

FEMINISTAS UNIDAS

*A Coalition of Feminist Scholars in Spanish, Spanish-American,
Luso-Brazilian, Afro-Latin American, and U.S. Latina/o Studies*



"Blasting Submission"
Mitra Kamali

FEMINISTAS UNIDAS

COVER ART

Mitra began drawing when she was three years old. Her artistic longings persisted through a career in petroleum engineering when painting was a luxury that could only be done as time permitted. "I painted in my mind as there was no time" (Kamali). When the passion to create became more compelling, she switched careers entirely and devoted all her energies to art.

Mitra feels that all knowledge fuels understanding and creativity. A world traveller, she sketches and photographs the ideas and images which influence her art yet she also incorporates the hard sciences. In her most recent work, the firing temperatures used to create different effects were a collaboration of Mirta's artistic vision and her extensive chemistry background.

Currently, Mitra lives in Houston, Texas, as a Petroleum engineer and an artist. She is working with a major gas transmission company where she feels content to fulfill both sides of her brain.

"Through my art, I share my personal belief in the unity of humanity. My paintings convey the shared emotions of all mankind- feelings that transcend prejudices of race, social status, religion or even a too narrow interpretation of beauty.

Personal experiences direct my heart and the art I share now with you. I only hope that my work reflects the compassion that binds all humanity"

-Mitra Kamali

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LETTER from the PRESIDENT

Queridas/os Feministas,

I am looking forward to seeing many of you at this year's MLA Convention in Chicago. We have two fabulous sessions: Monday morning at 10:15 Teaching Women, Building nations: A Roundtable on Pedagogy (Sheraton Centre, York) and Tuesday morning at 10:15 Hispanic Women's Theatricalities: Negotiating gender in Theater, Film, and Everyday Life (Sheraton Centre, Norfolk). Also, we will have the annual business meeting in my room at the Sheraton on Monday night from 6:00 to 7:00. All are welcome.

This year has seen some important innovations in Feministas Unidas, thanks to our officers Victoria Garcia, Lynn Talbot and Cynthia Tompkins. I especially want to thank Cynthia for her efforts in getting us on line with our own web site. See <http://www.west.asu.edu/femunida>. Our goal is to have our site be used for calls for papers, upcoming conferences and other activities that need to be out to you in a timely manner. Cynthia has also been at work trying to streamline the Newsletter to reduce costs, while maintaining the features that we have enjoyed through the years. It is our hope to combine the Newsletter with the web site and to have even more communication with and among members.

I also want to thank Elizabeth Horan for taking on the job of editor of the new RESENAS feature of the Newsletter. She will be looking for members to recommend new books of interest to Feministas members as well as to write short reviews. If you have a forthcoming book, be sure to contact Elizabeth so she can include it.

We are still working to keep our membership lists up-to-date and accurate. Please let Lynn Talbot know if you have a change of address or a change of e-mail address.

For the past couple of years we have had some major expenses with the publication of the Newsletter as well with the hotel suites for the MLA Feministas party. After considerable worry about expenses for this year and consultations with the Feministas officers, I have decided that this year we need to suspend the annual party, stabilize our finances and use the business meeting to think about ways to get together at the MLA without depleting our resources. I do this with great sadness, for the Feministas party has always been a time to relax and meet with friends and last year President Amy Kaminisky and I hosted a hugely successful bash in Washington. I do hope that we can discuss this matter more at the business meeting (or e-mail me beforehand and I'll convey your views to the group); I expect that by next year we will have some alternative function that will become our new tradition.

Finally, we will use the business meeting to decide on the panels Feministas will sponsor for the 1998 MLA. If you have some good ideas and cannot come to the meeting, please write to me before December 22. If you would be willing to chair a session (the paper work with MLA, reading abstracts, and selecting papers), again let me know.

Thank you for your interest and help,

Mary Jane Treacy

LETTER from the EDITOR

Mis queridas colegas:

Con este *mean/lean December issue* quisiéramos concluir la etapa de los Newsletters tradicionales. Tal como lo podrán comprobar, el *Web page*, cuya dirección es: <http://www.west.asu.edu/femunida> está en marcha. Quisiéramos invitarlos al *Web site* a fin de determinar si surge algún inconveniente cuanto antes. A fin de llevar a cabo la encuesta, debemos pedirles que me envíen un mensaje desde el *Web page* mismo si han tenido éxito. Caso contrario, por e-mail: IDCMT.ASUVM.INRE.ASU.EDU Quienes carezcan de acceso al *Web page* seguirán recibiendo el Newsletter tradicional por correo. Por favor, prueben cuanto antes...

Las sesiones de Feministas Unidas en el MLA prometen ser interesantes. ¡Apoyemos a nuestras colegas asistiendo! Demostremos también nuestra adhesión asistiendo a las otras sesiones listadas en las que participan miembros de la organización. Finalmente, están todas invitadas a la reunión anual de Feministas Unidas, a realizarse el lunes, de 6 a 7 pm, en el cuarto de Mary Jane Treacy, en el Sheraton.

A fin de ampliar el reconocimiento de la labor de nuestras colegas hemos dado a luz una nueva sección dedicada a Reseñas. Les reiteramos la invitación, diríjase a Elizabeth Horan tanto para el envío de material a ser reseñado como para preparar las reseñas.

Como verán, hemos listado varias conferencias interesantes para 1998, pero quisiera invitarlas muy especialmente a la organizada por la Asociación de Literatura Femenina Hispánica que tendrá lugar en Phoenix, del 17 al 19 de septiembre.

Mitra Kamali, ¡Gracias por compartir tu obra con nosotras!

Quisiera agradecerle a Melissa Thomson (Women's Studies/ASU-West) y a Gema Ledesma (Hispanic Research Center/ASU, por haberse encargado de la sección artística. A Deborah Stack y a Melissa Thomson, ¡Gracias por preparar el número! y a Dawn Danaher, ¡por poner el Webpage en marcha!

¡Gracias Lynn Talbot, por las nuevas listas de membresía [con e-mail] y los *labels*!

¡Felices Fiestas!

Cynthia Tompkins
ASU-West

MLA 1997 CONVENTION

“Teaching Women, Building Nations: a Roundtable on Pedagogy”

MLA NO. 389

Program arranged by Feministas Unidas

Monday 29, December 10:15-11:30 a.m. York, Sheraton Centre

Presiding: Elizabeth Rosa Horan, Arizona State University

Nora Erro-Peralta, Florida Atlantic University

1. “Internal Boundaries” Lisa Vollendorf, Wayne State
2. “Gender/Sovereignty” Anna Neil, University of Kansas
3. “Claiming Space” Adrian Roseman Askot,
College of New Jersey
4. “Working Hot” Susana Chavez Silverman, Pomona College
5. “Sex/Gender” Maria Magdalena Farland,
Wesleyan University
6. “American Texts” Eva Bueno, Penn State
7. “Postcapitalism?” Ana Maria Brenes Garcia,
Thunderbird Grad School

FOR COPIES OF SYLLABI PACKET SEND \$10 US TO NORA ERRO-PERALTA BY 15 DECEMBER



MLA 1997 CONVENTION

Hispanic Women's Theatricalities: Negotiating Gender in Theater, Film and Everyday Life

MLA NO. 659

Tuesday 30, December 10:15-11:30 a.m. Norfolk, Sheraton Center

Program arranged by Feministas Unidas

Panel Members

Presiding: Alicia del Campo, University of California, Irvine;
Margarita Vargas, State University of New York, Buffalo.

1. "La Búsqueda de la identidad femenina en el cine de Pedro Almodóvar."
María A Cami-Vela; University of Florida.
2. "Performing Difference: Intra-ethnic Theatricalities in Milcha Sanchez-Scott's Latina"
Yolanda Flores, Chapman University.
3. "Performing Melodrama: Tango/Crossdressing/ Eva Perón."
Silvia Pellarolo; California State University at Chico.
4. "Theatrical Constructions of Women's Identities in El eterno femenino by Rosario Castellanos. Sharon Sieber; Florida State.

Please support our two sessions by your attendance and participation.



Sharon Sieber

Idaho State University
Assistant Professor of Spanish

Paper to be presented at the Modern Language Association Convention in Toronto, December 1997, Feministas Unidas: "Hispanic Women's Theatricalities: Negotiating Gender in Theater, Film, Photography, and Everyday Life"

The deconstruction of Gender as Archetype in Rosario Castellanos' *El eterno femenino*

As one might expect from the title, Rosario Castellanos' drama involves the deconstruction of gender as archetype, both from the perspective of the quotidian modern woman and from the perspective of the ancient myth-making of the feminine, Eve (a very sarcastic, disbelieving and self-conscious Eve), and the power of the woman as the intuitive dreamer, this time dreaming, dreams that are invented by a machine, a dreaming machine which as a masculine device, foments discontent and projects, through its constructs, revolution on the mechanical dial of the "things that are to come." What better place to find all the feminine stereotypes than in a beauty shop— also a place where masks and other types of apparatus (giving the women what Castellanos refers to as a "Martian aspect") are applied with the ultimate end of beautification-- and hence, objectification which amounts to putting women on display or talking about them in a theatrical way, that is, as part of the theatre of everyday life--, but which first must make women ugly-- the stereotypical ugliness of curlers and mud packs, make-up, costume, and other theatrical accoutrements, thus setting up the binary process of transformation into opposite, woman becoming Other for the Other, which women are then compelled to define themselves against.

The theatrical construction of women's identities in everyday life situations in Castellanos' drama portrays, through the mixture of the practical (work) with the ideal (dreams), the transcendence of traditional power relationships between men and women. These are worked out on a real level in the beauty parlor and on a dream level between the protagonist, Lupita, and her bridegroom as a conflict between masculine reasoning and feminine manipulation; they are forced to define their power as a power over someone else (the oppressed quickly transforms into the oppressing) as opposed to finding their own power in themselves.¹

It is of course, a man who plays the role of tempter in the theatrical role of agent, and from a linguistic perspective he is the doer, and not the done-to, it is in fact, the clients, who are "patients" and who receive the action or are acted upon, in this case, they are women who are passively beautified and made into objects for aesthetic contemplation. The agent represents the biblical snake in this play in which the females attempt to define their identities through their sacrifices to patriarchal values and through the binary process of transformation and the eternal negotiation of the feminine. It is important to note that in this negotiation, the agent comes to the women with the object or dreaming gadget in order to tempt them, and to deconstruct their worlds through hierarchizing and subverting their free will into sacrifice, to give them the illusion that they are happy with their lives. But it is also incidentally something they may choose to accept or not, because as agent, he doesn't attempt to interrupt their free agency or their negotiation among themselves, he merely presents them with the choice and then tempts them with the illusion of happiness in pleasing the patriarchy. The women's gender negotiation in this play is among other women and is not a dialogue with the Other which is patriarchal, but rather it is a dialogue with other women about

¹ Conversation with Doug Nilson, March 1997

the feminine purpose of pleasing the Other.¹ Beautification is a process not without pain, however, and the agent points out that there is an alternative to suffering the heat and discomfort of Hair-dryer Hell, and he is there to liberate them: "Ya no más el secador como instrumento de tortura" (27)! Interestingly, Camille Paglia in *Sexual Personae* suggests that this cult of the beautiful is part of an overall artistic/ritualistic urge of an epistemological sort, since it suggests that understanding seeks order: "Art is order. But order is not necessarily just, kind, or beautiful. Order may be arbitrary, harsh, and cruel. Art has nothing to do with morality" (29).

