The Stridentist Movement in Mexico: The Avant-Garde and Cultural Change in the 1920s. By Elissa J. Rashkin. Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2009. Pp. x, 275. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. $75.00 cloth.

Since the 1990s there has been an explosion of interest in *estridentismo*—the Mexican answer to Italian Futurism—a movement that was born in 1921 when the poet Manuel Maples Arce issued his first manifesto. In recent years, several anthologies and illustrated catalogues have brought together many of the surviving manifestos, pamphlets, original paintings, and other visual materials. In recent years, there have also been several U.S. dissertations devoted to *estridentismo*, as well as several books in English that include chapters on the movement, including Vicky Unruh's *The Latin American Vanguards* (1994). The literature has focused on several debates: Does the movement merit inclusion in Mexican literary histories? Most critics since Luis Mario Schneider agree that it does. Should the movement be discussed in the context of international avant-garde movements or was it a purely local phenomenon? Many of the exhibition catalogues try to present *estridentismo* as an authentically Mexican movement disconnected from other avant-gardes. And, perhaps most importantly, what legacy did this movement leave behind?

Even as scholarly interest has grown in the United States and Europe, there is still very little material on the movement available in translation. Few of the primary texts have been translated, and there are no monographs devoted to the movement in English. This book, then, has the merit of being the most comprehensive source of information on the movement's history and output available in English. Elissa Rashkin is an independent scholar who lives in Xalapa, Veracruz (the one-time capital of the movement) and her study presents a schematic overview of *estridentismo* and introduces most of the manifestos, books, essays, and other works produced by members of the movement during the 1920s. While not as detailed as Schneider's *El estridentismo* (1985), it is the best English-language introduction to the small corpus of *estridentista* works.

Rashkin's book is divided into two sections: "Metropolis" and "Horizons." The first contains seven chapters devoted to the group's early writings, while the second includes five chapters dealing with larger thematic questions, including the influence of the movement outside of the Mexican capital and the artistic legacy left behind by the movement. Some of the chapters also address the place of gender and sexual identity in the movement's productions. The book has the merit of making connections among various forms of cultural production from 1920s Mexico. There is a chapter devoted to theater, for instance, which fills a lacuna present in most studies of the movement, which tend to privilege literary works. There is also an extremely interesting chapter on Xavier Icaza, a figure who has been excluded from most histories of the movement (he is mentioned only in passing by Schneider, for instance). In the last chapters, Rashkin introduces the work of artists like Jesse Lerner, who in recent years have sought to pay homage to the legacy of the *estridentistas*.

Rashkin's study, however, suffers from a number of shortcomings. The first involves an excessive use of citation and paraphrase, combined with scant analysis of the material.

Most of the book reads like a general introduction to the movement and the reader misses a more detailed discussion of key issues—from political affiliations to gender questions—that deserve more detailed and careful analyses. The book includes few illustrations, and many readers will be surprised to find that several of the images are of drawings made in 2008 by Ian Phillips. In the first pages of the book, the author links *estridentismo* to the movements studied by Marjorie Perloff in *The Futurist Moment* (2003), but the issue of *estridentismo*'s relationship to the international avant-garde merits a more detailed and historically-informed discussion. In the final section, the author shows that the *estridentista* movement not only left an important legacy, but continues to inspire artists like Lerner and Lizzet Luna Gamboa, but then makes the somewhat surprising argument that, "The preoccupation with 'heirs' and 'legacy' implies a fundamentally patriarchal understanding of history, in which an artist's or movement's value lies in his/its ability to reproduce as prodigiously as possible—to sow his seed in the terrain of culture, becoming a 'seminal' influence and a 'father' of subsequent generations" (p. 238). Despite these shortcomings, Rashkin's study could be a useful textbook for undergraduate courses when accompanied by more theoretical studies of the movement, like Unruh's *The Latin American Vanguards*, as well as by primary texts.

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Mexico City through History and Culture. Edited by Linda Newson and John King. New York: Oxford University Press for the British Academy. British Academy Occasional Paper #13, 2009. Pp. xiii, 137. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Charts. $35.00.

This collection of seven essays is based on contributions given at a symposium of Mexican and British academics, "Celebrating the City: Mexico City through History and Culture," held in London at the British Academy on October 30, 2007. The conference held great promise, as did this volume, and Linda Newson, King's College London, and John King, University of Warwick, deserve credit for bringing together those who analyze literature and visual culture with historians. Yet somehow the narrative got scrambled by abandoning history at the end of the colonial period (ca. 1810), only to be picked up again, sort of, in the 1940s. In fact, the nineteenth century is almost totally ignored. Even if no one in Britain studies that period, surely someone in Mexico could have discussed what happened to the city then. Mexico City underwent many significant transformations during that time, from the construction of the Paseo de la Reforma to the mansions of the Zona Rosa, to name just two. In fact, much of the current city's identity originated in the era of the Porfiriato and the Revolution.

The brief opening essay by the irreplaceable Carlos Monsiváis ("the chili in all the moles") although concocted out of many of his other writings, is still a wonder. In a few pages, "Monsi" managed to convey what life is like for many who live in the city by choice or by circumstance, and would be a good introduction to the place for students. Warwick Bray, Professor Emeritus, University College London, contributed the next essay on the city of the Aztecs and it too is a real delight, and definitely assignable in class. David Brading,