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Hemispheric Poetics: raúlsalinas, César Vallejo, and the Convergence of Xicanx and Vanguardia Poetry

Santiago Vidales

This essay places two important poets of the Americas in conversation. I argue that the poetry of raúlsalinas and César Vallejo presents an array of poetic convergences that can be studied and critiqued to contribute to an interdisciplinary and intersectional approach to hemispheric studies. Salinas, a Xicanx poet, and Vallejo, a Peruvian writer, share deep artistic, political, and ideological sensibilities. In studying their poetry from a critical convergence approach we may interpret their works in ways that open up their oft hermetic language to reveal the deeper political contestations and autobiographical accounts that are contained in their verses.

Salinas' carceral poetry has been studied under the framework of Xicanx Pinto culture. Pintos are Xicanx people who are or have been incarcerated. This interpretative approach is key in understanding the specific codes that Pintos use and how this discourse is woven into Salinas' poetry. The concept of *concientización*, political awakening, is a key feature that emerges from the scholarship on Pinto poetry. In turn, the concept of *concientización* arises from a carceral (re)education that will be a useful resource in studying Vallejo who, while incarcerated, wrote and radically rewrote his poetic masterwork, *Trilce*.

Vallejo is considered one of the most important and influential poets of the Spanish language. His poetry is exemplary of la vanguardia poética, an artistic movement that seeks to reinvent language to express the homegrown sensibilities and ideologies of the poet's cultural and political context. La vanguardia's

political commitment and lyrical originality resonate deeply with Salinas' work and open up a new and informative way of reading his work. A hemispheric convergence approach to reading these poets contributes to a mutual interdisciplinary understanding. My aim is not to argue for the primacy of one poetic tradition over the other, instead it is to present how independently developed poetic voices share similar characteristics that speak to their shared political orientations and how these orientations present themselves through poetry.

Xicanx poetry and raúlsalinas: appreciation and incomprehensibility

My entry point into Xicanx poetry occurred a few years back when my advisor, Luis Marentes, emailed me a video of a poetry reading by raúlsalinas¹ at the 1973 Festival Flor y Canto in Southern California. The first poem that Salinas performs "Homenaje al Pachuco: Mirrored Reflections," has mesmerized me to this day. I studied Latin American and Golden Age poetry for several years, and yet, I had never felt such strong appreciation and incomprehensibility by a work of art. This poem, specifically, and much of his poetry is multilingual, sonically expressive, lyrically inventive and hermetic in ways that make the comprehension and interpretation of his poetry a challenge for those of us who do not have fluency in Xicanx discourse (both literary and linguistic). But the power of Salinas' voice and his ability to channel history and myth captured my attention and amazement beyond my inability to access the text.

Salinas was born in San Antonio in 1934. He grew up in the Black and Xicanx working class neighborhoods of Austin before leaving for Northern California to work in the fields. As many young people of color in this country, his contact with the criminal justice system would have long lasting and painful implications. From 1957 until his final release in 1972, Salinas served time mostly

¹ Salinas went by many names. His nicknames Roy and Tapón are from his youth. He chose the pen name raúlsalinas, inspired by ee cummings when he started publishing his work. He also went by Autumn Sun, his Indigenous name. In the poem 'On Being/Becoming' he writes, "Naming ceremonies/Autumn Sun/Speak to many nations/ for red Nations"(Salinas *Indio Trails* 5). In his role as 'ambassador' for Indigenous struggles in North America, Salinas traveled the world bringing awareness to Indigenous resistances, advocating for political prisoners, and creating networks of support. His poetry maps his travels from his years of incarceration to his trips to Cuba, Nicaragua, and Mexico.

for drug offenses in four penitentiaries: Soledad, Huntsville, Leavenworth, and Marion.

These long years of incarceration were deeply scarring but also presented themselves as an opportunity for intellectual, political and artistic growth. The years spent incarcerated offered Salinas a radical education informed by the people he met and the relationships he fostered. It is in this context that his *concientización*, or political awakening, takes root. In prison he met Puerto Rican Nationalists such as Rafael Cancel Miranda and Óscar Collazo. These contacts gave Salinas the tools to construct his political consciousness. As he writes: “I was never to be the same after meeting these potentially focused men committed to liberation and justice” (Salinas *Memoir* 66). Similarly, he met other political prisoners such as Black Panthers and members of the American Indian Movement. These relationships informed his views on revolutionary politics and anti-colonial struggles. His prison experiences and his radical education became the groundwork for his most celebrated poetry book: *Un Trip Through the Mind Jail y Otras Excursions* (Editorial Pocho-Che: 1980; Arte Público Press: 1999).

