Off the Shelf #22: Somos Aquí: Writings on LGBT Latino and Hispanic Identities and Cultures

by Rob Ridinger

The diversity of the contemporary LGBT community is often flavored with cultural perspectives drawn from an array of cultures from across the world which are accessible through both print and electronic forms. One of the most complex and colorful voices of this multicultural pool is that rooted in the body of works produced by and about the many Hispanic and Latino LGBT activists, writers, artists and columnists whose creations and influence may not be as familiar as they merit. Even the facts that many of the patrons at the Stonewall Inn who participated in the incident that sparked the gay liberation movement were Puerto Rican and that the bar patron population was predominantly people of color are less often cited in LGBT historical writings.

Tracing the published activist history of the Hispanic thread of the evolving U.S. LGBT community is somewhat problematic, due in part to the fact that many of the publications produced by and for this population in the first decade after the beginnings of the gay liberation movement at the Stonewall demonstrations in 1969 took the form of newsletters created by local organizations which had limited circulation and often existed for only a few years. They include *Afuera* (1972) in New York City, the *Bulletin* from the Comité Homosexual Latinoamericano (whose first issue appeared in New York in June 1978) and Houston’s quarterly *Paz y Liberacion*, which began publishing in May 1979. The 1980s saw a group of new publications in cities as diverse as Los Angeles (*Unidad*, 1982), Denver (*Sin Fronteras*, 1985), Houston (*Noticias del Gay Hispanic Caucus*, 1985-1990) and San Francisco (*Sin mascaras*). In 1987, at the National March for Lesbian and Gay Rights in Washington, D.C., *el Primer Encuentro de Gais y Lesbianas Latinas* was held, out of which came the National Latino/a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Organization (LLEGÓ), although the
new organization did not begin publishing a regular periodical until 1994, *Aquí llego*. The 1990s saw an expansion of this genre of periodicals—joining *Aquí llego* were *De ambiente: revista latina bisexual, lesbica y gay de Los Angeles*, *La Gente Unida Newsletter* from Denver, *La entrevista: newsletter of Latinos en Acción* from Atlanta, *A la brava* from San Francisco, a second Los Angeles title, *Revista adelante*, and Chicago’s *En la vida*, which lasted until the end of 2003 and merged with another publication, *Black Lines*, to create a new title, *Identity*, which continued to provide coverage of the city’s LGBT Latino community.

The lack of explicit coverage of the situation of Latino LGBT people in the first fifteen years of *The Advocate* (1967-1982) is notable, despite the expansion and the growth during those years of substantial Hispanic communities across the United States in cities and regions outside their historically associated geographic locations. These latter include the Puerto Rican community of New York City and the Hispanic communities and neighborhoods of California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and south Florida. *The Advocate* did however publish interviews with El Paso author John Rechy in 1977, 1978 and 1979. Rechy was arguably the most prominent Hispanic writer dealing with LGBT themes in the years immediately preceding Stonewall, beginning with his 1963 novel *City of Night* and continuing with the 1967 novel *Numbers*. *City of Night* told the story of a young Mexican American man traveling across America and his various same-sex encounters, while *Numbers* relates the story of an aging Johnny Rio’s journey back to Los Angeles in a search to reaffirm his desirability to other men. The significance of Rechy’s work was formally recognized in October 2013 when the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center sponsored a program celebrating “A Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration of John Rechy’s ‘City of Night’” at which he spoke.

The organizations created in the 1970s by gay and lesbian Hispanics such as San Francisco’s
Gay Latino Alliance brought additional issues of oppression related to race and class (such as equal access to educational opportunities and voting rights) to the more general civil rights agenda of the gay liberation movement. They also sought to fill the gap left by the relative absence of sexuality-based issues from the priorities of more mainstream activist groups such as the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund. John Rechy also continued to address homosexuality in his writing, as evidenced by his 1977 work *The Sexual Outlaw: a documentary: a non-fiction account, with commentaries, of three days and nights in the sexual underground*. Other writers active in the 1970s were the poet Miguel Algarin (who with other artists including playwright Miguel Pinero founded the Nuyorican Poets Cafe in 1980) and Manuel Ramos Otero, the most important openly gay writer of Puerto Rico writing in Spanish whose novels and stories were often set in the Hispanic community of New York City.

