–xxi.

15. Helena C. Buescu, "Literary History: Are We Still Talking?" *Hispanic Issues* 18: 209–12.

16. Tamen, "Ghosts Revised," xix.

17. Buescu, "Literary History," 209.

18. Remo Ceserani thoroughly discusses this fundamental theme in "La storia letteraria come genere narrative," *Raccontare la letteratura* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 1990), 17–32.

19. David Perkins, "The Postmodern Encyclopedia," *Is Literary History Possible?* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 53–60.

20. Denis Hollier, ed., "On Writing Literary History," *A New History of French Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), xxii.

21. Perkins, "The Postmodern Encyclopedia," 1–2.

22. See *ibid.*, 60: "Encyclopedic form is intellectually deficient. Its explanations of past happenings are piecemeal, may be inconsistent with each other, and are admitted to be inadequate. It precludes a vision of its subject."

23. David Wellbery, "Introduction," *A New History of German Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), xvii.

24. After all, "legend arranges its material in a simple and straightforward way, it detaches it from its contemporary historical context, so that the latter will not confuse it. . . ." Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 20. In the original: "Die Sage ordnet den Stoff in eindeutiger und entschiedener Weise, sie schneidet ihn aus dem sonstigen Weltzusammenhang heraus, so dass dieser nicht verwirrend eingreifen kann. . . ." Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: Dargestellte Wirklichkeit in der abendländischen Literatur* (Tübingen: A. Francke Verlag, 2001), 22.

25. *Ibid.*, 20. In the original: "Geschichte zu schreiben ist so schwierig, dass die meisten Geschichtsschreiber genötigt sind, Konzessionen an die Sagentechnik zu machen." Auerbach, *Mimesis*, 23.

26. Wellbery, "Introduction," xxiv.

27. *Ibid.*, xxiii–xxiv.

28. On this paradigm, see Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht and Karl Ludwig Pfeiffer, eds. *Materialities of Communication* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994). On page 7, Pfeiffer clarifies the breadth of the approach: "'Materialities' may also function as an overall metaphor for the joint impact of institutions (the church, educational systems) and the media they predominantly employ (rituals, books of special kinds, etc.)."

29. Friedrich Kittler, *Discourse Networks 1800/1900* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992). David Wellbery wrote the "foreword" to this translation of *Aufschreibesysteme 1800/1900*, originally published in 1985. The impact of Kittler's perspective on traditional notions of literary history may be better appreciated by Wellbery's appraisal: "What Kittler's reading shows, rather, is that the scene in which the origin is imagined is not an origin at all—the pristine moment of auto-constitution—itself derives from a non-origin, from a beginning that is intrinsically plural, empirical, and other The origin" (xxi).

30. Mario J. Valdés, "Introduction," *Literary Cultures of Latin America: A Comparative History*, Mario J. Valdés and Djelal Kadir, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), xvii.

31. Ibid.: "Latin American literary culture partakes unequally, discontinuously, and without any uniformity of three different cultures: first, the Amerindian, especially in Mesoamerica and the Andean region; second, the European, predominantly Spanish and Portuguese (but also having some French and Italian characteristics); third, the African cultures, which are today still of major consequence in Brazil and the Caribbean region."

32. See "Introduction: Toward a History of Soviet and Post-Soviet Literary Theory and Criticism," in *A History of Russian Literary Theory and Criticism: The Soviet Age and Beyond*, Evgeny Dobrenko and Galin Tihanov, eds. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013), ix.

33. Chris Perriam, Michael Thompson, Susan Frenk, and Vanessa Knights, eds., "Preface," *A New History of Spanish Writing: 1939 to the 1990s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), v.

34. Marcus and Sollors, *A New Literary History of America*, xxiv.

35. Ibid., xxiii.

36. See, among many titles, the always-quoted collection of essays *Nation and Narration* (London: Routledge, 1990), edited by Homi K. Bhabha. As the editor affirms, "Nations, like narratives, lose their origins in the myths of time and only fully realize their horizons in the mind's eye." Homi K. Bhabha, "Introduction: Narrating the Nation," 1.

37. Then, at once, literary history, "for approximately the first seventy-five years of the nineteenth century . . . enjoyed popularity and unquestioned prestige," although this implied the danger mentioned by Renan; after all, "because literary historians viewed texts in relation to their historical contexts, literary history could achieve . . . a juster interpretation and a more complete appreciation than was otherwise possible." David Perkins, "Introduction: The State of the Discussion," in *Theoretical Issues in Literary History*, David Perkins, ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 1.

38. Ernst Renan, "What Is a Nation?" in *Nation and Narration*, Homi K. Bhabha, ed. (London: Routledge, 1990), 11. The sequence of the text is even more revealing: "Indeed, historical inquiry brings to light deeds of violence, which took place at the origin of all political formations, even of those whose consequences have been altogether beneficial."

39. "Inventing traditions, it is assumed here, is essentially a process of formalization and ritualization, characterized by reference to the past, if only by imposing repetition." Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition*, Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 4.

40. Wlad Godzich and Nicholas Spadaccini, eds., "Introduction," in *Literature among Discourses: The Spanish Golden Age* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), xi.

41. The editors define precisely the aim of this new literary history: ". . . to replace

the very phenomenon of literature in a larger verbal luxuriance, one in which literature is never given but is constantly being forged through a dynamic of inclusions and exclusions as complex as the social dynamic itself" (xv).

42. Alejandra Laera, ed., "Introducción: El Brote de los Géneros," *Historia Crítica de la Literatura Argentina*, Noé Jitrik, ed., vol. III: *El Brote de los Géneros* (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 2010), 9.