In “Homenaje al Pachuco,” these biographical experiences are translated into a complex and nuanced layering of lyricism. Salinas’ poetry masterfully navigates the clarity needed to make a radical political contestation and the hermetic nature of a culturally specific art form. An example of this nuanced and layered poetics can be read and heard in the concluding verses to “Homenaje al Pachuco” (Salinas *Un Trip* 104):

Y le peleamos la causa al gringo
that we are Not ahistorical.
Yet no mention
que por esta pinche vida vas
SUFRIENDO
Dibujos-TONANTZÍN Y HUITZILOPOCHTLI-grabados
tatuados en tu piel bronceada
con las
Ardientes Agujas
de esta gacha sociedad;
que no sabe llorar
por niños hambrientos o migrantes sin trabajo.
Much less give a damn, a good god-damn

about
street corner born,
forlorn fugitives
of the total jail
Hail Pachuco!

The first challenge that this poem offers is unpacking the multiple layers of language that are expressed in its verses. As Gloria Anzaldúa explains:

Chicano Spanish sprang out of the Chicanos' need to identify ourselves as a distinct people. We needed a language with which we could communicate with ourselves, a secret language. For some of us, language is a homeland closer than the Southwest...and because we are a complex, heterogeneous people, we speak many languages. Some of the languages we speak:

- Standard English
- Working class and slang English
- Standard Spanish
- Standard Mexican Spanish
- North Mexican Spanish dialect
- Chicano Spanish (Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California have regional variations)
- Tex-Mex
- *Pachuco* (called *caló*) (77).

The multiplicity and complexity of Xicanx discourse is evident in the verses written by Salinas. However, given that this poem was written to be performed, it is important to watch his performance and appreciate Salinas' specific accent, intonation, and cadence². Through an overview of his written and spoken poetry, it is possible to read and hear the multiple languages that Anzaldúa references even though the work of art may remain shrouded to linguistic and literary outsiders. Furthermore, the poetry of Salinas also expands the catalog of

² USC Digital Library, 'Raúl R. Salinas reads from his work, 1973':
<http://digitallibrary.usc.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/p15799coll79/id/189/rec/6>

languages that Anzaldúa describes; we would be well served by adding African American Vernacular English to the list as well as Pinto discourse. Pintos being Xicanx people who are or have been incarcerated. Salinas identified as and referenced Pinto culture in his prison writings³. Knowing the range of languages that are present in Salinas' poetry is important because it provides the reader with a necessary context to interpret the text. However, if the reader does not know at least some of the languages in Anzaldúa's catalog, Salinas' verses will remain shrouded in their culturally specific lyricism.

"Homenaje al Pachuco" is exemplary of Salinas poetics. In the first two verses that are cited above (Y le peleamos la causa al gringo/that we are Not ahistorical) we see the poet's engagement with history and his commitment to confronting white supremacist⁴ erasure of Xicanx history. His reference to the "gringo" can be understood as his poetic avatar for white supremacy, colonialism, and capitalism. As Salinas' biography makes clear, the poet understood how school segregation and lack of access enforced the myths and stereotypes perpetuated by white supremacist ideologies that frame Black people, Indigenous people, and Xicanx people as lacking history, culture, and civilization.

This poem responds to these ideologies of erasure and marginalization by reframing Xicanx history and tracing its roots to Tonantzín (an Aztec Mother Goddess) and Huitzilopochtli (an Aztec deity of war). Earlier in the poem, Salinas references the foundational myth of the Movimiento Chicano, Aztlán. The poet laments how many of his fellow *carnales*, *pachucos*, and *vatos locos* remain incarcerated "en las cárceles de Aztlán". The explicit mention of Aztlán and of the two Aztec deities signals the poet's commitment to combating stereotypes about

³ Within Xicanx colloquialisms Pintos and Pintas are a bilingual play on the Spanish word *penitencia* (penitence). Pintos and Pintas are thus people who have spent time locked up in penitentiaries. The second play on words traces the word Pinto and Pinta to the Spanish word *Pintao* (*Estar pintado*--to be painted, in this case tattooed). Pinto and Pinta subculture comes out of the lived experiences of incarcerated Xicanx people. For a more complex treatment of Pinto culture see: "Tattoos, Abjection, and the Political Unconscious: Toward a Semiotics of the Pinto Visual Vernacular" (Olguin, 166).

