STUDIES IN GLOBAL SCIENCE FICTION

Posthumanism and Latin(x) American Science Fiction

Edited by

Antonio Córdoba · Emily A. Maguire

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Studies in Global Science Fiction

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Posthumanism and Latin(x) American Science Fiction

Antonio Córdoba and Emily A. Maguire

On the first page of her book-length meditation on mushrooms and the end of the world, Anna Tsing (2015) outlines a constellation of concepts that will resonate with anyone who approaches the relationship between Latin American and Latinx communities, posthumanism, and speculative fiction. As Tsing puts it, the intellectual and material forces that were set in motion with the Enlightenment have left to peoples considered "Non-Western" and "non-civilized" the task of coming up with the fables that give an account of the complex and vibrant relationships of "all beings, humans and not humans" (Tsing 2015, vii). Often previously marginalized, these narratives are increasingly relevant at a time in which modern capitalism and Western traditions of mastery over nature have led us to an environmental catastrophe of such magnitude that we are forced to

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consider the extinction of life on earth as we know it. As the situation in which we find ourselves with respect to climate change becomes increasingly clear, scientists and thinkers have become aware of entanglements that seemed to be described only by those fabulists excluded from Western civilization and in which that Eurocentric, imperialist, Christian construct, Man, built on the exclusion of human beings from all over the world, is collapsing even as those same human beings clamor to be given the same status (Tsing 2015, vii). Latin(x) America, a region of the world whose culture has been shaped by colonial encounters between Indigenous, African, and European subjects, formed from uneasy workings through what Mary Louise Pratt (1991) has termed the "contact zone," has long been a site of traditions that offer alternatives to hegemonic narratives of Eurocentric universalism, other ways to understand humankind and relational subjectivity. In fact, there is a Latin American tradition of what we now would call "posthumanist," post-anthropocentric, and "new materialist" thought, to which Héctor Hoyos (2019) would ascribe, quite intriguingly, Cuban intellectual Fernando Ortiz, and in which we can include, with a far surer footing, Brazilian thinker Eduardo Viveiros de Castro and Colombian anthropologist Arturo Escobar (see below). Along with these thinkers and others, in the last fifteen years we have seen a flourishing of studies on posthumanism in the field of Latin American and Latinx studies. Just to mention a few examples: J. Andrew Brown (2010, 2017) and M. Elizabeth Ginway (2020a) have reassessed the figure of the cyborg, and David Dalton (2018) has used it to rethink the cultural and material project of the Mexican Revolution to fashion a mestizo nation; Gabriel Giorgi (2014) has examined the shifting relations between the human and the animal in Latin American cultural production; Gloria Anzaldúa's nagualismo has attracted the attention of Analouise Keating (2013) and Kelli Zaytoun (2015); Renée Hudson (2019) has highlighted the presence of Latinx speculative fiction; a collection of essays assembled by Lucy Bollington and Paul Merchant (2020) has analyzed the ways in which Latin American arts explore the limits of the human, and a volume edited by Carolyn Fornoff and Gisella Heffes (2021) has covered all kinds of creations moving beyond anthropocentric exceptionalism. Along the same lines, Joanna Page has focused on post-anthropocentric visions and "transdisciplinary art—science projects across the world [that] are taking up the challenge of representing geological and cosmic time, and of rendering visible, audible and tangible the powerful but often invisible forces that shape the planet's systems and even its orbit through space, such as

gravity, atmospheric turbulence, and electromagnetic and seismic waves" (Page 2021, 31). Latin American and Latinx studies are starting to map out how Latin American thinkers and artists have envisioned alternative models of human and non-human-driven processes. The scholars gathered around these projects allow us to construct distinctive Latin American and Latinx currents of thought around posthumanism.

