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DOUBLES AND HYBRIDS IN LATIN AMERICAN GOTHIC

Edited by
Antonio Alcalá González and
Ilse Bussing López

ROUTLEDGE

"Alcalá González and Bussing López's new collection is a timely exploration of the value of the double to Latin America. It is also a great example of what non-Anglophone cultures can teach more traditional academia about the global reach and significance of Gothic tropes."

—Dr. Xavier Aldana Reyes, Senior Lecturer in English Literature and Film at Manchester Metropolitan University.

Doubles and Hybrids in Latin American Gothic

Doubles and Hybrids in Latin American Gothic focuses on a recurrent motif that is fundamental in the Gothic—the double. This volume explores how this ancient notion acquires tremendous force in a region, Latin America, which is itself defined by duplicity (indigenous/European, autochthonous religions/Catholic). Despite this duplicity and at the same time because of it, this region has also generated "mestizaje," or forms resulting from racial mixing and hybridity. This collection, then, aims to contribute to the current discussion about the Gothic in Latin America by examining the doubles and hybrid forms that result from the violent yet culturally fertile process of colonization that took place in the area.

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Introduction

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Writing about Gothic literature and Latin America proves to be a two-fold challenge. To begin with, as Punter and Byron pointed out in *The Gothic* (2004), "Perhaps despite, or perhaps because of, this concentration of critical activity, the Gothic remains a notoriously difficult field to define" (xviii). Similarly, the concept of Latin America in itself is equally difficult to harness. Michel Gobat points out that numerous scholars believe that the label "Latin America" originated from the French imperialistic need to justify this nation's occupation of Mexico (1862–1867) and from the concept that Latin American émigrés in Europe promoted themselves as supposed descendants of a "Latin race."[1] Gobat, however, cites an earlier origin of the term:

> as Arturo Ardao, Miguel Rojas Mix, and Aims McGuiness have revealed, the term "Latin America" had already been used in 1856 by Central and South Americans protesting U.S. expansion into the Southern Hemisphere. Less known is the fact that these resisting Latin Americans also feared European intervention, albeit to a lesser extent. Such fears involved not only French designs on Mexico but also Spain's efforts to regain territories it had lost with the Spanish American wars of Independence. Opposition to U.S. and European imperialism thus underpinned the idea of Latin America. (1346)

Both terms that are at the core of this study then, as well as their intersection—Latin American Gothic—prove to be quite slippery and diffuse. Nevertheless, the justification for this volume to be created is based on the premise that, as controversial as these concepts might be, both Gothic and Latin American studies have evolved to the point in which most scholars can easily agree on common characteristics shared by countries in the region and by the Gothic works that emerge locally. Moreover, by focusing on fundamental issues behind the Gothic—doubling and hybridity—the chapters in this volume will contribute to the growing interest in studies about the presence of the Gothic in this area, but this time through a specific theoretical lens not applied previously in volumes that have offered a wider thematic scope. Thus, we

propose the beginning of more specialized studies around the presence of the Gothic in Latin America in order to motivate other scholars to carry out similar projects that will contribute to the expansion of the knowledge and studies about the manifestation of the Gothic not only in this region but in the whole Gothic globe. Such proposal also responds to the fact that, in recent years, much attention has symmetrically been paid to national manifestations of the Gothic, as well as to what Glennis Byron termed "Globalgothic," "the emergence of cultural and transnational gothics" (*Globalgothic* 1). Several collections have aimed to examine manifestations of this mode in the anglophone realm (Scottish, Canadian, American, Australian, etc.), while others have chosen to examine other regions of the world that had been previously overlooked by the Gothic studies lens, such as Asian Gothic and Latin American Gothic.

Recently published books such as *Tropical Gothic in Literature and Culture: The Americas* (2016), edited by Edwards and Vasconcelos, and *Latin American Gothic in Literature and Culture* (2018), by Ordiz and Casanova-Vizcaíno attest to the growing interest of Gothic studies in this region. In *Tropical Gothic*, Edwards and Vasconcelos carefully delimit the geographical boundaries of the region that their volume considers: "both the tropics and sub-tropics, extending from the Southern region of the mainland U.S. territories through Mexico and the Caribbean into Central and South America" (4). *Doubles and Hybrids* differs from this volume in that, while it considers most of the region cited in Edwards's and Vasconcelos's study, it excludes the Southern USA, since this area does not comprise part of what is traditionally called "Latin America." *Tropical Gothic* raises important issues that will also be considered here: notions of transculturation and an acknowledgment of the region's troubled past, shaped mostly by conquest and colonization. According to Edwards and Vasconcelos, transculturation

