



Elizabeth Starčević, *Thin Red Line*, wool and cotton (2005)

# *Feministas Unidas, Inc.*

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## Message from the Editor

Estimad@s miembr@s de *Feministas Unidas, Inc.*,

Antes que nada quiero desearles un muy buen año. Que el 2018 les traiga salud prosperidad, amor, risas y muchos proyectos que lxs inspiren y estimulen.

El nuevo año también comienza con una nueva presidenta (Prof. Tina Escaja), vicepresidenta (Prof. Cymthia Tompkins) y tesorera (Prof. Olga Bezhanova). Les agradezco su nominación, su vocación de servicio y su activismo para beneficio de nuestra organización y les deseo una excelente gestión.

En este numero de primavera, he tenido el placer de entrevistar a la profesora y tejedora Elizabeth Starčević. En una época donde el activismo es más importante que nunca, sus tejidos llaman la atención sobre hechos que merecen ser recordados y discutidos.

Aprovecho la oportunidad para agradecerle el haber accedido a la entrevista.

Nuevamente, deseándoles un muy buen año, las saluda cordialmente

Maria Alejandra Zanetta.

Editora *Feministas Unidas, Inc.*

**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 and Vicepresident

Estimada membresía:

Es para mí un honor tomar las riendas de Feministas Unidas y mantener su pulso de activismo académico y encuentro entre disciplinas, particularmente en un momento de especial relevancia en el ámbito feminista.

Para seguir con nuestra misión y objetivos resulta imprescindible que se mantengan al día con la cuota anual, una cuota que continúa las módicas cantidades de los últimos años (entre \$10 y \$20 según las categorías académicas). Les invito no sólo a renovar su cuota del año en curso, sino a animar también a nuevxs colegas y estudiantes graduadxs a unirse a nuestra dinámica e importante asociación. Para renovar o iniciar la membresía sólo hay que acceder a la sección “membership” de nuestra página: <http://feministas-unidas.org/>

Entre los retos de este año se encuentra el hecho de que iniciamos la andadura del ejecutivo con tres puestos enteramente nuevos: presidencia, vicepresidencia y tesorería, dada la renuncia de las representantes de dichos puestos en octubre del año pasado. No obstante, contamos con el apoyo del ejecutivo previo y del fabuloso grupo actual, como también contamos con todxs ustedes para seguir manteniendo el éxito, relevancia y presencia de nuestra asociación. A propósito del robo de identidad y fraude que se produjo el año pasado y que fue constatando en el Newsletter anterior, comentar que estamos haciendo seguimiento del tema y les informaremos de cualquier avance relativo a la investigación en curso.

Una vez más, les agradezco la confianza y les animo a participar activamente en este momento tan importante para los estudios feministas. Les deseo un buen inicio de semestre en sus respectivas instituciones, y un año nuevo espectacular.

Un caluroso saludo,

Tina Escaja  
Presidenta, Feministas Unidas

Estimadas colegas de Feministas Unidas,

Gracias por votarme, como Vice Presidenta. Les recuerdo mi plataforma:

Me postulo porque creo que debemos tratar de captar a nuestras colegas más jóvenes, porque ellas son las que van a tomar la posta en esta organización. A tal fin quisiera fomentar paneles sobre cine, digital humanities y novísimas escritoras. Asimismo, me gustaría tener una columna que se enfoque en cuestiones de mentoría porque me parece que hay muy poco en términos de las humanidades y menos aún en nuestro campo.

Como les dije inicialmente, he estado involucrada en Feministas Unidas oor mucho tiempo, ya que me encargué de 16 números del *Newsletter* (1998-2005) y luego seguí de secretaria hasta alrededor del 2016.

Justamente por el tema del fraude y mientras espero una clara respuesta del comité ejecutivo anterior, propongo cambiar los bylaws:

Quisiera que todo pedido de movimiento de fondos sea aprobado con antelación por todos los miembros del ejecutivo y que se incluya a la persona a quien se le giran los fondos.

Me parece esencial llegar al fondo de esta cuestión y proponer soluciones para que estas situaciones no se vuelvan a repetir.

Cordialmente

Cynthia Margarita Tompkins  
Vice President, Feministas Unidas

**Tina Escaja**, Presidenta de Feministas Unidas, Inc, ejerce la cátedra de literatura Ibeoramericana en la Universidad de Vermont y la dirección del programa Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies en la misma institución. Como investigadora ha publicado extensamente sobre género y tecnología en la poesía española y latinoamericana contemporánea. Sus trabajos poéticos trascienden el formato en papel e integran proyectos que involucran variantes multimedia, robótica y de realidad aumentada.

**Cynthia Margarita Tompkins** Vive 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.asaeca.org/imagofagia/sitio/>. Tompkins directs the Undergraduate Certificate in Latin American Studies, the Undergraduate Certificate in Translation, and the Graduate Certificate in Literary Translation. In addition she is launching a study abroad program in Buenos Aires for summer 2018.

## Message from the Treasurer

Dear colleagues,

I sincerely thank you for giving me an opportunity to serve Feministas Unidas as its new Treasurer. Ours is an organization that makes an important contribution to facilitating and promoting feminist scholarship. I'm looking forward to working together with the new leadership of Feministas Unidas on attracting new members, continuing the great initiatives that were started by the previous leaders of the association, and looking for ways to gain even greater visibility for the important work we do. As a scholar of gender, I am well-aware of the importance of uniting our efforts in a struggle for justice and recognition. I am looking forward to serving Feministas Unidas in 2018.

Cordially,

Olga Bezhanova  
Treasurer, Feministas Unidas

**Olga Bezhanova**, Treasurer of Feministas Unidas, Inc., is an Associate Professor of Spanish Literature at Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville. Dr. Bezhanova's research interests include gender, nationalism, literature of crisis, and contemporary Peninsular poetry and theater. Her articles on the subject of modern and contemporary Spanish literature have appeared in *Romance Quarterly*, *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*, *Hispanófila*, *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos*, *Letras hispanas*, *Anales galdosianos*, etc. Her book *Growing Up in an Inhospitable World: Female Bildungsroman in Spain* was awarded the Victoria Urbano Prize for the Best Critical Monograph by the Asociación Internacional de Literatura y Cultura Femenina Hispánica. Dr. Bezhanova's second book titled *Literature of Crisis: Spain's Engagement with Liquid Capital* was published by Bucknell University Press in the Fall of 2017.

## 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  
Arizona State University  
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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).

## Focus on the Profession: Entrevista a Elizabeth Starcevic por María Alejandra Zanetta

**MAZ:** Antes de comenzar con el tejido, el foco de tu investigación académica se centraba en escritoras feministas comprometidas con la realidad social que les toco vivir como por ejemplo Carmen de Burgos y Elena Poniatowska. ¿De qué manera tu interés en la literatura feminista y testimonial ha afectado tu labor como tejedora y el que te hayas interesado por este medio de expresión?

**ES:** En 1969 cuando empecé a enseñar la literatura y lengua española en la universidad City College of New York, mi profesor me dio un libro con una breve introducción a Carmen de Burgos. Me pareció fascinante por su radicalismo. Vengo de una familia que siempre ha defendido los derechos de los sin derechos y yo seguía ese camino. Fue un momento en que muchos de mi generación estábamos reclamando los derechos de votar para los africanos-americanos, los latinos, los derechos de la mujer, un fin a la guerra en Vietnam, el acceso a la universidad para todos y un programa que reflejara la presencia de los olvidados o excluidos de los cursos de estudio. La selección de Carmen de Burgos como figura feminista sería retar el canon existente. Yo había estudiado en City College antes de enseñar allí durante más de 42 años. La escuela era gratis. El derecho a la educación para todos por la cual luchó mi generación se ha convertido en - el derecho de adquirir una deuda grande por asistir a la universidad. Por eso hice un tapiz con tres paneles que representan mi Universidad. En el último hay las palabras- EDUCATION IS A RIGHT - LA EDUCACIÓN ES UN DERECHO que cuelga en el edificio administrativo de mi escuela a la vista de todos.

