Feministas Unidas

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

Fall 1999 Volume 19.2

Feministas Unidas
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Information About the Cover Artist:

María de Mater O'Neill (San Juan, Puerto Rico 1960)

Educación: BFA Cooper Union School of Arts and Sciences, NY (1984)

Premios

1993 First Prize
Computer Generated Publication Design, Publish Magazine, San Francisco

1992 First Prize Promotion, Graphic Design
Convocatoria de Diseño Gráfico, San Juan

1991 First Prize, Painting
III Bienal de Pintura de Cuenca, Ecuador

Honorable Mention, Artist Abroad
Asociación de Críticos de Arte de Puerto Rico

Honorable Mention Experimental Video
Cine Festival San Antonio, TX

AvantGarde Diploma, Experimental Video, Unica, Sweden

First Prize Experimental Video, Ateneo puertorriqueño

Print Portfolio, Certamen Pabellón de Sevilla

1984 Honorable Mention, Printmaking
Ateneo Puertorriqueño (1983)

Exhibitions solo:

1996 M796, Museo de Arte de Ponce, Puerto Rico

1993 Paisaje en fuego, IV Bienal de Pintura, Cuenca, Ecuador

1991 Paisaje en tiempos de ansiedad, Museo de Arte e Historia y Galería Botello

1985 Teatro, Liga de Estudiantes de Arte, San Juan, PR

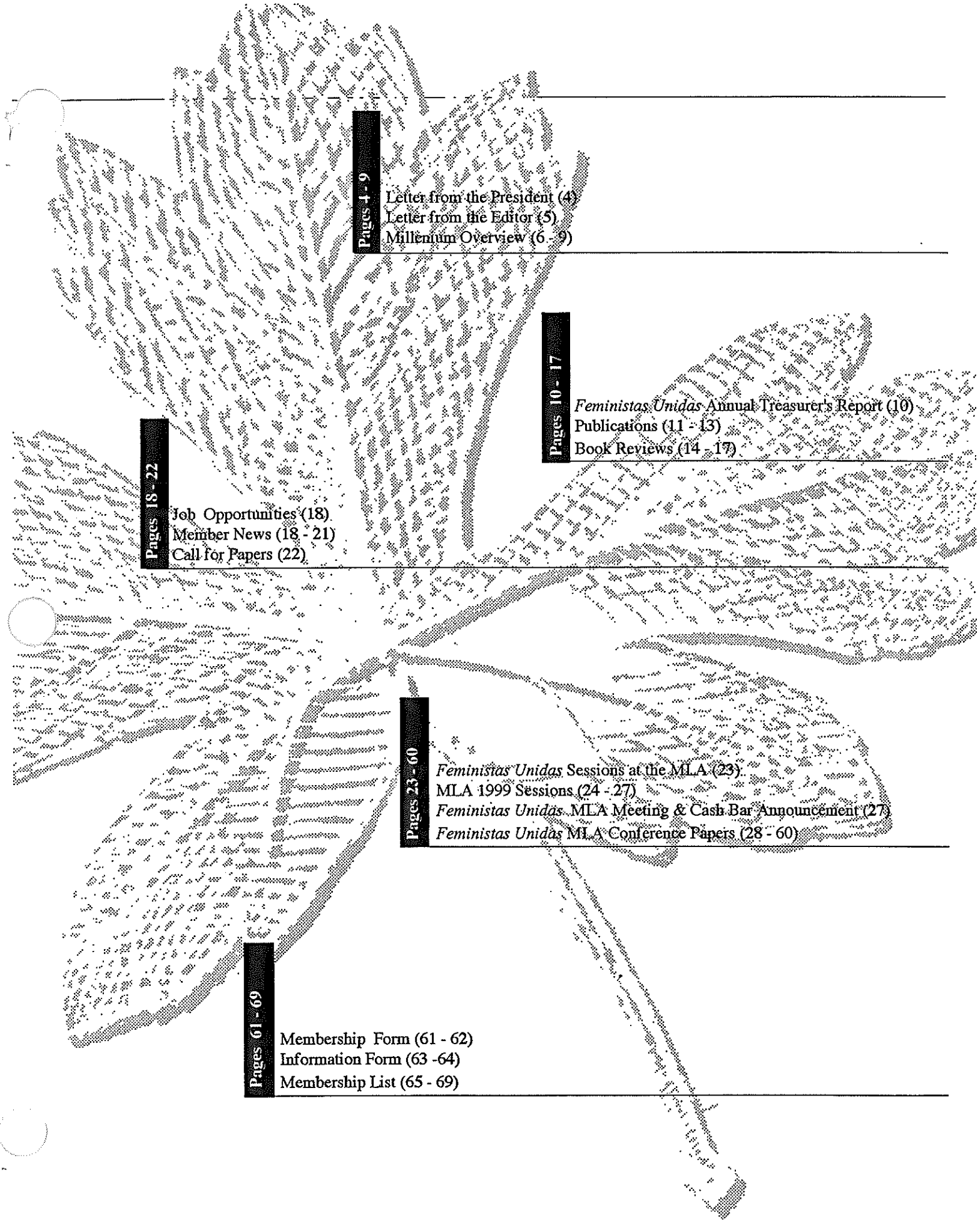
1989 Autorretratos, Chase Manhattan Bank, Hato Rey PR

Domingo

A la memoria de Joanne Saltz

En la claridad del cielo de San Diego
te sentí el domingo, abril del noventa y nueve.
Pasé por tu antigua calle Eldergardens el asfalto
tenía un brillo raro, y el viento alzaba polvo
en las grietas de los ladrillos amontonados de memorias
en tu casa. Tocaste mi hombro con el hálito de una vela sabática.
Te pedí que no te fueras,
pero tú ya estabas lista para dormitar hasta siempre.
Fuiste directa sin vacilar un momento,
nunca oí tus quejas, ni siquiera cuando tu cuerpo iba quedando estupefacto.
Perdonaste a tu hermano y sentiste el dulce sereno. Tus brazos se disuelven
y el aliento tibio de tus hijos te acompaña, te dieron luz
en tu piedra reposada. Tu nieto te mira desde adentro
con su rostro que le dejaste como herencia.
Ser madre fue tu eternidad y caparazón,
extraña la dicha tuya.
Supiste cantar el Kadish con tu cabellera negra
ensortijada de presagios. Te ocultas a mis ojos, te revelas
y no puedo detener la noche
veo que tus ojos bailan desde el fondo sin pausa
te reconozco en las huellas de tu risa
y armo un secreto con tu recuerdo. Tanto silencio en montones.
Penetro tu serenidad y hablamos
como si fuera otra llamada mas a Minnesota
hablabas algo así como inmortal
te abrazo para siempre en tus latidos.

Ivonne Vailakis



Queridas colegas:

Como ya saben, en diciembre de este año termina mi labor de presidenta de *Feministas Unidas* y Elizabeth Rosa Horan de la Universidad Estatal de Arizona me sustituirá. Le deseo suerte, inspiración y éxito en todo lo que emprenda(mos) en los próximos años.

El propósito de esta carta es que sirva de homenaje a Joanne Saltz, una socia de *Feministas Unidas* que murió el pasado mes de mayo. Joanne impartía clases de español en St. Cloud University, Minnesota, donde tenía el puesto de profesora asociada. Yo tuve suerte de conocerla hace más de 10 años y hasta poco antes de su muerte estuvimos en contacto debido a que asistíamos a propósito a los mismos congresos para así poder vernos y, por supuesto, gracias al correo electrónico. A las/los que no la conocieron les contaré que Joanne empezó a hacer el doctorado en español en San Diego después de haber criado a tres hijos y cuando aprender una nueva lengua suponía una enorme dificultad. Pero ni la edad ni la lengua ni la enfermedad que acabó con ella impidieron que Joanne se pusiera por su cuenta en contacto con escritores y feministas mexicanas, que viajara sola y a su aire por los países hispanos, que siguiera leyendo novelas recientes escritas, cómo no, por mujeres hispanas hasta sus últimos días.

Joanne ha sido una de esas mujeres que por su perseverencia, dedicación e independencia dejan una profunda huella y sé que no ha sido sólo en mí sino también en otras socias. A Joanne le debo, además de su apoyo personal y profesional, haber sido presidenta de esta organización, pues fue la que me nominó. La poeta Ivonne Vailakis, también socia de *Feministas Unidas*, ha escrito un poema en su honor.

Este año durante la conversación del MLA en Chicago, además de las dos sesiones habituales organizadas por *Feministas Unidas*, tendremos una reunión, seguida de una fiesta, el día 28 de diciembre en la suite de Lou Charnon-Deutsch en el hotel Sheraton a partir de las 7:30 de la tarde. Si todavía no lo han hecho, mándenme propuestas para las sesiones del año 2000. También vamos a celebrar el miércoles 29 de diciembre de 5:15 a 6:30 de la tarde un "Cash Bar" con otros grupos feministas (Women's Caucus for the Modern Languages, Women in French, Women in German...) como pueden comprobar en el programa del PMLA de noviembre (sesión 644). Espero que podamos seguir examinando las cuestiones que quedaron sin resolver en la convención de San Francisco.

Hasta entonces, que el final del semestre no les resulte demasiado abrumador.

Chao,
Victoria

Mis queridas colegas:

Ante todo, quisiera darles la bienvenida desde el Department of Languages and Literatures en ASU Tempe. Tenemos mucho que festejar. *Feministas Unidas* cumple veinte años. Los celebramos con testimonios de quienes fundaron y consolidaron la organización—idea de Christine Henseler. Vaya mi más profundo agradecimiento a todas por su dantesca labor.

Recapitulando la labor del semestre, y como punta de lanza de una agresiva campaña de reclutamiento, *Feministas Unidas* envió folletos a 3062 directores/as de departamentos de español y de estudios de la mujer. Quisiera agradecerle a Rosemary Feal el habernos facilitado una versión anterior y especialmente a Christine Henseler por habernos creado un documento profesional y atrayente a la vez... Mostrando la hilacha, para ahorrar, el estampillado se hizo a mano. Quisera agradecerle a David W. Foster el habernos facilitado la mano de obra de Narayanan Durairajalu, quien redimió pecados por varias vidas pegando direcciones y estampillas...

Con respecto a la reunión anual, quisiera que fueran pensando en posibles candidatas para las elecciones que se avecinan. Por ahora la única nominada que ha aceptado es Alicia del Campo... pero las nominaciones continúan hasta la reunión, que es, recuerden, el 28 de diciembre, en la suite de Lou Charnon Deutsch en el Sheraton, a partir de las 19:30. Una vez que las candidatas hayan aceptado, deben presentar un "statement" que pondremos en el web inmediatamente, y saldrá en el newsletter de mayo. A partir de entonces comienza la votación en sí. Por favor envíenme su voto en cuanto reciban el newsletter. Pueden hacerlo por correo regular o electrónico: cynthia.tompkins@asu.edu
Quedaron pendientes otros temas, quisiera que piensen en el re-embolso (retroactivo? parcial?) a la presidenta de turno por asistir al MLA...

Pasando al boletín en sí, habrán notado que tenemos un nuevo *look*! Vaya mi admiración y reconocimiento a Christine Henseler, quien se encargó del ensamblaje. Alvaro Vergara Mery se encargó de la versión electrónica, vaya mi eterna gratitud. Juana Suárez se encargó de la portada. Vaya nuestro reconocimiento a María de Mater O'Neill, por compartir la obra que en la actualidad se halla expuesta en la Galería Botello, San Juan, Puerto Rico. A Ivonne Vailakis vaya nuestro reconocimiento por haber compartido su poema dedicado a Joanne Saltz. Gizella Meneses identificó a las *Feministas Unidas* que presentan en las sesiones del MLA. ¡Felicitaciones compañeras! Juana Suárez incorporó el material sobre las sesiones; Elizabeth Horán se encargó de tres reseñas...¡no olviden enviarle material a reseñar! Vaya mi agradecimiento también a Cristina Guzzo, quien colaboró con dos más...

Quisiera despedirme rindiéndole homenaje a quienes concibieron y parieron la organización. Vaya mi reconocimiento además a Linda Fox, por mantenerla unida mediante el newsletter a través de los años. Y como siempre, vayan mis mejores deseos para todas, ¡especialmente en el año que se inicia!

Cynthia Margarita Tompkins

1981 - 1999

Feministas Unidas Millennium Overview

With this "Millennium Overview," Feministas Unidas would like to honor the scholars who have made this Newsletter possible. Thanks to the enriching experience and insight that contributors share with us today, we hope that you, the readers, will continue to enjoy this newsletter tomorrow.

Presidents

Marilyn Cuneo
(1981-1982)

Gloria Waldman
Co-President (1983-1988)

Patricia Klingenberg
(1989-1990)

Stacey Schlau
(1990-1993)

"*Feministas Unidas* has been an important element of my professional life since the early 1980's. A sisterhood of Hispanists with whom I could share assumptions and take risks about the sexual politics of writing and feminist theories, the organization has provided a safe haven from the patriarchal frameworks and practices of the dominant canon. The newsletter has been a lifeline. The MLA meetings/parties have at once stimulated and allowed me to relax from the tensions and hubbub at the annual rat race. My work has been immeasurably enriched by the scholarship of and conversations with *Feministas Unidas* colleagues. We form an intellectual community of the best kind, meant to encourage and nurture each other and the scholarly ideals for which we stand."

Stacey Schlau
West Chester University

Amy Kaminsky
(1994-1997)

Mary Jane Tracy
(1997-1998)

Victoria García Serrano
(1998-1999)

Elizabeth Starcevic
(1982-1988)

"*Feministas Unidas*, the life line, the connector, the keep us abreast of it all. For me, at the time that I was deeply involved in the organization, *Feministas Unidas*, la revista, was wholly identified with Linda Fox. She cajolled us to send in our information and worked hard, hard, hard to get things out. It was always such a pleasure to receive an issue and to see how Linda had trolled the seas of information for articles of interest, advertisements for books by our colleagues and updates on peoples' research. The pleasure remains as new people have taken up the challenge of producing una revista that is both new and yet true to the standard that Linda set. *Feministas Unidas* keeps me al tanto and reminds me how much my colleagues' work enriches my life. Adelante, compañeras, adelante ."

Elizabeth Starcevic
CUNY City College

Vice Presidents

Tey Diana Rebolledo
Vice-President (1981-1988)

Linda Fox
Vice-President (1988-1990)

Amy Kaminsky
Vice President (1993-1994)

"When it began, *Feministas Unidas* was the only place where feminist critics of Spanish and Latin American literature could come together to share their work. In the 1970's there was a great deal of hostility to our work in traditional Spanish and Modern Language departments—hostility that has not entirely dissipated in some places. It was important to me to have a group of colleagues who shared a common language, a common field of study. It remains an important site for doing feminist work in our field."

Amy Kaminsky
University of Minnesota

Mary Jane Tracy
Vice-President (1994-1997)

Victoria García Serrano
Vice President (1997-1998)

Lou Charnon-Deutsch
Vice President (1990-1993)

"My participation in *Feministas Unidas* came at a crucial time in my career when I was just beginning to do research on feminist psychoanalytic theory. Joining *FU*, and then serving as an officer, put me in touch with others who were doing similar work and made me realize that I wasn't working in a vacuum. My contact with some members, for example Rosemary Feal, but many others as well, has greatly enriched my research. The project that I completed in collaboration with *FU* (An Annotated Bibliography of Feminist Literary Criticism) was one of the most gratifying projects that I have ever worked on, allowing me to broaden my knowledge of Spanish and Latin-American women authors and putting me in touch with dozens of *FU* members whom otherwise I would have never met. In all, it is a source of comfort and satisfaction that there is a community of feminist scholars who share common interests."

Lou Charnon-Deutsch
SUNY Stony Brook

Treasurers

María Duarte
Treasurer (1981-1982)

Marilyn Cuneo
Treasurer (1982-1988)

Rosemary Geisdorfer Feal
Treasurer (1988-1994)

"I attended my first *Feministas Unidas* meeting at MLA the year in which we were recognized as an Allied Organization. There was much celebration and solidarity, and a sense that a group of dedicated "protofeministas" had accomplished something major for the benefit of us all. *FU* is an organization in which a graduate student and a full professor can work side by side, on the same panel or project, and enjoy mutual respect. The panels that *FU* has organized for MLA were unapologetically about women and feminist concerns, even though they are open to anyone who cares to collaborate. These are the professional qualities that have kept me involved with *FU* all these years, but I also cherish the personal friendships that have evolved from the organization. I am grateful to those who have taken the time to mentor me through *FU*, and I in turn am pleased to have been able to contribute to the careers of younger scholars in recent years. My hope is that *FU* continues to be a dynamic intellectual, professional, and activist organization and that we can resist the kind of careerism that has come to dominate so many branches of feminism."

Rosemary Geisdorfer Feal
University of Buffalo

Patricia Klingenberg
Treasurer (1994-1995)

"My first memory of *Feministas* is as an oasis in the hostile desert of the MLA! Having attended a session I heard an announcement of a meeting later in the evening, and went. Behold, women! Back in those days the MLA was mostly men. Since then it has been a source of support, information, perspective, and fun. Thanks, everyone."

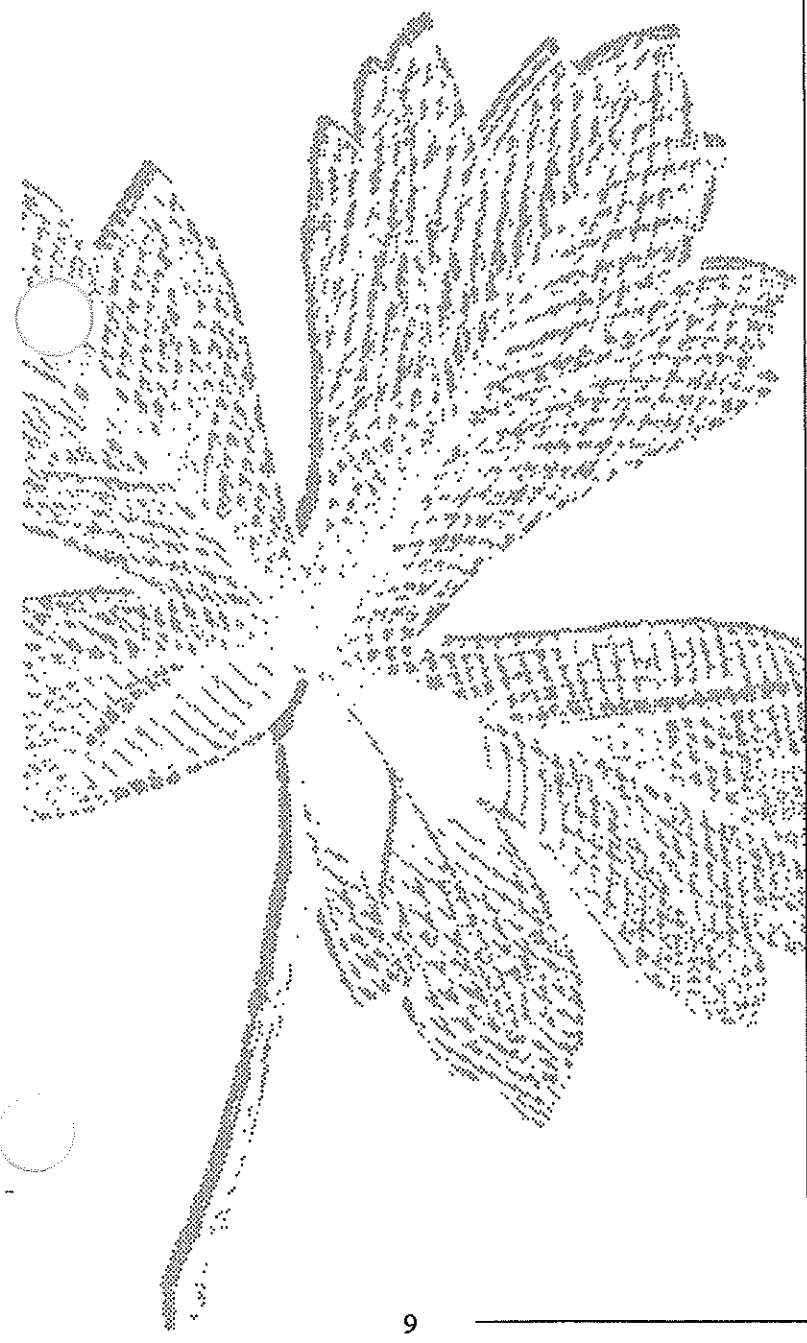
Patricia N. Klingenberg
Wesleyan University

Lynn Talbot
Treasurer (1995-1999)

Secretary

Roslyn Frank
Secretary (1981)

Newsletter Editors



Linda Fox
Newsletter Editor (1981 - 1996)

"For me, *Feministas Unidas* has been an incredibly rewarding organization both personally and professionally. As a "founding mother" of this organization (as well of the Asociación de literatura femenina hispánica), I have seen hispanic Women's Studies come into its own over the last two decades, and *Feministas Unidas* has done its part to help bring this about. An Antonio Machado specialist in a "former life," I am unwaiveringly aware that expanded horizons through the many sessions offered by *Feministas* at MLA and my work as Newsletter Editor for 15 years contributed to a new research and teaching area of specialization for me. Who was to know where that first class I taught on Hispanic women in 1975 would lead? Thanks to the existence of *Feministas Unidas* - as an organization and as a pool of wonderfully talented and dear colleagues - I felt then and continue to feel supported in that journey."

Linda Fox
Purdue University

Cynthia Margarita Tompkins
Newsletter Editor (1996-Present)

Feministas Unidas Annual Treasurer's Report 1999

Submitted by Candyce Leonard, Treasurer
December 6, 1999

Balance dating from October 1998		$ 3,637.56
		CREDITS
Dues Received (including scholarship gifts)		2,260.00
Bank Interest and Dividends (Share Draft Acct)	31.65	
TOTAL CREDITS		$ 5,929.21
DEBITS		
December 1998 Newsletter		$ 747.04
MLA Reception 1998		1,136.86
Equipment fee for MLA 1998	75.00	
April 1999 Newsletter		604.07
Bank Fee		5.00
Fall 1999 Membership Drive*		1,312.42
TOTAL DEBITS		$ 3,879.91
BALANCE AS OF DECEMBER 1, 1999		**$ 2,049.30**
Scholarship Fund (portion of **Balance** above)		$1,715.00

*Note: Twenty-eight new members resulted from the Fall 1999 Membership Drive

Lou Charnon-Deutsch

Lou Charnon-Deutsch

"A critical survey of graphic representations of the feminine in the emerging bourgeois culture of Spain."

There is no question that Fictions of the Feminine is a major contribution to our understanding of late nineteenth-century Spanish culture."

-James Mandrell,
Brandeis University

Fictions of the Feminine in the Nineteenth-Century Spanish Press.

Penn State Studies in Romance Studies
ISBN 0-271-01913-1 cloth: $48.50
320 pages 192 illustrations 8-1/2 x 11

How was the female body perceived in the popular culture of late nineteenth-century Spain? Using a wide array of images from popular magazines of the day, Lou Charnon-Deutsch finds that women were typically presented in ways that were reassuring to the emerging bourgeois culture.

Charnon-Deutsch organizes the 190 images reproduced in this book into six broad categories, or "fictions of the feminine": she reads women's bodies as a romantic symbol of beauty or evil, as a privileged link with the natural order, as a font of male inspiration, as a mouthpiece of bourgeois mores, as a focalized point of male fear and desire, and as an eroticized expression of Spanish exoticism and political ambitions. These imaginary visions of femininity, Charnon-Deutsch argues, were a response to, and also helped to create, gendered stereotypes by suggesting ideal feminine behavior and poses. Further, they comprised a reassuring "between-male" cultural medium that provided graphic validation of women's docile body for a culture enthralled with femininity.

Integrating the fields of literature and cultural studies, Charnon-Deutsch's approach to this subject is unique. Many if the images collected here are available for the first time, and they represent only a fraction of the two thousand images Charnon-Deutsch collected during her reserach, This book will appeal to students of Spanish cultural studies and gender studies, as well as to art historians.

Lou Charnon-Deutsch is Professor of Hispanic Languages at the State University of New York-Stony Brook. Her previous books include The Nineteenth-Century Spanish Short Story: Textual Strategies of the Genre in Evolution (Tamesis, 1985), Gender and Representation: Women in Nineteenth-Century Spanish Realist Fiction (John Benjamins, 1990), and Narratives of Desire: Nineteenth-Century Spanish Fiction by Women (Penn State, 1994).

Reflection in Sequence: Novels by Spanish Women, 1944-1988

Bucknell University Press
ISBN 0-8387-5400-7
224 Pages, $38.50

The codes of conduct imposed on females by Spain's dictator Francisco Franco after the Spanish Civil war (1936-39) created a stifling environment for women until his death in 1975. Beginning with Carmen Laforet's 1944 Nadal Prize-winning novel Nada, novels by women—many of which explore female identity—began to proliferate in Spain. The works examined in this study—Nada, Primera memoria (1960) by Ana María Matute, La plaça del Diamant (1962) by Mercè Rodoreda, Julia (1969) by Ana María Moix, El cuarto de atrás (1978) by Carmen Martín Gaite, El amor es un juego solitario (1979) by Esther Tusquets, and Qüestió d'amor propi (1987) by Carme Riera—feature female protagonists struggling for self-realization and, by extension, for change in a restrictive Spanish society. Schumm's analysis of the seven novels demonstrates how examination of metaphoric tropes and mirror images provides insight into the protagonists' development. These novels not only exhibit similitude in their thematic and artistic concerns but also provide a reflective continuum of women's progress in Spain for more than forty years. Brief consideration of other similar novels by each of the seven authors supports the idea of sequential dialogue between novels by women.

Metaphor and its related trope metonymy reveal subconscious processes and nascent ideas that are crucial to understanding development. Scrutiny of these tropes iluminates the course of changing identity that the protagonists undergo. While metaphors convey equivalent expressions that help to transmit meaning, metonymy moves on to associated ideas and frequently demonstrates change and growth. Schumm examines the metaphors used to describe the protagonists's feelings and shows how subsequent metonymic associations alter the orignial meaning.

