

Feministas

U n i d a s



Deborah Medlock

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

Fall 2001



Volume 21.2

About the Artist

Debbie Medlock is a native of Arizona—she was raised in the small copper mining town of Globe —and has traveled across the Southwest. Over the years, she has grown to have a deep love and admiration for the Southwestern Native American’s commitment to nature and the things of the earth that is central to their way of life. Her beautifully detailed gourds represent her passion and respect for their traditions.

One of nature’s greatest plant gifts to man has been the gourd. It is believed that the gourd spanned the entire globe in prehistoric times. Remains of gourds have been discovered in Peru, Mexico, and Florida dating from as early as 11,000 BC. The most common use of gourds was as a container for the storage and transportation of food. They also were used for cooking and eating utensils, carrying water, and as musical instruments. And the list goes on.

Many North American Natives believed that the gourd was a resting place for the Gods and Spirits. Another belief was that the gourd brought good spirits to the Earth and captured the bad spirits. It is considered good luck by many Chinese to have a gourd in your home.

Today gourds are both functional and decorative. The types of gourds commonly used are known as “bottle gourds.” These gourds are grown in many parts of the country; however, most of the gourds Debbie uses were grown in the Phoenix area. Gourds are harvested after the first freeze of the year and then left to dry either in the field or in an enclosed area. The more perfect gourds are picked and then moved inside after removing the thin outer skin by scraping. The gourds are allowed to dry for 4 to 6 weeks and then washed.

Debbie is a self-taught artist and a life long learner. She feels her talent is inherited from her parents, Sonny and Suzanne. Debbie began working with hard-shelled gourds about five years ago. Each gourd is transformed into a named, one-of-a-kind piece of art. Debbie began selling them on a wide-scale basis thanks to the encouragement and support of her husband, Mike, her parents, and many friends. Some of her artwork has traveled as far away as Sweden. Debbie has sold over 50 pieces and has participated in such craft shows as the Cloud Croft July Jamboree. Her work can also be found at the Blue Mule Gallery in Globe, Arizona and in Southwest Expressions Gallery, El Pedregal, Scottsdale, Arizona.

For more information, please visit:
www.igourd.com.



ELECCIONES/ELECTIONS

Vice President Candidates are:

Maria Claudia Andre

Claudia Ferman

Patricia Greene

Carmen de Urioste



Please go to page 40 for the respective candidate's statements.

Please cast your vote by September 15th electronically at cynthia.tompkins@asu.edu or mail this ballot to

Cynthia Tompkins

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This fall's column is a joint effort by our outgoing president Elizabeth Horan, and Beth Jorgensen, incoming for 2002-2003.

Dear Feministas Unidas Colleagues:

The "F" Word - De Nuevo La Palabra Maldita

I hear smart, active members of our organization tell me, from time to time, that they've had colleagues counsel them NOT to list their Feministas activities on their vitas. I suppose one could just list "MLA panel" or "MLA affiliate" without the sponsoring organization. If success in the academy, conventionally defined, is what most matters, maybe we should update ourselves, change our name and list ourselves as Post-Feministas Semi-Unidas.

As a group based in the world of the academy, we follow that world's conventions in significant ways. What we're about is spelled out less in the jazzy title — though it matters a lot — than in the flat-footed part following the colon. We are a coalition of scholars. What that scholarship involves, we continuously specify and broaden, year after year. Our study of literature and culture ranges over the Afro-Hispanic, US Latino/Latina, Iberian, Spanish, Luso-Brazilian, Latin American, Chicano and Chicano, el Caribe, and more. We are a coalition whose study and effort towards understanding and communication constitutes an activist agenda.

That "F" word has always made some people uncomfortable. Let's talk pragmatics. We've all moved — let's admit it, we move everyday — through worlds where using the "F" word seems to limit what can be accomplished for women. We seemingly censor ourselves in the name of some greater good. We censor ourselves at considerable cost: lacking a common identification, we have no unifying principle. If we're not feministas, we're not unidas. Besides, if we can't call ourselves feministas, what else can't we call ourselves?

Well, feministas, for one, and unidas, es decir, en coalicion. A coalition dedicated to communication through all means available and imaginable. A coalition committed to democratic, consensus-based decision-making in the face-to-face of our annual meetings. See you this December, in New Orleans!