**MAZ:** ¿Cómo comenzó tu carrera como tejedora? ¿qué fue lo que te hizo interesarte por este medio de expresión en particular?

**ES:** En 1992 fui a México para hacer una investigación sobre la obra de la escritora Elena Poniatowska y busqué algo que hacer en mi tiempo libre. No sabía nada del arte de tejer pero cuando entré en el salón de textiles me enamoré tanto de los colores como de la textura de la lana. Me fue difícil pero seguía porque mi maestro era muy bueno y me gustaba el ambiente de la clase. De allí, iba durante cada vacaciones de mi universidad. Ahora que estoy jubilada, sigo yendo a México dos veces al año.

**MAZ:** ¿Nos podrías explicar de qué manera la labor de tejedora se alía con la de activismo social tanto en la práctica de tejer en un colectivo como el de San Miguel Allende como en el contenido de los tapices y telas que creas?

**ES:** Creo que estás forzando la noción de un "colectivo". Trabajo sola entre otros



estudiantes pero mi obra es muy individual. Hay representaciones de mis viajes- *Sidney Opera House* o *The Tulip Fields of Holland* (Los campos de tulípanes en Holanda) por ejemplo. Hay cinco piezas : *River of Blood* (Río de sangre), *The Thin Red Line* (La delgada línea roja), *Seismic Sighs for Peace in War* (Suspiros sísmicos por la paz durante la guerra) , *Darkness, War, Peace and a Little Bit of Hope* (Oscuridad, guerra, paz y un poco de esperanza) y *A Pallid Peace* (Una paz pálida) que representan el inmenso impacto de la decisión de mi país de entrar en una guerra en Irak con el pretexto de buscar armas que no existían. Murió tanta, tanta gente en los dos lados. Por desgracia, estas obras siguen representando la realidad de guerras que continúan hoy en día con la pérdida de tantas vidas. Muchas cosas me han inspirado y mi obra es muy variada.

**MAZ:** ¿Podrías explicar el tapiz titulado *The Air My Mother Left Me*, 2011?, ¿tiene este tapiz alguna conexión con el tema de la tradición matrilineal que hemos perdido y que necesitamos recuperar?

**ES:** Cuando era joven, mi madre fumaba 4 cajetillas de Pall Mall al día. Muchos de su generación fumaban. Yo estaba rodeada del humo de sus cigarros y eso me afectó permanentemente los pulmones. Entre las muchas cosas que ella me dejó, buenas e importantes, el fumar nos ha dejado muchas enfermedades-el cáncer, por ejemplo, y un aire contaminado. Así que tendría que decir que no, esa tradición de la generación de mi madre no se debe recuperar. Durante un tiempo había campañas contra el fumar, pero veo que hay muchos que están fumando hoy en día.

**MAZ:** Me intriga el título del tapiz “*The Path is Pink*” ¿por qué razón aúnas el tema de la travesía con el color rosa? ¿Hay algún significado en la ubicación espacial del color rosa en la composición del mismo?

**ES:** Al principio mi visión del color rosa se conectaba con la belleza del color y la verticalidad de mi diseño. Pero creo que es importante conectar el color con las manifestaciones de mujeres en Estados Unidos y en muchas partes del mundo, a raíz de la elección del presidente Trump. Las manifestaciones fueron un acto de presencia, de rechazo y de solidaridad que muestran que- *The Path is Pink* - y que las mujeres no se echarán para atrás.

**MAZ:** En el tapiz titulado *Darkness, War, Peace and a Little Bit of Hope*, (2006) ¿a qué eventos específicamente haces referencia? ¿Cómo estos temas inciden en la composición del tapiz y en la elección de las texturas y colores que eliges?

**ES:** En esa obra, que es parte de la serie contra la guerra- la referencia fue la guerra que se inició a raíz de los eventos de 9/11 que servían de pretexto para entrar de lleno en guerra en Irak. *Darkness*- el periodo inmediatamente después de la caída de las torres

gemelas, War -aunque hubo millones y millones de personas en Estados Unidos y en el mundo protestando nuestra entrada en una guerra, sí, hubo guerra, Paz, después de mucha pérdida de vida y mucha destrucción, hubo algo de paz, y por eso *A Little Bit of Hope*, la verde de la esperanza. Usé una lana de llama muy pelusa y las franjas dan (pienso) una sensación de ansiedad y peso, de caos.

**MAZ:** *¿Qué problemática social te preocupa en la actualidad y cómo se manifiesta esta preocupación en los tapices que estas elaborando ahora?*

**ES:** En 2016 hubo una masacre en un club en la Florida que frecuentaban muchos jóvenes homosexuales. Mi tapete contiene un triángulo color rosado que representa el símbolo que usaban los Nazis para identificar a los homosexuales y mandarlos a los campos de concentración al lado de los judíos a quienes pusieron estrellas amarillas para identificarlos. La obra es color rojo profundo-color sangre, y tiene las palabras VIOLENCIA NO VIOLENCE cosidas en una tela negra en letras rojas. Como trabajo en México pero exhibo en Estados Unidos mayormente, puse las palabras en los dos idiomas.

El odio que se vio en contra de los homosexuales por parte del asesino con arma larga en parte se hizo posible por el clima que vimos durante la campaña electoral presidencial. Hice 2 obras a raíz de las elecciones. Una, que muestra el camino a las elecciones, contiene la pregunta: AND NOW WHAT? ¿Y AHORA QUÉ? que estaba en los labios de todos en el país al día siguiente de ganar Donald Trump. Como la pieza conmemorando el Pulse Night Club que acabo de describir -es media mixta- ya que intercalé las palabras en una hoja de plástico.

Finalmente, en ese mismo período, las conversaciones, discursos presidenciales -tanto en México como en Estados Unidos sobre la inevitabilidad de construir, en realidad, completar, un muro entre los dos países, me inspiraron a hacer el muro -en rojo color de sangre, contra un cielo oscuro. Mi título es NO TO THE WALL, NO AL MURO. El 27 de noviembre 2017 salió una foto de la obra en la revista norteamericana The Nation en su blog-Opp Art. Ellos le dieron el título de The Border-La frontera.

Ahora estoy trabajando en una obra en donde quiero indicar la desaparición de la justicia. Apenas he empezado-así que veremos como me va.

### **Biografía:**

He trabajado como educadora por más de 45 años y como mis estudiantes, he pasado muchos años en la escuela. Me ha gustado ser maestra, estar con los jóvenes, explorar temas difíciles y transmitir mi interés y mi amor por el idioma español y por la literatura escrita en español. La enseñanza me dió un lugar para integrar las ideas con el activismo y de mostrar esas posibilidades a mis estudiantes. Investigar la obra de Carmen de Burgos,

española polifacética, maestra, traductora, poeta, cuentista, novelista, periodista, madre, amiga y modelo de posibilidades para sus estudiantes, fue una aventura que me llevó a España . Sus escritos y su actividad cultural permanecían escondidas y olvidadas y con mi tesis doctoral, abrí una puerta por la cual muchos han llegado a interesarse en ella. Ahora estoy jubilada pero sigo compartiendo mi amor por la literatura y por la libertad de expresión como miembro del grupo PEN. Hace años, aprendí a tejer en México y he hecho muchos tapices allí. La belleza de la lana es un buen vehículo para visibilizar mi deseo por un mundo más justo a través del arte.