In this new reality, Latin American science fiction has become a fruitful site from which to explore posthuman relations. Indeed, in recent Latin American cultural production we can observe a questioning of the Eurocentric subject; the deployment of speculative modes of fiction; reflections on apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic past, present, and future scenarios; and the envisioning of all kinds of non- and post-anthropocentric entanglements between, as Tsing describes it, "the human and the not human." Speculative fiction seems a particularly useful tool with which to construct these other visions of agency, entanglements, and time that Tsing mentions, especially as planetary extinction looms larger and alternative configurations to avoid the End and/or visions of what the world may be after the End, or a certain kind of end, become more and more necessary. After all, as Frederick Luis Aldama convincingly argues,

> As we face a reality that seems increasingly unbearable … the space of the speculative seems more and more a place of reprieve. It's also more and more a space for us to see a way out of this quagmirical, gelatinous mess … the creative, mindful use of our counterfactual capacity today can imagine better ways for us to think, act, and feel tomorrow—where human and planetary organic life forms can productively and creatively build in stunning and remarkable new ways a future we all want. (Aldama 2019, 3)

The chapters in this collection, with their analysis of the use of the speculative and science fiction tropes and motifs to recast the past, the present, and the future beyond and beside Western, Eurocentric constructions of Man, show how pertinent and fruitful Latin American art and thinking are when articulating their own distinctive visions of posthumanism.

On Posthumanism and Science Fiction

What could—or should—"posthumanism" be at this moment? "If the 1980s initiated our becoming posthuman as a consequence of our integration with the technological, in the twenty-first century we are becoming

posthuman because of our inextricable inter-relations (or intrarelations, to use [Karen] Barad's term) with 'nature,'" argues Veronica Hollinger in a piece devoted to historizing the concept of posthumanism, published in 2020, and written, we may suppose, before the COVID-19 global pandemic highlighted in the most obvious terms the embeddedness of humankind in networks of non-human materialities and agencies (Hollinger 2020, 24). As Hollinger remarks immediately after this point, the urgency to turn our attention to the complex constellation of concepts and lines of study that we may put under the umbrella of "posthumanism" is dictated by facing the extinction of humankind in a climate crisis that is, at least partly, the result of "thinking with humanism" (Hollinger 2020, 24). Yet it is obvious that "not everyone using the term posthuman means the same thing by it," explains Sherryl Vint (2020, 5). We may surmise that it has to do with the questioning of humanism and the mirage of a bounded subject crafted in modern times, what Mark Bould forcefully describes as "the constant frantic concoction of the monadic subject—isolated, pristine, transcendent" (Bould 2021, 133–34). At a certain time, it was precisely a glorification of this monadic subject that was associated with posthumanism, as it enabled fantasies of transcendence of the human (whatever that was) amid the development of the field of cybernetics, the realities and potentialities of digital networks, and neoliberal-inflected understandings of the concept of emergence. In response to these (generally) white male dreams of power and technology-enabled immortality, N. Katherine Hayles demanded in 1999 a posthumanism that put back "the flesh" into visions of technified selves (Hayles 1999, 5). A decade later, Cary Wolfe made a frequently quoted distinction between an Enlightenment-inspired, ultimately humanist project to "transcend the bonds of materiality and embodiment all together" (transhumanism) and a posthumanism that comes "before and after humanism" and "names embodiment and embeddedness of the human being in not just its biological but also its technological world, the prosthetic coevolution of the human animal with the technicity of tools and external archival mechanisms;" this posthumanism looks to decenter the human (Wolfe 2010, xv). In the 1980s, Donna Haraway (1991) invited us to consider to what extent the cyborg was the exceedingly unfaithful offspring of militarism and patriarchal capitalism; twenty-five years later, she invites us to stay with the trouble and "make kin," or, rather, "make oddkin" (Haraway 2016, 5), to form cooperative relationships with the varied and vastly different beings with whom we share a planet. In Haraway's words,

> We become-with each other or not at all. That kind of material semiotics is always situated, someplace and not noplace, entangled and worldly. Alone, in our separate kinds of expertise and experience, we know both too much and too little, and so we succumb to despair or to hope, and neither is a sensible attitude. Neither despair nor hope is tuned to the senses, to mindful matter, to material semiotics, to mortal earthlings in thick copresence. (2016, 4)