The deconstruction of gender as genre and archetype in *El eterno femenino* involves the study of the interaction of collective stereotypes of mass culture and political ideology, particularly in relation to patriarchal gender (re)definition in this genre. The representations of the archetypal beauty shop as a woman's profession and of everyday nature of the business that is carried on there, the beautification, the gossip, the squabbling, etc., in which the women protagonists become political by "writing," "dreaming" or "constructing" themselves, in this case, in a farcical way, become a social and political commentary on the constructions which are projections of a phallogentric society. This beautification involves the transformation of masks, the trading of one mask for another, which also symbolizes the continual rebirth of the feminine, but it is beautification for the theatre of phallogentric observers, beautification which is exploited and transformed into industry, banality, and assembly line presentation for the work-a-day world of bourgeois values, which is elevated to the theatrical in that it is the beautification itself which defines and negotiates gender. Within the process of beautification, we go directly to what Camille Paglia has termed the single most important commodity on the male marriage market (a phallogentric institution, if there ever was one)--the public display of Lupita's virginity during her honeymoon, an event which is symbolic of the ritual participation of mass culture (the pueblo) in the tradition of patriarchal-conjugal mores. As Paglia notes, "Marxist feminists reduce the historical cult of woman's virginity to her property value, her worth on the male marriage market" (27). Lupita does this by wearing a skirt which is arranged to display the blood, of which her husband, Juan, doubts the authenticity. In fact, he accuses her of faking her virginity with catsup (an action which would significantly decrease her value, an archetypal value, and hence her power, on the male marriage market), he is amused when Lupita tells him it's plasma, and even more pleased when she tells him she has not enjoyed their first sexual encounter, since the pleasure of the text is a privilege exclusive to members of a males only club.

Yet these are women who write themselves from the perspective of crisis and counterpoint, constructing their own power base from a physical, representational, ideational and objectified level, similar to the women's manifesto suggested by Hélène Cixous in "the Laugh of the Medusa," "Woman must write her self: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies-- for the same reasons by the same law, with the same fatal goal. Woman must put herself into the text-- as into the world and into history-- by her own movement... Where is the ebullient, infinite woman who, immersed as she was in her naiveté, kept in the dark about herself, led into self-disdain by the great arm of parental-conjugal phallogentrism, hasn't been ashamed of her strength" (309)?

Typifying the "Men are from Mars" ideology, Castellanos' women are not from Venus at all but from Mars-- specifically by their appearance from the exaggeration of the everyday details and the mundane: the everyday "putting on of the face," or of the mask, and the agent's gadget which works in conjunction with the hair dryer prevents women from doing what annoys the patriarchy, thinking in a feminine way. As the agent attempts to convince the owner of the beauty shop of the importance of his gadget, he sweeps aside the suggestions that the women who spend many hours under the hair dryer per year are only "bored" or that they "sleep;" he claims that these states are transitory and lead to other, more active, consequences: that they might think: "entonces; entonces fue necesario inventar algo para conjurar el peligro." When the stylist asks, "what danger?," the agent responds, saying that thinking, in and of itself, is bad, and must be avoided: "[que las mujeres, sin darse cuenta, se pusieran a pensar. El misma refrán lo dice: piensa mal y acertarás. El pensamiento es, en sí mismo, un mal. Hay que evitarlo" (28). It's interesting that the agent, who is the temptor, is offering to women exactly the opposite of the tree of knowledge: he

¹ Conversation with Eduardo Castilla, November 2, 1997.

offers them a return to the Garden of Eden, the pre-cognitive and unreflective state of being that was lost when "Eve" sampled the apple: a gadget which induces dreams, a meld of the unconscious and the spontaneous, "experiential" mode of being as opposed to phallogocentric rational and conscious thinking of the male.

The women become as if they were from Mars, that is they begin the conventional process of deconstruction, that of hierarchizing in the way that men do, and thus becoming other. Certainly the fact that the power keeps going off in the Beauty Shop (the electricity, that is) is a representation of the female struggle to negotiate power, a struggle which is further symbolized by the fact that the dreamer falls in and out of feminine dream consciousness and masculine reality. It also has the effect of making the everyday reality of the beauty shop seem even more bizarre: a male colleague perhaps best summed up the situation with the observation that "the hair dryer wins"¹ The machine of boredom, of sacrifice, prevails, and not the gadget which provokes the revolution to begin with, by conveniently replacing thought with programming. Octavio Paz, commenting on the dream state in his book on Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz, has commented upon the conscious nature of the act of dreaming. "During the dream the soul is awake, something most critics forget. The voyage--a lucid dream-- does not end in a revelation, as in the dreams of hermetic and Neoplatonic tradition; actually, the poem does not *end* at all: the soul hesitates, recognizing itself in Phaeton, whereupon the body awakens" (*Sor Juana: or the Traps of Faith*, 380) and Castellanos is certainly using the frame of Sor Juana's famous work, "Primer sueño," as well as implying her other famous works "Hombres necios, que acusáis," and her famous rewriting of the Spanish Baroque artist, Luis de Góngora's famous sonnet in which life and all of its values are finally transformed into dust, smoke, nothing. The agent, however, has foreseen the "risks" of having leisure time-- noting that people are willing to give everything as long as they're not thinking-- has removed the uncertainty of the representation of the female through the unconscious-- the has programmed the gadget to produce dreams which manifest male-programmed femininity:

Hay alza de precios en los artículos de primera necesidad, que consigue una criada eficiente y barata; que este mes queda embarazada; que este mes no queda embarazada, que sus hijos sacan diez de promedio en la escuela; que sus hijas necesitan brassiere; que se muere su suegra; que se queda viuda y cobra un gran seguro de vida. . . en fin, hay para todas las situaciones y todos los gustos (30-31).

In response to this presentation, the hair stylist, who has the least status in the situation, and therefore the least power, exclaims the obvious: that they are dreams of the cheapest and most common sort, dreams which deconstruct and upset their own hierarchized conventions and value-fulfilling role through annihilating the very nature of feminine intuition and means of exploration of the unconscious with preprogramming of the feminine, not unlike the acculturated, assimilated and unquestioned values which are acquired through socialization and propagated by mass patriarchal culture.

Castellanos presents female protagonists who are women of action and who negotiate among themselves their own representation, and the means as to how this objectivization shall be allowed to continue. The eternal feminine denotes what has been a constant negotiation of the feminine since the beginning, in which gender is negotiated through everyday time and space. Derrida speaks of the overturning of hierarchy through difference, and the natural category of binary opposition of male and female imposes on the female the deconstructive activity of the woman writing herself, that is creating female characters within phallogocentric language and phallogocentric power, always referring us to this system of deixis, otherwise it wouldn't be understood by the male hierarchical patriarchy or anyone else—that is to say, the audience—and which is also to say that females cannot create a vaginal-centric language to get out of the power structure, they have to use the same phallogocentric power to deconstruct the patriarchy.²

Lupita is a human subject in an experiment which is co-participated in and facilitated by other women, in which there are vivid dreams about the nature of power relationships, which are constantly rupturing to give way to other hierarchies of power, all stemming from the fact that she is coming in to the beauty shop to have her hair done for her wedding, a beautification which is denied in the process of

¹ Conversation with Dan Hunt, Spring 1997

² Conversation with Eduardo Castilla, November 2, 1997.

negotiation, that of taking on the properties of the mask, the other, the transformed. Several women's voices participate in the exploitative portrayal of femininity and the objectivization of themselves, oppressed as they say, by make-up, girdles and brassieres. Yet the process of deconstruction demands that they use the same tool to describe their gender which has been imposed on them, by phallogentric language—here it is beauty itself which has been reified and which has become mythical in its importance, mythical in the beautification of women, which has traditionally meant the negotiation of gender through time and space, in which various theatrical masks and make up come in and out of fashion. The women do participate in the public display of this process, since no woman represented in the play is an outcast, with the exception of Rosario, a clearly self-conscious and self-referential postmodern representation of the author herself: since one way of rejecting negotiation is to play the part of an outcast, and it is also a way of establishing authority outside of the established conventions.¹ Perhaps the primary issue of negotiating the power of the feminine is to empower the female through feminine, and not masculine, characteristics. Sor Juana criticizes the authority of male tradition which expects that she put her critical faculties into looking beautiful as opposed to placing "beauty," into her understanding, which in this case is an analogue for knowledge, and represents the personal values of Sor Juana as opposed to the socially sanctioned ones, determined not by women, but by men: "En perseguirme, Mundo, ¿que interesas? ¿En qué te ofendo, cuando sólo intento/poner bellezas en mi entendimiento/y no mi entendimiento en las bellezas?" (57) Castellanos uses the archetypal mother, the archetypal feminist from Mexico (Sor Juana, here made into a simpleton who can't get the knack of writing in verse), archetypal woman, or Eve (who doesn't quite understand that the serpent has condemned her to freedom), archetypal negotiation of sexuality in the form of a prostitute, and she uses herself as archetypal feminist in her own play (reminiscent of Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author*), since part of the deconstruction of archetypal woman is woman writing herself, as in Cixous' "The Laugh of the Medusa," which rejects the use of the masculine, yet deconstruction involves using the hierarchy to overturn the hierarchy, so Castellanos works within the system of phallogentric language to deconstruct the hierarchy. The female characters are described by females who are within the system and who want to please men, authority and power, since there are no other means of biologically perpetuating themselves, so that the other women in the beauty parlor suggest that high technology is the answer to escaping male authority and power in that they would be able to reproduce in laboratories, without men. Here we see the sacrifice of women, the symbolism of sacrifice of Sor Juana cutting her hair because of her vanity, a passive and not active feminism, if being feminine is the custom, it is also the mask in that women have eternally been on stage to please: when Señora in the beauty parlor asks if it's all about pleasing men, Lupita answers: "Nay hay otra alternativa, si pensamos que nuestra misión en el mundo es perpetuar la especie" (189).

The reader becomes a ritual participant of the textual politics of this drama, as the genre integrates the reader not just as a viewer, but also as actor. In his introduction to Castellanos' play, Raúl Ortiz explains that "En *El eterno femenino* Rosario Castellanos arranca las máscaras, combate mitos, y ante un conflicto que no por dramático resultaba menos ambiguo e impreciso en el planteamiento, apunta con idioma ágil, jocosos y dúctil, contra la hipócrita complicidad de hombres y mujeres que se arrellanan en un status quo del que ambos sexos pretenden obtener ventajas y provechos" (12). Thus, as Ortiz notes, Castellanos strips the masks, myths and the complicity of the conflicts of the masculine and the feminine of their archetypal value, of their patriarchal significance and this devaluation consists in a kind of deconstruction whose very questioning sets in motion a new hierarchy of values, demonstrating that the correspondence between the valued and value-makers is, like signifier and signified, arbitrary, signifying only the political ideology and social mores of postmodern subscribers to phallogentrism. The eternal feminine symbolized by that first leaf, which has become value laden with guilt, purity, and the significance of the pursuit of beautification within a cultish-fetishism, that of pleasing has involved the eternal giving in to more and more oppressive items, girdles, brassieres, make-up, hair styles, manicures, which has become a sophisticated and lucrative system of negotiating the feminine. *El eterno femenino* ends with a truncation of the negotiation, Lupita stomping on the wig that the proprietor has suggested to her, killing the mask,

¹ Conversation with Eduardo Castilla, November 1997

destroying the archetype, expressing the frustration which is an end to duplicity and complicity in the negotiation of image. Her representation as a woman having a bad-hair day is a woman who cannot come to terms with vanity, perhaps the masculine instrument of torture, the hair dryer, does win. The proprietor tells Lupita that her bad hair day is her problem, to which Lupita responds; "¿Mi problema? ¡Chin!" (196), as she looks to the audience to support her obvious assertion: that it is, more broadly, the eternal problem of the feminine.

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Yolanda Flores

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Performing Difference: Intra-Ethnic Theatricalities

While recent, more accurate accounts of American history recount that, since its inception, the United States was a diverse, multilingual, multicultural society, the creation of what constituted an "American" national identity has historically been defined as white (European) and English speaking. Nowadays, however, there is a constant questioning of America's national identity and culture partly due to the dramatic demographic changes that have placed racial minorities (of non-European descent) as the majorities in major cities across the country-- Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, for example, and with one-third of the American people not claiming their ancestry to Europe but to Asia, Africa, and Latin America. As a result, in our current post-Civil Rights era, discussions about "race," "race" relations, and "race" theory now occupy the center stage in some circles of the American academy. Simultaneously, the "race" debate has infiltrated public forums such as the programming of NPR and PBS and other media vehicles. However, it is the racial tensions that permeate "America's" daily reality that fuels and intensifies these debates. One can think, for example, closer to home, of the April 1992 Los Angeles explosion, after the four officers were found not guilty of police brutality against Rodney King.