Elizabeth Starčević, Ph. D.

Professor Emerita, City College of New York

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***The Air My Mother Left Me.*** Tejido-Lana, algodón, fibra mixta, cigarros ( 2011)



*The Path is Pink*, Tejido-Lana, algodón ( 2015)



*Darkness, War, Peace and a Little Bit of Hope*, Tejido-Lana, algodón ( 2006)



*A Lament for Orlando Massacre at the Pulse Night Club, Tejido-Lana, algodón (2016)*



## Winners of the 15<sup>TH</sup> Annual Feministas Unidas essay prize Competition for graduate students

Nos gustaría felicitar a las ganadoras del concurso de ensayos graduados. Hubo mucha competencia y recibimos muy buenos ensayos. Gracias a todas las evaluadoras por efectuar un excelente trabajo de revisión y evaluación.

Ha habido un empate y se ha decidido otorgar el premio a dos ganadoras, cuyos artículos serán publicados próximamente en *Letras Femeninas*:

**April Knupp**, estudiante de doctorado de Arizona State University, con un ensayo titulado *Disability and Illness in Lina Meruane's Sangre en el ojo: A Disability Theory Approach*

### **Abstract:**

The ubiquity of (dis)abled people in current society is undeniable, and has called for the need to understand, connect, and interpret their experiences, and more importantly to recognize their self-representation, a theoretical framework presented in disability theory. However, collective social and political structures only seem to perpetuate the negative stereotypes that are associated with disability, and even more with (dis)abled women in countries whose patriarchal society mandates the collective community. Like many nations, Chile has a great disabled population, with women forming a large percentage of this group. In what ways, then, can we perceive this disadvantage of disabled women, when we in actuality do not have to live through it ourselves? In order to do so, we must focus on cultural products that represent the disabled woman, such as literature and life-writing. This essay uses the latter; it explores the theme of the chronically ill and disabled woman in the narrative *Sangre en el ojo* by Lina Meruane, analyzes her representation, and uses current disability theory to open up a discourse about the social and cultural factors that perpetuate disability stereotyping.

**Lilianne Lugo Herrera**, estudiante de doctorado de University of Miami, con un ensayo titulado *Melancolía y autoexposición: "Los perturbados entre lilas" de Alejandra Pizarnik y "Melancolía y manifestaciones" de Lola Arias*

### **Resumen:**

La relación entre genialidad, escritura y melancolía ha sido históricamente considerada un don masculino. En el siglo XX la psicología relegó al campo médico de la depresión las manifestaciones melancólicas, eliminando así su potencial intelectual. A partir del análisis de las piezas teatrales "Los perturbados entre lilas" (1969), de Alejandra Pizarnik, y

“Melancolía y manifestaciones” (2012), de Lola Arias, propongo una relectura de estos textos desde la capacidad de la melancolía como tropo, recurso estilístico y característica definitoria de los personajes, para aportar una nueva mirada sobre los discursos de género y la construcción de la memoria en el teatro argentino contemporáneo.

Presentando a sus protagonistas como melancólicas, Pizarnik y Arias intentan subvertir el paradigma genérico donde el genio melancólico es un hombre, mientras la mujer melancólica resulta una improductiva víctima de la depresión. La melancolía permite la validación creativa del cuerpo femenino (el personaje de Seg en “Los perturbados...”), y se muestra como consecuencia invisible de la dictadura militar argentina (en Arias). En la obra de ambas autoras el ámbito de lo privado, trasladado a la escena, permite situar históricamente a la mujer argentina, muchas veces relegada de los discursos públicos, como portadoras de una agencia social.

En nombre de la junta directiva de Feministas Unidas Inc. les damos nuestras más calurosas felicitaciones.

## Book Reviews

JOHN WALDRON

Braschi, Giannina. *Estados Unidos de banana*. Trad. Manuel Broncano. Seattle: Amazon Crossing, 2015. 246 pp.

Giannina Braschi (1953) born in Puerto Rico, a young tennis champion, a singer, model, and professor of literature among other things, is most of all known for being a writer. She has authored a collection of poetry called, *El imperio de los sueños*, a novel written in “spanglish,” *Yo, Yo Boing* (1998) and the recent *The United States of Banana* (2011) rendered into Spanish as *Estados Unidos de banana* by Manuel Broncano. Braschi has won several awards attesting to the brilliance of her work among them are the PEN/Open Book Award, the NEA and New York Foundation for the Arts among others. Though her work is complex and richly varied it is possible to recognize that the individual texts share some themes or characteristics that unify them. For example, all of her texts are set in New York and share the preoccupation with the narrators or characters share a preoccupation with personal “dis-identity” as well as the problems that confront Puerto Rico, Braschi’s place of origin.

In her most recent work, *Estados Unidos de banana*, the narrative begins with the Braschi as narrator eating a doughnut and reading the paper as she contemplates photos that document the consequences of a suicide bomber in Jaffa. Upon seeing the fragmented bodies she says that she feels, “espanto—pero seguí comiéndome el donut mientras pensaba “*me alegro de no estar ahí. Aquí esto disfrutando del donut mientras otros estallan en pedazos. Buena suerte. Mantén viva la esperanza*” (17). Her reaction is similar perhaps to that of the most of us. We see tragedies on a daily basis in the newspaper, on Facebook, Twitter, the computer, smartphones, where every, and they concern us, but we continue with our comfortable lives of consumption. Soon, Braschi’s pleasant life is interrupted by an event that before was, perhaps, unthinkable. The author relates that, “Un mes después estaba comiéndome otro donut igual cuando el primer avión se estrelló contra el World Trade Center” (17). Braschi, the narrator as well as the flesh and blood author of the novel was present at ground zero during the tragic events of 9/11 in Manhattan. What follows in the novel is a meditation on the tragedy’s wreckage. Similar to Benjamin’s angel of history, Braschi observes the shards left in the wake of the disaster, which in turn serve as a metonymy for the consequences of the ideological conflicts that shaped the end of the twentieth century and beginning of the twenty-first. Her reflections on the rubble have as their primary purpose the desire to encounter new possibilities, and to create her own “event.”



With the rubble of the Twin Towers as a background, Braschi picks up the recurrent theme in her other work that deals with the construction and destruction of identity. The narrator interprets the events of 9/11 as part of a “guerra santa” between “los bancos y las religiones” (13). In the middle of the horrific even that happened at the end (or beginning) of the century, the narrator sees the appearance of two ghosts, “Hamlet y Zaratustra con un muerto cada uno auestas” with them the narrator says that she is able to “ver el entierro del siglo xx—con todos los recuerdos que cruzaban mi memoria como nubarrones de luto en una pantalla de cine” (20). Hamlet and Zaratustra, from then on accompany her on her peregrinations through the city, a wandering that has as its end the intention of liberating Segismundo from his jailed existence in, nothing less than the Statue of Liberty. In her wanderings she looks for a way to liberate herself as well as the rest of us from the binary formed by the relation in what she calls the “guerra santa” between “bancos y religiones.” During the course of her meditations, these options, which really are no option at all, come to show a similarity to Puerto Rico’s colonial situation. As might be evident from this schematic retelling of some of the points in Braschi’s novel, she continually works to show connections between elements that seem totally disparate. However, upon presenting them to her readers, the connections seem clearly evident.

