
Feministas

U n i d a s



Julia Alvarez



TRIUNFO

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



Queridas Colegas:

We've had our allied Organization status renewed for the next seven years: the MLA office for affiliate organizations reports that it has accepted your outgoing Presidenta's seven-year report, compiled from stacks of newsletters dating back to our group's founding in 1970. It gave me much pleasure to see how we've endured and prospered, these twenty years.

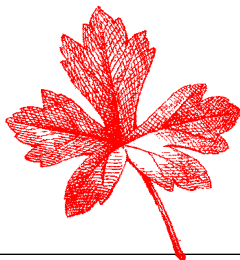
At this year's MLA: Feministas Unidas continues the work begun last year by members Rosemary Geisdorfer Feal and Victoria García –Serrano; Cynthia Tompkins continues her fine work as Newsletter Editor and Candyce Leonard, our valiant Treasurer. As before, this year's Feministas panels and meetings are co-ordinated with the MLA Women's Caucus, as well as Women in French and German. With other feminist and women's groups on the MLA program, we want to make sure that women's real-life concerns are brought to the table. This year's Feministas panels stress our social responsibilities as we work in, around (and, some might say, despite) academia. We continue our tradition of having a roundtable workshop session devoted to practical/pedagogical concerns, as well as a session involving papers and presentations (printed in this newsletter) centered on theory. Given our distinguished panelists and our always-engaged membership, the discussion will surely be lively!

Don't forget the Party! (The Business Meeting and Fiesta, that is!) This year it will be held at the Marriot, in the Arizona State University suite, (reserved by D. Bivona/Dept. of English). Please come and greet the beginning of a new year, with our new Presidenta, Beth Jorgenson, and other members of our organization, for drinks and food at our business meeting, on Friday, December 29, from 5:30 – 7:00. Bring, as ever, your fresh ideas to this year's business meeting, which includes, as usual, decisions to be made concerning topics and calls for papers for next year's panels. We also have calls from past and former treasurers to settle our dues structure, which has not been raised in many years, making our newsletter publication, not to mention the funding of our business meeting, an increasing challenge.

A final reminder: Feministas Unidas exists as a networking body, to support feminist work throughout the academy by scholars and teachers at every level, and at every type of institution. Our treasury includes scholarship monies to support graduate students to present at Feministas panels. If you work with graduate students, encourage them to join. Urge them to submit proposals to Feministas Unidas panels. Perhaps we should reserve at least one space on each Feministas panel for graduate student or joint faculty-graduate student efforts. Such mentoring, part of our broader activism on behalf of feminist theory and practice, is crucial to our future, and to the future of feministas everywhere.

Desde el fondo de mi corazon, gracias for this opportunity to serve the organization that sponsored me twelve years ago, as a graduate student, at my first national conference presentation. Please consider, as I have, how the friendship and support of colleagues in Feministas may have nurtured your development as a teacher and scholar. Renew your membership. Contribute to our treasury. Contribute book reviews to our newsletter. Help organize a panel. Tell your like-minded younger colleagues to join. Doing all this, our next two decades will surely be as fruitful as the two decades past.

29 nov. 2000. Elizabeth Rosa Horan



Mis queridas y queridos colegas:

Quisiera agradecerle a Julia Alvarez la gentileza de habernos permitido compartir su "Triunfo," y muy especialmente a Juana Suárez, por haber lo sugerido y haberse encargado de establecer contacto con Julia, además de presentarla. Espero que ésto sea solo el comienzo, y que Julia, como así también quienes participen en la Corporación Cachivache, pueda hacer llegar su obra a los EEUU.

Vaya mi más profundo agradecimiento a Miguel Quijada, por haber creado una nueva página de web, y por haberla actualizado con el material de dos newsletters.

Asimismo, no hay palabras para agradecerle a María Martell, quien a pesar de sus obligaciones como Ph.D. Candidate, y ante la falta de intern, se tomó el tiempo para scanear artículos y preparar la sección sobre las compañeras que presentan este año en el MLA. Además María envió recordatorios electrónicos a 150 colegas, lo cual parece haber funcionado.

Gracias a uds. por la celeridad con que enviaron los cheques, realmente atravesamos una situación crítica. Les ruego a todos que mantengan las cuotas al día...

Notarán que suprimí la parte de "Call for Papers"... Estoy tratando de reducir los gastos. Por favor manténganse al tanto de la lista electrónica, ya que las convocatorias circulan apenas me las hacen llegar.

Me parece que deberíamos incrementar las contribuciones, porque en realidad estamos funcionando a pérdida. Por favor piensen si conviene aumentar todas, o dejar la de los estudiantes en \$ 5, lo cual no cubre el costo de los newsletters.

También creo que habría que re-examinar la idea de enviar el material en hard copy simplemente a quienes no tengan acceso al web... Obviamente, esto abarataría los costos...

Como siempre, Candyce Leonard ha hecho una increíble labor como tesorera, lo cual incluyó el envío de recordatorios por carta, y la idea de incluir formularios de renovación y sobres, que sufragó personalmente.

¡A Elizabeth Horán, nuestra presidenta, le debemos las reseñas!

¡Bienvenida Beth Jörgensen, nuestra nueva Vice-y posterior Presidenta!

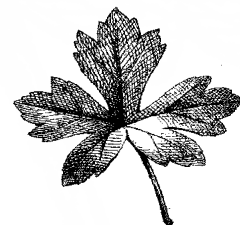
¡Gracias, Christine Henseler! sigo con el template que creaste...

Me apena no estar en la reunión este año, para festejar la tarjeta verde pasaremos las fiestas en la Argentina, con la familia, después de una ausencia de seis años, que son como una vida para Cami, mi hija/sobrina, que acaba de cumplir diez. Sé que la pasarán bien, recuerden que la cita es en la suite de Dan Bivona, en el Marriott Hotel, el viernes 29 de diciembre, de 5:30 a 7:00.

¡Felices Fiestas! ¡un próspero Año Nuevo! Y que disfruten del breve descanso...

Con el cariño de siempre,

Cyn.



Feministas Unidas Sessions at the MLA

MLA 225. "Hispanic" Women, Politics and Social Justice: Historical and Cultural Perspectives

Feministas Unidas session

12:00noon-1:15 p.m. *Chevy Chase, Washington Hilton*

Presiders: Alicia del Campo, Univ. of California, Irvine
Rosemary G. Feal, State Univ. of New York, Buffalo

1. "Gestiones para el nuevo milenio: Movimientos femeninos, organizaciones feministas y la política en Argentina."
María Claudia Andre, Hope College.

2. "Re/presentaciones de la represión: Pedagogía y lucha armada."
Patricia Greene, Michigan State Univ.

3. "Una historia para comprender lo que nos pasó": biografía, justicia política-social, y la mujer en Hispanoamérica."
Mary Jane Treacy, Simmons College.

Respondent: Amy K. Kaminsky, Univ of Minnesota, Twin Cities

MLA 816. *Cronicas: Tales from the Academy.*

Feministas Unidas Pedagogy Workshop

1:45-3:00 p.m., *Edison, Washington Hilton*

Co-organized by Maria Asuncion Gomez (Florida International University) and Elizabeth Rosa Horan (Arizona State University)

1. "Walking the fine line between 'doing too much' and 'not enough.'"
Elizabeth C. Martinez, Sonoma State University, California

2. "Why do women enter the 'network' late, if ever?"
Rosalia Cornejo-Parriego, Penn State Univ., University Park

3. "Policy and Prejudice in the Academy."
Nancy Gutierrez, Arizona State University

4. "Partnership and Empowerment."
Maria Asuncion Gomez, Florida International University.

MLA Sessions

Wednesday, 27 December

MLA No. 3 A Preconvention Workshop for Job Seekers: The Job Search in Foreign Languages

3:30-4:45 p.m./Thoroughbred/Washington Hilton/Program arranged by the Association of Departments of Foreign Languages.

Presiding: Elizabeth B. Welles, MLA.

MLA No. 12 Literature and Class in Nineteenth-Century Spain

5:15-6:30 p.m./Conservatory/Washington Hilton/Program arranged by the Division on Eighteenth-and Nineteenth-Century Spanish Literature.

Presiding: Lou Charnon-Deutsch, State Univ. of New York, Stony Brook

1. "Representing Civil Society in Spanish Romanticism," Thomas E. Lewis, Univ. of Iowa

MLA No. 24 Reenvisioning the Future of Spanish Programs

5:15-6:30 p.m./Lincoln East/Washington Hill/A special session

Respondent: Roberta Johnson, Univ. of Kansas.

MLA No. 69 Mock Interviews for Job Seekers in Foreign Languages

8:45-10:00 p.m./Map/Washington Hilton/Program arranged by the Association of Departments of Foreign Languages.

Presiding: Arthur D. Mosher, Univ. of Dayton.

Speakers: Geraldine Cleary Nichols, Univ. of Florida; Earl M. Rickerson, Coll. of Charleston.

Thursday, 28 December

MLA No. 114 Recent Trends in Latin American Theater

8:30-9:45 a.m./Chevy Chase/Washington Hilton/A special session

4. "Narrative Games in Alejandro Tantanian's *Juegos de damas crueles*," Sharon Magnarelli, Quinnipiac Univ.

MLA No. 119 The Roles of Literature in Foreign Languages Programs

8:30-9:45 a.m./Conservatory/Washington Hilton/Program arranged by the MLA Advisory Committee on Foreign Languages and Literatures.

Presiding: Randolph D. Pope, Washington Univ.

2. "Literature across the Curriculum: Spanish at Undergraduate Liberal Arts Institutions," Gwendolyn Barnes-Karol, Saint Olaf Coll.

MLA No. 130 Figuring the *Morisco* in Golden Age Spain

10:45-11:30 a.m./Chevy Chase/Washington Hilton/Program arranged by the Division of the Sixteenth-and Seventeenth-Century Spanish Poetry and Prose.

Presiding: María Cristina Quintero, Bryn Mawr Coll.

1. "Política de asimilación y estatus de inferioridad en el *Tratado acerca de los moriscos de España* de Pedro de Valencia," Mar Martínez-Góngora, Univ. of Mississippi.

MLA No. 201 Translation and the Conditions of Knowledge

12:00 noon-1:15 p.m./Caucus/Washington Hilton/Program arranged by Discussion Group on Translation.

Presiding: Carol S. Maier, Kent State Univ., Kent.



Thursday, 28 December

MLA No. 225 "Hispanic" Women, Politics, and Social Justice: Historical and Cultural Perspectives
FeministasUnidas session

12:00noon-1:15 p.m. *Chevy Chase, Washington Hilton*

MLA No. 241 Going into the Twenty-First Century: What Texts Are We Taking with Us?

1:45-3:00 p.m./Map/ Washington Hilton/program arranged by the Division on Twentieth-Century Spanish Literature
Presiding: Joan L. Brown, Univ. of Delaware, Newark

MLA No. 269 Social and Moral responsibility

1:45-3:00 p.m./Virginia Suite B/Marriott/Program arranged by the MLA Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession

Presiding: Rosemary Geisdorfer Feal, State Univ. of New York, Buffalo.

3. "What's Wrong with Building the Discourse of Solidarity in Academia? Reflections on Teaching and *Testimonio*," Alicia M. Partnoy, Loyola Marymount Univ.

MLA No. 296 Mixed Subjects: Women Read Latin America

3:30-4:45 p.m./Monroe West/ Washington Hilton/Program arranged by the Division on Twentieth-Century Spanish Literature.

Presiding; Cynthia Steele, Univ. of Washington

3. "Easy Women: Sex and Gender in Modern Mexican Fiction," Debra Ann Castillo, Cornell Univ.

MLA No. 407 "Nuestra Criolla Nación": Cultural Identity and Textuality in the Andes, 1638-1736

7:15-8:30 p.m./Edison/ Washington Hilton/A special session

3. "*Criollismo*: Cultural Realities and textual Traditions," Jerry Williams, West Chester Univ.

MLA No. 415 Teaching Text and Translation: A Roundtable Discussion

7:15-8:30 p.m./Conservatory/ Washington Hilton/ Program arranged by the MLA Publications Committee

Presiding: Kathleen Ann Ross, New York Univ.

Carol S. Maier, Kent State Univ., Kent. Speaker

Friday, 29 December

MLA No. 431 Performance and Culture in Contemporary Latin America

8:30-9:45 a.m./Hemisphere/ Washington Hilton/ Program arranged by the Division on Twentieth-Century Latin American Literature

Presiding: Vicky Unruh, Univ. of Kansas

3. "Performing Motherhood in Argentina and Mexico: Griselda Gambaro and Hugo Arguelles," Sharon Magnarelli, Quinnipiac Univ.

MLA No. 456 Critical Articulations in Hispanism: Literature, Criticism, Theory

8:30-9:45 a.m. Monroe East/ Washington Hilton/ A special session; session leader: Dara E. Goldman, Univ. of Illinois, Urbana.

MLA No. 466 Women in the Colonial Latin American Inquisition

10:15-11:30 a.m./ Chevy Chase/ Washington Hilton/ Program arranged by the Division of Literature of Colonial Spanish America.

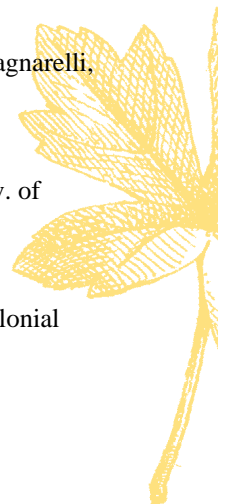
Presiding: Stacey Schlau, West Chester Univ.

MLA No. 499 Catalonia; or, The Vitality of the Periphery I

10:15-11:30 a.m./ Dupont/ Washington Hilton/ Program arranged by the North American Catalan Society.

Presiding: Bradley Scott Epps, Harvard Univ.

3. "Reading Reproduction," Geraldine Cleary Nichols, Univ. of Florida.



Friday, 29 December**MLA No. 500 Nuevas perspectivas sobre la estética de Galdós**

10:15-11:30 a.m./ Georgetown West/Washington Hilton/ Program arranged by the International Association of Galdós Scholars.

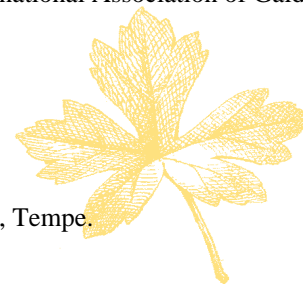
Presiding: Diane F. Urey, Illinois State Univ.

MLA No. 553 Foreign Languages, Foreign Cultures

1:45-3:30 p.m./ Jefferson West/Washington Hilton/ A forum.

Presiding: Russell Alexander Berman, Stanford Univ.