One of the most important lessons derived from the Los Angeles uprising, one which was first brought to the public's attention by the Chicano Civil Rights Movement of the late 60's and 70's, is that "race" in America needs to be expanded beyond the dominant traditional binary terms of black and white. A paradigm which, to this date, is often constructed in terms in the opposition between the descendants of Europeans and of Africans. In fact, a traditional view of the Civil Rights Movement in this country represents this struggle as a black and white issue, which erases the participation and contribution of other "racialized" minorities for their quest for human rights. Chicano historians have written about the participation of Chicanos in the Civil Rights Movement. But, perhaps, the PBS airing of a four -hour segment entitled "Chicano! The History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement," which took seven years in the making and just aired this year in April, brought to a larger audience's attention the history of the Mexican Americans involvement in the Civil Rights struggle of the late 60's and 70's. With respect to education, for instance, the Mexican American were even ahead of the African-Americans: in

1946 (almost 20 years before *Brown Vs the Board of Education*) in Santa Ana, California the case "Menéndez Vs the Westminster Board of Education" called for the end of segregation which had, until then, forced Mexican American children to attend only Mexican schools, where they had inadequate facilities, a second-class education, and where they would receive corporal punishment if they spoke Spanish. One important aspect illustrated by this series was the documentation of how the Mexican American population had been segregated and excluded from mainstream society because of their working poor, at times migratory working status, and because of the Spanish language most of them spoke. Hence, their social class and usage of the Spanish language rendered them undesirable and outsiders.

In agreement with the views of historian Ron Takaki, I accept the premise that "race relations in America does not correspond to the history of "ethnic" relations; rather, the trajectory of American history illustrates how non-European immigrants have had a different experience than those of European background (378-428). Today, even though the descendants of immigrants from Asia, Latin America, Arabia, the Pacific Islands and other non-European countries constitute a very large percentage of the racialized "minority" of Americans, in academic discussion about "race", as well as in the public forum, "race" relations are still predominately viewed as black/white issues. Latino cultural productions are often erased in discussion involving "race" theories. Whereas in the media, Bill Wong, Oakland Tribune correspondent and regular contributor to the *Lehrer New Hours*, laments the invisibility of other "racialized" minorities from public discussions of "race" relations in America (Wong) I, as a U.S. Latina, find myself in the same predicament expressed by Wong's assessment, for I often listen to discussions about "race" and know that they are of concern to me because they are "talking about Latinos," but not to them or with them: the dominant paradigm of black/white "race," relations in the U.S. which continues to define "race" according to biological categories and excludes other processes of racialization and other racialized minority groups needs to be deconstructed.

My objective in this paper is to interrogate simple notions of black/white "race" constructions and to insist on deconstructing "race" relations in the otherwise bipolar black/white paradigm of the U.S. context. To achieve this goal, I propose to consider a racialization process which is not limited by phenotype associations. Rather, I propose to look at the process of racialization in a more complex manner which illuminates the importance class, language, employment, illegal status, gender, and cultural behavior play in the process of racialization. By "racialization," I am referring to the historical emergence of the idea of "race" and its subsequent reproduction and application. A view which has long set aside biological (phenotypical) human features to characterize a distinct group of people. Rather, I wish to focus on the notion of "race" as a social construction which is at the center of the racialization process. When this process is imbued with negative valuation it is converted to racism. I will examine the way class and language, cultural behavior and costume are racialized within the inter-ethnic dynamics of the Latino constituency. I will focus on the role class differences play in Latinas' relationship with other Latinas. I argue that within the constituency of Latinas, class privilege and the English language allows for a social "whitening" that is denied to the working poor, the recent immigrants and non-English speaking who, then become the "racialized" abject subjects of that constituency. Thus, raising the issue of how useful it is to characterize racialized groups as a homogenous economic and social category, a depiction which I find unsatisfactory. While I do not wish to deny the economic and social disadvantage that the majority of the Latino ethnic minority face I think it is important to acknowledge the processes by which economic and social positioning is achieved and to study the way in which groups themselves call upon cultural and gender resources in order to deal with the structural disadvantages they encounter. *Latina*, the play that I examine in this paper, illustrates intra-class divisions, cultural and language differences that exemplify differences and diversity among the Latino constituency. In this case, the Spanish speaking, recent immigrant is constructed and viewed as inferior, not on the premise of racial categorization, but as cultural, linguistic, and national outsiders and undesirables. Thus, the Spanish language and the class of the poorest recent immigrant becomes "racialized."

Latina was the first play written by Milcha Sánchez-Scott whose dramatic work is often identified as Chicano, by Chicano scholars, because of its themes, language, settings and characters and because the playwright grew-up in Southern California, where among other Latino groups, Chicanos are the largest and most prominent group. Incidentally, as a result of the Chicano Civil Rights Movement Chicanos' access to higher education became an option to larger numbers of Chicanos. Once in higher education many

Chicanos focused their scholarship on Chicano issues. Of all the Latino groups, Chicano scholars are the forerunners of broader Latino scholarship. Perhaps this partly explains why Chicano scholars chose to appropriate Sánchez-Scott as a Chicana. Another partial explanation is that Chicano culture had been defined as originating from an underclass, exploited, and marginalized by mainstream society: in that sense, the theme of the play is, in fact, Chicano. More importantly, as I will discuss later, the play *Latina* calls for a collective identity which acts against the racial, economic, linguistic, and cultural oppression that affects Latinos within the dominant cultures. This collective identity encompasses broader Latino groups: it is not limited to the Chicano/ Mexican American presence. While Sánchez-Scott at the beginning of her career, identified herself as a Chicana, her ancestry is Colombian, Indonesian, Chinese and Dutch. From her very first play, one can see the presence of broader cultural elements, more Latin American, which the playwright will develop later in her later works.

The play *Latina* is somewhat autobiographical, it originated out of Sánchez-Scott's experience working at an employment agency for maids in Beverly Hills. Like the main protagonist in the play, Sánchez-Scott, in addition to writing plays, is an actress. Sánchez-Scott holds a degree in Literature, Philosophy, and Theater from UC San Diego. As its title implies, the 1980 play *Latina*, performs on stage the identity problems experienced by a young, second-generation, assimilated Latina actress and her relationship with other recent, predominantly Spanish speaking, often undocumented Latina women. The principal characters are women in a domestic employment agency run by a man from Guatemala, Felix Sánchez. Although Sarita, the main protagonist at times seems to empathize with the immigrant women seeking employment by for example teaching them how to acculturate their dress to more American standards, Sarita's treatment of the immigrant women is often co-opted by the ideology of the social and economic system that exploits and demeans these women. Thematically, the play deals with the many layers of oppression these 'Latina women experience: the government with its immigration laws; the television and film industry which perpetuates stereotypical images of Latinas; the European-American employers who are seeking cheap labor; the Latino males personified by the owner of the domestic agency-- "Sleazy Sánchez" who functions almost as a pimp-like character-- he finds work and represents the illegal women for prospective employers.

In the play, before a line of dialogue is spoken there is a nonverbal scene which underscores the visual codification of what it means to be Latina. The playtext reads:

The stage is dark. Then we hear Peruvian flute music coming from a distance. We see NEW GIRL saying good-bye to a small group of PERUVIAN MOUNTAIN VILLAGE PEOPLE. The time is dusk. NEW GIRL is carrying a satchel. She has a Peruvian shawl around her shoulders. Her hair is in braids. She has a peasant skirt and a work shirt and sandals on her feet. The NEW GIRL'S mother steps and puts a St. Christopher medal around NEW GIRL'S neck. She embraces NEW GIRL. NEW GIRL tears herself away to leave. NEW GIRL falls to her knees weeping. People around her (mother) help her to wave at NEW GIRL (85).

As performed in this scene the visual identification of the Latina is codified as one who wears a work shirt, peasant skirt, shawl, sandals, and whose hair is in braids. In addition this scene contextualizes the class background of the young woman she is a peasant woman from a small village-- not a middle-class educated urban university student. The lights dim and the girl goes through a tunnel of light. The music changes to an escape tempo. A sequence of exploitative images occur in mime: the girl pays a policeman; a woman steals her shawl; a man tries to rape her at knifepoint; and she pays a slick city "coyote" or person who gets her into the United States. There is a blackout and as the lights come up on the Felix Sánchez Domestic Agency set, the music changes to American city music, with street sounds in the background. The new girl will later in the play arrive at this agency in search of employment. The vulnerability of the young woman is shown in this sequence as the audience watches how men contribute to the exploitation and endangerment of women's lives. A critique of the oppressive nature of patriarchy is foregrounded in this initial framing scene.

Scene Two introduces Sarita the protagonist of the play. To support her acting career Sarita, a college-educated woman, age twenty-three, works as a counselor for a domestic agency located in downtown Los Angeles, a setting which allows Sánchez-Scott to highlight the multiethnic composition of the city and to represent the diversity of the Latino population. Felix Sánchez Domestic Agency employs women from all over Latin America: Cubans, Peruvians, Salvadorians, Colombians, and Guatemalans, among others. Some of these women are undocumented and can barely speak English. In this scene, Sarita addresses the audience and reveals her immediate predicament and her identity turmoil:

... And I spent the better part of the hour deciding what to wear, because I don't want to be mistaken for a maid. I am not a maid. You thought I was a maid. . . I am not a maid or housekeeper. Housekeeper is what polite people call their maids...I don' want to look Latina (86)....And I hate this stupid beach... and the illegal women who come here looking for jobs....Well, I don't hate the women, it's just that...I am not one of them. I don't want to be one of them. (87)

Sarita's desire to distance herself from the other Latina women can be understood when one recalls the stereotypical, often derogatory images the television industry perpetuates about Latinos. Sarita sardonically and humorously lists her acting credits:

I was a barrio girl who got raped by a gang in Police Story, a young barrio mother who got shot by a gang in Starsky and Hutch, a barrio wife who got beat up by her husband who was in Rookies. I was even a barrio lesbian who got knifed by an all-girl gang called the Mal-flores that means Bad Flowers. It's been a regular barrio blitz on television lately. If this fad continues, I can look forward to being a barrio grandmother done-in by a gang of old Hispanics called Los Viejitos Diablitos, the old devils. (89).

Mainstream media images of Latinos are confined to images associated with violence, poverty, and menace. This monologue is important because it contextualizes Sarita's, a young Latina actress, predicament in mainstream media: so that even with the advantages Sarita has over the recent immigrant women, such as English fluency, legal resident status, acculturated behavior and so on Sarita still suffers the consequences of discrimination by the dominant society. Her reluctance to identify with the recent immigrant, Spanish-speaking women is born, precisely, out of the desire to distance herself from the level of vulnerability of the immigrant women, which reminds her of how close she actually is to that son of fragility.

In her role as a counselor, Sarita functions as a broker between the recently immigrated poor women and their white employers. Through the play several European-American women complain about their maids' inability to perform to their standards. On one occasion, an employer returns the maid that worked for her, as if she were damaged merchandise, to the domestic agency claiming "She has no respect for my blue and white Chinese porcelain, or any of our antiques and things that are irreplaceable." (109). A critique of the objectification of human life under the consumerist capitalist system is evoked in this brief exchange. And women, do in fact, participate in the exploitation of other women. Clara, one of the immigrant characters, denounces her employer's failure to see how her words belie her actions. In talking about her employer, Clara states:

She like to talk. Eso de everybody equal. She go to meet with the other women, they talk everybody equal y de los husbands y como los hombres las tratan mal. They talk how the women must be equal to men. The she come to me and say, "Clara, you and me, equal." Hmmmmp! I don't pay attention. (Silence) She don't know nothing. I been taking three buses every day to clean houses for fifteen years and she. . . (116).

Chata another of the immigrant characters responds. "Comadre, you ain't equal to her. Any pendejo can see that" (116). In a different scene, a white employer threatens to expose Lola, her undocumented maid, to the immigration authorities.

Lola responds to her employer: "This legal-illegal is the business of the government, but God put me, a human being, in this world, I am here because my children must eat" (139).

Sarita finally reacts: ". . .you hypocrite! You talk "legal," you hired her because you didn't want to pay the salary a legal person gets."

To which the employer responds "Why should I? My taxes support their welfare."