The 1980s saw the emergence of both the AIDS pandemic and the creation of organizations aimed at providing effective community-based care and safe sex education to Hispanic men, who were one of the groups most heavily impacted early on by the new disease. A notable example of these organizations is Gay and Lesbian Latinos Unidos de Los Angeles, whose agenda also included poverty issues. In 1986, the International Lesbian and Gay People of Color Conference was held in Los Angeles, and as part of the event the Latino caucus met to discuss creating a national organization focused on the LGBT Latino community. Discussion continued into 1987 at the Lesbian and Gay March on Washington at *el Primer Encuentro de Gais y Lesbianas Latinas*, resulting in the formation of the National Latino/a Lesbian and Gay Organization (more familiarly known by its acronym LLEGO). Taking as its constituencies the gay and lesbian Latino communities in both the United States mainland and on Puerto Rico, it emphasized organizing these communities from local to national levels to address health, political and social issues with homophobia and sexism noted as specific concerns. It promoted these goals through sponsoring forums to help identify resources and to provide a supportive atmosphere for effective networking. The 1999 forum held in San Diego, California illustrates the international connections established by LLEGO, with more than twenty Caribbean and Latin American nations represented in the discussions. The papers of the LLEGO are held at the University of Texas libraries with an online finding aid available at [http://www.lib.utexas.edu/taro/utlac/00273/00273-P.html](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/taro/utlac/00273/00273-P.html).

Paralleling the growth of LGBT political and social organizing, the 1980s also saw the publication of significant works in Latina feminist literature which addressed questions of homophobia and lesbian identity. The first edition of the groundbreaking anthology *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings By Radical Women of Color* edited by writers Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherrie Moraga appeared from Persephone Press in 1981, and contained a section on “
Between the Lines: On Culture, Class and Homophobia.” It would subsequently be reprinted in 1983, 1988, 2001, 2002 and 2015. Anzaldua and Moraga would continue creating distinct and powerful poetry, stories and fiction with a strong Latina voice during the 1990s, which decade witnessed an explosion of Hispanic LGBT writing by clear new voices.

In 1987, the collection of essays Borderlands/la Frontera by Gloria Anzaldua appeared and over the next quarter century would exert a defining influence on the discussions of marginalized populations of color and the reclamation of Chicana feminisms and lesbian identity. In the text (a powerful mixture of Spanish, English and Nahuatl) poetry, essay, and autobiographical voices of both the lands and peoples of the borderlands are layered and intermingled. The work opens with a preface in which the author presents her vision of the natures of *la frontera*:

*The actual physical borderland that I’m dealing with in this book is the Texas-U.S.Southwest- Mexican border. The psychological borderlands, the sexual borderlands and the spiritual borderlands are not particular to the Southwest. In fact, the Borderlands are physically present wherever two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle and upper classes touch, where the space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy.*

(Anzaldua, Preface to the First Edition: 19)

It would be issued in successive editions in 1999, 2007 and 2012, the latter a 25th anniversary edition.

The 1990s opened with the publication in 1991 of the anthology *Chicana Lesbians: the girls our mothers warned us about* edited by Carla Trujillo from Berkeley’s Third Woman Press. Its bilingual contents take different literary forms, chiefly essays, short stories/memoirs, and poems. In the introduction, the editor describes the emotional and cultural dialogue each woman engages with in her own fashion:

“Chicana lesbians…take on the sacred contexts of religion and family…both simultaneously presenting a means of love, understanding and support, while stressing conformity and, ultimately, control. For our own survival, Chicana lesbians must continuously embark on the creation or modification of our spirituality and familia, usually implying alteration of the traditional, since these institutions by their very nature, profess to be antithetical to the Chicana lesbian experience.