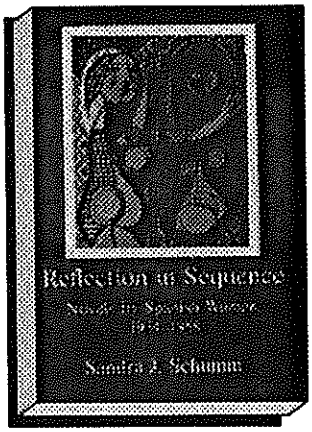
This study focuses on mirror scenes and other mirroring devices that illustrate development (such as mother-daughter relationships, references to fairy tales intimate communication with a friend, and telling or writing one's own story). Schumm explains how "mirroring" serves both a metaphoric and metonymic function and how the mirror also acts as a trope that reveals modifications in the protagonist's personalities.

In addition to the individual evolution of each of the protagonists, this study underscores the changing sociopolitical role of women in Spain between 1944-1988. The analysis of tropes in these novels demonstrates the protagonists' desire to change the repressive situation of Spanish women. There are also significant thematic changes from the 1940s to the late 1980s (e.g. female insanity, homosexuality, liberal sexual mores, and general expressions of sociopolitical independence for women) that reflect basic societal shifts. The gradual development of the female in these novels serves as a temporar y "mirror" of women's development in Spain since the Spanish Civil War.

BUCKNELL UNIVERSITY PRESS

Sandra J. Schumm

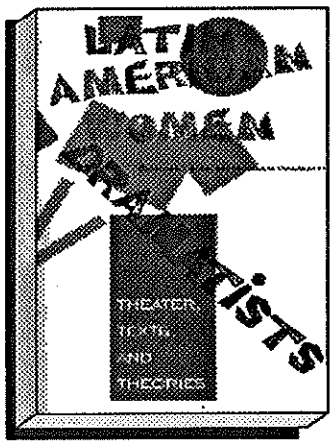
Sandra J. Schumm



Sandra J. Schumm is Director of Foreign Languages and Associate Professor of Spanish at Missouri Western State College in St. Joseph, Missouri. She received her Ph.D. in Spanish from the University of Kansas and has published several articles about twentieth-century Spanish literature.

Catherine Larson & Margarita Vargas

Margarita Vargas



Latin American Women Dramatists: Theater, Texts, and Theories.

Indiana University Press, 1988 / 1999
ISBN: 0-253-21240-5 (pbk.)
ISBN: 0-253-33461-6 (hbk.)

Contributors discuss the works and artistic lives of 15 Latin American playwrights (Gambaro, Vilalta, Romero, Campesino, Serebrisky, Castro, Raznovich, Casas, Berman, Aguirre, Boullosa, Assunção, Torres Molina, Leñero, and Garro)—their texts and contexts. All of the playwrights studied--whether they write in traditional male forms or are involved in dismantling masculine structures--use humor, sophisticated linguistic techniques, or a refined concept of theatrical space to produce a cultural politics of resistance.

Catherine Larson, Associate Professor of Spanish and Adjunct Associate Professor of Women's Studies at Indiana University-Bloomington, is author of Language and the Comedia: Theory and Practice and numerous articles on the theater of Golden Age Spain and twentieth-century Latin America; and co-editor of Brave New Worlds: Studies in Spanish Golden Age Literature.

Margarita Vargas, Associate Professor in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures at the State University of New York at Buffalo, is co-translator of The House on the Beach and co-editor of Women Writing Women: An Anthology of Spanish-American Theater of the 1980's. She has also published critical essays on Mexican literature and Spanish-American theater.

"This book will in all likelihood become standard reading on the subject of women dramatists in Latin America, indeed, on Latin American drama in general. It is the first English-language comprehensive critical anthology of Latin American women dramatists.

-Severino J. Albuquerque, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Joan Brown & Carmen Martín Gaite

Conversaciones Creadoras

2nd edition

Houghton Mifflin Co., 1999
Instructor's edition ISBN 0-395-90929-6

This is a revised, updated edition of the popular Spanish conversation textbook based on interactive role playing, The book provides a dynamic vehicle for developing oral communication skills and cultural competence in second-or-third year courses. Each of its twelve chapters involves students in meaningful and emotionally-charged mini-drama written by Carmen Martín Gaite; students use the language to resolve their dramas and to carry out a wide range of communicative tasks and activities.

Book Reviews / Reseñas

Carmen Ortiz. *Las mujeres fatales se quedan solas.*

Buenos Aires: Almagesto, 1998. 118 Pgs.

Es verdad que las mujeres fatales se quedan solas, pero al leer la novela de Carmen Ortiz encontramos que el relato de las memorias amorosas de Malena (una versión más moderna del prototipo), está más bien al servicio de una búsqueda de identidad. El libro, planteado en la primera y tercera persona alternativamente, evoca un estilo de relaciones semtimentales y sexuales inestables y poco comprometidas, típicamente urbanas, que comenzaron a ser comunes en Buenos Aires junto a otros muchos cambios sociales--en especial la postura de resistencia de la juventud--durante la década del setenta. En estas memorias hay erotismo, mucha soledad, reflexión sobre los diversos roles de la mujer, valentía, humor y bastante ingenuidad.

Cristina Guzzo, Albertson College of Idaho

Aída Apter-Cragnolino. *Espejos naturalistas.*

New York: Peter Lang, 1999. 187 Pgs.

Este ensayo, iniciado con un capítulo introductorio que revisa la historia del naturalismo y la figura de Emile Zolá, estudia la novela argentina del período comprendido entre 1884-1919. Apter-Cragnolino identifica a la producción de la época como un reflejo del discurso naturalista predominante: "Con respecto a la forma y los contenidos de la narrativa de este período, que en su mayoría se adhiere al modelo naturalista, la experiencia de la realidad y su percepción no pueden puntualizarse como causas pero sí como condicionantes de producción" (19). Luego de ofrecer un panorama de la historia argentina de fin de siglo, o sea, de la Argentina opulenta desde Roca al Centenario, se analizan en distintos capítulos las novelas: La gran aldea (1884), de Lucio Vicente López y Sin Rumbo (1885) y En la sangre (1886), de Eugenio Cambaceres; La bolsa de Julián Martell; Quilito de Carlos María Ocantos y Horas de fiebre de Segundo I. Villafañe, todas de 1891, son agrupadas en un capítulo como pertenecientes al "ciclo de la bolsa". Por último, se incorpora en el ensayo un estudio de Nacha Regules (1919), de Manuel Gálvez. Si bien estas novelas han sido tradicionalmente ligadas al naturalismo, la autora trata de demostrar aquí que éste ha sido el discurso estético dominante en la emergencia de estos textos, en principio, a causa de que la vida pública de los autores se halla marcada por el contexto de la estrecha relación que entabla Argentina con Francia como modelo prestigiado. La incorporación de la estética naturalista daría cuenta entonces de la preocupación de estas novelas por los problemas sociales--coincidente en Argentina con las quejas de los sectores menos favorecidos y el activismo de las vanguardias anarquistas~así como de la inclusión de temas como la prostitución, la miseria y la inmigración. La abundante bibliografía y referencias teóricas hacen de este ensayo un aporte de interés, además de ofrecer una perspectiva original para el estudio de la generación del 80. Sin embargo, en su indagación de los "espejos naturalistas", la autora quizá ha dejado de lado otros elementos determinantes de la literatura del período como el realismo, la tradición nacionalista y la mirada hacia los Estados Unidos, vigente en Argentina desde la presidencia de Sarmiento. El interés por "la bolsa", justamente, seguido en la realidad por la crisis del 90, es un índice en estas novelas de la mirada de Argentina hacia los nuevos poderes financieros; esa mirada por lo tanto, está también presente en el proceso de incorporación de discursos realizado por los intelectuales de fin de siglo.

Cristina Guzzo, Albertson College of Idaho

Mujeres Poetas de Chile: Muestra Antológica 1980-1995.

Ed. Linda Irene Koski. Santiago: Editorial Cuarto Propio, 1998.

This is a very fine selection of the work of sixteen contemporary poets in Chile. The range of voices represented is unparalleled, at least in this reader's experience. There's no evidence of sectarianism, of bias towards or against any particular school. There's a healthy balancing of work from poets residing in the provinces as well as in Santiago. The editor has made particular effort to include poets from the South, and to include women from the range of Chile's social and ethnic groups. Above and beyond the laudible democratic spirit of the collection, however, stands an equally compelling reason to read this text with much interest and pleasure: all of the poems are excellent. Each text and each selection stands well on its own, yet is chosen in such a way as to represent the distinctness of the individual writer's voice and concern. A sensitive prologue gives a clear, inviting introduction to work of each of the writers included. Koski examines with care the way that these individual writers have explored topics such as the importance of appearance, women's relation to consumer culture, responses to torture and the dictatorship. Particularly compelling in the poems is their repeated questioning and expanding on a repertorie of linguistic, social, and corporeal possibilities. Indeed, there are few poems that don't take on all of these topics, simultaneously, with marvelous daring, moving rapidly from one thought to another, for example in the work of Elvira Hernández: "Algo se fugó de nosotros mismos/su ausencia fundó la ciudad/La Sociedad Robótica y Mendicante" ("Letras & Letrinas," de Santiago Waria). In the work of Mapuche poet Graciela Huaino, which Koski has sought out from articles and unpublished sources, there's a concentration on intertwined threats to the land, in its flora and fauna, and indigenous culture, threats that Huaino contests: "Y yo/una a una/romperé milenarias cadenas." The daring and verve of one of the youngest poets in the anthology, Nadia Prado, is an absolute pleasure to read; its offhand, spoken quality the clear result of a talented, clear vision: "No soy Dios o dios o DIOS/no soy nada y no tengo nada/sólo garabateo al mundo/pues tomé de él su basura/el antojo de la suerte" (from "Simples placeres"). Soledad Fariña also has very fine work, each line carefully sculpted out, standing, gleaming on its own, and in profound, precise relation to the others, playing out a series of metamorphoses: "Mi gravidez de piedra casi/se ha convertido en aire/en esta luz oblicua" (From "En amarillo oscuro").

What makes poetry so crucial a medium for true experimentation with language is its brevity, its condensation. These same qualities make it an ideal way for engaging students with language and literature. When the classrooom and the ordinary page seem to stand a poor chance in grabbing the attention of students (and readers generally?) beseiged with commercial advertisements on multiple screens, poetry such as this offers a real alternative. These are voices that resist being ground down or, that break the language itself to proclaim resistence. Poetry's great virtues — appeal to the senses, social relevance, precision, the power to charm our emotions – are all evident this evocative anthology. Linda Koski's labor of love, in editing this anthology, is evident in an unassuming and valuable introduction, and in a selection of really stunning verses that reach out and keep on reaching. This slim and lovely book is difficult to put aside.

Elizabeth Rosa Horan

Elizabeth A. Marchant. *Critical Acts: Latin American Women and Cultural Criticism.*

Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999.

In a careful, thoughtful study well-informed by the numerous cultural and historical studies of Southern Cone women produced in the past decade, Elizabeth Marchant demonstrates the engagement of women writers with public issues in the first half of the 20th century. She argues that even as relegation to the *private* supposedly precluded them from the *public*, women writers used the public form of literary and cultural criticism to make room for themselves, against and despite critical establishments that sought to exclude them, or to include them only in the most minimal, restrictive ways.

Marchant's interesting and entertaining introductory chapter, "The Bearded Academy," sketches out the nature of educational reforms in mid-to-late 19th century Latin America. Her study is particularly attentive to Brazil; it also (and necessarily) includes Chile, Uruguay, Argentina, and Mexico. There are a number of valuable pointers for future studies. The importance of "the intersection between the literary and social" appears, for example, in her description (drawn from Masiello, Rojas, Sternbach) of how the work of women writers was disseminated. Writers would first give speeches, often to congresses, but also to clubs and on lecture tours. These speeches were subsequently printed in pamplets, and later reprinted in books. In paying carefully attention to details such as these, and in presenting a comprehensive bibliography, Marchant's book is exemplary. There's a wry wit, too, in well-chosen quotations from José Martí, written with a flowery personalism that would be condemned in a woman writer, but becomes, in the eyes of Marti's admirers, a hallmark of his mature eloquence. This becomes a characteristic, and very effective move, in Marchant's criticism: she points to how what is praised in men is condemned in women, as part of a wider project of ensuring that women be excluded from the public sphere in anything other than a blankly maternal role. Her critical methodology also involves attention to the problem of racial identification and the forging of national identities, showing the limited range of possibilities open to the non-European, in Brazil, and to the silencing of the Indian throughout the Americas.

Of the three central chapters make up the body of the work, the first one, on Brazillian novelist and critic Lucía Miguel Pereira, is the most detailed. It's very important that Marchant makes Brazil the starting point of her discussion of race, thus including a country often totally excluded from studies of Latin American culture. Marchant's primary interest, at the onset, is to point out the relation between Brazilian nationalism, and the presentation of racial identities in the varied production of Miguel Pereira. After a succinct but comprehensive survey of Miguel Pereira's novels, Marchant turns to the writer's production of literary criticism that is primarily biographical in nature, exploring the representation of mulatto writers in particular. The multiple terms of exclusion, on racial bases, operating in a writer who was herself excluded, on the basis of gender, are cogently set out. Especially admirable is the way that Marchant examines the writer's prose and delineates, in straightfoward terms, the way that it both contains and evades the social conditions preceding it.

Analysis of the work and figure of Victoria Ocampo is the subject of a third chapter. Here Marchant asks why it is that Ocampo has been excluded from surveys of literary criticism, and why so much attention has been focused on her person, as opposed to her work. There's a persuasive overview here, of Ocampo's motives in producing her Testimonios as works of literary and cultural criticism. Also useful is the analysis of Ocampo's responses to the sexist criticism of writers such as Ortega y Gasset, Bergamín, and Sábato. I found

myself wanting a more detailed analysis of Ocampo's relation to French culture than what Marchant provides, yet the discussion of Ocampo's relation to Virginia Woolf and to the figure of Emily Bronte, is understandable, as these figures surely provided a basis for Ocampo's intellectual development as a feminist. Marchant's final chapter, on Gabriela Mistral in Mexico, stands in contrast to the two earlier ones. Where Ocampo and Miguel Pereira are related to the nations of their birth, additional factors come into play when a writer is associated with a country of which she is not a citizen. Marchant does well in putting Mistral's conservatism, at this time, within the rather extraordinary context of post-Revolutionary Mexico, relating Mistral's project to the ambition of Vasconcelos to educate Indians via Greek Classics!) and within the time-honored tradition of looking towards Europe in order to avoid looking towards the US.

In addition to offering multiple angles on how women carved out niches for themselves in a public sphere, this book offers a very good introduction to the figures surveyed. This is an erudite, well-written text by a fair-minded scholar successfully tackling a subject that demands substantial range and depth.

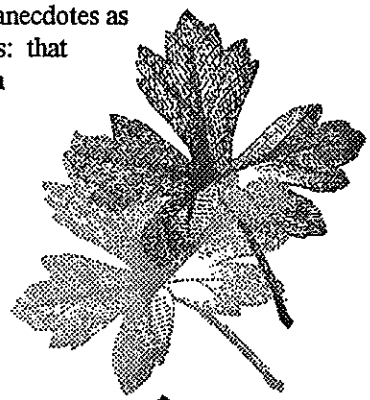
Elizabeth Rosa Horan

Félix Matos Rodríguez
Women and Urban Change in San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1820-1868.

Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999.

Addressing the lack of studies of gender relations and women's history in Latin America, prior to the 20th century, and contributing to the growing number of histories of urban development in the region, Matos Rodríguez has produced a very interesting, readable book based on extensive, original research into the archives of 19th century San Juan, Puerto Rico. With theoretical rigor he addresses figures and examines institutions that encompass the lives of women across the social classes. He pays particular attention to the Casa de Beneficio as an institution created ostensibly for charitable purposes, in which elite women had a major role, and whose primary utilitarian function was to regulate the lives and labor of the urban poor, particularly orphans and widows. Drawing from census figures, home ownership and other legal records, Matos Rodríguez also examines the ebb and flow of female population in San Juan (which was built as a military fortification, and retained this character throughout the 19th century). The comprehensiveness of the study is one of its strongest points: as much attention goes to women who were laundresses and street sellers as to members of the elite. Each of the chapters – variously focused on urban space, immigration from Spain and elsewhere, the role of the elite, the lives of poor and lower-class women, and the points of convergence – is amply illustrated with lively anecdotes as well as easy-to-read charts. The writer amply demonstrates his thesis: that "beneficence institutions had been historically oriented toward women in San Juan and elite women moved to establish and control [those institutions] to secure their class and race privileges over their less fortunate sisters" (Introduction 9). This is a fine study, well informed by scholarship in the history of the Caribbean, and Puerto Rican women in particular.

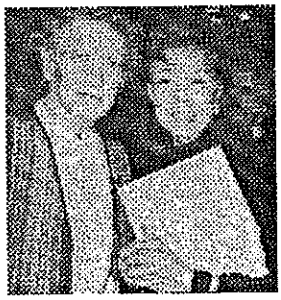
Elizabeth Horan



News / Noticias

Anita Vélez-Mitchell

Anita Vélez-Mitchell



Anita Vélez-Mitchell & Marcel Marceau

Anita Vélez-Mitchell ha sido galardonada con el premio "Julia de Burgos" de Puerto Rico por La Casa de la Herencia Cultural Puertoriqueña, Inc. También ha publicado una entrevista en Temas sobre "Marcel Marceau y el Arte del Mimo." En ella concluye diciendo que

"Para mí Marcel Marceau es un genio, me invitó a su clase maestra, a donde humildemente fui a aprender el idioma del alma, en su carnal presencia frente a la eternidad, en busca de la palabra final" (25).

Anita Vélez Mitchell nació en Puerto Rico y se educó en los Estados Unidos. Es traductora de varias obras como Kids Want In de Norma Aleandro y varias obras de autores puertoriqueños como Rene Marqués, Carmen Marrero, Walter Murray Chiesa, y otros. También ha trabajado como traductora en una obra musical para el "Puerto Rican Travelling Theatre," para sus propias obras, canciones, poesía y para un drama de Miguel de Unamuno. Escribió y codirigió videos Educacionales para el "Creative Arts Team" de New York University.

Vélez es artista de baile. El rol que distinguió a Vélez fue el de "Anita" en "West Side Story." Actuó en el Ed Sullivan Show, El Teatro Palace de Broadway, e hizo gira por los Hilton Hotels de los Estados Unidos, el Canada, y el Caribe con su propio grupo de jazz: los Anita Vélez Dancers. También fue solista en los tours de Marina Svetlova Consort (prima ballerina del Metropolitan Opera) con bailes españoles clásicos.

Job Opportunities

Hofstra University (Romance Languages and Literatures Dept.) in Contemporary Spanish (Peninsular) Literature and Language. This is my replacement (I will retire from teaaching, not from academia, in August 2000), and I would like to leave it in good hands. See Job List for description. I am sorry I will not be in Chicago with you all, but we shall meet again. My best to you all!
Mercedes Mazquiaran de Rodríguez

Coordinator of Language Instruction. Renewable Term Lecturership. Ph.D.required. Salary 35,000-40,000. Preference will be given to candidates specializing in some area of applied linguistics and with experience coordinating language courses. Native or near native fluency and scholarly potential also required. Send letters and dossier (or up-to-date curriculumvitae and three recent letters of recommendation) by Dec. 1 to Benigno Trigo. Hispanic Languages and Literature. SUNY at Stony Brook, Stony Brook, NY11794-3371. Stony Brook is an AA/EO employer.

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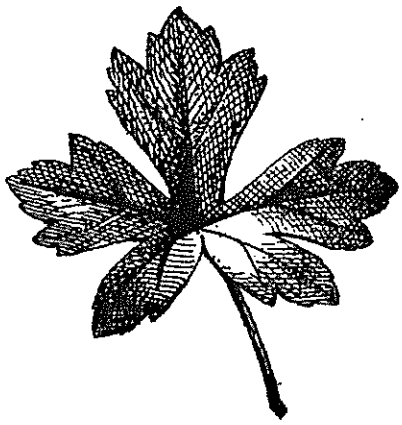

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We are soliciting articles for a volume of essays which demonstrates the possibility of synthesizing faith with feminism. We invite writers to draw on personal experience, as well as on feminist theory or feminist theology, and from history, literature, sociology, cultural studies, or American studies, to describe and illustrate the unification of politics and religion. Despite our request that you theorize your experiences, we strongly emphasize that the language should be accessible to readers inside and outside the academy. In developing your essay, consider the following questions: Is the American feminist experience unique, or can parallels be found in other countries? What experiences prompted this reunification? Does feminist Catholicism differ from the traditional conceptions (or misconceptions) of feminism? If so, in what ways? If not, how are issues such as divorce, birth control, and abortion-that is, the expectation that women subordinate their personal desires for the sacred obligation of motherhood-reconciled? And how does this unification thus broaden the definition of feminism?

Send, by July 1, 2000, two copies of letter-quality mansucript, MLA style, approximately 15-20 pages including Works Cited to: Sally Barr Ebest, co-editor, Department of English, University of Missouri-St. Louis, 8001 Natural Bridge Road, St. Louis, MO 63121. Send abstracts or inquiries to sebest@umsl.edu

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Cuarto Simposio de Cultura Popular Mexicana

Arizona State University
Tempe, AZ

7 y 8 de abril del 2000

La cultura popular mexicana ante el nuevo milenio:
Mexico Guadalupano, Mexico Juarista, Mexico Zapatista
...entre otros 2000 nuevos y viejos rostros y mitos.

Este simposio busca explorar las continuidades de los diferentes mitos y rostros mexicanos y su incidencia en la cultura popular y otras manifestaciones artísticas y/o políticas. De interés particular serán aquellas ponencias que revisen la articulación de dichos rostros y mitos, la expansión de fronteras, su incorporación al nuevo milenio y su consecuente repercusión.

Por favor envie un sumario de una página (en español, portugués o inglés) antes del 15 de enero del 2000. Se aceptarán propuestas para mesas.

Professor Liane Reinshagen-Joho reinshagen@asu.edu
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Tempe AZ 85287-0202

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Juana Suarez: yemaya@asu.edu

Feministas Unidas Sessions at the MLA

MLA No. 593 Desplazamientos: Women and Resistance

1:45-3:00 p.m./Parlor C/Sheraton/ Program arranged by Feministas Unidas.
Presiding: Linda Irene Koski, Santa Clara University.; Dara E. Goldman, Univ. of Illinois, Urbana.

1. "Parasites and Polemics: Rigoberta Menchú and the Politics of Sacrifice.
Jennifer Browdy de Hernandez, Simmons Rock College of Bard.

2. "Irse de Casa: A Feminist Time-Geography." Joyce Lynn Tolliver, Univ. of Illinois, Urbana.

3. "Traveling *Folklóricas:* Bring Spain to the Americas: Ambiguous Role Models for Women in the 1940s and 1950s." Eva Maria Woods, State University of New York, Stony Brook.

4. "Virtual Voices, Electronic Bodies: Women and Resistance in Cyber-Chiapas,"
Sarah L. Grussing, Macalester College.

5. "Diaspora, Exile and Migration: Movement and Sexuality in Recent Afro-Caribbean / Latin American Women's Narrative." Margaret M. Olsen. University of Missouri-Columbia

MLA No. 71 Teaching Feminisms in Its Historical Contexts

5:15-6;30 p.m./Huron/Sheraton/ Program arranged by Feministas Unidas.

Presiding: Lisa M. Vollendorf, Wayne State Unversity.

1. The Role of Feminism in Teaching Latin American Literature,"
Adriana Rosman-Askot, Coll. of New Jersey.

2. Teaching Women in Mexican History," M. Victoria García-Serrano, Emory Univ.

3. "Gender and Revolution in Women's Studies," Maria Helena Lima,
State Univ. of New York, Geneseo.

4. "Feminism and Film in the Spanish Classroom," María Asunción Gómez,
Florida Intl. Univ.

5. "Women Writers and the Spanish Literary Survey," Patricia V. Greene,
Michigan State Univ.

MLA Sessions

Monday 27, December

MLA No. 32 Mapping Galdós
3:30-4:45 p.m./Arkansas/Sheraton/ Program arranged by the International Association of Galdós Scholars.
Presiding: Akikio Tsuchiya, Washington Univ.

MLA No. 71 Teaching Feminisms in Its Historical Contexts
5:15-6;30 p.m./Huron/Sheraton/ Program arranged by Feministas Unidas. *Presiding:* Lisa M. Vollendorf, Wayne State Unversity.

1. The Role of Feminism in Teaching Latin American Literature," Adriana Rosman-Askot, Coll. of New Jersey.
2. Teaching Women in Mexican History," M. Victoria García-Serrano, Emory Univ.
3. "Gender and Revolution in Women's Studies," Maria Helena Lima, State Univ. of New York, Geneseo.
4. "Feminism and Film in the Spanish Classroom," María Asunción Gómez, Florida Intl. Univ.
5. "Women Writers and the Spanish Literary Survey," Patricia V. Greene, Michigan State Univ.

Tuesday 28, December

MLA No. 167 Culinary Narratives Prior to the Twentieth Century
8:30-9:45 a.m./Mississippi/Sheraton/A special session
Respondent: Elaine Stone-Drummond, Batavia, IL

MLA No. 205 Faulty Towers: Rebuilding the Academic Environment
10:15-11:30 a.m. Columbus Hall A/ Hyatt Regency
2. "The Generation Gap," Roberta Johnson, Univ. of Kansas.

MLA No. 220 Critical Race-Ethnic Studies
12:00 noon-1:15 p.m./Columbus Hall B/Hyatt Regency/ Program arranged by the Division of Ethnic Studies in Language and Literature.
4. "Aestheticizing the Corpus Delecti: Evidence and the Law in Mexican American Border Photography," Lázaro Lima, Dickinson Coll.

MLA No. 246 The politics of Latina and Latino Memory
12:00 noon- 1:15:00 p.m./Field/Hyatt Regency
2. "Ideology and Canon Formation: The Case of Gaspar de Alba," Debra Ann Castillo, Cornell Univ.