Human exceptionalism and the constant work to uphold a knowing subject over an objectified world that needs to be mastered in and through cognition are abandoned in favor of an integrated world (Colebrook 2014, 20). As Kared Barad suggests, we need to acknowledge that "*all bodies, not merely 'human' bodies, come to matter through the world's iterative intra-activity*" (Barad 2007, 152; Barad's emphasis). In the end, as articulated by a wide range of thinkers of posthumanism, we are urged to explore all kinds of entanglements of human materialities and agencies and non-human ones.

If, as Haraway suggests, these intra-active relationships are always "situated," always "someplace," what does posthumanism look like in Latin(x) America, from within Latin American and Latinx communities, and in the fields of Latin American and Latinx studies? When it comes to Latin American studies, it seems that ideas developed in the context of the humanities in the Global North took their time to reach the field, according to Ignacio Sánchez Prado in 2008 (9). In 2016, Tania Gentic and Matthew Bush found that few scholars had paid attention to issues of posthumanism in Latin America (Gentic and Bush 2016, 5). However, Gentic and Bush see Mabel Moraña as exploring the matter in an essay published in *Inscripciones críticas* (2014). In this essay, Moraña highlights how a hegemonic Eurocentric universalism can be called into question using new ways to understand humankind and subjectivity (Moraña 2014, 205). The form of posthumanism that Moraña proposes decenters the subject, the way the critical posthumanism advanced by Wolfe does. But this is not the only instance in which we can find a reflection on posthumanism from the field of Latin American studies, or one that can be easily translated to ideas produced in metropolitan centers of knowledge. In *Latin American Cyborgs* (2010), J. Andrew Brown is attuned to the specific histories and material circumstances of the region, self-consciously theorizing "a peculiarly Latin American vision of technological identity in the post-dictatorial, neoliberal reality that is not the case in the situations

where we find cyborg and posthuman theory most often cited" (Brown 2010, 2). If Haraway's cyborg erased the militaristic, capitalist father that produced them, in the texts that Brown analyzes the cyborg "cannot help but remember the father whose prosthetic phallus [i.e., the technology of torture] engendered the mechanical appendages that constitute its existence" (Brown 2010, 4). The cyborg is a trace of trauma. This insight is expanded, but not erased, when, in a more recent text, Brown talks about posthuman selves as "a combination of technological identities and an identity that is distributed over social networks and goes beyond any border between the self and the world" (Brown 2017, 109). One could argue that it is precisely in this distribution that we can locate even more points of oppression, trauma, and potential liberation. In fact, in David Dalton's formulation of *robo sacer*, global inequalities are inserted in Latin American configurations of posthumanist tropes, as these *robo sacer* subjects are "beings who are intimately connected to and influenced by foreign technologies of power" (Dalton 2016, 16). These beings are still able to fight global capitalist powers in their local contexts, thereby reenvisioning, and thus reclaiming, agency in contexts in which they suffer the dehumanizing effects of transnational inequalities (Dalton 2016, 13). M. Elizabeth Ginway recently called attention to the fact that in Latin American cyberpunk's envisioning of posthumanist realities the physical body is never transcended in dreams of disembodiment, and this emphasis on the corporeal must be understood as a conceptual maneuver to fight oppressive political conditions (Ginway 2020b, 385). If Hayles felt the need to put the flesh back into the posthumanist fantasies that had attempted to cast it off, we could say that in Latin America such calls were never needed, because the flesh never went away. If Haraway invites us to "stay with the trouble," the bodies of the Latin American subjects in these stories never disappear into digital nirvanas, but instead find themselves in all kinds of difficult entanglements.