Segismundo comes to be identified with Puerto Rico and its relation to independence or freedom. Similar to the character in Calderón de la Barca’s play, *La vida es sueño*, the only reality that the Segismundo and Puerto Rico know, is one constructed by others. Similar to Puerto Rico, the options presented to Segismundo are limited and determined by authorities who control the situation. The options for Puerto Rico, statehood, independence, or *estado libre asociado*, are represented in the Spanish version in Manuel Broncano’s excellent translation as “Fu, Fa, ni Fu ni Fa.” In English, Braschi calls these, wishy, washy, and wishy washy. Until the last two plebiscites the option for the status quo or *estado libre asociado* has won. However, in the penultimate plebiscite, the option for “none of the above” won and in the last vote taken in 2017, the option for statehood won but only if you do not consider that the vast majority of the electorate did not vote. As the Puerto Rican historian and thinker, Carlos Pabón has said on several occasions, no one believes anymore in the concept of “nation” and what it signifies. Even more, the concept as such no longer defines cultures or people. If the people of Puerto Rico do not vote it is because they no longer believe in and they no longer identify with the political system and all that it represents: the nation, identity among other things.

The relation that Braschi establishes between Segismundo and Puerto Rico extends to Latin America and the world as a whole. Segismundo is Puerto Rico and Puerto Rico is the world. Political power is not necessarily what enslaves Puerto Rico with political hegemony, but rather the hegemony of banks and markets. Markets and the capitalist system of limitless consumption, the most important value of neoliberalism, colonize Puerto Rico. The so-called “Isla del Encanto” is the place where corporations test many of their products and marketing strategies as retold in Braschi’s novel, “Y créanme, lo intentaremos todo. Antes de lanzar cualquier producto al mercado—los USB primero lo probaban en Puerto Rico. Si

Puerto Rico lo compra... el resto del mundo lo comprará” (196). Puerto Rico is the laboratory where banks and markets try out their ideas. More than a simple criticism of the USB’s (United States of Banana) imperial, colonial power, Braschi critiques the markets and neoliberalism that offer limitless options and, with them, freedom. She shows that what appears to be freedom is rather similar to Segismundo’s predicament, he lives trapped in the Statue of Liberty. Similar to the freedom that Puerto Ricans have to determine their political status between “Fu, Fa, ni Fu ni Fa,” there is no real choice in the markets. If the conflict now in the world is between banks and religions, Braschi opines that the majority of us have chosen “banks” in our acceptance of the endless accumulation of products thinking that it gives us freedom. However, none of the options that we are given between “bank” or “religion” lead us to freedom, the primary goal for Braschi that runs through all of her works.

Even though it is a tragic event, the Twin Tower’s destruction offers Braschi the chance to contemplate a truly globalized and cosmopolitan world beyond the identities constructed and determined by the USB and other countries that before saw themselves as all powerful. In a conversation in the novel with Diotima, Giannina theorizes that, “Pero los continentes [son] menos relevantes que las ciudades. Las lenguas [son] más relevantes que las naciones. Las lenguas están vivas. Las naciones muertas” (230). The languages spoken by people and not those that are codified by academics or nations are what define and determine culture and which, in turn, identify a group of people. However, it is an identification or definition that is in constant movement as she says, “brinco en esa grieta—todo está en el aire—y en el aire debe quedarse—sin la resolución final de un puñetazo o una pugna o un conflicto—en el aire” (234). The “puñetazo” and the “pugna o conflicto” represent the imposition of laws and limits by an authority that wants to define and stabilize the identity of the subjects in a determined territory, that is to say, a nation. Against stability, Braschi wants to “desubicarse” as she says, “Quiero sentirme confusa, desconcertada, perpleja, quiero hacer incómodo lo cómodo. Quiero desubicarme” (50-1). From a position of discomfort, she is able to perceive freedom.

Braschi’s work, and *Estados Unidos de banana* in particular, not only offers us the possibility to free ourselves from colonial ideology and its inequalities, but it also presents us with the opportunity to create spaces from which it might be possible to imagine other connections. As Jacquelin Loss has said, “the most positive aspect of the diverse positions on cosmopolitanism is the emerging discourse of self fashioning that accounts for but is not based solely on facile and reductive politics of identity” (9). “Self-fashioning” is a constant in Braschi’s work. In the novel, the character Giannina says, “El poder no reside en el Estado, sino en la cultura del pueblo, para el pueblo” y es una cultura de “los poetas los filósofos, los amantes” que va llegando a Nueva York por “New(Ark)” (231). This culture of immigrants of mixture and renovation that arrives in the “New Ark/Newark” offers a contraposition to that presented by the media and the market. The character Giannina says, “El estado tiene un eje del mal que divide el mundo entre buenos y malos, entre razas y religiones, entre masculino y femenino, entre teatro y poesía. Hay que quebrar ese eje del mal. Está en la columna vertebral de la Estatua de la Libertad” (142). “El eje del mal” creates divisions that

form the basis upon which all that divides us, racism, coloniality, sexism, identities, are founded. According to the theoretical work of critics such as Carlos Pabón, Alberto Moreiras and Jon Beasley Murray among others, the hegemonies constructed by nations that formed the coloniality of power no longer function and, what is more, no one believes in them. However, we keep acting like zombies as if they still worked and as if they still had power over us. What is needed, according to Braschi, is to imagine other possibilities in other, unofficial languages that are not approved by the authority or the state. She says that, “se deben derribar y reconstruir las lenguas—no en un continente geográfico con una frontera llamada bandera, sino en el espacio infinito de una cáscara de nuez” (51).

Some like Slavoj Žižek, are of the opinion that the fall of the Towers constituted an “event” as defined by Alain Badiou. That is to say, their fall formed a rupture in the symbolic order by the Real. The trajectory of Braschi’s novel begins with this event, but it ends thinking that, perhaps, really 9/11 was not a true event since it is already the product of known forces that form an already existing binary that shapes the world system, the conflict between religions and banks. It is an explosion that comes as the result of the divisions created by the “eje del mal” that keeps us separated and controlled. For Braschi, a true event is not an act of destruction that only works to separate us, but an act of creation. As the character Giannina says, “El gran evento es la creación de un valor nuevo—un valor nuevo que aparece como arcoíris con muchos sobres que insinúan misterio” (183). As Francisco Matos Paoli, another great Puerto Rican poet, once said in his *Canto de locura*, in order to break the chains of colonialism, “hay que enloquecer.” The end of madness is a better world for everyone. Against the conflict between “banks” and “religions” the mixture of people who arrive in “New(Ark)” turns into a rainbow, which represents the possibility of unity, of love. As Arnaldo Cruz Malavé says, Braschi presents an “urban inspired, anticolonial spatial forms that would foster networks of interaction and cooperation, camaraderie, compañerismo, and yes, love” (816).

It is difficult to reduce a text written by Braschi to a couple of paragraphs, to a few words. Without a doubt her work presents a lot of possibilities that I have not been able to indicate here. Before ending, I would like to say a few words about her work in general and the translation by Broncano in particular. Braschi’s work is comparable to writers who are as well known and praised in the U.S. as Pynchon, Barthes, Coover, and Saunders. What she does not have in common with them is evident in their names. Similar to them, her work is exceptionally experimental and innovative. It demonstrates a creative capacity without compare. Her work could also be considered as belonging to a long Latin American tradition that begins with Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, which is later recuperated by José Lezama Lima and Severo Sarduy. I am speaking of the baroque and neo-baroque. In terms of Puerto Rican literature there are many similarities with other writers particularly with Matos Paoli, whom I have already mentioned as well as Iván Silén. However, perhaps because her work breaks the categories we use to talk about literature as well as the expectations of the readers, unfortunately her work is not frequently spoken about. As has probably already been noticed, the authors I have mentioned are all me and they belong to the accepted tradition,

to accepted groups. Braschi, being a woman who is from neither her nor their is, as she herself says, “desubicada” or placeless, without a place, without a tradition and almost without readers. Now with the popularity of other masculine U.S. Latino writers such as Junot Díaz who write in a way that does not necessarily fulfill the expectations that the reading public might have, it may be possible that they will go back and look at excellent work by Braschi and other writers like Cecile Pineda that is highly experimental and pre-dates the excellent work done today. I hope so.

