

Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos

CANDELAS GALA. Clara Janés. La poética cuántica o la física de la poesía, 1939-1999. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2021. 203 pp.

Debra Faszter-McMahon



Volume 45, Number 2, Winter 2021

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1100817ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18192/rceh.v45i2.6712>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Asociación Canadiense de Hispanistas

ISSN

0384-8167 (print)

2564-1662 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Faszter-McMahon, D. (2021). Review of [CANDELAS GALA. Clara Janés. La poética cuántica o la física de la poesía, 1939-1999. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2021. 203 pp.] *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos*, 45(2), 515–517. <https://doi.org/10.18192/rceh.v45i2.6712>

© Debra Faszter-McMahon, 2023



This document is protected by copyright law. Use of the services of Érudit (including reproduction) is subject to its terms and conditions, which can be viewed online.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/en/users/policy-on-use/>

érudit

This article is disseminated and preserved by Érudit.

Érudit is a non-profit inter-university consortium of the Université de Montréal, Université Laval, and the Université du Québec à Montréal. Its mission is to promote and disseminate research.

<https://www.erudit.org/en/>

diverse poems from Cetina to the Argensola brothers in which this dynamic unfolds, as well as lyrics by other poets in which ultimately the reciprocal gaze is not that of an earthly beloved, but rather that of a loving God, a spiritual beloved.

Meticulously written and researched, *Ojos creadores* provides a new and welcome critical approach to a familiar Spanish poetic corpus and the Petrarchan sources that inspired that poetry. Fernández Rodríguez's book is a valuable contribution to our understanding of Early Modern Spanish poetry and demonstrates the importance of interartistic studies for our grasp of Early Modern culture.

MARSHA S. COLLINS

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

CANDELAS GALA. *Clara Janés. La poética cuántica o la física de la poesía, 1939-1999*. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2021. 203 pp.

This study focuses on one of Spain's most intriguing twenty-first century poets, analyzing the philosophical underpinnings of Clara Janés's corpus and the way her work interacts with diverse scientific ideas. Candelas Gala argues that Janés's work recurs to the natural world in an effort to counter subject/object dualism, connecting subjectivity and culture to the cosmos. Janés employs what Gala terms "quantum poetics" in ways that unite areas of knowledge traditionally separated: emotion and sensation with logic and analysis, poetics with scientific thought. Janés's goal, according to Gala, is to "conectar el entorno exterior con la interioridad" (14) and to demonstrate that "la naturaleza y su libro ... ofrece[n] la mejor lección del saber y su constante evolución" (188).

The work begins with an introduction that offers an epistemological approach to Janés's corpus. Gala argues that Janés's work arrives at "un tipo de pensamiento dinámico que no es ni poesía ni filosofía, sino un balance entre ambas" (16). The introduction references Janés's early publications and biography, as well as her most scientifically focused writings, and Gala notes that Janés is drawn to the insights of quantum physics because those insights "revelan aspectos de la materia marcados por la misma incertidumbre, probabilidad, incompletitud y paradoja que caracterizan muchos de los temas tratados en la poesía" (21). Janés's recurring poetic themes, according to Gala, include an exploration of the dualisms commonplace in Western thought as well as the ways both classical and theoretical physics offer avenues for poetic re-envisioning (24).

The introduction is followed by four chapters delving more deeply into the major themes described above. Chapter 1, “Entre incertidumbres y certezas,” offers an exploration of the dualisms of contemporary Western thought, and the opportunities for complementarity that Janés illuminates via quantum physics through the scientific theories of Niels Bohr and Erwin Schrodinger. Close readings analyze Janés’s *La indetenible quietud* (2008), *La blanca forma de la fuga* (2015), and *El jardín de las delicias* (2014). Gala highlights Janés’s fascination with the indeterminacy of quantum physics in contrast with the causality of classical scientific thought, and the parallels between scientific and poetic experimentation.