> merges the acquisition of another culture (acculturation) with the uprooting of a previous culture (deculturation) to engender new cultural phenomena. Indeed, transculturation often arises out of colonial conquest and subjugation, particularly in a postcolonial era when indigenous cultures articulate historical and political injustices while struggling to regain a sense of cultural identity. (1)

The last point that is mentioned, that of the colonial past, is of extreme importance for the topic of doubling, since it is addressed in this collection in connection with the idea of hybridity. As *Tropical Gothic* mentions, "hyphenated expressions of identity" (1) and "double or multiple identities underscore the linguistic and cultural variety that characterizes this vast territory" (3). *Doubles and Hybrids* addresses this legacy of colonization and slavery in the region precisely by focusing on how this violent mixing of indigenous cultures and European conquerors

produced hybrid (*mestizo*) cultures that gave rise to doubles and other transformations reflected in Gothic fictions from the area.

In the introduction of *Latin American Gothic in Literature and Culture* (2018), Casanova and Ordiz refer to the connections and divergences between fantastic literature and the Gothic in the region. This is a matter of extreme importance, since historically in Latin America, the former has been considered of a superior presence to the Gothic, and in the best of cases, the two terms have often been confused and misused in the Latin American context and abroad. Casanova and Ordiz also point out how Magical Realism, a genre that has received greater acceptance locally and worldwide, functions differently from the Gothic: "the relationship between reality and the supernatural is essentially different in magical realist and Gothic texts" (4). We would like to contribute to this discussion, by also addressing the differences and similitudes between these genres, especially in the Latin American region. To do this, we can consider as a starting point the difference identified by Lucie Armitt. According to her, while in Magical Realism the foreign disruptive element is accepted as a part of the real that usually brings a message of "political significance," the Gothic "fights to keep the stranger [the disruptive element] at bay but fails" (225). The three different forms of writing listed in this paragraph (fantastic literature, the Gothic, and Magical Realism) present approaches different from shared motifs. The purpose of this collection in this regard is to identify the voice of the Gothic inside this interaction by focusing on the presence of the double.

As its title indicates, the edited collection *Doubles and Hybrids in Latin America* focuses on both a fundamentally recurrent motif in the Gothic—the double—and a construction that unfolds from it —the hybrid. For this reason, it is essential to contextualize such terms before continuing with the discussion around the existence of this collection. In itself, the manifestation of the Gothic in Latin America is a hybrid that incorporates local and foreign traditions as expressed in the previous paragraph. Hybrid bodies and identities are liminal assemblements in that they challenge classificatory systems; as a result, they can be considered "aberrant forms" (Douglas 48). Their mere presence disrupts the continuity of categories on which cultures are built. Whenever a challenge to the order appears, it is necessary to contain it for the sake of the known order to continue; this is why "Hybrids and other confusions are abominated" (66). As a result, like some of the hybrid bodies studied in this volume, the manifestation of the Gothic in Latin American literature and film is a transgressive form that has prompted new possibilities to express anxieties from a region that was itself molded from a hybrid past.

As for the double, although it has been conceptualized as inherent to the human condition since ancient times and civilizations, its modern relevance departs from the study by Otto Rank who examines it in his

essay published in 1914, and is later quoted by Sigmund Freud in "The Uncanny" (1919). Following the legacy initiated by both thinkers, it has proved a crucial motif in the Gothic theory generated in recent years. Rank identifies some common denominators between these instances of literary doubles: a "likeness that resembles the main character down to the smallest particulars, such as name, voice, and clothing" (33). It produces a relationship of antagonists between the character and his double that usually ends up in suicide. More recent studies, such as Kenneth Gross's "Ordinary Twinship," focus on one type of doubles, twins, in order to highlight Rank's assertions about the double's universal importance: "The anthropological literature on the subject of twins is equally rich. In some premodern societies —instances of which have been found in Africa, Australia, and the Americas— twins are thought to possess special powers of blessing, divination, and shape-shifting" (22).[2] Another important anthropological notion posited by Rank is that "The primitive concept of the soul as a duality (the person and his shadow) appear in modern man in the motif of the double, assuring him, on the one hand, of immortality and, on the other, threateningly announcing his death" (Tucker xvi). Regarding death, Rank also presents provocative conclusions. First, he emphasizes the need to create a double that will embody unacceptable characteristics and take the blame for personal deeds:

> This detached personification of instincts and desires which were once felt to be unacceptable, but which can be satisfied without responsibility in this indirect way, appears in other forms of the theme as a beneficent admonitor…who is directly addressed as the 'conscience' of the person. (Rank 76)

Gross refers to this notion in the following manner:

> What the double offers is a split-off vehicle for and mirror of those hidden impulses, personalities, or depravities that refuse to be buried alive, that we do not wish to know; hence the double's emergence as a foe to any more consistent, rational, or conscious picture of the individual self. (29)

Rank also insists that the killing of this despised double can be ultimately considered self-immolation: "The frequent slaying of the double, through which the hero seeks to protect his self, is really a suicidal act" (79). He explains that because a person is ultimately narcissistic, the only acceptable way to commit suicide is by murdering a hated double, which explains this motif's popularity in diverse cultures and literatures. Rank locates in the individual's desire to continue living, the creation of the idea of soul which "became an immaterial concept with

the increasing reality-experience of man, who does not want to admit that death is everlasting annihilation" (84). Because of this indeed *dual* effect or capacity of the double, to both announce the subject's death and ensure its immortality, it is not difficult to understand its constant presence in the Gothic tradition to express anxieties about two sets of opposites that cause extreme concern in Western thought. On the one hand, it reflects the existence of both unity and multiplicity of the self already proved by psychological studies from even before the beginnings of the twentieth century; on the other, the disintegration that usually results from encounters with doubles—as it occurs in the early Gothic experiences of Dr. Frankenstein and William Wilson—raises questions about two contrary stages in the existence of the human being that mark our beginning and end: life and death.

Ranks's work on the double gave way, and still gives way, to numerous publications that address the topic exclusively or in unison with other psychoanalytical or archetypal motifs. The most renowned of these works is undoubtedly Freud's "The Uncanny" (1919). Although focusing on the aesthetic and psychoanalytical notion of the uncanny, Freud's work addresses the phenomenon of doubling and compulsive repetition in part by analyzing E.T.A. Hoffmann's "The Sandman" as a tale of Oedipal castration. But Freud focuses on the motif of the double more strongly in his discussion of Hoffmann's "Die Elexiere des Teufels" ["The Elixirs of the Devil"]. Freud acknowledges Rank's pioneering study and restates some of its most poignant conclusions:

> In the civilization of ancient Egypt, it became a spur to artists to form images of the dead in durable materials. But these ideas arose on the soil of boundless self-love, the primordial narcissism that dominates the mental life of both the child and primitive man, and when this phase is surmounted, the meaning of the "double" changes: having once been an assurance of immortality, it becomes the uncanny harbinger of death. (Freud 142)

Freud connects the double with the uncanny in that it is a reemergence of a past creation "that belongs to a primitive phase in our mental development, a phase that we have surmounted, in which it admittedly had a more benign significance. The double has become an object of terror" (143). This issue about the double having once had a "benign significance" but now acquiring a terrifying quality is of extreme importance because some of the works in this volume argue that, in at least some Latin American Gothic works, doubling and hybridity are not necessarily always terrifying things. They can actually be a liberating or empowering phenomenon instead, as some chapters in this collection suggest (see chapters by Ajuria, Bussing Ordiz, Reid, and Rojas).

We stated in previous lines that the Gothic coexists with other mediums of expression of dominant presence in Latin America. It is therefore imperative to consider the definitions of such similar, yet distinct, types of writing. To begin with, the term fantastic literature/"Literatura Fantástica" can be traced to Todorov's cornerstone study *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, which notes that the fantastic does not equal fantasy literature. Instead, it stands between two other genres: the uncanny and the marvelous. A text qualifying as *unheimlich* logically follows Freud's guidelines for this notion, including that which is unsettling because it is both strange and familiar. For Todorov, the marvelous is more of a simple notion, implying the occurrence of fantastic events. The fantastic, on the other hand, meets a specific requirement that sets it apart from both the uncanny and the marvelous:

> The Fantastic occupies the duration of this uncertainty. Once we choose one answer or the other, we leave the fantastic for a neighboring genre, the uncanny or the marvelous. The fantastic is that hesitation experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event. (Todorov 25)