With respect to the differences between the original version and the translation; the translated version has a chapter in the table of contents that does not exist in the original, “El hotel exterminador.” This chapter does not indicate additional text but rather a division in the Spanish version that does not exist in the English. How to analyze this I leave to future studies. With respect to the translation itself; when the Spanish version arrived I thought it would be impossible to translate Braschi’s text because she depends so much on language games that have the intent of breaking the limits of understanding. As she constantly reminds her readers, she writes and thinks in more than one language. As a result her work presents translators with a series of problems in addition to those that normally confront them. All of this is to say that Broncano’s translation is excellent. He perfectly captures the rhythm and tone of the original. He also translates the meaning of what Braschi wants to say, which is difficult if not impossible given the complexity of her writing and thought. An example that I have already mentioned has to do with the “options” presented to the people of Puerto Rico with regard to their political status. In the original Braschi calls them, “Wishy, Washy, and Wishy Washy” that is to say, statehood, independence or status quo. Broncano translates this as “Fu, Fa, ni Fu ni Fa.” Of course, it is a question of preferences, but it seems that the translation in this case not only perfectly captures the original, but perfects it. This is just one of many examples.

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*Champourcin, Ernestina de. María de Magdala. Ed. Magdalena Aguinaga Alfonso. 2nd ed. Ariccia: Aracne, 2015. 168 pp.*

Ernestina de Champourcin is mostly known as one of the poets of the Generation of ‘27 whose poetic legacy has attracted significant critical attention in recent years. For instance, the collection *Una rosa para Ernestina: ensayos en conmemoración del centenario de Ernestina de Champourcin*, edited by Joy Landeira in 2006, offers an analysis of different aspects of Champourcin’s poetry. The writer’s novelistic output, however, was largely unknown to readers and critics until Champourcin’s first published novel *La casa de*

*enfrente* (1936) became a subject of critical inquiry in the first decades of the twenty-first century. A new edition of the novel by Carmen Urioste came out in 2013 and contained two chapters of Champourcin's unfinished war-time novel *Mientras allí se muere* that were published in Spain during the Civil War and that in 1941 appeared in the Mexican literary magazine *Rueca*. In spite of Champourcin's reluctance to speak of her prose and the writer's dismissive stance vis-à-vis *La casa de enfrente*, it has become clear that Champourcin has created valuable novelistic oeuvre that deserves to be read and studied.

The new critical edition of *María de Magdala*, a novel by Champourcin that was published in 1943 and has not appeared in print since then, makes it clear that the writer's novelistic output is richer than has been assumed heretofore. Magdalena Aguinaga Alfonso, the scholar who prepared this valuable text for publication, points out in the introduction to this edition of *María de Magdala* that even a careful study of Champourcin's literary archive at the University of Navarra and an analysis of her extensive correspondence from the late 1930s and early 1940s offer no clues as to when and how the novel was written. Aguinaga Alfonso's research has uncovered no reviews or even mentions of the novel in Spain's literary journals at the time of its publication. This is not surprising, given that Champourcin had been allied with the Republican cause during the Civil War through her own political affinities and the work of her husband, poet Juan José Domenchina, on behalf of Manuel Azaña's government.

Aguinaga Alfonso's carefully written and enlightening introductory essay constitutes the first attempt to create a critical framework for an analysis of *María de Magdala*. The scholar points to the links between Champourcin's first published novel *La casa de enfrente* and her 1943 novel, making it clear that *María de Magdala* does not constitute a break with the writer's artistic trajectory that began before the civil war and exile. One of the most valuable aspects of Aguinaga Alfonso's analysis of the novel is the scholar's discussion of the influence that *Figuras de la Pasión del Señor* (1917) by Gabriel Miró had on *María de Magdala* (16). Aguinaga Alfonso suggests that the novel was written in Spain prior to the author's exile yet does not explore this claim any further. The dearth of information on the process of the novel's gestation makes it hard to offer a convincing argument as to when the novel was created.

*María de Magdala* is set in Jerusalem during the culminating stage in the life of Jesus Christ and explores the religious awakening of one of the most memorable biblical characters, Mary Magdalene. It would be a mistake, however, to see the novel as completely divorced from the political and social realities of the Spain of the Second Republic and the Civil War. Champourcin's *María de Magdala* is a rebellious woman who preserves her sense of dignity and insists that she has the right to an inner life of her own in spite of making her living through selling sexual services. In the words of Aguinaga Alfonso, Champourcin's character stands out by virtue of her "conciencia de su valía y de su dignidad que le impide entregar su intimidad a ningún hombre" (44, n. 13). It is clear that María's rejection of the idea that a woman has to be content with fulfilling the needs of men reflects the views of

Champourcin who witnessed the feminist advances of the Second Republic and was active in the professional organizations of female artists (9-10). The writer's concern about the position of women in patriarchal societies is evident in her earlier novel, as well. Elena, the protagonist of Champourcin's *La casa de enfrente*, realizes that the patriarchal system of power relations that she inhabits requires that she infantilize herself and stifle her rebellious impulses. María de Magdala, however, rejects patriarchal conventions and, after her religious conversion, dedicates herself to developing spiritually in a way that she chooses for herself.

Feminist ideas in the novel are tempered by the suggestion that the only meaningful changes one can expect occur within the realm of the private development of an individual. Echoes of the writer's feelings of disillusionment with the possibility of political change appear in María's decision to look for refuge from the world's injustices in her inner life: "¿Qué era verdaderamente la paz? No era la paz de los pueblos, de las naciones, sino una paz íntima, de cada uno, que el nazareno deseaba o dispensaba a sus amigos" (92). Champourcin's María spends the last thirty years of her life in solitary contemplation and away from a direct engagement with others (167). The character's exile from active life mimics Champourcin's own experience of having to remove herself from the political and artistic life of Spain.

The bibliography of Champourcin's published work in the 2006 collection of critical articles *Una rosa para Ernestina* refers to *María de Magdala* as a possible edition of the second part of *La casa de enfrente*. The book's editors had no access to a copy of Champourcin's second novel and were thus prevented from offering a deeper understanding of the novel. The publication of Aguinaga Alfonso's critical edition of *María de Magdala* will allow scholars interested in Champourcin's work to engage with this valuable part of the writer's legacy.

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DIANA GONZÁLEZ-CAMERON

**Del Rio Gabiola, Irune. *Resistant Bodies in The Cultural Productions of Transnational Hispanic Caribbean Women. Reimagining Queer Identity*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2017. 147 pp.**

What does it mean to become a transnational subject with a queer identity and how does one go about achieving transnationality? These are two of the main questions addressed in Irune Del Rio Gabiola's outstanding book *Resistant Bodies in The Cultural Productions of Transnational Hispanic Caribbean Women: Reimagining Queer Identity*



(Lexington 2017), where the author examines some of the cultural productions by subjects whose “bodies...do not matter” (Del Rio Gabiola vii) from the patriarchal and post-colonial Hispanic Caribbean. According to Del Rio Gabiola, the artistic productions by marginalized contemporary women from Puerto Rico, Cuba and the Dominican Republic not only challenge notions of race, Latinidad, colonization, diasporic, and national identity, but can also be interpreted as strategies of survival that enable the artists to generate a voice, visibility, agency, empowerment, queer identity and ultimately, transnational identity. Transnationalism then, considered as “a methodology of the oppressed” offers these subjects “[a] resistant emancipatory technique...that ultimately opens up spaces of cultural and political subversion, and celebrates an intersectional analysis of subject formation” (xiii) for lesbians, transgender, transsexual and queer Hispanic Caribbean subjects. The cultural productions the author examines include a pseudo-documentary, a novel, hip-hop songs, graphic novels, art performances, paintings and photos, and a collection of essays, memories, poems, *testimonios*, and stories. Although all the artists wrestle with shared issues such as language, dominant ideologies in their native and adopted country, racism, homophobia, poverty, patriarchal systems within and without the family unit, and repression, each one contests the issues distinctly. By structuring her text after each country, chronicling the political and economic forces shaping its past and present, and supporting her analyses with a range of theoretical frameworks, Del Rio Gabiola illustrates an assortment of liberatory strategies employed by the artists to establish themselves on the global scene.