Asking whether posthumanist ideas formulated in the centers of intellectual production in the Global North have reached Latin American studies seems to frame posthumanism as only something that flows south from the North American academic metropolis, excluding other options. Yet elements of what we might identify as posthumanist ways of thinking and being were already present in Latin America in their own right. Indeed, Latin American thinkers such as Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, Marisol de la Cadena, and Arturo Escobar have been working for decades in exploring these situated "copresences." Viveiros de Castro's (2012) exploration of

"Amerindian perspectivism" gives an account of the complex and fluctuating indigenous understanding of the relationship between humans and non-humans, a relationship in which non-human beings have personhood that does not need to be understood as permanent nor identical with that of humans and needs to be understood strictly in Amerindian terms. We must stay with the trouble, because "affirming that non-human beings are persons capable of a point of view is not the same as affirming that they are 'always' persons, that is, that humans' interactions with them are always predicated on a shared personhood" (Viveiros de Castro 2012, 54). This mutable, fluctuating relationship between humans and non-humans, humanity and the world must be thought as "the relationship." De la Cadena's (2015) work with Indigenous Andean healers Nazario and Mariano Turpo provides a window into a complex worldview in which humans, animals, and earth-beings (landscape forms) coexist. Drawing on the work of colleagues like De la Cadena as well as his own work in the "mangrove world" (Escobar 2016, 18), the dense network of interspecies relations in which the Afro-descended peoples of Colombia's Yurumanguí river exist, anthropologist Arturo Escobar argues for approaching political, environmental, and social justice struggles from the perspective of a "radical relationality," an understanding that "all entities that make up the world are so interrelated that they have no intrinsic, separate existence by themselves" (Escobar 2020, xiii). This scholarship—some of which, like Escobar's, is intimately connected to political activism—sees strains of posthumanism within longstanding Latin American ontologies and ways of being as a starting point for imagining a way out of the problems created by Anthropocenic thinking.

"When Eve walked among /the animals and named them/ … /I wonder if she ever wanted/them to speak back," writes Latinx poet Ada Limón in "A Name," the poem that opens her collection *The Carrying*. Limón ends the poem wondering if Eva ever whispered, "*Name me, name me*" (Limón 2018, 3; Limón's emphasis). This is a dream of reciprocity, in which Eve would demand from the animals to be recognized and identified (named) in turn. The subject of knowledge would become the object, humans and non-humans entangled in the circuit of mutual recognition that just might cancel out the alleged dominion over animals granted to human beings in the book of Genesis. Obviously enough, what we find here in this dream of shared agency is an anthropomorphizing gesture in which animals are made to behave like humans in the desired reciprocity between human and non-human consciousness. In this, Limón may seem

to confirm Claire Colebrook's assertion that "Man imagines himself as exemplary of life, so much so that when he aims to think in a posthuman manner he grants rights, lifeworlds, language and emotions to nonhumans" (Colebrook 2014, 141). And yet, the white, Australian, US-based Colebrook, by seemingly upholding a universal Man as the only source of articulation of posthumanist visions of the world, forecloses venues of exploration. We may take into consideration, when reading a Latina poet writing about a woman, that posthumanist theories may help us "attend to the animist, the otherworldly, the irrational, and ecological aspects of Latinx thought," as Suzanne Bost argues (2019, 7). By doing that, we find agencies and relations that go unnoticed otherwise. Kelli Zaytoun (2015) employs a similarly productive posthumanism when exploring Gloria Anzaldúa's "nagualismo," in which subjects are empowered by creating imaginative ties between the human and the non-human. Through this process, Anzaldúa expresses her skepticism of the Eurocentric universalist humanist subject. According to Zaytoun, we would all benefit from looking at Anzaldúa's blurring of the "boundaries between self, other, and surroundings" in terms of posthumanism (Zaytoun 2015, 74). Latinx thinkers and communities uphold and recover non-universalized cultural, religious, and philosophical traditions that are able to envision non-human agencies in ways that question the Eurocentric subject behind the humanist gestures that anthropomorphize the world and make it an extension of the anthropocentric mentality pushing humankind toward its own extinction .