According to Todorov, in the uncanny, supernatural or unexplained events can be explained through reason, while the marvelous is explained through sets of laws that reinforce the supernatural. The fantastic, on the other hand, is defined as a moment of doubt or hesitation between belief and disbelief of the supernatural. Todorov's work, as controversial and challenged as it is by many critics, is still recognized as one of the main studies of the fantastic, but an anthology published in Latin America, in 1940, contains a brief definition of the "Literatura Fantástica" produced in Latin America. The *Antología de la literatura fantástica*, by Jorge Luis Borges, Adolfo Bioy Casares, and Silvina Ocampo, provides a classification of different types of fantastic tales, according to the type of explanation that is provided for occurrences: a) those explained by the agency of a supernatural being or event, b) those that offer a fantastic but not supernatural explanation, c) those that can be explained by a supernatural being or event but also allow the possibility of a natural explanation. Todorov's work as well as this anthology defines the fantastic and fantastic literature as a genre that centers on the process of attempting to explain the supernatural.

The fantastic as a genre may be considered an umbrella term for several other genres that somehow or another display an affinity for unexplained events and that display a constant confrontation between the supernatural and natural, the "real" and the fantastic, among other polarities. The fantastic includes subgenres as diverse as those generally assigned to Gothic fiction, such as weird fiction and ghost stories. It also encompasses others traditionally ascribed to science fiction, such as Cyberpunk. Despite inconsistencies and controversy regarding the

difference between the fantastic and the Gothic, most critics do agree that the fantastic is a category that encompasses several genres and modes, including the Gothic. In "Notas sobre lo gótico en el Río de la Plata," one of the main Latin American exponents of the Gothic, Julio Cortázar, explains the wider scope of fantastic literature: "entendido en una acepción muy amplia que va de lo sobrenatural a lo misterioso, de lo terrorífico a lo insólito, y donde la presencia de lo específicamente 'gótico' es con frecuencia perceptible" [understood as a very wide term that ranges from the supernatural to the mysterious, from the terrifying to the extraordinary, and where the presence of the specifically "Gothic" is often perceptible] (Cortázar 145). Ríos Cordero also highlights the fantastic's ample scope: "Fantastic Literature has spawned a great variety of genres, subgenres, and modes. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Gothic became one of the most original offspring of Fantastic Literature" (Ríos 82). Despite the obvious connection between the fantastic and the Gothic, in the Latin American context, this seemingly clear notion is clouded by the practice of ignoring the "Gothic" label and genre altogether and just referring to Gothic literature as "Literatura Fantástica." In fact, it is rare to hear someone talk about "Literatura Gótica," but commonplace to hear the term "Literatura Fantástica," even when one is specifically referring to Gothic literature. Casanova-Vizcaíno and Ordiz point out that in *Galería Fantástica* [*Fantastic Gallery*] (2009), "the Argentine critic and writer María Negroni states that what has thus far been defined as fantastic literature in Latin America is, in fact, Gothic Literature" (1). Casanova and Ordiz also mention that when regional Gothic is actually mentioned and recognized as such, it is often considered inferior when compared to the fantastic. Moreover, in "Gothic Fuentes," Ricardo Gutiérrez Mouat pinpoints the text selection in the *Antología de la literatura fantástica* (1940), as the main culprit for excluding the Gothic from the local literary canon, since it "very deliberately excluded any overt manifestation of the Gothic genre in their selections and only included one story by Poe" (297), concluding that this work "was one of the reasons why the fantastic became a more refined and prestigious genre than the much maligned Gothic" (297). It is not until the emergence of works by the likes of Argentinian Julio Cortázar and Mexican Carlos Fuentes (often referred to as "authors of the fantastic"), that Gothic literature begins to gain recognition and acceptance in Latin America. According to Gutiérrez Mouat, Fuentes's stories finally manage to "elevate a minor genre" (298) in the region.

