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The Representation of Queer Men in the Gay Literature of Luis Zapata & Mario Bellatín

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Spring 2020
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Significance of this study:

**Create awareness of the
representation of the queer male
experience in hispanic literature**

Research Question:

01

How are queer men represented in the novels: *El vampiro de la Colonia Roma* by Luis Zapata and *Salón de belleza* by Mario Bellatín through monologues?

Research Question:

02

What spaces represent the marginalization of queer men in the novels: *El vampiro de la Colonia Roma* by Luis Zapata and *Salón de belleza* by Mario Bellatín?

Literature Review

Queer vs. Gay

- ❖ “Gay” is defined as the physical attraction between men
- ❖ There are variations between gender expression and sexual orientation; this is where the term “queer” comes from. (Social Society 2)

Self Identity Development

- ❖ Double life: family/society & private
- ❖ Fall of the misogynist social norm of machismo (Mcglew 13)
- ❖ Sexual role results in different levels of respect within gay community (Green; Carillo 1)

The Birth of Modern Homosexuality

- ❖ November 19th, 1901
- ❖ 41 Queer men arrested for having a dance (Piltcher 152)
- ❖ First media reported incident of homosexual behavior (Irwin 354)

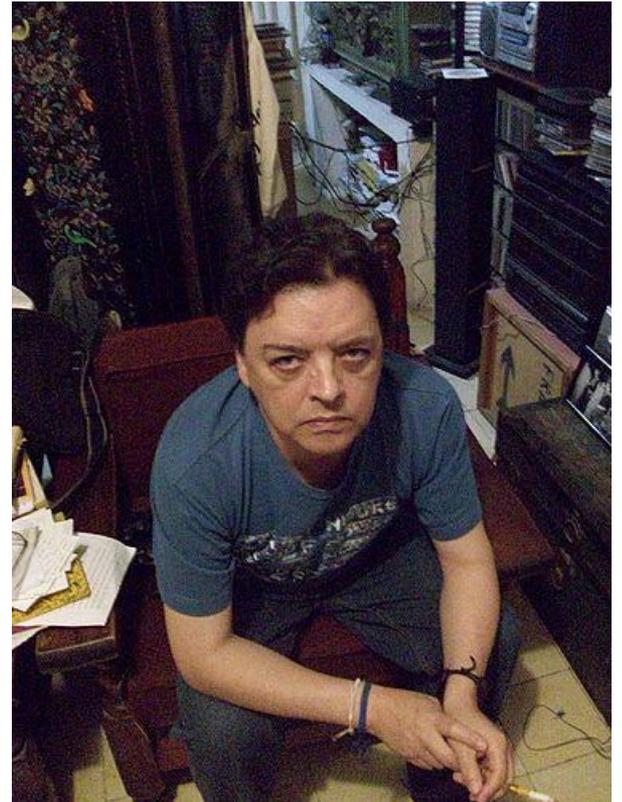
Gay Literature

- ❖ Started near the end of the 19th Century
- ❖ Inspired by La “Onda” literary movement of the 1960s (Prinkey 3)
- ❖ Gained popularity starting in the 1980s
- ❖ Salvador Novo was one of the first contributors (Prinkey 1)

Luis Zapata

Born April 27th, 1951 in
Chilpancingo, Guerrero, México.

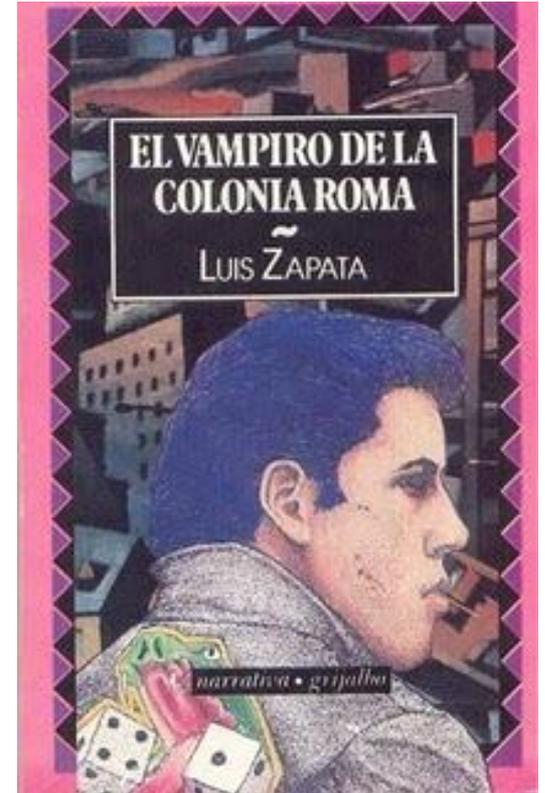
- ❖ Education: National Autonomous University of Mexico
- ❖ Inspiration: to change the enigmas around homosexuality in Mexico
- ❖ Uses a form of realistic fiction to anonymously share the experiences his friends have faced as homosexual males



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El vampiro de la Colonia Roma (1979)

- ❖ La "Onda"
 - Colloquialisms
 - Sexual relationships
 - Urban settings
- ❖ Classified as:
 - Novela Picaresca
 - Testimonial Report
- ❖ Tells the story of *Adonis García*
 - Navigates living in Mexico City
 - Experience as gay male & prostitute
 - Self actualization & development journey



El vampiro de la Colonia Roma- Analysis

Prostitution

- ❖ Underground subculture of LGBT+
- ❖ Induction into the world of prostitution
- ❖ Desensitization of true love & sexual acts
- ❖ Deception & the feeling of defeat
- ❖ Discovery of self comfort