Del Rio Gabiola's exploration of transnationalism and the liberatory practices the various artists engage in follow Chela Sandoval's *Methodology of the Oppressed* (2000) as the overarching theoretical framework providing the setting for discussions on alternatives to counteract systems of oppression in order to attain subjectivity and emancipation through, as Del Rio Gabiola quotes, the “operational mechanisms of semiotics, deconstruction, meta-ideologizing, democratics and differential movement” (ix).

The book is divided into three parts: I: Puerto Rico, II: Cuba, and III: The Dominican Republic, with two chapters in each part. In the first part, *Chapter 1: Shame and Failure, Positive Narratives to Re/imagine Queer Identity in the Transnational Puerto Rican Context*, the author considers Frances Negrón Muntaner's film *Brincando el charco* (1994), a semi-autobiographical depiction of Claudia Marin's life through the lens of shame and failure as theorized by Jack Halberstam, Eve K. Sedgwick and Silvan Thomas among others, and Lawrence La Fountain-Stokes' concept of shamelessness to illustrate how they operate in a queer Puerto Rican setting, national and diasporic identity politics and transnational subjectivities. In *Chapter 2: A Queer Way of Family Life: Narratives of Time and Space in Mayra Santos-Febres' Sirena Selena vestida de pena*, Del Rio Gabiola expands on Halberstam's theory of queer temporalities to demonstrate how Santos-Febres' transsexual, transvestite and queer characters problematize the concepts of *la gran familia puertorriqueña* and national identity as they dis/place themselves through non-fixed and non-linear time, space and boundaries and engage in alternative family-constructing

practices that serve as emancipatory techniques of survival. In Part II, *Chapter 3: Divas, Atrevidas y Entendidas, Cuban Hip-hop Group Krudas Cubensi ConQueering Love Across the Transnational Space* Del Rio Gabiola explores the hip-hop group Las Krudas comprised by black Cuban lesbians whose performances (originated in Cuba but now in the United States), deploy a “*mujerista*” feminism as articulated by Tanya Saunders that connects black feminist politics to various oppressive power structures. Their songs, argues Del Rio Gabiola, operate as liberatory strategies that proclaim social justice and alliance across the borders of race, gender normativity, class and nationality and enunciate a queer “prophetic love” that empowers and, following Sandoval’s articulation, is “freed from ideology”. In *Chapter 4: Unbecoming Cuban-American, An Analysis of Cristy Road’s Graphic Narratives* Del Rio Gabiola examines three of Cristy Road’s graphic novels that contest the traditional and the Caribbean *bildungsroman* by portraying ways of unbecoming and unbeing through nonlinear graphic narratives that deconstruct colonized, capitalist and national discourses. By depicting the body as a politicized site that articulates subversiveness and transgression, Road’s narratives argues Del Rio Gabiola, dismantle cultural and national expectations of becoming/being a woman. Thus, the graphic novels’ depiction of failure to become a successful Cuban-American is transformed into a positive process of “emancipatory deconstruction” (68). In Part III, *Chapter 5: Flexible Bodies in Cyberspace, Representations of Dominicanidad in the Art of Raquel Paiewonsky*, Del Rio Gabiola argues that Paiewonky’s art performances (photographs, paintings installations and sculptures) which have reached transnational success, “provide new alternatives to conceptualize and imagine the body” (89). Del Rio Gabiola’s analysis focuses on the portrayal of flexible, fragmented and manipulated Dominican/Latina bodies that defy national discourses on *dominicanidad*. The author skillfully engages Chela Sandoval and various other critics with Dominican traditional discourses on race, sexuality and colonization to reflect the artist’s commitment to represent Dominican identity and social justice. Moreover, Del Rio Gabiola states, that by making her art available through the Internet, Paiewonsky transforms it into an emancipatory tool, a, quoting Sandoval, ‘decolonizing apparatus for intervening in postmodern globalization’” (89). In *Chapter 6: The Lesbian Body as Home, Queering Dominican Women’s Experiences* her last one, Del Rio Gabiola considers Jaqueline Jiménez Polanco’s *Divagaciones bajo la luna: Musing Under the Moon* (2006), a collection of *testimonios*, memories, poems, essays, short stories and lyrics that reveals “how sexually nonconforming women propose a radical conceptualization... of home that underlines the importance of the lesbian body as a space of belonging” (112). Some of the writers in the collection are exiles while some are not, but all, according to Del Rio Gabiola, re-imagine and re-signify the lesbian body as a site of desire and belonging, which in turn, renders it as a liberatory strategy.

By considering how the female Hispanic Caribbean colonized queer body is showcased as a site of resignifying ideological systems in the various cultural artifacts examined, Irune Del Rio Gabiola’s *Resistant Bodies* reveals the how and why the artists create an assortment of emancipatory strategies that grant them a transnational subjectivity. Due to this, and to the fact that a substantial number of published studies



spotlight the male body, her book should be a required addition to any collection on Queer, Latino/a, Feminist, Gender, and Latin American Studies.

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Gutierrez y Muhs, Gabriella, ed. *Word Images New Perspectives on Canícula and Other Works by Norma Elia Cantú*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2017. 214 pp.

This book consists of two parts: Part I. Critical Essays and Part II. *Canícula* Teaching Methodologies. Commencing with two excellent sections; Maria Herrera Sobek provides a forward and Gabriela Gutierrez y Muhs an introduction to the volume.

Part I focuses on Identity formation from distinct perspectives. Essays by Ellen McCracken, Jesús Rosales, María Socorro Tubenca, Steven W. Bender, Vanessa Fonseca, and María Esther Quintana Millamoto are followed by an interview of Cantú by Gabriela Gutiérrez y Muhs, comprise this section.

A unique vantage of border hybridity is presented by Ellen McCracken whose contribution provides us with complex issues regarding constant migration thus creating hybrid cultures, which will continue to shift our view of border culture. The concepts presented necessitate deep level pondering and probing of the significance of historical community based cultures of the Mexican U.S. border.

Jesús Rosales articulates the complexities of integral dynamics of family in the identity formation of the author. He provides a unique perspective on the author's self-imposed exile from the borderlands. Rosales contends that Norma Cantú is not negating the border culture but embracing it. By validating its existence her identity emerges.

In Tubenca's rich and prolific essay of Cantú's border identity, which merges with Bender's view of the historical legal aspects of life at the border, strengths her cultural identity. Both critical essays give a detailed rendition of the realities of life at the border: Tubenca in events and dynamic cultural interpretations in the author's work focused the poetry and the other on historical legal dimension of border issues. Two unique dimensions of culture at the border appear in each respective essay, Bender situates Cantú's family as a nonmainstream group of Americans thus positing a distinct perspective on hers writing as a unique venue of cultural positioning connected to identity formation open to multiple interpretations.