While Gothic fiction struggled to be acknowledged as a legitimate literary creation in Latin America, Magical Realism or "Realismo Mágico" emerged, from the start, with an astounding force and prestige, due largely to the recognition of it as a truly autochthonous creation, a Latin American literary genre that was later exported to other latitudes. Art critic Franz Roh coined the term "magic realism" in 1925, when referring to post-expressionist painting in Europe,[3] and even though he

was referring to the medium of painting, Roh's definition of the concept is relevant to what would later become a literary genre: "a new way of looking at the real world that highlighted the marvelous that is hidden in the banality of everyday life" (Ríos 85). The term was introduced into the literary realm in a 1927 anthology by Ortega y Gasset, in which Roh's work was translated into Spanish. In turn, the concept was further expanded and described by Cuban author, Alejo Carpentier, in the prologue to *El reino de este mundo* (1949), in which he defined the concept of "lo real maravilloso" or "the marvelous real." For Carpentier, this phenomenon was exclusive of this region:

> For Carpentier, Latin American culture is full of these miracles; of instances where the quotidian becomes marvelous because it is deeply embedded in a reality different from Europe…? For Carpentier the marvelous is inherent in the Latin American experience and geography. He believed that the Old World was already saturated with history and that there was no inherent magic left. (Ríos 85)

This Cuban author proposed that "lo real maravilloso" was exclusive of Latin America and that the miracle was a key component of the phenomenon; both of these notions were later contested, but Carpentier's notions still resound and are considered foundational to the concept of Magical Realism. Coming back to Armitt, like other contemporary critics, she recognizes the wide scope of this genre across the globe: "Magical Realism comes to us first from Latin America, though it has also taken strong root elsewhere" (224). Like the Gothic, then, Magical Realism could be said to have begun in a certain region or continent and later acquired the capacity to spread worldwide, the difference being that the Gothic's origins took place in Europe, while Magical Realism surfaced initially in the New World. According to Armitt, both types of literature share the fact that they challenge order and reason through supernatural or extraordinary phenomena. However, both work differently when it comes to the border between the extraordinary and the ordinary, between the supernatural and the natural or realistic:

> The boundary markers between mimesis (Greek for 'realistic imitation') and antimimesis in magical realism are far more fluid and permeable. At one moment a character is standing in a room in his or her own house; at the next moment, a specter arrives and engages in dialogue. Unlike the conventional ghost story, the result in literary terms is neither to eradicate the realism established beforehand in the text nor to dilute the unsettling effect of the ghost: instead, by granting equal narrative presence to both, magical realism reveals that the extraordinary exists most absolutely within the quotidian real. (225)

Instead of this permeable border between mimesis and anti-mimesis, Armitt explains the Gothic displays a more polarized structure between reality and the extraordinary: "In the Gothic, by contrast, points of entry and exit between earth and hell are far more clear-cut" (225). Another major difference between the Gothic and Magical Realism lies in the political and postcolonial essence of the latter. This is not to suggest that Gothic works (or any type of literature) may not be political and/or postcolonial. For instance, numerous studies have focused on the political and religious agenda behind eighteenth-century Gothic works that portrayed Catholic countries and Catholicism as corrupt and malevolent; likewise, the Gothic genre is populated by works that can be considered postcolonial, such as H.G. Wells's *The Island of Dr. Moreau*. Nevertheless, Magical Realism is more overtly political as a whole, being called by Armitt, Gothic's "more overtly politicized sister form" (224). Thus, as mentioned in earlier pages, the difference between the Gothic and Magical Realism resides in the treatment rather than in the presence of the motifs on which writers rely to express their preoccupation about the contexts from which they produce their work. In our case, as already stated, it is the presence of the double in Latin America that concerns us. The existence of this motif in the cultures from the region can be traced to their origins from a colonial past.

Having been colonized by European powers in the past, societies from Mexico to Argentina have a double past. They have been molded from the combination of indigenous, pre-Columbian elements, with others from European, and in some particular cases, even African origin. As a result, cultural identities in the region bear within them a multiplicity that is reflected in its individuals. In addition, the predominant Catholic past in the region adds an extra component of duplicity, that is, the binary influence upon human beings represented by the clash between good and evil forces. This can be seen as a motif in literary manifestations from colonial times such as some productions of Juan Ruiz de Alarcón,[4] especially his play, *El anticristo* [*The Antichrist*] (first on stage in 1623), where St. Michael, the Archangel, struggles against the Antichrist who has set his influence over the people from Babylon. A similar case occurs with the confrontation between Sacred Love and Profane Love, each disputing the guiding hand behind Magdalena's actions in Juan de Cigorondo's[5] *Comedia a la Gloriosa Magdalena* [*Comedy to the Glorious Magdalena*], staged for the first time around 1600 (Locke 166).