3. "Cultural Studies and Sexual Ideologies," David William Foster, Arizona State Univ., Tempe.

**MLA No. 558 Medieval Iberia Online**

1:45-3:00 p.m./Cabinet/ Washington Hilton/ Program arranged by the Division on Spanish Medieval Language and Literature.

Presiding: Barbara F. Weissberger, Old Dominion Univ.

MLA No. 559 Culture and Consumption in Nineteenth Century Spain

1:45-3:00 p.m./Caucus/ Washington Hilton/ Program arranged by the Division of Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Spanish Literature.

Presiding: Lou Charon-Deutsch, State Univ. of New York, Stony Brook.

MLA No. Uncanonized American Indian and First Nations Writers

1:45-3:00 p.m./Wilson B/Marriott/Program arranged by the Association for the study of American Indian Literatures.

Presiding: Malea D. Powell, Univ. of Nebraska, Lincoln.

3. "Claiming a Voice: Shirley Sterling's *My Name Is Seepeetza*," Laura Beard, Univ. de las Americas, Puebla.

MLA No. 618 Locating Blackness: Racial Difference and National Identity in Spanish Film and Literary Narrative since 1939

3:30-4:45 p.m./Caucus/ Washington Hilton/ A special session

3. "Hacia la identidad híbrida: La penetración de la negritud en el imaginario español de finales del siglo XX," Rosalía Victoria Cornejo-Parriego, Penn State Univ., University Park.

MLA No. 664 Volatile Values: Promoting Literature in Contemporary Spain

7:15-8:30 p.m./Map/ Washington Hilton/ Program arranged by the Division on Twentieth-Century Spanish Literature.

Presiding: Silvia Bermúdez, Univ. of California, Santa Barbara

1. "The Influence of the Publishing Industry on the Production of Literature: Confessions of Contemporary Authors," Christine Henseler, State Univ. of New York, Fredonia.

Saturday, 30 December**MLA No. 722 Modernity, Gender, Aesthetics: Pardo Bazán beyond Naturalism**

8:30-9:45 a.m./Grant/ Washington Hilton/ A special session; session leader: Joyce Lynn Tolliver, Univ. of Illinois, Urbana.

3. "Thoroughly Modern Men: Crime, Sex, and Adventure in *La gota de sangre* and *La aventura de Isidro*," Joyce Lynn Tolliver.

MLA No. 761 Pressure Points: Spanish Women Writers and the Canon, 1898-1939

10:15-11:30 a.m./Grant/ Washington Hilton/ Program arranged by Twentieth-Century Spanish Association of America.

Presiding: Catherine G. Bellver, Univ. of Nevada, Las Vegas.

1. "Women Writers Imagine a New Political Order, 1923-31," Roberta Johnson, Univ. of Kansas.



Saturday, 30 December

MLA No. 769 Academic Conferences as Sites of Folklore

12:00 noon-1:15 p.m./Park Tower Suite 8211/Marriott/Program arranged by the American Folklore Society.

Presiding: Kathleen Elizabeth Baird Manley, Univ. of Northern Colorado.

2. "Stories from the Job search: The Nature and Functions of Search Lore," Kimberly Ann Nance, Illinois State Univ.

MLA No. 785 Gender and Sexuality in the Cultures of Medieval Iberia

12:00 noon-1:15 p.m./Grant/ Washington Hilton/ Program arranged by the Society for Medieval Feminist Scholarship.

Presiding: Barbara F. Weissberger, Old Dominion Univ.

MLA No. 816 Cronicas: Tales from the Academy--A Workshop

Feministas Unidas workshop

1:45-3:00 p.m./Edison/ Washington Hilton/

Business Meeting

Friday, December 29

5:30 - 7:00 pm

Marriott

Dr. Dan Bivona's Suite

(ASU-English Dept).

Party



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María Claudia André
Hope College

“Gestiones para un nuevo milenio: Participación política de la mujer en el proceso de democratización en la Argentina”

Confinadas a la complejidad de un sistema que no las incorpora sino que mas bien las discrimina, las mujeres de Latinoamérica y el Caribe aún se encuentran atadas a dificultades económicas, culturales y sociales que impiden su activa participación en los espacios de poder. No obstante, la lucha de las mujeres a nivel global tanto en el ámbito de los derechos humanos como en el área doméstica ha despertado un gran interés sobre la problemática de género y gracias a ello, las mujeres han comenzado a tomar conciencia de que la división entre el espacio público y el privado perpetúa su alienación del ambito político. En varios países sudamericanos, la activa participación femenina y sus demandas en sobre cuestiones de género han comenzado a ser incorporadas en la agenda estatal; por cuanto, los nuevos gobiernos reconocen de que para democratizar la democracia es preciso reformular las pautas de participación ciudadana desbaratando el monopolio de político de élites y partidos. El propósito de este ensayo es justamente el de examinar el desarrollo y la participación de movimientos y organizaciones de mujeres en la Argentina durante y después de la transición a la democracia a partir de la década de los 70. Me interesa exponer cuáles son las nuevas propuestas y construcciones ideológicas en torno a la problemática de género evaluando cuáles han sido los logros más destacados tanto en la esfera socio-política como dentro del ámbito legal de estas nuevas instituciones dedicadas a fomentar la presencia de las mujeres en el proceso de democratización. A título de conclusión se analizarán cuáles son objetivos por cumplir y los problemas que aún deben ser solucionados para garantizar a la mujer el ejercicio y goce de derechos fundamentales en igualdad de condiciones con respecto al hombre en una sociedad realmente democrática.

A principios de la década de los 70, los ideales de liberación femenina provenientes de los Estados Unidos y Europa comienzan a tener una marcada influencia en la mentalidad de las mujeres latinoamericanas. En el Cono Sur fue notoria la proliferación de los movimientos feministas encabezados por mujeres de diferentes segmentos sociales, raciales y culturales. Por ejemplo, en la Argentina surgieron en este período el Movimiento de Liberación Feminista; el Centro de Estudios de la Mujer (1971), y la Organización Feminista Argentina (1982). Mientras que dichas organizaciones se fundamentaron en base a prácticas sociales apartidarias o como asociaciones culturales, otros grupos surgieron de partidos políticos, como El Grupo Evita y el Grupo de Mujeres Socialistas. No todas pero, sí muchas de las participantes sostuvieron una doble militancia luchando simultáneamente por el progreso de la causa feminista y por la participación de la mujer dentro del ámbito político. En marzo de 1976, ante suspensión de los derechos civiles bajo el Proceso de Reorganización Nacional establecido por la Junta Militar, dichas organizaciones quedaron desmanteladas, suspendidas o desplazadas en la periferia junto con el resto de los grupos de acción social. Recién en 1983, como consecuencia del colapso económico, la derrota sobre las Islas Malvinas, el alto nivel de desempleo y la presión que ejercen los grupos de derechos humanos a partir del los 80, tales segmentos comenzaron a resurgir y a participar más activamente a nivel popular. La Asociación de las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo fue la organización que jugó un papel preponderante en la caída del régimen militar dada su capacidad para ejercer presión dentro de los segmentos de poder. Tal como examina María del Carmen Feijoó, la destreza de la Madres constituye en construir un movimiento en base a los sentimientos y emociones usualmente asociados con la esfera doméstica y mantenerse o adaptarse bajo cualquier condición represiva. “Simbólicamente, su debilidad femenina, se trasformó en su fuerza política. La legitimidad de su acción estaba anclada en su obligación histórica, moral y legal de defender a sus hijos” (34). Desde su inicio en agosto de 1979, dicha asociación ha demostrado una incuestionable capacidad de lucha, adaptación y desenvolvimiento en la transición a la democracia del país. Participando desde su inexperiencia, este grupo de mujeres de distintos credos y dispares entornos socio-económicos, han demostrado que no sólo es posible sino que es además necesario, que la mujer desempeñe un papel activo dentro de la esfera pública y que comience a desarrollar una conciencia política para lograr la igualdad de derechos entre ambos sexos.



Las Madres para quienes la democracia implica educación, trabajo, y salarios decentes, se autoerigen como un segmento de oposición independiente y apartidario aunque transformador de la política tradicional. Su premisa básica es la defensa de los valores éticos y democráticos: la igualdad, la justicia social y la defensa los derechos humanos. La Asociación de Madres continúa en la actualidad manteniendo su rol de vocero de causas sociales que amedian la atención inmediata por parte de la ciudadanía. Tanto su periódico (el cual ha recibido varios premios y se traduce en el exterior) como en su sitio de internet, las Madres promueven causas políticas, hacen llamados a la solidaridad, y efectúan denuncias sobre abusos a los derechos humanos a nivel nacional e internacional. Recientemente han inaugurado las aulas de la Universidad Popular Madres de Plaza de Mayo en la cual se enseñan materias en el área de filosofía política e historia. Según sostiene la presidenta de la asociación, Hebe Bonafini, la universidad surge a partir de la presunta noción que “la lucha ya no es por los desaparecidos, pero por todos los jóvenes que no están contentos con el sistema, que quieren cambio y la posibilidad de una vida mejor. Para que pierdan el miedo a enfrentar la represión y desarrollen una conciencia civil verdaderamente democrática para cuando sea su turno de ingresar a la sociedad.” (<http://www.madres.org/>)

Las pautas trazadas por Las Madres no sólo han gestado la organización de nuevos movimientos sociales a nivel nacional, por ejemplo, Las abuelas de la plaza de mayo e H.I.J.O.S (asociación conformada por los hijos de desaparecidos); pero también lograron que en las campañas y plataformas políticas se incorporasen temas directamente relacionados a la problemática femenina. Tales propuestas se solidificaron aún más a partir de la instauración del sistema económico neo-liberal que durante las últimas décadas ha perjudicado a los sectores más pobres de la sociedad, y a las amas de casa en particular, por cuanto de ellas depende la administración y en muchos casos, la exclusiva manutención económica de la familia. A consecuencia de la severa crisis económica del 82, surge el Movimiento Nacional de Amas de Casa del País; el cual, en 1989, al adherirse a la Confederación General del Trabajo (CGT) se gremializa como el Sindicato de Amas de Casa de la República Argentina (SACRA). Al igual que la Asociación de Madres, dicho gremio se encuentra basado en la igualdad, solidaridad, y la promoción de objetivos radicales cuyo último fin es el de lograr cambios efectivos dentro de la comunidad. En su función de custodias de la esfera doméstica, las miembros de este sindicato luchan a la par de otros grupos marginales rebelándose contra el costo de la vida, el alza de precios indiscriminados, la falta de servicios de salubridad y las deficiencias en la educación estatal. Organizaciones como SACRA resaltan no sólo por su radical cuestionamiento del sistema, sino también por la eficacia y originalidad de sus múltiples técnicas de resistencia; por ejemplo, el boicoteo a supermercados, marchas golpeando cacerolas, huelgas de compras por períodos predeterminados, recolección de firmas, etc. Durante estos últimos diez años, SACRA ha venido luchando por la efectiva realización de importantísimos logros, entre ellos, comida gratis para los niños en edad escolar, seguro de desempleo y de salud, creación de guarderías infantiles, programas de salubridad para la mujer, planes jubilatorios, educación gratis sobre el control de la natalidad, y pensiones para amas de casa. Según Jo Fisher, esta última demanda sigue siendo debatida por los segmentos feministas los cuales estiman que el salario para el ama de casa refuerza la idea de la confinación de la mujer al ámbito doméstico y que dicha pensión reduciría la motivación de las amas de casa a incorporarse dentro mercado laboral. En su defensa, las miembros de SACRA, consideran que este salario les daría la independencia económica necesaria para poder dejar el hogar y pagar a alguien que se ocupe de los quehaceres domésticos. El sindicato tampoco cuenta con el pleno apoyo de la directiva de la CGT puesto que sus demandas no se adaptan a los planes preestablecidos para los otros gremios pero sobre todo, porque SACRA representa una amenaza potencial por su gran cantidad de miembros femeninos.

En su estudio crítico sobre los nuevos movimientos sociales, Elizabeth Jelin confirma que las organizaciones populares se han vuelto más desafiantes y críticas de los gobiernos civiles al rechazar abiertamente el sistema neoliberal que trata de imponerse en como parte del proceso de re-democratización. Sin embargo, los problemas sociales que generan la creación de tales movimientos continúan siendo neutralizados dentro de la esfera gubernamental, la cual subestima sus reclamos como resabios de la represión o dramas domésticos que sólo pueden ser resueltos en base a planes económicos a largo plazo. Por su forma no tradicional de hacer política y su atípico desenvolvimiento dentro del sistema, estos

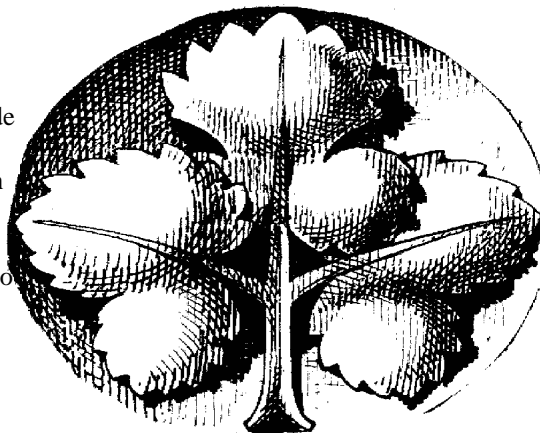


segmentos se hace sentir en mayor o menor grado dentro de los parámetros del discurso hegemónico. En particular, en lo concerniente a temas de género y familia.

Aparte de estos movimientos, con la recuperación del estado de derecho y bajo el gobierno democrático en 1987, comienzan a surgir organismos estatales encargados de concretar planes de acción dedicados a impulsar políticas que favorezcan el avance e integración de la mujer en todas las esferas de la vida social. En dicho año, se funda la Subsecretaría de la Mujer y en 1992, el Consejo Nacional de la Mujer, directamente dependiente de la Presidencia de la Nación. El objetivo de este consejo es el de “contribuir con la sociedad democrática en un mundo igualitario en el cual las diferencias entre los seres humanos no sea una excusa para opresión sino una base para el respeto de la pluralidad y la diversidad”. Específicamente, este organismo gubernamental a nivel nacional procura legitimar ante la sociedad la relevancia de la equidad de género para el fortalecimiento de la democracia. En reconocimiento de que “la democracia debe empezar en el hogar”, el Consejo ha determinado como función prioritaria lograr que se cumplan e incluyan en la legislación argentina las pautas trazadas por la convención de las Naciones Unidas sobre la eliminación de todas formas de discriminación contra la mujer. (Convención fue ratificada por ley 23.179 y adquirió rango constitucional en la reforma de 1994). Esta agencia ha venido incorporando dentro de la agenda estatal y legal una serie de problemas que afectan directamente a las mujeres; como por ejemplo, ha logrado la sanción de leyes sobre el derecho conjunto de patria potestad, la igualdad de derechos para los hijos matrimoniales y extramatrimoniales (1985); legislación sobre el divorcio vincular (87); la pensión vitalicia para madres con más de 7 hijos (88) y la consagrada Ley de Cupos que demanda la inclusión de un mínimo de 30% de mujeres en cargos a elegir – esta ley hizo posible que se eligieran 80 mujeres representantes de varios partidos políticos, constituyendo un 26.4 por ciento de la asamblea constitucional (91); la creación de un gabinete de Consejeras Presidenciales (93); la Ley de Protección contra la violencia Familiar (93); derogación del delito de adulterio (95); aprobación del Plan de Igualdad de Oportunidades en el mundo laboral (98) y la ley de jubilación para el Ama de Casa (98).