Elizabeth Horan



Transitions

I knew that Elizabeth would be a hard act to follow as president of Feministas Unidas, so I should have expected her contribution to our joint column this Fall to be provocative. Her words provoked me to remember and to reread Luisa Valenzuela's short but forceful piece "La mala palabra," published in 1985 (back before anyone imagined a post-feminism) in that most venerable of journals, the *Revista Iberoamericana*. And the two things in combination made me take a few minutes on a busy day and reflect on the power of language and the struggle over our uses of that power among the ever-shifting landscape of "palabrotas" that remain to be appropriated and transformed and perhaps even liberated without fear of "el jabón ni la sal gema, ni el miedo a la castración, ni el llanto" (Valenzuela). For those few minutes and for the years of commitment and time dedicated to Feministas Unidas, I want to thank our out-going "presidenta" Elizabeth Horan. She was an effective leader who leaves our organization stronger than she found it in many ways.

The day and its busyness suggest other themes to address as well. I am gearing up for my two-year term as president with the capable support of our newly elected vice-president, Patricia Greene, the other Executive Committee members, Cynthia Tompkins and Candyce Leonard, and the many past officers who participate in an electronic discussion of our concerns and our projects on an ongoing basis throughout the year. This is one of the many ways in which we work as a true coalition, even on a long-distance basis.

I want to bring your attention to the announcement in this newsletter of our first annual Feministas Unidas Essay Prize. The discussion of the idea of organizing an essay contest for unpublished work by junior scholar members of FU started at the 1996 MLA meeting, and I am delighted that with the cooperation of Ksenija Bilbija and *Letras Femeninas*, we are able to get the contest underway this year. Please spread the word among your colleagues and help us in soliciting exciting submissions for the prize.

Our annual business meeting/party will be held on Thurs., December 28 starting at 5:30 p.m. in Rosemary Feal's suite at the New Orleans Sheraton. We will be done in time to attend the Presidential Address later in the evening. We will discuss details of the essay prize, choose topics and presiders for the 2003 MLA sessions (a research papers panel and a pedagogy workshop), and consider items of new business raised by our members. If you wish to suggest topics for the meeting, or if you cannot attend the meeting, but have an idea for the MLA sessions, please e-mail me before the end of the semester at: bjgn@mail.rochester.edu

I look forward to seeing many of you in New Orleans in December, and I encourage you to attend the many sessions in which our members are participating. We have an important presence at the MLA and we make a difference for each other and for scholars in many fields. Take care and please contact me at any time throughout the year with your ideas for FU activities.

Beth E. Jorgensen



Queridas/os colegas:

Ante todo, quisiera darle la bienvenida a Patricia V. Greene, nuestra flamante Vice Presidenta, y agradecer una vez más, a las candidatas, Carmen de Urioste, Claudia Ferman y María Claudia André, por haberse presentado.

Me da una enorme alegría el que se haya logrado el trabajo conjunto de *Feministas Unidas* y la *Asociación de Literatura Femenina Hispánica*, respecto al premio que consiste en la publicación del mejor artículo en *Letras Femeninas*. Mi gratitud a todas las involucradas en el proceso, y en especial, a Ksenija Bilbija y a Beth Jorgensen.

A Deb Medlock, mi agradecimiento, por habernos permitido utilizar su obra para agraciarse la tapa...

A Fabiola Fernández, María Martell y Beatriz Trigo, gracias, de corazón, por las reseñas...

A Catharina Vallejo, mi sentido agradecimiento por preparar la nota necrológica de Montserrat Ordóñez, y a Linda Fox, gracias, como siempre, "for the kind words."

Marisol Russell se encargó de preparar las listas de "*Feministas Unidas* members at MLA" y también logró "domar" el obituario de Carmen Rico-Godoy. Vaya mi aprecio...

Otra vez estoy utilizando la matriz que nos facilitó Christine Henseler... ¡Gracias mil, nena!

A David Martínez, eterna gratitud, por hacer posible el ensamblado de textos largos y la impresión inicial.

A quienes asistan al MLA, además de las sesiones de *Feministas Unidas*, y al "Business Meeting", quisiera invitarlas/os a ir a las tres sesiones sobre "Women and Experimentalism" que organicé para la Division of Women's Studies and Literature...

Como todos, en estos momentos tan difíciles, doy gracias, pero también quisiera que fuéramos más autocríticos respecto al costo social y humano que conllevan nuestro nivel de vida e intervenciones políticas y económicas, tanto en los Estados Unidos, como en el exterior.

Vayan mis mejores deseos para el Año que se inicia...