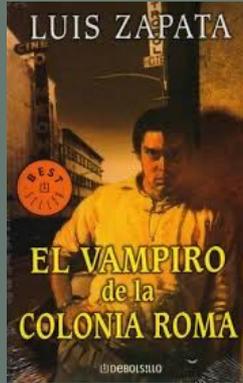
Nightlife

- ❖ Clubs & Prostitution
- ❖ Exposure to drugs & alcohol
 - Self control issues
 - Unhealthy Coping Mechanisms
 - “Marijuana was something like paradise” (110)
- ❖ Mental Health
 - Paranoia
 - Attachment issues

El vampiro de la Colonia Roma- Analysis

Scepticism

- ❖ Casts Judgment
 - People
 - Activities
- ❖ Feels alone in the world
- ❖ Criticizes Prostitution at first
- ❖ Negativity & Mental Health
- ❖ Self introspection
- ❖ Development of an open mind
 - Concept of being transgender
 - “one day you must have realized that he wasn't interested in being gay, right? But woman because it's different, right?” (166)



Colloquialisms

- ❖ Colloquialisms within the stream of consciousness
- ❖ Type of Spanish common within Mexico City
- ❖ Memory & Hope
 - "I had dreams to feel the warmth of a home" (20)
- ❖ Realization of Homosexuality
 - “So I decided to toss women to the side” (20)

Mario Bellatín

Born in México City, México in July 23, 1960, but raised in Peru.

- Education: Santo Toribio de Mogrovejo and University of Lima
- Fascinated by the creative aspects of writing, often using mystery as a writing technique.

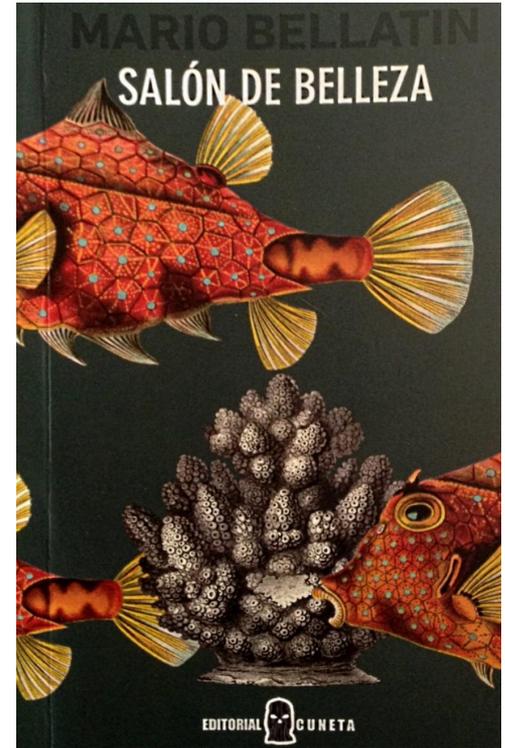
Works: *Las mujeres de sal* (1986), *Efecto invernadero* (1992), *Canon perpetuo* (1993), *Damas chinas* (1995), *Poeta ciego* (1998), *Flores* (2001)



<https://www.ciudadsi.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/bellatin01.jpg>

Salón de belleza (1994)

- ❖ Organization:
 - Reflection
 - Retrospection
- ❖ Style:
 - Internal Monologue
- ❖ Tells about the protagonist's experience
 - Set in an nameless, urban city
 - Nameless protagonist
 - Protagonist reflects on the transformation of his life and the effects of the illness

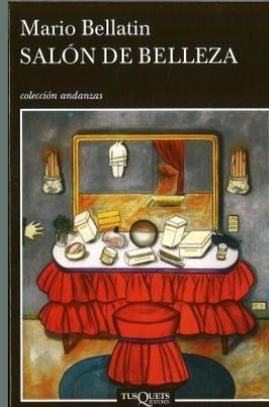


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Salón de belleza- Analysis

Illness

- ❖ Is not identified
 - No cure
- ❖ Condemned to ostracism
 - Also by members of the LGBT+community
- ❖ Underlying antagonist is death
 - Presented as an illness



<https://i.gr-assets.com/images/S/compressed.photo.goodreads.com/books/1347353783/17371076.jpg>

Death & Denial

- ❖ Process of acceptance
 - Difficulty in accepting inevitable death
 - Unhealthy coping mechanisms presented as rules in El Moridero
- ❖ Total separation from society
 - Religion
 - Hope
 - Family

Salón de belleza- Analysis

Spaces

- ❖ Clandestine subculture of LGBT+
- ❖ Portion of novel that reflects the happiness of the protagonist
 - In clubs with friends
 - Took women's clothes in bags to crossdress on location, for safety
- ❖ Creation of a safe space in El Salón
 - "Only women seem to not focus their attention to stylists dressed mostly in women's clothes." (24)

Symbolism

- ❖ The relationship between the conditions of El Salón and the fish tanks
 - Starting to lose interest in one is mirrored by interest of the other
- ❖ El Salón & El Moridero
 - Both are places meant to symbolize comfort and consolation
- ❖ Illness
 - Inevitable death
 - Identifying as LGBT+

Comparison:

Prostitution

The experience & power struggle

Isolation & Exclusion

Internal and external factors cause mental health issues

Cynicism

The transformation of the protagonists throughout the novels

*both experience discrimination in their daily lives

El vampiro: works as a prostitute & many times was taken advantage of physically & financially

El *Salón*: contains an anecdote about a male prostitute who was violated in a bathhouse.

El vampiro: confronts attachment issues and depends on substance abuse

El *Salón*: adopts an over controlling nature that does not allow anyone to gain his trust

El vampiro: a journey towards self acceptance, is presented by the life of the individual

El *Salón*: a view into the downfall of a person

01

Conclusions

Both authors effectively utilize internal monologues to present the queer male experience through unique gay literature.

The literary devices utilized by each author help create an increase in social awareness for the LGBT+ community.

02

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