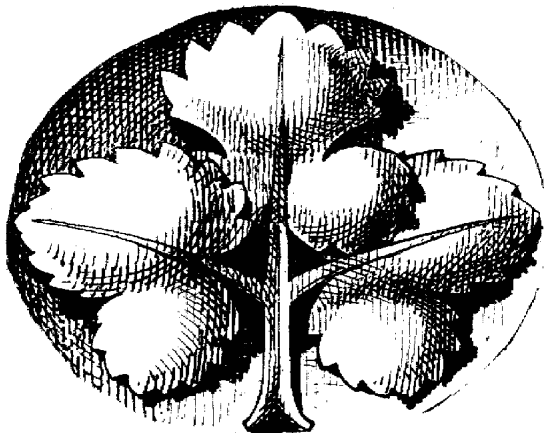
Además de promover la integración de las demandas y los aportes de las mujeres en cuestiones públicas, el Consejo se dedica a establecer convenios con las distintas áreas del Estado con el fin de lograr la ejecución de programas y planes específicos para modificar los patrones socioculturales de conducta que perpetúan la desigualdad entre los géneros. Dicho organismo sirve también como ámbito de consulta y asistencia para las organizaciones centradas en resolver los problemas de las mujeres en todos los sectores sociales. Para cumplir el logro de estos objetivos se ha desarrollado El Plan Federal de la Mujer a través del cual se pretende combatir toda publicidad discriminatoria y sentar las bases para que los publicistas, los responsables de medios, y los lectores en general se den cuenta por sí mismos que esos estereotipos son nocivos y no deben reproducirse. El plan prevee primero, la realización de jornadas de concientización e involucramiento en el tema mujer para profesionales en los medios de comunicación de todo el país. Segundo, la capacitación de las integrantes en el proyecto sobre el funcionamiento de los medios y de cómo desenvolverse satisfactoriamente a la hora de dar una entrevista, participar en una mesa de discusión o escribir una nota de opinión. Un tercero y central componente del Plan es el armado de SNIM, una red nacional de información que vinculará entre sí a las entidades que producen distintos tipos de datos en todas las áreas concernientes al estudio y desarrollo de la mujer.

Dentro de las organizaciones independientes y sin fines de lucro se destaca M.E.I - Mujeres en Igualdad fundada en 1989. M.E.I se autodefine en los siguientes términos “Nuestra fundación participa ampliamente del conjunto de las actividades del movimiento de mujeres, del feminismo y de la vida política del país. Somos mujeres con diferentes profesiones y militancias, pero comprometidas con el empoderamiento de las mujeres, el desarrollo de la conciencia de género y la profundización de las democracias. Eso nos permite y nos obliga a estar vinculadas con diversas redes con las cuales interactuamos en forma constante en temas como salud, medio ambiente, derechos civiles y políticos, derechos humanos y violencia doméstica.” Desde 1990, esta



organización ha venido realizando talleres de “participación política donde se desarrollan planes o proyectos sobre el rol de las mujeres en los procesos de consolidación democrática” y a partir de la sanción de la ley de cupos promulgada en 1991, M.E.I. se ha enfocado en temas relacionados con la dinámica femenina en áreas de poder, negociación, liderazgo, análisis de problemas específicos y toma de decisiones. Además, este organismo promueve campañas políticas, financiación, estrategias de alianzas y articulación entre las dirigentes participantes para lograr su exitoso desempeño en la esfera pública. M.E.I. mantiene una base de datos de mujeres en lugares de decisión y mujeres capacitadas e inclusive edita “Mujeres en Política”, una publicación cuatrimestral que pretende proporcionar la información necesaria para aquellas mujeres que participan activamente en la esfera política. Otras dos asociaciones sin fines de lucro que articulan y promueven las demandas de las mujeres en el ámbito político son La Asociación Lola Mora, el Estudio Graciela Romer y el Fondo de Investigación de Campañas de Mujeres, esta última organización no sólo se dedica a la capacitación política de la mujer sino que además provee de un Fondo de Campañas de Mujeres, el cual contribuye con aportes en efectivo y asistencia técnica a nuevas candidatas. A estos increíbles logros debemos sumarle la creación de programas interdisciplinarios de estudios sobre la mujer y género en la Universidad de Córdoba, el Centro de estudios históricos sobre las mujeres en la Universidad de Rosario y Centro de documentación y archivos de la mujer en Salta.

En los últimos diez años, la Argentina ha logrado un marco normativo excepcional en materia de igualdad. Algunas de las leyes sancionadas, transformaron por su propio peso ciertas prácticas sociales. Tal es el caso de la Ley de Cuotas (nov. 1991), que multiplicó por cuatro la proporción de legisladoras nacionales en sólo cinco años. La transformación que operó esta norma dio lugar a una nueva concepción del lugar de la mujer en la política argentina. Hoy es habitual ver en diarios y revistas mujeres políticas aportando su punto de vista sobre distintos temas. No obstante, todavía queda mucho por hacer en el área laboral, puesto que si bien la expansión comercial y la globalización han generado más empleos para las mujeres, éstas aún no se ven incluidas dentro del proceso de desarrollo económico al igual que la fuerza masculina y en cierto modo, las mujeres mismas tienden a adaptarse a un mercado de trabajo que tiende a explotarlas pero que aún no se atreven a modificar. Además de las restricciones en el ámbito privado y público, existen las limitaciones de la propia autoestima, dificultades para



confrontar o negociar a la par del hombre, temor a ver socavada su integridad e identidad femenina, etc. El poder trae en sí aparejado una serie de connotaciones psicológicas, según examina Marcela Durrieu, en éste se “incluye una gran cuota de pasión por la gloria, el reconocimiento y la consideración social” (132). Por otra parte, aún nos es preciso aprehender la complejidad de la herencia que la guerra sucia ha dejado a la sociedad argentina. Esta deuda social y jurídica no se ha pagado del todo y son las nuevas generaciones las que sufren las inclemencias de la impunidad. Según el Informe de las organizaciones o gubernamentales al Comité de Derecho Humanos de las Naciones Unidas, en la Argentina de hoy, el 40% de los niños vive en situaciones de extrema pobreza. Hay 50 muertes infantiles diarias por pobreza, desnutrición o malas condiciones de salubridad. Lo dramático de esta situación es que 7 de 10 de estas muertes

son evitables. En más del 50% de los partos que se producen en la ciudad de Buenos Aires, las madres no han recibido casi ningún control del embarazo y en el interior la cifra se duplica o triplica.

Aún estamos lejos de alcanzar todas las reformas legales necesarias, pero por lo pronto, en la Argentina como en otros países latinoamericanos, la intensa participación de movimientos y organizaciones femeninas han provocado que el estado de los primeros pasos para incluir a las mujeres ya no como objetos sino como sujetos activos dentro de su agenda política. Con ello se pretende algo tan básico como institucionalizar el lugar de las mujeres en la toma de decisiones para garantizar la igualdad jurídica. Solo es de esperar que nuestros derechos básicos finalmente logren traducirse en prácticas concretas.

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"Re/presentaciones de la represión: pedagogía y lucha armada"

[Lo que no tiene ninguna legitimidad, lo que es algo que escapa a toda medida humana, lo que está fuera de toda ley de guerra, [. . .] son los procedimientos de represión utilizados, la crueldad puesta de manifiesto, la barbarie insensata demostrada, todos esos instintos feroces que contemplamos sueltos con admiración horrorizada.

España 1933 Federico Urales

La proclamación de la Segunda República en 1931 engendró la esperanza de una mejora en la situación social y económica española, especialmente dentro del sector obrero y campesino. Sin embargo, el evidente fracaso de las repetidas tentativas gubernamentales de realizar una reforma agraria y laboral provocó una serie de levantamientos populares de protesta, siendo los de mayor relieve los enfrentamientos en Andalucía y Cataluña de 1932 y la revolución de Asturias de 1934, sobre los que se hizo un amplio eco en la prensa anarquista. Desde las páginas de *El Luchador*—semanario anarquista de “sátira, crítica, doctrina y combate”, según reza su subtítulo—y de *La Revista Blanca*, ambos editados en Barcelona por la familia Montseny, se mantuvo una actitud crítica frente a las campañas de represión ejercidas por las fuerzas militares contra el pueblo, desplegándose en ambas publicaciones una gran campaña de denuncia en contra de las acciones del aparato represivo estatal, calificadas como una “barbarie”.

El epígrafe que encabeza este estudio firmado por el intelectual y activista libertario Federico Urales (seudónimo de Joan Montseny) pertenece a *España 1933*, que lleva por subtítulo: la barbarie gubernamental en Barcelona, Tarrasa, Sarrià, Ripoll, Lérida, Salient, Ribarroja, Bugama, Pedralba, Bétera, Tabernes de Valldigna, Valencia, Arcos de la Frontera, Utrera, Málaga, La Rinconada, Sanlúcar de Barrameda, Cádiz, Alcalá de los Gazules, Medinasidonia, Casa Viejas. (Ediciones *El Luchador*). Este título sitúa geográficamente las sucesivas campañas de represión militar contra obreros y campesinos, y resulta premonitorio de la barbarie que se avecinaba, y que finalmente culminaría con el triunfo del General Franco en 1939.

Esta obra, verdadero catálogo de horrores, encarna una nueva forma de periodismo comprometido al combinar artículos de opinión recogidos de la prensa libertaria con testimonios, informes y reportajes ilustrados que obedecen a un doble objetivo: denunciar la lamentable situación de los represaliados por las fuerzas armadas de la República y destacar el significativo papel de las publicaciones anarquistas en el impulso revolucionario. Sirva de ejemplo este comentario sobre la popularidad de la prensa libertaria en Sanlúcar de Barrameda: “Se siente un hambre voraz de pan espiritual. Se reparte profusamente *El Luchador*, *Tierra y Libertad*, *El Libertario*. *La Soli*, *la Revista Blanca*, *Estudios*, *La Novela Ideal*, folletos y libros anarquistas” (181).

Re/presentaciones de la represión

Los avances en las técnicas de reproducción fotográfica en los años treinta favorecieron el aumento de los reportajes gráficos en la prensa, de gran popularidad entre los lectores, con lo que se garantizaba una mayor difusión del ideal libertario. Es cierto que la utilización de la imagen propagandística como arma revolucionaria no era nueva en la prensa anarquista. Desde la publicación de los primeros diarios libertarios del siglo XIX se había recurrido repetidamente al grabado y las ilustraciones por su impacto visual y su potencialidad como instrumento didáctico. Sin embargo, la utilización de la fotografía en la prensa de “crítica” y “combate” representa no sólo un enorme salto cualitativo sino también un salto epistemológico. Como ha observado W. J. T. Mitchell, “Truth, certainty, and knowledge are structurally connoted in realistic representations: they constitute the ideology [...] necessary for it to construct a reality” (357). Las fotografías como imágenes realistas, a diferencia de los dibujos y grabados

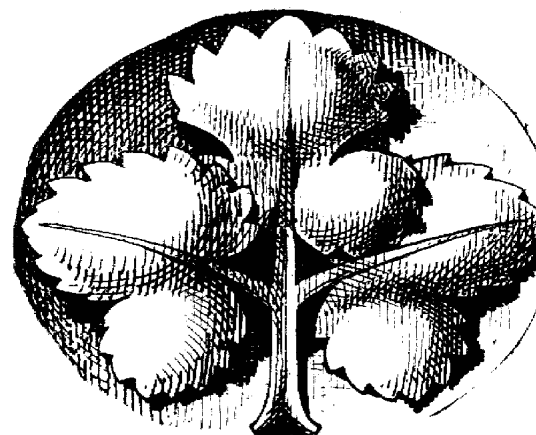
del pasado, encarnaban un nuevo valor epistemológico para los lectores por su presunta capacidad de representar fielmente una realidad inmediata que subrayaba los valores ideológicos del programa anarquista. La presencia ubicua de estas imágenes durante la Segunda República en la prensa de izquierdas, particularmente la publicada por la familia Montseny, desató una inflación dentro de lo que Mitchell denominaría una “economía de la violencia” donde cobraban mayor valor de cambio las fotografías más “reales” y escalofriantes.¹ Esta inundación visual en el mercado periodístico de cuerpos desfigurados y cadáveres mutilados terminó por fetichizar el cuerpo obrero, restándole cualquier marcador de individualidad subjetiva, transformándolo finalmente en un doble accesorio de la prosa de combate tanto por su calidad de representación de la violencia contra el pueblo como por su capacidad de incitar el pueblo a la misma. El aparato propagandístico libertario se benefició inmensamente de estas nuevas tecnologías de representación realista porque le permitía escenificar las consecuencias dramáticas del terror sufrido por el pueblo, movilizar los lectores a la acción y difundir con mayor claridad sus presupuestos ideológicos. Precisamente, en los artículos ilustrados de la teórica anarquista Federica Montseny el diálogo entre lo textual y lo visual se fundamentaba sobre una nueva gramática visual que autorizaba a los lectores a mirar aquellos cuerpos captados por la tecnología y reproducidos para testimoniar el terrorismo de Estado sistemáticamente desplegado en contra del sector obrero por las fuerzas militares. Si como sugiere Mitchell, la imagen se constituye como único testigo aparentemente objetivo de los hechos representados (327) el apoyo fotográfico de estos artículos es la prueba o evidencia testimonial sobre la que se construye un discurso de denuncia y resistencia.