Chapter 2, titled “Vías hacia el conocimiento,” focuses on the way specific theories from theoretical physics link to complex imaginative poetics and the search for knowledge. Gala highlights Janés’s use of philosophical concepts like Basarab Nicolescu’s transdisciplinarity, the hidden third, and Andrei Plesu’s “la angélica cuántica.” While many of these concepts appear esoteric, the author offers helpful contextualization and interpretation to connect Janés’s philosophical explorations with contemporary scientific thought. Analysis in this section demonstrates how Janés employs various mathematic and scientific forms, such as relativity, bifurcations, fluctuations, and asymmetry in works like *Orbes del sueño* (2013), *Los números oscuros* (2006), and *Estructuras disipativas* (2017).

The third chapter returns to the author’s early work, particularly her prose memoir *Jardín y laberinto* (1990), in order to draw parallels between Janés’s earliest experiences and her ongoing efforts to bridge interiority with the external world. Gala argues that “[l]os libros de Janés relatan la aventura en busca del conocimiento [que] se revela en un saber exento del requisito de completitud en la tradición occidental ... Y es un conocimiento que encuentra en la naturaleza una sabiduría que tanto las ciencias como las humanidades de distintas tradiciones culturales corroboran” (162). Gala traces how Janés’s childhood explorations in the garden at Pedralbes continue to drive her poetics via an effort to connect the exterior world with interiority and to participate in the unending search for understanding and connection in a complex and uncertain natural world.

The final chapter, “Poética cuántica: escritura fluctuante o naturaleza escrita,” offers an overall vision of the connection between scientific thought and the author’s work. Gala explores the description that Janés herself offers of her poetic process, “escritura fluctuante,” and explains that for Janés, that description serves as a way to “aproximarse a la plasticidad del movimiento en la naturaleza y la materia, funcionando a modo de réplica de lo que se manifiesta en la física cuántica y la biología” (165). She notes that this kind of fluid writing must push boundaries and borders of all kinds, especially between genres and cultures, with physics as its central analogy. The

knowing that comes about through this poetic process is not a knowledge based on reason, but rather an acceptance of nature's knowledge, "la sabiduría de la naturaleza en todo lo complejo de su elementalidad" and with the realization that nature "tiene un lenguaje oculto, silencioso, el de una savia que se propaga en medio de la diversidad" (185).

Gala's work offers intriguing insights about Janés's philosophical approach and the power of poetic integrations of scientific thought. There are a few areas of the study that are somewhat less successful, particularly the absence at times of pertinent secondary bibliography on Janés's work, as well as less clearly structured or convincing argumentation in certain theoretical sections. For example, the theoretical grounding includes many intriguing scientific theorists, but at times it lacks engagement with current literary thought, such as not referencing the affective turn in literary theory when discussing Janés's interrogation of the emotional/logical divide, or citing descriptions like "acercamiento 'apropiacionista'" and "nómada estético" (14) in an effort to praise and theorize Janés's work without acknowledging the critiques of these ideas within contemporary literary theory. Nonetheless, Gala's work offers a timely and helpful approach to an incredibly important part of this very underrepresented author's work. Janés has published a vast and intriguing corpus, and has been recognized by international literary bodies including the Real Academia Española, and continues to publish at a rapid pace. However, this is only the second monograph focused on her oeuvre, and the first to look specifically at her integration of scientific thought. Specialists will find this a helpful and intriguing approach to the important insights offered in Janés's poetry.

DEBRA FASZER-MCMAHON

Seton Hill University

PAUL JOSEPH LENNON. *Love in the Poetry of Francisco de Aldana: Beyond Neoplatonism*. London: Tamesis, 2019. 203 pp.

In this volume on the topic of love in the verse works of Francisco de Aldana, Paul Joseph Lennon analyzes those poems against a complex backdrop of earlier literary expressions of love, incorporating multiple poetic examples from classical through early modern times. The result is a fine literary-historical contextualization of the selected poems.

In a solid introduction, Lennon details the history of the publication, study and reception of Aldana's poetry, then maps out the purpose and structure of his own volume. Given that Aldana's verse has been studied for its poetic adaptations of Neoplatonic themes and imagery, Lennon proposes