MLA No. 251 All Work and No Pay?
12:00 noon- 1:15:00 p.m./San Francisco/Hyatt Regency/ Program arranged by the MLA Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession. *Presiding*: Rosemary G. Feal, State Univ. of New York, Buffalo.

MLA No. 270 Memory and Literature
1:45-3:00 p.m./Erie Room/Sheraton/Program arranged by the Division of Twentieth-Century Spanish Literature.
Presiding: Geraldine Cleary Nichols, Univ. of Florida.
3. "Gender and Memory," Maryellen Bieder, Indiana Univ., Bloomington.

MLA No. 309 Rereading Celestina
3:30-4:45 p.m./Ontario/Sheraton/Program arranged by the Division of Spanish Medieval Language and Literature.
Presiding: Barbara F. Weissberger, Old Dominion Univ.

MLA No. 335 The Invention of Modern Spanish Literature: A Tribute to Andrew P. Debicki
3:30-4:45 p.m./Missouri/Sheraton/Program arranged by the Association of Departments of Foreign Languages.
1. "Twentieth-Century Spanish Literature and the Humanities Today," Roberta Johnson, Univ. of Kansas.

MLA No. 384 Old Texts, "New" Genres: Colonial Latin American
7:15-8:30 p.m./ Parlor G/Sheraton/ Program arranged by the Division on Literature of Colorado Spanish America.
Presiding: Stacey Schlau, Westchester Univ.

Wednesday 29, December

MLA No. 444 Expert Fictions: gender and Literary Professionalism in Stein, Cather, and Wharton
8:30-9:45 a.m. Stetson B and C/Hyatt Regency/ A special session
1. "Gertrude Stein's 'Brain Work,'" Maria Magdalena Farland, Columbia University.

MLA No. 464. A Roundtable on Teaching Twentieth-Century Spanish Literature
10:15- 11:30 a.m./Ohio/Sheraton. Program Arranged by the Division on Twentieth-Century Spanish Literature.Alda Blanco. Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison. *Speaker*

MLA No. 466 Fines de Siglo
10:15-11:30 a.m./ Arkansas/Sheraton/ Program arranged by the Division of Latin American Literature from Independence to 1900.

2. "La angustia finisecular en 'El amante de las tortugas' de Julián del Casal," Gizella T. Meneses, Arizona State University.

MLA No. 493 Maya Voices Today: Rigoberta Menchú Tum, Humberto Akábal, Zapatista Theater
10:15-11:30 a.m./New Orleans/Hyatt Regency/ Program arranged by the MLA Committee on Community Colleges.

2. "Empirical (Imperial) Validity: Chiasmus and Oral Tradition in *I, Rigoberta Menchú*—A Postmodern Interpretation of Postcolonial Reality," Sharon Lynn Sieber, Idaho State Univ.

3. "A Weaver of Words: The Poetry of Humberto Akábal," Frances Betty Jaeger, Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison.

MLA No. 557 Indigenous Literatures and New Social Movements
1:45- 3:00 p.m. Michigan B/Sheraton/ Program arranged by the Division of Twentieth-Century Latin American Literature
4. Para demostrar que tenemos algo que aportar al país: La poesía de Humberto Akábal y el movimiento maya en Guatemala," Francis Betty Jaeger, Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison.

MLA No. 576 Locating Race and Ethnicity in Nineteenth-Century Spain
1:45-3:00 p.m./Erie/Sheraton/ A special session
1. "The Nationalization of the Spanish Gypsy," Lou Charnon-Deutsch. State Univ. of New York, Stony Brook.

MLA No. 577 Peninsularities
1:45-3:00 p.m./Superior B/Sheraton/ A special session
2. A Corpse in the Garden: Postnationalism, Identity, Politics, and the Reconfiguration of Transgression in Recent Basque Filmmaking and Literature," Annabel Martín, Emory Univ.

MLA No. 593 Desplazamientos: Women and Resistance

1:45-3:00 p.m./Parlor C/Sheraton/ Program arranged by Feministas Unidas.
Presiding: Linda Irene Koski, Santa Clara University.; Dara E. Goldman, Univ. of Illinois, Urbana.

1. "Parasites and Polemics: Rigoberta Menchú and the Politics of Sacrifice. Jennifer Browdy de Hernandez, Simmons Rock College of Bard.
2. Irse de Casa: A Feminist Time-Geography," Joyce Lynn Tolliver, Univ. of Illinois, Urbana.
3. "Traveling *Folklóricas* Bring Spain to the Americas: Ambiguous Role Models for Women in the 1940s and 1950s," Eva Maria Woods, State University of New York, Stony Brooks.
4. "Virtual Voices, Electronic Bodies: Women and Resistance in Cyber-Chiapas," Sarah L. Grussing, Macalester College.
5. "Diaspora, Exile and Migration: Movement and Sexuality in Recent Afro-Caribbean / Latin American Women's Narrative." Margaret M. Olsen, University of Missouri-Columbia

MLA No. 596 Un Gran Gènere: The Catalan Short Story
1:45-3:00 p.m./Parlor G/Sheraton/ Program arranged by the North American Catalan Society. *Presiding* Kathleen McNerney, West Virginia Univ. Morgantown
3. "The Author as Femme Fatale: Carme Riera's Disabling of the Short Story in *Epitelis tendríssims*," Josefina González, Univ. of Georgia.

For copies of abstracts on this session, write to Kathleen McNerney by 6 Dec.

MLA No. 636 Deviance and Social Control in Galdós
3:30-4:45 p.m./Huron/Sheraton/ Program arranged by the International Association of Galdós Scholars.
3. "Peripheral Subjects: Policing Deviance and Disorder in *Nazarín* and *Halma*," Akiko Tsuchiya, Washington Univ.

MLA No. 638 Reassessing Women's Poetry in Twentieth-Century Spain
3:30-4:45 p.m./Missouri/Sheraton/ Program arranged by the Twentieth-Century Association of America.
1. "La poesía de mujeres en España: Reporte fin del siglo," Sharon Elizabeth Ugalde, Southwest Texas State Univ.

3. "Mermaids, Pirates, Women, and the Sea in Recent Women's Poetry," Margaret H. Persin, Rutgers Univ., New Brunswick.

MLA No. 734 Recovering Spain's Feminist Tradition
9:00- 10:15p.m./Huron/Sheraton/ A special session; *session leader*: Lisa M. Vollendorf, Wayne State Univ.

1. "Feminist Subjects and Female Sexuality in Medieval and Early Modern Spain," Barbara F. Weissberger, Old Dominion Univ.; Anne J. Cruz, Univ. of Illinois, Chicago.

3. "Feminist Strategies in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Spain," Maryellen Bieder, Indiana Univ., Bloomington; María José Martínez- Gutiérrez, California State University., Fresno.

Thursday 30, December

MLA No. 738 Stylistics: Old, New, and yet to Come
8:30-9:45 a.m./Stetson D/Hyatt Regency/Program arranged by the Division of Linguistic Approaches to Literature.
Presiding: Joyce Lynn Tolliver. Univ. of Illinois, Urbana.

MLA No. 752 Visions of the Border in Mexican and Chicana-Chicano Literature
8:30-9:45 a.m./Stetson B and C/Hyatt Regency
2. "Fuentes Fronterizo," Debra Ann Castillo, Cornell Univ.

MLA No. 754 Gender, Genre, and Modernity in Nineteenth-Century Spain.
8:30-9:45 a.m./Michigan B/Sheraton/ A special session
2. "Theorizing the Novel at Mid-Century," Alda Blanco, Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison.

Please join *Feministas Unidas* at the 115th MLA Annual Convention in Chicago.

Meeting & Party:
December 28th
7:30 - 9:00 pm
Sheraton Hotel.
At the Suite of Dr. Lou Charnon-Deutsch.

Business Meeeting & Cash Bar
December 29th
5:15 - 6:30pm
Columbus Hall C and D, Hyatt Regency Hotel
Session #644

Arranged by the Women's Caucus for the Modern Languages,
in Collaboration with the Brown University Women Writers Project,
Feministas Unidas,
Women in French,
and Women in German.

MLA 1999 Conference Papers

Parasites and Polemics: Rigoberta Menchú and the Politics of Sacrifice

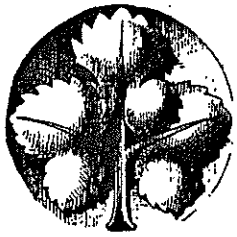
By Jennifer Browdy de Hernandez
Simmons Rock College of Bard

I'm going to begin with a story. It's a story about a little girl named M'in, the sixth in a family of nine children, born to a poor indigenous family in the highlands of Guatemala. M'in grew up in a time and place swirling with the unpredictable currents of civil war; a civil war fought by opponents whose language she and her family couldn't even speak, and whose ideologies were as foreign as the distant superpowers that supported them. Nevertheless, M'in's family and village were quickly swept up by the war, and before she was 18, M'in was an orphan, having lost her mother and father, as well as a brother, to horrible, torturous deaths at the hands of Guatemalan government forces. She and her remaining siblings scattered, and M'in was sucked into a whirlpool that threw her out eventually in Mexico, among friends who began to teach her their language and their way of understanding the events that had so traumatized her childhood. M'in was a quick learner, and once she could communicate in Spanish, she proved to be a passionate, colorful speaker, capable of moving crowds to tears with the terrible story of her life, a life that would soon become emblematic of the lives of all the poor indigenous people of Guatemala and indeed, of the indigenous peoples throughout Latin America. M'in's friends, leftists who saw armed resistance as the only way to force the ruling elites in Guatemala to temper their brutal exploitation of the poor, sent her on a speaking tour in Europe, and there she was introduced by an exiled Guatemalan intellectual, Arturo Taracena, to a French anthropologist, Elizabeth Burgos-Debray. Over the course of a week, M'in talked her story into Burgos's tape recorder; then she went back to Mexico, while Taracena and Burgos went to work transcribing and editing it for publication. Suddenly, with the publication of I, Rigoberta Menchú, M'in found herself transformed into Rigoberta Menchú Tum, world-famous advocate for the human rights of indigenous Guatemalans.[1]

The next part of the story is fairly well-known: Menchú, in concert with various leftist Guatemalan exile groups, worked tirelessly at the United Nations, trying to secure a peace that would allow poor Guatemalans, and especially the indigenous peoples who constitute the impoverished majority in Guatemala, to live their lives in dignity. Over the years, her vision broadened, and gradually she became an activist for indigenous human rights throughout the world. In 1992, five hundred years after the fateful landing of Columbus in America, she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts.

The magnitude of this award, to a poor, indigenous woman born in a hut in the mountainous rainforest of Guatemala, may be hard for us to appreciate, accustomed as we are to a country in which institutionalized racism is forbidden, hard work is rewarded, and even those born to humble homes have the potential to become successful and acclaimed. It is very different in Latin America, where indigenous people, and indigenous women, in particular, are viewed by people of European descent (called ladinos in Guatemala) as little more than beasts of burden, incapable of the kind of passion and fiery intelligence that Rigoberta Menchú Tum displayed in her testmonial and in her advocacy work on the world stage. As Menchú says herself in I, Rigoberta Menchú, "Our experience in Guatemala has always been to be told: 'Ah, poor Indians, they can't speak.' And many people have said, '*I'll* speak for them.' This hurt us very much. This is a kind of discrimination" (228). In I, Rigoberta Menchú, the authentic voice of an indigenous Guatemalan woman spoke to Western audiences directly for the first time, and she touched the hearts of literally millions of readers. At the same time, Menchú's testimony has sparked much debate in scholarly circles precisely about its "authenticity": to what extent, it has been asked, was Menchú manipulated by the leftists who supported her speaking tour to France, as well as by the editor (or editors) of her testimonial? To what extent is Rigoberta Menchú Tum a construction of the Western intellectuals who gave her a platform and textualized her voice?[2]

Menchú herself, in her recent book published in English under the title Crossing Borders, recognizes the complexity of her identity as a public figure of international stature. As a Nobel laureate, her life has taken on a symbolic, representative character: "I had lived through experiences," she says, "that, in a few short years, had come to symbolize the cause not just of poor and indigenous people in Guatemala but of poor people throughout the world" (6). Even at the beginning of her public career, when she recorded the tapes that would become I, Rigoberta Menchú, Menchú considered herself a representative of the poor and indigenous masses, and much has been made of the collective identity that is expressed in the famous lines that open her testimonial:



> My name is Rigoberta Menchú. I am twenty-three years old. This is my testimony. I didn't learn it from a book and I didn't learn it alone. I'd like to stress that it's not only *my* life, it's also the testimony of my people....The important thing is that what has happened to me has happened to many other people too: My story is the story of all poor Guatemalans. My personal experience is the reality of a whole people. (1)

Ironically, however, many, if not most, of the poor Guatemalans that Menchú claims to represent had never read her testimonial, or even heard of her before she was proposed (by her Western or Westernized intellectual friends) for the Nobel Peace Prize. In Crossing Borders, Menchú describes how, at a conference on "Five Hundred Years of Indigenous, Black and Popular Resistance," the resolution formally proposing her as a candidate for the Nobel Prize "proved very controversial":

> Many indigenous brothers and sisters did not agree with my candidacy. They said, 'Who does she represent? Who made her a leader? Who elected her?' The proposers of the resolution had to admit this was a true criticism. Nobody had elected me. Fate had just put me where I was. I might have been representing my own experience, but nobody had given me a mandate to do so (2).

Menchú is being a bit disingenuous here; in fact, the unnamed "proposers of the resolution" had "elected" her, and it may be that she is unwilling to admit the extent to which her identity as an indigenous leader who is theoretically opposed to the domination of Western and Westernized culture, is in fact a creation of that culture. Although the young woman M'in certainly did not choose the series of tragedies that formed the basis of her early years, she accepted her mission as an activist with her eyes open, aware of the sacrifices that would be involved in her transformation into Rigoberta Menchú. At the end of I, Rigoberta Menchú, recorded at the beginning of her public career, she says matter-of-factly: "My life does not belong to me. I've decided to offer it to a cause. They can kill me at any time, but let it be when I'm fulfilling a mission, so I'll know my blood will not be shed in vain" (246). Interestingly, in the opening pages of Crossing Borders, the image of personal sacrifice is again evoked; Menchú knows that she may one day be called to make the ultimate sacrifice, of her life, for her cause. "I may die tomorrow, or the day after. I will not be here forever...but I will always...remain in our Mayan memory. I am very conscious of this. A lot of people will remember me when I am dead" (22). When Menchú talks about the sacrifice of her own life, she seems to see herself as at the mercy of forces she cannot control. Certainly in her original testimonial, she perceived the world as a dark and threatening place: "The world I live in is so evil, so bloodthirsty, that it can take my life away from one moment to the next," (246) she says ominously at the end of I, Rigoberta Menchú.

There are more ways than one to "take a life away," especially a highly textualized and publicized life such as that of Rigoberta Menchú. I would like to suggest that the recent book by anthropologist David Stoll, which argues that much of what Menchú said in her 1982 testimonial was inaccurate or untrue, is a not-so-subtle example of using Menchú as a sacrificial victim—this time for the rather prosaic goal of pleasing the gods of academic success.

Briefly, Stoll's research showed that Menchú was not actually present at some of the events she describes as a purportedly eyewitness in I, Rigoberta Menchú, such as the burning to death of her brother Patrocinio; she was not as illiterate as she claimed to be at the time she recorded her testimonial, having actually received some schooling in a Belgian-sponsored convent; and her version of her father's struggle for his land, which pits ladinos against indigenous people, conveniently leaves out an internecine struggle between her father and his in-laws, making it easier to read the story of her village as an allegory for the struggle between the indigenous and the colonizers throughout Guatemala, and indeed all of Latin America.

Stoll says he is not specifically out to smear Rigoberta Menchú in his research; actually, his agenda is somewhat larger: he would like to succeed in discrediting the entire Guatemalan guerilla movement, to which Menchú belonged at the time of recording her testimonial. At the beginning of his book he asks a question that he obviously considers largely rhetorical: "Does armed struggle protect peasants from repression and empower them, or is it a high-risk strategy that usually ends in defeat and disillusion, after sacrificing peasants to romantic images of resistance?" (10). By the end of the book, he has concluded that the guerillas were actually to blame for the civil war in Guatemala, because they "bolster[ed] the rationales of the most homicidal wing of the army" (279); wherever the guerillas appeared, the army was sure to follow, with innocent and, in Stoll's analysis, apolitical peasants brutally caught in the crossfire between them.

Moreover, Stoll argues, Menchú's testimonial, by simplifying the situation in Guatemala into a "morality play" between idealized indígenas and evil ladinos, allowed the "construct[ion of] mythologies of purity for academic factions claiming moral authority on the grounds that they identify with the oppressed" (247). The "underlying problem," Stoll says, "is not how Rigoberta told her story, but how well-intentioned foreigners have chosen to interpret it" (xiv). Stoll is not only out to discredit guerilla warfare as a strategy of resistance, but also to challenge the premises of popular academic subfields like cultural studies and postcolonial studies, which have generally been sympathetic to leftist politics, including armed resistance, and which, Stoll claims says, "end up revolving around romantic conceptions of indigenous people, mythologies that can be used to sacrifice them for larger causes" (xv).

It is interesting to find Stoll evoking the image of sacrifice here, in the opening pages of his book Rigoberta Menchú and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans, a book that, to my mind, does just exactly what he is complaining about: it sacrifices *una indígena*, Rigoberta Menchú, to the "larger cause" of proving his own foregone conclusion and furthering his academic career. It seems to me that whether or not Stoll's accusations are true, his whole project of digging into the past in order to discredit Menchú is, if not outright reprehensible, then at least misleading, in the sense that it displaces our attention from the very positive results of Menchú's original testimonial, as well as from her continuing important work for human rights, peace and justice in Guatemala and throughout the indigenous world. Stoll's book functions as a diversionary tactic, creating a skirmish on the sidelines over issues that have largely lost their relevance. Whether or not Menchú was literate in 1982, she has become literate now, to the point of confessing that she travels with her laptop computer; whether or not Vicente Menchú was fighting with his in-laws or with ladino landowners, he gave his life for land that his children are still struggling for today; whether or not the guerilla movement was the right strategy of resistance to employ in the 1980s, the guerillas have now come in to the negotiating table, and even Stoll admits that "the more important war became the international one, of images, and that is the war the guerillas won with the help of I, Rigoberta Menchú.... Without this war of images," Stoll concedes, "a peace agreement probably would not have been signed in 1996" (7).

So what is the point of arguing about these issues now? Stoll makes no bones about the fact his ulterior motive in conducting a background check on Menchú is to support the theory he propounded in his first book, that the indigenous people were not themselves political, but were simply unfortunate victims caught in the crossfire between the Guatemalan Army and the guerillas. "I hope to convince readers that the EGP [the Guerilla Army of the Poor] never developed the strong social base in Uspantán that Rigoberta would have us believe," he says; "If Rigoberta's version were true, it could mean I was wrong," he adds, in his analysis of the violence.[3] Stoll's priority seems to be proving his theories correct, even if it means that yet another *indígena*, this time

Rigoberta Menchú, is sacrificed in the on-going "war of images" presided over by distant and capricious gods. But Menchú is not about to go quietly to the sacrificial slaughter; in an interview published on the Menchú Foundation Website, she calls Stoll's accusations "un acto de humilliación de las víctimas," and she refutes most of his smaller claims.[4] For example, she explains that in 1982 she could not discuss freely her relationship with the Belgian nuns, for fear of reprisals against them, but that she actually worked there as a servant and received some basic schooling after hours—not, as Stoll claimed, receiving the same education as the school's other, much wealthier ladino students. As for Stoll's accusation that she had misrepresented her father's struggle for land, she dismisses this as essentially missing the forest for the trees: if indígenas like her father and his relatives were squabbling over land in the mountains of Guatemala, it was because the ladinos had already taken over all the good land on the coast, and further confused land ownership throughout the country by imposing an arcane system of national land titles, making it possible for wealthy ladinos in the cities to buy tracts of land they had never seen, and evict indigenous communities that might have been living there for years. Forced into ever smaller, less arable corners of the country, naturally, Menchú says, the indígenas began to fight among themselves for the few crumbs of land that remained.

As for the casual way that she conflated her own experiences with those lived by other members of her community (for example, she herself apparently never went to work on the coastal finca that she so memorably describes in the opening of I, Rigoberta Menchú), Menchú insists that "Yo, Rigoberta Menchú no fue una autobiografía, sino un testimonio," and testimonials, as many analysts of the genre have shown, generally enact a collective voice, which is clearly represented by the famous opening lines of I, Rigoberta Menchú.[5]

Menchú also raises a question that Stoll prefers to ignore, about the authorship of I, Rigoberta Menchú. In an article published in El Periódico, a Guatemala City newspaper, Menchú points her finger at the editor, Elisabeth Burgos, under whose name the

book is always catalogued, and who has received the royalties for it all these years. I, Rigoberta Menchú "is not my book," Menchú says. "It is a book by Elisabeth Burgos. It is not my work; it is a work that does not belong to me morally, politically, or economically" (xi).[6] Stoll takes this statement as a kind of hysterical, defensive striking out on Menchú's part; I think it's possible to read it in quite a different light, as a shrewd recognition of the extent to which her oral testimony, recorded on Elisabeth Burgos's tape machine, has taken on a life of its own that has little to do with that of its original protagonist.

At this point there are conflicting stories about just who authored I, Rigoberta Menchú: Burgos has insisted that she did all the transcribing and editing, while Arturo Taracena has recently come forward and claimed that he had another young woman do the transcription, and then did the editing of the original Spanish version himself.[7] Be that as it may, what all the parties involved do agree on is that Menchú herself had little to do with the final version of the manuscript, which was sent to Mexico to be approved by the guerilla leadership before being released, first in French, and then in Spanish, English, and many other languages throughout the world. In Crossing Borders, Menchú claims that while the manuscript was in Mexico, she did review it with her *compañeros*: "I had to ask *compañeros* in Mexico to help me understand the text....I censured several parts that might have been dangerous for people. I took out bits that referred to my village, details about my brothers and sisters, and names of people. That is why the book lacks a more specific identity," she says, going on to envision a time when she might gain control of the book that bears her name, and make it not only her own, but her people's, as well:

> My dream is to recover the rights to I, Rigoberta Menchú and to expand it....I am grateful to my Creator that I am still alive, and I hope I can still finish the story, and regain the rights to that important part of the patrimony of my people....It should belong to no one but them and Guatemala (114).

The fact that Menchú has never managed to secure the rights to her testimonial supports her own analysis of the way in which the uneven power dynamics between herself as testifier and Elisabeth Burgos as scribe work to keep her in a position of subalternity. Burgos apparently paid Menchú some "royalties" that were in fact charitable donations of the Mitterand Foundation, which enabled Burgos to continue to collect the full amount from the publishing houses herself. When Menchú demanded that Burgos cede her rights to the testimony, the two had a falling-out, and Burgos stopped sending Menchú any "royalties" whatsoever. Stoll presents us with an oddly disturbing image in his book of he and Burgos chatting cosily together in Burgos's apartment in Spain, the anthropologist who "created" Rigoberta Menchú hand in hand with the anthropologist out to destroy her reputation, neither one much interested in listening to what Menchú herself has to say. Why, I wonder, if Burgos has been so keen on maintaining her rights of authorship over I, Rigoberta Menchú, aren't any inaccuracies in the text *her* responsibility? Surely she should have checked facts more carefully before releasing the manuscript? Significantly, this does not occur to either of the anthropologists, who conveniently place all the blame on Menchú, while absolving the book's "author" of any responsibility for its factuality.

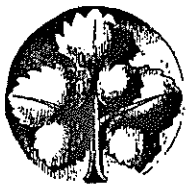
Given this scenario, it is hardly surprising to find in Crossing Borders a scathing indictment of Western intellectuals like Burgos and Stoll, whom Menchú calls "parasites":

> I know people who think they know everything about indigenous people. People make careers out of us, people who think they can live by studying other human beings yet do not make the slightest effort to help them define themselves in society and history. We create defenses against these parasites. Getting to know another culture is wonderful, but it is ignoble when certain irresponsible individuals try to put human dignity in a bottle and make a profit from selling it (223).

We can already see Menchú erecting "defenses" against such parasites in the closing lines of her 1982 testimonial, which have received much discussion from Western readers: "I'm still keeping my Indian identity a secret," Menchú said firmly. "I'm still keeping secret what I think no-one should know. Not even anthropologists or intellectuals, no matter how many books they have, can find out all our secrets" (247).[8] In Crossing Borders, Menchú acknowledges that she is still afraid to be entirely candid; "One day," she says, "I will tell the whole truth" (115). Evidently in 1998, that day had not come yet; Menchú still does not feel safe enough to let down her guard, and reading of Stoll's book, it's easy to understand why she feels that way.

In the natural world, parasites usually end by sacrificing their hosts to their own greedy habits of consumption, and Menchú suggests that the relation between the Western colonizers and the indigenous people have too often repeated this pattern; in Crossing Borders, she wonders "why people criticize the Aztecs for offering human sacrifices to their gods when they never mention how many sons of this America...have been sacrificed over 500 years to the god Capital" (226). I want to suggest that Menchú's life and career are emblematic of a shift in this pattern, from the extreme exploitation and, indeed, sacrifice of generations of men, women and children to the god of Capitalism, which she described in I, Rigoberta Menchú, to the increasing refusal, by Menchú as well as by the indigenous people she stands for, to be used as such sacrificial victims anymore, for any reason.

In travelling to France, working for the Guatemalan resistance movement, Menchú was already, nearly 20 years ago, refusing to



be a passive victim of the repressive government, and also refusing to be merely a spectator, exiled on the sidelines of the violence. In recording her testimony and beginning the work that would eventually carry her to the Nobel Peace Prize, Menchú was living her dream for all indigenous people, that they "become the central protagonists in their own destiny" (221). Of course, this work has entailed sacrifices of a different sort: instead of being a victim to be sacrificed by others, Menchú has voluntarily sacrificed her own time, energy and private life for her cause of "peace, life, and dialogue" (22). She has suffered continual harassment from reactionary, racist factions in Guatemala as well as in the world arena, as she describes in Crossing Borders:

> Some people still see me as that illiterate indigenous woman, that subversive born in squalor. I'm still the domestic servant, as some mestizos in Guatemala City refer to me. There is so much resentment against an indigenous woman being a national leader. I have to watch my back the whole time....Not only do I have to fear being killed, I also have to worry about political harassment from those who cannot tolerate the presence of an indigenous woman in politics. It's hard for them to share a platform with me (191).

