



*Eclipse* by Maria Alejandra Zanetta (2000)

# *Feministas Unidas, Inc.*

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## Message from the Editor

Dear members of *Feministas Unidas, Inc.*,

First of all, I want to wish all of you a great start of the Fall semester.

Feministas Unidas Inc. has a newly developed website thanks to the dedication and talent of our dear colleague and webmistress, Inmaculada Pertusa. I want to take the opportunity to thank Inma for a job well done!! Look for Inma's message below.

In addition, I would like to encourage all of you to share the new web page with your colleagues and to invite non-members to join our organization. Our mission is as important as ever and we need the support of all our members in making the organization stronger.

I wish you and your loved ones a healthy semester. Stay safe!!

All the best

Maria Alejandra Zanetta.

*Feministas Unidas, Inc.* Newsletter Editor

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**Maria Alejandra Zanetta**, Editor for *Feministas Unidas, Inc.* is a distinguished professor of Spanish literature and culture at The University of Akron. Currently her research focuses on the artistic and literary production of Spanish avant-garde women painters and writers. Her latest books, *La otra cara de la vanguardia: estudio comparativo de la obra artística de Maruja Mallo, Ángeles Santos y Remedios Varo* (The Edwin Mellen Press, 2006) and *La subversión enmascarada: análisis de la obra de Maruja Mallo* (Biblioteca Nueva, 2014) comparatively analyze the visual manifestations of these women painters that result from the competing theories of gender and sexuality central to the various ideological struggles of the period.

## Message from the President

Queridas *Feministas Unidas*

Tengo el placer de escribirles para compartir buenas nuevas:

*Feministas Unidas* tiene una nueva página web: <http://feministas-unidas.org>

Recuerden to clear history si no acceden a ella ¡¡¡¡Gracias Inma (Inmaculada Pertusa) por crearla!!!!

Las invitamos a conectarse para enviar información sobre los libros que hayan publicado recientemente.

Esta página incluye un archivo de todos los newsletters de *Feministas Unidas*. ¡¡¡¡Gracias Olga Bezhanova por escanear la primera etapa!!!! Quisiera señalar que referencias a estos archivos y a la organización en general ya han aparecido en dos libros. Como feministas es crucial que sigamos promocionando la participación de las mujeres en la academia, que cultivemos la organización, y que se conozca su historia ya que trasciende cuatro décadas...

Por favor envíen sus artículos a *Ámbitos Feministas*, la revista que nos convoca y representa. No se olviden de promocionarla entre amigas, colegas y estudiantes graduadas. Síganos en Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/FemUnidas/> y en Twitter @AmbitosFem ¡¡¡¡ Gracias Carmen de Urioste Azcorra!!!

Las instamos a enviar sus publicaciones para el premio Adela Zamudio (best published article by a member of *Feministas Unidas* in the areas of feminist studies, gender studies, queer studies and studies related to works of literature and cinema by female authors). Además, les pedimos que promocionen el concurso al mejor estudiante graduado (this Prize is awarded for an outstanding unpublished essay on feminist scholarship on women in the field of literature, the arts, filmmaking, Transatlantic studies or cultural studies in the areas covered by our organization's mission: Spanish, Spanish-American, Luso-Brazilian, Afro-Latin American, and U.S. Hispanic Studies) que ahora será publicado en *Ámbitos Feministas*.

Considerando que *Feministas Unidas* se define como a Coalition of Feminist Scholars in Spanish, Spanish-American, Luso-Brazilian, Afro-Latin American, and U.S. Hispanic Studies; que junto a *Association of Gender and Sexuality Studies* (AEGS) son las dos asociaciones que convocan a estudiosas de las mujeres; que los estudios hispanos siguen en el gueto académico; que el feminismo será una cuestión radical hasta lograr la equidad; y que se ha expandido muchísimo últimamente entre las nuevas generaciones (#MeToo, Argentina, Chile, etc), las invitamos a ayudarnos a hacer crecer la asociación al participar en las

sesiones organizadas por *Feministas Unidas* en el MLA, así como en NEMLA y SAMLA, y particularmente en *Ámbitos Feministas*. Por favor renueven la membresía y de ser posible inviten a alguien más a asociarse...¡Las esperamos con los brazos abiertos!

Abrazos



Cynthia Tompkins  
Presidenta, *Feministas Unidas*, en nombre del comité ejecutivo.  
Professor, Spanish, SILC  
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Spanish Graduate Advisor  
Affiliate Faculty, Film and Media Studies, English  
Senior Sustainability Scholar, Environmental Humanities Initiative  
Julie Ann Wrigley Global Institute of Sustainability  
she/her/vos

**Cynthia Margarita Tompkins**, President of Feministas Unidas, Inc, specializes in contemporary Latin American literature and film. Tompkins' interdisciplinary publications *Experimental Latin American Cinema: History and Aesthetics* (U of Texas P, 2013, 294 pp), and *Latin American Postmodernisms: Women Writers and Experimentation* (UP of Florida: Gainesville, Florida, 2006. 226 pp.), underscore her interest in theory and aesthetics. Her latest book *Affectual Erasure: Emotion in the Representations of Indigenous Peoples in Argentine Cinema 1917-2015*, in production, alternates film analysis--contextualized with background on the different Indigenous Cultures--with chapters on the history of Argentine Cinema, and closes by examining issues of land sovereignty. <http://www.sunypress.edu/p-6590-affectual-erasure.aspx>. In addition to publishing a number of articles in the most respected refereed journals, Tompkins has co-edited and co-translated a variety of books. Since 2007 she co-edits *Imagofagia*, the Journal of the Argentine Association of Film and Media Studies (ASAECA) <http://www.asaeaca.org/imagofagia/sitio/>. Tompkins directs the Undergraduate Certificate in Latin American Studies, the Undergraduate Certificate in Translation, the Graduate Certificate in Literary Translation and directs a study abroad program in Buenos Aires.