De entre los cientos de artículos de combate firmados por Montseny durante el sexenio republicano sirva de ejemplo “Las víctimas del terror gubernamental” (La Revista Blanca, 202, 15-10-31). Este artículo responde a unas declaraciones del Ministro de Gobernación Maura acerca de los muertos ocasionados por los levantamientos de Sevilla. Para el Ministro, los muertos representaban un “detalle secundario que carece de importancia para los efectos del orden público” (314). Esta desvalorización de la vida humana provoca en Montseny una reflexión sobre la instrumentalización de la violencia por parte del Estado. Invoca, para rescatar del silencio, a los desaparecidos de Cuba y los asesinados en Barcelona. Las seis imágenes que ilustran este ensayo reproducen cuerpos mutilados cuyas miradas desfiguradas, captadas por la mirada fotográfica, subrayan “Una sola verdad, verdadera: que el Estado representa [. . .] opresión y muerte, anulación del hombre [por] organismos armados que sostienen por medio del terror y por la fuerza al Poder que domina, que roba y que mata” (314). El realismo aparente de estas imágenes evidencia “la única verdad, verdadera” proclamada por Montseny quien termina esta denuncia exhortando al lector a reconocer en las fotografías la realidad del mundo: “Contemplad, sintetizada en estas líneas y demostrado por la realidad el panorama del mundo” (317). El deseo por parte de Montseny de documentar y combatir la represión sobre el pueblo no se limitó a la prensa, sino que se extendió a su labor de conferenciante y a sus creaciones literarias.

Pedagogía y lucha armada

Junto a su incansable labor periodística, Federica Montseny, fundó conjuntamente con sus padres una de las pequeñas empresas editoriales unifamiliares anarquistas más importantes de España, Ediciones de la Revista Blanca. La familia Montseny, consciente de la gran eficacia de la prensa y la novela de quiosco como medios revolucionarios en la propagación del Ideal anarquista, desarrolló a lo largo de cuarenta años una gran labor cultural centrada en la actividad editorial que daría como resultado la publicación de novelas, revistas y prensa. Montseny recuerda con orgullo en su autobiografía *Mis primeros cuarenta años* la constante labor educativa llevado a cabo por Ediciones de La Revista Blanca, haciendo particular hincapié en que “nuestra obra editorial jamás fue un negocio, sino una incansable labor de cultura y propaganda” (52).

Urales, responsable de crear las líneas generales de este nuevo proyecto editorial. Cada publicación de la “Novela Ideal” constaba de una historia de 32 páginas. En sus comienzos se lanzaba una tirada semanal de diez mil ejemplares, llegando, en un espacio breve de tiempo, hasta los cincuenta mil copias (*Mis primeros cuarenta años*, 56). La gran popularidad de esta colección entre la juventud anarquista impulsó el lanzamiento de una nueva serie titulada “La Novela Libre”; éstas nuevas novelas alcanzaban las 64 páginas y tenían una tirada mensual de veinte mil ejemplares. Los títulos publicados en ambas colecciones se calculan en más de ochocientos desde su inicio en 1925 hasta el cierre de la editorial en 1938.



Los presupuestos ideológicos del proyecto editorial de la familia Montseny se reflejan en la clarísima declaración doctrinal aparecida en la contracubierta del número 34 de La Revista Blanca del 15 de octubre de 1924 anunciando la futura nueva serie:

Nuestro propósito es de interesar por medio del sentimiento y de la emoción, en las luchas para instituir una sociedad sin amos ni esclavos, sin gobernantes ni gobernadores.
No queremos novelas rojas, ni modernistas, ni eclécticas. Queremos novelas que exponen, bella y claramente, episodios de las vidas empeñadas en la lucha en pro de una sociedad libertaria.
No queremos divagaciones literarias que llenen páginas y nada dicen. Queremos ideas y sentimientos, mezclados con actos heroicos que eleven el espíritu y fortalezcan la acción.
No queremos novelas deprimentes ni escalofrantes. Queremos novelas optimistas que llenen de esperanza el alma; que sean limpias, serenas, fuertes, incluso que contengan alguna maldición, alguna lágrima.



Los editores de este nuevo proyecto plantean una redefinición de los contenidos y las formas de la novela corta. Declaradamente anti-modernistas y anti-vanguardistas rechazan tanto las novelas “modernistas” como las “eclécticas” por su carácter decadente, representante de la ideología burguesa, y por su superior valoración de la forma sobre el contenido. Desde una perspectiva coherente con su postura ideológica, renuncian al dogmatismo autoritario de las “novelas rojas” que estimaban la colectividad por encima del individuo. De acuerdo con los principios estéticos libertarios, proponen para la nueva línea editorial publicar obras con un fin concienciador que, unido a un discurso sentimental, instruyan al lector sobre las relaciones de clase y las injusticias sociales. En contraposición a las novelas producidas por el realismo socialista, los editores buscan personajes ejemplares de corte heroico que inspiren al lector a perseguir el ideal anarquista. Atribuyendo una función ético-social a la producción cultural, terminan esta declaración de principios con una llamada a aquellos autores cuyas novelas proporcionen una visión optimista del futuro, revelando las injusticias de las clases oprimidas en el tiempo presente. Paradójicamente, y a pesar de las intenciones renovadoras estéticas e ideológicas, por parte de los promotores de “La Novela Ideal” y “La Novela Libre”, estas novelas tienen un carácter eminentemente moralizante, caracterizadas por una temática reiterativa con el fin de difundir los principios ideológicos del anarquismo y unas estructuras formulaicas, cuyo origen habría que remitirlo al folletín decimonónico burgués. Sirva de ejemplo de esta contradicción ética-estética un anuncio insertado junto al rótulo de El Luchador en el que aparece un joven leyendo una novela frente a una joven concentrada en la misma actividad, ambos, curiosamente, de aspecto burgués. Enmarcando esta imagen leemos el título de la serie LA NOVELA IDEAL y subrayado por el lema: RECREA, EMOCIONA, CONSUELA. Cabe preguntarse hasta que punto no respondía a un mecanismo de resistencia para superar la censura esta frívola calificación de unas obras destinadas a concienciar sus lectores en el Ideal anarquista.

Como editora y una de las autoras principales de ambas series, Federica Montseny firmó más de cien novelas para “La Novela Ideal” y “La Novela Libre”. Típicamente de corte realista y lenguaje coloquial, de acuerdo con los principios estéticos de la serie, los temas abordados por Montseny en sus novelas se centran especialmente en la problemática de la mujer frente a una sociedad católica y tradicional. Estas novelas, de carácter predominantemente didáctico, fueron instrumentales en la divulgación entre un público obrero femenino de las teorías defendidas por Montseny sobre el amor libre, el individualismo y el anarquismo. De forma novelada, Montseny presenta una problemática cuya resolución dependerá de la fortaleza espiritual y el grado de concienciación de sus protagonistas, quienes se verán forzadas a examinar sus elecciones y las consecuencias de las mismas. Por medio de la independencia económica, el amor libre y la activa participación en la lucha social, elementos claves del ideario libertario, sus personajes femeninos encontrarán la dignidad, finalmente alcanzando el bienestar. Así el personaje de Clara en La Victoria hallará la anhelada felicidad en la maternidad, desvinculada del matrimonio; la heroína de La Indomable, Vida, preferirá la independencia absoluta a una relación amorosa con tintes burgueses; finalmente la joven guerrillera María Luisa de Heroínas, guiada por una superioridad moral preferirá la muerte sobre la salvación. Salta a primera vista el obvio simbolismo en los nombres de las heroínas, Clara y Vida, que celebran los valores de claridad de visión y de una vitalidad visceral por encima de los valores burgueses, mientras el nombre de María Luisa nos remite a Luisa Michel, mítica heroína del levantamiento de La Comuna de París en el pensamiento libertario.



El carácter moralmente revolucionario de estas mujeres enfrentadas a los valores primordialmente patriarcales vigentes en la sociedad española explica que para los años veinte y treinta estas obras resultaran escandalosas, aún incluso en los ambientes libertarios.

Obstinadamente individualistas, moralmente integras, sexualmente avanzadas, políticamente comprometidas e intelectualmente vanguardistas, los personajes femeninos creados por Montseny son mujeres “ideales” que trascienden los roles sexuados culturalmente asignados al reafirmarse en su personalidad y en sus deseos de libertad, a pesar de las consecuencias, que, en algunas novelas pueden resultar trágicas. Un caso singular es el de María Luisa Montoya, protagonista de la novela titulada *Heroínas*, editada por “La Novela Libre” en enero de 1935, a los pocos meses de la Revolución de Octubre en Asturias.

Anteriormente a su publicación, Montseny ya había dedicado varios artículos de *La Revista Blanca* a los sucesos acaecidos aquel octubre del 34 en Asturias. Bajo el título “El dolor de los niños”, expone la penosa situación de abandono de los niños asturianos, tras los violentos choques entre el sector obrero y las fuerzas armadas. En “Periodismo a la moderna”, Montseny reflexiona sobre la compleja relación entre el compromiso social y la ética profesional de los periodistas españoles ante la creciente inestabilidad política: “¿Puede, si, un periodista español, [. . .] hallar garantía para la libre emisión de su pensamiento y el no menos libre ejercicio de su trabajo en la especial situación en que se van colocando las cosas hoy en España?” Esta pregunta surge a raíz del asesinato del periodista Luís de Sirval, redactor de *La Libertad* y destinado a Oviedo para informar sobre la revolución. Junto al panegírico dirigido a su amigo y compañero de oficio, Montseny incluye un homenaje a la heroína anónima conocida como “La Libertaria” de Oviedo cuyo valor y dedicación inspirarán el personaje de Carmen en *Heroínas*.

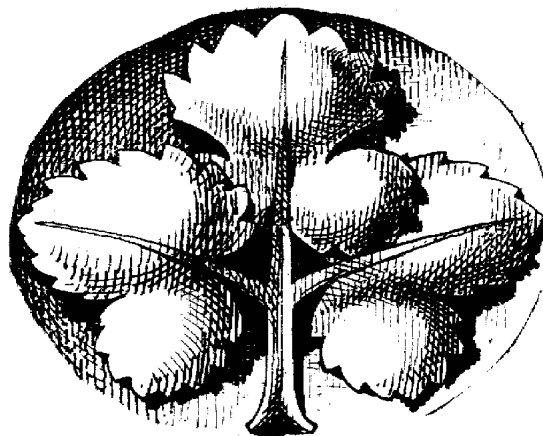
Esta novela-testimonio en la que Montseny nos descubre la progresiva concienciación política de su protagonista enmarcada por una historia de amor imposible, constituye un testimonio que ofrece una particular visión épica de la actuación de las mujeres en aquel impulso revolucionario. El deseo de homenajear a estas luchadoras se evidencia en la dedicatoria de la novela: “Quedan ahí estas páginas como testimonio de una época. Y que todas las mujeres de Asturias, las mujeres de España se sientan honradas y representadas en las siluetas femeninas que desfilan por la obrita.”⁽⁴⁾ Precisamente el título de la novela, *Heroínas*, nos proporciona la clave de la historia, en tanto que son las mujeres quienes sacrificando cualquier posibilidad de felicidad personal llevarán la revolución hasta sus últimas consecuencias movidas por el deseo de hacer realidad el ideal libertario. Con el fin de ayudar a sus lectoras a imaginar lo inimaginable, Montseny recurre a las técnicas tradicionales del folletín para describir con todo lujo de detalles el avance de las tropas coloniales sobre los pueblos, haciendo particular hincapié en la represión ejercida sobre la población femenina e infantil. Cabe destacar que Montseny no intenta resolver la tensión existente entre la historia romántica y el documento testimonial, sino que *Heroínas* nos desvela la existencia cotidiana de unos seres humanos atrapados en una situación política insostenible que los llevará a asumir la lucha armada como único modo de resistencia.¹

Montseny recurre al terreno de la ficción novelística enmascarando mínimamente la localización geográfica (Vetusta=Oviedo, Girón=Gijón) para narrar la historia no escrita de la participación heroica de las mujeres asturianas, quienes junto a sus compañeros, lucharon y cayeron ante el asedio de las tropas gubernamentales.² Es más, Montseny rescata el carácter auténticamente heroico de la ciudad de Vetusta y de sus clases populares frente a aquélla otra anti-heroica ciudad Vetusta, asociada a una ideología provinciana y pequeña burguesa, ironizada por Clarín desde la primera línea de *La Regenta*: “La heroica ciudad dormía la siesta” (135). La voz autorial se transparenta en la voz narrativa al subrayar el carácter épico de estas nuevas heroínas urbanas:

... es esta epopeya de las mujeres en Cantabria la que no se ha escrito y quisiera yo escribir algún día. Muchachas jóvenes que acompañaban a los destacamentos de obreros y campesinos sirviéndoles la comida, siendo enfermeras cuando era necesario y soldados cuando se terciaba. Mujeres que manejaban las armas con tanta precisión y tanta soltura como los hombres. (*Heroínas*, 34)

¹ Ya en un artículo de 1932, Montseny había defendido la lucha armada como actuación justificada en situaciones extraordinarias.

² A pesar de estos topónimos inventados nos remiten a Asturias, Montseny sitúa la acción en Cantabria, quizá con el fin de obviar la censura.



Todos los personajes femeninos que conforman esta genealogía heroica son arquetípicos de la literatura libertaria. María Luisa, modelo de mujer moderna, suma y síntesis del Ideal libertario, maestra racionalista convertida en guerrillera se entregará a su labor pedagógica con el mismo fervor apostólico que a su comando guerrillero: “[...] salió en busca de almas que modelar, de existencias que dirigir, de conciencias que formar” (Heroínas, 8). Completan este cuadro de modelos ejemplares del proletariado femenino, Carmen, personificación de la joven trabajadora ilustrada que junto a Juana y Gertrudis, encarnarán la fuerza natural de la revolución hecha mujer.

Las lectoras, junto a María Luisa, serán testigos del fracaso de la Revolución de Octubre. La muerte heroica de Carmen, abatida al pie de su metralleta en clara alusión a “La Libertaria” de Oviedo, señalará para María Luisa el fin de toda posibilidad revolucionaria. En reacción a la represión desplegada por las fuerzas del gobierno, la joven maestra racionalista llevará a la práctica el ideal libertario y se echará al monte para formar su propio grupo de resistencia, invocando al recientemente abatido guerrillero nicaragüense Sandino como modelo de acción revolucionaria ejemplar:

Lucha de guerrilla, que quiere decir lucha de encrucijada, de recoveco, de agilidad, en la que toda la ventaja es para los menos, hábiles y astutos. Si Sandino se sostuvo tanto tiempo en las montañas de Nicaragua, luchando con un enemigo tan poderoso cual es Norteamérica, más tiempo podremos sostenernos en estas serranías [sic]. (Heroínas, 45)

Al contrario del anuncio programático anteriormente citado de La Revista Blanca, Heroínas ni es optimista ni termina de un modo feliz, sino que nos encontramos ante un final ambiguo, donde el futuro de los protagonistas sobrevivientes queda sin resolver. El grupo de tropas gubernamentales y las empresas mineras con el fin de denunciar su actuación conjunta en contra del sector obrero.

