

Antonio Luciano de Andrade Tosta. *Confluence Narratives: Ethnicity, History, and Nation-Making in the Americas*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2016. 301p.

*Confluence Narratives* is a groundbreaking study of the legacies of colonization and its entanglements with different waves of immigration in twentieth and twenty-first century novels of the Americas. Antonio Luciano de Andrade Tosta addresses the complexity of “otherness” in identity formation, emphasizing how multiple ethnic experiences were suppressed in the construction of national imaginaries in the region. The author perceives fiction as a reparatory tool to address the role of ethnic groups and their narratives in weaving a myriad of national identity fabrics. The political commitment of the book is to provide alternative accounts of historical events built upon historiographical metafictional novels.

The term “confluence” points to the palimpsestic cross-cultural encounters depicted by the novels and the role they play in the configuration of national spaces. Tosta argues that confluence narratives are able to articulate individual immigrant narratives, challenging the homogenous historical discourse about immigration and the formation of national identity in the Americas. This recognition of diasporic experiences allows the fracture of the core/periphery dichotomy, incorporating the political participation of immigrants in the building of American nations.

The interweaving of history and fiction provides the interdisciplinary analytical framework to examine the pluriverse experience of being an immigrant in the Americas. The novels analyzed in chapter one, “The Native American, Hybridity, and *Mestiçagem* in Luiz Antonio de Assis Brasil’s *Breviário das Terras do Brasil* and Laura Esquivel’s *Malinche*” portray indigenous struggles in relation to the violent encounter with colonizers in Brazil and Mexico. In chapter two “Escaping the Nation? —African American History

as (Trans)National history in Luís Fulano de Tal's *A Noite dos Cristais* and Ismael Reeds's *Flight to Canada*" the analysis encompasses the transnational scourge of slavery and its legacies in the Americas. Chapter three, "Jewish Puzzles –Identity Search, Memory and History in Moacyr Scliar's *A Estranha Nação de Rafael Mendes* and Ricardo Feierstein's *Mestizo*," focuses on the importance of the often-neglected Jewish American history for building American national identities. Lastly, chapter four, "Memory, Difference, and the Struggle for Belonging in Jorge J. Okubaro's *O Súdito: (Banzai, Massateru!)* and Joy Kogawa's *Obasan*," covers the intersection between the Second World War and Japanese immigration to Brazil and Canada. Along these lines, *Confluence Narratives* emulates the relation between fiction in history in its own structure, providing a historical overview of the national and transnational historical context of the fictional works analyzed.

Tosta perceives writers' political engagement with their productions—locally and transnationally—through two axes. "Politics of recognition" encompasses novels in which writers counteract historical omissions and exclusions of their own ethnic groups from the formation of the national fabric, while "politics of solidarity" comprises a response from writers outside the ethnic groups they write about. Thus, fiction serves as a reclaiming platform, recognizing and materializing the historical ambiguities and hybridity inherent in the national formation of the Americas.

The politics of recognition orients the analysis in most chapters. In chapter two, writers use personal family memories, in conjunction to historical facts, to build upon the collective identity of African diasporas in Brazil and Canada. The forced migration of Africans to the aforementioned countries repositions Africans as protagonists of their narratives, materializing their struggle for inclusion and recognition as citizens. Chapter three focuses on the role of the Jewish diaspora in the making of Brazilian and Argentine national identity, and its multiterritorial feature. While the protagonists contest the exclusion of Jewish immigrants from the historical formation of Brazil and Argentina, they simultaneously reclaim their participation in their diaspora, also asserting their belonging in the Jewish nation. Finally, both novels in chapter four converge personal family experiences to the transnational and world history of Japanese immigration to Brazil and Canada. The narratives highlight how Japanese immigrants reclaimed the acknowledgment

and inclusiveness of their participation in the weaving of Brazilian and Canadian national fabrics.

The politics of solidarity, on the other hand, guides the reading in chapter one. Through a critique of the normativity of colonial tropes in the literary imaginary of the Americas, the two novels reimagine the encounter between indigenous communities in Brazil and Mexico, portraying the disobedience of their protagonists and how they challenge colonial authority. According to Tosta, writers committed to politics of solidarity “can become allies to the Amerindian cause, seek to understand Amerindian experiences and struggles, and use their relative positions of privilege to pursue racial justice” (40).

By pairing a Brazilian novel with a Mexican, Argentinian or Canadian fictional text in each chapter, the volume aims to confirm the centrality of Brazilian history and its literary production to the inter-American field. In a larger sense, however, *Confluence Narratives* articulates the inextricable connection between fiction and history in the imaginary around nation formation in the Americas. Tosta’s work makes a vital contribution to comparative literary, ethnic and cultural studies, affirming the role of fiction as a symbolic historical revisionist act against the silence and omission of diverse ways of existence and resistance in the construction of national identities in the Americas.

**Andressa Macena Maia**

Brown University