How does Latin American and Latinx science fiction confront a world in which, as Kim Stanley Robinson argues, "we all live inside a science fiction novel we are making together," with the result that "the genre is becoming better understood as the great realism of our time"? (Robinson 2018, xii). To begin with, we must remember that "Latin American science fiction is, above all, Latin American fiction," as one of us asserts in his book-length study of the genre in Latin America; it is *not* a stranger in a strange land (Córdoba Cornejo 2011, 18). As Silvia G. Kurlat Ares suggests, we must look for all kinds of aesthetic and ideological continuities between science fiction texts and the rest of the production in the Latin American cultural field; science fiction has a long local genealogy, and debates on whether or not Latin American science fiction is an "implanted," "inauthentic" form of art are deeply unproductive (Kurlat Ares 2018, 24). Embracing this historical perspective and moving to reconsider and even retro-label works that have not been necessarily considered science fiction

as such not only expands our understanding of Latin American science fiction, but it also contributes to a more generous, more ambitious understanding of the potential of the genre as a whole (Haywood Ferreira 2010). Furthermore, as Kurlat Ares explains in another of her many studies, science fiction is just one more mode in which "a culture (any culture) reads processes of social and cultural transformation" (Kurlat Ares 2020, 12).

While it is not helpful to get lost in unnecessary questions regarding the "legitimacy" of Latin American works nor to engage in a constant comparison of Latin(x) American SF's trajectory to the development of the Anglo-American tradition, it is true that we may find a certain specificity in the works produced in the region. If speculative literature is usually understood as genre fiction that approaches the ways in which technology has an impact on everyday life, we may argue, as Liliana Colanzi and Debra Castillo do, that in Latin America it "stands out as a framework from which to explore philosophical ideas and to extend literary styles and formats" (Castillo and Colanzi 2018, 2). We may add, as an example of specific traits, that during the Cold War period, Latin American science fiction showed a remarkable interest in exploring the question of how center-periphery relationships would develop and which countries/global regions would occupy which place in that dualistic structure (Banerjee and Haywood Ferreira 2017). In the case of Latinx culture, Daniel J. Older argues that speculative literature offers authors an opportunity to fight one-dimensional representations in white mainstream culture, and to reclaim a degree of complexity that cannot be captured by "affirmative, glorious, magical versions" of who Latinxs are (Aldama 2017, 170). If Older's speculative literature combines mythology and politics, Afro-Caribbean religion and Lovecraftian mythos, the Chicanofuturism of Marion C. Martínez "does not privilege science and reason over spirituality. Instead, it merges them, and, thus, offers, an ontological and epistemological alternative to that of the Enlightenment (or rational) subject" (Ramírez 2019, 157). Speculation can be turned into a form of care in which Latinx authors chart historical and personal trauma while they envision other articulations of the world.

The study of science fiction in Latin American and Latinx studies has suffered from the same neglect vis-à-vis realism that genre fiction has experienced in other parts of the world (Brown and Ginway 2012). Furthermore, as is the case in the literature from other regions, we can observe that, beginning in the first decade of the twenty-first century,