In addition to embodying the combination of an indigenous past colonized by European colonial powers with a strong Catholic presence, the identity of the region is affected by a third element that motivates the feeling of a duplicity behind its formation: slavery. For a series of political, cultural, and religious reasons that pushed them to keep a certain degree of "American Indian autonomy," both the Spanish and Portuguese

crowns decided against a permanent enslavement of American Indians. While the Portuguese imported black slaves from Africa as other colonial powers would later do in the Caribbean,[6] the Spaniards tended to transform the powerful peasant-based empires from the territories conquered in Mesoamerica and the Andes to exploit the natives without the need to destroy their political and social systems (Klein 22). It was in places that required stronger working hands for conditions that proved too harsh for the natives that the Spaniards also imported African slaves. Such were the cases in the mines of New Granada (now Colombia) and the plantations in Venezuela (84–85). Even after the independent movements at the beginning of the nineteenth century and the resulting abolition of slavery,[7] other forms of unfree labor remained in the region until the beginnings of the twentieth century; as an example of this, "national studies, past and relatively present, give a picture of Mexico as a nation of peonage and poverty which, according to a polemical account of 1908, included 750,000 chattel slaves and 5 million debt peons" (Knight 102).

As the preceding lines show, the notion of duplicity in Latin American Gothic literature is not a motif that needed to be imported from other contexts, but a concern related to the formation of a region whose cultural heritage is to be traced from two main sources; there is on one hand the mark of the pre-Columbian civilizations still present in cultural manifestations present in names of some streets, cities, and provinces, as well as those given to newborns; on the other hand, there is the European culture—starting with language and religion—that was imposed by the colonial powers that settled in the area. Thus, this collection aims to contribute to the body of Gothic criticism dedicated to these latitudes, while focusing more specifically on the motif of the double, considering its regional variations and transmutations. The emphasis is placed on the presence of doubles and hybrid forms that result from the violent yet culturally fertile process of colonization that took place in the area. The following questions are thus addressed in this collection. How central is the presence of doubles, split personalities, and hybrid bodies in the discussion around Latin American Gothic? Is there a connection between the tradition of Magical Realism, a genre native to this region and closely associated to ghostly presences, and the Gothic? What is the connection between the presence of hybrid bodies in the present and the pre-Columbian heritage in the area?

The chapters in this book are grouped in three sections that explore different aspects of the Gothic double and its manifestations in Latin American literature and film from the twentieth and twentieth-first centuries. In the first section "Doubling the Self," Aurora Piñeiro analyzes how *Seeing Red* (2012 by Chilean author, Lina Meruane) becomes by itself a literary *Doppelgänger* which fluctuates between the conventions of *autoficción* and those of Gothic writings. Meruane uses the motif of the double as well as Gothic aesthetics to explore the uncanny, monstrosity,

and the loneliness of ill people. At the same time, she articulates forms of resistance in the face of infantilizing narratives associated with illness or *mestizaje*/hybridity. The cultural doublings in the novel are rooted in the experience of exile and reinforce a post-memory type of writing. Another female novelist is analyzed by Inés Ordiz who proposes an understanding of Mexican novelist's work, Daniela Tarazona's *El animal sobre la piedra* (2009) as Gothic fiction, and, more specifically, as belonging to a type of (subversive and rebellious) Gothic written by women in Spanish-speaking countries in the twenty-first century. In this sense, by subverting the binary systems that reduce women's experience to archetypal images generated in a phallogocentric system, *El animal* suggests the possibility of other models to understand the female body outside of these imprisoning definitions. The protagonist's almost reptilian body becomes fluid, ever-changing, and powerful because of its ability to adapt and welcome difference. As for Antonio Alcalá's chapter, he analyzes how the uncanny presence of Amilamia, with her deformed adult body, in Carlos Fuentes's "The Queen Doll," becomes a Gothic uncanny presence that invalidates all attempts to impose the permanence of her past. The dead image of eternal childhood presented by the porcelain doll that gives title to the story proves worthless in front of the adult woman's monstrous body. Alcalá's second purpose in his analysis is to compare the reluctance to accept the present in the story with the Mexican idealization of the past that prevents the country's inhabitants from facing the existence of an incompletely formed nation. After these three reflections on the connection between the double and feminine bodies, Gina Wisker closes the section with a comparative exploration reminding the reader that the presence of duplicity is a universal Gothic motif. She centers her analysis on how the reflections of other selves in both Carlos Fuentes's *Aura* (1962) and Angela Carter's "The Lady of the House of Love" (1979) capture the reader directly in the web of history to reflect upon the lies and narratives of the past.