## Message from the Vice-President

Estimadas colegas,

Escribo desde tierras del huracán Laura, que por suerte nos ha dejado ilesos aquí en el pueblo, saludándoles y deseándoles un buen semestre, a pesar de las circunstancias insólitas que tenemos con el COVID-19 y más. Aquí en Luisiana, donde están detenidos gran parte de los migrantes que cruzan la frontera desde México, hemos estado este verano intentando organizar apoyo, en especial para las de la cárcel de mujeres en Basile, LA.

Estoy admirando el nuevo look del sitio web de FemUn, y agradeciendo del corazón a la talentosa Inma Pertusa por haberlo hecho. También, de la sesión de FemUn que dirige Olga Bezhanova en NeMLA, está saliendo el volumen *Intersectional Feminism in the Age of Transnationalism: Voices from the Margins*, editado por Bezhanova y Raysa Amador (Lexington Books); tanto las editoras como las contribuyentes son miembros de FemUn.

Este otoño estaré promoviendo el premio de ensayo para estudiantes de posgrado. El propósito de la competencia es promover y premiar el trabajo feminista y sobre mujeres en el mundo hispánico. Son ensayos de unas 18-25 páginas, y el plazo es hasta el 30 de noviembre de 2020. El ensayo ganador será publicado en *Ambitos Feministas* a finales de 2021, y el premio para la autora es de \$300 USD. Hay detalles en el sitio <http://feministas-unidas.org/>.

Saludos cordiales y solidarios de

Leslie

Leslie Bary

Femenistas Unidas Inc., Vice-President

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

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**Leslie Bary**, Vice President of *Feministas Unidas, Inc.* is an assistant professor of Spanish and Latin American Studies at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Her research interests include modern Latin American literature, comparative literature, literary and cultural theory. She has published extensively about Avant-garde Latin American poetry in journals such as *Hispania*, *Latin American Literary Review*, and *Twentieth Century/Siglo XX* among others. In addition, she has published several articles about Latin American cultural identity and the construction of national identity in the XIX and XX centuries, literary translations, such as *Roxosol/Sunredsun* (colección poética de Pedro Granados), *Artepoética 2020*, en Granados, *Amerindios*, trans. L. Bary, L. Goldemberg y S. Reiter (in press); and journalistic articles about the state of Academia, such as “What is to be done? Or, Optimism of the Will” (*Academe*, September- October 2018). She is currently working on a book manuscript titled *That Discerning Eye: Race and the State in Modern Latin American Literature*.

## Message from the Webmistress

Colegas,

*Feministas Unidas Inc.* estrena un nuevo diseño en su portal en la red con mejor acceso desde las diferentes plataformas digitales. No dejen de echarle un vistazo.

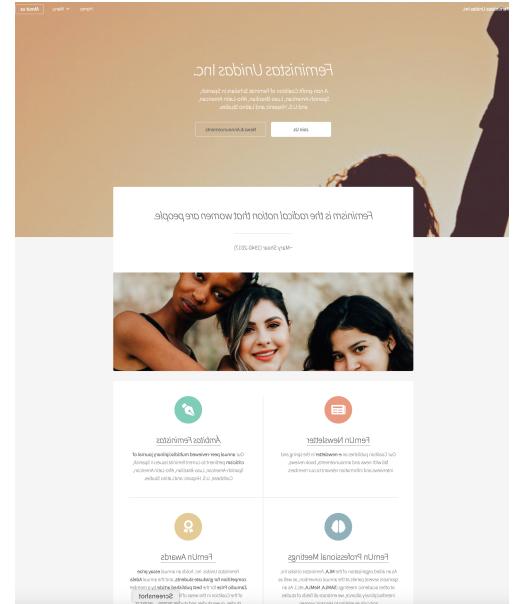
<http://feministas-unidas.org>

Quiero destacar la sección ampliada del archivo de nuestro Newsletter que se remonta a los volúmenes del comienzo de la coalición en 1981. Todo un documento histórico digno de revisar

Aprovecho también para invitarles a participar en una nueva sección que estamos preparando para promover las publicaciones de libros de crítica o de ficción de la membresía y compartir nuestro trabajo entre tod@s. Así, les invito a enviarnos la información pertinente de aquellas publicaciones (también producciones audiovisuales) cuyo tema encaje con el interés de *Feministas Unidas Inc.* Pueden enviarme los detalles completando este formulario (uno por cada libro o producción): <https://forms.gle/47dWm7ACWnCv2c5Y7>

Un saludo distanciado pero sincero,

Inma Pertusa  
Webmistress *Feministas Unidas Inc.*



**Inmaculada Pertusa**, Professor of Spanish at Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, KY. Inma has published on contemporary Hispanic women writers, focusing on issues of gender and sexual representation. She is co editor of the book *Tortilleras: Latina Lesbians* (Temple Press 2003), and author of *La salida del armario: Lecturas desde la otra acera* (Libros del Pexe 2005). She is co editor of an anthology of short stories titled *Un deseo propio. Cuentos de escritoras españolas* (Bruguera 2009). She has also edited the anthology of short stories *Fundido en negro: antología de relatos del mejor calibre criminal femenino* (Al revés 2014) and co edited with Nina Molinaro a volume on Esther Tusquest titled *Esther Tusquets: Scholarly Correspondences* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014). Her latest publication, *Serial Crime Fiction by Spanish Women Authors: Repeat Offenders*, co edited with Melissa Stewart, is forthcoming this fall.

## Message from the Book Review Editor

Estimad@s soci@s de Feministas Unidas, Inc.:

Es para mí un placer comunicarme con tod@s vosotr@s para comentar el tremendo éxito de la sección de reseñas en esta nueva etapa del *newsletter*. Desde aquí mi agradecimiento a l@s reseñador@s, a l@s autor@s que me han enviado sus libros y a las editoriales que responden eficazmente a mis pedidos de novedades. A tod@s, muchas gracias.

Para que la sección pueda seguir funcionando así de bien, por favor no se olviden de mandar sus nuevos libros a la dirección postal de mi universidad.