(Trujillo 1991: x)

A second notable 1991 was David William Foster’s *Gay and Lesbian Themes in Latin American Writing* from the University of Texas Press. The author noted in his introduction that “the contemporary Latin American novel finds itself dealing with broad social and personal concerns, and it would be surprising if there were no appearance of lesbian and gay
characters and their experiences…What is surprising is the virtual lack of bibliography on the topic…” (Foster 1991 : 1) Foster’s volume examines a selection of works by a wide range of familiar and lesser-known authors including Adolfo Caminha, Luis Zapata, Aguinaldo Silva and Cassandra Rios.

1993 was notable for the publication of a memoir by the prominent Cuban novelist and poet Reinaldo Arenas, Before The Fall, continuing the autobiographical tradition among Hispanic gay men begun three decades earlier by John Rechy. And a second major collection of Latina lesbian cultural voices was published in New York City in 1994 by the Latina Lesbian History Project. In Compañeras : Latina lesbians : an anthology, forty-seven women from ten nations present their vision of being lesbian and Latina in poems, essays, oral histories, artwork and short stories. Countries represented are Chile, Nicaragua, Colombia, Brazil, Argentina, Cuba, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, and Puerto Rico. The opening preface by editor Juanita Ramos relates the origin of the idea of this book in a lesbian collective in New York she helped to found, and describes the search for information on or created by Latina lesbians at the Lesbian Herstory Archives:

“Members of the Colectiva …visited the Lesbian Herstory Archives in New York City to research women’s/publications. Through this research we hoped to obtain the names of Latina lesbians who might contribute material as well as do outreach for the book. Although the Lesbian Herstory Archives has always been very supportive of this project, the journals and books we researched confirmed what we already suspected: only a handful of Latina lesbians had ever been included in any of these publications. Our exclusion hurt. It was as if we had never formed part of the women’s/lesbian community in this country or in our countries of origin. It was as if we had never existed.” (Companeras xv)

The mid-1990s also saw the addition to the literature of the first books by the Chicago-based Cuban-American author Achy Obejas, whose work ranges from poetry to novels and newspaper columns for both the mainstream and LGBT news media. Beginning in 1994 with the collection We Came All The Way from Cuba So You Could Dress Like This? : Stories from Cleis Press, her next work appeared in 1996, Memory Mambo: A Novel. 1994 also witnessed the publication of a massive reference work by Greenwood Press which in part builds on the earlier 1991 volume by David William Foster. Foster served as editor of Latin American Writers on Gay and Lesbian Themes: A Bio-Critical Sourcebook.

In 1998, a thoughtful study of the role(s) played by lesbian and gay people in the evolution of New York’s Puerto Rican community appeared as part of the anthology The Puerto Rican Movement: Voices from the Diaspora edited by Andrés Torres and José E. Velázquez from Temple University Press. The essay by Luis Apontes-Pares and Jorge B. Merced, “Paginas Omitidas : The Gay and Lesbian Presence” focuses on the experiences of the Puerto Rican LGBT community of New York City, outlining the ways political, social and cultural changes occurring for Puerto Ricans in general in the metropolis and their economic needs and demands were not recognized or embraced by the early leaders of gay liberation. The authors note that “the seventies and eighties were a period when the Puerto Rican community’s will to survive was tested to the limits. This was also a key period in the development of the modern
gay movement’s institutional infrastructure. Some in the White radical gay movement by seeing
to “transform American society, not gain admittance to it.” Others, who were more
conservative, were demanding “a place at the table”- a demand that empowered White males
have always been able to make in U.S. history….Thus even those “street people” ( which
usually meant people of color like Puerto Ricans) who wanted to participate were excluded
from the early leadership positions…During this same period Puerto Ricans, other people of
color, and women were struggling for their right to an education and a decent home, something
most White men took for granted in U.S. society….The contrasts between the Puerto Rican
and White gay communities could not have been greater.” (Luis Apontes-Pares and Jorge B.
Merced, 1998: 299.)