"sf—and science fictional elements—have been increasingly incorporated into mainstream Latin American literature, often by writers who do not consider themselves explicitly 'science fiction writers.' The end result of this trend is that the last decade and a half [i.e. 2002–2017] has seen a remarkable rise in both the presence and visibility of sf in mainstream Latin American cultural production" (Maguire 2021, 170). As an example of this double trend, we may mention the fact that Hugo Correa (1926–2008), a prolific writer of sf between 1950 and 1980, is absent from Cambridge University Press's *A History of Chilean Literature* (2021), while Jorge Baradit (b. 1969), author of several recent works of alternate history and cyberpunk science fiction, is actually included (López-Calvo 2021, 618–621). In fact, current critical work on Latin American science fiction and speculative literature is defined by two main features, according to Teresa López-Pellisa: the naturalization of the genre and "an increase in the presence of women" (2021, 239). These points seem to be confirmed by the recent awarding of the Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz Prize at the 2021 Guadalajara International Book Fair (FIL in Spanish) to Fernanda Trías for her novel *Mugre rosa* (2021), in which an unidentified and simultaneous mutation in algae and the climate produces a devastating epidemic in a nameless Latin American city that looks like a spectral version of Montevideo in which residents now live under siege by the algae, sunk in a marsh of fog. Although started before the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Trías' novel captures the experience of lockdown and the despair that became so prevalent in 2020 and 2021 all over the world. The tropes of science fiction can unearth "the radical alterity buried within the present," allowing us to glimpse "a genuine alternative" while we experience the pleasure that can be found "in the conscious responsibility of constructing something new and different" (Bould and Williams 2014, 8). When reading *Mugre rosa*, one could say, with Kim Stanley Robinson, that in the hands of Trías the speculative lens that is intended to look for alterity actually works to give a reflective account of the science fictional world in which we live now.

"Science fiction" or "speculative fiction"? Margaret Atwood considers that there is a meaningful "distinction" between "science fiction proper," which deals with impossible beings, places, and things, and speculative fiction, "which employs the means already more or less to hand, and takes place on Planet Earth" (Atwood 2004, 531). In an arch, though positive, review of Atwood's *The Year of the Flood*, Ursula K. Le Guin considered that the only distinction that really matters to Atwood is a Bourdesian one:

"This arbitrarily restrictive definition seems designed to protect her novels from being relegated to a genre still shunned by hidebound readers, reviewers and prize-awarders. She doesn't want the literary bigots to shove her into the literary ghetto" (Le Guin 2009). Building on Paul Kincaid's (2008) understanding of genre—and of science fiction in particular—as a question of "family resemblances," in this introduction, and in our general understanding of this project, we have used them interchangeably, without any real effort to tell one from another, or to identify any idea of "proper" as opposed to "improper" science fiction.

The challenge, it seems, is to articulate posthumanist constellations that aptly give an account of the entanglements of human and non-human agencies in productive ways. While talk about the Anthropocene and such geological matters may bring attention to the complex ways in which humankind is embedded in natural materialities, "talking about a geological epoch invites awestruck recoil at sublime magnitudes, which is not necessarily a bad thing, since hubris should be clobbered once in a while, but also risks evasion and complacency," as Mark Bould recently warned us (Bould 2021, 14). How are we to escape this complacency, this melancholy invitation to embrace flight and non-action? The authors in this collection argue for the ways in which Latin American and Latinx works of speculative imagination produce new strands of posthumanist thought from these sites of enunciation. As these chapters demonstrate, Latin(x) American texts can be understood as sources of thought in their own right and not a mere illustration of concepts developed in academic departments in the Global North. Speculation is "a mode of contemplative creativity" that "challenges the knowable, predictable modern world, finding it insufficient" (Rogers 2021, 1, 2).

We may want to remember Seo-Young Chu's thought-provoking conceptualization of science fiction as "a mimetic discourse whose objects of representation are nonimaginary yet cognitively estranging" (Chu 2011, 3). The possible futurelessness of humankind as we know it on a planet undergoing a climate change that is a devastating event for life forms as they exist now is a palpable reality that paradoxically both defies imagination and fosters all kinds of posthumanist new concepts and artistic works to try to give an account of it. In this sense, science fiction gives us a representative tool to process the failure to represent certain objects. It is a way to handle the power of what Gayle Rogers calls the "cognitive provisionality" of speculative thought (Rogers 2021, 3). The "alterity" crafted by science fiction fails as much as any other linguistic creation when it tries

to come to terms with the Real. But even that failure must be understood as productive, because, as China Miéville points out, science fiction's sense of wonder is predicated on "precisely the necessary failure of alterity, the inevitable stains and traces of the everyday in whatever can be thought from within it, including its estranged/estranging other. Without such guilty stains, there could be no recognition or reception—true alterity would be inconceivable, thus imperceptible. We gasp not just at the strangeness but at the misplaced familiar within it" (Miéville 2009, 248). Precisely because science fiction fails, we are not left paralyzed in the contemplation of the absolute Other, and this failure keeps us coming to terms productively with the major crises we may face, rather than turning our face away from them or embracing melancholy and giving up. It is in the gaps between the given and the projection of what is not yet here, between the indicative and the subjunctive, that the possibility of agency and action can be kept alive.