Cordialmente

Carmen de Urioste-Azcorra  
*Feministas Unidas, Inc.* Book Review Editor  
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**Carmen de Urioste-Azcorra**, Book Review Editor for *Feministas Unidas, Inc.*, is a professor of Spanish Literature in the School of International Letters and Cultures at Arizona State University, where she has served as Spanish Graduate Representative (2008-2011). She has taught Spanish and Spanish literature at the Center for Cross-Cultural Study and Gettysburg College. Her research focus is on contemporary Spanish literature, particularly on post-Franco Spain (from 1975). She served as editor of *Letras Femeninas* (2005-2014) and is the director of the Spanish Language, Literature and Culture Program (Seville).

## Book Reviews

ROSITA SCERBO

**Bost, Suzanne. Shared Selves: Latinx Memoir and Ethical Alternatives to Humanism. U of Illinois P, 2019. 200 pp.**

Anyone familiar with Latinx literary productions knows that autobiographies, memoirs, and artistic self-representations have always been at the center of Chicanx/Latinx authors' identity construction and political activism. Suzanne Bost's last monograph *Shared Selves* changes the way we look at memoirs shifting our attention to marginalized self-narrations and prompting us to question and reconsider our conception of human life. The book seeks to revolutionize how humans think about animality, nature, gender, body, and spirit exploring how these concepts are complex and interdependent.

The organization of the manuscript allows the reader to easily follow the innovative way Judith Ortiz Cofer, Irene Vilar, John Rechy, Aurora Levins Morales, and Gloria Anzaldúa propose new parameters of selfhood. The book is divided into four main chapters, an introduction, and a conclusion. Throughout the volume, the author reveals a deep knowledge and understanding of multiple theoretical postulations. The chapters' content structure appears to be really dynamic with every section of the book emphasizing a different research approach: respectively, feminist theory (Judith Butler, Susan Stanford, Sidonie Smith, and Rosi Braidotti) in chapter 1, queer theory (Samuel Delany, José Esteban, and Tim Deane) in chapter 2, ecocriticism (Stacy Alaimo and Mel Chen) in chapter 3, and lastly disability theory (Robert McRuer) in chapter 4. The author opens up the introductory chapter acknowledging her early attraction towards the genre of the memoir and her background on Latinx, queer, feminist, and disability studies. Bost sets in motion clearly from the beginning the interconnectedness among species in relation to posthumanist theories and indigenous worldview. She reflects on the urgency of utilizing the term Latinx in her task of identifying the political and communal subject in life writing.

The two Latina memoirists, Judith Ortiz and Irene Vilar, are the protagonists of the first chapter in which the author establishes the foundations about the way selves get shared. The two Puerto Rican writers drawn upon themes such power inequality, girlhood, systematic patriarchal control, mental illness, suicide, abortion, pregnancy as a form of contagion, and the constant fear of death. Human life fragmentation is the main topic shared by Ortiz Cofer's *Silent Dancing* (1990) and Vilar's *The Ladies gallery* (1996) and *Impossible Motherhood* (2000). Bost discusses the endurability of the life experience that is translated into writing, the role of the reader and the seizing of control through her analysis of these women who live fragile and precarious lives. She doesn't forget to remind readers that all the texts she analyzes prompt us to participate "in making meaning as well as making community" (44). In Chapter 2, Bost attention shifts to John Rechy portrait of his own life in his memoir *About My Life and the Kept Woman* as well as the autobiographical content found in numerous of his fictional novels, his literary documentary *The Sexual Outlaw*, and ultimately his CD-ROM interactive memoir *Mysteries and Desire*. All of his work is proven to conventionally be associated with narcissism and exhibitionism and as a perfect representation of queer selves and the distorted depersonalization of a "ahuman" identity (56). The third chapter deals with the autobiographical writing of Levins Morales and in particular her concept of unbounded

ecosystem of the World Wide Web in which humans, plants, and animals found themselves strictly interconnected. We learn how her personal website turns into a new form of public archive through which her experience with illness became public domain. This chapter helps us understand how “bodies are intertwined with trans-species ecologies” (77) and how environmental works like Levins Morales’ turn into safe spaces for “transcorporeal collectivity and exchange” (91). Lastly, life and death is the main focus of the fourth chapter dedicated to Gloria Anzaldúa’s less-known memoir work. As other authors examined in the book, Anzaldúa overcomes in her writing traditional forms of identity, dismantling the boundaries that separates human life from non-human animals, plants, and spirits. This chapter includes some abstract visual images and doodles that were found among Anzaldúa’s writings, helpful aids that allow the author to point out how “imagination is an important tool to probe the limits of human life” (125). *Selflessness?* is the closing chapter which reveals the author’s reflections around the borderless and ever-growing subject in the field of Latinx Studies.

In this ambitious work, Suzanne Bost’s endeavors to ascertain the existence of innovative posthumanist theories that prompt us to rethink about the human condition today. However, she asserts as well some of the limitations of her own work emphasizing that none of the Latinx authors she analyzes would consider him/herself a posthumanist. The multiple theoretical approaches explored in the book meshes well with its organization and lends itself successfully to the study of different authors. Each chapter is broken down into titled sub-sections, which typically fit logically into the topic of the chapter and help the reader navigate all the works analyzed. This well-structured design allows us also to advocate for each of the several defining parts that maintain in this way a sense of continuity throughout the volume. Bost supplies an in-depth analysis of different kind of texts, nonetheless the four core chapters demonstrate a strong sense of unity in which every author analyzed is linked to each other by the fact that all of them “challenge the idea of a success story” (11) and transcending the Western culture mandates that reject any kind of nonbinary and unstable identity configuration.

Bost’s contribution to the autobiographical archive permits us to get familiar with unconventional understandings of selfhood while highlighting some less-known names in the field of Latinx cultural, literary, and critical studies. The author’s writing is eloquent, yet clear and understandable. This book represents ultimately an interdisciplinary resource for a wide range of scholars and exhibits Bost’s flexibility and mastery of a versatile agglomerate of theoretical approaches. *Shared Selves* is a must-read for academics who focus their research on post-humanist self-narrations, ethnic minorities, and Latinx identity and wish to further understand the epistemological connection between life writing and ethical action.