Sarita responds: "You! Your support? No, you depend! You're cheap, you're greedy. You want their labor, their cheap abundant labor. You don't care about the legalities " (139).

In addition to representing the contradictions of the arguments often advanced by many who espouse anti-immigrant sentiments, this scene further depicts the "liberation" of some women at the expense of others; it shows women's complicity in the exploitation of other women. The playwright, it seems to me, is evoking the 70's Women's' Movement's failure to take into consideration the needs of women's burden with the additional weight of class and racial oppression-- the needs of working poor women of color.

Despite witnessing the mistreatment of the European- American employers towards the immigrant women, Sarita never defends the maids, taking instead, the side of the employer and by doing so provokes the resentment from the other Latina women who interpret Sarita's actions as a sign that she is ashamed of being a Latina and wants to be a "gringa desteñida." As La Cubana, one of the immigrant women, tells Sarita: "You are a pocha. Mexican trying to be gringa," (120). Translated into English "gringa desteñida" means "bleached white American." The emphasis on performance assumes various forms in this play. To help these women find employment, Sarita, in several instances, engages in role-playing in which she plays the employer and teaches the immigrant women how to "act" more American in order to fit their European-American employers' demands. "Acting" American, for these immigrant women involves assimilation, exchanging their old styles of dress for new modern Americanized versions. As one European-American character states: "I really can't afford anybody, but Silvia said most of your women were.. . well, you know, illegal. . . (131). In this scene, in order to make Peruvian woman from the first scene more acceptable to the her employer, Sarita and the other women transform the hair, make-up and clothes of the young woman into a more Americanized version of the NEW GIRL. The playwright reads:

"We see an Americanized version of NEW GIRL, with a new slick hair style, make-up and Sarita's clothes. Off the side we see a different SARITA, with NEW GIRL's clothes. SARITA looks stunned as NEW GIRL as others stand back and exclaim, "Qué bien se ve,"...(133).

With her Peruvian clothes and hair style exchanged for Americanized versions, the Peruvian girl resembles Sarita. Once more, Sarita confronts the reality of how near she is to the vulnerable position the new girl occupies in American society. As performed in this scene, there are certain cultural markers that can be exchanged for less inconspicuous American ways of "acting"-- dress and make-up are two of them. In comparison with her South American counterparts, Sarita clearly embodies certain advantages— acculturated demeanor, citizenship. English fluency-- that an illegal woman from South America lacks in the U S. context . Yet, there are others, as Sarita's predicament as an actress reveals that are not that easily exchanged.

In a pivotal scene at the end of the play, Sarita for the first time stands up for the Latina women by rebutting the unjust accusations of an employer, engaging in physical contact with the aggressor. The Latina women applaud Sarita's efforts to defend them. One of them affirms: "Sarita, I only wanted you to stand up for us, not to kill the woman. Andale un abrazo... Ahora sí eres una latina completamente una latina" (140). According to this character in order to become a complete Latina action is required. "Acting" Latina according to this definition means acting in opposition to the forces that cause the oppression to the most disempowered. Not taking action, not standing-up for the rights of the more

marginalized and vulnerable is viewed by these immigrant women as "acting" white. Hence, the playwright, it seems to me, is proposing a Latina collective identity which demands the willingness to act, to take action against the forces that cause this oppression.

The play ends with an immigrant raid and the replay of different "new girl" crossing the border, suggesting, in this way, that the issues explored in the play are ongoing problems. The last words of the playtext read:

[SARITA walks over and sits on the bus bench. Flute music, helicopter lights and sounds, barbed wire fence as we see creeping towards the fence another new girl and her coyote] (141).

The barbed wire fences, the helicopter's lights and sounds with which the play ends have not only continued but have intensified dramatically in the sixteen years after the date the play was written: Anti-immigrant sentiment has increased significantly, especially in the state of California, where one witnesses the militarization of the Mexican/U.S. Border. While Mexican and Latinos are not the only immigrants to this country and this state, Mexican and Latino population are the special targets of Propositions 187 and, more recently, Proposition 209. Just as class plays an important role in the inter-Latino dynamics, the poor social economic background of the recent Latino immigrants has marked them as undesirables and outsiders. a type of reception which is significantly different than that afforded to immigrants of upper social classes, even if they are "racially" marked individuals. Here one can think, for example, of the emergence, codification, and popularity of Postcolonial theory.

Cultural critics such as Aijaz Ahmad and Aril Dirlik have noted the problematic consequences in the U.S. context of the Postcolonial theory. Dirlik notes: "To put it bluntly, postcoloniality is designed to avoid making sense of the current crisis and, in the process, to cover the origins of postcolonial intellectuals in a global capitalism of which they are not so much the victims as the beneficiaries" (153). The fetishization of difference that postcolonial discourse embodies renders North American critics of color even more impotent because the postcolonial is privileged precisely because it is safely distant from urgent local concerns of historically underrepresented American minorities: postcolonial studies performs a racial containment of U.S. people of color. While most of these postcolonial critics are, in fact, of Indian and African birth, their migration to this country is dramatically different than that of the poor immigrants. The upper-class birth, dominance of the English language and education affords them an economic and social "whiteness" which is denied to the undesirable pour. The Spanish language, after all, is the dominant, it not exclusive language of the poor Latino population: In California, Spanish is the language of the cooks, maids, groundskeepers, and those under-employed.

In this presentation, I have tried to bring center stage the role class differences played in Latinas' relationship with other Latinas. By calling attention to the diversity and inter-ethnic conflicts and divisions among that constituency, I hope to call attention to the endemic problems of conceptualizing the Latino community as a homogenous economic and social category. It is my contention that social classes are products of struggles within concrete historical processes which may include relations of gender, "race," class, and language, among others. While discussion about "race" in America is still most often viewed in old, black and white terms, that is, by phenotypical human features, I insist in calling attention to the deficiencies of this categorization. On one hand, there are many other non-European ethnic groups in this country that have also historically been racialized. Within the racialization process, class, language, culture, and gender play a pivotal role in determining which elements of a particular ethnic group or culture are inferiorized, are made the abject subject of a constituency or a culture. "Race in America is much more complex than the discussions about it tend to represent. By failing to see and deal with this complexity, one may, inadvertently, re-entrench the borders, the forbidden zones one was hoping to transgress; hence, one may be contributing to maintaining the status quo. A current condition which hides the reality that behind the "facial" explosion of the Los Angeles explosion lie very concrete, economic factors. As African-American, congress woman Maxine Waters pointed out in an interview after the Los Angeles incident: "The uprising is the cry of the poor." The white, male protagonist of *Dead Man Walking* reminds us of the "racialization" of the working poor, regardless of biological associations, when he comments

"there are no people with money in death row." Plays like *Latina* and others written by Latino authors such as Josefina López's *Simply María or the American Dream*, *Real Women Have Curves* and some of the earlier work of Luis Valdez contribute to the discussions of racialization processes that are far more complex than those assumed by biological categories. These plays insist on inserting themselves in the discussions about "race" in America and on disrupting the black/white "race" relations paradigm. Ironically, the racialization process described in the play *Latina* enacts a similar type of bipolar paradigm. For the racialization process that I have discussed in this paper enacts a sort of "whitening" that is associated with positions of economic' social and discursive power over those that are "racialized" as dark and undesirable. This more complex way of discussing "race" in America points to what often motivates "racial" tensions-- it serves to unmask the essentially divided nature of the U.S. population-- the haves and the have-nots, the employed and the unemployed, capital and labor.

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Performing Melodrama/ Performing Gender in Modern Argentina: Tango, Crossdressing, Eva Perón

The performative construction of gender roles during the formation of modern Argentina (1920-50) was promoted, (among other cultural practices), by an active interaction between the culture industry and its audiences/ consumers. This exchange reflected the need in the public sphere for the creation of a modern feminine identity, remarkably documented in the stage and political performativity of "public" women. In the following overview of gender formation I study the popular culture of that time, specifically the contrast between the representations of

women in male-authored productions (tango lyrics, plays and films) and the actual lifestyles of tango singers and cabaret women who were the models of these feminine portrayals. In addition, I trace the evolution of the theatricality (derived from French and vernacular versions of melodrama) in which this modern feminine style is presented, rehearsed and transformed, and, as I claim, was later incarnated in the controversial political figure of Eva Perón.

Canonic tango studies have seldom included reflections on gender issues. Only very recently have such approaches been undertaken, due to the fact that the discipline has been historically monopolized by a conservative male scholarship reluctant to accept dissident views (ie. feminist). This anxiety coming from the guardians of tango evidently hides a fear that this paper will try to address: the unveiling of a notorious gender ambiguity covered up by a cultural practice that dramatizes the binarism of heterosexuality in an almost parodic way.

From its inception in the 1880s, the modernization of Argentina brought with it visible demographic, political, economic and cultural changes to the country. The transformations were brought about by the entrance of the Argentine economy into the international market, together with the adoption of the liberal model in politics, which favored a massive immigration from Europe and the migratory displacement of unemployed peasants from their rural environment. A consequence of this was the transformation of a colonial, pre-capitalist society towards the values of an urban, modern, cosmopolitan one. In Buenos Aires-- where the changes were manifested with much more intensity--an interesting process of transculturation took place between the two most vulnerable, sectors of the society at the beginning of the century. A new urban creation, the suburbs, were the site of synthesis and transformation of the--mainly rural--cultural elements brought by the displaced criollos from their nomadic life of the Pampas and that of the European immigrants. These cultural paradigms began to be negotiated towards the construction of a new identity which would encompass the heterogeneity of the newcomers. The popular culture of era--the theatre, particularly the *género chico criollo* (mostly sainetes: brief farcesque plays) and the tango--were admirable representations of the aesthetic and ideological transformations of this society.

Tango represented the nostalgia for a time gone by, irrecoverable, and acknowledged the same experience of displacement suffered by *criollo* migrants and European immigrants. Both this cross-cultural product--with a strong substratum of Afro-American elements--and the theater plays that staged it foregrounded metonymically the unnamable existence of a hidden gender ambiguity in this society in transition. Currently some tango studies expose these silenced practices by looking with a phenomenological candor at information readily available to tango historians, who had traditionally opted not to arrive at epiphanic conclusions which would debunk the myth of Argentine masculinity disseminated by the tango culture. Such the cases of Marta Savigliano's and Jorge Salessi's which portray the homosociality of this culture under a revealing light:

Couples of compadres, compadritos, uranists, homosexuals, inverted (...), danced in whorehouses, in the corners of the streets or in men-only venues, performing 'lascivious figures' or 'the total representation of an erotic simulacrum,' (...) tango, in its 'age of forbidden music' had marked homosexual and homoerotic connotations which have not yet been researched. And this sexuality and this labile eros, interspersed, confused, were characteristics -resulting from prostitution and the demographic situation of the Buenos Aires of the times (Salessi 1995:38 1).

Prostitution developed impelled by an unbalanced demographic situation, due to the fact that the contingents of immigrants--and migrants--were predominantly male, which resulted in a notable "lack" of women in the capital (Germani 187-9). Donna Guy's study of prostitution and the family during the formation of modern Argentina includes a graphic which represents the masculinity index in Buenos Aires between 1914 and 1936. According to the data, in the city and during a period of twenty two years, for every one hundred women there were an average of one hundred and fifty Argentine men and one hundred and twenty five foreign men.

Women of scarce economic resources who lived in the suburbs took advantage of this demographic situation and the leniency of a government which promoted legalized prostitution, putting into practice a profession celebrated in their favorite readings: serial novels. They started to imitate the model of melodrama heroines and thus embraced prostitution as a means of obtaining some financial comfort. The displacement of poor young women promoted by the tango culture from suburban cafés to downtown cabarets, where they became professional sex workers decreased around 1935, with the disappearance of legalized bordellos and the incorporation of women into the general activities of industry (Ulla 36).

The commercial theater of the 20s and 30s, influenced by French and vernacular versions of nineteenth century melodrama, had found a very popular topic in the representation of poor women who, in search of a better social position, would leave their suburban tenements to work in downtown cabarets as milongas, where the bacanes (rich men from the upper classes) learned to dance the Argentine tango. Numerous sainetes dramatized, amplifying them, the brief narrations of the tangos included in these works which constituted the "hook" to attract audiences. Many famous tangos were introduced in these *intermezzos cantabiles* and the young women who performed them and would eventually become international figures favored by the radio and recording industries--made their debuts singing in these venues. The magnitude of this phenomenon created by the roaring popularity of these plays and the symbolic impact they produced in the collective psyche makes of this rich *corpus* an attractive document which recorded the transformations undergone by traditional feminine roles during modernization.

