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Book Review: *They Used To Call Us Witches: Chilean Exiles, Culture, and Feminism*

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They Used To Call Us Witches: Chilean Exiles, Culture, and Feminism. By Julie Shayne. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009, 320 pp., \$89.50 (hard cover); \$36.99 (paper); \$35.99 (eBook).

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They Used To Call Us Witches: Chilean Exiles, Culture, and Feminism by Julie Shayne is an informative account of the role Chilean women exiles in Vancouver, British Columbia, played during the military dictatorship. Based on the oral testimony of 24 women exiles who range in age from 27 to 71 and come from diverse social and economic backgrounds, Shayne traces the history of the Chilean Solidarity Movement in Canada from its beginning in the 1970s to its end in 1996.

Shayne's study begins with a historical overview of the social reforms implemented by Salvador Allende's leftist government during 1970-1973 and the impact of the September 11, 1973, military coup and General Augusto Pinochet's military regime on the lives of his political opponents. The 14 testimonial narratives that follow illustrate the many challenges facing the women and their families in their new lives in exile after leaving Chile and settling in Vancouver or other Canadian cities. The subsequent chapters describe the emergence of the transnational solidarity movements initiated in November 1973 and give a detailed description of the early Canadian efforts to provide material and political support to both the anti-Pinochet faction in Chile and the Chilean nationals who were forced to leave the country. Shayne proposes that the Chilean New Song movement—"the most concrete manifestation of the coupling of leftist politics with cultural production"—developed between 1950 and 1975 was instrumental in the ways in which the Chilean exiles would organize in Canada.

Shayne's study of the oral stories of the Chilean women exiles in Vancouver who she interviewed is a pioneering account of the many challenges facing the political refugees that settled in British Columbia as well as the ways in which the families affected by the military regime coped with them. Based on the themes that emerged from the oral interviews, Shayne separates the multiple projects developed by the Chilean community into four main categories: social support systems, political economic tactics, media campaigns, and cultural events and fundraising efforts.

Airport welcome committees, informational booklets, home visits, newsletters, radio programs such as “*América Latina al Día*,” housing cooperatives, hunger strikes, empanada sales, *peñas*, and other musical events served as tools to support the refugees, convey the political ideas of the organizers, inform Canadians of the Chilean political situation, as well as provide therapeutic environments that helped the refugees deal with the trauma of exile.

Shayne’s final chapters include a gendered analysis of her empirical data and the role that feminism played in the female members of the Chilean solidarity movement’s desire to provide political and material support to women activists in Chile and to empower women exiles in Vancouver. Shayne argues that in spite of the political frustration and emotional toll on the organizers, the “Fifth Canadian Conference in Solidarity with Women of Latin America” that took place in Vancouver between February 27 and March 1, 1987, had a crucial impact in future feminist projects such as the *Aquelarre* multinational Latin American collective and *Aquelarre: A Magazine for Latin American Women/Revista de la mujer Latinoamericana*, a publication that was largely the result of the efforts of Chilean members. The testimonial narratives of several members of the editorial committee, the photographic reproductions of *Aquelarre*’s covers and bilingual political cartoons, and the analysis of the journal’s discourse on identity politics, cultural production, human rights, and sociopolitical issues are some of Shayne’s most valuable contributions to the historical archives of Chilean and transnational feminism.

One of the aspects that readers might question is Shayne’s positioning on gender roles and sexual distribution of political labor. Her conclusion that emotions sustained women’s participation in the solidarity movement and that women dominated more “emotional” projects such as providing social services, cooking at *peñas*, and teaching children to sing and dance reveals that her book does not go far enough to properly expand stereotypical conceptions of female activism and contributions to social movements. The absence of information on what Chilean men were doing in the movements and the recollection of one of her Chilean female subjects that “women worked like crazy, making empanadas and doing music like a poor circus! We did it all while the guys were discussing the politics” makes one speculate if the emotional impact of exile socially paralyzed Chilean men, leaving the political platform in women’s hands. The fact that most of the women Shayne interviewed for her study left Chile in the seventies following their husbands and that many later divorced their husbands to achieve the freedom that marriage did not allow or because

of psychological and/or physical abuse suggests that, even if not conscious, “reason” instead of “emotion” was the sustaining factor in the cultural events and productions of the Chilean women who led the Vancouver solidarity movement.

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Making Transnational Feminism: Rural Women, NGO Activists, and Northern Donors in Brazil. By Millie Thayer. New York: Routledge, 2010. 256 pp. \$140 (cloth), \$35.95 (paper), \$35.95 (e-book).

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Thayer’s *Making Transnational Feminism* argues that globalization is not only a function of connections among actors, whether people, businesses, or nations, but also the ways in which people on the ground embrace discourses from the global north and adapt those to their own reality. She shows the ways in which discourse and practice are connected and the “friction” between them, and how feminist movements engage and form what she calls feminist “counterpublic” spaces. Given that one of the goals of feminist movements is to collaborate across borders, feminist movements spend a lot of time and effort interacting with each other transnationally. There is little scholarship, however, about how feminist discourses actually travel and change in this process of collaboration. Millie Thayer’s excellent ethnographic work shows in detail how this happens and discusses what the future holds for this process. Thayer starts from grassroots organizations in rural and urban Brazil and works her way up, disentangling the threads of collaboration and tension between feminists. Thayer draws on a seemingly isolated case in Brazil, showing with precision how feminists in Brazil are connected to larger, global flows.

Thayer poses critical questions such as: How do discourses travel, who are the agents, and what are the particular mechanisms of discursive travel and transformation? Who are the economic and political actors implicated in this process? Do their alliances mirror or challenge the movements of global capital and dominant political and cultural forces? In order to address these questions, *Making Transnational Feminism* shows how links among women’s movements across regional, national, and international levels, as well other differences, are enacted. Using data from a year