Section two "Double bodies" works like an appendage of section one in that it also focuses on transformations of the self, but with the emphasis on doubling the sexuality of the human body. First, Daniel Serravalle explores Coelho Netto's novel *Esphinge* (1908), which provides an example of how the Gothic operates as a discursive mode which is key to narrate modern sensibility, more particularly, in its engagement with the limits of genre, gender, and politics. He suggests that in this text, the themes of the double and the Gothic operate on several different levels, including the explorations and experimentations of the body, and the dialogues between Brazilian and British literature. Norman Marín completes this short section with a study of the different manifestations of queer bodies (*queerpos*) as Gothic elements in the short story "El prostíbulo mágico de Monsieur Venus" ["Monsieur Venus's Magical Brothel" 2003] by Costa Rican author José Ricardo Chaves. In it,

Marin focuses on the destabilization of the traditional borders between the sexes in the characterization of the *bisexual*, the *hermaphrodite,* and the *androgynous* which undermine the *status quo*, since they present the importance of the Gothic hybrid in overthrowing the long-established binary logic, thus provoking chaos, horror, and destabilization.

As its title indicates, the third section "Animals and Doubles" presents clear cases of duplicity between the human and animal bodies. Ilse Bussing begins her analysis by indicating that Otto Rank coined his theory on the double based on European and Western literature in general, without taking into consideration its presence in other cultures, such as the Mesoamerican one, where doubling and hybridity, in the form of the nagual (also *nawal*, *nahual*), is not a harmful entity, but a guarding spirit. Her chapter analyzes *nagualism*, along with other types of transmutations, as a key component in the novel *Hombres de maíz* [*Corn Men*, 1949] by Guatemalan author Miguel Ángel Asturias. Vinicius Lucas de Souza continues the discussion by focusing on two short stories from Brazilian literature. In Gastão Cruls's "O espelho" ["The Mirror"] (1938), the mirror turns into an element of duplicity that makes multiple *doppelgängers* irrupt into the sexual life of the narrator. Secondly, in Murilo Rubião's "Teleco, o coelhinho" ["Teleco, the Rabbit"] (1965), the process of metamorphosis changes the rabbit mentioned in the title into a giraffe, a goat, a horse, and even into extinct and imaginary animals. Lucas de Souza's analysis of the double in both narratives argues that the duality of the *doppelgänger* unveils a legion of "others," as well as it highlights the insurgence of transient and mutable bodies—human, animal, or hybrid ones—in the doubling process. The final component of the section is Esteban Rojas's exploration of the uses of the Gothic literary uncanny devices of doubling and shapeshifting in the novel *The Kingdom of this World* by Alejo Carpentier. Despite the fact that this text is traditionally placed within its own category of the Marvelous Real, Rojas emphasizes Carpentier's use of the traditionally Gothic devices already mentioned. His text concludes that it is the ambivalent essence of the uncanny, which depicts doubling and shapeshifting as both threatening and empowering, that links the Gothic and the Marvelous Real together, despite Carpentier's apprehension toward the former.

After establishing a solid frame on doubling the self into an other and the use of the double to express concerns about the animal side of humans, section four is devoted to the study of the connection between doubles and the spaces they inhabit. As a beginning, Anna Reid fixes her gaze on Mexico and scrutinizes the uncanny effect created within the framework of ritual sacrifice, the dual nature of the Aztec gods, the blurring of boundaries between life and death, and the intermingling of spatial and temporal boundaries in the fiction of Elena Garro, Carlos Fuentes, Mauricio Molina, and Bernardo Esquinca (all of them Mexican writers from the twentieth and twentieth-first centuries). Her chapter

addresses how the violent eruption of ancient and malign forces haunts contemporary Mexican fiction. In particular it explores the uncanny as a positive force, representing freedom and/or subversion within a Mexican context. Gilda Pacheco follows and focuses on Colombia. She explores the connection between Magical Realism and the Gothic in Gabriel García Márquez's *Del amor y otros demonios* [*Of Love and Other Demons*, 1994], which is set in colonial Cartagena from the eighteenth century. Pacheco proposes that the novel setting creates an ambiance of darkness and decadence that propitiates the pathetic fallacy, a typical tool in Gothic literature which helps develop the main protagonist's transmutation. She also uncovers racial and religious prejudices that in a sense both generate the protagonist's transformations and end up sealing her fate. The discussion around spaces in this section ends with a return to Mexico and a view of the manifestation of the Gothic, not in literature, but in the social experience. Enrique Ajuria Ibarra proposes a view of the 9/19 earthquake that struck Central Mexico in 2017 as an uncanny and double repetition of the event from the same date in 1985 that is manifested through the phantom projections of surviving children. He points out that the traumatic natural disaster is processed through Gothic experiences of haunting and repetition in everyday life, revealing transgenerational phantoms in social memory that process the event.