In her studies of Latin American *telenovelas*, Nora Maziotti considers melodrama as a "hypergenre that contaminates different practices, even everyday life" (154). Its emphatic representational and performative styles geared towards the triggering of sudden emotions in its audiences, can be traced in tango singers and its choreography and even in public speeches of political performers. This "rhetoric of excess"--as Peter Brooks has denominated the flamboyant gestuality and language of melodrama--continues, according to Jesús Martín Barbero, the performing tradition of country fairs and traveling troupes which combine "the presentation of farces and comic interludes with acrobatics, puppetry (...) juggling" and pantomime (114). The "metonymical stylization" of this performing style, with its "often exaggerated symbolism of facial and other personal characteristics" continues the "strong codification that corporeal appearance and gestures have in popular culture," as is the case in *Commedia dell'Arte*.

Barbero traces the origins of melodrama to the French Revolution, and claims it is the "portrayal of the transformation of the rabble into an organized public (...) which could not read and who looked to the stage not for words but for action and great passions" (112-3). Furthermore he adds that the melodramatic excess was a victory over the repression of bourgeois patrons and consequently the genre's complicity

with the new popular culture and with the cultural space which this public marked out for itself provide the keys which help us situate this form of popular spectacle at the turning point of the process which moved from the popular to the mass. Melodrama provided a point of arrival for the narrative memory and gestural forms of popular culture and the point of emergence of the dramatization of mass culture (113).

María de la Luz Hurtado studies the structural characteristics of the melodrama genre, which she claims is a type of fiction which "gains popularity in times when the modes of production and social relations are transformed, the historical institutionalization of which had meant an integrated and culturally legitimized world" (124). This narrative structure is as follows. Given an initially harmonious situation centered around a humble family of traditional values, a conflict is introduced whereby the traditional family order is broken. Based on Manichean values, the party responsible for this disintegration is the bad boy/girl,

an external element to the biological family (...) which exerts a negative influence on one of its members. The attractions with which the 'bad guy' lures his prey are based on the modern values of a capitalist consumer society in its moment of speculation, not of production. The accepted goal of this life is the conquest of status, profit, ostentatious luxury, and the cult of physical attraction (ie. women who use jewelry and makeup, who rely on their eroticism, and who, naturally, always need money, are the 'bad girls' of this melodrama (...)) The main symbol of the fall provoked by the disintegration of the family is the loss of "Virtue" in the case of the young woman and the "neglect" of the mother in the case of the son (123).

The progression of the narrative widens the abyss between the values still held in the heart of the family and the new "licentious" life led by the "bad boy/girl." The dramatic tension leads to a climax that usually represents a turning point in which the preexisting order is reestablished. The resolution follows the mythical theme of the prodigal child (*la pródiga*).

To be able to trace the silenced side of the Milonguita story, I contrast these representations of women as prostitutes in the popular theatre and tango lyrics, with the lives and experiences of real-life *cancionistas* (actresses and tango performers who had benefited from the commercial boom of the criollo theater subgenre, concentrated in the *Nacional* theatre. On its stage were consecrated the most important theater companies of Buenos Aires, who

would be appropriated by the film industry in the following decade. Azucena Maizani and Libertad Lamarque made their first appearances on this stage; they too would become well-known tango performers who contributed to the internationalization of this popular song by means of their tours and the radio, film and recording industries (Gallo 222).

The artistic personas of these female performers--the *arrabalera*: the tough, yet glamorous woman of the suburbs who had learnt to deal with modern life and men, and who many times had to cross-dress in order to be allowed to perform as "singers"--became an acceptable alternative to a more radical type of women for the conservative sectors of society. Most of the time these singers had to legitimize their access to the masculinized public space of the tango culture through the impersonation of male roles, dressed up as *gauchos* or *compadritos*, as is evident in the case of Azucena Maizani, known popularly as the "pug-nosed *gaucha*."

The case of Azucena is paradigmatic of this phenomenon because her life could be read as a real-life reference of the numerous stories with a melodramatic narrative structure found in tangos and *sainetes*. Just like Milongita, Azucena migrated towards the center of the city in search of employment after spending her early years in the Martín García Island. Like the famous "seamstress," Azucena had found a means of support as a dressmaker, before becoming an internationally renowned performer. Due to the influence of her friends, she came in contact with the artistic and theatrical scene of the city, and thus became known as a tango singer. In 1923 she made her debut at the Nacional; from that moment on, she became a mass media success. She performed in the radio, for the recording and film industries and was hired for several international tours, during which she exported the tango to the United States.

The threat posed by a successful woman tango singer is documented in a scorching article published in a music periodical, *La canción moderna*, in 1928. Most likely signed with a pseudonym, the author, Pascual Cordero, dedicates this "Ultraist Sonata to Azucena Maizani" with the intention of smearing the singer's reputation. The audacity of having succeeded in the national and international public spheres is a crime which this representative of the conservative, patriarchal society cannot tolerate. After mocking her artistic success he offers a "word of advice from a friend": the return to the established order which Azucena had subverted, a widespread fictional resolution in melodramas and serial novels. Azucena, as the melodrama heroine, in order to redeem herself, should remove her make-up, become "good," and consequently recover the forgotten "honorable" values of her seamstress days. The fact that this was no longer possible is proven by the public support that Azucena constantly received, particularly from her female audiences.

This massive loyalty proves that this feminine model, skillfully transferred from the living theatre of the city to actual theatre stages by this constellation of talented performers, had become a viable alternative for modern urban women, with which they identified. The visibility and popularity of successful, independent, professional women performers provided by the mass culture was effectively internalized by a society which rejected a more radical feminine style.

It is not surprising then that this theatricality that had trained audiences in the acceptance and adoption of this model was later adopted by Eva Perón, who was able to impersonate and institutionalize this feminine style as the charismatic first lady who pushed for the female vote and an end to discrimination against women in the workforce in the late 1940s.

Repeating the same trajectory of the melodrama heroine, Evita follows the path of so many poor women, who, lured by the lights and opportunities of the modern city, abandon their marginal position in society confident that they will succeed in a performing career. After triumphing as an actress and becoming quite visible as the wife of the popular president Juan Perón, Eva discards her glamorous Hollywood style disseminated by the international media during her spectacular trip to Europe in 1947. As many women tango singers, she then adopts what is perceived by most of her opponents as a masculinized public image when she finally becomes a political actress with a strong social agenda in a time when women did not even have the right to vote.

At this moment there seems to be an editorial boom of scholarly work devoted to revisionist studies of Eva Perón coming from diverse ideological backgrounds. Until now, however, the revision of this fascinating woman has not been approached from a performance studies perspective. Her training in the performing styles of the late 30s and early 40s is clearly perceived in her public appearances in mass rallies. As Davis and Dulical have shown in a movement signature study of Hitler's public performances, which they describe as "melodramatic actions" (160), Eva Perón demonstrated remarkable skills when performing her political persona in a public setting. This

unexplored corporeal re-reading of this public figure facilitates the recovery of her theatricality--and complexity--as a charismatic stage and political performer who embodied a modern feminine style which had already seduced mass audiences and thus received popular consent to promote much needed reform in the society and legislation of her country.

I had a confirmation of the importance of this revisionist approach by the recent opposition of wide sectors of the Argentine society to the representation of this political and social icon by US actress and singer Madonna.. Their rejection of the US sex icon to impersonate Evita indicated to me--beyond legitimate concerns to uphold decolonization--that for Argentinean audiences this was an explosive (gender/performative/popularity-based) combination that intersected in the performing body of Madonna. In a metonymic twist the media disseminated spectrality of this "loose" corporeality threatened to demystify the flat "saint-whore" dichotomy that pro- and con Evita sectors had begrudgingly accepted as a safe way of immortalizing (and dis-embodiment) her memory.

As in tangos and cheap serial novels or the radio plays she used to perform before she became a political figure, Evita died young, endowing her fellow countrywomen with a strong public model of femininity and activism. Just as her vandalized embalmed corpse was returned after twenty years of concealment, it is high time Evita recover her (performing) body.

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María Cami-Vela

LA BUSQUEDA DE LA IDENTIDAD

EN EL CINE DE PEDRO ALMODOVAR: LA FLOR DE MI SECRETO

Aunque el análisis de la cinematografía de Pedro Almodóvar ofrece diversas posibilidades, en mi opinión la temática de la identidad es el eje unitario de todas sus películas. En *La flor de mi secreto*, la temática de la identidad de la mujer está ligada a la problemática de la identidad de la "nueva" España y su relación con la Comunidad Europea. Este artículo es un estudio de cómo en *La flor de mi secreto* Almodóvar consigue lo que para Hutcheon es un propósito importante del feminismo posmoderno "des-naturalizar" la tradicional separación de lo privado y lo público, de lo personal y lo político (*The Politics of Postmodernism* 142) al problematizar la identidad política del español a la vez que la identidad personal de la mujer.

En el estudio que realiza sobre el cine español, Marsh Kinder argumenta que se reconoce internacionalmente a Almodóvar por crear en sus películas una imagen de la "nueva" España (en contraposición a la "vieja" del período franquista) y que la peculiaridad de su cine consiste en tratar el tema de las drogas, los homosexuales, los travestis, los terroristas etc. (*Blood Cinema: The Reconstruction of National Identity in Spain* 432). Estoy completamente de acuerdo con el argumento de Kinder, pero yo incluiría también a la mujer.

Teresa de Lauretis, Linda Hutcheon y otras críticas han analizado muy acertadamente cómo la manera en que la mujer se ve a sí misma o a otra mujer, en que la ven los hombres, los diferentes medios de comunicación, es fruto de una representación, una construcción socio-cultural, y por lo tanto, una mirada condicionada. *La flor de mi secreto* trata de la lucha que la mujer-protagonista-escritora lleva a cabo para: 1. Liberarse como mujer del estado de agonía que sufre debido a la situación en la que se encuentra de dependencia emocional a su marido; 2. Liberarse como autora de un discurso narrativo (la protagonista escribe novelas sentimentales) que precisamente

“(re)produce” y propaga esa condición de la mujer en la sociedad. La liberación se reliza cuando la protagonista inicia un viaje de retorno a su pueblo natal, Almagro.

El desplazamiento desde Madrid (centro) hacia Almagro (periferia) es un doble viaje, físico y psíquico, con una doble implicación significativa. Desde una perspectiva feminista, el viaje se entiende como un proceso de auto-búsqueda en el cual las figuras de la madre y de la mujer-amiga son primordiales. Desde una perspectiva política, el viaje puede comprenderse como una revaloración de lo regional-marginal en el proceso de integración de España a la Comunidad Europea. Con el uso de diferentes técnicas, Almodóvar se burla del aspecto fictivo que pueda tener la relación España-Europa, o en otras palabras, la nueva identidad española respecto a la Comunidad Europea.

El cine de Almodóvar se incluye dentro de la tendencia posmodernista que pretende exponer cómo la diferencia sexual, al igual que otras diferencias, es continuamente “(re)producida” culturalmente por medio de representaciones que normalmente se aceptan como “naturales”. Si la identidad de la mujer es el resultado de una construcción en la que el cine, la literatura y otras formas de producción desempeñan un papel importante, también la identidad del “nuevo” español es una construcción-resultado del esfuerzo de integrarlo dentro de la nueva identidad de la Comunidad Europea.

OTHER SESSIONS OF INTEREST

FEMINISTAS UNIDAS MEMBER PARTICIPATION

Beyond the two officially-sponsored sessions on December 27th thru 30th, many of our members and compañeras are presenting sessions or topics of interest to Feministas Unidas. Let's support them when we can!
A list of these sessions follows:

Saturday 27, December

MLA No. 2 A Pre-convention Workshop for Members of Search Committees:
The Job Search in English and Foreign Languages

3:30-4:45 p.m. / *Manitoba, Royal York* / Program arranged by the Association of Departments of English and the Association of Departments of Foreign Languages. Presiding: Herbert J. Rosengarten, Univ. of British Columbia; Nona Fienberg, Keene State Coll.; Roberta Lee Johnson, Univ. of Kansas.