Con el cariño de siempre,

Cyn



Feministas Unidas Sessions at the MLA

MLA 238. Racing Research, Engendering Scholarship: Thinking Race and Gender in the Latino, Iberian, Latin American, and Luso-Brazilian Contexts

Program arranged by Feministas Unidas
12:00 noon-1:15 p.m., Studio 1, Marriott

Presiding: Laura J. Beard, Texas Tech Univ.

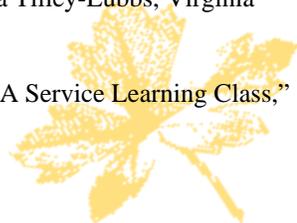
1. "Navigating Delicate Terrain: Negotiations between a Roma Student and a Non-Roman Professor," Alexandra Alopea, Vassar Coll.; Eva Maria Woods, Vassar Coll.
2. "Gender and Race in Brazilian Literary Scholarship and in the Classroom: Problems, Approaches, and Strategies," Cristina Ferreira-Pinto, Austin, TX
3. "The Challenges of Globalization for Feminist Scholars," Debra Ann Castillo, Cornell Univ.

MLA 810. Pedagogy in Solidarity

Program arranged by Feministas Unidas.
1:45-3:00 p.m., Galvez, Marriott

Presiding: Beth Ellen Jörgensen, Univ. of Rochester

1. "Building Bridges: Teaching Spanish through Community Involvement," Lisa M. Vollendorf, Wayne State Univ.
2. "Building Engaged Learning Environments: Challenges and Opportunities," Lourdes María Alvarez, Catholic Univ. of America
3. "Culture Learner and Service Learning: Pedagogy and Practice," Alice A. Weldon, Univ. of North Carolina, Asheville
4. "Student Journals and Reflective Judgment for Service Learning," Gresilda Tilley-Lubbs, Virginia Polytechnic Inst. and State Univ.
5. "The Image and the Voice of la Chicana in Mexican American Literature: A Service Learning Class," Elizabeth Rodríguez Kessler, California State Univ., Northridge



Feministas Unidas Members at the MLA

MLA Sessions

Thursday, 27 December

MLA 78. Mock Interviews for Job Seekers in Foreign Languages

8:45-10:00 p.m., Studio 7 & 8, Marriott

Program arranged by the Associations of Departments of Foreign Languages.

Presiding: Geraldine Cleary Nichols, Univ. of Florida

Speakers: Geraldine Cleary Nichols; T. Richard Chi, Univ. of Utah

Friday, 28 December

MLA 161. Novedad y ruptura II: Nuevos nexos

10:15-11:30 a.m., Studio 2, Marriott

Program arranged by the Division on Twentieth-Century Latin American Literature.

Presiding: Carlos J. Alonso, Univ. of Pennsylvania

1. "Mixing It Up: The Uses of Memory in Recent Argentine and Chicana Women Poets," Suzanne Chávez-Silverman, Pomona Coll.

MLA 182. In Memory of Montserrat Roig: Remembrance and Resistance

10:15-11:30 a.m., Studio 3, Marriott

A special session; *session leaders:* Rosalía Cornejo-Parriego, Univ. of Kansas; Ofelia Ferrán, Univ. of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

1. "*L'hora violeta*: Del ocaso de las utopias a la escritura de la memoria amorosa," Rosalía Cornejo-Parriego

2. "*Això Era i No Era*: Myth and Memory of Montserrat Roig," Geraldine Cleary Nichols, Univ. of Florida

MLA 230. Postnational Imaginaries: Cultural Practices in Latin America

12:00 noon-1:15 p.m., Iberville, Marriott

A special session; *session leader:* Miguel López, Univ. of New México, Albuquerque

1. "From Macondo to McOndo: What Does Young Contemporary Latin American Literature Tell about the Transnational Cultural Landscape?" Claudia B. Ferman, Univ. Of Richmond

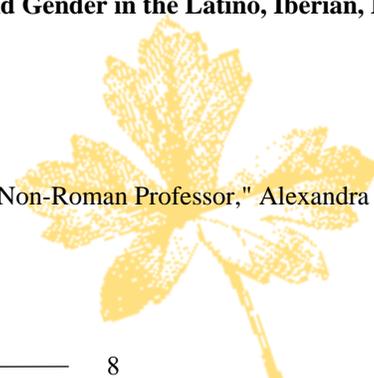
MLA 238. Racing Research, Engendering Scholarship: Thinking Race and Gender in the Latino, Iberian, Latin American, and Luso-Brazilian Contexts

12:00 noon-1:15 p.m., Studio 1, Marriott

Program arranged by *Feministas Unidas*.

