



Mexico's Ruins: Juan Garcia Ponce and the Writing of Modernity (SUNY series in Latin American and Iberian Thought and Culture)

Raul Rodriguez-Hernandez

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Explores the trope of modernity in García Ponce's writings.

At face value, the concept of modernity seems to reference a stream of social and historical traffic headed down a utopian one-way street named “progress.” Mexico’s Ruins examines modernity in twentieth-century Mexican culture as a much more ambiguous concept, arguing that such a single-minded notion is inadequate to comprehend the complexity of modern Mexico’s national projects and their reception by the nation’s citizenry. Instead, through the trope of modernity as ruin, author Raúl Rodríguez-Hernández explores the dilemma presented by the etymology of “ruins”: a simultaneous falling down and rising up, a confluence of opposing forces at work on the skyline of the metropolis since 1968. He focuses on artists and writers of the generación de medio siglo, like Juan García Ponce, and envisions both the tales of modernity and their storytellers in a new light. The arts, literature, and architecture of twentieth-century Mexico are all examined in this cross-cultural and interdisciplinary book.

“...Rodríguez-Hernández offers an intriguing interpretation of [García Ponce’s] writing ... This well-researched work incorporates historical and literary references, Freudian precepts, and the plastic arts (Mexican murals, photos, monuments).” — CHOICE

“Rodríguez-Hernández accomplishes what he describes in García Ponce’s fiction: he opens readers to new connections, moving them beyond a Manichaeian choice of modernity versus ruin, toward a flexible reading of the mobility and inter-referential nature of both. Rodríguez-Hernández teaches his readers the pleasure and necessity of reading ruins, whether archeological, cultural, political, or literary. The debris of the past is ever-present.” — Carol Clark D’Lugo, *The Fragmented Novel in Mexico: The Politics of Form*

Raúl Rodríguez-Hernández is Associate Professor of Spanish and Comparative Literature at the University of Rochester.

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