MLA No. 11 La voz de la mujer en la literatura del fin del siglo XIX

7:00-8:15 p.m. / *Peel, Sheraton Centre* / Program arranged by the Division of Latin American Literature from Independence to 1900.

1. "Un recate de la institucionalización leyendo a Salomé Ureña de Henríquez," Ester Gimbernart González, Univ. of Northern Colorado.

MLA No. 12 Liminality in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Spanish Texts

7:00-8:15 p.m. / *Conference Room D and E, Sheraton Centre* / Program arranged by the Division on Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Spanish Literature. Presiding: Mary S. Vásquez, Davidson Coll.

MLA No. 40 Configurations of Gender in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Spanish Cultural Expression

9:00-10:15 p.m. / *Conference Room F, Sheraton Centre* / Program arranged by the Division on Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Spanish Literature. Presiding: Mary S. Vásquez, Davidson Coll.

4. "Reconfiguraciones de género sexual en el pensamiento anarco-feminista de Soledad Gustavo," Patricia V. Greene, Michigan State Univ.

Sunday 28, December

MLA No. 64 From Page to Screen

8:30-9:45 a.m. / Elgin, Sheraton Centre / Program arranged by the Division on Twentieth Century Spanish Literature. *Presiding:* Geraldine Cleary Nichols, Univ. of Florida

MLA No. 87 Translation and Teaching

8:30-9:45 a.m. / Huron, Sheraton Centre / Program arranged by the MLA Publications Committee.

1. "Pedagogies of Translation," Carol Maier, Kent State Univ., Kent

MLA No. 128 The Future of Tenure in Foreign Language Departments

10:15-11:30 a.m. / Conference Room F, Sheraton Centre / Program arranged by the Association of Departments of Foreign Languages.

2. "The Corporatized Research University and Tenure in Modern Language Departments: Notes from Minnesota," Constance A. Sullivan, Univ. of Minnesota, Twin Cities

MLA No. 183 Discourses on Sexuality in Colonial Spanish America: Agents, Bodies, and the Power of Cultural Production

1:45-3:00 p.m. / Elgin, Sheraton Centre / Program arranged by the Division on Literature of Colonial Spanish America.

3. "Raped Bodies, Reimagined Identities: Colonial Representations of Women of Color," Christine Henseler, Cornell Univ.

MLA No. 220 Sexualities and Identities in Flux: Representations in the Portuguese Speaking World

3:30-4:45 p.m. / Norfolk, Sheraton Centre / Program arranged by the Division on Luso-Brazilian Language and Literature.

2. "Masculinity and Homosocial Identity in Paulo Thiago's Film *Jorge, um brasileiro*," David William Foster, Arizona State Univ.

MLA No. 282 Palimpsest and Ekphrasis in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Spanish Texts

7:15-8:30 p.m. / Elgin, Sheraton Centre / Program arranged by the Division on Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Spanish Literature. *Presiding:* Catherine Jagoe, Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison.

MLA No. 289 Chaucer's Queer Nation

7:15-8:30 p.m. / Tudor 7, Royal York / Program arranged by the Division on Chaucer.

3. "Limit of the Nation: The Hymen and Griselda's Smock," Kathleen Davis, Bucknell Univ.

MLA No. 293 Queering the Modern Novel

7:15-8:30 p.m. / Conference Room G, Sheraton Centre / Program arranged by the Discussion Group on Romance Literary Relations.

3. "Queer Sexualities beyond Borders: Women's Writing in Spanish," Rosemary Geisdorfer Feal, Univ. of Rochester

MLA No. 305 [Re]Visions of the Nation in Contemporary Latin American Women's Writing

7:15-8:30 p.m. / Huron, Sheraton Centre / A special session.

1. "Re-membering the National Body: Illness as Metaphor in *Realidad nacional desde la cana*," Dianna C. Neibylski, Earlham Coll.
 2. "Women's Time and Colonized Peoples: Mexican Feminists on National History," Rebecca Elizabeth Biron, Univ. of Miami
- Respondent:* Debra Ann Castillo, Cornell Univ.

Monday 29, December

MLA No. 325 The Other Playwrights: Beyond Lope, Tirso and Calderón

8:30-9:45 a.m. / Conference Room F, Sheraton Centre / Program arranged by the Division on Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Spanish Drama.

2. "Why, Shall We Turn to Men?: Desire and Resistance in Woman-Authored Plays," Lisa M. Vollendorf, Miami Univ., Oxford

MLA No. 326 Spain, Identity, and the Figuration of War

8:30-9:45 a.m. / VIP, Sheraton Centre / Program arranged by the Division on Twentieth Century Spanish Literature.

2. "Lauding the Father: Javier Marías and the Reconstruction of Masculine Identity," Susan L. Martin-Márquez, Tulane Univ.
3. "Textos Lúdicos: *Nadie conoce a nadie* de Juan Bonilla," Carmen Urioste-Azcorra, Arizona State Univ.

MLA No. 341 The Caribbean That Isn't?

8:30-9:45 a.m. / Peel, Sheraton Centre / A special session.

Respondent: Catherine Den Tandt, Univ. of Alberta

MLA No. 376 Work in Progress II: Comparative Literary History of Latin America

10:15-11:30 a.m. / Dufferin-Simcoe, Sheraton Centre / A workshop arranged in conjunction with the forum *Rethinking Literary History Comparatively* (135). *Presiding:* Djelal Kadir, Univ. of Oklahoma

2. "Exclusions and Marginalizations in the Literary Histories of Latin America," Cynthia Steele, Univ. of Washington

MLA No. 389 Teaching Women, Building Nations: A Roundtable on Pedagogy

10:15-11:30 a.m. / York, Sheraton Centre / Program arranged by *Feministas Unidas*.

[See preceding section]

MLA No. 439 Philosophy and Literature in Nineteenth Century Spanish America1:45-3:00 p.m. / *Wentworth, Sheraton Centre* / Program arranged by the Division on Latin American Literature from Independence to 1900.

2. "Gendered Narratives of Progress and Nineteenth Century Argentinean Subject Formation," Kathryn Lehman, Univ. of Auckland.

MLA No. 461 Developing Second-Language Competencies at Upper Levels of the Curriculum1:45-3:00 p.m. / *Norfolk, Sheraton Centre* / Program arranged by the MLA Committee on Foreign Languages and Literatures.

2. "Gaining Multiple Competencies through Translation," Carol S. Maier, Kent State Univ., Kent.

MLA No. 557 Logics of Desire: Bodies, Violations, and Patriarchy in the Films of Pedro Almodóvar7:15-8:30 p.m. / *Peel, Sheraton Centre* / A special session: *session leader*: Marie E. Barbieri, Bowdoin Coll.

1. "First Love: Mothers, Sexual Politics, and the Melodramatic Lens in the Films of Pedro Almodóvar," Annabel Martin, Emory Univ.
2. "Sex, Snuff, and Circular Saws in Pedro Almodóvar's *Matador*," Marie E. Barbieri.

MLA No. 562 The Gender and Sexuality of Ethnicity: Reading Foundational Texts7:15-8:30 p.m. / 206C, *Toronto Convention Centre* / Program arranged by the MLA Committee on the Literatures and Languages of America

4. "Dominican Studies: Constructing Ethnicity in the Age of Feminism and Queerness," Augustus Puleo, Columbia Univ.

MLA No. 584 Language, Land, Social and Cultural Changes in the Americas: From Past to Present9:00-10:15 p.m. / 203A, *Toronto Convention Centre* / A special session.

3. "Looking for Words: Innovation and Orthodoxy in Mexican Guerrilla Discourse of the 1990s," Cynthia Steele, Univ. of Washington.

Tuesday 30, December

MLA No. 659 Hispanic Women's Theatricalities: Negotiating Gender in Theater, Film, and Everyday Life10:15-11:30 a.m. / *Norfolk, Sheraton Centre* / Program arranged by Feministas Unidas.

[See preceding section]

MLA No. 699 Cervantine Texts in Context12:00 noon-1:15 p.m. / *Conference Room F, Sheraton Centre* / Program arranged by the Cervantes Society of America.

2. "Don Quixote, Huarte de San Juan, and the Transmutation of Masculine Women," Sherry Marie Velasco, Univ. of Kansas.

MLA No. 743 Spanish Poetry, 2000: *Fin de Siglo* and Beyond1:45-3:00 p.m. / *Wentworth, Sheraton Center* / Program arranged by the Twentieth Century Spanish Association of America. *Presiding*: Sharon Keefe Ugalde, Southwest Texas State Univ.

FEMINISTAS UNIDAS
ANNUAL TREASURER'S REPORT 1997

STARTING BALANCE	\$931.95
Dues Received	2,633.00
Interest in checking account	<u>29.75</u>
	Total \$3,594.70
Disbursements:	
Supplies (labels, UPS)	26.95
Hotel Room (MLA - Dec. 1996)	670.31
April Newsletter	<u>441.08</u>
	Total \$1,138.34
Balance as of November 20, 1997	\$2,456.36
Scholarship Fund Total	\$1,098.00

Submitted by Lynn K. Talbot, Treasurer
November 20, 1997

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Foster, David William.
PATIENT

Translation of the novel by Argentine Jewish writer Ana María Shúa. Scheduled for publication by the Latin American Literary Review Press.

Foster, David William.
BUENOS AIRES AND URBAN CULTURE

Book length monograph. An analysis of the representation of Buenos Aires in contemporary Argentine culture. One chapter deals with women and urban space, and one chapter deals with the feminist photography of Sara Facio. Other chapters discuss women authors with reference to the visibility of homoerotic culture in Buenos Aires, Jewish society, and sexual construction in the tango.

Foster, David William.
**CONTEMPORARY BRAZILIAN
FILMMAKING**

Book-length monograph. An analysis of key Brazilian films made since the return to institutional democracy in 1985. Emphasis is on gender construction and its use to interpret sociopolitical issues in contemporary Brazil.

Cólmara, Madeline
WRITTEN OVER A WOMAN IS BODY

Is studying the images of the mulatto women throughout Cuban Literature and graphic art. Has selected five images symbolically spaced for different historical and cultural periods. These are 19th century "la Plaza" y "el Barracón" and 20th century "el Solar," "el Cabaret," y "el Malecón."

Frouman-Smith, Erica.

**ANGEL SAHUQUILLO'S FEDERICO
GARCÍA LORCA & the CULTURE of MALE
HOMOSEXUALITY**

The translation of Sahuquillo's innovative study of the Spanish poet and playwright will provide English-speaking scholars access to new insights into Lorca's life and poetry which incorporate previously unrecognized homosexual symbols, motifs and concepts. The author acknowledges the influences of Walt Whitman, Oscar Wilde, Hart Crane and others, underscoring the kindred nature of their idiosyncratic use of language. These readings take into account not just the texts themselves, but the homosexual culture in which they were written.

Frouman-Smith, Erica.
**GENDER CONFLICTS in the FICTION of
LILIANA HEKER**

This study examines two broad paradigms within the female bildungsroman in order to establish important connections among Heker's female protagonists. Heker's first novel, *Zona de Clivaje*, 1987, follows the pattern of an apprenticeship novel as it traces the development of its protagonist, Irene Lauson, who wrestles with issues which are gender-based. Her grappling with these issues is not new to Heker's work. Irene's predecessor may be found in key female protagonists from the author's first collection of short stories, *Los que vieron la zarza*, 1966, via the second pattern, fiction of awakening. This work shows the striking similarities these characters share.

Frouman-Smith, Erica.
**WOMEN AND THE PROBLEM OF
DOMINATION IN THE SHORT FICTION
OF INÉS ARRENDONDO**

The domination and its effects on the lives of young women is the issue examined in three short stories by Arrendondo. Harshly explicit, these works convey the complexity and destructiveness of gender polarity and how it can be mitigated through the use of a female protagonist telling her story - a first step toward acquiring agency and eventual freedom from the often destructive bonds of love.

Foster, David William.