Rosita Scerbo  
Allegheny College

## KATHLEEN MCNERNEY

**Drago, Margarita. Sor María de Jesús Tomelín (1579-1637), concepcionista poblana: La construcción fallida de una santa. Pliegos, 2018. 298 pp.**

Even coming from a time and place in which *Vidas* of religious figures were commonplace, the nine biographies of Sor María seem excessive, until Professor Drago explains the insistence of the Mexican hierarchy on having this visionary nun canonized. All nine of the hagiographies were based on the work of two contemporaries of Sor María: her disciple and secretary, Sor Agustina de Santa Teresa, and her confessor, Miguel Godínez. The three works that Drago chooses to examine are those of Francisco Pardo from 1676, Diego de Lemus from 1686, and Félix de Jesús María from 1756. Pardo, the closest in time and space, has a New World outlook as he parallels the nun's life with developments in New Spain; the other two published their works in Europe with clear Old World perspectives.

Sor María's Puebla was something of a model city, planned with both agriculture and commerce in mind, and the convent in which she lived was prestigious, with its hierarchy based on the position and wealth of the families of its inhabitants. The religious model to be followed was Saint Ignatius Loyola, whose precepts of chastity and humility included the imitation of Christ's sufferings and led to the destruction of the female body. Cases of extreme fasting, flagellation, and other self-inflicted punishments were not uncommon, but Sor María's were exaggerated even by standards of her era. Her visions, with incidents of prophecy and telepathy, were very much appreciated by her contemporaries, including cases of nuns who feared her for piercing their minds too deeply. Miracles were attributed to her, sometimes narrated in the style of novels chivalry.

Professor Drago clarifies the practice of nuns writing down their confessions at the behest of their confessors, whose prestige was augmented by the work of the nuns in their charge. But visions could be dangerous, and the watchful eye of the Inquisition was quick to scrutinize anything that might be considered heretical. Sor María's words caused her confessor to search for a "helper" to copy down her outpourings, and to keep an eye on her. In the biographies that followed, based on Sor Agustina's observations, it was usually the visions, rather than her behavior, that kept Sor María from achieving sainthood—the only criticism of her personally was that she wasn't humble enough. There were few female saints to emulate; Saint Gertrude the Great of Helfta, mystic from the 13th century, and the much closer in time and culture Saint Teresa of Avila, canonized in 1622 and proclaimed a Doctor of the Church. Drago argues convincingly that the visions of these women so controlled by an unrelenting patriarchy represented their striving for a voice, for who can argue with a vision? They even had visions to explain and interpret their visions. The struggle of women to have a voice through the only outlet they had was brought to the attention of scholars in *Untold Sisters* (Arenal and Schlau 1989), a groundbreaking study of convent writing in the Hispanic world.

For all those familiar with this time and place, the tribulations of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz will come to mind. Born a decade or so after the death of Sor María, her troubles began when Manuel Fernández de Santa Cruz, Bishop of Puebla, induced her to write a response to sermons, forty years previous, of Antonio de Vieyra. The same Fernández de Santa Cruz persuaded Diego de Lemus to write about Sor María, in advocacy of her beatification, much desired by the Mexican authorities, both ecclesiastic and secular. Drago's analysis of the politics of the day greatly enhances the understanding of this subject: she discusses the New

World inferiority complex, the rise of Marianism, the church's belief in Purgatory and the Immaculate Conception in contrast to the rising Protestant movement, and the expulsion and dissolution of the Jesuits during the long period of efforts to canonize Sor María.

Professor Drago's writing is clear and straightforward. The Appendix is most helpful since it includes some of the visions and spiritual exercises of the would-be saint, additional information about the role of Sor Agustina, and excerpts from the three biographies analyzed. An index would have been useful as well.

Kathleen Mc너ney  
Professor Emerita  
West Virginia University

## AURÉLIE VIALETTE

**Godón, Nuria. La pasión esclava: Alianzas masoquistas en La Regenta. Purdue University Press, 2017. 224 pp.**

Una pensaría que ya no se puede publicar nada revolucionario sobre una obra tan canónica como *La Regenta* de Clarín. Pero una se equivocaría. El libro de Nuria Godón, *La pasión esclava: Alianzas masoquistas en La Regenta*, es la prueba de que incluso la literatura más estudiada ofrece caminos de interpretación nuevos. La autora propone estudiar esta novela bajo un ángulo muy concreto, nunca estudiado hasta ahora: el de la adopción de mecanismos masoquistas, que sirven como “dinámica defensiva y vehículo de safío ante la imaginería establecida sobre la concepción de roles genéricos” (3). Si bien se publicaron numerosos estudios sobre la importancia de la religión y del género en *La Regenta*, así como sobre el adulterio en relación con la mujer, Nuria Godón insiste en que el masoquismo y el erotismo desde un punto de vista feminista no son temas que hayan sido explorados. Según ella, un estudio de la dinámica masoquista permite entender de qué manera la parte sumisa, en este caso la mujer, puede expresar su agencia y creatividad para a su vez adoptar un rol de dominación; es lo que denomina “el masoquismo transgresor como estrategia subversiva de dominación” (6). El masoquismo transgresor permite la manifestación de un lugar de resistencia gracias al cual se redistribuye el poder y se renueva y reestructura el yo. Asimismo, y en el caso de Ana en la novela de Clarín, el masoquismo transgresor es una manera de rechazar la pasividad, la sumisión y la abnegación de la mujer del discurso de la domesticidad. Por tanto, el masoquismo transgresor renegocia las condiciones del poder establecido (6).

