

BOOK REVIEW

Mending the Body/Mind Split through Transdisciplinary Methods

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Shaming Into Brown: Somatic Transactions of Race in Latina/o Literature. By Stephanie Fetta. Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2018. Pp. 240. \$29.95 (paperback and e-book). \$99.95 (hardcover).

Shaming Into Brown advances the study of racism by introducing the *soma* and somatic analysis as a powerful tool to expose how racialization takes place in the body. Stephanie Fetta innovates upon the Greek word for body, *soma*, as an intelligent, responsive precognitive bodily register of subjectivity. Through her study of Latina/o/x literature, she argues that shaming is a systemic social technology executed by bodily communication of and through the soma, resulting in pervasive psycho-social and physical harms. Fetta cogently argues that racist society delivers intersectional racialization by shaming people through non-verbal somatic physical demands that the racializer imposes on its target.

Shaming Into Brown eloquently examines the scenes of racialization in novels, poetry, autobiography, and teatro, studying the moment in which the Latina/o/x body experiences racial shame. Fetta's somatic analysis considers the uncontrolled gestures, postures, and other paralinguistic forms of communication such as crying, laughing, hiccupping, or gasping. This focus on the soma supports reconsideration of race as an abstraction. *Shaming Into Brown* begins with the question—if we know race biologically does not exist, how then do we come to accept the notion of race as social fact? To answer this question

in the Introductory chapter, Fetta combines research methodologies from the social sciences and humanities and identifies four steps for the transaction of racialization. She applies this transdisciplinary method to Chicana/o/x and Latina/o/x creative texts to generate detailed qualitative descriptions of the soma in the dynamic process of racialization.

In four chapters, Fetta analyzes literary portrayals of racial shaming. Chapter two is a close reading of the four senses in Luis Valdez's *No saco nada de la escuela* (1971), Américo Paredes's *George Washington Gómez* (1990), Xyta Maya Murray's *Locas* (1998), Nelly Rosario's *Songs of Water Saints* (2002), and Angelo Parra's *Song of the Coqui* (1994). The multi-sensory force of somatic racialization leads to an exploration of involuntary body expressions in chapter three, which illuminates how Oscar Acosta in *The Autobiography of a Brown Buffalo* (1972) surrenders to a racial ontology that regiments his social interactions. By focusing on the internal somatic expression, such as belching, an unexplored aspect of the novel, Fetta reconsiders the autobiographical genre and finds that Acosta subverts the conventions of autobiography—particularly the speaking protagonist. She argues that Acosta's stomach and emotional illness are the subject of the novel. Chapter four investigates *Lydia* (2008) by Octavio Solís and illuminates how the play dramatizes social foreclosure, the fourth step of racialization. Significantly, Fetta links disability and immigration studies by demonstrating how people with disabilities and immigrants share the somatic expression of social denial. The fifth chapter takes the reader to new territory, and Fetta looks at Andrés Montoya's book of poetry, *The Ice Worker Sings and Other Poems* (1999), for the soma's ability to transform pain into creativity. As such, Fetta supports Chicana/Latina pedagogies for liberation and offers healing insights for readers. It is also the chapter that honors the work of Gloria E. Anzaldúa and builds on her theoretical proposal that the borderlands are tragic spaces from which artistry and creativity flourish.

The contributions to Chicana/Latina studies are direct and indirect. Invoked in the preface, introduction, and conclusion, Fetta's work is deeply informed by Anzaldúa's notion of *conocimiento* and Cherríe Moraga's attention to intersectional, embodied knowledge. The concluding chapter signifies the importance Chicana feminists' rejection of the Cartesian mind/body split, the foundation of the book. These parts of the book also employ personal narrative, a method identified and honored in the pages of this journal, particularly through the editorial leadership of Tiffany Ana López (2005-2011). The writing style is lucid, poetic, and vulnerable, which also likens it to Moraga's.

Shaming Into Brown is an impressively original and creative contribution not just to Fetta's field of Latina/o/x literature and Latina/o/x cultural studies—important enough—but also to sociology, critical race theory, cognitive science, philosophy, body studies, and affect theory. It is a major contribution to the transdisciplinary methods of Chicana/Latina studies. Readers at all levels of learning will benefit from this book. It has tremendous potential for readers of color who may find relief from the new awareness of how they have been shamed and why they feel *ashamed*. It gives readers tools to heal from the many instances of intersectional racial shaming. It is ideal for courses in Chicana/o/x and Latina/o/x literary studies.