⁴ "Throughout American history, the subordination of Blacks [and therefore all other racialized people] was rationalized by a series of stereotypes and beliefs that made their condition logical and natural. Historically, white supremacy has been premised upon various political, scientific, and religious theories, each of which relies on racial characterizations and stereotypes about Blacks that have coalesced into an extensive legitimating ideology" (Crenshaw 1370-71).

Xicanx lack of history by affirming a glorious and powerful indigenous lineage that can be traced through the Aztec empire to the earliest inhabitants of Aztlán⁵ (i.e. the American Southwest).

The political and poetic contestation “we are Not ahistorical” is buttressed by the way the poem links Xicanx history to the ancestral pantheon of the Aztecs. However, the way political contestation, affirmation of history, and connection to an ancestral past is presented is quintessential Salinas. The poem states that the two Aztec deities are tattooed on brown skin; the poet thus expands the textual terrain of the poem and incorporates the complexities of Xicanx Pinto tattoo culture within his poetics. In other poems, Salinas includes his own tattoos in his poetry thus expanding his poetry over multiple bodies. Unfortunately, this essay’s brevity does not allow for a full treatment of such a complex and transgressive artistic intervention.

As a contestation of white supremacist ideologies Salinas deploys the multiplicity and complexity of Xicanx languages that Anzaldúa catalogs. Furthermore, within Anzaldúa’s discursive matrix we can see that the “secret language” of Xicanx people is expressed in the hermetic Pinto context from which Salinas’ early work emanates. Pérez-Torres speaks to the hermetic nature of Xicanx poetics when he states:

literary texts reconstruct a voice, portray a community, enact a union between linguistically apt readers. This does not mean that any reader proficient in Spanish immediately gains access to interlingual texts. The use of *caló*, the re-creation of regional dialects, the specificity of speech-acts that occur within the borderlands of Chicano social networks all are

⁵ “Within a Chicana/o context, Aztlán as the mythic Aztec homeland has served as a metaphor for connection and unity. During the nearly thirty years of its modern incarnation, Aztlán has come to represent a nationalist homeland, the name and place that will at some future point be the national home of a Chicano people reclaiming their territorial rights” (Pérez-Torres ‘Refiguring Aztlán’ 171). After 30 years of Aztlán as a metaphor it has also come under criticism for erasing the territory, the lives, and histories of Indigenous communities living in the Southwest. However, Aztlán as a metaphor has the potential for regeneration and redemption: as a metaphor it can honor the historic and political importance of Aztlán within the Movimiento and acknowledge the struggles of current Indigenous people that live in the Southwest. For a more complex treatment of the current debates surrounding Aztlán and Xicanx indigeneity see: [‘Beyond Aztlán: Reflections on the Chicano Student Movement’](#).

the matrices that form the hermeneutic grids of a text, which inflect the range of Chicano poetic expression. Familiarity with and recognition of speech patterns forms one of the draws and requirements of comprehension within Chicano poetic discourse (Pérez-Torres 215).

It has taken me years of reading Xicanx poetry, studying Salinas' work, and learning about Xicanx history to fully grasp the complexities and nuances that are expressed in poems like "Homenaje al Pachuco". As my understanding of Xicanx language expands and I have a better grasp of the poetic and political contexts that Salinas navigates, my appreciation for his work only grew even though the hermetic nature of his Pinto discourse remains inaccessible in many ways. However, the incomprehensibility and inaccessibility of his hermetic nature also reminded me of the Latin American poetic traditions that I had studied previously.

Salinas and la vanguardia: independent developments, shared characteristics:

The strongest and clearest connection I can make between Salinas and the Latin American poetic tradition is with César Vallejo. Vallejo (Peru, 1892-France, 1938) is widely considered one of the most important and influential avant-garde poets of the twentieth century. As Efrain Kristal states, "Vallejo's poetry stretched the Spanish language beyond grammar and lexicon into compelling dissonances and asymmetries, unprecedented and unsurpassed in the history of Hispanic poetry" (Kristal "Introduction" 1). Before placing Vallejo and Salinas in conversation with the aim of framing such a comparative criticism within a hemispheric vanguardia, it will be useful to define avant-garde poetry as seen in the Latin American context.