Nuria Godón plantea de manera excelente un marco teórico para todo el libro (capítulo Uno “Reconsiderando el masoquismo”) gracias al cual el lector puede entender en qué consiste el masoquismo subversivo. La autora discute tanto la literatura como la crítica acerca del masoquismo (Sacher-Masoch, Krafft-Ebing, Sartre, Deleuze, de Beauvoir, Reik) los discursos científicos, en particular psiquiátricos, entorno a la sexualidad y a la aparición de los términos masoquismo y sadismo. Pone a discutir episodios de *La Regenta* que iluminan las ideas de la crítica y de la ciencia de la época sobre el masoquismo. Por ejemplo, el capítulo explica la particularidad del contexto decimonónico a la hora de establecer el contrato masoquista: en ese contexto, es la sumisa, y no la parte autoritaria (como es el caso en Sacher-Masoch) quien hace firmar las reglas, lo cual permite la creación de agencia, libertad

y burla de la ley para el que se somete. Godón lee este contrato en *La Regenta* como una parodia del contrato matrimonial. Explica cómo se articulan la dialéctica de las almas gemelas, el contrato masoquista, el placer y el dolor, la teatralidad y el fetichismo, con el fin de probar de qué manera estos componentes permiten entender el sentido contrahegemónico e interpretar el masoquismo en relación con el discurso doméstico decimonónico. Se da un especial énfasis a la teatralidad dentro del mundo masoquista, lo cual es analizado en el marco de las teorías sobre la *performance*.

El desarrollo de la agencia femenina dentro de los mecanismos de la sumisión es también objeto de discusión en el libro (segundo capítulo “Yo tu esclava y tú mi amo”). La autora argumenta “cómo la relación masoquista entre Ana y Fermín, desexualizada y asentada en la conceptualización de almas hermanas, permite a la protagonista resignificarse dentro de un nuevo orden que parodia la engañosa complementariedad de la pareja mientras desafía los roles genéricos” (55). Esta parodia establece una crítica del encadenamiento de la mujer dentro del matrimonio burgués. A lo largo del libro y en particular en el segundo capítulo, Godón ofrece un análisis profundizado de la carta-contrato masoquista que le escribe Ana al Magistral, “el contrato genera una nueva ley e irónicamente provee un aspecto jurídico a la *performance*” (77). Este contrato-carta no está exento de vinculación al carácter fetichista del contrato masoquista, que se encuentra en los textos de Sacher-Masoch y que en la novela de Clarín aparece “mediante la fantasía erotizada, la entrega personal y el objeto que desata la violencia” (97, “La pasión extraviada” tercer capítulo). La carta que le escribe Ana a Fermín se vuelve objeto fetichizado; como asimismo lo son ciertos objetos que rodean a los personajes. El análisis del vocabulario de la novela en el tercer capítulo es particularmente interesante, como se puede ver cuando Godón analiza las connotaciones eróticas del subtexto masoquista “con un claro énfasis en el se sirve de los tejidos: pieles, raso, holanda y lana para enmarcar la violencia. La piel de tigre desprende en la obra de Clarín el mismo efecto suntuoso que Sacher-Masoch dona a los tejidos. Como catalizador de la sensualidad de la protagonista, Ana se desnuda sobre la piel de tigre para oprimir y desvigorizar su carne de raso, aquella que evoca de nuevo las capas de raso que el Magistral desflora y marchita en sus manos” (108). El tercer capítulo trata también temas importantes en la novela como la masturbación femenina, la autoflagelación, la procesión de Semana Santa (que la autora interpreta como la puesta en escena del ritual masoquista).

Pero Ana y Fermín no son los únicos personajes de *La Regenta* que entran en el análisis del masoquismo transgresor ofrecido en *La pasión esclava: Alianzas masoquistas en La Regenta*. Efectivamente, doña Paula, la madre del Magistral, es vista en su rol de imperatrix dentro del marco masoquista (cuarto y último capítulo del libro, “El imperio masoquista en la madre iglesia”). Explica Nuria Godón que la relación madre-hijo del mundo masoquista permite una crítica anticlerical que se establece a través de la articulación de un dispositivo familiar que ella denomina “masoquismo filial” (134). El masoquismo filia sería el vínculo indisoluble entre madre e hijos, el cual crea un lazo autoritario y una sumisión a la voluntad materna. La madre de Fermín ejerce todo su poder sobre su hijo, lo cual establece otra relación de dominador/dominado en la novela; una relación en la cual Fermín se encuentra esta vez en un plano inferior, sumiso: “el lector se percata de que el que pretende dominar a Vetusta es, a su vez, esclavo de los intereses maternos” (152). El libro cierra con dos apéndices, primero el “contrato entre Wanda y Sacher-Masoch”, segundo el “Contrato entre la señora Wantad von Dunajev y el señor Severin von Kusienski.”

Los estudios culturales anglofonos, francófonos y germánicos se han interesado en la dimensión masoquista mucho más que los estudios peninsulares. El libro de Nuria Godón, *La*

pasión esclava: *Alianzas masoquistas en La Regenta*, pone a dialogar la literatura con campos como la historial cultural, la antropología, la filosofía, la sociología y la psicología y nos incita a abrir nuevas vías de interpretación para la literatura decimonónica. La conclusión de la autora es que *La Regenta* de Clarín es un *bildungsroman* del masoquismo transgresor en la España finisecular (165), lo cual nos invita a ver con otro ojos, quizá, muchas de las obras literarias de la época.