In a poignant example of these racist attitudes, Menchú describes how the President of Guatemala refused her invitation to the gala celebration of her Nobel Peace Prize; his wife attended in his place, but arrived extremely late, after the congratulatory toasts had already been offered. Menchú remains defiant of such bigoted politicians: "I'm not going to step aside," she asserts. "I won't leave the field free for them" (191). Or, in other words, she won't allow her dreams and ambitions to be sacrificed to their racism.[9]

In striking contrast to Stoll's muck-raking through the past, Menchú is resolutely forwarding-looking in Crossing Borders. Her constant emphasis on children represents a shift in her own thinking from the time of I, Rigoberta Menchú, when she swore she would never marry and have children, because she did not want to bring children into such a harsh, dangerous world. She gives us scant information about her husband, a fellow Guatemalan exile, or their son, but simply by refusing to allow her enemies to destroy her chance at a happy family life, she is enacting in her own life her dream of the survival and upliftment of her people, and of indigenous people worldwide. "Our ultimate objective," she says, speaking of her work with the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Peoples, "is that our children should grow up in their ancient identity and culture, that they should live in freedom and dignity, without fear of persecution" (147).

Continually, in Crossing Borders, Menchú finds ways to focus on life and the future, rather than on the death that has hung like a heavy shroud over Guatemala during her lifetime. An example of this is her chapter on the 1995 massacre of indigenous villagers at Xam´n, a newly established highland community of returned refugees that had received some support from the Menchú Foundation. Menchú, on a speaking tour in the U.S. when the massacre occurs, has a premonitory dream in which pain figures prominently; on waking, significantly, she relates the pain to childbirth, not to death:

> I had had a horrible dream. It was a dream but it was also a premonition. Then there was this terrible pain. I said to Dorita, who was on the tour with me, 'I wonder how many children were born last night?' I didn't think of death, I thought of life. 'I wonder how many were born and if any were named after me. I feel as though I helped those mothers give birth during the night' (57).

Later that day, she finds out that the nightmare of soldiers opening fire on innocent people, including women and children, has returned yet again to Guatemala: "that day a Guatemalan army patrol...entered the community at Xam´n and opened fire on people preparing to celebrate a festival. Eleven people died in this latest massacre of my country's poorest people, including two children. Twenty-five others were injured" (58).

What is remarkable about this incident is the way in which the villagers, and Menchú herself in her retelling, refuse to let these untimely, unnecessary deaths dominate them or crush their spirits. "Amid the general grief, the leaders consulted the victims' families and the rest of the community, and they took the decision to carry on with the preparations for the first anniversary celebrations. Life must triumph over death, they said. The fiesta would be the best way to tell those murderers that they had failed in their attempt to destroy the faith and hope" of the people of Xam´n. "I will never forget the baptism ceremony for the twelve babies alongside the coffins of the murdered victims," M
enchú says. "Tears were shed for injustice and death, while at the same time thanks were offered to the Heart of the Sky and Earth for the miracle of life" (66-67).

Despite her awareness of the need to maintain a defensive posture vis-à-vis Western culture, Menchú is not a separatist; rather, she firmly espouses a political philosophy of cultural fusion: "Culture isn't pure, it is dynamic....I think the whole idea of purity is damaging; it leads to sectarianism, intolerance, segregation and racism," she declares (182). What we should be working towards, she explains, are ways of "living together, combining the ancient culture of our peoples with the culture of the colonizers" (181). For Menchú, cultural identity, like personal identity, is not singular and exclusive, but expansive and inclusive. There is

no need for one culture to be sacrificed to the aspirations of another; rather, Menchú would have us recognize the interdependence and interconnectedness of all the world's peoples: "If society recognized that the suffering in El Quiche hurt the whole world, then humanity would recover its true meaning," she declares. She offers a beautiful Mayan analogy in illustration of this idea:

> We indigenous Guatemalans think of ourselves as maize, as a cob of corn. If a grain is missing from the cob we notice that there is an empty space....We are all both individuals and a part of society....When there is a wound in this beautiful K'iche' land of ours, I feel it as a pain in the heart of humanity, because El Quiche is like a grain in the cob of humanity (224).

How different this is from the parasitic model of human coexistence, in which the more powerful prey on the weak, sacrificing them indiscriminately to satisfy their own selfish needs. What short-sighted parasites fail to recognize is that in destroying their hosts, they destroy themselves as well. Fortunately, Rigoberta Menchú has become too wise and too powerful to let herself, or those she represents, be easily used as sacrificial victims anymore. She remains steadfast in her goal: "to enrich the life of our planet, our animals, our waters, our rivers and seas. And also the life of men and women of future generations, the life of our children" (224). Describing the trajectory of her own career in poetic fashion, she concludes:

> I have been going around the world for years, to house after house, to town after town, and to different countries....I have been invited to many places. People have gradually gotten to know me. I am like a drop of water on a rock. After drip, drip, dripping in the same place, I begin to leave a mark, and I leave my mark in many people's hearts (166).

She has certainly left her mark in my heart, and I hope in yours as well.

Notes

[1] In Crossing Borders, Menchú tells the story of how she came by the name Rigoberta; suffice it to say here that Rigoberta was an "official" name, associated with her birth certificate, which "none of my family could ever pronounce," Menchú says. "At home, they always called me M'in" (74). On the subject of names, I would like to express my impatience with the standard practice among academics discussing Menchú of referring to her as "Rigoberta," a practice begun by Elisabeth Burgos in the introduction to I, Rigoberta Menchú, and continued by almost every other scholar working on Menchú. Why don't they refer to Burgos as "Elisabeth"? At the risk of editorializing, I find the use of Menchú's first name in academic milieux inappropriate and demeaning.

[2] For an extensive discussion of the uneven power dynamics embedded in I, Rigoberta Menchú, see my essay "Of Tortillas and Texts: Postcolonial Dialogues in the Latin American Testimonial" in Interventions: Feminist Dialogues on Third World Literature and Film, ed. Bishnupriya Ghosh and Brinda Bose (Garland, 1997): 163-183.

[3] In their book review of Stoll's Rigoberta Menchú and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans *for* The Nation, Greg Grandin and Francisco Goldman argue persuasively that Stoll is, precisely, "wrong": "Just as he accuses Menchú of doing, Stoll arranges and suppresses events to support his claims. Stoll would have us believe that if not for the guerrillas, the Guatemalan military might not have become the most bloodthirsty killing machine in the hemisphere. Yet by reducing Guatemala's conflict to the back-and-forth sparring between the guerrillas and the military, Stoll willfully—or ignorantly—misrepresents the history of Guatemalan opposition and repression. In the seventies, trade unionists, Mayan activists, peasants, students and social democrats came together to push for social reform. No other country in Central America witnessed this level of political mobilization. But well before anyone had ever heard of the guerrillas, the military was going after this movement, murdering peasants in coastal plantations and politicians and unionists in the capital" ("Bitter Fruit for Rigoberta," The Nation 2/8/99; available online at http://www.thenation.com/issue990208/0208granding.shtml.).

[4] The Menchú Foundation Website contains many links to other articles about Menchú and the Stoll controversy; it can be found at http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/rmtpaz/FRMT/acusarmt.htm>.

[5] One of the best essays to discuss this issue remains Doris Sommer's "'Not Just a Personal Story': Women's Testimonios and the Plural Self," published in Life/Lines, ed. Bella Brodski and Celeste Schenck (Cornell UP, 1988): 107-130.

[6] Published originally in "Menchú reniega de Así me nací la conciencia," El Periódico (Guatemala City), December 10, 1997; this translation is taken from Stoll, p. xi.

[7] Burgos tells her side of the story to Stoll, who discusses her point of view uncritically in the chapter of Rigoberta Menchú and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans entitled "The Construction of I, Rigoberta Menchú." An extensive and detailed interview with Arturo Taracena, conducted by Luis Aceituno, is available as a link from the Menchú Foundation Webpage, under the title "Arturo Taracena rompe el silencio." Menchú gives her version of her dealings with Taracena and Burgos in Paris in Crossing Borders, 113-114.

[8] For an interesting discussion of Menchú's secrets, see Doris Sommer's "Rigoberta's Secrets," in Latin American Perspectives 70, 18:3 (Summer 1991): 32-50.

[9] Prominent Latin American commentators such as Eduardo Galeano and Arturo Arias argued that Stoll's attack on Menchú was

racist at base; for example, here is Galeano's take on Menchú's situation: "Ella se ha salido de su lugar, y eso ofende. Que Rigoberta fuera india y mujer, vaya y pase, y allá con su doble desgracia. Pero esta mujer india resultó rebelde, imperdonable insolencia, y para colmo cometió luego la barbaridad de convertirse en uno de los sómbolos universales de la dignidad. A los poderosos de Guatemala y del mundo, este desafío no les gusta ni un poquito" (cite Web).

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Virtual Voices, Electronic Bodies: Women and Resistance in Cyber-Chiapas

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On New Year's Day, 1994, an army of Maya men and women calling themselves the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) emerged from "nowhere" to take over several large towns and communication centers in Chiapas, Mexico on the same day that NAFTA (the free trade agreement between Mexico and the United States) took effect. In the context of free trade agreements, President Salinas' amendments to Article 27 of the Mexican constitution had put an end to traditional land reform policies without solving the agrarian crisis suffered by Mexico's campesino and Indigenous communities and without generating enough opportunities for these sectors of society to make a living with dignity. In EZLN discourse, Neoliberal policy measures are seen as generated by a New World Order that is based on social, economic and political injustice despite the democratic rhetoric used to support it.

The symbol of Zapata, long coopted by the ruling Partido Revolucionario Institucional, has always been a key element in the battle over the meaning of Mexico's revolution. By championing the cause of assigning new, yet historically linked meaning to Zapata's struggle and to Mexico's struggle for inclusive democracy in general, neo-Zapatista discourse re-appropriates the meaning of the martyred Revolutionary campesino hero as well as other cultural symbols in common circulation whose "excess significance" often subverts their official interpretations by Mexican institutions. It is for this reason, among others, that I term the resistance "Neo-Zapatista" in order to differentiate it from the original Zapatista movement of the Mexican Revolution.

The Neo-Zapatista rebellion is firmly rooted in Mexican history, yet its platform of demands and the worldview which shape it are well "linked" to the realities of the present world context. The Neo-Zapatistas' most effective weapon has been their invitation to the rearticulation of Mexican identity—and human identity— through a search for dignity, democracy, and social and economic justice. After the first several days of the armed conflict, the EZLN has for the most part used non-violent strategies among which is a call for solidarity from Mexican civil society and an international audience. A key element to the rebels' success in resisting the Mexican army's attempts to crush them has been the effective circulation of communiqués via E-mail and websites as well as promotion of awareness of the crisis via appeal to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) which issue urgent-action bulletins and publicize cases of human rights abuse online. Such networking via cyberspace has helped to transmit up-to-the-minute news that supplements, corrects, and contradicts more traditional mainstream media coverage. In addition, the rebel agenda has captured the imagination of a great variety of individuals and groups, such as human rights activists, academics, artists, pop musicians, progressive journalists, and ecumenical social justice groups who have been engaged in symbolic production via the web.[1] The EZLN's "War of ink and Internet," as it has been called, has been so successful because the "speech acts" of the Neo-Zapatistas have resonated within the context of global human rights discourse. Increasing access to and manipulation of the Internet with its utopian and democratizing possibilities has resulted in the creation

and continuous expansion of a dynamic discursive space in which the words, images, and acts of everyday resistance in Zapatista base communities in the Conflict Zone acquire multiple levels of significance.

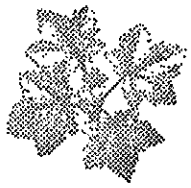
This paper is part of a larger study of the theoretical implications of the role of technology in the creation and expansion of this discursive space and global theater of resistance associated with the Neo-Zapatista rebellion in Chiapas, Mexico. The circulation of Neo-Zapatistas (particularly Indigenous women) and non-Indigenous solidarity activists as symbols of resistance in cyberspace raises many particularly fascinating theoretical questions. I would like to focus here on the dis-placing of Indigenous voices and bodies from "A Place Called Chiapas" (as the award-winning 1998 documentary by Nettie Wild terms it) into a bodiless space. How are Indigenous persons in resistance dis-placed from the material "conflict zone" in Chiapas (really an invisible "noplace" from a global perspective prior to 1994) to a borderless, dimensionless zone which is simultaneously "noplace" and "everyplace?" What are the contradictions involved as Maya rebels (and particularly women) from a movement which seeks connection with other social movements globally travel through cyberspace as multimedia icons? Despite the (albeit inverted) military model of the EZLN, has the digitization of the rebel movement paradoxically led to the transcendence of its military origins as a decentralized global network of solidarity is woven? Does the weaving of this solidarity network also qualify as an act of resistance which appropriates cyberspace itself from its origins as a military defense weapon and its current domination by global capital? Part of the series of "desplazamientos" I wish to refer to involves women's representation and participation in this technologically-mediated space. Technology has often been represented as a male-dominated, male-authored aspect of "modern" and indeed "postmodern" culture in which women's agency is unwelcome and even unnatural. Yet feminist theorist Sadie Plant reminds us that computing, and the networking of computers, follows the model of the traditionally-female activity of weaving. Sadie Plant also reminds us that a woman, Ada Lovelace, was a key pioneer in the design of the first prototype of the computer in the nineteenth century (45). With Sadie Plant's affirmations in mind, I would like to explore how feminist theories on the relationship between emerging technologies and models for envisioning radical political connections may provide useful insights into the "Chiapas" phenomenon of the successful weaving of an alternative space for new ways of envisioning and acting out local and global politics. Key to the weaving of this space are the various processes of "dis-placing" of Indigenous and women's bodies as they travel through cyberspace, as well as the "dis-location" experienced by non-Indigenous actors and audience in the production of multi-media transnational solidarity texts.[2] Utilizing concepts borrowed from feminist scholars Donna Haraway and Anne Balsamo, I will discuss how the phenomenon of "Zapatistas in Cyberspace" both affirms and contests prevalent postmodern theories about the relationship between the human body and cybernetic technologies. Before I embark on an exploration of these theoretical questions, however, I will provide further background about the Indigenous rebellion in Chiapas and the national and global solidarity network that has emerged in connection with it and that actively continues to produce both traditional print and nontraditional, multimedia texts in support of rebel demands for justice and dignity.

The struggle of self-proclaimed autonomous communities in Chiapas has resonated profoundly in many sectors of Mexican civil society that are also attempting to re-articulate a national identity that would no longer exclude groups that historically have held, and continue to hold, a marginalized status. The masked rebels from this "internal colony"[3] at the southern border have invited their audience in Mexico and abroad to participate in a process of revealing the deceptive image of Mexico as a nation entering the "First World" that has been projected to court international investment. In deconstructing the myth of a democratic, inclusive nation and revealing the "other Mexico," the rebels have also encouraged the construction of alliances across ethnic, gender and class borders in civil society in order to promote the birth of more democratic and just social and political institutions.

In spite of the efforts of the Mexican State and the army to limit the rebellion to a small "conflict zone" by physically encircling rebel communities, the Chiapas armed rebellion has ironically opened a new discursive space which has rippled far beyond the local level. The Neo-Zapatista subversion of established patterns of Indigenous dialogue with the State began with the EZLN call for mediation on the part of civil society in an attempt to find peaceful alternatives for resolution of the armed conflict. This Zapatista invitation to civil society, appealing to such diverse groups or actors as labor unions, gay rights activists, Indigenous rights groups, election reform activists, students, esteemed artists and writers, journalists, politicians, pop musicians, and even sectors of a disenfranchised middle class resulted not only in physical mediation between the State and the insurgents through the formation of a "cinturón de paz" during the first rounds of negotiations but also has inspired the creation and strengthening of new political and social organizations which are dedicated to various aspects of the struggle for democracy, justice, and pluralism and which pressure for political reform. "Los Zapatistas abrieron la puerta, y nosotros nos estamos metiendo," says Arturo Sanabria, director of Gestión de Servicios de Salud, an

organization which fosters the development of community-based alternatives to the limited medical services provided by the Mexican army in the context of its low-intensity warfare strategy.[4] This opening achieved by Neo-Zapatista discourse reflects a radical transformation in old processes of cultural mediation.

In a January, 1999 article in the Mexican daily La Jornada, Fabrizio Mejía Madrid summarized the trajectory of the rebellion in Chiapas since it came to light in January of 1994 by saying, "La historia de estos cinco años va del agrarismo tradicional a la penosa construcción de un lugar en el que nadie ha estado, de ocupación de tierras a la identidad sin territorio definido." Indigenous communities in resistance in Chiapas have acquired transnational significance within the context of the globalization of Neoliberal projects. Autonomous communities, which are situated in one of the most isolated and marginalized regions of Mexico, now find themselves in the center of a discursive space that has transgressed many boundaries. In this space, the future of human rights in discussed, as well as issues of cultural autonomy, the blurring or disappearance of traditional geographic, economic, political, and cultural borders, and possibilities for the construction of local and global communities. Through the production of thousands of electronic and interactive texts, images of the Zapatistas circulate as symbols of the subversive possibilities of the rearticulation of a sense of community that would contest the IBM model of the "Global Village."



In the mediating texts of the contradictory yet effective non-Indigenous EZLN spokesperson Subcomandante Marcos as well as in the echo of many political activists and Mexican and transnational human rights organizations, the word "Chiapas" has come to represent a model of dignity which inspires attempts toward the articulation of new models of social justice and connection with others. Whether or not the utopian grassroots power structure of the EZLN and its base communities functions as ideally as Marcos and other Neo-Zapatista voices describe it, it has triggered the emergence of new decentralized patterns of solidarity and of communication. Perhaps it is largely due to the efficient mediation of the honorary Maya Marcos between various cultural and intellectual discourses on local, national, and global levels that the neo-Zapatistas have received world-wide attention and "Chiapas" as a mediating sign has acquired significance in other struggles for autonomy or social justice in other parts of the world. However, the Neo-Zapatista invitation to re-imagining has made possible the formation of discursive links which reflect the decentralized structure of hypertextual links in cyberspace. The slogan "todos somos Marcos; todos somos indios; todos somos Chiapas" is repeated not only in Mexico, but also in Ireland, in Japan, in Holland, in Italy, in the United States, and in many other places where the "readers" or the "audience" of multimedia texts or performances by or about the Neo-Zapatistas also become authors and actors in a global theater of virtual resistance to State repression of minorities, neo-colonialism, and the spread of Neoliberal policies. The use of emerging technologies in the amplification of Indigenous voices as well as in the creation and distribution of texts in which the Neo-Zapatista rebels circulate as multi-faceted symbols of resistance has been integral in the new mediation processes between Indigenous voices and both hegemonic mestizo Mexican culture and global culture which have been at play since 1994. For example, visitors to the National Commission for Democracy in Mexico website can buy T-shirts that say "soy Zapatista" [I am a Zapatista]. Online photo galleries depict both scenes of everyday life in autonomous communities and chains of unarmed Indigenous women and children attempting to physically block soldiers in riot gear from entering their villages and cornfields. Especially since the massacre of over forty Indigenous peace activists from the group Las Abejas (mostly women and children) in December of 1997, many websites promote videos that document human rights violations and interview victims and local grassroots activists. On some sites, actual video clips and interviews are available for viewing online. The Acción Zapatista site sponsored by a solidarity committee in Austin, Texas sports an impressive annotated bibliography of websites about the rebels, illustrated with a graphic artist's rendition of Marcos as a cyberpunk produced through computer embellishment of an actual photo of the EZLN Subcomandante. Many such websites are jointly maintained by Mexican and international activists.

The circulation of Indigenous voices and bodies as symbols of resistance in multimedia texts in cyberspace involves various processes of "dis-placing" of actors and audience in this global theater. Although this "dis-placement" affects all those participating in this interactive performance, the various levels of "dis-placing" that Indigenous women experience as they join the struggle in this technologically-mediated Chiapas space are arguably the most visible. Although I wish to focus here on "desplazamientos" due to technological mediation, it is also important to point out that the dis-placing of Indigenous women's bodies begins not in cyberspace but in the Conflict Zone itself in the Chiapas highlands. The Mexican army's occupation of Chiapas has led to thousands of internal refugees, to whom the media and human rights groups literally refer as "the displaced." Women fleeing from the threat of military and paramilitary violence attempt to feed and care for their families in makeshift camps or in mountain hideouts. On the other side of the coin, mainstream media immediately latched on to the curious fact that many of the Zapatista soldiers in uniform who participated in the capture of various towns and communication centers in January, 1994 were women. The rebel movement itself has "displaced" Indigenous women who volunteer to become EZLN combatants from

their homes and traditional family structures into guerilla military camps, a change in identity which has often been reflected in the media through the "shocking" image of young Maya women wearing military uniforms instead of traditional dress and carting guns instead of babies. Both mainstream media and alternative web-based news sources have also published photos of Maya women from the rebel civil support communities in traditional dress wearing red bandannas over their faces as they parade in protests in San Cristobal or Mexico City or form human blockades against Mexican army incursions. In perhaps the most well-known example of this "displacement," soft-spoken Zapatista officer Ramona, suffering from a terminal illness, learned Spanish in order to take Mexico City and cyberspace by storm when she arrived in the capitol city for the first time as a delegate from the EZLN. The women of the EZLN's civil base communities have also authored, and insisted on the EZLN ramification of, "Women's Revolutionary Laws" asserting their right to choose a spouse, determine the number of children they desire to have, and participate equally in all political activities and community decision-making processes. Women in the "conflict zone" have also established cottage industry cooperatives producing weaving and other artesanal products in order to creatively seek ways to break out of their economic isolation.

Although arguably a bi-product of the original Neo-Zapatista Indigenous autonomy movement, women's unique interpretations of what this cultural autonomy should mean at the community level have been increasingly visible influences on the international scene. Women's participation in the Conflict Zone has captured the imagination of many involved in the global solidarity network surrounding the rebellion. Books and have been published about the Zapatista women,[5] solidarity groups such as the National Commission for Democracy in Mexico's Sisters Across Borders and spaces such as Zapnet's interactive website's Forum on Zapatista Women have been formed, and non-Indigenous women who are inspired by the Neo-Zapatista rebels in the military organization or in the civil base are important links in the international campaign for human rights and democracy in Chiapas and in Mexico in general. For example, National Commission for Democracy in Mexico's founder Cecilia Rodriguez, a United States citizen of Mexican decent, became the EZLN's "ambassador" to the United States, and Mexican actress and activist Ofelia Medina continues to be a vociferous leader in the Mexican civil movement in support of the rebel communities. Women such as Teresa Ortiz of the San Cristobal-based binational NGO Cloudforest Initiatives help to sponsor international tours of speakers whose voices would not otherwise be heard (insuring for example, that the Indigenous mono-lingual wife of a bi-lingual leader of Las Abejas, the group targeted by the paramilitary massacre of civilians at Acteal, also had the opportunity to speak on tour) or sponsor community-based literacy or alternative economic development projects for autonomous women's cooperatives in the Conflict Zone.

I turn now to the question of the role of emerging technology in the weaving of global spaces for resistance against economic, political, and social injustice and the possibilities new technologies may provide for future weaving that links local struggles with global issues. Will these new technologies further alienate us from our "humanity" and from each other, or will they link us? It has often been observed that the construction of highways in the United States corresponded with the death of a sense of community in urban centers. The rapid growth of the much-touted "Information Superhighway," dominated by corporate interests, may have similar consequences for a sense of community in cyberspace. On the other hand, the more decentralized model of the Net, with its utopian possibilities for the construction of communities without borders contests the Al Gore/IBM/ Microsoft model of the Information Superhighway. The struggle over the appropriation of cyberspace is currently based on the opposition between these two models of the "net" and the "highway." The information highway does not contest unjust power structures, but instead reproduces old patterns of exploitation in the name of democratization. The Information Superhighway, constructed for commercial and military purposes, converts human beings into data. Some theorists even speak of data rape as its function (Kroker & Weinstein). In contrast, the model of the Internet is based on a virtual extension of humanity which makes new models of connection, community, and decentralized communication possible and in which it is still possible to dream of alternative social structures.

Various postmodern theories about the future of humanity in the context of digitization, such as those articulated by Arthur Kroker and Michael Weinstein in their book Data Trash, speak of the disappearance, or the invasion, of the human body. When such theorists attempt to envision the manifestations of the body in cyberspace, where physical parameters are nonexistent, they speak of the "virtualization" of the body: the electronic body. The idea of the disappearing body can be a useful concept when analyzing discursive spaces framed by emerging technology. However, the idea of the disappearance of the body in cyberspace can also be problematic. Perhaps this is due to the key role the human body continues to play in figuring ideas of community. In her essay "Forms of Technological Embodiment," Anne Balsamo observes:

> The feminist story of the postmodern body begins with the assumption that bodies are always gendered and marked by race. What is missing [in the idea that 'the body" is an idealist abstraction] is a material dimension that takes into account the embodied markers of cultural identity... [T]he body can never be constructed as a purely discursive entity. In a related sense, it can never be reduced to a pure materialist object... [T]he material and the discursive are mutually determining and non-exclusive. [T]he material body remains a constant factor of the postmodern, post-human condition. It has certain

> of the postmodern, post-human condition. It has certain undeniable material qualities that are, in turn, culturally determined and discursively managed; qualities that are tied to its physiology and to the cultural contexts within which it makes sense, such as its gender and race identities" (219-220).

While acknowledging the power of Kroker's observations regarding "virtual culture" and the disappearing body, Balsamo challenges the currently much-espoused idea that we live in a post-body world where the human body is merely a postmodern data construct. We could add to her assertion the observation that the "mutually determining" material and discursive qualities of the body continue to function while narratives and counternarratives of modernity and postmodernity collide and intersect in global spaces.