Presiding: Laura J. Beard, Texas Tech Univ.

1. "Navigating Delicate Terrain: Negotiations between a Roma Student and a Non-Roman Professor," Alexandra Alopea, Vassar Coll.; Eva Maria Woods, Vassar Coll.



2. "Gender and Race in Brazilian Literary Scholarship and in the Classroom: Problems, Approaches, and Strategies," Cristina Ferreira-Pinto, Austin, TX

3. "The Challenges of Globalization for Feminist Scholars," Debra Ann Castillo, Cornell Univ.

MLA 292. Spanish Golden Age Drama II: Staging and Performance

3:30-4:45 p.m., *Galerie 1, Marriott*

Program arranged by the Division on Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Spanish Drama.

Presiding: Amy R. Williamsen, Univ. of Arizona

1. "Comedia Theory and Performance Anxiety," Catherine M. Connor, Univ. of Vermont

MLA 310. Basque Women Writers Inside, Outside, Inside Out

3:30-4:45 p.m., *Jackson, Marriott*

A special session; session leader: *Marijose Olaziregi Alustiza*, Univ. of the Basque Country, Spain

1. "From the Outside Looking in: Basque Women Writers Urretabizkaia, Mintegi, and Oñederra Viewed through Anglo-American Feminism and Majority Language Stylistic Opposition," Linda White, Univ. of Nevada, Reno

MLA 312. Material Dimensions of the Spiritual Life: Early Modern Hispanic Convent Literature

3:30 p.m.-4:45 p.m., *Iberville, Marriott*

A special session; *session leader:* Lisa M. Vollendorf, Wayne State Univ.

1. "Political, Epistemological, and Gender Figures in Sor Juana's *Neptuno Alegórico*," Verónica Grossi, Univ. of North Carolina, Greensboro

2. "A View into the Convent: Vidas of Four Discalced Trinitarians," Susan Manell Smith, Hampden-Sydney Coll.

3. "Two Provincial Nuns and Colonial Religious Culture," Stacey Schlau, West Chester Univ.

MLA 318. Building Coalitions Among the MLA Caucuses? A Roundtable on Grassroots Problems and How We Might Solve Them

3:30-4:45 p.m., *Cornet, Sheraton*

Program arranged by the Women's Caucus for the Modern Languages.

Presiding: Sara Lennox, Univ. of Massachusetts, Amherst

Speakers: Michael Bennett, Long Island Univ., Brooklyn; Ruth-Ellen Boetcher Joeres, Univ. of Minnesota Twin Cities; Beth Ellen Jörgensen, Univ. of Rochester; Eleanor M. Kennedy, Queen's Univ.; Magali Cornier Michael, Duquesne Univ.; Christine M. Probes, Univ. of South Florida; Douglas W. Steward, Truman State Univ.

MLA 354. Women and Experimentalism in Writing, Film, Art Performance, and Theory I

7:15-8:30 p.m., *Studio 2, Marriott*

Program arranged by the Division on Women's Studies in Language and Literature.

Presiding: Miriam Balboa Echeverría, Southwest Texas Univ.

2. "Outrageously Spectacular: Performances by Jesusa, Fusco, and Findley," Margarita Vargas, State Univ. of New York, Buffalo



MLA 370. Entrelazos caribeños / Caribbean Interrelations: Homage to Nilita Vientós Gastón

7:15-8:30 p.m., Jackson, Marriott

Program arranged by the Discussion Group on Puerto Rican Literature and Culture.

Presiding: Luz María Umpierre

2. "Delirio tremendo: Memory in the Writing of Daniel Torres and Mayra Santos Febres," Suzanne Chávez-Silverman, Pomona Coll.

MLA 382. Remaking Spain: Gender, race, and Nation in Spanish, French, and Hollywood Film Remakes

7:15-8:30 p.m., Balcony N. Marriott

A special session; *session leader*:- Kathleen M. Vernon, State Univ. of New York, Stony Brook

3. "Strategies of Assimilation and Exclusion: 1950s Remakes of *Morena Clara and Maria de la O*," Eva Maria Woods, Vassar Coll.

MLA 385. From Research to Action: Changing the Status of Women in the Profession

7:15-8:30 p.m., Bayside C, Sheraton

Program arranged by the MLA Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession.

Presiding: Rosemary G. Feal, State Univ. of New York, Buffalo; Dana Dragunoiu, Princeton Univ.