The extensive review of language and cultural interpretations of Norma Cantú's complete works which includes her poems, Tubenca posits that in Chicano/a writing Spain is present as a distinct space connected to southwestern language, and is seen in the

interpretations of the painful experiences linked to the indigenous historical dimensions of culture. She asserts however, that in Cantú's writing, both topics are acknowledged; the violence of the conquest but also the rich traditions from Spain integrated in the regional cultures that contribute to Chicano identity formation.

Fonseca's rendition of identity formation draws on a contrast between Norma E. Cantú and Cleofas Jaramillo and in connection to other Chicana writers. By positing this contrast, it examines literary strategies used to trace the literature of these writers that have contributed to multiple literary techniques. This literary perspective portrays a sense of time and space discerned in her writing establishing acts of the imaginary in identity formation.

A strong critical analysis of identity formation is Millamoto's essay initially written in Spanish and then translated to English. The psychological dimension of Norma Cantú as a female ethnic coming-of-age, appear in the novel as pivotal roles of women's socialization linked to maternal figures. Millamoto, places emphasis on the mother figure in the protagonist's psychosexual development. Positing a sociopolitical context of female relationships in the author's family is fundamental to *Canícula*'s main protagonist, Azucena. The emphasis on emotions associated with Azucena's maternal role models and struggles to maintain her identity is embedded in a strong sense of independence and self-determination. Ultimately, the protagonist is establishing a connection, (not a disconnect) to her maternal relationships through a process, which strengthens an external cultural identity and thus provides inner strength. An interview with Norma Cantú, conducted by Gutiérrez y Muhs addresses changes and future goals replete with challenges addressing the literary subjectivities that appear in her work especially in connection to other writers.

Part II includes themes for a compendium of teaching methodologies. Critical essays by, Aldo Ulisses Resendiz Ramírez, Aurora Chang, Carlos Sibaja García, Rose Rodríguez-Rabín and Juan Velasco comprise this section. The essays rich and exhaustive treatments of multiple dimensions of pedagogical worthiness, present translanguaging, non-linearity of stories that appear in other autobiographical forms and the political realities of the history of Mexican American in the United States. In addition, included are themes of border histories, political repression, and cultural theory. Taken together possibly the strongest contribution gleaned is the representation of women of color in oral narratives. Multiple interpretations of *Canícula* as a novel make the suggested pedagogical approaches a contribution to critical thought that ignite consideration for active educational applications in the broader sense of schooling.

In Resendiz Ramírez imaginative perspective *Canícula*'s metaphors represent the borderlands of Laredo through the schemas of the author's memory. The world in images, visual signs, colors and shapes exemplify the acts of meaning in the experience of a child. In particular the school experiences place students in an imaginative space that albeit when they do not learn to read and write in a mainstream way, they continue to view their world through their natural cognitions, which trigger their senses within the systems of their home and community culture. Often observed but rarely articulated as a process of learning in

spite of school failure, the natural learner within the lived culture is represented, propagating individually or collectively a sense of “literacy”.

In *Canícula*, the author presents and reinforces positive self-concepts of girlhood and Mexican-ness on both sides of the border. The storytelling function of the novel is a critical pedagogy. Central to questions that require reflection is the appearance of the complexity of translanguaging strongly illustrated in the novel in all aspects of life in Laredo. Azucena’s schooling experiences illustrates the deep-seeded prejudices towards the native language, Spanish. The protagonist Azucena is continually exposed to linguistic terrorism. Cantú explains how “attacks on the use of the native tongue diminishes a sense of self” (139) and infuses the historical repression of Spanish as a native language in school and other public settings. translanguaging repression characterizes bilinguals in a complex linguistic repertoire. She captures this language repertoire in families, and communities as the practices of the characters in *Canícula* create a social identity with multiple levels of challenges in social political spaces. The notion of translanguaging is the essential component of critical pedagogy in schools, which if recognized as awareness, can socially, linguistically, and academically be a tool for empowerment. The hidden curriculum in schools is then enriched through a nonconventional but unique view of the concept as suggested by Chang who presents *Canícula* as a vehicle for strengthening the notion of community as cultural wealth through culturally responsive pedagogy. Chang contends that by acknowledging the nonlinearity of the *novela* to enhance the understanding of events in real life, storytelling can capture the connection to students’ lives especially those life stories that have never been told in traditional classroom or those whose lives have been marginalized not only from the mainstream culture but from their own communities.

An extensive in-depth interpretation of the women in *Canícula* is done by Sibaja García, emphasizing the sexual development of Azucena and other characters in the novel. Followed up by Rodríguez-Rabín who treats the “womenfolk” in great detail bringing to the forefront through many critical dimensions, the challenge of the cannon of storytelling. Connected to the process of decolonizing of the self but especially of women, these essays in multiple ways intricately deal with women’s roles by portraying them as stepping out of the victim roles, which traditionally are determined by social and political conventions. In many ways, this novel can be interpreted and seen as an autobiography but clearly also functions as an ethnography chronicling the two “Laredos” on the Texas-Mexico border which then become Norma Cantú’s vehicle to create an art form.

The essays presented in Word Images are prolific. The final essay by Juan Velasco alone can constitute a university course highlighting important literary genres. Hybridity in *Canícula* autobiographical, visual and ethnographic connection of life in the borderlands is a viable tool for pedagogical use. Velasco’s, extensive depiction of space and identity in complex representations of the novel sets the border as a space of connectivity and inter-relationality as a base for dualistic thought creating fluidity to expand our understanding of frontera community culture. All the concepts included in Velasco warrant careful

consideration to expand our notion of critical autobiography. The world as seen from the border in Cantú's novel illustrates a bi-nationality and fluctuation between two countries and serves to represent an ambiguity of identity as a structure in her autobiography. As Velasco concludes, and I agree, *Canícula's* "conflictive ambiguity is a complex form of consciousness" (196), which enhances the unique value of this novel and has become canonical in the rich tradition of Chicano literature written by women. Twenty years after *Canícula* (1997) was published in English I am anxious to read the Spanish version, to provoke innovative visions and multiple interpretations of border culture.

Sara S. García  
Santa Clara University

#### DAVID WILLIAM FOSTER

Bergmann, Emilie L. and Stacey Schlau, eds. *The Routledge Research Companion to the Works of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz*. London: Routledge, 2017. xxi, 320 pp.

Despite the outrageous cover price, which puts them beyond the personal libraries of most scholars (\$225 hard cover; \$65.95 e-book for this title), the Routledge Research Companions are outstanding scholarly resources, even more so in the case of Hispanic studies, which always have a more limited range of reference options than do Anglo-American studies. Organized by premier scholars in the field, these companions bring together essays structured around nuclear topics; each essay pretends to be an in-depth analysis of the trends and controversies surrounding these nuclear topics. In the case of figures like Sor Juana, for whom personal information is sketchy and for whom there have been some quite divisive controversies, the result is a primary go-to source for scholarship on the author. Certainly compilations such as this are absolutely essential for students and beginning scholars on key figures like Sor Juana. Presentation of the material is accurate and balanced and no attempt is made to resolve controversies in terms of one or another interpretive position. On topics as high-volume as the nature of Sor Juana's religious convictions, her relationship with Church authorities, or her sexuality, the reader comes away with a clear grasp of the issues and with an objective assessment of the fundamental scholarship and documentary sources for any one of the issues examined.

Bergmann and Schlau, who have themselves authored some of the best scholarship available on feminist and gender issues in Sor Juana, divided their *Companion* into four parts, with a total of twenty-three essays: Contexts; Reception history; Interpretation of and debates about the works (further subdivided into: Prose works, Verse, Theater and public art); and, finally, a single-essay part IV on Future directions for research.