For such a definition, I turn to Raúl Bueno and his article, "Apuntes sobre el lenguaje de la vanguardia poética hispanoamericana." La vanguardia is traditionally understood as a response to the Latin American modernismo of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the avantgarde aesthetics coming out of Europe in the early twentieth century. Bueno argues that in its poetic manifestation, la vanguardia poética is more than the addition of neologism and new metaphors. What makes la vanguardia distinct from modernismo, its predecessor, and the European avant-garde is its new and homegrown sensibility. Similarly, the innovation of la vanguardia goes beyond original forms of

expression. What is truly at stake is the creation of a new poetic language that is committed to the development of an ideological project. La vanguardia poética thus corresponds to a new ideology. The poetic language that the vanguardia creates is anchored in an ideology that breaks with our colonial past and seeks to create a poetic language that expresses the revolutionary spirit of a new generation of artists, thinkers, and intellectuals. La poesía de vanguardia is seen as a tool to understand ourselves and our own realities and not merely to replicate poetic models coming from abroad (Bueno 35-7). To underline the homegrown sensibility and revolutionary commitment of la vanguardia poética, Efrain Kristal defines Vallejo's poetry as densely hermetic because he sought to challenge the "logos of Western culture" by creating a "window into the indigenous soul of the Andean peoples" (Kristal "Introduction" 1).

By the very heterogeneous nature of la vanguardia, it is not easy (or useful) to find a sole definition for such a wide ranging ideological and poetic project. As a historical process, la vanguardia responds to modernismo and to avantgarde movements in Europe. As an aesthetic manifestation of revolutionary politics, it is committed to a decolonial framework that centers marginalized populations. As already mentioned, Vallejo is a poeta vanguardista for his transgressive use of language as well as his inclusion of indigenous vocabulary and epistemologies. La vanguardia has feminist⁶ openings that can be seen in the works of Magda Portal (Peruvian 1900-1989) and to a lesser degree in Gabriela Mistral (Chilean 1889-1957). In its Caribbean iteration, la vanguardia's clearest representative is Nicolás Guillén (Cuban 1902-1989) who infused Spanish poetry with the lyricism of the African Diaspora⁷. La vanguardia's lasting impact and reach can also be seen in contemporary urban Mapuche poetry such as the work

⁶ For a more nuanced study of feminism and la vanguardia see Mihai Grünfeld's 'Voces femeninas de la vanguardia: El compromiso de Magda Porta' and Karen Peña's 'Hecate's Delightful Revenge or Gabriela Mistral's "Sonetos-lésbicos:" Refashioning Amorous Discourse in Los sonetos de la muerte (1914).

⁷ For a more nuanced study of negritude within the vanguardia see Arturo Pérez Pisonero's "Nicolás Guillén y la intrahistoria cubana."

Y wacha,
 dizque you sprang from EL CHUCO,
 Boogie'd into LOS
 & found
 the battleground
 for US Naval wars;
 y es acá.
 Órale, simón que sí.

Again, the multiple voices that Salinas negotiates in these stanzas is impressive and only rendered more expressive and beautiful when we hear his performance. In reading the poem and experiencing the performance we can point out the multiplicity of personas that Salinas engages. Given that this poem is, and much of Salinas' poetry is autobiographical, each of these stanzas encapsulates a different moment of Salinas' life and personality.

The borderland discourse, the "secret language" that Anzaldúa references, is made explicit in verses such as "Ese loco.../curate" and "Órale, simón que sí." These verses are spoken in Spanish but come out of the hybrid, multilingual cultural context of his Xicanx youth in Texas and California. The verses "Dig on what/on what them dudes are saying" is a clear echo of African American Vernacular English; a language that Salinas' would have heard and spoken in his Austin barrios. We again see the presentation of racist tropes that frame Xicanx people as "non-goal oriented/ alienated being/ sufriendo una 'identity crisis,'" which are rendered vacuous by the poet's sense of humor: "¡Ja-ja, que lucas!".