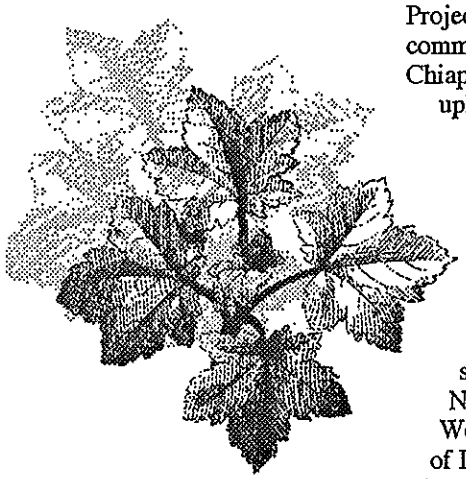
In the cybernetic texts which are found in the Chiapas discursive space, we can observe the symbolic circulation of Indigenous and/or female bodies; that is, human bodies which have been marked as "other" in hegemonic cultural discourse. In Latin American literature since the colonial period, the female body has often been represented as the mediating site of discourses of nation, of race and ethnicity, and of power. With the figure of the mulata in the Caribbean and in Brazil, or the figure of La Malinche in Mexico, for example, bodies of women of color have served as sites for figuring the invasion of cultural discourses that also define them, mark them, and oppress them. Since 1994, "marked" Indigenous bodies and female bodies circulate as discursive entities in the "Chiapas" discursive space, but the electronic or virtual body as representation also depends on material conditions to be transformed into an effective symbol of resistance to oppressive power structures. The number of "virtual photo galleries" of Indigenous communities in rebel territory that are posted on the web by photographers, journalists, and activists illustrate the importance placed on these "markers" of race (and of gender and ethnicity, as the favorite camera target seems to be women in traditional dress) in a visual context of poverty and physical isolation (jungle or cornfield backdrops) to communicate the Neo-Zapatista struggle. Other favorite images have been that of Indigenous EZLN soldiers in rubber boots carrying mock wooden rifles as props or small, barefoot teenage women in rebel base communities, wearing bandannas over their faces and carrying babies on their backs, pushing back military lines with bare, brown arms.[6] We cannot unplug the resisting electronic body in cyberspace from its reference to the material conditions of the physical body—conditions which are often determined by how race and/or gender have been inscribed into "modern" narratives of identity.

It is not coincidence that the discourse of human rights, with its focus on the material conditions of human beings, frames the texts produced in this electronic space. On the Web, Indigenous and female bodies serve as effective sites of mediation, or as bridges, between isolated Indigenous communities in resistance in Chiapas and national and global spaces because they reveal on a material and symbolic level the ruptures in discourses of Neoliberalism and economic globalization. Indigenous and/or women's bodies circulate in the "Chiapas" sector of cyberspace not only as objects of intellectual discourse, but also as subjects in the multi-media performance of the theater of resistance which is daily life in the "conflict zone." Among hundreds or even thousands of such 'virtualized' rebel performances on various Mexican, U.S., European and Japanese websites, one example is when EZLN officer Irma speaks via a Quicktime video interview clip of her lack of opportunities as a girl growing up in her impoverished and isolated highland community and her rationale for joining the rebel army (Actlab 1999). Traditionally, Irma would be doubly invisible as Indigenous and as female, but her quiet digitized voice and her camouflage-uniformed body nevertheless emerge from "nowhere" in the surrounding Lacondan jungle and resonate on computer screens around the world. In spontaneous video footage, in online newspapers, in web pages of national and transnational non-governmental organizations, circulate visual and aural images of unarmed women and children who use their bodies and their voices (crying "¡Fuera el ejército, fuera!") to block the Mexican army's invasion of their communities. Paramilitary groups as well as the Mexican army continue to use torture and sexual violence as weapons of low-intensity warfare in the conflict zone. But torture and rape, strategies of social control whereby the rhetoric of power is inscribed on the body of the other, acquire different significance in Virtual Chiapas. Voicing five hundred years of suffering, Indigenous women have related their personal histories of oppression and violation, and their testimony has been amplified and circulated in cyberspace, along with testimonies by women activists, non-Indigenous mediation figures. The army and paramilitary groups have assigned these women a "virtually" Indigenous status because of their mediating activism in the Chiapas discursive and physical spaces. This is a manifestation of the dangers and risks which may accompany the often-repeated affirmation of solidarity "todos somos indios; todos somos Chiapas." For example, Cecilia Rodríguez, leader of the National Commission for Democracy in Mexico and the EZLN's representative to the United States, was raped in 1995 by the paramilitary. Her defiant letter of testimony, courage, and continued activism and solidarity with the rebel communities was reproduced on mail lists worldwide and illustrated as one of a dozen Chiapas solidarity posters which were distributed in print form as well as online by the Resistant Strains artist cooperative in Vermont.

There have been many other examples of sexual violence suffered by Indigenous and non-Indigenous activists in the conflict zone. But these acts of intimidation and repression have not silenced the voices, but rather have resulted in their amplification through a solidarity network which continues to expand. The testimony of these men and women becomes a symbol of resistance which inspires more solidarity and more virtual resistance outside of the physical conflict zone. While it is important to distinguish

between the physical acts of resistance to military occupation and paramilitary action which put "bodies on the line" and other kinds of resistance that do not, virtual resistance and the rise of the "Chiapas" discursive space have been important in raising consciousness about the struggles of those resisting bodies and linking those struggles symbolically with others around the world. Often, these links become more than symbolic. Viewers/readers of electronic texts in the "Chiapas" space often find their interaction with these texts becomes the stimulus toward further action linking discourse with praxis. For example, peace camps of international human rights observers become human buffers between the military and communities in Chiapas, thousands of activists attend "Continental," "Intercontinental," and "Intergalactic" "Gatherings for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism" sponsored by the rebels in Chiapas and abroad, and First Nations make pilgrimages from the U.S. and Canada to sign their own alternative trade agreements with their counterparts in Maya communities.

The processes of mediation in the "Chiapas" discursive space also have their contradictions. For example, the EZLN opened this space in order to invite the deconstruction of institutions which are based on unequal power structures and to promote the construction of other, more inclusive models. However, many feminists as well as other critics indicate that the militarism of the EZLN reproduces old patriarchal models of conflict resolution and is therefore an inauthentic pattern for the construction of new social and political models. Another contradiction is that in spite of the possibilities for disintermediation (more direct amplification of Indigenous voices by way of the Internet), the need for acts of mediation by non-Indigenous intellectuals has not been erased. In their roles as intellectuals and/or activists and in their symbolic production inside or outside of the physical borders of the autonomous Indigenous communities in Chiapas, those who participate in the neo-Zapatista transnational solidarity network still serve as mediators between Indigenous voices and spaces of privilege to which they themselves belong. In spite of the fact that activists and prolific cyberspace authors like University of Texas professor Harry Cleaver and his group Acción Zapatista affirm that the neo-Zapatista solidarity network is a decentralized space in which unequal global power relations are not reproduced, there is a certain inequality which cannot be erased, even in an utopian cybernetic space. We can affirm the utopian possibilities for the construction of new democratic communities in cyberspace, but the fact is that only the most privileged have direct access to this space. Participation in Actlab's high-tech interactive Zapnet website "The Revolution Will Be Digitized,"[8] for example, requires up-to-date equipment and the very latest in browser plug-in software. Not all nodes of the solidarity network are so exclusive: lower-tech newsgroups, billboards and archives abound. However, computers are doors to cyberspace, and in economically marginalized areas like Chiapas, access to technological hardware and training generally does not exist. Indigenous communities have depended on the mediation of foreigners and of some Mexicans connected to the Web for entrance into cyberspace. The fact that Chiapas communities in resistance ask for donations of cameras and computer equipment indicates the level of consciousness of the power of this new means of communication on the part of these marginalized communities. With access to this type of equipment, Indigenous in Chiapas and other marginalized groups worldwide can document the acts of resistance of their daily lives. This was how the binational organization Chiapas Media Project was born, for example. This organization, affiliated with the Mexican Solidarity Network, sponsors delegations from the United States and Mexico including Indigenous video artists and other Mexicans with experience and training in alternative media projects. These Mexican experts train their counterparts in Oventic and Morelia (in the heart of Neo-Zapatista territory) in rural Chiapas, and accompanying international delegates escort equipment for donation. This program enables these communities to "tell their own stories in their own words" in order to contest the often inaccurate picture of their reality that is painted in the mainstream media and that forms the basis for outside decision-making which affects them. Within the Chiapas Media Project, videos are sent to television stations or are sent as "video letters" to Indigenous communities in other areas of the Mexico or in other countries. Soon, communities in Chiapas participating in the project will also be able to record human rights violations and upload them onto the Internet in "real-time" (Chiapas Media Project 1999).



The idea that these marginalized communities can, within the context of the struggle for autonomy, articulate the ruptures in the discourse of economic globalization and subvert postmodern processes of alienation in order to transform them into processes of re-articulation of community and of material reality on a global level shows the paradoxes present in this technologically-mediated discursive space. Virtualized Zapatistas are a reminder of the material conditions of human life. Indigenous and/or female bodies that circulate in the Chiapas electronic discursive space have come to symbolically point to all groups which are excluded from Neoliberal global projects; they are bodies which refuse to disappear with the New World Order. Neo-Zapatismo marks a new stage in the Mexican Revolution; a new stage of Indigenous resistance without borders. It has also suggested new subversive models for crossing boundaries to establish intertextual, or hypertextual links between previously isolated acts of symbolic production and of cultural criticism. Rather than envisioning the global Neo-Zapatista network as a phenomenon related to the "disappearing body," it is

perhaps more productive to see it as the result of the birth of the Neo-Zapatista cyborg, a concept which both embodies and crosses boundaries.

Anne Balsamo observes that the cyborg—the'technological-human'—has become a familiar figuration of the subject of postmodernity. For whatever else it might imply, this merger relies on a reconceptualization of the human body as a boundary figure belonging simultaneously to at least two previously incompatible systems of meaning—'the organic/natural' and 'the technological/cultural.' At the point at which the body is reconceptualized not as a fixed part of nature, but as a boundary concept, we witness an ideological tug-of-war between competing systems of meaning which include and in part define the material struggles of physical bodies (215).

Taken as the coalescence of the many variations/(per)mutations that it has undergone in the Chiapas discursive space as it is (co)imagined and acquires new meaning in various inter-and hyper-textual contexts, the image of the ski-masked Zapatista has become a cyborg icon. The constant tension between the very visceral nature of Zapatista and solidarity net discourse and the technological/artificial nature of the Chiapas space gives birth to this dynamic cyborg function. The cyborg crosses boundaries between the material and the artificial, between "meat" and "machine." Since the appearance of Donna Haraway's ground-breaking essay "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century" in the mid-1980's, the cyborg as cultural symbol has also come to represent the subversive potential posed by what Haraway calls "fruitful couplings" for the articulation of radical politics. The Neo-Zapatista as symbol acquires its cyborg quality as it circulates through multi-media texts framed by emerging technology only dreamt about when Haraway's essay was written. The Zapatista cyborg is a mediating symbol which owes its effectiveness as a sign which continues to acquire layers of global significance to just this sort of boundary-crossing association of often contradictory elements. The Zapatista image may have originally been based on the bodies of Indigenous rebels, but these bodies have since been scanned and then (re)generated electronically. No longer the intellectual property of the EZLN, of Subcomandante Marcos, nor of any journalist, the anti-copyrighted Zapatista cyborg take shape and acquires an illegitimate life of its own in cyberspace. However, with the Zapatista cyborg, we can see that Anne Balsamo's observation of the dual material/discursive body in postmodern spaces holds true. In the Zapnet, VR stands for Virtual Resistance as well as Virtual Reality. The quixotic sign of the Zapatista tilting at multinational windmills in cyberspace continues to point to the material existence of the bodies that are left on the other side of the screen as the New World Order is digitized. Global "virtual resistance" via E-mail and Internet has become more and more sophisticated as web protests coordinate not only E-mail inundation campaigns directed toward political figures in Mexico, the United States, or the United Nations but also massive electronic "sit-ins" at stock exchanges. These campaigns seek to reveal and publicize multinational corporate complicity in military repression in rebel territory as well as to express support of the Chiapas rebels' resistance to the globalization of Neoliberal policies in general.[9]

Like Haraway's cyborg, Zaptistas in cyberspace have become "creatures of social reality as well as creatures of fiction" (149). The "Zaps" are a fictional/rhetorical construct of the Chiapas discursive space, a highly-significant computer-generated image which attracts our attention in an age of fast Internet connections and rapid barrage of multimedia images, in order to point us to those who are left on the other side of the screen—those who are farmed for body parts such as sharp eyes and quick fingers in maquiladoras in border no-man's land. Is the "Zapnet" a postmodern cyber metafiction, or a network of human rights testimony documenting the very real flesh-and-blood victims of the intersection of conflicting narratives of modernity? We could suggest that it is both. In effect, the cyber-Zapatista functions as our guide to Virtual Chiapas as Haraway's "fiction mapping... social and bodily reality" (150).

The Zapatista cyborg as multimedia rhetorical image is the product of a transnational discursive space surrounding the recent and ongoing struggle for cultural autonomy, democracy, and social and economic justice in Indigenous communities in Mexico. My analysis of the power of this rhetorical tool in no way intends to detract attention from the men and women in the communities in resistance in Chiapas who continue to dedicate their bodies and voices to the ongoing, daily struggle for dignity. The Zapatista cyborg owes its strength and its "humanity" to the determination of these individuals and their communities. Indigenous resistance in the Americas is firmly rooted in a sense of historical continuity in that it continues to contest colonial models of injustice, exclusion and oppression which are still in operation although masked by the rhetoric of "posts." The esoteric debate over the nature of the "postmodern world" often seems disconnected from the lived reality of Chiapan autonomous communities, or of any other communities engaged in continued resistance against oppression with roots in "modern" struggles of identity, nationhood, and development. Yet Zapata and countless other dead witnesses to 500 years of Indigenous resistance have become "the ghosts in the machine." Cyber-Zapatismo as a transnational phenomenon owes its capacity for 'fruitful transgression" of boundaries to the model of the original "transgresores"[10] in the Lacondan jungle. The coalescence of meaning of Chiapas as sign since January 1, 1994,

however, is due largely to the mediation of this daily grassroots struggle via its intertextual and hypertextual amplification and (re)presentation in symbolic production framed by emerging technology. The Neo-Zapatista cyborg is able to dis-place us by inviting us to cross geographic, ethnic, and class boundaries and participate in virtual resistance against global Neoliberal projects as readers/writers/audience/actors of multimedia guerrilla texts/performances. The Zapatista cyborg is most effective in its ability to dis-locate us: to incite us to both affirm and transgress difference, and to envision new 'radical couplings" in search of solidarity with others. The cyber-Zapatista invites us to shed our bodies in utopian flights of fancy about the future of humanity, but at the same time, its rhetoric is firmly rooted in a sense of history and material reality that reminds us of our location, and that of Mexico's campesinos, as they are dictated by local and global relations of power.

The transnational hybrid discursive space surrounding the Chiapas rebellion lays bare the contradictions present in historical models of mediation of Indigenous voices, but these rebel voices and bodies continue to invite us to attempt to navigate those contradictions with them in search of better models of solidarity. The rebels have been accused of a lack of ideology due to their refusal to form a vanguard party. Instead, Mexican and global "civil society" has been encouraged to connect, consult and form alliances across ethnic, class, gender, and geopolitical borders following the bottom-up community "consulta" model of the grassroots rebel decision-making process. To the confusion of many on left and right, a totalizing national or global identity narrative has not been promoted by the rebels.

In my use of the cyborg concept to explore the Zapatista in cyberspace as an oppositional sign, I have taken a great deal of poetic license with Haraway's rhetorical tool. Haraway's cyborg, described in an essay first published in 1985, was envisioned as a model for the formation of a network which would cross boundaries between feminists and make new partial connections among other oppositional groups in order to reappropriate new technologies from the military industrial complex which threatened Armageddon. But Haraway's original call for new models of social activism which would subvert and refuse to replace totalizing visions by imagining "radical couplings" continues to be relevant. In her words, "this is a dream not of a common language, but of a powerful infidel heteroglossia. . . . It means both building and destroying machines, identities, categories, relationships, space stories" (181). In 1999, such an oppositional cyborg seeks to transgress boundaries and make "illegitimate" connections in order to reappropriate cyberspace from its military origins and its control by multinational capital which would convert human beings into data. The Zapatista cyborg is a survival symbol in our age of globalization and virtualization. This Neo-Zapatista "oppositional cyborg" transgresses global and local boundaries in the struggle against becoming, as Kroker and Weinstein so eloquently put it, "roadkill along the information superhighway" (Kroker & Weinstein 8). The explosion of the de-centered global discursive space surrounding the rebellion points to the development of imaginative new models for connection which seem to transcend the military/defense origins of the technology which frames this space and go beyond the military identity of the EZLN.

Kroker and Weinstein write about corporate interests in the Information Superhighway which threaten to liquidate the "public" aspect of the "Net." In turn, in a way which prefigured the struggle over the appropriation of cyberspace in the late nineties, Haraway suggested that '[n]etworking' is both a feminist practice and a multinational corporate strategy—weaving is for oppositional cyborgs" (170). Today, we see that the Internet is a tool which is available to both sides of the struggle. Many interests seek to construct boundaries in what has been envisioned by others as a utopian, borderless space. Military and security organizations such as the U.S. armed forces' Air Intelligence Agency patrol cyberspace and are engaged in "netwar" against all perceived "subversive" uses of the Internet, including the "linking" activities of Neo-Zapatista cyber-guerillas. Originally at a disadvantage in the global propaganda game, the PRI-dominated Mexican government has learned from its opposition and has invested extensively in establishing its own effective "legitimate" web presence, including special sites dedicated to the government's perspective on the Chiapas conflict. These sites include complete texts of State-sponsored reports on the Acteal massacre (that contradict the findings of outside human rights investigations) and videos of recent presidential speeches about social service campaigns and economic progress in Chiapas. Free online E-mail subscriptions to President Zedillo's press releases are available.[11]

Cyberspace is a contested no-place, and it is uncertain how long the Internet will be open as a space for social and political resistance. With the intensifying corporate and political struggle against decentralized "weaving" of network and meaning on the Web, it remains to be seen whether the Neo-Zapatista cyborg will continue to mutate in order to provide a relevant oppositional model for the appropriation of cyberspace and the construction of new models of mediation and of global solidarity.

Notes

1. "The armed conflict in Chiapas is a war of ink, of written word and a war on the Internet. Chiapas, please take note, is a place where there has not been a shot fired in the last 15 months. The shots lasted 10 days, and ever since the war has been a war of written word, a war on the Internet." (a frequently-quoted sound byte from an April 25, 1995 speech by José Angel Gurria, Mexican Secretary of Foreign Relations, at the World Trade Center.)

2. A traditional print format lacks the illustrative scope of a multimedia electronic hypertext document, and for this reason you are encouraged to visit some of the websites dedicated to consciousness-raising about the crisis in Chiapas. A good place to start is at Acción Zapatista's extensive bibliography of links "Zapatistas in Cyberspace: An Annotated Guide to Resources and Analysis."
3. See Collier for more on the idea of Chiapas as an internal colony and for the history of sophisticated political organizing and consciousness raising in the 1970s and 1980s in campesino communities.
4. Arturo Sanabria, representative of Mexican N.G.O GESS (Gestión de Servicios de Salud), unpublished conference at Frente del Norte, a Zapatista solidarity organization based in Minneapolis, Minnesota.
5. See, for example, Rosa Rojas' Chiapas: ¿y las mujeres qué?, originally published in two volumes in Spanish in Mexico by La Correa Feminista, and now available translated into English online. See also the film Zapatista Women, (Guadalupe Miranda and María Ines Roque, 1995, Spanish title Las compañeras tienen grado) circulated widely early on in the crisis.
6. See, for example, the reproduction of a La Jornada photo on the Pastors for Peace Chiapas Organizing Information page.
7. In the aftermath of the December, 1997 massacre at Acteal, volunteers with the Chiapas Schools organization helping to construct the first Junior High ever in rebel territory taped five hours of "realtime" footage of a standoff between women and children in an unarmed village and federal troops which vastly outnumbered the inhabitants of the community. Although not officially "published," this video was circulated in its impressive unedited format throughout the solidarity network in Mexico and the United States. I viewed it in March, 1998. Another NGO, Cloudforest Initiatives, sponsored the production of a video about the Acteal massacre and its aftermath entitled Victims of the War in Chiapas. The footage was shot by local video artists. Many dozens of similar projects have circulated these images of bodies confronting military lines and paramilitary violence.
8. http://www.actlab.utexas.edu:80/~zapatistas/rev.html. Entire interactive web project also available in CD ROM format.
9. For example, see the archive of articles, description of protest actions, etc. surrounding the Chase Manhattan Bank report (1995, unpublished) calling on the Mexican government to "eliminate" the Zapatistas in order to protect foreign investment in Mexico. Available in the Chiapas95 archive at gopher://mundo.eco.utexas.edu:70/1m/mailing/chiapas95.archive/chase.
10. The label "transgresores de la ley" was first assigned to the rebels by former Mexican president Salinas on January 5, 1994 during a press conference. Often repeated in government references to the EZLN, it has since also been appropriated for rhetorical advantage by the rebels themselves.
11. Chiapas Press Room Special Coverage. http://www.presidencia.gob.mx/welcome/chiapas/chiapas.htm.

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Irse de casa: A Feminist Time-Geography

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"La geografía del tiempo está surcada por
caminos de memoria y grutas del olvido."
(*Irse de casa*, 301)

In her latest novel, Carmen Martín Gaite tells the story of Amparo Miranda, daughter of an unmarried dressmaker, who grows up in the back room[1] of her mother's workshop in provincial Spain during the postwar years and who "leaves home" with her mother during the 1950's to settle in New York City. Amparo, whose brilliant university career in foreign languages has earned her a position with the United Nations, eventually marries an American diplomat, has two bicultural and bilingual children, and opens her own very successful dress-designing studio in New York. The plot begins at the moment when Amparo, now on the verge of her sixty-second birthday, decides to "leave home" again and travel back, for the first time in forty years, to the town where she grew up.[2] But by returning to provincial Spain she is, of course, going home as well as (or rather than) leaving it. The narrative structure of the novel is characterized by an elaborate series of temporal and geographical dislocations and relocations as the narrator's gaze follows and "chronicles" the internal and external experiences of various characters, jumping back and forth between New York and Salamanca; and between the 1990s and the 1950s.

Amparo Miranda reconfigures the image she presents to the world when she leaves her home town and moves to New York, ultimately changing even her name. When she marries Gregory Drake, she shifts her last name to the position formerly held by her first name, becoming, not Amparo Drake, but Miranda Drake. Ironically, it is when she is left "desamparada" that she feels most protected, for in renouncing her name (and her identity as individual and as a Spaniard), she also renounces her past. But the irony turns back on itself, for by retaining, not her given name, but her last name, she marks herself as forever the "illegitimate" daughter of Ramona Miranda. Trained in "lenguas," in performing those chameleonic linguistic transformations we call translation, when she marries Gregory Drake she gives up her career as translator for the United Nations and dedicates herself, instead, to inventing costumes. With the aid of a great deal of money and admission to the upper class, she becomes a sort of super-powered version of her own mother, surpassing Ramona's dressmaking with her internationally-famed dress designs.[3] In this sense, then, her renaming of herself simply linguistically marks the ways in which she has transformed herself to constantly surpass, and yet constantly imitate, her own mother.

Clothing plays a key role in Amparo's re-fashioning of herself. When she was a young woman, Amparo's skill in dressing well, despite her lack of money and privilege, set her apart from the other middle-class girls at her school, and evoked both admiration and the resentment that always comes along with envy: "Lo que me da rabia, por si lo quieres saber, y me la sigue dando, es tener que aguantar a Olimpia cuando dice que Amparo con zapato plano y un abrigo oscuro dado la vuelta por la madre era más elegante que todas nosotras juntas, una chica con aquella cara de hambre y menos carne que una llave." (43-44). Now that she is in her sixties, Amparo carefully hides the evidence of the years she has lived, the evidence of the past she wants to forget, with plastic surgery. Not only does she dedicate herself, now, to the creation of expensive costumes for other women to wear, she also chooses her own wardrobe with great care. Her shoes and handbags are Italian, her clothing so sophisticated that, in Salamanca she is instantly perceived by virtually all, including those who knew her when she was young, as a mysterious wealthy *foreign* lady. Amparo, in fact, encourages this ruse: she carefully avoids the "coro griego" of her former schoolmates who meet for *merienda* and gossip every afternoon at the Hotel Excelsior, and introduces herself to the strangers she meets as Miranda Drake, New Yorker. She even cultivates a faint American accent when she speaks her native language.

Thus, through the daily re-invention of her physical self, Amparo continually re-situates herself, both in time and space: she is from New York, not Salamanca; she has lived on earth perhaps fifty years, but not sixty-two. She is, now, not Amparo Miranda, but rather Lady Drake. As Higgonet points out, since "representations of individual identity and of presence in society often coincide in the body," in her own self-situation, Amparo "therefore begin[s], in Rich's phrase, 'not with a continent or a country or a house, but with the geography closest in—the body'" (5).[4]
her as being "of" a particular time and place. Rather, it is precisely through her multiple relocations and dislocations—cultural, temporal, linguistic, and geographic, as well as of social class—that Amparo defines herself and is defined by others. For the narrator, for all other characters, and above all for herself, Amparo constantly functions as spectacle and as object of speculation.

Amparo's son, Jeremy, attempts to track these displacements in the film he plans to make, which would trace the life of a female character who is a thinly-fictionalized representation of his mother. Amparo's constant redefinition of herself through performance is literalized in Jeremy's project; at many points in the narrative, we encounter a shifting of the boundary dividing the experiences of Amparo Miranda, protagonist of the story we are reading, and those of the unnamed woman of Jeremy's film. Early in the novel, Jeremy and his sister María meet in their mother's apartment and discover a letter from Amparo announcing that she has gone away on a trip. The letter discloses neither her destination nor her return date. But Jeremy finds a clue in the timing of her trip:the following week she will celebrate her birthday. María says, "¡Es verdad! ¿Y crees que necesita revisar el pasado como la señora de tu película?" "Claro," responds Jeremy, "está copiando mi argumento. Se lo he contado varias veces, en versiones distintas.... . No me ha querido financiar la película, pero la está copiando" (31).

