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**Prádanos, Luis I. *Postgrowth Imaginaries. New Ecologies and Counterhegemonic Culture in Post-2008 Spain*. Liverpool University Press, 2018. 246 pp. ISBN: 978-1-78694-134-3.**

Luis Prádanos offers an extensive study on Spain's cultural and artistic expressions produced in the aftermath of the economic crisis of 2008. Whereas no industrial country escaped the effects of the market and housing crash during the first decade of the new millennium, Spain was among the hardest hit countries of the EU. Among young Spaniards, including the ones with postgraduate degrees, unemployment famously rose to a staggering 30%, while a submerged labor-market assured their exploitation. The results were regular mass demonstrations, mass emigration, and the emergence of social movements like the 15-M. The increasing political polarization only deepened the national disenchantment and distrust in government. Many felt that capitalism as a system guaranteeing prosperity and progress was failing. It is in this context that Prádanos places the emergence of counterhegemonic postgrowth imaginaries in Spanish film, fiction, and non-fiction that "contribute to decolonizing the dominant imaginary and its ideology of cultural consumerism, technological acceleration, and economic growth" (87).

The book is divided into three parts and four chapters. Part I deals with Spanish culture and postgrowth economics and consists of one chapter. After providing a scathing condemnation of Spanish neoliberalism in the introduction, the author summarizes the historical conditions that led to the Western growth imaginary in general, and to how it developed in Spain in particular. The author makes an excellent point in tying Spain's particular historical experience of the *Transición* to the economic crisis and its aftermath. He addresses the origins of the 15-M and provides a Marxist condemnation of capitalism while denouncing a lack of response in Spanish thought, especially an absence of ecocritical engagement.

Notwithstanding the author's passion and sound critique, one could be tempted to interpret this lack of response less as an intentional silence or self-censorship, as he proposes, and instead call to mind how recent these events still are. All signs point to the beginning of drastic changes in the way we view and articulate crises, including in Spain. As more studies and voices emerge —Prádanos's book is in itself proof of this change— ecocriticism and critical views of the growth imaginary are certain to emerge.

The discussion on urban ecologies makes up the second part of *Postgrowth Imaginaries*. Prádanos applies ecological thinking in order to converge the fields of sociology, cultural studies, and urban studies. This ecocritical cross-disciplinary approach may be the strongest merit of the book. Not only does the author bring together theoretical discourses from different disciplines, he also shows how they are interconnected, how they can enrich one another in order to become more relevant for the critique of our present. He addresses the need for more ecocriticism, especially in the Latin American and Spanish imaginary, and laments the lack of an "urban ecological cultural criticism" (91). Prádanos certainly has a point: especially when analysing Hispanic fiction and film, ecocriticism in Spain is still mostly limited to rural fiction or, in Latin America, to the "selva" as a an indomitable space that resists colonization. Prádanos provides a useful and innovative model to analyze urban imaginaries in film and fiction from an ecological perspective, by considering them ecologies that move from growth machines in crisis towards postgrowth visions. The latter part of chapter 2 includes shorter analyses of three films that illustrate his arguments, such as *Gente en sitios* (Juan Cavestany), *Mercado de futuros* (Mercedes Alvarez), or *Sobre ruedas* (Óscar Clemente).

Chapters 3 and 4 make up the third part of the study. They deal with an in-depth discussion on the consequences of growth-oriented societies, in particular the political ecology of waste and nonhuman agency. The author reminds us again that nothing exists in isolation. He includes a drawing published by Jane Bennet that demonstrates the absurdity of consumerist thinking and further emphasizes the relational ontology that informs his book. The final chapter provides an exhaustive list of examples of disaster fiction that prove "the popularity of post-apocalyptic narratives in all media" (211), followed by a detailed analysis of a selection of films, such as Juan Antonio Bayona's *The Impossible*.

While one sympathizes with the proposal of a decolonial logic, Prádanos's absolute condemnation of growth, including green growth, leaves little space for much needed dialogue to initiate change. One of the major challenges this study confronts is that its focus lies on the postgrowth imaginaries following relatively recent events. This limited timeframe places the author and the works he analyses in the midst of the same ongoing developments he intends to decipher. On one hand, as one could argue, this immediacy may not allow for the needed

critical distance or objectivity. On the other hand, it may be difficult to evaluate a time of transition that thus far only appears to reveal a point of departure, but not yet where it should or will lead us. In addition, the abundance of words such as “today”, “current”, “up-to-date insights” in the introduction and throughout the book imply the risk of quickly becoming outdated.

Nevertheless, the author meets these challenges head-on. Prádanos’s *Postgrowth Imaginaries* is not only of immense value to scholars interested in contemporary Spanish fiction and film. Due to its national and global scope, as well as its impressive theoretical depth, his book exemplifies the convergence of several discourses on modernity currently taking place in the fields of ecocriticism, economics, sociology, and cultural studies. The merits of this book are therefore two-fold. First, the many examples of Spanish postgrowth imaginaries included in the study become perfect cases in point. Their insightful analyses illustrate and explain current theoretical discourses beyond Spain. At the same time, they show the extend of the impact the economic crisis of 2008 has exerted on Spain’s society and culture. Second, Prádanos provides a detailed summary and discussion on current critical theory concerning the Anthropocene and new materialisms in the humanities, while showing their relevance and practicality for our times. As he announces in the introduction, his study was motivated by the fact that the “complex interrelations among Iberian cultural practices, economic paradigms, and ecological processes are vastly undertheorized. This book intends to fill the gap and to provide an innovative and functional theoretical apparatus, articulated around the notion of postgrowth imaginaries [...]” (3). He certainly delivers on this promise.

Scholars of contemporary Hispanic culture will benefit from this compelling study by learning how the economic crisis of 2008 impacted cultural production. The economic crisis was also a global phenomenon and, as such, affected all areas of life across the international community. Rich in theory, exhaustively researched, engaging and well-written, Prádanos’s *Postgrowth Imaginaries* provides a dearth of information while at a same time extending an invitation for further cross-disciplinary dialogue. The book ends on the perhaps somewhat utopian appeal to search “for the conditions of possibility for socially desirable and ecologically viable postgrowth societies to emerge” (238). However, in this time of unrest and uncertainty, imagining utopias may be just what we need.

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