Even though these verses seem at first glance mostly a rehearsal of the poet's range of personas, sonic expressivity, and ridiculing of stereotypes; the poem also hides a historical account. When we "translate" "Y wacha,/ dizque you sprang from EL CHUCO,/ Boogie'd into LOS/ & found/ the battleground/ for US Naval wars;" I interpret these verses as an account of the so-called Zoot Suit riots in Los Angeles ("Boogie'd into LOS", LOS being a colloquialism for Los Angeles) of June 1943 in which white civilians and U.S. military personnel attacked young pachucos ("the battle ground/ for US Naval wars" refers to the violence perpetuated by U.S. servicemembers) in a deliberate weeklong racist and anti-Mexican reign of violence (Grisworld del Castillo 367-8). As the reader of Xicanx poetry develops their understanding of Xicanx language and history, these kinds of political contestations and historical accounts come to light where we

previously may have only appreciated the polyphonic expressivity of Salinas' lyricism.

Vallejo as a Pinto: Xicanx approaches to vanguardia poems:

In a similar way, Vallejo's vanguardista poems also hide historical accounts in poems that at first glance appear to be almost unintelligible. *Trilce*, published in 1922, was Vallejo's second book of poems and was received by critics with few accolades. Efrain Kristal explains that the leading critics of his day panned *Trilce* as "incomprehensible and outlandish" (Kristal, "Introduction" 12). Vallejo's style broke with tradition, ignored all conventions, and challenged the very fabric of language. His work was considered "an affront to good taste" (12). In the opening verses of "Trilce I", we can immediately notice the complexity of Vallejo's poetics and understand the confusion of the critics⁹:

Quién hace tanta bulla y ni deja
Testar las islas que van quedando.

Un poco más de consideración
en cuanto será tarde, temprano,
y se aquilatará mejor
el guano, la simple calabrina tesórea
que brinda sin querer,
en el insular corazón,
salobre alcatraz, a cada hialóidea
grupada.

Who's making all that racket, and not even letting
the islands that linger make a will.

A little more consideration
As it will be late, early,
And easier to assay

⁹ I use Clayton Eshelman's bilingual edition of his *The Complete Poetry César Vallejo*. This book is an incredible resource that brings together all of Vallejo's published poetry and translates them into English with great accuracy.

The guano, the simple fecapital ponk
A brackish gannet
Toasts unintentionally,
In the peninsular heart, to each hyaloid
Squall.

In this excerpt of “Trilce I,” we can read and hear the complexities of Vallejo’s *poesía de vanguardia* that hides a “deep structure” under an “opaque surface” (Eshelman, “A Translational Understanding of Trilce #I” 157). The opacity of such works can be seen in Vallejo’s obscure expression, “la simple calabrina tesórea” which Eshelman translates as “the simple fecapital ponk”. Eshelman explains that *calabrina* is a Spanish archaism for stench, which thus necessitates the English archaism *ponk*. *Tesórea* is an example of Vallejo’s many subtle neologisms in which the word *tesoro* (treasure) borrows its new suffix from *estercórea*, meaning excrement. Like in Salinas’ poetry, we have to navigate through the layers of language, in this case neologisms and archaic terms, to find the deeper meaning of Vallejo’s verses.

“Trilce I” seems to be at first glance a commentary on excrement. But equipped with a better understanding of Vallejo’s biography and his political engagement, the poem reveals itself to be a contestation of how prisoners are treated by their guards. Vallejo was imprisoned from November 1920 to February 1921 for having been involved in the social unrest and protests that had taken place earlier that year in Trujillo. The guards of the prison would take the inmates out to the latrines four times a day and instead of respecting their privacy, they would mock them, shout at them, and demand that they hurry up (Eshelman, “A Translational Understanding of Trilce #I” 154). In a similar way as Salinas and other Pintos, the time behind bars granted Vallejo the opportunity to reflect on life and his place in society. While in prison, he wrote and radically rewrote a significant part of the poems that would become *Trilce* (154). With an understanding of Vallejo’s complex language and his biography, we can see that beyond the opaque surface of his poetics, the deep structure of his verses contain a transgressive centering of prisoners, some of the most marginalized people in any society.