Jeremy's project is itself an attempt to create a past for his mother, to re-position her both in time and in space. For Amparo has always refused to return to Salamanca and to the street where she grew up, named, significantly, la calle del Olvido. Likewise, she has refused to share her stories of childhood with her own children. Having no access to the intimate reality of his mother's life,[5] Jeremy literally scripts his mother's re-encounter with her past and with the spaces of her childhood: Spain, Salamanca, la calle del Olvido, the tiny basement dressmaker's shop. The camera lense of Jeremy's proposed film will follow the protagonist as she walks through the streets of her forgotten city, follow her as she encounters, or almost encounters, the many people whose lives in some way create the threads of the web that is her past. And it is precisely this trajectory, of course, that the narrative gaze of *Irse de casa* traces. As Amparo moves through the streets of Salamanca, she moves through time as well: not only the week she spends in her home town, but also her past. But, in tracing this trajectory and in imagining Amparo's/Miranda's thoughts, Jeremy's script (which at times seems to be identical to the narrative we read) inevitably flattens the protagonist, depriving her of her subjectivity.

In his often-cited essay, "Walking in the City" (chapter 7 of *The Practice of Everyday Life*), de Certeau describes the limitations of the notion of trajectory in tracing everyday human activity. As he originally conceived it, the notion of trajectory was intended to suggest a temporal movement through space, that is, the unity of a diachronic succession of points through which it passes, and not the *figure* that these points form on a space that is supposed to be synchronic or achronic. Indeed, this "representation" is insufficient, precisely because a trajectory is drawn, and time and movement are thus reduced to a line that can be seized as a whole by the eye and read in a single moment, as one projects onto a map the path taken by someone walking through a city. However useful this "flattening out" may be, it transforms the temporal articulation of places into a *spatial* sequence of points (35; emphasis in original).

The intersection of time and space, then, is lost in this geographical tracing of activity, just as the script Amparo reads of her own life reduces her to object (never subject) of the narratorial/camera gaze. As Amparo finishes reading Jeremy's script, sitting on the balcony outside her hotel room in Salamanca, she realizes that she has, until now, been no more than the flat character of another's text, the tiny human figure represented in a deCerteau-like trajectory:

> Amparo supo con certeza no sólo que ese texto había sido el desencadenante del viaje emprendido, sino que se había movido a su dictado desde que llegó. Despegó los ojos de la palabra FIN y fue como percibir esa luz que anuncia el epílogo de un túnel. . . .
>
> Entró. Abrió el armario y eligió un traje de chaqueta de entretiempo. Me quiero salir del guión de Jeremy—dijo—. Ir de verdad a la calle del Olvido. (207)

Up to this point in the narrative, Amparo has not allowed herself to approach her old neighborhood, and has studiously avoided the street where she grew up. Her own mental map of Salamanca does not correspond to that of its present residents. Not only has the city changed so much that she must ask for a map at the hotel desk, but she also transforms the space she used to inhabit through her own interaction with it. "The walker," de Certeau tells us, transforms each spatial signifier into something else. And if on the one hand he actualizes only a few of the possibilities fixed by the constructed order (he goes only here and not there), on the other he increases the number of possibilities (for example, by creating shortcuts and detours) and prohibitions (for example, he forbids himself to take paths generally considered accessible or even obligatory). (98)

In like fashion, Amparo forbids herself to walk to the Calle del Olvido; she creates a prohibition for herself based on time and metaphorized into space. In fact, the very name of the street is an obvious metaphor that merges an allusion to that which is past and forgotten with a spatial point of reference. Ironically, the calle del Olvido, for Amparo, represents both oblivion and its more troubling opposite: memory. By finally entering the street where she spent her childhood, she faces the past that she has purposely forgotten: *olvido* becomes *memoria* as she enters this space.

And yet, inevitably, time has transformed the scene of her childhood loneliness and misery. Where once there was a dark, basement space compartmentalized by many interior walls, there is now an airy, bright, open area. When she was a girl, Amparo "soñaba con demoler todos los tabiques y convertirse en habitante de un lugar grande y silencioso para ella sola" (210).[6] The owner of the new shop (who turns out to be the daughter of the man Amparo once loved—and perhaps still does) has done precisely that. It is surely no accident that Rita Bores sells antiques in her new shop. When Amparo enters, it is apparently by accident: she has just been sideswiped by a motorcyclist, and has tripped and broken the heel of her shoe. Not realizing who Amparo is, Rita helps her and invites her to rest in the shop. Amparo is, then, seeking refuge (also, of course, seeking herself, seeking *amparo*). When she sees the open space that her old home, with its many tiny rooms, has become, Amparo remembers how she used to put earplugs in her ears to block out the noise of the sewing machines as the seamstresses clacked the pedals against the floor, and how she used to design and make little costumes for dolls in her cramped back room. Her eye is caught by a beautiful antique doll "que no se podía sujetar de pie porque en lugar de piernas tenía un palo" (210). The "muñeca mutilada" evokes Amparo's own immobility, both literal —since she has twisted her ankle and broken her shoe—and figurative—since, until now, she has been unable to move from present to the past. But the antique doll also serves as a bridge between past and present, a function which is underlined when Amparo decides to give the doll to her granddaughter as a gift. When she asks about the beautiful figure, Rita explains that her apparent "defect" (the store is named Defectos Especiales) is actually an asset: the doll has no legs because the carved post on which she is propped is actually the handle of a music box. Rita notes that the doll is "intacta" (213), missing only a bit of fringe from her skirt. When Rita takes her needle and thread to fix this small defect, the threaded needle in Rita's hand, like the doll itself, works to meld past, present, and future; Salamanca and New York: "Amparo la miró allí, con la cabeza inclinada sobre la labor, y se sintió raptada por la intensidad de ese momento, atravesada ella misma por la aguja recién enhebrada que cosía otros retales de vida con esta escena y con la que tendría lugar en Nueva York cuando Caroline hiciera bailar a la muñeca..." (213). Likewise, when Rita Bores, the daughter of Amparo's secret love, transforms the seemingly defective doll into a very special object (in keeping with the name of her store), she at the same time transforms a painful past into a promising future. The delicate threads fastening the fringe to the skirt of the doll seem to evoke the many invisible threads tying Amparo to Rita. When Amparo leaves the store, Rita loans her a pair of comfortable mocassins to walk in. In return, Amparo gives Rita her barely-worn Prada shoes with the broken heel, which she is confident Rita can easily repair. With this exchange, Rita gains a fairly intimate token of a promising new friendship as well as an object of economic, aesthetic, and symbolic value. Amparo, on the other hand, walks out into the street having momentarily left her Italian shoes, and the foreign identity they are a part of, back in the old shop, and at freedom, now, to walk the "calle del Olvido" at ease.

As she walks through the spaces of the city, Amparo transforms the spaces through her very presence in them. Walking through spaces that used to belong exclusively to her past, and gradually incorporating those spaces into her present life, she begins to relinquish the illusion that she is walking alone and anonymously; that her presence is barely noted and does not affect the emotional or physical geography of the town. As Amparo "walks in the city," her path constantly intersects with the paths of others. "Their intertwined paths give their shape to spaces. They weave places together" (de Certeau 97). Very often, those who cross her path share not only a physical trajectory with her, but also a temporal one: their lives have somehow been influenced by hers. She sees a young man she met on the train, and speaks to him; what she does not know is that the boy's silent companion, who observes the encounter from a distance, is the son of Ramona Miranda's former assistant in the shop. This son is now a doctor, having attended medical school thanks to a very generous check that Amparo herself wrote, at her mother's request. The woman who attends her at the hairdresser's is the sister of this doctor; Amparo's mother and her mother were the closest of friends. In fact, when Amparo uses the bathroom in the hairdresser's private quarters which are attached to the shop, she wanders into a bedroom and encounters the same wardrobe that used to stand in her own bedroom, into whose mirror she used to whisper secret desires. The woman she meets in the art museum, for instance, and who takes her photo posed at the entrance, has just divorced the doctor, and will very shortly get into her car to drive to her family's summer place, crashing and dying before she arrives. When Amparo reads the obituary in the newspaper and sees the photo of the dead woman, she recognizes her as a person with whom she had a very brief connection, and she decides to attend the memorial service in the cathedral. There, finally, the many threads of the web formed by the characters' physical and temporal paths converge. Amparo is noticed and identified by most as the mysterious foreign lady who has been occupying the penthouse suite of the town's most expensive hotel. Only one person there sees her and recognizes her not as Lady Drake, elegant New Yorker, but as Amparo Miranda, daughter of Ramona Miranda, friend of the eccentric and aristocratic Olimpia Moret, inveterate reader and perennial loner. It is only after she comes face to face with Abel Bores, and is recognized by him, that the safety of Amparo's carefully-constructed identity as foreigner is threatened. Rushing away from the cathedral in a last attempt to escape the reality of her past, she fancies that she comes face to face with Miranda Drake herself:

> se tropezó inopinadamente con una mujer que venía en dirección contraria y que le preguntó en inglés si sabía por dónde se iba a la Catedral. Amparo, casi sin mirarla, le contestó en italiano que lo sentía pero que no la había entendido, y apretó el paso sin atreverse a volver la cabeza. Había creído percibir con horror que la mujer se parecía a ella, que era ella misma. (297)

As the narrative voice (or the lense of Jeremy's imagined camera) traces Amparo's movements through time and through space, and records her numerous encounters and near-encounters with others whose lives touch her own, the text we read comes to resemble a fictional time-geography. Gillian Rose attributes the term "time geography" to the Swedish geographer Törsten Hägerstrand, who "describes the paths taken by individuals to fulfil their everyday tasks, or projects, using representations of three-dimensional time-space" (21). Rose, however, considers Hägerstrand's notion of time-geography to be limited by its elision of the role played by the gendered body in these movements through time and space; and (in contrast to de Certeau's model) in its failure to consider the points at which one individual's path intersects with that of another. Time-geography traditionally images "the individual," then, as a solitary, ungendered body. Further, says Rose, traditional time-geography "insists on a singular space; the space through which it traces people's paths claims to be universal" (18-19), while the reality is that men and women in most cultures move through different spaces, and move through them with varying degrees of constraint on their mobility. While Rose does not explicitly link Hägerstrand's work to that of de Certeau, surely the same criticism could be made of the otherwise very useful ways in which de Certeau has theorized the "common man" as he walks through the city.

Irse de casa, on the other hand, traces the physical, temporal, and psychic movements of its characters in such as way as to suggest a vision of how Rose's proposed "feminist time-geography" might look. Yet, as the narrative gaze watches Amparo walk around Salamanca, we are insistently reminded that "to walk is to lack a place. It is the indefinite process of being absent" (103). Ultimately, Amparo is bound to the streets of her home town not by her expensive Italian shoes, but by memory. Memory, de Certeau tells us, "is a sort of anti-museum: it is not localizable. . . . Objects and words also have hollow places in which a past sleeps, as in the everyday acts of walking, eating, going to bed, in which ancient revolutions slumber. A memory is only a Prince Charming who stays just long enough to awaken the Sleeping Beauties of our wordless stories" (108).

Amparo finally allows herself to walk the Calle del Olvido, not alone now, but accompanied by the only person in the city who recognizes her former self in the body she now presents to the world, the man who she once thought of as the only person who might truly understand her, who might see past the image she projected to the world. Finally, she realizes that, like de Certeau's Prince Charming, Abel Bores encarnates the memories that will ultimately awaken her own stories, the stories she has, until now, withheld from her children, her friends, and herself. After seven days in her home town, and on the day of her birthday, Amparo consciously decides to play the protagonist, not of Jeremey's imagined story of her life, but of her own newly-awakened story. She thus steps into her newly chosen role, "performing" in the life she would most like for herself. Ironically, this last performance allows her, finally, to begin to control the spectacle of her life, for it is at this point that she resolves to step behind the camera and to become a producer of films, starting with the film of her own life—both the one her son will make and the one she will now "produce" in her own daily life. Having finally walked the literal and figurative "caminos de memoria" in her home town, and dug into the "grutas del olvido" (301), Amparo Miranda is ready to leave home, in order, now, to return home—both to the American home she has made with her son and daughter; and to the home that is the "calle del Olvido." What awaits her there is a life of her own making.

Notes

[1] In this detail, as in many others, Martín Gaite seems to slyly allude to one of her previous-published works.

[2] Amparo's home town is never overtly identified as Salamanca, but numerous textual indications, along with Martín Gaite's frequent allusions to her own youth in that town, encourage us to think of Salamanca as we read the town laid out in Irse de casa as Salamanca.

[3] Amparo's fairy-tale marriage with the wealthy and important American, Gregory Drake, cannot help but bring to mind Carmen de Icaza's Franco-era bestseller, *Cristina de Guzmán, profesora de idiomas* (1936). Not only is Cristina also trained in "idiomas," but she, like Ramona Miranda, is a single mother. Amparo, like Cristina, attracts the rich American not only because of her excellent English skills but because of her reserve and industriousness. The similarity is most likely not fortuitous, given that Martín Gaite discusses Icaza in *Usos amorosos de la posguerra española* (147-48).

[4] The reference Higgonet gives for the Adrienne Rich quotation is *Blood, Bread and Poetry: Selected Prose, 1979-1985* (New York: Norton, 1986), 212).

[5] When Jeremy approaches Florita, a young Cuban-American woman, about playing the part of his film's protagonist, she challenges the verisimilitude of the soliloquies he scripts for the fictionalized Amparo: "si está sola cuando habla, ¿cómo te enteras de que habla sola?" (15). She then adds, "si habla sola será porque tiene secretos, todas las madres los tienen. Y nos cuentan una verdad a medias. Sabemos muy poco de nuestras madres" (15). (Jeremy's choice of a Cuban-American woman to play the part of a transplanted Spanish woman cannot be overlooked, especially given that this novel was published one hundred years after the Spanish-American War.)

[6] Martín Gaite shares a characteristic of several other contemporary women novelists, discussed by Kathleen Komar, in the symbolic weight placed in this novel on the architecture of the inner spaces the female characters inhabit.

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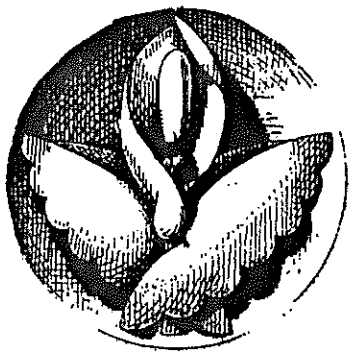

Traveling *Folklóricas* Bring Spain to the Americas: Ambiguous Role Models for Women in 1940's Spain

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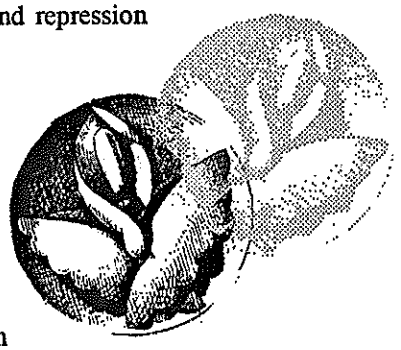
The on and off-screen images of the female stars who protagonized Andalusian musical comedy films of the 1940s were highly ambiguous despite the severe censorship by the Franco regime. This paper discusses the potential textual and cultural contradictions for female spectators in Spain inherent in the figure of these *folklóricas* specifically as they are framed by star travel discourse. In this case, star travel and its discourses refer to talk about or representations of Spanish *folklórica* stars who toured to the Americas to promote their careers or who played film roles as female protagonists who toured the Americas. In films such as *Suspiros de España* (Benito Perojo, 1938), *La Lola se va a los puertos* (Juan de Orduña, 1947), and *Filigrana* (Luis Marquina, 1949), the *folklórica's* character rose to stardom from humble beginnings and the tour to Latin America marks the height of their success. The success of these films and its genre, the Andalusian musical comedy, seems to confirm the theory that these hybrid comedies offered audiences a variety of identificatory positions, despite their orthodox plots (Labanyi 24). In terms of studying the audience's role in the construction of different and contestatory meanings, I am aware of the limitations encountered by analyzing only texts and discourse (e.g. films, publicity, academic and journalistic criticism, and fan culture).[1] Needless to say, analyzing such contextual discourses, the necessary corollary of reception ethnographies, can still provide fruitful results.

Folklóricas were singers, dancers, and actresses whose early stage careers led to cinema stardom, especially in the folkloric comedy musical genre. Most or all of the *folklóricas* that became internationally renown, such as Conchita Piquer, Estrellita Castro, Imperio Argentina, Lola Flores, Sara Montiel, and Carmen Sevilla traveled through Latin America and the United States. In fact, it was a requirement for most *folklóricas* to tour Latin America and the United States in order to be considered successful. Although Spain reciprocated by receiving or importing such musical figures as Jorge Negrete, Pedro el Infante, María Félix, Carlos Gardel, Agustín Irusta the *tanguista* and Blanquita Amaro the *rumbera*, I will concentrate specifically on the female stars from Spain that travel.

I will first explain how the *folklórica*, a fusion of the traditional feminine role and the liberated woman, is a contradictory figure. In the second part of this analysis I will show how star travel to Latin America constituted a discourse that further complicated the already ambiguous meanings ascribed to the *folklórica* figure.

I.

The first third of the twentieth century in Spain witnessed an acute crisis in terms of defining the role that women should play in society. We only need to look at the transformative intellectual and political currents of thought —an inchoate feminism, anarchism—that characterized this period to understand the alarm and the urgency that certain sectors of society, specifically the ascendant bourgeoisie, felt. Part of this social instability was the issue of where women belonged in the widening split between the public and private realms, a phenomenon brought about by the rise of capitalism and consumerist culture. The Church, and later Franco's regime, would be quick to react to any threats with the impositions of norms and official models for women which strove to determine the limits of womanhood. Since culture under Franco was not a strict issue of the dominated vs. the dominant, these two opposing currents of resistance and repression coexisted and thus produced radically ambivalent effects.



The decade of the 40s is particularly interesting for studying the movement of *folklóricas* between Spain and Latin America. This is due to the intersection between the autarchy that characterized the 40s, Franco's policy of *Hispanidad*, and most importantly the changing and contradictory definitions of women that were being articulated, both despite and because of official Francoist ideology concerning the role of women. The Second Republic and the Franco era are too often seen as chronologically discrete and coherent entities, a fact that discounts the wide variety of social and ideological persuasions that coexisted alongside the discourses of Francoism, even though they were often unable to find full expression. This is not to say that subversion existed unproblematically, rather it is to suggest the possibility of difference within or alongside an official culture that enforced homogeneity.

Scholars have often pointed out how Woman was constructed by National Catholic ideology, but have less often discussed, as has Martín Gaite in Usos amorosos de la posguerra española, how or if these models were actually appropriated by real women. She writes: "Los jóvenes de posguerra sabíamos muy bien que una película española o nos iba a contar una historia heroica de las que venían en los libros de texto o nos iba a ensalzar las delicias de un amor sacrificado y decente" (33). Although Martín Gaite dismisses all Spanish films as if they unconditionally reproduced Francoist ideology (a position I would question), she admits that there existed a consciousness of the official ideology. Such an awareness implies that the spectator could have experienced alternative identifications or could have read into the material something more personal, forbidden, or even scandalous. That space of fantasy, the moment of crossing the boundary and becoming an agent, who instead of passively ingesting images helps to contribute in their production of meaning, constitutes a real and material activity that we all perform. Later on, Martín Gaite discusses the significance of the cinema-going experience in Spain of the 40s as providing an outlet for pent-up desires for many individuals, describing it as "la gran evasión, la droga cotidiana" (191) for many individuals. Such a statement seems to emphasize audience reaction rather than the content of the films, thus undermining the supposed deterministic nature of the *españolada* film.

As unintentionally ambiguous role models, *folklóricas* embodied the union of the sex symbol and the girl-next-door. On the one hand they constituted the female representation of Spain, the "perfect novia," and a devotee of the Virgin. Coincidentally many *folklóricas* starred in roles as nuns or novices in films such as *La Hermana San Sulpicio*, which had three different versions, all starring famous *folklóricas*: Imperio Argentina (1927), Carmen Sevilla (1952), and Rocío Durcal (*La novicia rebelde*,1971). Interestingly, the front cover of *Cine radio actualidad: publicación rioplatense*, displays a photo of Aurora Bautista as Juana la loca dressed in the austere medieval dress for *Locura de amor* (Juan de Orduña, 1948) based on the legend of Juana la loca.[2] On the other hand, there is an article in the same publication announcing Imperio Argentina's arrival to sing on Uruguayan radio. It features a photo of her in a rather seductive low cut period dress for Goyescas (Perojo, 1942), a role currently being played by the contemporary Spanish star, Aitana Sánchez-Gijón in *Volaverunt* (Bigas Luna, 1999).

Because of the tradition out of which the *folklóricas* had arisen -the popular and sometimes ribald theatre genres of the *revista*

and the *género frívolo*- there was an underlying eroticism that surrounded the her aura. At times the sexuality was more explicit than others. Various scholars point out that almost all café conciertos practiced a kind of prostitution in disguise (see Salaun 81; Barreiro 47). This sensuality was further enhanced by the risqué lyrics of songs, such as "Ojos verdes" or "Tatuaje", popularized by these female stars and transmitted either through the radio or the musical films.[3]

Also ambiguous and difficult to whitewash were the career-oriented lives which these public women led, lives that contrasted with the "angel del hogar" model promoted in so much of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century literature for women and documented by scholars such as Lou Charnon Deutsch. The spectacularization and publicity that the *folklórica* received when she toured and traveled was recognized as a potentially dangerous influence and thus steps were taken to construct an acceptable image. It is here, of course, where we can find slippages of meaning which allowed for potential subversion in the election of women's roles by women.

In films such as *Mariquilla Terremoto*, *Suspiros de España*, *Filigrana*, and *La Lola se va a los puertos*, the *folklórica* plays a rising young star who "makes it" by dint of hard work and talent, thus avenging the negative forces in her life, i.e. men and her small-minded home town. In *La Lola*, and *Mariquilla* the protoganist-star leaves for "América" at the end of the film, while in *Filigrana* and *Suspiros*, half-way through the film her success in America allows her to return to Spain and reconcile the conflict either within the family or with love. Thus, traveling to the Americas is not only experienced as a reality but also constitutes a fundamental plot element of several Andalusian musical comedy films. This mirroring of star's life in the film plots confirmed even more the *sueño americano*, the idea that dreams could come true for women in Spain of the 40s and 50s. Such an identification with stars was surely not what the Franco censors had in mind.

This is not the kind of role model one associated with Spanish cinema of the 1930s and 40s. What comes to mind are the stereotypical images of the scenic folklore set, nestled in the rural backward South with a flamenco artist who becomes famous first in her local community, not in an industrial entertainment complex. Even when the *folklórica* tours the capitals of the cosmopolitan West, she is still somewhat immune to the evils of the Hollywood factory. But nevertheless the "myth of success" model was extremely popular and we can find striking similarities between the Andalusian musical comedy and a few Hollywood plots (A Star is Born, What Price Hollywood). Many Spanish Andalusian musical comedies follow this plot with the exception that they have a happy ending. The woman is also the main protagonist, the film converging around her, and many of the Spanish films deal with the story of her success and stardom, the recounting of how she "made it" and, of course, how her romantic life (and/or family life) is resolved as a result. The male supporting actor is subordinate in both talent and will to the female lead. Whereas the *folkórica* is characterized by her talent and all-around good qualities, the male is often characterized by his major faults such as his dependency on alcohol, his philandering, or his inability to successfully launch a career. Examples of weak male characters can be found in *Suspiros de España*, where the father of the Sole, the protagonist, is a *golfo* and beaten up by his wife; in *Mariquilla Terremoto*, Quique, the *señorito* with whom the protagonist is in love is a womanizer and alcoholic who at the end of the film must beg for Mariquilla's compassion; in *Filigrana*, the count, who is also a philanderer , loses his estate to Filigrana who, having become rich, buys the mansion along with the furniture and the title; and finally, in *Embrujo* (Serrano de Osma, 1947) Manolo drinks himself to death out of jealousy and despair for the female protagonist who becomes rich and successful. Instead of being set in Hollywood or even Madrid, the background is "some little town" in Andalusia. In other words, it is Spain's own version of Hollywood, given the extent of massification of the flamenco spectacle and its use for exporting Spanish entertainment to the rest of the world.

No matter how retrograde the roles that *folklóricas* might have played, their private lives were consumed just as much as their public/screen lives (Dyer 45). These stars enjoyed having the cinema at their service, a publicity launching à la Hollywood, a public image that the consumer could immediately recognize. In fan magazines and film publicity journals descriptions that focused on the luxury items and the fashions donned by the *folklóricas* were (and still are) avidly read by both women and men, desiring subjects who identified with these role models put at their disposal: "Ahora mira su pulsera de brillantes, su estola de visón blanco, su Mercedes blanco, forrado de rojo..." (Moix 21). The salaries of each star, how much they paid for their houses, the exterior signs of wealth—jewels, furs, and cars—symbolized not only an artistic and feminine identity but also the development of capitalism in Spain, of which the *folklórica* was a mascot. Contributing to the relationship between cinema and consumerism, Raquel Meller, a forerunner of the *folklóricas*, allowed her name to be used for perfumes. Legends and multiple versions of the same story abounded, all exacting the same effects—wonder, admiration, and a sense of pride that the stars who had made it were

With respect to the policy of *hispanidad* and its effect on films made in Spain, the two meetings of the Congreso Cinematográfico Hispanoamericana functioned as yet another vehicle of Francoist foreign policy. The outward intention was to renovate Spain's façade to Latin America now that WWII was over. Yet its covert aim was to mount a politics of *apadrinamiento* with Latin America (Díaz López 142). The goal of the first meeting, held in 1931, was to combat the Spanish film versions made in the big studios such as Hollywood and Joinville so that the same countries that consumed these films could have a better foothold on the Spanish market (144). The aim of the second one, in 1948, was to attempt to connect the three most flourishing hispanic cinema industries with the purpose of joining forces against the hegemony of Hollywood (144). The justifying slogan was: "unas industrias hermanas, un idioma común y unas costumbres que tienen su raíz en idénticas tradiciones." [4] A large number of Andalusian musical comedy films were shown in both Spain and Latin America.[5] The Spanish films that were imported to Argentina numbered 35 between 1936and 1939 and 23 between 46 and 49.[6] Whether or not these numbers attest to the policies and efforts put forth by the Spanish government or to the nature of capitalism, is hard to say.