La trayectoria vital de María Luisa se convertirá en materia informativa, aquella joven burguesa, formada en una residencia de estudiantes, transformada en maestra anarquista sólo podría acabar de una manera. . . guerrilleros conocido en los medios de difusión como “la partida de la maestra de Orbejo”, lograrán resistir en el monte asistidos por el pueblo las batidas de fuerzas militares. Conscientes del valor de la prensa como medio difusor llevarán a cabo sonados golpes contra las

Era toda otra mujer, más recia, con una hermosura poderosa y como sobrenatural. La Prensa iba llena de retratos suyos [. . .] pero una mujer lanzada al bandidaje; una mujer capitaneando una partida de bandidos, era algo nuevo para la prensa de todo el mundo. Se hablaba de la maestra de Orbejo con profusión. Se documentaron sobre ella y se supo con asombro que provenía de una familia distinguida. (Heroínas, 52)

Su figura encarnará los valores propios de la Nueva Mujer que promulgaba Montseny en numerosos ensayos desde La Revista Blanca; fuerte, independiente y fiel al credo libertario. Su mitificación en el imaginario popular se consolidará al evidenciarse el contraste entre las narraciones de sus hazañas revolucionarias y los retratos de una joven candorosa publicados por la prensa nacional:

[. . .] vestida de blanco, con su semblante tranquilo y siempre con la expresión de una gran bondad y una dulzura angelical. La maestra de Orbejo convirtiéndose en un mito para el público español. Algunos dudaban de su existencia; otros soñaban con ella, con toda clase de sueños: desde el amor hasta el terror; desde la ilusión hasta la pesadilla. (Heroínas, 52)

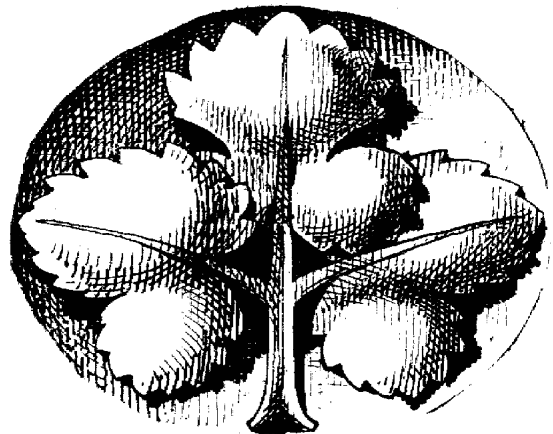
María Luisa llevará la praxis revolucionaria hasta sus últimas consecuencias en su relación con los guerrilleros. Ante la creciente y difícil situación de supervivencia en el monte, presentará a los miembros de su pequeño ejército la alternativa de huir hacia Portugal, la rendición ante el cerco que tarde o temprano caerá sobre ellos o la lucha hasta el final. Siguiendo las directrices del pensamiento libertario, la maestra guerrillera dejará que cada guerrillero y guerrillera decidan su propio destino. Preguntada por su decisión, María Luisa responde: “Viva no me cogen. Huir tampoco quiero. Presentarme menos” (Heroínas, 55).

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Las protagonistas de Heroínas, comprometidas con el pueblo y la lucha armada, no dudarán en asumir el supremo sacrificio, “Lo mejor de nosotros sobrevivirá como han sobrevivido a sí mismos todos los mártires y todos los héroes” (Heroínas, 56). Las cualidades del ideario libertario que encarnan las heroínas de Federica Montseny: coraje, valor, decisión, independencia, amor por la libertad individual y justicia social siguen vivas como un horizonte utópico lejano pero aún necesario y relevante en los tiempos que corren.

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Taking Liberties: Remaking Women's Lives Through Biography

The biographer cannot extract the atom. He gives us the husk. Therefore as things are, the best method would be to separate the two kinds of truth. Let the biographer print fully, completely, accurately, the known facts without comment. Then let him write the life as fiction.

Virginia Woolf

We had lost hope, and we needed a story to understand what had happened to us.

Dedé Mirabal from *In the Time of the Butterflies*

If Latin American militant women have tended to use their life stories as testimonio and their memoirs as vehicles for political change, they have left to others the task of telling a guerrillera life with all its uniqueness and detail. The questions unanswered in their autobiographical statements remain: who were these young women who ten, twenty, thirty years ago entered organizations of armed struggle, how did they come to this commitment which transgressed the gender norms of their societies and how did they fare in the guerrilla itself?

Journalist Marta Diana explains that she began her research on Argentine women revolutionaries in order to see beyond the social myths of the guerrillera as either heroine or delinquent and to find the women as they once were, "personas, con historia propia, miedos y amores (24)" / "people just like any other with their own stories, fears and loves." Although there were many thousands of militants, there are still very few accounts of their lives and even fewer attempts to delve into the personal, to reach out for what Virginia Woolf has called the "soul" of a woman (Lee, 10).

Biography, it would seem, could be well suited to bring to light the lives of women militants. Certainly the number of biographies on Ernesto "Che" Guevara attests to an enduring interest in the private as well as public man who symbolized the utopian passions of his era. Moreover, biography and biographical sketches of notable women have been frequently employed to bring about change in female gender roles during periods of social transformation. As Marilyn Booth has found in the forging of Egyptian modernity, biographies of "famous" women were used in the debates over the place of women in the state (836-838):

By accustoming the female reader to thinking about the lives of women as individual trajectories, as contests between autonomy and social constraint, a theme explicit in most of these texts, biography helped to construct the ideal (bourgeois) woman as the individualized subject of a national, putatively postimperialist state that was undergoing a difficult and prolonged birth as these biographies were appearing in print. At the same time, by constructing a community of women that suppressed national boundaries and international power relationships, exemplary biography offered the encouragement of a collective history of heroines, that first-step feminist move. (837-838)

By the middle of the twentieth century Latin American nations had already experienced many of the changes that once marked modernizing national projects: the consolidation of liberal reformist movements, the rise of an urban middle class, and the waning of Spanish cultural domination. As the participants in the Seminar on Feminism and Culture in Latin America have explained, notions of masculinity and femininity began to be redefined in terms of the contemporary urban experience, middle-class women entered the work force and struck alliances with men to participate in national politics as well as to challenge customs and laws regarding their sex, (4-5). By the 1940s universal suffrage had been or was just being extended to women; female organizations were established to engage with adding a "woman's perspective" to views

from the extreme right to the militant left; while internationally-known women—such as poet/journalist Alfonsina Storni, editor of *Sur* literary magazine Victoria Ocampo and poet Gabriela Mistral—took active roles in governmental affairs, albeit primarily in those areas considered to be a woman's province such as culture, education and child welfare. Although Latin American women did not abandon their domestic roles—sources of private power if Evelyn Stevens' notions of *marianismo* prove correct—they were beginning to introduce them into national life, using them to gain political power and recognition.

It is at moments of significant social change for women like these that biography can be mobilized to bring the “average woman” to imagine new ways to be female or to negotiate between the limitations of tradition and newly cultivated social desires. After all, it is just about at mid-century that Eva Duarte, herself inspired by Norma Shearer's film portrayal of Marie Antoinette, set off for stardom in Buenos Aires and later found her lackluster acting career saved by Radio Belgrano's dramatic series on famous women of the world (Dujovne, 53; Fraser and Navarro, 41-42). These portrayals of queens and artists, for all the scorn they received from sophisticated audiences, not only provided then Colonel Juan Perón's mistress with the language with which to fashion her public persona — she later used the scriptwriter to write her speeches once she had become wife of President Perón (Dujovne, 53)—they also most assuredly offered female audiences dreams of achievement and notoriety well beyond the domesticity expected of them. Escapist fantasies to be sure, but ones that merged with the values expressed in *Evita's* unique politics — a blend of outward submission to an idealized male figure and ambition for personal power— with the very real incorporation of women into the authoritarian state through the vote (Dujovne, 209-210). Indeed Congresswoman Graciela Fernández Meijide today attributes female participation in the leftist movements of the 1970s to the opening into politics that was *Evita's* gift to her countrywomen. Biographies, like Radio Belgrano's series and the biographical recollections of *Evita* published after her death in 1955, have all been used to mold opinions in the complex struggles over how women are to be incorporated into the state and how they will manifest their needs and ideals as fully participating citizens. While individual life stories may not have greatly influenced their readership, the circulation of many biographies of women begins to establish multiple sites for the forging of new social identities.

It would be reasonable to expect that the political-military movements of the nineteen seventies and eighties would turn to biography—if not to lengthy texts suited for leisureed reading, then to short sketches for easy access in song, pamphlet or poetry— to address the “woman question” that they had inherited from the previous generation. The guerrilla not only hoped to recruit women into their ranks, they also sought to train them in the use of arms and have them participate in actions, military roles that went beyond that of “repose of the warrior,” or “women's auxiliary” that had been the lot of communist and anarchist women of the nineteen thirties and forties. Argentina's Peronist Montoneros did just that, fashioning their ideal woman militant from the existing cult of *Evita Perón*. According to Nicholas Fraser and Marysa Navarro, the early nineteen seventies fairly exploded with biographical texts to recall aspects of *Evita's* life: “there were records of her speeches, comic-strip versions of her life and, of course, photographs and posters” everywhere (189). Claiming *Evita* as their own, the Montoneros downplayed *Evita's* frail physical appearance, her penchant for couturier fashion and the debates over the morality of her sexual behavior to emphasize the woman's intuitive relationship with the working classes and what she herself called her political “fanaticism” (Taylor, 142-43). Although no guerrillera herself, *Evita* who died of cancer in 1952, was transformed in the nineteen seventies into a model of romantic heroine. As Alicia Dujovne points out, Montoneros of both sexes “used *Evita* as their flag, the same taste for self-sacrifice and death, the same ardor, the same Robin Hood spirit,” (297-98). Throughout the period, they returned to her image for inspiration, calling upon their reconstruction of her memory through graffiti of “*Evita vive!*” (“*Evita Lives!*”) and chants of “*Se siente, se siente, Evita está presente*” (It's clear, it's clear; *Evita* is still here!) or just “*Si Evita viviera, sería Montonera!*” (If *Evita* lived, she'd be a Montonera), Fraser and Navarro, 189-90.

At about the same time that a “firebrand” *Evita* was being deployed to captivate Peronist youth in Argentina, Cuban biographers Marta Rojas and Mirta Rodríguez Calderón introduced “*Tania*” to



an international readership in a biography that highlighted Haydée Tamara Bunke Bider's role as a guerrilla fighter who accompanied Che Guevara on his final and fatal expedition into Bolivia, a more androgynous role for the contemporary East German/Argentine. Like the representations of Evita that legitimize the Montoneros' call to self-sacrifice, this biography fashions a guerrillera for the times: a female warrior who demands equality with her male counterparts, but also a model of unquestioning dedication to the political ideology of her organization. The public image of "Tania," who died in Bolivia in 1967, is one of intransigence, discipline and what the guerrilleras who followed in her steps called "hardness," the capacity to suppress those experiences or emotions which might get in the way of revolutionary duty. This ideal of internal strength and public rejection of "feminine" vulnerability was emulated by politicized women throughout Latin America. Nicaraguan Nora Astorga recalls her early years in the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN) when she hoped to be another "Tania" (8). So too Carmen Castillo recalls "Luisa" as the ideal woman in Chile's Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR) whose dedication to action sets her squarely in the "Tania" model:

...Luisa, la imagen de la mujer segura de sí misma, consagrada por completo al combate político, jamás una grieta, siempre sin rodeos, nunca una excusa. Luisa, que no flaquea ante nada ni nadie. (45)

Luisa, the image of a woman sure of herself, totally dedicated to political combat, never a flaw, always direct, never an excuse. Luisa who didn't weaken before anything or anybody.

Castillo's respect for "Luisa" as a "hard" woman combatant only becomes more enriched when she discovers papers in which the young woman has poured her private grief; it is in this combination of militancy and contained feminine emotion as well as the ability to separate public presence from private self that makes Lumi Videla Moya a figure to be recalled with great affection by the female MIR members who survived her. 1

At the height of guerrilla activity in the nineteen sixties and seventies, as Castillo notes, the very "air that they breathed" urged women militants to remake themselves into the image of the pure combatant, who was herself but an image portrayed in one of the few exemplary biographies of the times (45). Thus the international biography of "Tania" as well as the shorter biographical sketches of national women revolutionaries became tools for recruiting women into the militant organizations and particularly for providing the recruits with models of behaviors and feelings with which to shape a new identity. The guerrillera, who songwriter Daniel Viglietti was to exalt as a "mujer entera" ("complete woman") encompassing both tenderness and dedication, transfers her traditionally feminine qualities to her guerrilla group while taking on the masculine attributes, to say nothing of the military skills, which would make her most useful to the organization.

Perhaps it was the Marxist orientation of the political-military organizations that led men and women guerrilleros to believe that women's equality in the public realm would be achieved as a result of their revolution or perhaps it was the belief that violence from "below" would counter injustices from "above" that led the militants to emphasize the military actions and sacrificial deaths of the guerrilleras, such as those dished out in the newspaper *Evita Montonera* (Moyano, 124). If a woman's freedom was seen as coming from the barrel of a gun and her ability to wield it, as the Uruguayan Tupamaro "Urbano" once suggested, (Quoted in Araújo 33), then there was little incentive to introduce questions of gender into the guerrillas' theories of national liberation. The life stories of the unquestioningly hard militant, circulating through revolutionary culture, must have served to keep such troublesome problems at bay. Then too, the intensity of state repression of guerrilla groups soon turned all militants' efforts from thoughts of social equalities to warfare and the struggle for survival. For whatever reasons, it appears that after the publication of *Tania*

la guerrillera in 1971 there have been no book-length biographical studies of any of Latin America's many guerrilleras.