LITERATURA CHICANA 1965-1995; AN ANTHOLOGY IN SPANISH, ENGLISH, AND CALÓ.

Edited by Manuel de Jesús Hernández-Gutiérrez and David William Foster. NY: Garland Publishing Inc., March 1997. Extensive representation of Chicana authors; significant representation of material dealing with gender construction and homoeroticism.

CONFERENCES

**TERCER SIMPOSIO DE CULTURA POPULAR MEXICANA:
DIVERSIDAD, REPRESENTACION, MEDIOS**

Department of Languages and Literatures,

Arizona State University,

Programa Interdisciplinario de Estudios de la Mujer,

El Colegio de Mexico,

Posgrado de Literatura de la Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana
Iztapalapa

Marzo 12-14 de 1998.

Invitados especiales: SABINA BERMAN, ROSINA CONDE,

ASTRID HADAD y JUAN VILLORO

Convocamos a estudiosos de los medios de la cultura o de perspectiva culturalista en las siguientes disciplinas: Periodismo cultural, periodismo político, radio, televisión, cine.

Los debates del simposio se centrarán, de manera nodal, en las siguientes áreas de la crítica y la investigación: 1) Discurso y representación en los medios de la cultura; 2) Los mecanismos de la censura en el cambio de milenio; 3) Alternativa y cambio en la diversidad; 4) Periodismo político: Crónica de las sociedades marcadas por la violencia.

Tomaremos en consideración las contribuciones que aborden el estudio crítico de temas problemáticos tales como la concepción de masa, clase social, género, etnicidad y nación en México. Este simposio busca analizar los elementos que hacen de la expresión cultural de lo mexicano una experiencia "popular", ajena a aquella que recluye a la Cultura (con mayúscula) en el interior de los discursos dominantes.

Las ponencias pueden presentarse en español, inglés o portugués. Deberá someter a un consejo consultativo un resumen (200-300 palabras) y/o la propuesta de una mesa redonda, de un panel de discusión o de un taller de trabajo antes del 10 de febrero de 1998 a:

Dra. María Dolores Bolívar, Coordinadora del Simposio

Fax: (602) 965-0135

E-mail: Maria.Bolivar@asu.edu

Inscripción: 40.00 USD (30.00 antes del primero de marzo), los costos de viaje y hospedaje deberán correr por cuenta de los participantes.

WOMEN OF COLOR

IN THE 21ST CENTURY:

STORIES, STRUGGLES & VICTORIES

a participatory conference to discuss the women of color experience in all walks of life tentative topics include: gender and sexuality, economic development, spirituality, women in militarized zones, creative expression, environmental justice, reproductive health, family, religion, political participation, grassroots organizations, affirmative action, violence, interracial adoptions and multiracial identities

May 29-31, 1998

Sisters of Color International

Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA

Registration fee: 70\$ general; 20\$ for students and limited income.

Information: (360) 650-3534, (360) 738-1714 or
(206) 587-6958

Interested participants are asked to submit proposal which indicates their areas of interest, contribution to the conferences, inquiries, etc. by March 1, 1998 to SOCI Conferences, Women Studies Office, MS 9119, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA 98225

1898: Entre la Crisi D'identitat I la Modernizació

La Comisión 1898, de la Generalitat de Catalunya, en colaboración con las universidades públicas, invita a todos los estudiosos nacionales y extranjeros a exponer y discutir en un congreso sus investigaciones sobre el doble movimiento de regeneración y de modernización que agitó la vida política social y científica de España de fin de siglo.

El Congreso tendrá lugar en Barcelona del 20 al 24 de Abril de 1998 y se desarrollará en torno a tres grandes ejes:

- ◇ Crisis de identidad de España, construcción de una Castilla y una Cataluña ideales, relaciones con Portugal con las diversas repúblicas latinoamericanas.
- ◇ Voluntad de moderización en el campo de las ideas, de la enseñanza y de la ciencia.
- ◇ Modernización en el campo de las artes y de la literatura.

Todos aquellos que desen presentar una comunicación de un máximo de 20 minutos de duración, deberán remitirla a la Secretaría del Congreso antes del día 15 de

Diciembre de 1997 acompañada de un resumen de 200 palabras.

El Comité Científico comunicará la aceptación antes del día 30 de Enero de 1998.

Las conferencias plenarias, las ponencias y las mesas redondas serán anunciadas oportunamente.

PRIMER ENCUENTRO INTERNACIONAL DE ESCRITORAS

19-22 de agosto, 1998

Rosario, Argentina,

Del 19 al 22 de agosto de 1998 se realizará en Rosario el Primer Encuentro Internacional de Escritoras, organizado por el Centro Cultural de la Secretaría de Cultura de la Municipalidad de Rosario. Asistirán veintidós escritoras invitadas de países de ambas Américas, Europa, Asia y África.

Alojamiento: los hoteles van desde cinco estrellas, con precios que rondan los cien dólares por día, hasta los modestos a cincuenta y aún un poco menos. Peso igual a un dólar. Existe la posibilidad de parar en casas de familia, gratis o a un gasto mínimo de cinco o diez dólares por día "bed and breakfast," pero para eso hay que avisar con tres meses de anticipación.

Se dan certificados. El programa tentativo hasta ahora incluye: Identidad y Narrativa, Identidad y Poesía, Los Géneros del Género, La Censura Ligada al género, Las Que Hicieron Todo Cuando no se Podía Hacer Nada, etc.

Habrà venta de libros escritos por mujeres que han de traer las editoriales y las librerías.

Para llegar a Rosario hay varias posibilidades. El avión las deja en el aeropuerto de Ezeiza, Buenos Aires. Desde allí mismo o desde Aeroparque tienen avión a Rosario, que pueden reservar cuando compren el pasaje o en Aeroparque porque son frecuentes. Media hora de vuelo más o menos. Desde Ezeiza se puede ir en ómnibus, taxi o remise a la Terminal de Omnibus en Retiro y tomar un coche a Rosario. Hay montones de empresas, prácticamente sale un coche cada quince minutos. Son espléndidos, con asientos reclinables mejores que los del avión, tv, teléfono, aire acondicionado, bar, café y jugos de frutas. Tardan exactamente cuatro horas y el viaje es placentero. Por supuesto, mucho más barato que el avión. Hay que avisar adónde y cuándo llegan para haya quien las espere. Gracias por todo. Abrazos. Angélica Gorodischer.

ASU/ASU-West

Conferencia Internacional

Asociación de Literatura Femenina Hispánica

Septiembre 17-19, 1998

IMAGINARIOS FEMENINOS:

HETEROSEXUALIDAD(ES), BISEXUALIDAD(ES), LO
LESBI-GAY, TRANSEXUALIDAD(ES),
TRANSFORMISMO, SORORIDADES, POST-
SEXUALIDAD(ES)

Temas Sugeridos:

Género y estilo: crítica y retórica (imágenes, símbolos) de la sexualidad.

Representación de la sexualidad o pornografía en los medios masivos de la comunicación (cine, publicidad, telenovelas...) teatro o performance.

Sexualidad en la construcción del sujeto: testimonio, autobiografía.

Historización de la sexualidad:
crónicas, documentos coloniales, confesiones, vida conventual

Feminismos y sexualidades (Latinoamericanas, Latinas)

Feminismo, sexualidad, y la izquierda

Ecofeminismo(s)

Erótica/pornografía

Locura e identidad

Comité Organizador:

Dr. Arturo Aldama: AALDAMA.ASU.EDU

Beatriz Cortez: BCORTEZ@ASU.EDU

Dr. David W. Foster: ATDWF@ASUVM.INRE.ASU.EDU

Cecilia Rosales: CROSALES@IMAP3.ASU.EDU

Dr. Cynthia Tompkins: IDCMT.ASUM. INRE.ASU.EDU

Women's Worlds 1999

7th International Interdisciplinary Congress on
Women

Tromsø, Norway, June 20-26, 1999

First announcement / call for papers and proposals

Norway has a lot to offer visitors: beautiful scenery, including the famous fjords, large unspoiled countryside and mountain areas with clean air, breathtaking rivers and waterfalls. In addition Norway offers an exciting environment for research on women and gender. Norway is a country where equal rights campaigns have been very successful, where political structures and cultural traditions demonstrate a real commitment to sexual equality, where women hold central positions in government and political parties, and where, by United Nations' ratings, women enjoy some of the most advanced economic and social conditions in the world.

The Centre for Women's Studies and Women in Research at the University of Tromsø, which will be the chief organizer of the conference, is very proud to have been entrusted with the 1999 Women's Worlds Congress. They have formulated several key themes already, but are keenly interested in having as wide and as active a response as possible. Please do not hesitate to send your suggestions!

2nd Announcement February 1998

Relevant Women's Worlds 99 addresses:

Women's Worlds 99
University of Tromsø
N-9037 Tromsø
Norway
fax: +47 77 64 64 20
email: womens.worlds.99@skk.uit.no
web page: <http://www.skk.uit.no/WW99/ww99.html>

CALL FOR PAPERS

Feminist Encyclopedia of Latin American Literature

The co-editors of the *Feminist Encyclopedia of Latin American Literature* (Greenwood Press) are seeking submissions/contacts/ inquiries from scholars interested in participating. Subjects such as Latin American male as well as female authors, significant events, words, periods, characters, motifs, themes, problems, theories, etc. will be considered for inclusion, as long as they interrogate / present/investigate some relation to local and/or global feminism. Texts will run from 500 to 3000 words.

For more details contact Eva Bueno (Penn State University, College Place, DuBois, Pa. 15801, epb4@psu.edu), or Ivonne Vailakis (Modern Literatures and Languages Department, University of Redlands, Redlands, CA 92373, vailakis@uor.edu).

Hispanic & U.S. Latina Lesbian Studies Call for Papers

We invite papers for an anthology on Hispanic, and U.S. Latina Lesbian Texts. Papers can be analyses of fiction, non-fiction, art, music, performance art, or film. The editors are particularly interested in essays that investigate the creation, maintenance and contradictions of lesbian space and the lesbian identity in the Hispanic, and Latina social, political, and cultural context. Especially welcome are studies that investigate the concept of limits and transparencies (palimpsests) of the margins (race, ethnicity, culture, politics, class) in the representation of the lesbian experience; papers that interrogate the intersections of race, ethnicity, and sexuality within the Hispanic, and U.S. Latina lesbian communities; and works that explore how race and ethnicity are intimately related to questions of power and lesbian community building.

Send inquiries, abstracts, or papers by *December 1, 1997* to Inmaculada Pertusa or Lourdes Torres, Dept. of Spanish and Italian, 1115 Patterson Office Tower, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky 40506-0027.

Pertusa@pop.uky.edu Torres@pop.uky.edu
<http://www.uky.edu/ArtsSciences/SPI/call.html>

2nd Call For Papers to the Joint Conference of the

Canadian Association for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CALACS - XXVIII Congress)

and the

Canadian Association for Mexican Studies (CAMS - 3rd International Congress)

March 19-21, 1998
Simon Fraser University at Harbour Centre
515 West Hastings Street
Vancouver, British Columbia
Canada

The 1998 Joint Conference of CALACS and CAMS invites proposals for papers and panels in all areas of Latin American and Caribbean scholarship. The conference will bring together academics, students, public officials, media, business people, and NGO personnel from Canada and other countries, and is open to the general public. Participation from Latin America and the Caribbean is particularly welcome. The conference will take place on the downtown campus of Simon Fraser University, in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Conference Theme: "Latin America: Moving Beyond Neoliberalism"
Papers are invited in all areas relevant to the understanding of historical and contemporary Latin America and the Caribbean. The conference organizers especially invite papers and panels that reflect on the social, cultural, and economic transitions within Latin America and the Caribbean as the region moves beyond the immediate changes wrought by neoliberalism. This includes studies of historical and comparative parallels.

Deadline for proposals: October 1, 1997 Proposals received after that deadline will be considered according to space availability.