1999 witnessed the publication of the first anthology of living gay Latino writers edited by
Jaime Manrique. The contributors to Besame Mucho: New Gay Latino Fiction represented
Spain, the United States and Cuba, Mexico, Chile, and Colombia, with some appearing in print
for the first time. The collection borrowed for its title the name of a well- known song by
Mexican composer Consuelo Velazquez written in 1940. A second anthology of fiction from
Cleis Press, Virgins, Guerrillas, and Locas: Gay Latinos Writing About Love, presented twenty-
one stories and poems, nineteen of them appearing in print for the first time, from a pool of
writers nearly totally independent of the contributors to Besame Mucho. These books were
balanced by a second volume from New York’s Painted Leaf Press focused on the writings of
gay Latinos on how they lived being in love, but with the difference that all the entries were
more memoir than tale and came from the authors’ own lives. Edited by writer Erasmo Guerra,
Latin Lovers: True Stories of Latin Men in Love, offers the reader an opportunity to dip into the
pasts of authors they may know only through a favorite story or poem, not all of whom are
Latino.

The new millennium opened with the appearance of Out of the Fringe: Contemporary
Latina/Latino Theatre and performance edited by
Caridad Svich and Maria Teresa Marrero, published by
New York’s Theatre Communications Group. Among its
entries is the chapter “Greetings from A Queer Señorita” by Monica Palacios which gives the full text of
the author’s one-woman play first produced in 1995 as
a combination of two older autobiographical
performance pieces about being a Latina lesbian. The
visual record of the LGBT Hispanic community was
significantly expanded in 2001 with the short award-
winning bilingual documentary De Colores: Lesbian &
Gay Latinos: Stories of Strength, Family and Love. The
title is a reference to a traditional Spanish song about
the beauty of the varied colors of the world, and fits well
with the interviews with women and men who have
come out to their families in a culture where la familia
and its expectations hold significant authority. A notable
feature of the film is the sound track music provided by Joan Baez. In the fall of 2001, a
doctoral thesis in ethnic studies by Horacio N. Roque Ramirez, Communities of Desire: Queer Latina/Latino History and Memory, San Francisco Bay Area, 1960s-1990s was accepted at the University of California, Berkeley. It was based on forty detailed oral histories of men and women who had either been born in the San Francisco Bay Area or migrated there and participated in the shaping of a range of LGBT Latino/Latina social and political identities and the community institutions crafted to serve their needs, including the response to the impact of the AIDS pandemic.

Readers seeking an introduction to the scope of the body of works being created by Latina artists and writers as it existed at the beginning of the twenty-first century received valuable assistance in 2003 with the publication of Latina Lesbian Writers and Artists edited by Maria Dolores Costa. Its opening essay by Costa, “Latina Lesbian Writers and Performers: An Overview” presents the major individuals active in Spain and Latin America as well as the United States over a period of two decades. Another essay exploring the often hidden diversity of the Latina lesbian presence is Amelia Maria de la Luz Montes’ “Tortilleras On The Prairie: Latina Lesbians Writing the Midwest.” This essay also anticipates the later reclamation by the LGBT community of the word “queer” by choosing to use a term in common use in the Spanish of Costa Rica, elsewhere in Latin America, and peninsular Spain for lesbians. The term’s owning by the women to whom it is applied continues in the second work to appear in 2003 on Latina lesbians Tortilleras: Hispanic and U.S. Latina Lesbian Expression edited by Lourdes Torres and Immaculada Pertusa. This collection is described by one of the editors in the introduction as “the first anthology to focus exclusively on queer readings of Spanish, Latin American, and U.S. Latina lesbian literature and culture …to address the notable under-representation and marginalization of lesbians.” (Torres 2003: 3.). A fourth volume in a series on Latin American film from the University of Texas authored by David Foster, Queer Issue in Contemporary Latin American Cinema, expands the idea of “queer” as an analytical category into a genre of creative production that plays a significant role in the cultural life of many Latin American nations as well as being shown within the United States.
In 2004, analysis of Latino LGBT writing returned to the individual emphasis seen in *De Colores* with the publication by the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Press of *I am Aztlán : The Personal Essay in Chicano Studies* edited by Chon A. Noriega and Wendy Belcher. Among the contributions was the essay “Activist Latina Lesbian Publishing: esto no tiene nombre and comocion " by Tatiana de la Tierra, who edited both of these lesbian magazines between 1991 and 1996. And the full range of social and cultural criticism produced over five decades by pioneering writer John Rechy, beginning five years prior to the publication of *City of Night* and extending to 2004, is gathered in *Beneath the Skin: the collected essays of John Rechy*. Among the topics he addresses are AIDS, court cases and gay rights, homosexuality in film, and the work of other gay writers including Jack Kerouac and Gore Vidal. The essay “City of Night Remembered" from 1984 provides a detailed personal history both of Rechy’s evolution as a writer and the story of his landmark novel on its thirtieth anniversary.