Yet biography would seem to be a promising project, a way to reflect on the insurgencies of the past as well as the role that guerrilla organizations played in the entry of women into national political debates. There is no lack of subjects; many women can be identified as important figures in the guerrilla movements: Argentine Norma Arrostito, a co-founder of the Montoneros; Adriana Lesgart, head of the Montonero's Agrupación Evita; Ana María Villareal de Santucho, ERP leader and Roberto Santucho's first wife as well as Clarisa Lea Place, his lover and Liliana Delfino, the woman he married after Villareal and Place were killed in the Trelew massacre; Guatemalan Rogelia Cruz, the beauty queen, as well as Nora Paiz, FAR militants killed by government forces; Claudia Chamorro cited as a fearless warrior in Francisco Rivera's memoir as well as Nora Astorga who went on to become the Sandinista representative to the United Nations; the Dominican Republic's Mirabal sisters killed for their involvement in the underground against dictator Rafael Trujillo, Cuba's revolutionary heroines Haydée Santamaría and Celia Sánchez, Puerto Rico's Lolita Lebrón jailed for her attack on the U.S. Congress, and Chilean MIR militants such as Lumi Videla Moya. Since these women were born in the past sixty years, potential biographers should find it easy to follow how their lives unfolded: there are living militants as well as family and friends to serve as witnesses, governmental and private documents could remain in relatively good physical condition, newspaper accounts can be found in national libraries and, as Marta Diana discovered to her delight, attics and closets still yield photographs and other memorabilia that attest to a subject's life. 2



But biographers have not appeared for the guerrilleras and, unhappily, most of these women's stories have already been thoroughly erased from public view. Disappearance, murder and secret burial have obscured not only deaths, but also the fullness of lives intensely lived. But even the most well-documented of guerrilleras leave behind little evidence of their existence. Many lives, as Jon Anderson has found in his research on Che Guevara, are still engulfed by secrets and gaps in information (xiv). Military governments, even those like the Argentine which was said to have kept punctilious records of its counterinsurgency activities, quickly dismantled clandestine jails, destroyed or hid documentation, and kept their press censored so that today there appears to be almost no story, official or otherwise, to research and publish. Even more devastating for the potential biographer is the culture of fear fostered by years of state terror that has endured, leaving mistrust and a sense of continual danger to suffocate a people's oral history and memories of the period. As Diana experienced, most people who could provide information on women militants refused to speak to her altogether, while others were so apprehensive about her motivation—thinking she was a representative of the police or other repressive group—that she decided to discount their words. Similarly, María José Moyano interviewed male and female Argentine militants and found that some “were not emotionally prepared to review their guerrilla experience” while others could not go on with their stories (114).

This overwhelming lack of material evidence available to aspiring biographers seems to doom such projects; there will either not be enough material or the work will be vulnerable to inaccuracy, rumor or the political whims of the writer. Although most theorizing about biography has long emphasized the biographer's role as creator “reassembling the dust” in Paul Mariani's words (104), most European and North American scholars assume that a biographer can obtain access to information, can have some of that dust about an individual with which to shape the presentation of a life. But this is precisely what a biographer of Latin American guerrilleras lacks; the documents have been so well hidden, kept so taboo or so entirely obliterated that most biographies are thwarted from the outset. Marta Diana, for instance, had almost ideal conditions for her research on school chum Adriana Lesgart: she knew the woman's family well and could contact survivors with ease; she was a member of Lesgart's generation and had contacts with former guerrilleras; she was a journalist trained to get information in her country, yet she never achieved the desired “encounter” with the dead woman nor was she ever able to answer her



question of how the Montonera leader might have changed from the girl she once knew. Diana met with failure, that she can never know the adult Lesgart but can only “understand and imagine” the guerrillera by piecing together the life stories of others (445). It seems that today there are still too few available facts about guerrilla women’s lives to examine any one life thoroughly, or as Fraser and Navarro’s sought to achieve in their biography of Evita Perón: “to see her, present her and judge her as a human being,” (x).

Militant lives have not only been erased by their foes, supporters too have idealized their heroes and heroines, forging the images that they needed for myths of revolution. Even today, the merest outline of Che’s head, Sandino’s full body with his broad-brimmed hat or Evita’s face can still convey political meanings which unleash passions far outweighing the simplicity of the symbol. Early biographies of political leaders were unabashedly partisan, often using personal memory and well-publicized facts to reinforce the glory of their subjects. Today those few biographers who are attempting a more thorough assessment of past heroes find that it is not easy to determine where myth recedes and reality begins. One of the first to investigate Evita Perón’s life story, anthropologist Julie M. Taylor found that the “what actually happened,” is so intertwined with myth—even a middle-class myth about the lower classes’ supposed veneration and mythification of the woman, a “myth of the myth”—that the myth itself becomes a reality in need of analysis (9).

The case of Eva Perón reveals no easily perceptible point at which ‘reality’ ends and myth begins. These myths have used reality, and reality has been shaped by these myths. People have acted on what they believed to be the truth about Eva Perón, and they have acted as well on what they believed that other people believed about Eva Perón. They have acted on myths, and they have acted on a myth about those myths. (9)

When Fraser and Navarro wrote their biography of Evita several years later, they found that there was still very little factual information available about this most public of women, the myths had prevailed in spite of a massive amount of documentation. Similarly, Jon Anderson discovered enormous amounts of material for his biography of Che Guevara, but most were stories (xiv) intended to shore up or obliterate the symbol of Che as the secular Christ of La Higuera which had “spiraled out of control” after the publication of the photo of his dead body on display in that Bolivian village. So too Mexican novelist/biographer Paco Ignacio Taibo II found that the Che he was pursuing had already become a phantom, a prisoner of a publicity machine that converted his life into pure image: a revolutionary guardian angel guiding his followers as well as his former enemies, the peasants of Bolivia who now pray to the “almita del Che.” (9)

When revolutionary figures take on national or political significance, it is their myth rather than their lives that drive the demand for biography. While much is known about the Mirabal sisters, the hagiographic impulse turns away from searching for Minerva, Patria and María Teresa as complex individuals to establishing symbols of defiant Dominican nationalism, defiled beauty, and martyred saints. Ramón Alberto Ferreras reveals his myth-making intention at the very beginning of his fictionalized biography *Las Mirabal/ The Mirabal Sisters*. The front page reproduces the mass card distributed on the first –year anniversary of their deaths; it depicts the map of the country punctured by a cross with three ethereal women holding lighted lamps and looking towards the horizon. The words “dulce y decoroso es morir por la Patria”/ “It is Sweet and Right to Die for the Fatherland” immediately situates the Mirabals as martyrs, aligning their resistance to dictatorship with religious devotion and female spirituality. The book’s dedication to the people of the Dominican Republic and its women—directly addressing female readers as a separate group—urges them to follow the Mirabal lead, not in transgressive revolutionary activity to overthrow a government, but rather in feminine love and politico-religious sacrifice:

Al pueblo dominicano y a sus mujeres:
Para que abreen en la prístina fuente del ejemplo de sacrificio y martirologio sublimes, de estas tres monstruos del amor a su pueblo y a sus semejantes de toda la humanidad.

To the Dominican People and to Their Women:

So that they may partake of the pristine fountain of sublime sacrifice and martyrdom that these three monsters of love gave for their people and for their fellow man throughout all of humanity.



In a fictional account of the Mirabals, Julia Alvarez explores how myth-making narrative takes on a life of its own. If at first it is a ready-made formula for containing personal grief, it is reproduced for the public who demand a narrative which will transform political murder into sacrifice, projecting the deaths into the realm of the sacred to give them meaning. Tourists and journalists alike demand an altar to their dead heroines—title of yet another biography of the Mirabals, *Minerva Mirabal, historia de una heroína* by William Galván—, turning them into icons for public veneration. Fresh orchids are to be always kept under their photos as visual signs of their femininity, just as the photographs of the sisters remind visitors of the Mirabals' physical absence, their loss to the nation. The "girls" house is kept intact ready for the tours that demand authenticity while each Mirabal is provided with an unchanging personality trait, a "part, pinning her down with a handful of adjectives:" intellectual Minerva, religious Patria, immature Mate (6). To surviving sister Dedé, the visitors' fascination with simplified stories and household objects are a relief, foreclosing the difficult questions that another kind of biographical insight might ask.

Usually, if she works it right—a lemonade with lemons from the tree Patria planted, a quick tour of the house the girls grew up in—usually they leave, satisfied, without asking the prickly questions that have left Dedé lost in her memories for weeks at a time, searching for the answer. (5)

Visitors leave the Mirabal shrine with no more insight into the lives of the "girls" than they came with; however, they have experienced an affirmation of their faith in Dominican nationalism, the catharsis of women's martyrdom and a faith in a female spiritual power. This heady combination, which once promised the sisters' allegiance to popular revolt, is shown in Alvarez's story to have become an empty media event in a nation that has flowered over its killing fields to become the "playground of the Caribbean (318)."

Idealization of political figures persists in the depiction of women who took an active part in the guerrilla movements of the nineteen sixties and seventies. Moreover, this mythification tends to celebrate socially conservative feminine roles by endowing the politically rebellious woman with a posthumous femininity, one that in life she might have struggled against. As J. P. Taylor has shown in the case of Evita Perón, bodily purity, maternity, emotion, intuition and self-sacrifice are the qualities assigned to Latin American political "heroines," becoming the very stuff that their stories will be made of (86-97). Their biographies will emphasize the subject's ideal feminine body, small yet strong (88); her identification with a husband or male leader (90); her capacity for physical and moral/ spiritual nurturing (93), usually ending with some manner of suffering (95). Once myth-making is set in motion, biographers too collude in a process that strips the individual of her unique experiences, killing off the "real life" in order to convert it into a symbol for public veneration. The opposite can also be true, as in the case of the "black legend" of Evita in which the woman was recreated for vilification (J.P. Taylor, 72-85).

As Fraser and Navarro warn, dominant conceptual frameworks can overwhelm an accurate investigation of a life: "[n]o sooner does something happen than it forced into received patterns of history, (ix). Even Marta Diana, who brings a journalist's concern for facts to her research on Adriana Lesgart, initially sets as her goal the desire to find if Lesgart was either the "tender" (i.e., feminine) woman of her memory or the "hard" guerrillera, an automaton of armed struggle, as others have described her. Moreover, Diana finds that the female survivors of the ERP's Santucho family make use of similar patterns to structure the memory of their loved ones. Ana María Villarreal de Santucho's sister and daughters create a portrait of "Sayo" that could easily be that of any number of beloved guerrilleras or even that which Peronists gave to her countrywoman Evita Perón decades earlier. This co-founder of the Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo is remembered as small, fragile and elegant ("ella era una persona muy linda, muy femenina, muy delicada en todo...prefería los colores claros, y lo que usaba acentuaba esa apariencia que tenía tan frágil...su ropa era simple pero tenía siempre elegancia y refinamiento." (316)/ "she was a lovely person, very feminine and delicate in every



way...she preferred pastel colors and [her style of dressing] accentuated the fragility of her appearance..her clothing was simple but always elegant and refined"); a partner to husband Robi Santucho ("pero el amor por Robi fue creciendo y estoy segura de que continuó creciendo hasta su muerte; nunca vi una pareja que se amara como ellos se amaron" (314)/ "her love for Robi kept growing and I am sure that it continued growing until her death; I never saw a couple who loved one another the way that they did"), but one who held her own political convictions ("mucha gente de nuestra familia pensó siempre que mi madre asumió la lucha porque se enamoró de mi padre, y tal vez al principio haya sido así, pero luego mamá tomó perfil propio, actuó absolutamente convencida y de acuerdo con sus propias decisiones" (322)/ many in our family always thought that my mother entered the struggle because she fell in love with my father and, maybe at first this was true; but later mama made her own way and acted according to her convictions and following her own decisions). She was a wonderful mother who read to her girls and never forgot a birthday, even during the difficult years in semi-clandestinity (317-18), but she sacrificed her motherhood for the good of the nation:

Yo sé que ella hubiera querido vivir y ver crecer a sus hijas y cuidarlas y mimarlas y enseñarles, como toda madre, pero supo entregar lo que Dios pide, su vida, y fue por los demás. (314)

I know she would have liked to live and see her daughters grow up, to take care of them, pamper them and teach them, just like any other mother, but she gave up what God asked, her life, for others.

More than a little has been suppressed to keep this portrait alive: the elegance of Sayo's appearance—the tailored dresses that emphasized her tiny waist—would have had to overcome the austerity of the family's living conditions in the best of times as well as the woman's many stints in prison; her love for Robi was challenged when he left her for Clarissa Place and then returned to her after, it is rumored, considerable pressure to set the proper example of revolutionary marriage; and finally daughter Ana Cristina's wistful recollection that she would have been a good parent if only she hadn't dedicated so much time to the political struggle.

Creo que hubieran sido buenos padres si no hubiesen estado tan dedicados a la lucha. Pudimos sentir su amor, pero no los tuvimos paso a paso, siguiendo nuestra vida de cerca. (322)

I think they would have been good parents if they had not been so dedicated to the struggle. We could feel their love, but we didn't have them at our side, following our lives closely.

Yet even as Diana depicts the gap between "Sayo's" legend of exotic femininity—the nickname 'Sayonara' refers to her Asian-like features—and her experiences, it is a photograph of this young woman in her signature shirtwaist that fills the cover of *Mujeres guerrilleras*, once again reinscribing beauty as the mark of the female revolutionary.

Both the lack of information on the women who made up a large percentage of militant organizations and the ideological demands that these revolutionaries be represented as ideally feminine warriors can lead the potential biographer away from research of the facts or claims of the truth of a life. Although Claribel Alegría and Darwin Flakoll use oral histories as the starting point for the life story of Ana María Rivas Castillo, their *No me agarran viva: la mujer salvadoreña en lucha/They Won't take Me Alive* is fictionalized. Indeed, the reconstruction of her violent death which begins the book—gleaned from interviews in which loved ones recall radio reports of the army's ambush of a truck carrying FMLN guerrillas—as well as the defiant words of the title, which Rivas Castillo reportedly had said in other circumstances, set biographical information about this young mother's life within a dramatic reenactment of a heroism that might have been. Other writers who hope to examine a woman's life turn directly to fiction, creating protagonists who are free from the demands of verisimilitude or historical truth. Nicaraguan Giacomda Belli, for instance, ventures into biofiction in *La mujer habitada/ The Inhabited Woman*, whose

heroine Lavinia is a composite of Sandinistas Nora Astorga and Leticia Herrera, a fact that could not have been missed by Nicaraguan readers of the time. Basing the novel on two of the most dramatic exploits by women in the early FSLN—one in which a beautiful woman lures her political enemy into a trap and the other in which a woman leads a commando operation—, Belli can explore transformation of femininity into revolutionary zeal and join the “tender” with the “hard” in her heroine. But even those writers who do not move to fiction, those who still hope to ground their life stories in the dust of documentation, may have to reach Marta Diana’s conclusion that the guerrillera of the recent past is unknowable, that the only way to encounter her is by piecing together bits of life stories, her own as well as that of others, in act of the imagination.

A través de esta búsqueda yo traté de saber algo de Adriana, y a medida que iba conociendo detalles de la vida de otras militantes pude comprender/ imaginar lo que seguramente fue su vida. No me encontré con ella, como esperaba mi fantasía al iniciar el trabajo. Qué habría pasado en ese caso? ... Su desaparición implica que nunca podré saberlo. (445)

I tried to find out something about Adriana’s life in this search and, as I learned the details of other militants’ lives I was able to understand/ imagine how her life surely unfolded. I didn’t find her as I had fantasized at the beginning of this work. What would have happened if I had been able to do so?... Her disappearance implies that I will never know.