Aurélie Vialette  
Stony Brook University

## PILAR MARTÍNEZ-QUIROGA

**Rødtjer, Rocío. *Women and Nationhood in Restoration Spain 1874-1931. The State as Family. Legenda*, 2019. 172 pp.**

El cuadro que ilustra la portada, “Jura de la Constitución por S.M. la Reina doña María Cristina” de Joaquín Sorolla, junto a los conceptos castizo, cursi y pedigrí, vertebran el análisis de Rocío Rødtjer sobre la participación de la mujer y de la literatura en la construcción de la nación en el periodo de la Restauración borbónica. La autora recurre a la imagen de la Reina María Cristina, embarazada y con la mano posada sobre la Constitución, como un símbolo ambivalente: representante del futuro del liberalismo y de la estabilidad política del país a través de la continuación de la monarquía, pero también perpetuador de un modelo de mujer reducida a su capacidad biológica para la maternidad y a su papel de guardiana de las tradiciones. Rødtjer proyecta esta ambivalencia también a la literatura al enfatizar su función en la construcción del discurso nacional y en la exclusión de la mujer del mismo a dos niveles. Por un lado, la literatura de la época visibiliza a la mujer al reproducir el tropo que la identifica como madre de la nación, pero este mismo recurso la relega a su función biológica. Por otro lado, la literatura hegemónica ignora a la mujer escritora en la confección del canon al clasificar su producción como cursi o pasada de moda, mientras que la literatura escrita por hombres es considerada castiza o se resalta su pedigrí al conectarla genealógicamente con obras clásicas. Al desplazar a la mujer fuera del canon se la excluye paralelamente del discurso sobre la nación. Expuesto este panorama, el objetivo principal de Rødtjer consiste en recuperar para el canon a tres escritoras que desde posiciones políticas muy divergentes emprendieron proyectos de inclusión de la mujer en el nuevo proyecto nacional de la monarquía liberal. En un contexto que las reclusa al espacio privado, Julia de Asensi, Blanca de los Ríos y Carmen de Burgos trataron de dignificar el espacio privado como propio y lo transcendieron a través de diferentes agendas determinadas por el estatus económico de sus familias y por sus trabajos como docentes, investigadoras y escritoras.

La generalidad del título no representa la profundidad y la originalidad de la propuesta de Rødtjer, la cual abarca un periodo mucho más amplio que la Restauración, retrotrayéndose hasta la Edad Media y deteniéndose en detalle en el siglo XVIII. El excesivo número de capítulos progresiva desde la contextualización sobre el desarrollo del liberalismo en España y su contribución a la expulsión de la mujer del canon historiográfico y literario, atravesando capítulos introductorios a la labor específica de cada autora, hasta alcanzar el análisis pormenorizado de varias de sus obras. En el segundo capítulo, Rødtjer se sirve de la experiencia personal de Asensi, como hija de diplomático, maestra y colaboradora del proyecto Biblioteca de Autores Españoles (BAE), para resaltar el papel de las maestras y

escritoras de literatura infantil en relación con la promulgación de la Ley Moyano (1857). Esta ley abrió un campo de trabajo a la mujer como maestras y difusoras de opinión sobre el nuevo estado monárquico liberal. Además de la experiencia personal, en la línea de Kirsty Hooper, Rødtjer relee algunos de los géneros literarios tildados de femeninos y denostados por la crítica patriarcal, como el drama romántico o la novella historiográfica, como géneros con posibilidades contestatarias. Así lo demuestra en el capítulo tres, dedicado al estudio de la novella histórica “El encubierto” de Asensi.

El formato empleado en los capítulos sobre Asensi se reproduce en los designados a Blanca de los Ríos. En los capítulos cuarto, quinto y sexto, Rødtjer analiza la situación familiar y académica privilegiada de la autora y cómo las utilizó para proporcionar visibilidad a la mujer. Su contribución se produjo principalmente desde su trabajo como crítica literaria en la recuperación de la obra de Tirso de Molina con un enfoque de género y con sus publicaciones en volúmenes prestigiosos como la Biblioteca Mignon. Al igual que en Asensi, Rødtjer destaca el valor contestatario de su preferencia por géneros desprestigiados por la crítica, como sus novellas históricas, publicadas en la revista *El Cuento Semanal*. Es especialmente estimulante el capítulo sexto, centrado en la novella *Madrid goyesco* de Ríos, por su enfoque en personajes femeninos creadores de falsos pedigüeros genealógicos concebidos como mecanismo de inclusión en la construcción imaginaria de la nación y por su lograda intertextualidad con la pintura. Este acercamiento interdisciplinar se extiende a los capítulos octavo, noveno y al epílogo, dedicados respectivamente a las obras *La que quiso ser maja*, *Los anticuarios* y *Los huesos del abuelo* de Carmen de Burgos, en los que Rødtjer estudia el papel desempeñado por los museos y las reliquias en la construcción de la nación y la contribución de la mujer a esta labor.

Para comprender la totalidad del libro debemos tener en cuenta que Rødtjer considera que el concepto de feminismo utilizado hoy en día no es aplicable a la época de la Restauración, lo cual ha determinado qué escritoras han sido recuperadas para el canon y cuáles han sido largamente ignoradas. Como explica Rødtjer en el séptimo capítulo, a diferencia de Asensi o Ríos, Carmen de Burgos ha sido objeto de múltiples estudios en los últimos años porque su postura ideológica de izquierdas y promulgadora del feminismo coincide con una visión más actual. Precisamente, las principales contribuciones del libro de Rødtjer al campo consisten en repensar el concepto de feminismo desde la Restauración; en la revisión de las agendas de autoras que encajarían dentro de un concepto de feminismo mucho más amplio; y en la interpretación contestataria de los géneros literarios desprestigiados al ser clasificados como femeninos.

Pilar Martínez-Quiroga  
University of Illinois, at Urbana-Champaign

## OLGA BEZHANOVA

**Sellers-García, Sylvia. *The Woman on the Windowsill: A Tale of Mystery in Several Parts*. Yale UP, 2020, pp. 281.**

In this fascinating and original book, historian Sylvia Sellers-García takes the readers through the streets, living quarters, churches and hospitals of Guatemala City in year 1800 in an investigation of a gruesome crime that shook colonial Guatemala at the dawn of the nineteenth century. When severed body parts and mutilated female bodies started to appear

in public places around Guatemala City beginning on July 1, 1800, colonial authorities employed their newly acquired zeal for policing crime to apprehend the culprit. Sellers-García follows the traces of that investigation through the archives, acquainting her readers with the complexities of archival research and delving into the realities of late eighteenth-century Guatemala as the foundations of its transformation into a modern nation-state were being laid through the reforms instituted by the Bourbon dynasty.