The contentious topic of immigration to the United States by women and men who identify as somewhere on the LGBT spectrum is explored at length in the 2005 volume *Queer Migrations: Sexuality, U.S. Citizenship, and Border Crossings* from the University of Minnesota Press. While focusing on immigration from four nations (with Latin America represented by Cuba, Mexico and El Salvador), its papers examine the intertwined issues of asylum and sexual orientation, gay men in the Mariel boatlift exodus from Cuba, the 1952 U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act (which introduced the category of homosexuality as grounds for excluding an immigrant from being eligible for entry and naturalization), the 2002 case of transsexual migrant Christine Madrazo and their abuse lawsuit against the U.S. government, and the experiences of gay Latin migrants to the San Francisco Bay Area. Readers unfamiliar with these issues will find the lengthy introductory chapter by editor Eithne Luibheid on “Queering Migration and Citizenship” valuable. 2005 also saw the acceptance at California State University, Long Beach of Anastasio Cena’s master’s thesis in social work on *Homophobia as Experienced by Latino Males Living in the United States*. The philosophical and literary legacies left by the passing of Gloria Anzaldúa in 2004 were
explored and extended by the 2005 anthology *Entre mundos/among Worlds: new perspectives on Gloria E. Anzaldúa* edited by her literary executor AnaLouise Keating. The new *Encyclopedia Latina: History, Culture and Society in the United States* from Scholastic Library Publishing included a brief survey article by Frederick Luis Aldama on “Literature, Gay and Lesbian.” And as a sign of the degree of changed LGBT visibility since the time of *City of Night*, 2005 also saw the issuance of a report from the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force’s Policy Institute on *Hispanic and Latino Same-Sex Couple Households in the United States: A Report from the 2000 Census*, online at


The writer Rigoberto Gonzalez contributed to the stream of Hispanic LGBT autobiography with his 2006 work *Butterfly Boy: Memories of a Chicano Mariposa*, which explores his many-layered relationships with his family during and after his childhood in Michoacan and his evolution as a gay man. The voice of Hispanic lesbians as heard in creative writings is deftly explored by Catriona Esquibel in *With Her Machete in Her Hand: Reading Chicana Lesbians*. Her collection explores subjects and figures as varied as Aztec princesses, the mythical weeping figure of *la llorona*, seventeenth-century poet and dramatist Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz, politics, and race. The deeply interwoven natures and complex definitions of racial awareness and gay identity were also explored within the context of Puerto Rican society in Manolo Guzman’s *Gay Hegemony/Latino Homosexualities* from Routledge.