It is U.S.-based Dominican writer Julia Alvarez exploring nation, gender and biography in *In the Time of the Butterflies* who develops the belief that the way to approximate a guerrillera life is through an imaginative recreation of whatever material remains available, taking liberties in the reassembling of the dust:

So what you will find here are the Mirabals of my creation, made up but, I hope, true to the spirit of the real Mirabals. In addition, though I had researched the facts of the regime, and events pertaining to Trujillo’s thirty-one-year despotism, I sometimes took liberties—by changing dates, by reconstructing events, and by collapsing characters or incidents. For I wanted to immerse my readers in an epoch in the life of the Dominican Republic that I believe can only finally be understood by fiction, only finally redeemed by the imagination. A novel is not, after all, a historical document, but a way to travel through the human heart. (324)

But first the narrative patterns which have created heroines of moral purity, self-abnegation and sacrifice have to be dismantled. Biographical works by Alvarez and other Latina writers suggest that some temporal and geographical distance helps make this initial reassessment of national female legends. Irene Vilar, whose autobiographical account of depression led to an exploration of the impact that her grandmother Lolita Lebrón had on the family, carefully unpacks the mythology surrounding the Puerto Rican nationalist who fired shots on the U.S. Congress and spent twenty seven years of her life in jail for doing so. The Lebrón who went to Washington on that day in March 1954, fully orchestrating her own myth as woman-nationalist—selecting a feminine dress, wrapping herself in the Puerto Rican flag, creating the public statement “I did not come here to kill. I came here to die.” (85-97) —coexists with another Lolita who has religious visions, sends President Eisenhower a “Message from God in the Atomic Age,” and uses her daughter’s funeral for a public appearance. Evidence that she privileged nationalist politics over her family’s well-being, the possibility of her madness, and the decline into decrepitude—even as her presence as icon of the independence movement remains strong—opens up a breach between the political symbol and the individual, demythologizing the figure and asking serious questions of the life.

Although Alvarez’s story is somewhat less personal, she too addresses the upheavals experienced by those whose loved ones have been transformed into heroines of revolution. At the outset of *Butterflies*, Dedé Mirabal has become weary of the tourists and the pretense. She begins to slip in her role as guardian of memory: refusing to put out fresh orchids; making do with silk flowers to honor her sisters; forgetting to



close a bedroom door which allows a visitor to catch a glimpse of the house as a living space rather than monument to the dead (6). Minerva's daughter Minou is also "tired of being the daughter of a legend" (65), and tries to assert her own life as wife and mother. Still, they are surrounded by the Mirabal house and nearby museum which provide official memorialization of the "girls" as well as the storefront outside the grounds where Fela, a former servant now medium, attracts the "girls'" spirits to its altar with offerings of a cigars and rum. As keepers of the myth, albeit for different social groups, Dedé and Fela have held on to their icons, mummifying them and reproducing the story of their murder, "to take the sting out (259)," but are now facing a new struggle.

While the novel's main plot recreates the Mirabals' life stories, this narration of the past is set within another ongoing tale: Dedé's attempts to free herself from the guilt of survival as well as her life-long need to prove that the "girls" have not died in vain. Reluctantly Dedé faces Fela's assertion that the Mirabals might finally be at rest and responds with "we can let them go, I suppose," (319-320), as she plans for the first time in thirty years to mourn her sisters as dead and the ideals of their youth as permanently shattered. Thus it is this practical Mirabal—life insurance agent par excellence—who faces the stillness of death without the palliative of sacrifice, rebirth or mythical resurrection. She remains without a preordained story, a character without a narrative, alone to create her own unscripted life.

As Alvarez frees her character from myth-making responsibilities, she also calls attention to the process of life writing to show how far it is from truth. Creating a double within the text, a "dominicana gringa"—much like the Alvarez who gives an autobiographical statement at the end of *Butterflies* or the other dominicana/gringa that her readers first met in *How the García Girls Lost Their Accent*—goes in search of Dedé and wants "to know everything" about the Mirabals. Alvarez presents this would-be biographer through Dedé's eyes: she is a skinny scatter-brained woman with fly-away hair, convoluted Spanish; a bumbler who gets lost in her rented car, makes cultural errors in slamming doors, asks intrusive questions, and outstays her welcome. She makes mistakes, is far from omniscient and is even uncertain how to interpret events. However, the "dominicana gringa" challenges the stock answers that Dedé has used to avoid hard questions, making the woman face "where she is" in the Mirabal legend (6) and why she survived (174). Once this would-be biographer pushes Dedé, the official purveyor of Mirabal myth, to show how she is implicated in the very narration she has chosen to tell, biography comes down to earth and is revealed to serve the interests of the living. Alvarez follows the lead of her fictional double as well, revealing something of her own involvement in the Mirabal story: the "Postscript" explains her father's participation in the underground against Trujillo, the family's political exile and her own life-long interest in the Mirabals as courageous women. By shifting the biographical narration away from the Mirabal subjects to the official and unofficial biographers themselves, Alvarez challenges her readers to imagine a life story that does not try to "know everything" and thereby achieve a mastery of sorts over the dead. She asks readers to explore the process of inquiry and construction of a subject as a reciprocal exchange in which the biographer reconfigures the subject that she needs and perhaps the subject that she is.

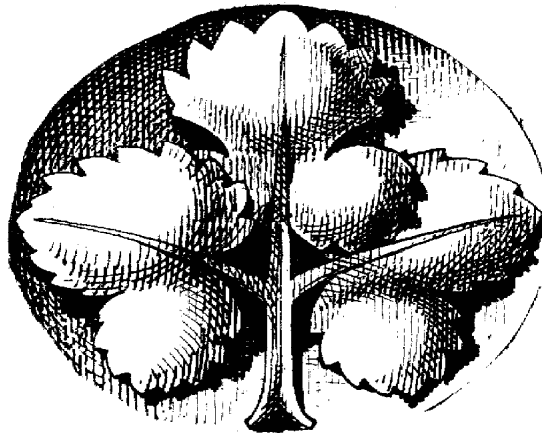
What Alvarez fashions in *Butterflies* are heroines who can speak to contemporary U.S. and Dominican readers. These are Mirabals who enter political resistance through their everyday lives as provincial women in the late 1950s, "girls" who experience the Trujillo tyranny through the dictator's sexual predation and his destruction of friends, families and religious values. Here Alvarez suggests that lived female experience—the beauty products, the shopping, the love affairs— can indeed lead to politization and that her Mirabals do not have to imitate male heroic models nor what Ileana Rodríguez has called the man/woman convergence in the guerrillera (1996, 160). Indeed, it is the very domesticity of this account that causes critic Roberto González Echeverría to give the novel such a negative review for its portrayal of the Mirabals as simple innocents with no "deeply felt or intellectually justified commitment" and an unclear connection between "individual destiny and pivotal political events" (28). Yet Alvarez seems to be rejecting just these conventions which have determined the biographies and biofictions of female militants; she is refusing to use the Mirabals either as sacrificial victims of state violence or as role models for armed warriors. Her Patria's lemon tree has no hidden spirits; the "girls'" are contemplating

their new purses rather than their political ideals when they are ambushed; they are terrified when led off to their deaths. Alvarez insists on the ordinariness of the Mirabals, which does not deter them from engaging in resistance, nor protect them from political imprisonment and assassination. This biographer strips the Mirabals of their heroic attributes, freeing them from the idealization that has them immobilized in time and space—like so many butterflies pinned to the wall—just as she frees the reader from that uncritical deification of the hero which, she explains, authoritarian regimes have planted in the hearts of all their victims.

Biography tells the life stories of important figures in national and world history. From its beginnings, the genre has not been intended to be a text alone; rather, it is expected to reach out from the pages to a reader, asking its audience to heed the examples it presents them. It is supposed to transform readers into the kinds of subjects needed for national, political and moral projects; it is a genre made for creating national attitudes and emotional allegiances. Biographers of Latin America's female militants bring their own hopes for their readers; some would have us join enthusiastically a revolutionary cause, others ask us to grieve for a lost generation, still others to adapt the spirit of the past to the present. Yet, unlike many biographers, these few who search for the female members of guerrilla organizations tell us that cannot find their subjects; they cannot get to the "soul" of the so recently dead. Ignored as both leftists and women, dangerous as well as insignificant, the guerrilleras have been generally eliminated as subjects for renewed debates on women and the state, traditional female roles and political power. Their attempts to forge a new female identity through revolutionary activity seem to have been expunged from the realm of the possible. Although biographers may still appear for the women who would be today's middle-aged citizens and documentation may very well be found, it would seem that until Latin American societies see their guerrilla women as important participants in the forging of nation, we readers of biography will have to return them to life through our imagination.

Footnotes

1. See the memoirs of Marcia Alejandra Merino Vega and Luz Arce for additional memories of the warmth and nurturing qualities of Lumi Videla Moya whose nom de guerre was 'Luisa.'
2. After almost all of her sources on Adriana Lesgart had come to naught, Diana found an old Christmas card and note from the girl in a file stuck in the back of her mother's closet.



ANNUAL TREASURER'S REPORT 2000

Submitted by Candyce Leonard

27 November 2000

Balance dating from 30 April 2000 \$ 1,183.87

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Dues, Scholarship Fund, and general donations \$ 1,619.00
Dividends from Share Draft Account 9.22

TOTAL \$ 2,812.09

DISBURSEMENTS

April 2000 newsletter \$ 764.09

(1) SCHOLARSHIP FUND BALANCE \$1,850.00

(2) GENERAL FUND BALANCE 198.00

COMBINED FUNDS BALANCE \$ 2,048.00

Publications

The Subversive Voice of Carmen Lyra Selected Works

Carmen Lyra

Edited, translated, and with an introduction by Elizabeth Rosa Horan

“Carmen Lyra’s marvelous trickster tales wake the reader to a sharper understanding of 20th-century history. Lyra’s stories and sketches—characterized by a sharp wit, wonderfully audacious candor and wry humor—help us reimagine the map of the Western Hemisphere.”
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“Carmen Lyra is one of many Central American women writers who were significant players in literary, intellectual, and political circles during their lifetimes but who have been studied and remembered less than they deserve. Recent scholarship is beginning to change this, and Horan’s work is a welcome contribution to this effort. Her witty renderings into colloquial English of Lyra’s folk and fairytales are an invitation to read them aloud.”—Janet Gold, University of New Hampshire.

These Central American trickster tales and satirical and realistic stories by Carmen Lyra (the pseudonym of María Isabela Carvajal, 1888-1949) are the first translation into English of the writings of early 20th-century folklorist and children’s writer.

Elizabeth Rosa Horan is director of comparative literature and associate professor of English at Arizona State University. She is the author of award-winning *Gabriela Mistral: An Artist and Her People* and the translation editor (with Marjorie Agosín) of *House of Memory: Short Stories by Latin American Jewish Women Writers*.

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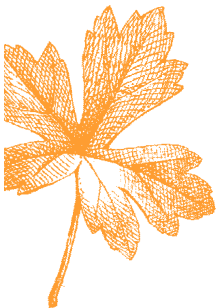
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This volume presents her popular folktales, including her most famous work, *Tales of My Aunt Panchita*, along side her influential social criticism. The familiar Central American folk character “Uncle Rabbit,” derived from both African and Native American folklore, is featured in the tales, while her children’s play, *Christmas Fantasy*, portrays another wily rabbit trying to pass as the Child Jesus.

Lyra’s realism is represented by her satire of high society in “Tales of the Cothnejo-Fishy District,” and her “Silhouettes from the Maternal School” describes the founding of Latin America’s first Montessori kindergarten. She denounces the exploitation of workers in “Bananas and Men,” while “Golden Bean” reveals crooked dealings in the coffee business.

Although Lyra’s writings form the core of this book, the editor’s essay offers important biographical information about an author and cultural milieu unfamiliar to many in the United States.



Nuevos Manantiales

Dramaturgas Españolas en los Noventa

África 30
Mercé Sarrias

Locas de amar
Paloma Pedrero

Hormigas sin fronteras
Margarita Sánchez Roldán

...son los otros
Carmen Resino

Pullus
Beth Escudé i Galles

La boda
Carmen Delgado Salas

La mirada
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Un maldito beso
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presenta

'Nuevos Manantiales

Dramaturgas Españolas en los 'Noventa

9 obras

de
9 dramaturgas reconocidas

con

Retratos
y
Autorretratos

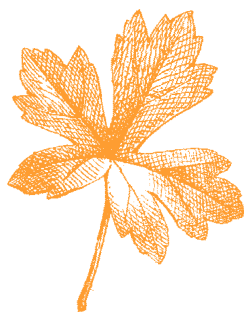
Introducción general

Introducción a la obra de cada escritora

Amplia bibliografía

Edición a cargo de
Candyce Leonard e Íride Lamartina-Lens
(Wake Forest University
y PaceCollege)

GIROL Books Inc.



Notable Twentieth-Century Latin American Women
A Biographical Dictionary

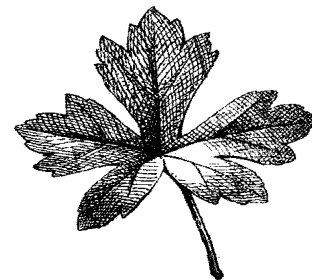
Edited by **Cynthia Margarita Tompkins** and **David William Foster**,
 Arizona State University, Tempe.

Greenwood Press, Dec 15th 2000. 0-313-31112-9. \$ 60 Est.

Notable Twentieth-Century Latin American Women is a powerful testimony to the outstanding contributions 73 of the most noteworthy women have made to their fields and to society. This volume covers a broad range of women excelling in the fields of politics, art, religion, government, education, literature, popular culture, and the sciences, with substantial, up-to date biographical and career overviews. Many notables are international figures, such as the former Nicaraguan President Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, Cuban Queen of Salsa Celia Cruz, and Mexican artist Frida Khalo. Others, such as the Mirabal sisters, founders of a resistance movement against a repressive Dominican Republic Regime, and Carmen Naranjo, a prolific Costa Rican author and champion of culture, merit the wider recognition offered here.



Yolanda Flores



The Drama of Gender: Feminist Theater by Women of the Americas. Peter Lang: New York, 2000. In the series Wor(I)ds of Change: Iberian and Latin American Literatures.

The special contribution of this project is to fill the scholarly gap existing in the juncture between women's dramaturgy and feminism as they manifest themselves on contemporary stages across the American continent, since the field that interfaces women playwrights, theater, and feminism has only recently become the object of critical and, to a lesser extent, pedagogical attention.