This collection concludes with a short section that, nevertheless, encourages others to extend the knowledge on the field of "The Double in [Latin American] Film." The two chapters that form this section remind us that the manifestations of the Gothic go beyond literature, appearing in other artistic modes of expression. Fernando Pagnoni starts with a study of the depiction in Argentinian horror cinema of the nation's historical ideological division: the wide gap separating *savages from civilized people*. He chooses two early films—*El Hombre Bestia* (*The Beast Man*, Camilo Zaccaría Soprani 1934) and *Una Luz en la Ventana* (*A Lighted Window*, Manuel Romero 1942)—to analyze the presence of the Gothic motif of the savage within and the social anxieties produced by the national civilizing project and its dark reverse: devolution to superseded evolutionary stages. Finally, Anthony López Get studies the asylum as a space in which Gothic elements converge to transform the life, body, and minds of its inmates. His chapter scrutinizes the asylum (or modern mental hospital) as a Gothic setting and as a source of bodily and mental transformation of the inmates in the Latin American context. His focus centers on the Costa Rican novel *Cachaza* (1977) by Virgilio Mora, and the Brazilian film *Bicho de sete cabeças* [*Brainstorm* 2000] directed by Laís Bodanzky. López indicates that, although not traditionally catalogued as Gothic, these two texts explore central Gothic tropes and themes in the context of modern psychiatric hospitals. In both of them, the protagonists experience the contemporary horrors of enclosure and the transgression of all humanitarian principles of a

medical institution. The images of the transformed, drooling, incoherent patients stand as terrible doubles of the humans they were, before their admission to the institution.

Our expectation is that this collection fulfills its double aim. First, we intend for our readers to satisfy their curiosity about the presence of the Gothic double in Latin America. Second, we encourage other scholars to deepen into either other manifestations of the double, or analyze the presence of various Gothic motifs in the context of Latin American literature and film. Our call to them is to continue from where we are leaving off, and not only expand the research shared by our contributors but also explore the works of writers and directors, as well as countries, left out from this collection. To begin with, we call for an enlargement of studies around the Gothic in Latin American film since the contribution of this collection in that area is short. Similarly, the studies on the presence of the Gothic in art and architecture produced in Latin America should also be addressed and enlarged.

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Notes

1 Saint-Simonian French sociologist, Michel Chevalier, wrote that part of the Americas was inhabited by people of a "Latin race" in order to justify a historical and cultural affinity with France and not anglophone powers. He insisted that countries south of the United States were "Latin" and "Catholic," thus had a lot more in common with France, granting the latter more of a right to occupy the territory. Latin American émigrés in Europe would later appeal to this notion of descending from a "Latin race," in order to highlight a likeness with Europeans.
2 Harry Tucker notes that Rank also mentions twinship as the earliest embodiment of the "Double-soul" (pp. 84–92).
3 Franz Roh coined the term in 1925, in *Nach Expressionismus: Magister Realismus: Probleme der neuesten europäischen Malerei* [*After Expressionism: Magical Realism: Problems of the newest European Painting*].
4 Although he later moved to Spain, Juan Ruiz de Alarcón was born in the Viceroyalty of New Spain (present Mexico) where he lived until around his twentieth birthday (Peña 380).
5 Although Juan de Cigorondo was born in Spain, his family moved to New Spain when he was only a child.
6 A special case among independent movements in the Caribbean is that of Haiti usually recognized as "the land where black people first threw off the chains of slavery" (Nicholls 237). On the one hand, the independence of Haiti represented hope for black people in the continent; on the other, it was seen as a threat for European colonial powers and even for the independent states in the American continent in as much as it could be seen as an example for black populations to demand equal rights (236). The effect of Haiti's independence was so influential in the region, that it even motivated the ruling planter classes of Cuba and Puerto Rico "to remain loyalist [to the Spanish crown] for fear of arousing their slaves" (Klein 91).
7 Before, respectively, abolishing slavery in 1886 and 1888, Cuba and Brazil remained "the two largest slave states in Latin America" (Klein 130).