Dr. Conrad M. Herold, Latin American Studies Program, Simon Fraser University, 8888 University Drive, Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada V5A 1S6

Phone (604) 291-5426 or Fax (604) 291-4989 e-mail: cherold@sfu.ca

NEWS & NOTICES

Job Announcement

The Department of Women's Studies at University of Minnesota, one of the oldest women's studies departments in the country, invites applications for two tenure-track, full-time, assistant professor positions beginning Sept. '98. Applicants must have Ph.D. in literary, cultural, social, or historical studies or in an interdisciplinary field such as Women's Studies, American, or ethnic studies. Salary will vary depending on prior experience. Please send letter of application, vita, and three current letters of recommendation to:

Professor Amy Kaminsky, Chair of the Women's Studies Search Committee, Women's Studies Dept., 489 Ford Hall, University of Minnesota, Minnesota 55455.
Phone (612) 624-7319, Fax (612) 624-3573

E-mail kamin001@maroon.tc.umn.edu.

Applications Due: December 1, 1997

Cross-Stitch

The women and men who work for the US-based Phillips-Van Heusen corporation have something none of the other 70,000-plus Guatemalan maquila workers have: a Union contract, guaranteeing job rights and improving wages and benefits. It took them six long years of struggle, fighting first for union recognition, then the right to negotiate, and then for a fair contract. It's a breakthrough for the basic rights of apparel workers in Guatemala and all Central America.

"The most important thing about achieving the contract is that it opens a new space for us and for the workers in other maquilas," said Monica Felipe Alvarez, general secretary of STECAMOSA, the union of Guatemalan PVH workers.

In the contract, workers won on all major issues, including raising wages, protecting jobs against outsourcing, and ending discriminatory treatment by supervisors. The contract calls for a raise of 11% in the first year and 12.5% in the second year; maintaining current levels of employment; a grievance procedure; increased subsidies for transportation, lunch, and education for school-age children; a signing bonus; and visible recognition of the union - with a right to use plant facilities for an anniversary party and the right to have a bulletin board in the factory.

"We are now the best paid workers in the maquila sector - but not in terms of other industries...I hope that PVH agreeing to negotiate will serve as an example for other companies," Alvarez said.

"The women of PVH have fought a long, hard battle in a very difficult environment. Against all odds, they have succeeded not only in gaining direct benefits but also in opening up the political space needed for all workers who wish to exercise their basic rights in Guatemala's maquiladora sector," said Stephen Coats, Executive Director of the US/Guatemala Labor Education Project, which coordinated the US campaign to pressure PVH to bargain.

Union leaders and supporters of workers rights in the United States cheered the breakthrough contract. "This is a victory for peace with justice. It is an example of what can be done when enough people care about making workers' rights real in this new global economy," stated Jay Mazur, president of UNITE!

"The company was very repressive and tried to break the campaign," said Alvarez. International support was "fundamental for gaining the contract...We kept working with the hope that someday we would succeed."

Because of the courage and tenacity of these women, and with international support, their hopes have been realized. Congratulations! That's victory #1. Let's keep it going!

STITCH Women's Delegation to Guatemala

November 20-25 (tentative)

\$500 plus travel costs

STITCH is US women's network that supports women organizing efforts, primarily union organizing efforts, in Guatemala. We are coordinating a small delegation of women organizers and rank-and-file union activists to Guatemala in November as part of a training exchange program among women leaders. Trip activities will include:

- Preparing and conducting a workshop on internal organizing strategies and member-organizer programs jointly with FETRAEXTIGUA, the Guatemalan textile federation, which includes the Phillips-Van Heusen workers who recently won what is the only union contract in the entire Guatemalan maquila sector;

- Meeting with other union groups to discuss strategies for and obstacles to new organizing efforts and to learn more about their internal structures and union-building activities;
- Meeting with women's community groups involved in organizing efforts with women workers, particularly maquila workers, to learn about their goals and activities, as well as the obstacles they face; and
- Gaining a better understanding of the Guatemalan labor movement and the current situation in Guatemala;
- Learning how US solidarity can best support Guatemalans' efforts to organize for economic justice.

We'll stay at the Casa CAMI popular education center outside Guatemala City, which was founded by leaders of the Coca Cola workers' union. Delegation participants should have experience with union or community organizing and be willing to read background materials and help prepare for the workshop and meetings.

For more information, contact Jennifer Hill at (515) 283-0341 or Hannah Frisch at (773) 924-5057.

Una americana en la Corte del teatro español contemporáneo

El Mundo, May 22, 1997

MADRID. - Los que la conocen bien dicen que ama entrenarse para participar en maratones, la teoría feminista y desprecia a kilómetros un cigarrillo encendido. Nada sorprendente en una ciudadana norteamericana. Lo que sorprende es que corra hablando de Pérez Galdós y Francisca Nieva.

Phyllis Zatlín es una de las grandes adalides del teatro español contemporáneo en Estados Unidos. A ella se deben los primeros estudios teóricos en este país sobre el teatro de Jaime Salom y Ana Diosdado, así como traducciones y ediciones de obras de Antonio Gala, Alonso de Santos y Paloma Pedrero, entre otros. Por algo dice orgullosa que «En Madrid tengo más amigos que en cualquier otra ciudad del mundo, incluida la que nací y en la que vivo».

Por ello, autores como Antonio Gala, Fermín Cabal, Jaime Salom, Jerónimo López Mozo, Pilar Enciso o Luis Riaza, entre otros muchos, se congregaron ayer en la Sociedad General de Autores (SGAE) para rendirle homenaje y agradecerle la tenacidad de años de apoyo y difusión a la escritura teatral contemporánea.

Zatlín ha ejercido la disidencia ante las teorías críticas en boga: «Algunos teóricos dicen que no se puede investigar objetivamente a un autor, si se le conoce personalmente». Tal vez porque su trayectoria es la historia de una obstinada disidencia. Cuando en 1965 presentó su tesis doctoral sobre el humor en el teatro español contemporáneo, parecía impensable. «El teatro contemporáneo adolecía de prestigio y no se permitía una tesis dedicada a un autor vivo. En la antesala del tribunal, mi director de tesis seguía diciendo que había sido un error no habría hecho sobre Lope de Vega», señala.

Su director de tesis se equivocó y a lo largo de estos años de enseñanza en la Universidad de Nueva Jersey, Zatlín ha dirigido varias tesis dedicadas a autores españoles vivos. Y la situación ha cambiado con publicaciones especializadas como *Estreno* - de la que es directora adjunta, con Patricia O'Connor - o *Gestos*.

Al final, Phyllis Zatlín se siente satisfecha de un recorrido que la ha unido al teatro español de forma unívoca. «Creo que he elegido bien el mundo en el que quería trabajar», concluye.

**Homenaje a la hispanista Phyllis Zatlín por su
labor difusora del teatro español
en Estados Unidos**

ABC

22 May 1997

Madrid, S.E. La sede de la Sociedad General de Autores y Editores (SGAE) sirvió de marco ayer por la mañana para ofrecer el homenaje a la hispanista norteamericana Phyllis Zatlín, doctora en Lenguas románicas y una de las personas que más ha hecho por promocionar el teatro español contemporáneo en Estados Unidos. Al acto asistieron diversos autores dramáticos como Antonio Gala y Fernán Cabal, entre otros.

Santiago Moncada, vicepresidente de la Sociedad General de Autores de España (SGAE), en cuya sede se celebró la ceremonia, introdujo el acto en el que Jaime Salom habló de la trayectoria profesional y personal de esta hispanista que conoce hasta las más pequeñas obras de teatro español contemporáneo. Además de traducir a autores españoles, enseña teatro, es directora adjunta de la revista «Estreno» y autora de estudios monográficos publicados en Estados Unidos sobre Jaime Salom, Víctor Ruiz Iñarte y Elena Quiroga, entre otros.

Tras recibir una placa de plata de manos de dos de los autores que más ha traducido, como son Santiago Moncada y Jaime Salom, la hispanista Phyllis Zatlín comentó que empezó a conocer el teatro español en los años 60, década en la que se dedicó a la lectura de los distintos autores del momento. En los 70 viajó a España por lo menos una vez al año para ver teatro español y así y tras ver «Los buenos días perdidos» hizo un estudio sobre Antonio Gala; posteriormente, y después de presenciar «Usted también podría disfrutar de ella» realizó un trabajo sobre su autora, Ana Diosdado, y luego abordó la obra de Jaime Salom a raíz de ver la escenificación de «La piel del limón». En una tercera etapa, según resaltó ella misma, comenzó a conocer a los autores, para a continuación pasar a traducirlos y por último enseñar este arte y su amor por el teatro español a sus alumnos universitarios que comparten con ella esta importante tarea de difusión de nuestro teatro en Estados Unidos, donde, se da la feliz coincidencia de que algunos de los autores antes señalados, como Salom y Moncada, tienen actualmente obras suyas en las carteleras de ciudades como Nueva York o Los Ángeles.

**7th annual Women's Studies
Conference**

Southern Connecticut State University
presented:

Latina Visions For Transforming The
Americas/Perspectivas De La Mujer Latina En
La Transformacion De Las Americas

October 3-5, 1997

RESEÑAS

Strejilevich, Nora. Una sola muerte numerosa. Florida, Centro Norte Sur: Universidad de Miami, 1997.

Una sola muerte numerosa, la novela de Nora Strejilevich que obtuvo el premio Letras de Oro 1995-96, contrasta la lucidez de una voz testimonial que denuncia la represión militar en la Argentina del "Proceso" (1976-83), con un coro polifónico de discursos que articulan posiciones tan dispares como la de los desaparecidos y los militares, los sobrevivientes y las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo ... Este palimpsesto se complementa con fuentes bibliográficas tales como Nunca Más, Dossier secreto: el mito de la guerra sucia, de Andersen, Rebeldía y esperanza, de Bayer, Como los nazis, como en Vietnam, de Paoletti, Heidegger y 'los judíos', de Lyotard...

En el contexto de ideologías contrapuestas Strejilevich examina la dimensión personal y social del genocidio. El detallado análisis del impacto del género en la tortura se complementa con la minuciosa recreación de los mecanismos de defensa desarrollados durante la tortura, a los que se contraponen la implacable y dolorosa misión del recuerdo necesario para la denuncia.

La visión panorámica de Una muerte tan numerosa surge además del análisis del impacto del antisemitismo, así como del contrapunto del examen de las secuelas a nivel individual y del impacto del proceso a nivel familiar y social.

A la riqueza discursiva de Una muerte tan numerosa, que en ese sentido se asemeja a La Noche de Tlatelolco de Elena Poniatowska, se le añade la lucidez descarnada de la denuncia, por lo tanto, es de esperar que la novela de Nora Strejilevich se convierta en un clásico.

Cynthia Tompkins

Por favor envíen material a ser reseñado a
Elizabeth Rosa Horan
Associate Professor of English and Women Studies;
Director of Comparative Studies in Literature
Arizona State University
Tempe, AZ 82287-0302
(602) 965-7659

FEMINISTAS UNIDAS

Feministas Unidas is a Coalition of Feminist Scholars in Spanish, Spanish-American, Luso-Brazilian, Afro-Latin American, and U.S. Hispanic Studies. Now in its 18th year, Feministas Unidas publishes a Newsletter in April and December, and as an Allied Organization of MLA sponsors panels at the Annual convention. To join this network, complete the membership form below. Membership is for the calendar year.

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PLEASE CIRCLE: New Member Renewal

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Send this form with a check (in U.S. funds) made payable to *Feministas Unidas* to:
Lynn K. Talbot
Department of Foreign Languages
Roanoke College
Salem VA 24153-3794

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS / PUBLICATIONS

(PLEASE TYPE!)

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1. Please list only **one** project per form; photocopy the form if you have more than one project to submit.
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3. Please make sure that all information is complete; one of the aims of RIP is to make the materials accessible.

Return this form to **Cynthia Tompkins, Newsletter Editor, Feministas Unidas, Arizona State University West, Women's Studies, - Mail Code 2151, P O Box 37100, Phoenix AZ 85069-7100.**

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Date _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ Fax _____

E-Mail _____

Profs. Affiliation _____

TITLE OF WORK

CATEGORY (Circle one or more, as appropriate):

Feminist Criticism	Biography	Bibliography
Women in the Academy	Translation	

DESCRIPTION OF WORK (Please limit to 50 words) **(PLEASE TYPE!)**

Please indicate as appropriate to the work:
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Sheila	Candelario	
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