

About the Series

Latin America Otherwise: Languages, Empires, Nations is a critical series. It aims to explore the emergence and consequences of concepts used to define "Latin America" while at the same time exploring the broad interplay of political, economic, and cultural practices that have shaped Latin American worlds. Latin America, at the crossroads of competing imperial designs and local responses, has been construed as a geocultural and geopolitical entity since the nineteenth century. This series provides a starting point to redefine Latin America as a configuration of political, linguistic, cultural, and economic intersections that demands a continuous reappraisal of the role of the Americas in history, and of the ongoing process of globalization and the relocation of people and cultures that have characterized Latin America's experience. *Latin America Otherwise: Languages, Empires, Nations* is a forum that confronts established geocultural constructions, that rethinks area studies and disciplinary boundaries, that assesses convictions of the academy and of public policy, and that, correspondingly, demands that the practices through which we produce knowledge and understanding about and from Latin America be subject to rigorous and critical scrutiny.

In *Las hijas de Juan*, Josie Méndez-Negrete boldly shatters the silence surrounding a Chicana family tragedy. This intellectually astute *tour de force* builds on the tradition of Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa in its unflinching truth telling. These are the daughters who, in the face of the patriarchal imperative to put men first and condone their abuses, liberate themselves and dare to tell the tale. Méndez-Negrete weaves a complex tale of contemporary *mujeres de fuerza* and brings the fight for social justice to the previously protected fortress of the family.

Las hijas de Juan is a narrative of contemporary U.S. Latina life, anchored in the explicitly political tradition of *testimonio* exemplified by

social activists such as Rigoberta Menchú, Elvia Alvarado, and Maria Teresa Tula. The author identifies the text as auto-ethnography, but at times it reads like a novel in the literary tradition of Ernesto Galarza's Chicano classic *Barrio Boy*. Méndez-Negrete never offers mere nostalgia; her paradisiacal life in Mexico, with its evocative tastes and aromas and strong network of women-centered households, is shattered by the reality of life under a violent, tyrannical patriarch. This is Latina *testimonio* at its most provocative.