This Volume

More than seeking to strictly categorize the posthuman in particular authors and works, the chapters in this volume engage in a dialog that takes into consideration Sherryl Vint's recent question: "How might sf help us conceptualize and respond to a world that has begun to resemble sf, in ways both marvelous and malign [?]" (Vint 2021, 1). The chapters in this collection think posthumanism through the tropes of speculative fiction to try to conceptualize and respond to this world. The ten chapters in this volume are organized in three parts, each of which centers on a different aspect of posthuman subjectivity or environment. Of course, it is simply not possible in one volume to do justice to the wealth of perspectives that the different Latin American countries and Latinx communities have to offer in a wide range of media. None of the chapters in this collection explores the cultural production of Central America, Colombia, Peru, or Chile, for instance, and while several chapters examine the relationship of race and ethnic identity to expressions of the posthuman, specific movements such as Amazonian Futurism, Brazilian Afrofuturism, and Caribbean "Prietopunk" (among others) are not explicitly addressed. Given the extraordinary contribution to the field that Edward King and Joanna Page (2017) recently made in *Posthumanism and the Graphic Novel in Latin America*, we did not think to include any chapters on comic books and sequential art in general. Readers may consider that science fiction books

(essays, short stories, and novels) are overrepresented, and they would be right to point out that film, TV, videogames and performance and visual arts should have received more attention. We can only hope that the lacunae in this collection may serve as an incentive to further exploration of the rich intersection between posthumanism and speculative aesthetics in the field of Latin American and Latinx studies.

The volume's first chapters explore the ways in which recent speculative fictions in Latin America propose new configurations of the subject, both (post)human subjects within the narratives themselves as well as the reading subject who consumes and engages with these fictions. In Chap. 2, Ana Ugarte focuses on the work of Cuban author Maielis González Fernández, whose short fiction features a range of technologies that probe the relationship between the body and technology. Rather than highlighting the opposition between artificialness and nature, Ugarte approaches this opposition through another dichotomy, that of the abled subject—epitome of the normative and the normal—versus the disabled subject. In this sense, Ugarte's examination of technological embeddedness through the lens of disability studies brings to mind Irving Goh's observation that "'posthumanism' so far has been motivated and mobilized largely by rejects, that is, figures excluded, marginalized, and even banned by existing sociocultural norms and dominant intellectual discourses that determine what constitutes a human and what belongs to human communities" (Goh 2015, 219). Ugarte's reading of González Fernández's short stories sees both the literal use of the word prosthesis—artificial body parts—and its figurative use as an "amplifying tool" that improves the functioning of a damaged or maladjusted reality—in this case, the Caribbean island's reality. Armed flying wheelchairs, bionic limbs turned into information storing devices, or acts of self-mutilation perpetrated in order to technologically enhance the human body may trivialize or conceal disability, presupposing a lack of normality inherent to the disabled person that needs to be fixed. Veering from these "restorative" narratives, Ugarte argues that González Fernández's fiction foregrounds prostheses and different sorts of impairments to question the institutional regulation of the Othered body and, ultimately, to reveal the symbolic technologies of biopower in Cuba. Simultaneously, the motif of the prosthesis in her fiction becomes a master trope that elicits a meta-literary discussion on the meaning, role, and uses of science fiction as a genre in the specific context of the Caribbean.

In the case of Mexico, as David Dalton explains, "the twin ideals of mestizaje and technological modernity sat at the background of most—if