For readers of *Ámbitos feministas/Feministas Unidas*, questions of gender and sexuality are likely to be of predominant interest. On the one hand, there is the coverage of

Sor Juana's fate with male critics, who if they cannot ignore her, still find it difficult to accept her as a full-fledged poet. The culmination of this quandary continues to be exemplified by Octavio Paz, who, despite all his brilliant perceptions about her work, cannot get way of condescending perspectives circumscribed by sexist dispositions, such as the idea of Sor Juana being "ultimately an accomplice of her tormentors" (Marie-Cécile Bénassy-Berling 57), as though ultimately she did not have the (manly?) fortitude to deal with the storms her writing provoked. By contrast, one finds charming the comments by Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, in his famous inaugural study of Latin American poetry, that, while Sor Juana was not a good poet, she was an impressive intellectual (Martha Lilia Tenorio 50); although it is not directly stated, one assumes that the reservations regarding Sor Juana's poetry did not stem from the fact that it was penned by a woman, but by the sort of anti-Baroque disposition Menéndez Pelayo would have represented at the time (1893-95).

But of course the whole matter of Sor Juana's sexuality must necessarily occupy a significant amount of space, beginning with the fact that it is necessary to document the silly claims that putatively homoerotic passages are the consequence of Baroque convention, a claim that never seems to get made about heteroerotic practices are true and authentic and (auto)biographically valid. Equally silly would be any claim that tequila-fueled same-sex orgies took place in the convent, although there is ample reason to believe that many viewers and not just a few critics would like to take this away from María Luisa Bemberg's film, *Yo la peor de todas* (1990). I think part of the issue here, and not really addressed by the criticism referenced in the *Companion*, is the extent to which insufficient theorizing over the parameters of lesbian desire is still occurring. I note, for example, there is no reference by any of the criticism indexed, to Lillian Faderman's *Surpassing the Love of Men* (1998) or Adrienne Rich's propositions regarding the lesbian continuum ("Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" [1980]), despite the fact that the former directly impinges on the period of Sor Juana's writing and both on lesbianism as something other than heavy-breathing gymnastics. Certainly, the Faderman line of research is there to refute the assertion that any attribution of lesbianism/aka sapphism to Sor Juana is *avant la lettre*. One can deal similarly with the intertwined assertion that feminism is an anachronistic attribution to Sor Juana.

In any case, the way in which a compilation such as this brings together in a systematic and intelligent way critical opinion on these issues both makes it possible to understand what differing theoretical and ideological grounds are at play and the perceive precisely where it might be possible to undertake new scholarly interventions in their regard.

In sum, a major reference work. Sor Juana scholars and those engaged in gender studies for the Latin American pre-modern period would be well advised to make it a part of their core library.

David William Foster  
Arizona State University

## Call for Papers and Contributions

### ***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.

#### **CALL FOR SPRING 2018 Issue VIII**

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.

While we accept submissions at any time, in order to be considered for the Fall 2017 Issue, originals should arrive to our editorial office by **October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018**.

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://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 endnotes 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 endnotes section.

### **“A Sustainable Future for Latin America?”**

In the context of the emerging challenges of the 21st century, the task of envisioning and planning for sustainable societies has taken center stage. Sustainability is a complex concept that integrates multiple areas of study, yet it has been conventionally associated with environmental issues, and therefore its intimate connection to culture and the humanities has often been overlooked. In concert with the United Nations’ 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development—also known as the Sustainable Development Goals (or SDGs)—we can now highlight the essential role of cultivating intellectual, ethical and social qualities to focus on sustaining quality of life on our changing planet. To that end, The University of New Hampshire’s Sustainability Institute reframes the definition of sustainability as “what sustains us as diverse people and communities, from clean air and water to healthcare, education and art,” and explains how decisions are both individual and collective, while keeping the “big picture” in mind: “sustainability is both local and global. It requires of us that we consider both the past and the future in terms of current and best practices.” This definition’s focus on quality of life as diverse cultural communities affirms the need for knowledge and insights from the humanities and social sciences, as well as diverse native sciences in addressing the grand challenges facing Latin America. With this definition in mind, proposals for a special issue of the refereed journal *A Contracorriente* are encouraged to explore, though not exclusively, the following questions:

In these times of volatile political divisions, the ravages of climate change, and endemic poverty and inequality, what does a sustainable future look like for Latin America?

What is unique about Latin American thought in its understanding of the Anthropocene?

How have the humanities and social sciences, indigenous societies and religion, informed an ethics of sustainability for the region?

What are cultures of sustainability through the lens of democratic participation, citizenship, and social movements in Latin America?

How do literature and literacies interrogate the kinds of globalization and mass-culture that marginalize local cultures and communities throughout the continent?

How can the celebration of diversity, creativity, and the arts sustain a people, a nation, or a region's cultural heritage?

How can de-coloniality and alternatives to capitalism promote sustainability?

How do Latin-American realities inform sustainable policies and practices regionally and globally?

Areas of inquiry may include:

Belonging and identity

Changing patterns, cultures of consumption

Cosmopolis: local cultures, globalization, diaspora

Cultural dimensions of population change, migration, demographics

Indigenous peoples: self-government, self-management, and self-representation.

Indigenous knowledge and traditional practices of sustainability: other ways of knowing

Women and men, children and the elderly, the "familial" as community for sustainability

Gender and sustainability

The dynamics of production and consumption

Free trade and fair trade

Development, underdevelopment, sustainable development and sustainability

Poverty and its eradication

Urbanization and sustaining (mega)cities

Needs, wants, and demand: reconfiguring economic models for sustainability

Please email a 150-250 word abstract and title to the special issue's editor, Dr. Maria Woolson (The University of Vermont) at [maria.woolson@uvm.edu](mailto:maria.woolson@uvm.edu), by **March 1, 2018**.

Articles, which may be written in Spanish or English, will be due June 30, 2018 and the journal issue will be published in Spring 2019



## Feministas Unidas Inc. in Congreses

### **FEMINISTAS UNIDAS, INC. en NeMLA 2018: Global Spaces, Local Landscapes and Imagined Worlds.**

Pittsburgh, PA., April 12-15.

Chair: Hilda Chacón (Nazareth College)

Notions of “space,” “landscape,” and “world” evolve and transform depending on the time period and cultural context. This panel seeks to address how Latin American and/or Spanish drama, literature and film, of any time period, explore ideas of “space,” “landscape,” and “world” while challenging political, social and ideological contexts. We are particularly interested in how the application of gender and sexuality studies comes to bear on these (con)texts.

For more informations: <https://www.buffalo.edu/nemla/convention.html>

### **FEMINISTAS UNIDAS, Inc. en SAMLA 90:**

Birmingham, AL, 11/02/2018 - 11/04/2018

Chair: Ana Corbalán

For more information visit <https://samla.memberclicks.net/future-samla-conferences>

### **FEMINISTAS UNIDAS, Inc en el MLA 2019: Gender/s, Language and Identities in Hispanic Studies**

Chicago, January 3-6, 2019

Chair: Tina Escaja (University of Vermont)

As feminist/transfeminist scholars of Hispanic Studies, we engage in constant recasting of our gender, linguistic (beyond the binary), and cultural identities. How do our experiences of textual transactions impact our self-awareness? How do we position ourselves vis-à-vis the expanding field of transfeminism and its intersection with transnational cultural studies? What can we do to ensure that our critical engagement with gender reflects itself in “our relationships with constituencies outside the academy”?

Send a 250-word abstract (in English, Spanish, or Portuguese) to Tina Escaja at [tina.escaja@uvm.edu](mailto:tina.escaja@uvm.edu) by **March 15th, 2018**.

Must be a member of MLA and Feministas Unidas, Inc. in order to present at the conference.

## 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 (SAML, NeMLA, etc.). As an interdisciplinary alliance, we embrace all fields of studies and culture relating to Hispanic women.

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