

SPRING 2021 CHARLAS CON CAFÉ ILLNESS, TEMPORAL EXPERIENCE, AND LATIN AMERICAN FICTION

with Johnathan Vaknin, University of Arizona

Friday, Mar. 19, 1-2 pm (MST)

Join via Zoom: <https://arizona.zoom.us/j/86782034717>

“The powerful feet of the runners left tracks momentarily on the reddish sand. The runners sped by, concentrating on their exercise as if thinking about each muscle they tightened, absorbed in their daily offering to health.” If in this opening scene of his novel *Beach Birds*, Cuban writer Severo Sarduy reignites the early-twentieth century’s pervasive insistence on velocity, he does so in order to provide an acute contrast to the figure that populates the pages that follow: the ill body stricken with fatigue. While the text never names their illness overtly, it nonetheless alludes to HIV/AIDS through the disease’s symptoms, including a lack of energy. Vaknin's paper centers on Sarduy’s novel as well as the essays gathered in his collection *Christ on the Rue Jacob* in order to glean an aesthetics of fatigue. Tracing Sarduy's exchanges with his longtime interlocutor Roland Barthes, he argues that fatigue disrupts the steady flow of linear narrative time and thus counters the notion of “progress” that we often associate with disease.



Johnathan Vaknin is Assistant Professor of Latin American Cultural Studies in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese. His research and teaching focus on the cultural production of the Caribbean basin, with an emphasis on the relationship between literature and medicine. He is currently working on his first monograph, provisionally entitled *Sick Days: Medicine, Temporality, and Latin American Culture*.



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