The plays examined *Lua nua* by Leilah Assungdo (Brazil), *Simply Maria or the American Dream* by Josefina López (U.S. Latina), *...Ya otra cosa mariposa* by Susana Torres Molina (Argentina), and *Cocinar hombre* by Carmen Boullosa (Mexico)- all exhibit a desire to deconstruct patriarchal notions of gendered roles and identities, compulsory heterosexuality, and dramatic forms. This demystifying enterprise is accompanied by the desire to create a variety of identities, more true and just to the reality of women's lives. The divergent historical and political contexts from which the plays emerge influence the way in which the authors express their feminist vision. The rubric "Americas" highlights the many linguistic, cultural, racial, and political layers that comprise each country that falls under such a heading. The multiethnic, multicultural realities that inform the US Latina condition invite comparison with counterparts south of the border and raise issues of class and the racialization of Latin America in differing contexts.

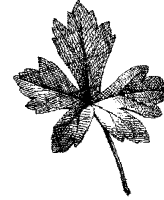


News from Members

Rosemary Geisdorfer Feal of the State University of New York at Buffalo has been appointed to a three-year term as Senior Consulting Editor of the *Latin American Literary Review*.

The *Latin American Literary Review*, a semiannual journal founded in 1972, publishes scholarly essays and book reviews on the literatures of Spanish America and Brazil. Articles may be submitted in English, Spanish or Portuguese, and non-English language quotations need not be translated. Submissions should conform to MLA style. Authors should send two copies of the article and a self-addressed stamped envelope to:

The Editors,
Latin American Literary Review,
121 Edgewood Avenue, Pittsburgh,
PA15218.



Individual domestic subscription rates are \$22 per year.

Rosemary Feal encourages members of Feministas Unidas to send their best work to the *Latin American Literary Review*.

DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS

Thesis presented at Michigan State University in December 2000 by Mary E. Orlicki

Thesis Director: Dr. Patricia V. Greene

Title: "Sextalk, Power, and Revolution: Discourse and Resistance in the Novels of Lidia Falcón."

Lidia Falcón O'Neill is one of the central figures of the Feminist Movement in 20th century Spain. Front-line activist, attorney, journalist, legal historian, playwright, PhD, and novelist, Falcón is a prolific writer. She is also the founder of the first Feminist Party in Spain. This dissertation examines Falcón's seven novels (*Clara*, *Asesinando el pasado*, *Es largo esperar callado*, *El juego de la piel*, *Rupturas*, *Camino sin retorno*, and *Posmodernos*) in light of their interrogation of history and of second wave feminist culture both within Spain and on the international scene. A preliminary overview of Women's Studies within Peninsular Hispanism reveals that the field has broadened and become more inclusive during the last five years, and that focus on Falcón has grown. Despite this change of tenor there persists a relative lack of critical inquiry devoted to her fictional works. This dissertation responds to this lacuna in the field.

A principal focus of this study is the examination the power relations implicit in the discourse of female sexuality inscribed in Falcón's fiction. Tools of critical analysis are employed which were developed by second wave feminists who have theorized the body and the sexual discourse of power, from within Spain and internationally. This dissertation also draws on the work of Michel Foucault for the analysis of power relations in the discourse of sexuality, and to relate these to the historical context of the characters, the author herself, and the second wave feminist movement in Spain.

Scrutinizing Falcón's portrayal of the feminist catchphrase "the personal is political," particularly regarding female sexuality and feminist consciousness, this study traces the development of a feminist ethics vis-à-vis female sexuality. Examination of this theme reveals that Falcón's discourse on sexuality is not part of a Foucauldian general deployment of sexuality which serves to manipulate and control; nor does it promote what Elizabeth Grosz calls a feminist sexual norm tainted by patriarchal ideology. What Falcón develops is a feminist counter-ethics. She creates new subject positions for women and portrays both positive and negative role models, but eschews the dictating of norms. Thus her counter-ethics stands in contrast to the patriarchal order.

SILVIA NAGY-ZEKMI

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

ARTICLES:

“‘Hasta no verte’, Rigoberta: aproximaciones teóricas al testimonio femenino.” *Woman as Witness: Essays on Testimonial Literature by Hispanic Women*. Eds: Linda Maier and Isabel Dulfano. Tucson: Arizona UP. (Forthcoming)

“Inscripciones patrias desde el espacio doméstico en la narrativa de Gioconda Belli” *Revista Hispánica Moderna*. (Forthcoming).

“A La Cuba homotextual de Reinaldo Arenas” *Sexualidad y nación*. Ed. Daniel Balderston. Pittsburgh: Instituto de Literatura Iberoamericana, 2000: 213-223.

“El mundo al revés: el proyecto paródico en *Mi tío Atahualpa* de Paulo de Carvalho-Neto.” *Locos, excéntricos y marginados en la literatura latinoamericana*. Ed. Joaquín Manzi. Poitiers, France: Centre de Recherches Latinoaméricaines, Université de Poitiers, 1999: 419-432.

“Silencio y ambigüedad en *Blanca Sol* de Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera.” *La voz de la mujer en la literatura hispanoamericana*. Ed. Luis A. Jiménez. San José: Universidad de Costa Rica, 1999: 51-60.

“Ficción y testimonio en la obra de Manlio Argueta.” *De texto a contexto: prácticas discursivas en la literatura española e hispanoamericana*. Barcelona: Puvill, 1998: 55-62.

BOOKS:

Paralelismos transatlánticos: Postcolonialismo y narrativa femenina en América Latina y Africa del Norte. Providence, RI: Ediciones INTI, 1996.

(Edited) *Identidades en transformación: El discurso neindigenista de los países andinos*. Quito: Abya Yala. 1997.

(Edited) *De texto a contexto: Prácticas discursivas en la literatura española e hispanoamericana*. Barcelona: Puvill, 1998.

More info on my web page: www.albany.edu/faculty/sng/snz/

LUZ MARIA UMPIERRE

“De-coding Isabel Allende’s ‘Dos palabras’”

This paper rose out of a request. In 1996 while I was working as a Cultural Resource person and Teacher at FM High School in New York, I received a request to prepare a presentation on Isabel Allende’s short story ‘Dos palabras’ and present it to about 400 students who had read this work in a myriad of different classes. The purpose was to entice the students into dishing out \$18 each to attend a lecture by Allende herself in Syracuse, New York. The request had come from one of my colleagues in Spanish who was determined to have as many students as possible attend the presentation. Because of our schools system of bureaucracy, I could not give the lecture to the students all at once but that I had to scramble myself and repeat the lecture over six periods of the school day to six different groups.

As I had to repeat myself over and over again on that day in 1996, I began to realize that Isabel Allende’s short story was also scrambled. The first name of the main character Belisa Crepusculario if de-coded spelled the name Isabel. I began to see how other aspects of the story that referred to Belisa, if read through the prism of Allende’s life, could be found to be autobiographical.

This paper will de-code for the audience ‘Dos palabras’ from Allende’s *Eva Luna* to reveal aspects of the author’s own life behind the facade of Belisa Crepusculario and the plot of the story.

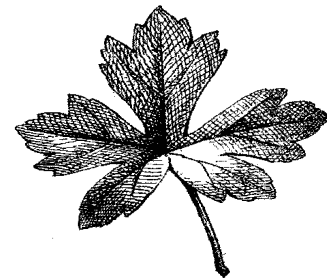


A
ISLA NENA
Por Anita Vélez Mitchell

Ay, de mis oriundos coquíes
con sus persistentes pláticas
sortilegio de la noche borincana
 Ay, de mis intrépidos pitirres
 que pintan mi cielo azul
Ay, de mis gallardas palmeras
que abanicen la esencia sutil
de mi patria.

 Ay, de mi mar fosforescente
 luz de nuestras
 delfinas aguas

Pido clemencia
pido justicia
pido conciencia
pido intervención humana
que se opongá terminantemente
a la fuerza macabra
que insiste en arrasar
a toda costa
con nuestra flora
con nuestra fauna
que emponzoña la naturaleza
de nuestra isla grata
que anuncia con truenos bélicos
la apoteosis que avanza
sobre nuestra tierra santa
 ¿Es que no escuchan la voz de mi isleta
 inundada en llanto?
Ay, ¡como nos trastorna el alma!
 Ay, de mis preciados coquíes
 ay, de mis valerosos pitirres
 ay, de mis airosas palmeras
!Ay de mis benditas aguas!



[Así cantó la poetisa viequense en New York al saber del bombardeo de Vieques con Napalm]

The Viques Times, March, 1993

Refiriéndose a la situación actual en Vieques, Anita Vélez Mitchell dice, “This 93’ publication needs no updating...”

Anita Vélez-Mitchell was honored as Women of the Year by the National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, Inc. New York City Chapter in September, 2000. Velez-Mitchell portrayed Julia de Burgos in a poetry video. She also starred in “I tuned Celia Rodriguez Piano” and in a 31 minute documentary, titled “Anita Velez: Dancing Through Life.”

Suspense!

She came from Puerto Rico during the Great Depression...

A child all alone ... haunted by a secret...

She survived by teaching herself to dance...

Three quarters of a century later...

Her daughter solves the mystery of why...

Anita's still dancing ... through life...

To watch the documentary, go to the Internet at www.movieflix.com (featured under documentary category)

Por favor recuerden mantener los pagos al día

Reminder:

New listserv address:

femunidas@clio.fiu.edu

Website:

<http://www.asu.edu/clas/dll/femunida>



Puestos/Job Announcements

Assistant Professor of Spanish, tenure track, to begin Fall, 2001.

The Department of Hispanic Languages and Literature seeks a Ph.D. specialist in Contemporary Peninsular Studies with strong theoretical and interdisciplinary interests. Expertise in transnational approaches to Hispanism and new critical theories highly desirable. The successful candidate will have an active research agenda and strong teaching credentials. Teaching load is two courses per semester, including advanced language, literature and culture courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Send letter of application and dossier by December 1 to Professor Lou Charnon-Deutsch, Dept. Of Hispanic Languages and Literature, SUNY Stony Brook, Stony Brook, NY 11794-3371.

The State University of New York at Stony Brook is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.

Applications from women, people of color, disabled individuals, special disabled veterans or Vietnam-era Veterans are especially welcome. If you require a disability-related accommodation please contact Professor Lou Charnon-Deutsch.

Department of Modern Languages and Literatures
The State University of New York at Buffalo

The department seeks an Assistant Professor to teach undergraduate and graduate courses in Spanish-American Colonial and/or Postcolonial literature; teach language courses as needed; occasionally teach required undergraduate courses in American Pluralism or in the Honors program; teach Spanish literature in translation courses with a broad appeal to students in the College of Arts and Sciences. Share in administrative duties related to the program. The candidates must: 1) hold the PhD in Spanish with specialization in Colonial and/or Postcolonial literature, 2) have strong teaching credentials, 3) have significant grounding in at least one major current theoretical model as well as ability to introduce students a range of those models, 4) demonstrate commitment to interdisciplinary literary and cultural theory. Evidence of scholarly promise is essential.

Send cover letter, CV, and dossier to Chair of Search Committee, Dept. of Modern Langs. and Lits., SUNY at Buffalo, Buffalo, NY 14260-4620.

All materials must be received by November 30. SUNY Buffalo is an Equal Opportunity Affirmative Action Employer.

Department website:

<http://wings.buffalo.edu/cas/ml/index2.html>



Announcement: Two Positions in Spanish

RANK: Assistant Professor. Appointment level and salary commensurate with experience. In extraordinary circumstances hiring at a higher level may be considered.

LOCATION: Romance Languages & Literatures, Carleton College, Northfield, Minnesota. 40 miles south of Minneapolis/St. Paul.

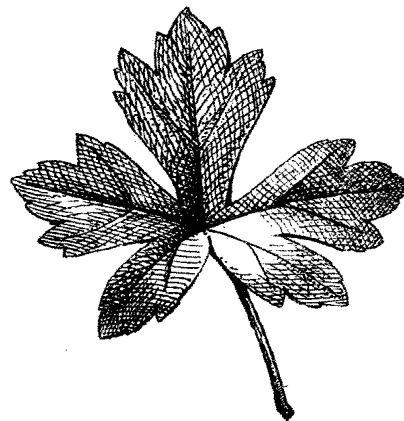
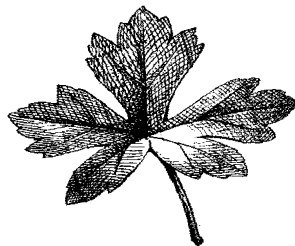
POSITIONS: Two tenure-track positions: 1) Peninsular Literature with speciality in 20th Century/Contemporary Spanish Literature; 2) Latin American Literature, specialty open. These positions require teaching both language and literature courses as well as involvement with interdisciplinary programs.

QUALIFICATIONS: Native or near-native fluency in Spanish. Ph.D. degree in hand or near completion at time of appointment. The candidates should show a commitment to teaching excellence, service to the college, and research/scholarship.

APPLICATION: Submit a letter of application, curriculum vitae, three letters of recommendation, and a writing sample to:

Professor Becky Boling
Chair of Romance Languages & Literatures
Carleton College
Northfield, MN 55057

Deadline for receipt of completed applications is November 10, 2000.



Membership Form

for the Calendar Year January - December 2001

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 21st year, *Feministas Unidas* publishes a Newsletter in April and December, and as an Allied Organization of MLA sponsors panels at the Annual convention.

To join this network, complete the membership form below, tell us what type of payment you prefer, fold the page so that Candyce Leonard's address label shows, close it with a piece of tape, include a return address and postage.

Yes! I would like to become a member of *Feministas Unidas*.

Please tell us about yourself:

I am a:

Full or Associate Professor	\$15.-
Assistant Professor, Full-time Instructor, or Independent Scholar	\$10.-
Graduate Student, Part-time Instructor or Other	\$ 5.-
Institution	\$20.-

Name:

Address:

Professional Affiliation:

Please add a contribution for the scholarship fund (indicate amount)

\$ 20 \$ 15 \$ 10 \$ 5

I am enclosing a check over \$____ (please use separate envelope)

E-mail address:

Please mail to:

Dr. Candyce Leonard
Wake Forest University,
P.O. Box 7332
Winston-Salem, NC 27109-7332



We Would Like To Hear From You!

Please tell us about your research projects, your recent publications, book reviews, honors or grants that you have received, feminist conferences that you are hosting, or conference panels that you will take part in.

Please fill out the following information:

Name:

Rank or position(s):

Institution(s):

Year-round mailing address:

Please indicate:

The Title of your work or event:

The author(-s) or the place and date of the event:

Describe your project in 50 words or less:

Thank you for your cooperation and your interest