The often problematic impact of admitting an LGBT identity in Hispanic society was taken up in 2007 by Mario Espita in his master’s thesis in social work at California State University, Long Beach, *Coming-Out among Gay Latino Men: The Effects of Catholicism and Traditional Culture*. And the literary genre of testimonial accounts was significantly expanded to include the queer Latino population with the publication in 2007 of Arnaldo Cruz-Malave’s presentation of the life tale of Juan Rivera, the Puerto Rican partner of New York artist Keith Haring, in *Queer Latino Testimonio, Keith Haring, and Juanito Xtravaganza: Hard Tails*. 
The New York focus begun in 1998 with the essay by Luis Apontes-Pares and Jorge B. Merced, “Paginas Omitidas: The Gay and Lesbian Presence“ and augmented with Queer Latino Testimonio continued in 2008 by journalist Kai Wright with *Drifting toward Love: Black, Brown, Gay, and Coming of Age on the Streets of New York* through the lives of the young men he sought out and interviewed. And the voices of Latino poetry seen as an element of earlier anthologies took center stage the same year with the publication of the bilingual collection *Mariposas: A Modern Anthology of Queer Latino Poetry* edited by Emanuel Xavier. In his introduction, the editor notes that:

> “Besides Spain, the mother country of our native tongues, America has been a hotbed of Latino poetry thanks to the rich diversity of cultures throughout this continent…Whether straight, bisexual, closeted or openly gay, Latino voices have made a deep mark on the poetry scene. Despite distinction in style, dialect, and customs within the Latino mosaic, our voices have been unified by a determination to be heard…These poems are personifications of our souls and, like mariposas, we will continue to survive and pollinate with our words, whether in English or Spanish or Spanglish, for years to come.’ Xavier 2008: 10-11)

In 2009, the coverage of Hispanic community provided in the expanding field of LGBT reference works was expanded with the publication of two articles in *LGBTQ America Today: An Encyclopedia* from Greenwood Press. The first by Yarman Velasquez Vargas profiles the Gay Latino Alliance (GALA), founded in San Francisco in 1975 and the first such organization with national visibility, while the second and longer essay by Yvette Saavedra and Deena Gonzalez examines “Latino/Latina Americans and LGBTQ Issues.”
The current decade opened with the 2010 publication of playwright Guillermo Reyes’ *Madre and I: A Memoir of Our Immigrant Lives* from the University of Wisconsin Press. The same year saw the recording and analysis of LGBT history focus on Arizona with the acceptance by Arizona State University of Lucas Charles Messer’s doctoral dissertation in communications on *Queer Migrant Culture: Undocumented Queer Latinos and Queer Clubs in Phoenix*, examining the role played by public spaces as a medium of claiming and communicating a distinct identity. Messer notes in the abstract of the dissertation (available on the database *Proquest Digital Dissertations* as full text) that “Undocumented, queer Latinos represent a group of marginalized peoples who are spoken about but rarely spoken with. For queer migrant Latinos living in the United States, stereotypes and discursive misconceptions about their identities as deviant, diseased others are a constant force with which to negotiate. (Messer 2010: 5).

The publication in 2011 of *Compañeros: Latino activists in the face of AIDS* by Jesus Ramirez-Valles from the University of Illinois Press broke new ground in the chronicling of contemporary LGBT Hispanic history. It presents the stories of eighty gay, lesbian and trans activists involved with the AIDS pandemic who were/are Latino and worked within their communities in both the United States and Mexico. In the introduction to *Compañeros*, the author provides a thoughtful perspective on being LGBT and Latino outside of urban areas:

“…our realities, as Mexican homosexual men, were and, to some extent, still are more complex than those of white gay men in the United States…We were navigating through different social spaces that were at times contradictory but not completely separated. They included our family lives, our Catholicism, our childhood friends, our homosexual friends, our lovers, our coworkers, and our work in combating AIDS…The realities of us, companeros, were not made up of identities based on sexual desire, “life style” or skin color…In other parts of the country, such as Mexico City and Guadalajara, there were people marching on the streets claiming “orgullo homosexual” (gay pride). That was not our world.” (Ramirez-Valles 2011: 4)
A second 2011 collection, *Ambientes: New Queer Latino Writing*, was edited by Lazaro Lima and Felice Picano and published by the University of Wisconsin Press. Readers will find their opening comments valuable in orienting themselves to the importance of and continuing need for Latino fiction written by women and men who use their queer identities as lenses to explore a wide range of life experiences. As Picano notes,