It is not an easy task to write a book of scholarly research that can be of interest and value to readers with no professional knowledge of the field while still holding its own as a significant scholarly contribution to the study of history. On the one hand, the author runs a risk of offering too much historical background and personalizing the account to the point where specialist readers would find the narrative of little value. On the other, if the text becomes too laden with professional jargon and assumes that the readers have too sophisticated a knowledge of the relevant time period, it will lose its capacity to appeal to a wider audience. Sellers-García masterfully overcomes these challenges, creating a narrative that can appeal to readers with different degrees of understanding of the history of colonial Central America. She does not overload the text with scholarly references, tucking the bibliographical information into endnotes that are often quite long and always very informative. The book features thirty-two illustrations that offer the readers images of archival texts, drawings, and artwork that facilitate the journey through the fascinating material discussed in *The Woman on the Windowsill*.

The crime that lies at the heart of Sellers-García's investigation is gruesome in nature but the historian discusses it with great sensitivity and tact. As she details her emotional reaction to the dismemberment of an unknown woman's body, Sellers-García offers an enlightening discussion on the differences in what was perceived as horror in late eighteenth century and what we see as horrifying today (4-6). This discussion appears early in the book and sets the tone for the entire narrative. One of the overarching themes of *The Woman on the Windowsill* is the importance of approaching history on its own terms. This is what makes the book particularly useful as an educational tool as it teaches the readers not to fall into the fallacy of judging the beliefs, behaviors and moral norms of the past from the vantage point of today.

One of the most valuable aspects of this enlightening volume is the discussion of the complexities and limitations of archival research. Sellers-García details the difficulties she ran into while conducting her investigation, yet she does that in a way that does not needlessly center her own hardships as a scholar of history who often fails to encounter the archival documents she needs. Instead, Sellers-García invites the readers to ponder how the exclusion of certain kinds of knowledge from historical records is in itself an important facet of the past and the present (151-53).

The titles of the book's introduction, eight chapters, and epilogue are modeled on what in his 1742 novel Joseph Andrews Henry Fielding referred to as "those little spaces between our chapters [that] might be looked upon as an inn or a resting place" where readers can stop and reflect on what they are reading. "Strangers in the Valley: In Which Don Cayetano Díaz Opens His Window," for instance, is the title of the first chapter. The habit of providing short summaries in the chapter titles that had been part of the Western literary tradition since the times of early Christian scribes was mostly abandoned in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Today's readers associate this type of chapter title with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novels, which allows Sellers-García to set the tone for the reading of each chapter from the start. Less justified, in my view, is Sellers-García's decision to place a quote from

Arlette Farge's *The Allure of the Archives* (1981) between the title and the body of each chapter. Farge's book is undoubtedly a foundational text for today's historiography, yet the tone of Farge's writing clashes with Sellers-García's way of narrating the fascinating story she unearthed in her research.

The overabundance of quotes from Farge, however, is the only defect of an otherwise brilliantly constructed and meticulously researched volume. I would greatly recommend it to those who teach courses on colonial Guatemala as well as scholars who offer introductory-level courses in history or Hispanic civilization. *The Woman on the Windowsill* teaches that history should be approached with tact, intelligence, and respect, and there are few lessons that are more important than this one.

Olga Bezhanova  
Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville

## Announcements

### Graduate Student Essay Prize Competition

The Executive Committee of *Feministas Unidas Inc.*, an allied organization of the MLA, is pleased to announce a call for papers for the 18th Annual Feministas Unidas Essay Prize competition for graduate students. This Prize is awarded for an outstanding unpublished essay on feminist scholarship on women in the field of literature, the arts, filmmaking, Transatlantic studies or cultural studies in the areas covered by our organization's mission: Spanish, Spanish-American, Luso-Brazilian, Afro-Latin American, and U.S. Hispanic Studies.

The purpose of the essay prize is to promote feminist scholarship by those who are entering our profession and are currently graduate students. The selection committee is drawn from officers and members of Feministas Unidas. *Feministas Unidas Inc.* reserves the right not to award the prize in a given year.

**Award:** \$300 and publication of the essay in the journal *Ámbitos Feministas*. The author of the winning essay must be a member of *Feministas Unidas Inc.* at the time of publication of the essay. Winning essay will receive corresponding editorial comments from competition readers as well as from *Letras Femeninas* Editors. Essays will be published one year after acceptance.

**Eligibility:** Graduate students who are current or new members of *Feministas Unidas Inc.* are eligible to submit their original research for the prize.

#### Guidelines:

- An unpublished paper
- Length: 18-25 pages, double-spaced, including notes and works cited
- Format: MLA style. Prepare the manuscript according to instructions for "Anonymous Submissions"
- Languages: Spanish or English
- Deadline for submission: **November 30, 2020**  
Items to be submitted by email to Marta Boris <[martab@uidaho.edu](mailto:martab@uidaho.edu)>
- Essay
- 200-word abstract of the essay
- Author's C.V.
- Submit all materials in the following way: one hard copy and as an e-mail attachment. Please submit essays without names and add a cover page with the title of your work, your name and institutional affiliation. This will help us ensure adequate refereed procedures.

## Feministas Unidas Inc. 2021 Annual meeting

The 2021 annual meeting of *Feministas Unidas Inc.* will take place during the 2021 MLA annual convention in Toronto. The meeting is open to all current members of the coalition. Time and date TBA.

As a MLA allied organization, every year *Feministas Unidas Inc.* organizes several panels on topics of interest to the coalition and we encourage all its members to send proposals once the panels are announced.

## Call for Papers and Contributions

### *Letras Femeninas*

**Letras Femeninas** (<http://www.letrasfemeninas.org>) es el órgano oficial de la Asociación Internacional de Literatura y Cultura Femenina Hispánica.

Publica colaboraciones de los socios de número de AILCFH en forma de artículos críticos sobre literatura femenina y reseñas de libros escritos por mujeres. Las socias pueden enviar también poemas, piezas teatrales y narraciones por duplicado y a doble espacio, especificando el nombre y el país de origen de la autora.

Los artículos críticos deben oscilar entre las 17 y las 25 páginas a doble espacio y deben ser enviados por duplicado y de acuerdo con las normas editoriales establecidas en la última edición de The MLA Handbook for Writers. Deben venir acompañados de una breve sinopsis y de un sobre dirigido a quien lo remite, con la franquicia correspondiente en sellos sueltos o cupones internacionales. La cuota anual para pertenecer a la AILCFH incluye la suscripción a *Letras Femeninas*.