We can thus “translate” the opening verses of “Trilce I” “Quién hace tanta bulla y ni deja/ Testar las islas que van quedando” (Who’s making all that racket, and not even letting/ the islands that linger make a will) as a rhetorical question

contesting the guards' disrespect towards the inmates in not allowing them the dignity of privacy while going to the bathroom. Neither the inmates nor their turds ("the islands that linger") are allowed to speak their truths ("make a will"), thus rendering the inmates objects of the guards' disrespect. This poem hides within it an autobiographical account in which the humiliation of Vallejo the inmate becomes the inspiration for his radical reimagining of the Spanish poetic language. His brilliance as a poet is not simply his transgressive use of language but the way in which he hides his political contestation of the treatment of inmates within his carceral verses. This interpretation would only have been possible by bringing Salinas' Pinto *concientización* into this new Latin American context. Furthermore, in "Trilce L," Vallejo once again writes of his carceral experience:

El cancerbero cuatro veces
al día maneja su candado, abriéndonos
cerrándonos los esternones, en guiños
que entendemos perfectamente.

Cerberus four times
a day wields his padlock, opening
closing our breastbones, with winks
we understand perfectly.

The four times the guard¹⁰ opens the doors for the inmates underscores the biographical information Eshelman notes in his reading of "Trilce I". From a Xicanx perspective, Vallejo's prison poems express a Pinto sensibility. This Pinto sensibility is present in the political awakening, or *concientización*, that inmates undergo in prison. This *concientización*, which was so powerful in Salinas' prison years, makes the inmate aware of their own carceral marginalization and the wider interlocking systems of oppression that sent them to prison in the first place (Olguín 167). The process of *concientización* creates bonds of solidarity and forms networks of radical (re)education. In the cases of Salinas and Vallejo the process of *concientización* also inspired them to write a poetry that is deeply committed to social justice but expresses its political message in the register of

¹⁰ Cerberus being the three-headed dog that guards against any soul escaping from the Greek Underworld.

the vanguardia poética which may hide a powerful ideological and autobiographical message underneath the hermetic nature of their layered and nuanced poetic discourse.

Hemispheric poetic convergences: diverse struggles, mutual desires:

When placed in conversation, Salinas and Vallejo present us with the opportunity to observe the cultural and literary convergences that scholars working within Hemispheric studies write about. The aim of a hemispheric approach to Xicanx and Latin American poetry is to “construct intellectual and linguistic bridges between American studies and Latin American studies”(Luis-Brown 61). David Luis-Brown emphasizes the possibility of creating a “robust hemispheric studies field” that may change institutions of higher learning by focusing them on a more holistic approach in which multilingual pedagogies and vibrant cultural exchanges are centered and amplified. My research has this end in sight, to create a space of poetic convergence where the artistic sensibility and political ideology of Xicanx poetry and la poesía de vanguardia may be placed in conversation with the aim of understanding how our hemispheric political consciousness creates a new poetic language that expresses our diverse struggles and our mutual desire for justice and liberation.

My use of the term convergence is intentional for I do not seek to argue for the inclusion of Salinas within the canon of la vanguardia. I also do not aim to argue that Xicanx literature is merely an extension of Latin American literature. I do not argue for the primacy of one over the other; I am also not looking for a cause and effect. The term convergence operates by observing the way independently developed poetics share similar characteristics that speak to the sensibility, ideology, and solidarity of poets like Salinas and Vallejo. In studying the convergences that are created by placing such poets in conversation, we can build the fields of study where multilingualism and cultural exchanges are the norm. Languages are always already in constant evolution. Cultures are always already informing one another. It is thus the critic’s responsibility to create scholarly approaches that can account for the multiplicity of ways that the people in our hemisphere have produced politically conscious art grounded in their lived experiences.

With this use of a convergence approach to hemispheric poetics, we can read and interpret Salinas’ Xicanx poetry with the terminology of la vanguardia. The opaque and hermetic nature of his discourse thus opens itself up to a clearer

understanding of the deep structures that speaks to his political contestations and autobiographic accounts. A new approach to his work grants us a new understanding of it and hopefully a wider audience that will appreciate the power and beauty of his lyricism. In turn, a convergence approach also equips us to read Vallejo with the vocabulary of the Xicanx Pinto experience. His time in prison clearly had an impact in his work. Eshelman states that *Trilce* was radically reconceived while in jail. The concientización of Vallejo is evident in his carceral poems. This creates an opening to reevaluate his literary work grounded in a critique that centers his carceral influences and his political radicalization. These kinds of research questions and future lines of study are only now being explored because our disciplines are opening themselves to these critical approaches.

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