

Call for chapters for edited volume:

Fantasies of the Subject: Affecting Selves in Contemporary American Literature **edited by Paula Barba Guerrero & Laura de la Parra Fernández**

If what we need to dream, to move our spirits most deeply and directly towards and through promise, is discounted as a luxury, then we give up the core—the fountain— of our power [...] we give up the future of our worlds.

—Audre Lorde, “Poetry Is Not a Luxury”

“Nations provoke fantasy”, contends Lauren Berlant (1997, 1). In *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City* (1997), Berlant argues that citizenship has become privatized in neoliberal America, and political discourses have turned to the private sphere and the appeal of the emotions. This way, what being an American citizen represents has become closely linked to the individual subject, their life choices, and their feelings and emotions. In short, certain choices, feelings or even identities, as Donald Pease claims, can be considered “un-American” (1994, 11). At the same time, the tendency toward the privatization of feeling and politics has developed along with neoliberalism. If, according to Foucault, neoliberalism can be understood as organisation of subjectivity (2008), the subject can then be managed by market rationality, whereby identity is turned into a series of rational consumer choices, risk-management and governmentality. The individual can thus be marketed and capitalised through emotions.

Following Benedict Anderson’s claim that nations are “imagined communities” (2006, 22), Timothy Brennan affirms that nations “are imaginary constructs that depend for their existence on an apparatus of cultural fictions in which imaginative fiction plays a decisive role” (1990, 49). In this sense, the idea of national fantasy may be propelled forward by means of cultural artifacts that sustain it, and which put forth the “correct” performance of subjectivity. Amongst them, fiction is a powerful tool to create what Lauren Berlant has called “intimate publics”, which are a group of readers and consumers who “already share a worldview and emotional knowledge that they have derived from a broadly common historical experience” (2008, ix). These productions, especially those traversed by sentimentality and addressed to an intimate public, allow, on the one hand, to voice complaints and express discomfort or disappointments at the failed expectations of the “good life” (Berlant 2011), while on the other hand they reify and uphold these normative narratives.

This volume seeks contributions that deal with representations of emotional selfhood from a variety of perspectives. Suggested topics include, but are not limited to:

- “Biofiction” and the female self
- Bodies and/in nations
- Re/productive future(s)
- National post-memories, mobility, and the American dream
- Radical hope narratives and emotional (after)lives
- Emotional fantasies and cultures: the self and/as the Other
- Environmental fiction and the anthropocene

- Visual and digital cultures
- Political emotion and intimate publics
- Pleasure narratives, affect-centered writing
- Posthuman subjectivities and the emotions of the future
- Literature, emotion, and activism

Prospective contributors are expected to submit **300 to 400-word abstract proposals**, including **full name, affiliation, and email address** to paulabarbaguerrero@usal.es and lauradelaparra@usal.es by **December 30th, 2021**. Please indicate “Fantasies of the Subject Proposal” in the email’s subject.

Selected, peer-reviewed contributions will be published in 2023 by a top-tier academic press.

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Timeline:

- Deadline for abstract submission: December 30th, 2021
- Confirmation of acceptance: January 30th, 2022
- Book chapters due: June 30th, 2022

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