Although these strategies of *apadrinamiento* were ultimately innocuous, the Spanish public was aware of the efforts made by Spain to make one last bid to Latin America. Surely it was hoped that this consciousness would infuse Spaniards with pride for their weakened and former imperial nation. But it remains to be studied how successful this attempt actually was in terms of Spanish or Latin American publics. We cannot assume that either of these audiences identified "correctly" with the explicit project of *hispanidad* and reflections of it in the folkloric film (whatever that project might have been).

The fact that *folklóricas* were travelling and going to "America" implied that these women were realizing their own dreams and desires to be successful and rich. "Going to America" in many of these films meant leaving behind the old and embracing the new as well as accepting risks and adventure. I am not denying the existence of an over-arching attempt at colonizing the Latin American cinema and its spectators. Nor that the folklórica could have been seen by some as a neo-*conquistadoras*. However we must also not ignore the possibility that these stars and their characters provided progressive role models for women in an oppressive and depressed society.

The study of *folklóricas* and cinema of this period seems especially pertinent in light of the recent developments of the nostalgia industry in Spain, an ever growing market. Due mainly to the rising interest in and attempt to capitalize on *folklórica* stars of the 30s, 40s, and 50s, compact disc collections of the music of Estrellita Castro, Imperio Argentina, Concha Piquer, and a few other have also appeared. La niña de tus ojos, the much talked about and then much scorned period piece by Fernando Trueba also links up current stars such as Penelope Cruz with the *folklórica* icons Imperio Argentina and Estrellita Castro. The latest collector's series, which has recently appeared in the department stores in Spain, features Sara Montiel's films made in Mexico, "Sara Montiel en México." Now that we are at the millenium, it remains to be seen exactly what kind of nostalgia a Spanish *folklórica* making films in Mexico evokes.

Notes

[1] Currently I am preparing to conduct a study of audience responses to Andalusian musical comedy films of the 30s and 40s on the basis of interviews. For more on audience studies see Kuhn (1998) and Stacey (1994).

[2] Cine radio actualidad: publicación rioplatense. N.672. May 17, 1948.

[3] See Silvia Bermúdez's excellent article, "Music to My Ears: Cuplés, Conchita Piquer and the (Un)Making of Cultural Nationalism." Siglo XX/20th Century. Vol. 15, Issues (1997): 33-54.

[4] Joaquin Romero Marchent. "Espíritu y aliento del certámen cinematográfica hispanoamericano en Madrid." *Radiocinema*. Agosto, 1948.[5] Among some of the Spanish films shown in Mexico that featured *folklóricas* were: María de la O (1936), Carmen la de Triana (1938), La Canción de Aixa (1938), El barbero de Sevilla (1938), Mariquilla Teremoto (1938), Suspiros de España (1938), La gitanilla (1940), Marianela (1940), Martingala (La copla andaluza) (1939), La patria chica (1943), Embrujo (1947), Oro y márfil (1946), La Lola se va a los puertos (1947) (see García Riera).

[6] International Motion Picture Almanac.

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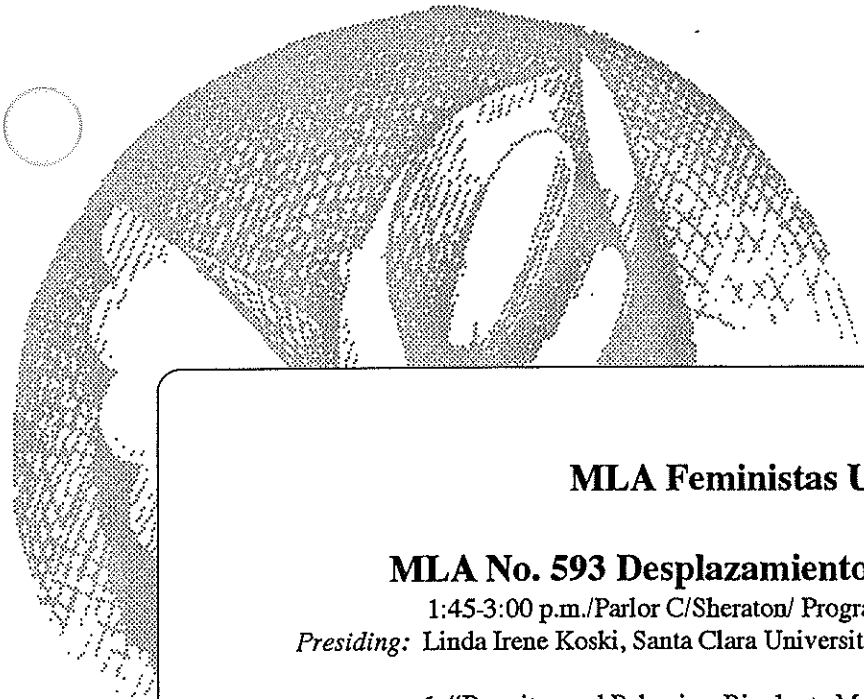


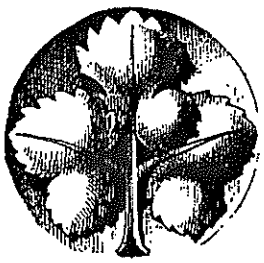
MLA Feministas Unidas Session:

MLA No. 593 Desplazamientos: Women and Resistance

1:45-3:00 p.m./Parlor C/Sheraton/ Program arranged by Feministas Unidas.

Presiding: Linda Irene Koski, Santa Clara University.; Dara E. Goldman, Univ. of Illinois, Urbana.

1. "Parasites and Polemics: Rigoberta Menchú and the Politics of Sacrifice."
Jennifer Browdy de Hernandez, Simmons Rock College of Bard.
2. "Irse de Casa: A Feminist Time-Geography." Joyce Lynn Tolliver, Univ. of Illinois, Urbana.
3. "Traveling *Folklóricas* Bring Spain to the Americas: Ambiguous Role Models for Women in the 1940s and 1950s."
Eva Maria Woods, State University of New York, Stony Brook.
4. "Virtual Voices, Electronic Bodies: Women and Resistance in Cyber-Chiapas" Sarah L. Grussing, Macalester College.
5. "Diaspora, Exile and Migration: Movement and Sexuality in Recent Afro-Caribbean / Latin American Women's Narrative." Margaret M. Olsen. University of Missouri-Columbia



Diaspora, Exile and Migration: Movement and Sexuality in Recent Afro-Caribbean/Latin American Women's Narrative

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University of Missouri-Columbia

Movement and migration have long been identified as characteristic of Caribbean reality. In large part the notion of the region as one of perpetual demographic and cultural motion traces its origin to the massive transfers- voluntary and involuntary- of peoples during hundreds of years of colonial domination. Among these movements, the African diaspora figures as central for the purposes of this paper, as its cultural repercussions were felt throughout the Caribbean and many other regions of Latin America. In the twentieth century, especially the late twentieth century, migration and exile have continued as a result of political and economic forces which both push and pull individuals and groups into lives that are hybrid on numerous levels.

Much of contemporary Afro-Caribbean and Afro-Latin American women's narrative explores the sense of orphanhood and isolation that centuries of colonial and neocolonial migration have produced in the black female subject. In each of the four novels and collection of short stories I have chosen for this analysis (Ecuadorian Luz Argentina Chiriboga's Bajo la piel de los tambores/Drums Under My Skin (1991) Haitian-born Edwidge Danticat's Breathe, Eyes, Memory (1994) and The Farming of Bones (1998) Puerto Rican Mayra Santos Febres's Urban Oracles (1997) and Antiguan-born Jamaica Kincaid's The Autobiography of My Mother(1996)), the young woman protagonist, in her geographic and psychological migrations becomes distanced from both home and the "someplace else" she must occupy for economic or educational purposes. Yet while the forces which lead her from home and into spaces of initial alienation are beyond her control, an exploration of her sexuality and possession of her body provide a means to her initial acts of decolonization. It is through the sexual discovery that accompanies her movement that she will begin to undo the body as a primary site of colonization. Ultimately, sexuality and control over body become paths to resistance and the redefinition of neocolonial power. Before each of the protagonists can return home, as they all do either figuratively or literally, sexual awakening will oblige her to confront her historical orphanhood and solitude. It will also entail determining what of the past should be retained and remembered, and what should be cast aside and forgotten in the trajectory that casts her fate as parallel to the future of her people.

Categories of Exclusion/Inclusion

Before turning to a critique of the texts, it seems appropriate to establish the criteria by which this analysis justifies crossing frontiers of language and geography in order to include works by authors that may appear arbitrarily cast together. Overall, it is the experience these women share of being writers of the African diaspora that unites their work. I choose to use a notion of African diaspora in the Americas that does not ignore differences such as language, class, culture or ethnicity, but which emphasizes a pan-Caribbean reality as well as the general commonalties of experience between women of African descent throughout the Americas in general and Latin America in particular. While a traditional Marxist perspective has been criticized for overemphasizing class and ignoring other levels of difference, an excessive application of the limitless classifications that form identity and the creation of a subject can lead us to overspecific and often not very useful categories of "one." In the region of Latin America where large (although distinct) segments of the population remain marginalized from economic resources and opportunity, it is important politically speaking to locate the ways in which these groups' experiences of exclusion exhibit similarities. Because literature remains rooted in the historical processes that surround it, it would be negligent to not recognize the parallels emerging from literary expression of distinct geographies. Despite the fact that the women considered in this paper write from disparate loci and in languages that reflect distinct colonial legacies, the themes of history, migration and gender that occupy their narratives are

startlingly similar.[1] It was the texts, after all, in the spatial and corporal journeys that the female protagonists undertake, that demanded the analysis that I make here.[2] Clearly, it is the legacy of the African diaspora and the Middle Passage that lends the primary sense of displacement to narrative by writers of African descent in Latin America. In the wake of that forced human migration, the search for place has stretched throughout the region's history, ranging from the most essential territorial claims (i.e. home and land) to full participation in the discourse of nation and contemporary canonical inclusion.[3] In the Caribbean, the insular/ insulating nature of the region has not been lost on critics who, while recognizing the similarities that ultimately link the islands in spite of differences of language and culture, also portray them as geographic orphans unable to bridge the seas that stretch between them and separate them from the rest of the world. That sense of orphanhood was heightened by the end of *de jure* colonial rule for many of the islands, which left them twice detached from notions of father- or mother land and alienated from a sense of true national identity.[4] And yet, despite this isolation, a perpetual movement has continued, both between the islands and to international metropolitan centers like New York, London, Paris, and Montreal. Consider, for example, the numerous waves of Cuban exile to the U.S., Puerto Rican migration back and forth between island and mainland, Dominican refugee escapes to Puerto Rico and the U.S., Haitian migration into the Dominican Republic and to Miami and New York. Still another form of movement, urbanization and migration to the capital is a phenomenon in all of Latin America that has provided economic and educational opportunities for marginalized groups from smaller towns, but not without demands of cultural adjustment and identity reevaluation.

In his book on the Caribbean and postmodernity The Repeating Island, Antonio Benítez Rojo points to the inability of either the narratives of modernity or postmodernity to fully make sense of the Caribbean independently.[5] I would add colonialism -past and present- as another narrative that reveals itself as insufficient on its own, the reason being that most of the Caribbean and many regions of Latin America are characterized by a simultaneous coexistence of all three historical realities. Carole Boyce Davies further questions the usage of "post-colonial" theoretical perspectives when considering the realities of black women's literature, implying the question "POST for whom?" and signaling the continued prevalence of neocolonialism in the lives of many black women writers in various parts of the world.[6] And yet, in the face of the argument that cultural expression deemed postmodernist cannot be located in a region where modernity is unattained or still in progress, the response must be that migratory populations are experiencing postmodernism both in the act and the consequences of their movements to and from the *metropole* or international urban centers. They are simultaneously bearers, producers and consumers of numerous economic and historical narratives and cultural and literary discourses, including those of colonialism, neocolonialism, modernity, and postmodernity.
Leaving Home: Migration and Orphanhood

Caribbean and Latin American migrations in the twentieth century have been the result of numerous political and economic circumstances and have entailed migration within countries as well as between them. Rural or provincial inhabitants are often forced to urban centers, most often the capital city, in search of economic and educational opportunities. The same motivators may push individuals out of their countries towards opportunities in the United States, Canada or Europe. Political instability or persecution drive people to seek safety in external exile, while social mechanisms of exclusion may lead to an internal exile of detachment from the notion of country. Oftentimes, these migrations are periodic or temporary and result in a reality that fluctuates between "home" and "elsewhere" and the numerous differences that accompany the two spheres of existence.

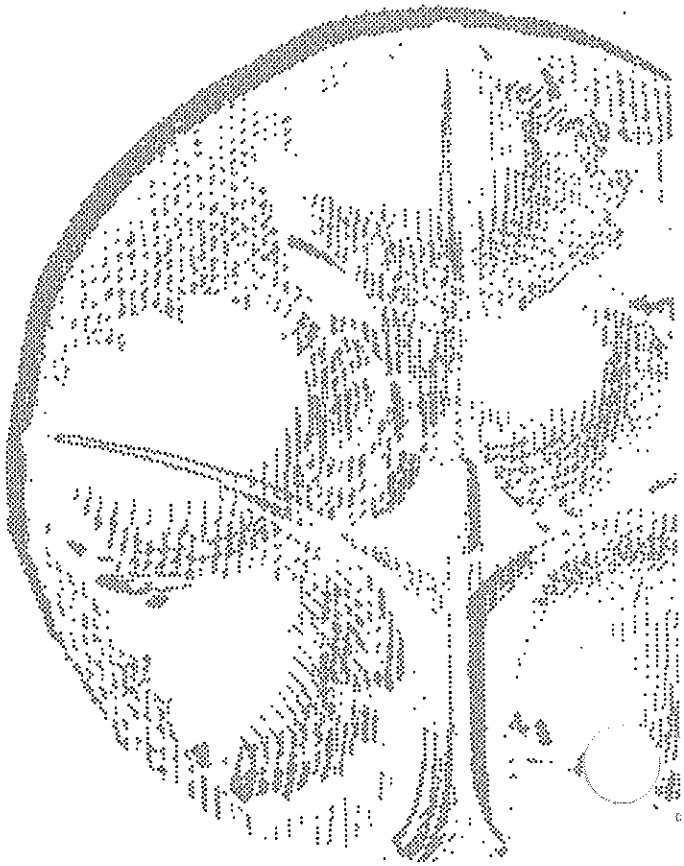
For both the Afro-Caribbean/Latin American women writers who themselves experience this migratory reality and the female protagonists they create, a general sense of displacement and uprootedness characterizes their lives. For Boyce Davies, there is an inherent power implied for the Black woman who writes from within movement: Migrations of the subject refers to the many locations of Black women's writing, but also to the Black female subject refusing to be subjugated. Black female subjectivity then can be conceived not primarily in terms of domination, subordination or "subalternization," but in terms of slipperiness, elsewhereness. Migratory subjects suggests that Black women/'s writing cannot be located and framed in terms of one specific place, but exist/s in myriad places and times, constantly eluding the terms of the discussion. (Boyce Davies Black Women 36)

The same "myriad of places and times" that characterizes the lives of black women writers also naturally typifies the lives of many of the black women characters they create. This is not simply true for autobiographical reasons, but because it responds to a general shared reality.

When the young women protagonists of the narratives considered here leave home, they do so consistent with common motivators:

to better their circumstances, either economically or educationally. Leaving home entails for each more than a stepping away from security and a familiar identity, for departing signifies an orphanhood she must overcome. At the time of her departure, or by the time she has returned home, each protagonist will have been "orphaned," left alone by the death of one or both parents. Such literal orphanhood is also metaphorical for the detachment of diaspora (familial) and the cultural fragmentation produced by colonialism and neocolonialism. In Edwidge Danticat's The Farming of Bones, Amabelle Désir lives outside of her native Haiti in order to work in Trujillo's Dominican Republic of the 1930s. She witnesses the drowning of both of her parents as they try to cross the swollen Massacre river from the Dominican Republic back into Haiti. The orphaned child Amabelle is rescued by a man she calls Papi, a Spanish ex-patriot who takes her to his home where she works as a servant to his daughter, whom Amabelle respectfully calls Señora Valencia. Amabelle lives contentedly with the Dominican family, but is keenly aware of her limited, and eventually tenuous inclusion within its embrace. Her marginalization within this foreign country is ever-present, despite having lived there for several years. The magnitude of the notion of orphanhood for the island of two countries is revealed when she compares Papi to herself: "Like me, Papi had been displaced from his native land; he felt himself the orphaned child of a now orphaned people" (Danticat Farming 78)[7] Because it is ambiguous whether this orphanhood to which Amabelle refers is that of displaced Spaniards and other Europeans, or Dominicans, or peoples of the African diaspora in general, her words suggest that the entire island- and in fact the entire Caribbean region- is inhabited by orphans.

Danticat's female protagonist from Breath, Eyes, Memory is also Haitian-born. Sophie is raised by her Tante Atie because her mother, Martine, left years earlier to work in New York. Sophie has never known a father, because she is the result of a violent rape committed against her mother by an unknown man (perhaps a *macoute*) when she was very young. Sophie's maternal bond is not with her biological mother, but rather with her Tante Atie. Nevertheless, the women who comprise Sophie's family determine that she shall go to New York in order to receive an education and forge a true mother-daughter relationship with Martine. Of course, one immediately questions the potential of this to take place in a space so separated from Haiti and the terrain of family. On the plane to New York, Sophie witnesses the terrified fits of a young, orphaned boy, whose situation she no doubt feels reflects her own as they both leave their embattled homeland. Says the woman acting as the child's guardian, after informing those seated around her that the his father was a corrupt official who had just been killed in political violence: "'He does not have any more relatives here. His father's sister lives in New York. I called her. She is going to meet him there'" (Danticat Breath 38).[8] The displacement of this Haitian child's family to New York is fully completed with his departure. In a sense, then, his orphanhood is paralleled by his family's fissure from nation.



Both Rebecca (González) from Luz Argentina Chiriboga's Drums Under My Skin and Xuela (Richardson) of Jamaica Kincaid's The Autobiography of My Mother are sent as young women to the respective capital cities of their countries to be educated. Rebecca's parents are alive when she departs her town of Sikán (near Esmeraldas, Ecuador) for Quito, although her father will die in her absence. Her solitude is one that is created when she becomes aware of her difference: as one of only two *mulata* students in a primarily white girls' school, her skin color, which had been irrelevant in Sikán, now becomes a means of distinguishing her from the rest of the girls in the school. Further, she is of peasant background, another initial irrelevancy that becomes key in the definition of her identity in the capital. Shame leads Rebecca to temporarily divorce herself from her bonds to home in a desire to be accepted by her classmates. Contrary to Rebecca, Kincaid's Xuela is staunch in her identity and unapologetic about her mixed-race heritage as she grows up in Dominica. She finds herself beautiful and enjoys gazing in the mirror at her own reflection, although her self love rises entirely from her innate inner strength. Xuela's father is a greedy and cold man who shows her no affection and for whom she has no bond of love. She never knew her mother, who was Carib Indian: "My mother died at the moment I was born, and so for my whole life there was nothing standing between myself and eternity; at my back was

always a bleak, black wind" (Kincaid 3)[9] When sent at the age of fifteen to study in the capital of Roseau, she goes fully conscious of her solitary existence in life, as well as that of all the other inhabitants of her island. It is a loveless place, according to Kincaid. In reference to her first teacher and her classmates, she says: "She did not love us; we did not love her; we did not love one another, not then, not ever" (15).

The migrations of Puerto Rican Mayra Santos Febres's female characters in Urban Oracles are more abstract and not made towards the capital city or beyond Puerto Rico's borders, but certainly have a trajectory of outwardness: out of the home, pushing against spatial boundaries of female limitation.[10] Still, the colonial reality of Puerto Rico is ever-present, as are the cultural domination and hybridity which are inscribed on its spaces and bodies. Santos Febres' protagonists are as equally solitary as the women of the novels-existential, free-floating, self-determining or struggling to be so. As such, they venture into spaces determined by powers that they eventually undermine. Juliana of "Stained Glass Fish" hesitantly enters a gay bar and longs from afar to be the recipient of the kisses and affection her female coworker lavishes on her lesbian lover. Desire and the need for identification that she feels can come only from a woman leads her to overcome her fear and ask the woman to lunch. Dilcia M. of the story that carries her name, conquers the space of her prison cell -a cell that seeks to squelch her anticolonial desires-by possessing herself sexually.[11] And the young nameless schoolgirl of "The Parks" ventures into the park, deemed dangerous for women, so that she can have sexual relationships with strangers and obtain pleasure knowing that numerous eyes are watching her. "'Be careful in the parks'" say the voices that wish to suppress her movement and sexuality, but she goes anyway in order to satisfy her own desire.

The step away from home is multidimensional for the female protagonists in all of these works: it is a journey away from the house and the confines of family, away from traditions and the known, and into a space of the alien and an isolation that will eventually lead to discovery and return. Central to that discovery and the process of decolonization is the power implied by sexual freedom and exploration.

Sexual Freedom and Decolonization

For Myriam Chancy, exile provides the opportunity for the black Caribbean woman, specifically the black Caribbean woman writer, to step away from the gender limitations placed on her by family and society (as well as the race limitations placed by nation) and reconsider her identity from a "safe space." Importantly, Chancy indicates the body as a primary space where cultural and gender inscriptions are articulated and redefined.

Our bodies form the very nexus of the battle that begins at home and carries into exile. For those Afro-Caribbean women whose bodies are literally abused, physically or sexually, in order to strip them of their autonomy, class becomes an all-important dimension of their consciousness of the ways in which they are multiply disadvantaged; their response, then, must be one that speaks to class imbalance without themselves, however, repeating or inverting those imbalances. For other Afro-Caribbean women, the body becomes a representation of who they ought to be (wives, mothers, mammys, sapphires, and the rest) rather than who they know themselves to be' for such women, their Black and female bodies become the source of their fulfillment. And it is in exile that such awareness of the limitations imposed upon the body becomes much clearer; for "out there" women have the opportunity to speak out against their marginalization in a culture which is not theirs and which is not likely to punish for speaking out against the emigrants' culture that it feels the less threatened by (Chancy 5)[12]

In each of the narratives considered in this paper, sexuality and sexual exploration form part of exile, whatever the form it may take. The body becomes for each of the female protagonists an intimate territory that is very much her own in a foreign sphere in which nothing seems to truly belongs to her. The body functions thus as a tool of expression as well as a surface upon which to inscribe liberation, rebellion, anger, desire and love. In the midst of the alien, the violent and the threatening, it provides the only safe space for the self.

In Danticat's The Farming of Bones, Amabelle Désir's last name points to a desire for a safe space, a desire for family, for home and for nation. Within the text, Danticat constructs that space for her protagonist by allowing the narrative to fluctuate between two first-person modes which both belong to Amabelle: one that is externally oriented and concentrates on the events taking place in the Dominican Republic of Amabelle's life in that country, and one that communicates the intimate facets of her persona. This internal narrative voice, which is marked from the other in the text by its bold print, belongs to memory, to Haiti, to Amabelle's

parents, and to sexuality and her lover Sebastien. Within these sections, Amabelle comes to terms with herself, and at times her lover, sexually, emotionally and psychologically:

I close the door and lock out the tame night breeze that barely reaches my bare body, naked because Sebastien has made me believe that it is like a prayer to lie unclothed alone the way one came out of the womb, but mostly because I am hoping to feel the sweat gather between the cement floor and the hollow in my back, so that when I rise up, there will be a flood of perspiration to roll down over my buttocks, down the front and back and between my thighs, down to my knees, shins, ankles and toes, so that there will not be a drop of liquid left in me with which to cry (Danticat Farming 94).

The intimacy and sensuality that characterize the private narrative passages of the novel contrast with the sense of exclusion and cultural violence that Amabelle confronts in the other parts of the text. These are the mechanisms of difference constructed by excessive Dominican nationalism over which she has no control and yet which determine her daily existence in that country. Amabelle's blackness at times marks her difference from Dominicans, but because physical distinctions don't serve to effectively distinguish the two peoples who share African heritage, it is language that becomes the dividing element. Demanding pronunciation of the Spanish word for parsley (*perejil*), which is difficult for a Haitian Kreyol speaker in the "r" and "j" sounds, comes to serve Dominicans as a means to single out Haitians and cast them as inferior or persecute them. Since Amabelle has spent the majority of her youth in the Dominican Republic, she is able to pronounce both the Kreyol *pési* and Spanish *perejil* with ease. Nonetheless, she still falls victim to the violence against her people, underscoring the negative ways in which arbitrary categories of difference are used in the name of nationalism.

Tragically, though not surprisingly, the intimate narrative portions of the text will cease with Sebastien's disappearance and the violence of the 1937 Dominican massacre against Haitians that consumes the novel. This narrative will not return until the final pages of the novel, when Amabelle is still searching for peace and safety, in Haiti or somewhere between the two countries. Of her obligatory flight out of the Dominican Republic in the face of the massacre, she says:

> I had never desired to run away. I knew what was happening but I did not want to flee. 'Where to?', 'Who to?', was always chiming in my head... The slaughter is the only thing that is mine enough to pass on. All I want to do is find a place to lay it down now and again, a safe nest where it will neither be scattered by the winds, nor remain forever buried beneath the sod. (Danticat Farming 264, 266)

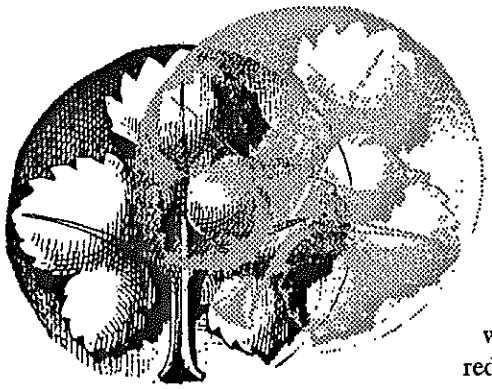
Amabelle's true self and identity are contained within the passages that relate the link between her memory and sexuality. In the first part of The Farming of Bones, it is Amabelle's sexual intimacy with Sebastien that provides her with a source of continued identity and strength while living in a country that is not her own. The connection of their bodies in intimacy is more metaphorical than explicitly erotic in the bond to Haiti it implies. After Sebastien's disappearance, it takes time before Amabelle can recover her interior voice. Even in her sexual relationship with Yves, a friend of Sebastien who survives the massacre, she is unable to find the narrative space of inner peace. Once she does recover that peace, however, it functions once again as a link to her own body and its search for rootedness to place. In the final pages of the novel, Amabelle, sheds her clothing and lies down nude in the water of the Massacre river that separates Haiti from the Dominican Republic, the river where her parents drown and the river that Haitians scrambled to cross in the escape from Dominican violence in 1937. As the water caresses her body, Amabelle seeks memory that contains her past, her parents, her lover Sebastien, and some reconciliation of the broken fragments of diaspora that have unjustly separated peoples of a common past.