Envíe sus colaboraciones a: Prof. Dianna Niebyski, Letras Femeninas Editor University of Illinois at Chicago, Department of Hispanic and Italian Studies a [dcn@uic.edu](mailto:dcn@uic.edu) pero con copia a [amarin25@uic.edu](mailto:amarin25@uic.edu).

### *Ámbitos Feministas*

Revista crítica multidisciplinaria anual de la coalición *Feministas Unidas Inc.*

An annual peer-reviewed multidisciplinary journal of criticism pertinent to current feminist issues in Spanish, Spanish-American, Luso-Brazilian, Afro-Latin American, Caribbean, U.S. Hispanic and Latino Studies. The editors of *Ámbitos Feministas*, a multidisciplinary journal of criticism pertinent to current feminist issues in Spanish, Spanish-American, Luso-Brazilian, Afro-Latin American, Caribbean, U.S. Hispanic and Latino Studies, invite unpublished critical essays in English, Spanish, and Portuguese on literature, film, art, plastic arts, music, gender studies, history, etc., relating to contemporary Hispanic/Luso/Latina women writers and artists. Original unpublished creative work (short stories, poetry) is also encouraged. The accepted papers will appear in the next annual fall volume.

Submit original and cover letter as Word attachments to [carmen.urioste@asu.edu](mailto:carmen.urioste@asu.edu)

#### **Editorial Guidelines for Submissions:**

A current membership to the coalition *Feministas Unidas Inc.* (<http://membership.feministas-unidas.org>) is required of all authors at the time of submission and must be kept until the end of the process. [Membership information](#)

Manuscripts should be double-spaced and between 17-25 double-spaced pages in length, including all notes, as well as the Works Cited. They should be formatted using Times New Roman Size 12 and 1" margins.

For review purposes, originals should contain no reference to the author. Include a one page cover letter with author's information: name, rank, academic affiliation, email, postal address, essay's title, and a brief bio (8-10 lines) with latest publications.

Essays in Spanish, Portuguese or English, need to conform to the most recent versions of the MLA Style Manual and the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers.

The end notes will be at the end of the essay, and they should not be inserted automatically. Please manually use numbers in superscript in the text and then refer to them in the end notes section.

## Feministas Unidas Inc. in Congresses

**FEMINISTAS UNIDAS, INC. en NeMLA 2021: Feminist Theory and Art Between Tradition and Innovation**  
Philadelphia, PA – March 11-14, 2021

**Chair: Olga Bezhanova, Southern Illinois University**

Feministas Unidas invites you to join our panel on artistic and theoretical contributions by female and feminist artists in the Hispanic world. In our panel we will discuss the ways in which the current generation of feminist artists and theorists shapes feminist discourse and transforms it to suit the needs of this time in history.

Which feminist traditions are worth preserving and which will have to be displaced as a result of our evolving understanding of the complexities of female marginalization? What kind of artistic and theoretical innovations serve the goals of feminism?

Submit abstracts at the NeMLA website (<https://www.cfplist.com/nemla/Home/S/18674>) before September 30, 2020. Inquiries about the panel should be addressed to Olga Bezhanova ([obezhan@siue.edu](mailto:obezhan@siue.edu)).

## **FEMINISTAS UNIDAS, INC. en MLA 2021: Feminist Genealogies**

**Toronto, Canada, January 2021**

This session explores the way in which female authors and filmmakers in the Luso-Hispanic world develop genealogies of mutual reliance and support that inspire each other in their creative work. More information TBA.

## Treasurer's Report

January 1, 2020 – June 30, 2020

Submitted by Olga Bezhanova

General Fund (including the Scholarship Fund. See below for a specific breakdown of the Scholarship Fund monies).

	In	Out
Previous Balance	\$ 14,651.29 (\$ 11,622.25 (bank)+ (\$3,029.04 PayPal)	
Membership dues through PayPal (minus the fees)	\$895.86	
Membership dues through mail	\$90	
Adela Zamudio (2 <sup>nd</sup> Prize)		\$400
E-chapters		\$239
Office supplies (certificates+folders)		\$46.32
MLA, Women's caucus		\$223
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$14,728.83</b>	
	(\$10,803.93 (bank) + (3,924.90 PayPal)	

### Scholarship Fund

	In	Out
Previous balance	\$2,085	
Contributions		
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## Membership Form Feministas Unidas, Inc.

Founded in 1979, *Feministas Unidas, Inc.* is a non-profit Coalition of Feminist Scholars in Spanish, Spanish-American, Luso-Brazilian, Afro-Latin American, and U.S. Hispanic and Latino Studies. Our Coalition publishes an enewsletter in the spring and fall, and an annual critical peer-reviewed journal, *Ámbitos Feministas*, in the Fall. As an allied organization of the MLA, *Feministas Unidas Inc.* sponsors several panels at the annual convention, as well as at other academic meetings (SAMLA, NeMLA, etc.). As an interdisciplinary alliance, we embrace all fields of studies and culture relating to Hispanic women. To renew on-line, go to: <http://membership.feministas-unidas.org>

To pay by check print this form and mail it with check payable to: *Feministas Unidas, Inc.*

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*Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville*

*2333 Peck Hall, Edwardsville, IL, 62026*

Inquiries or e-mail corrections to: [obezhan@siue.edu](mailto:obezhan@siue.edu). Change or update your personal/professional at <http://fu.echapters.com>.

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**Ámbitos Feministas** is the official critical journal of the coalition *Feministas Unidas, Inc.*.  
ISSN 2164-0998.  
MLA and EBSCO indexed.  
Peer Reviewed. Printed. Published annually in the fall.

**Ámbitos Feministas** aims to foster critical exchanges on the current status of feminist studies in relationship to creative work (literature, film, plastic arts) by contemporary Hispanic, Iberian, Luso and USA Latino women.  
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ISSN 1933-1479 (print)  
ISSN 1933-1487 (on line)  
It is published biannually (October and February) by Publication on-line

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