“…it’s the twenty-first century, and it’s time that a twenty-first century literature about being queer in America existed and acknowledged the large number of Latinos in this country……What the young authors collected in *Ambientes* bring to us are many different ways of being queer, of being American, of being Latino… Their writing addresses what it means to be a queer Latino: not only how the color of your skin, or your accent, or any of a dozen perceived differences affect not only how you may be treated- demonized, vilified, adored, iconized- but also how you come to perceive yourself.” (Picano 2011: xi-xii.)

A third 2011 collection, *From Macho to Mariposa: New Gay Latino Fiction* edited by Charles Rice-González & Charlie Vázquez, showcases the writings of twenty-nine gay male Latino authors from ten states and Puerto Rico- a comparison of its list of contributors with the authors represented in *Ambientes* reveals only two individuals with works present in both.

The absence of a broadly based volume articulating the validity and complexity of the life experiences, social and cultural issues of gay Latino men comparable to Gloria Anzaldua’s *This Bridge Called My Back* was addressed by the 2011 anthology *Gay Latino Studies: A Critical Reader* edited by Michael Hames-Garcia and Ernesto Xavier Martinez. in the introduction, they note that their purpose “is not to recover a forgotten field of study or to inaugurate a future discipline, but to highlight relationships among ongoing intellectual projects that take the lives of gay, bisexual and queer Latino men as a starting point.” (Michael Hames-Garcia and Ernesto Xavier Martinez 2011: 4 ) And in 2013 Rigoberto Gonzalez penned a second memoir of his life, *Autobiography of My Hungers*, a useful complement to *Butterfly Boy*. The same year, Alex Sandro Salazar presented his master’s thesis in English at California State University, Northridge, entitled *Buscando mi tonal: a queer Chicano’s search for self in academic literature*. A notable addition to LGBT Latino media was made in December 2013 with the posting to YOUTUBE of the event “A Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration of John Rechy’s ‘City of Night’” (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hw9PBxdH9NA) held on
October 23, 2013 at the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center. And 2015 saw the publication by the University of Texas Press of *Queer Brown Voices: Personal Narratives of Latina/o LGBT Activism*, which covers the work of fourteen activists during the last three decades of the twentieth century.

In 2017, three short books were published on LGBT communities of color in America based on data obtained from over five thousand individuals by the Social Justice Sexuality Project since its inception in 2008 as an effort to gather quantitative data on LGBT people of color regularly. One was *An examination of Latinx LGBT populations across the United States: intersections of race and sexuality* authored by Antonio Pastrana, Jr., Juan Battle and Angelique Harris, published by Palgrave. Its contents provide a detailed profile all major aspects of being “Latinx,” an identity the authors define as follows:

“In this document…we will use the term “Latinx.” It is similar to “Latino”, but the “x” erases gender, making the category inclusive of men, women, agendered, tran*, gender-nonconforming, gender-queer and gender-fluid people. Finally, it bears noting that most Latinx people do not use racial terms assigned to them. Instead, most Latinx people around the world refer to themselves based on whichever country or indigenous population they belong to (e.g. Honduran, Mexican, Peruvian, etc.) As a social construct—something that changes over time and within different contexts—identity labels are neither static nor universal. (Pastrana et.al. 2017: 4-5)

Subjects explored are types of research done on LGBT communities, characteristics of studies done on Latinx LGBT people, family life, coming out, religion and spirituality, and current trends for Latinx communities in the areas of trans* issues, immigration marriage, economics and health care. The final chapter provides a history of the evolution of the Social Justice Sexuality Project and the planned phases of its continuing research.

The stories told by Hispanic LGBT women and men across the years thus present a complex, determined, and richly textured body of writing and language that will continue to evolve in both print and electronic forms during the twenty-first century.

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