In Danticat's Breath, Eyes, Memory, Sophie's entrance into sexual maturity comes at about the same time she is sent from Haiti to live with her mother in New York. It is there that she is forced to confront the ritual that the women of her family have imposed on their daughters for at least two generations in the name of preserving their virginity, and therefore, honor, until marriage. Thus, Martine, Sophie's mother, subjects her daughter to "the test", a humiliating examination of her child's hymen in order to verify her innocence. Sophie finds herself trapped between an imposition of traditional chastity and her own sexual volition and desires. She enters into a romantic relationship with a man she loves and with whom she eventually makes love, but it is not he, but rather Sophie who takes her own virginity. Enraged by her mother's invasion of her body, she uses a pestle to break her hymen, attempting at the same time to break the cycle of sexual control over the female body in her family.

It is no coincidence that a story of Erzulie appears in the text just previous to Sophie's act of rebellion geared toward her mother.[13] Erzulie has accompanied Sophie throughout her life: "As a child, the mother I had imagined for myself was like Erzulie, the lavish

Virgin Mother. She was the healer of all women and the desire of all men" (Danticat Breath 59) The story that Sophie recalls is of a woman who bleeds for twelve years from her skin. When doctors are unable to help her, she turns to Erzulie, who stops the woman's bleeding by transforming her into the life form of her choice: a butterfly. "The woman was transformed and never bled again" (88) are the words that precede Sophie's act of violence against her body. She fails the next test her mother performs on her, and is thrown out of the house, just as she had suspected she would be. Sophie's anguish with her mother's invasiveness and the lack of control she has over her body and destiny parallels metaphorically the bleeding of the woman who seeks out Erzulie. The moment of bleeding for Sophie is the moment of her liberation from that anguish, or so she believes. In fact, the past will prove much more difficult to escape, for Sophie's blood recalls the bleeding (and need for self-determination) of a nation and of an entire colonized people.

Sophie occupies a position of geographic and generational transition, but it does not allow her to simply break out of the defined cycles of Haitian womanhood that characterize her family. While she terminates her virginity and chooses her own lover and husband, the tests of her youth haunt her and the nightmares of rape that torture her mother compound her own fears, making a sexual relationship with her husband unbearable to her. On a spatial level, Sophie's trips back and forth from Haiti reflect the tension between tradition and a desire to redefine sexual norms. Significantly, Sophie's decisions for independence over her body are made in "exile" in the US, geographically separated from her mother's rape in Haiti and the family's repressive traditions. But, the complexity of breaking away from the cycle of womanhood that Sophie has inherited is implied by a mother/daughter cycle, as when both Tante Atie and Sophie's grandmother compare Sophie to her mother by use of the proverb: "Crabs don't make papayas," meaning "you are your mother's daughter." The child Sophie gives birth to is also a girl, whose existence is certainly meant to produce resonances of Sophie's relationship with her own mother. Brigitte allows, however, for the possibility of a different mother/daughter resolution projected into the future.



Sophie's final trip home in the novel is made to accompany her mother's body to Haiti so that she may be buried there. Martine has killed herself in an attempt to abort the child she was carrying, driven mad by the tortuous memories of her rape that it produced in her. As Sophie contemplates her deceased mother, clothed in the red dress she has chosen for her, she thinks once again of Erzulie, in whom she finds vindication for her mother and herself: "She would look like a Jezebel, hot-blooded Erzulie who feared no men, but rather made them her slaves, raped *them*, and killed *them*. She was the only woman with power" (227). It is the reconciliation of the virginal Erzulie and the powerful Erzulie that Sophie seeks within herself, through a coming to terms with the past and a simultaneous redefinition of the present. She returns to the canefield where her mother was raped to find this peace and some resolution to both of their suffering: "My mother was as brave as stars at dawn. She too was from this place. My mother was like that woman who could never bleed and then could never stop bleeding, the one who gave in to her pain, to live as a butterfly. Yes, my mother was like me." (234)

Like Sophie, Chiriboga's Rebecca in Drums Under My Skin makes her migration to study (in the capital city of Quito in the late 1960s) at the same time she is coming into sexual maturity. Concerned with her daughter's virtue in her absence, Rebecca's mother warns repeatedly: "Behave yourself." "A month before I left Sikán, she taught me to kneel and say the Our Father, and at her command, I filled a hundred-page notebook with this sentence: 'I will always behave myself'" (Chiriboga 6).[14] Rebecca doesn't forget her mother's words. Neither, however, does she follow her mother's notions of good behavior as she initiates immediate exploration of her sexuality, pushing the limits of the school's rules and society's expectations. In the capital, she maintains her virginity, but enters into erotic relationships with a male transvestite student named Vicenta, the school's priest Father Cayetano, the wealthy father of one of her schoolmates, Juan Lorenti, and a student, Fernando Ponce. At one point, her desire almost leads her to fall unwittingly into a prostitution ring led by a schoolmate. In Quito, Rebecca is initially naïve, unaware that her race (she is biracial, *mulata*) and peasant background would make her different in the eyes of her schoolmates and the nuns. Significantly, it is her sexual exploits which facilitate a greater understanding of her society and of human nature overall. By becoming involved with men from social backgrounds and positions different from her own, she gains a comprehension of their motivations, and more

importantly, of her sexual power over them. Sensuality and sexual freedom provide Rebecca with a sense of worth and confidence where it had previously been diminished.

Sikán, Rebecca's home town, is initially a source of shame for her in the face of her schoolmates. She fears the revelation of her African heritage and her peasant origins. But the novel pushes Rebecca towards growth and an acceptance of her identity. In the face of an accusation of inferiority on the basis of the African origin of her grandmother, Rebecca's response is:

> "I'm her granddaughter," I said to her in defiance. Afterwards, everything was easy. My roots, which I had wrongfully wanted to hide, were no longer painful to me. I felt like a part of my grandmother, a result of her, and I heard her drums beating under my skin. From then on I began to speak frequently of her, and whenever I did so, I found more strength in her memory. (92)

Upon the death of her father, Rebecca returns home to Sikán and starts a small business transporting livestock between her town and Guayaquil. But Rebecca's sexual desires are equally forceful in determining in her life in Sikán as in Quito. She longs for Fernando, who remains in the capital, and she gives in to her physical desire for Milton Cevallos, a local white peasant, losing her virginity to him. She also consummates her desire for Father Cayetano. Too late, Rebecca discovers that her desires have been youthfully self-absorbed, tragically diverting her away from what should have been an energy externally directed towards political activism. Julio Martínez, the novel's pseudonym for Che Guevara, whom she meets on the bus to Quito, is actually the man she desires in her fantasies. And the black nun known as Sister Inés (Olga) is the political activist she admires. But somehow these figures pass through Rebecca's life without succeeding in making her actively assume a social role in her community:

> She [Sister Inés/Olga] spoke of the urgent need to organize, to form a common front for resistance. 'People are afraid to die.' 'So am I,' I said to her. I kept feeling smaller and smaller as we spoke. I had a mouth to speak, eyes to see, hands for the farm, but I was not collaborating in rescuing the dignity of the country. (138)

It is Rebecca's naiveté in her irresponsible handling of a deciphered cryptogram that results in the death of Olga. Rebecca herself is accused of subversion and of ties to Julio Martínez, and the novel's final lines suggest that she, too, is shot by the soldiers: "There are shots, screams, dead people. Manuelita Sáenz recognizes them. 'They're the same people as usual.'" (139) Rebecca's movement within her country had provided her with all of the tools necessary to awaken her social consciousness and even make her a lead

Xuela Richardson of Kincaid's The Autobiography of my Mother is as wise and self-assured as Chiriboga's Rebecca is naïve. Xuela's migration to the capital of Roseau (Dominica) to attend school there takes place when she is fifteen years old. She becomes a boarder in the house of a married man who will become her lover, the first in a series of men with whom she will have sexual relations, but whom she does not love. Xuela decides that in a (post)colonial world where there is no love, and where she is entirely alone, she will love herself unapologetically. Her body, then, becomes her homeland. She enjoys its scents and textures, and she masturbates with uninhibited pleasure. Men are for her no more than an avenue to herself: "... the body of a man is not what makes him desirable, it is what his body might make you feel when it touches you that is the thrill, anticipating what his body will make you feel, and then the reality becomes better than the anticipation and the world has a wholeness to it, a wholeness with a current running through it, a current of pure pleasure." (70-1) She loves one man, Roland, but that love quickly and painlessly passes. And she does marry, eventually, but she marries a man she does not love. She never has children. She aborts one pregnancy and, happily in her view, never conceives again. Xuela turns her escape from childbearing into a further liberation of herself: "Exhausted from the agony of expelling from my body a child I could not love and so did not want, I dreamed of all the things that were mine." (89) Sexuality is a freedom for Xuela, unhindered by the traditional burdens it often entails in wedlock and motherhood.

For Mayra Santos Febres' female protagonists as well, the sexualized body is the purest expression of freedom. They empower themselves by invading the physical, metaphorical and textual spaces previously forbidden to women. "Dilcia M.," the political prisoner, finds through masturbation that her body, if nothing else, is her own in the prison where the guards strip her of everything else. Juliana's hesitant entrance into the gay bar in "Stained Glass Fish" is a venture into herself and her own desire for a sexual relationship with another woman. And the teenage protagonist of "The Parks" is sexually ravenous and even exhibitionist, but an emphatically normal young woman sexuality and all:

> She is fifteen years old, has a park close at hand, has accomplices, and once in a while she goes for a walk. She gets good grades in school. Someday she'll go to the university. She likes Math and English. She doesn't have any vices, she's not stupid, and in the afternoon she closes her eyes for one instant to see herself as the image that the eyes peering into the

> park see, with her little back arched and her Maja brand powder compact like a Delilah looking out... to start the game (Santos Febres 63)

Movement away from home, whatever site that might imply, entails an exploration of sexuality in metaphorical or very concrete terms for all of the young women of these narrations. In many cases a rejection of sexual norms and limitations imposed on the female body characterizes the behavior of the protagonists. Promiscuity, the refusal to bear children, lesbianism and the rejection of marriage are just a few of the choices with which they destroy traditional notions of female sexuality that often accompany the colonial legacy that surrounds them. Reinscription of the sexuality of the body thus represents the initial step in the process of decolonization suggested by each work. That first step prefigures an eventual return "home" and a confrontation of the greater structures of oppression still at work.

Return Home

While away from home the historically orphaned female subject has been partially reinvented through the sexuality and sensuality of her body, yet home remains an essential element for her in the process of reconstitution. Home cannot simply be cast aside because the history it implies is necessary component to a reformation of a decolonized identity. That is, memory is crucial. In part, the return home, whether temporary or permanent, metaphorical or real, requires a deliberation on the part of the protagonist of what must be remembered and what should be forgotten. That same process is requisite for the healing of colonial wounds that belong to her, but on a larger scale to her "people" as well. Amabelle Désire (Farming) cannot forget the horror of the massacre she has lived and yearns only to make peace with the past. Her own coming to terms with that violence and the historical processes of racism, nationalism and domination surrounding it suggests on a greater scope a healing and increased sense of autonomy for all of Haiti. Sophie's struggle to break free from the cycle of pain of her mother (Breath) implies a general need to shed cultural norms that reproduce colonial and patriarchal structures of power. For Xuela (Autobiography) the only hope for the female subject is to first save and liberate herself. Perhaps once truly independent individuals can learn to love each other a sense of nation can be obtained in the Caribbean island. But meanwhile, the orphans who constituted its human components, such as her Carob mother, remain victims lost in the past. A reconciliation with the memory of the mother, or some mother figure, forms part of the journey home for these women, and points to a confrontation with the past. Says Chancy about memory and exile:

> ...there should be no dead, silenced, forgotten foremothers among us, for it is they who provide us with a guide to a memory that will transform our forward motion. In reclaiming these foremothers, we reclaim ourselves and repair the fissures caused by distrust, economic and political turmoil, as well as the process of emigration. We repair the generational disruptions that have by and large fueled the repetition of the cycles of abuse directed at the youngest and most fragile among us, especially girl children. (Chancy 214)

In the home space, then, the self in all of these works is part of a greater geographic and national entity that requires a similar shedding of colonial baggage. But once left behind, home becomes alien, and often alienating. "Home, then, paradoxically becomes both the site of self-recovery and the point of no return" (Chancy xi). The questions at the end of these narratives (Can we move beyond our colonial legacy? Or shall we remain orphans unable to escape historical structures alien to our true culture essence?) are in some senses left unanswered. Our last image of Amabelle is one in which she lies in the river bridging two unreconciled worlds. Sophie feels she has freed herself (Ou libéré!) but she must recognize that she remains part of a cycle. Rebecca (Drums) dies, failing to ever effect change for her community as she might have. Xuela (Autobiography) chooses a loveless, solitary life. And while Mayra Santos Febres' characters affirm their autonomy through sexuality, we are never given an indication of any greater outcome of their actions.

In the works by Afro-Latin American women writers considered in this paper, the female protagonists undergo an experience of movement to a sphere that forces them to confront a level of their identity previously ignored.. It is striking to realize that all, in one way or another, are orphaned; that is to say, they are all terribly alone in their movement. They are either separated from family or community- and yet entirely unable to separate from its legacy/reality. In all of the cases where there is physical displacement, each woman returns home in order to confront the self she has carried with her and rearticulated in her absence. The discovery of body and sexual expression is linked to the return, and while sexuality certainly allows for a greater knowledge of self, it does not insure a positive resolution of the crisis of migration and cultural schizophrenia. The female protagonist finds herself, even at the end of the narration, in a transitional state. She has taken steps that go beyond those of her foremothers,

but the peace of success or complete self-realization is left yet problematized, perhaps signaling a need for continued redefinition of identity, or perhaps signifying the scars of cultural rupture which are ultimately indelible.

Works Cited:

Please see the author at the MLA for a list of Works Cited.

Notes

[1] All of the authors dealt with in this paper are themselves in motion, within their countries or between them and the United States.

[2] Antonio Benítez Rojo, in his book on postmodernism and the Caribbean, points to the plantation as the "strange attractor" in the region, that is the historical reality that determines and unifies the (seemingly chaotic) multitude of cultural manifestations found there. See The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective. Durham: Duke UP, 1992, 264-269.

[3] The importance of women of color establishing canonical presence is a central concern in Carole Boyce Davies' introduction to her critical anthology Moving Beyond Boundaries, 2 vols. New York: New York University Press, 1995.

[4] Recall, for example, the poetic voice which patiently waits to be rescued from the island shore in Judith Cofer's "The Idea of Islands" in Terms of Survival, University of Houston, Arte Público, 1995.

[5] See particularly the Introduction.

[6] Carole Boyce Davies. Black Women, Writing and Identity: Migrations of the Subject. New York: Routledge, 1994. See chapter four and particularly pages 81-86.

[7] Edwidge Danticat. The Farming of Bones. New York: Soho Press, 1998.

[8] Edwidge Danticat. Breath, Eyes, Memory. New York: Vintage, 1994.

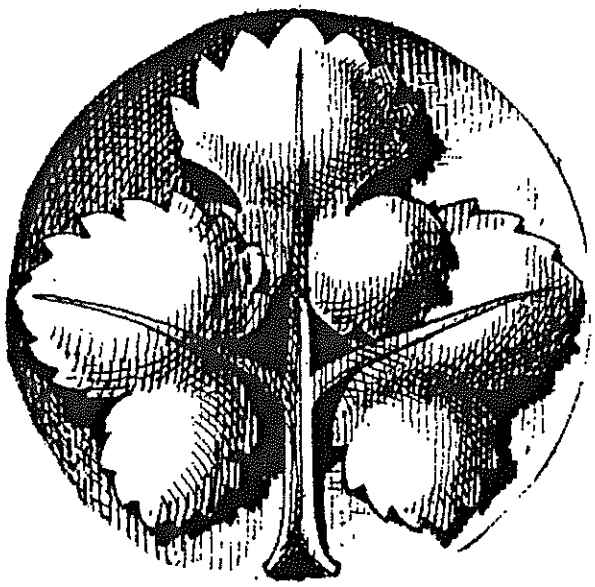
[9] Jamaica Kincaid. The Autobiography of My Mother. New York: Plume, 1996.

[10] Mayra Santos Febres, Urban Oracles. Cambridge, Mass.: Lumen Editions, 1997.

[11] I assume that Dilcia M. is Dylcia Noemi Pagán, one of the FALN Puerto Rican nationalists recently granted clemency by President Clinton.

[12] Myriam J.A. Chancy. Searching for Safe Spaces:Afro-Caribbean Women Writers in Exile. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997.

[13] Erzulie is the Haitian goddess of love, beauty, flowers, jewels dancing and fine clothes. According to Richard Carlyon in A Guide to the Gods. New York: William and Morrow and Company, 1982, Erzulie requires luxury and detail. Interestingly for our purposes, he adds: "In addition to being so demanding, Erzulie is the soul of generosity, lavish with her gifts, her affections and her body. She greets all men with warm embraces. She is sexually involved with all three major gods of Voodoo, Damballah, Agwe, and Ogoun. She wears three wedding rings. Her exuberant physical generosity comes from sincere love rather than mere promiscuity. Yet Erzulie's gaiety is tinged with sadness. She will be happy and frolicsome, flirting, sipping champagne and laughing, and then suddenly be plunged into tears and racking sorrow. She is conscious of betrayal; she is cosmic innocence besmirched. In this aspect she is, with reason, especially worshipped by prostitutes. She is at once pure virgin and bright-eyed coquette, constantly yearning for a perfection which is forever unattainable (70).



[14] Luz Argentina Chiriboga. Drums Under My Skin. Washington DD: Afro-Hispanic Institute, 1996.

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Who are we?

In the year 2000, president Elizabeth Rosa Horan of Arizona State University will lead this important network of feminist scholars in Hispanic studies. Our members include professionals at many stages: we are directors of graduate programs, administrators, department chairs, as well as librarians, creative writers, graduate students, and independent scholars.

For women with less professional experience, membership in *Feministas Unidas* can provide a comfortable entry into the academic world; for senior members, it may offer the chance to engage in mentoring a new generation of feminist scholars.

About our newsletter:

Our Newsletter publishes a variety of information for members: job vacancies; fellowship and prize competitions; announcements of books, films, and videos; notices of members' research projects; conference announcements and publication opportunities; and pertinent reprints from other publications. The Newsletter functions as the tie that connects us during the year, and both Linda Fox, who edited the newsletter for 16 years, and Cynthia M. Tompkins at Arizona State University, have consistently produced a highly informative publication.

Feministas Unidas:

Feministas Unidas is a Coalition of Feminist Scholars in Spanish, Spanish-American, Luso-Brazilian, Afro-Latin American, and U.S. Hispanic Studies. Since it was founded 20 years ago, *Feministas Unidas* has published 19 volumes of its Newsletter, which appears in April and December, and as an Allied Organization of MLA has sponsored panels at the Annual Convention. We are also an Associated Organization of the M/MLA.

At the MLA and the M/MLA, our sessions have dealt with many aspects of women's writing in Spanish and Portuguese, feminist theory, and the conditions for our teaching and research. We also meet at the MLA to conduct the official business of *Feministas Unidas* and to get to know one another informally. We keep archives to document the history of *Feministas Unidas* and we collect our syllabi from courses on women, a project that will culminate in a book publication. Lately we have worked toward setting up regional caucuses. Lou Charnon-Deutsch directed a bibliographic project for *Feministas Unidas* entitled Hispanic Feminist Criticism: An Annotated Bibliography. (New York:Feministas Unidas, 1994.) This annotated bibliography of feminist theory and criticism is an invaluable tool for the membership and the larger profession.

What is our objective?

The Women's Caucus of the MLA serves the general needs of its many constituents, and so, like our counterpart associations Women in German and Women in French, we in *Feministas Unidas* have come together in an attempt to address the particular concerns of women working in our specific areas of research and teaching.

Membership Form

for the Calendar Year January - December 2000

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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 20th year, *Feministas Unidas* publishes a Newsletter in April and December, and as an Allied Organization of MLA sponsors panels at the Annual convention.

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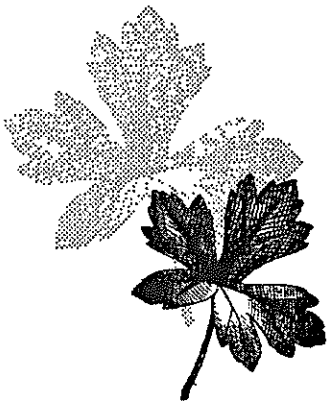

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One of the aims of the *Feministas Unidas* Newsletter is to make the valuable information that you send us highly accessible to our readers. For this purpose, it is important that you describe your event or project as clearly as possible. Please type your description, if you would like, use a separate sheet for additional information, and photocopy this form for each separate event.

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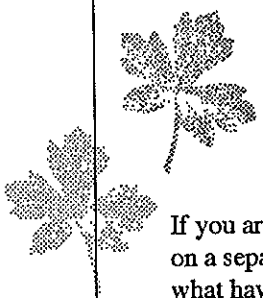

If you are contributing with a publication or with special news, on a separate sheet of paper, we ask that you tell us about yourself: what have you published prior to this, what are your research interests, etc.?

In order to make your work more visible, we ask that you include a black and white or colored photograph of yourself.

Thank you for your cooperation and your interest

Into which section of the *Feministas Unidas* Newsletter would you like your material to appear?

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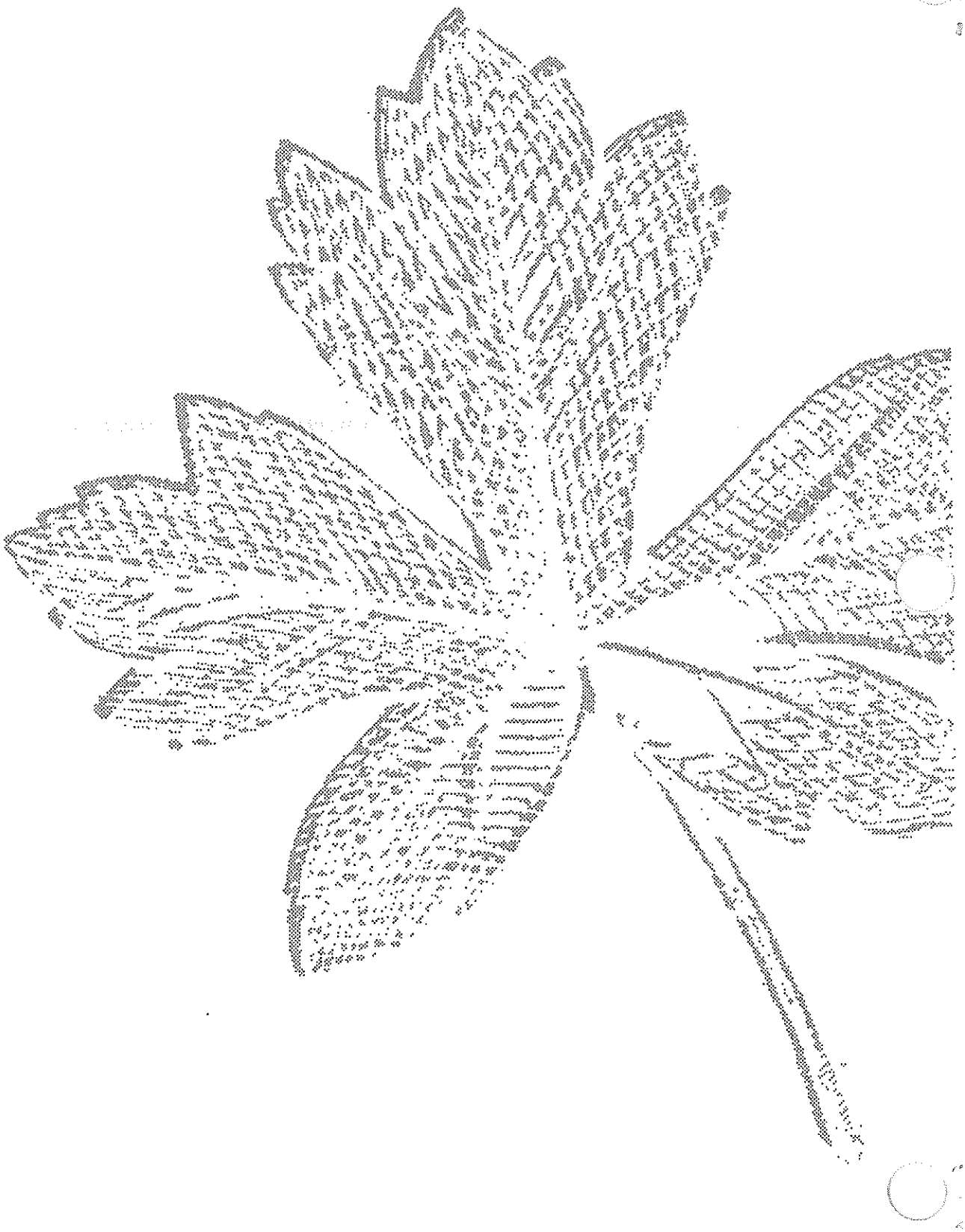

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