Saturday, 29 December

MLA 431. The Rise of the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century Spain

8:30-9:45 a.m., Regent, Marriott

A special session; *session leader*: Lou Charnon-Deutsch, State Univ. of New York, Stony Brook

1. "Género sexual, 'esfera pública' y 'alta cultura' en la España del siglo XVIII: Una perspectiva comparatista," Iñigo Sánchez-Llama, Purdue Univ., West Lafayette

MLA 441. Simone de Beauvoir: The Other Analyzed and Influenced

8:30-9:45 a.m., Studio 1, Marriott

Program arranged by the Simone de Beauvoir Society.

Presiding: Liliane Lazar, Hofstra Univ.

3. "Simone's Daughters: Beauvoir's Influence in Contemporary Latin American Feminist Discourse," María Claudia André, Hope Coll.

MLA 445. Women and Experimentalism in Writing, Film, Art Performance, and Theory III

10:15-11:30 a.m., Maurepas, Sheraton

Program arranged by the Division of Women's Studies in Language and Literature.

Presiding: Cynthia Margarita Tompkins, Arizona State Univ.

MLA 469. Teaching Literature to Today's Student

10:15-11:30 a.m., Studio 2, Sheraton

Program arranged by the Associations of Departments of Foreign Languages.

Presiding: Phyllis H. Larson, Saint Olaf Coll.

3. "Visual Effects: Engaging Students' Visual Competencies in the Study of Literature," Kimberly Ann Nance, Illinois State Univ.



MLA 516. Homage to Carmen Martín Gaité: 1925-2000

12:00 noon-1:15 p.m., Studio 1, Marriott

Program arranged by the Twentieth-Century Spanish Association of America.

Presiding: John C. Wilcox, Univ. of Illinois, Urbana

3. "Gendered Spaces in 'Entre visillos,'" Catherine G. Bellver, Univ. of Nevada, Las Vegas

MLA 528. Medieval Spanish Language and Literature

1:45-3:00 p.m., Regent, Marriott

Program arranged by the Division on Spanish Medieval Language and Literature.

Presiding: Barbara F. Weissberger, Univ. of Minnesota Twin Cities

MLA 546. Race-ing Research, En-gendering Scholarships

1:45-3:00 p.m., Salon 816, 820, & 824, Sheraton

Program arranged by the MLA Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession.

Presiding: Yi-Chun Tricia Lin, Manhattan Community Coll., City Univ. of New York

2. "Historicizing Positionality in an Age of Globalization," Sara Lennox, Univ. of Massachusetts, Amherst

MLA 561. Theory, Posttheory

3:30-4:45 p.m., Bacchus, Marriott

Program arranged by the Division on Twentieth-Century Spanish Literature.

Presiding: Maryellen Bieder, Indiana Univ., Bloomington

2. "Spanish Feminist Theory Then and Now," Roberta Johnson, Univ. of Kansas

3. "Processions of Simulacra, Volatile Bodies: Spanish Studies, Theory, and the Academy," Leora Lev, Bridgewater State Coll.

MLA 656. Theater and Performance in Nineteenth-Century Latin America

9:00-10:15 p.m., Studio 10, Marriott

Program arranged by the Division on Latin American Literature from Independence to 1900.

Presiding: Maria A. Salgado, Univ. of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

1. "Once on This Island: Insularity and Performance in Nineteenth-Century Puerto Rican Theater,": Dara E. Goldman, Univ. of Illinois, Urbana

MLA 675. Canon Formation in Nineteenth-Century Spanish Literature: Constructions of High Culture in Spain during the Restoration (1874-1931)

9:00-10:15 p.m., Regent, Marriott

A special session: *session leader:* David T. Gies, Univ. of Virginia

1. "Canonizing the Countess: Gender and Canon Formation," Maryellen Bieder, Indiana Univ.

MLA 675. Canon Formation in Nineteenth-Century Spanish Literature: Constructions of High Culture in Spain during the Restoration (1874-1931)

9:00-10:15 p.m., Regent, Marriott

A special session: *session leader:* David T. Gies, Univ. of Virginia



2. "Aesthetics and Gender in Restoration Spain (1874-1931): A Post-Isabelline Perspective," Iñigo Sánchez-Llama, Purdue Univ., West Lafayette

Sunday, 30 December

MLA 695. Teaching Multiethnic Literatures: Courses and Syllabi

8:30-9:45 a.m., Salon 825 & 829, Sheraton

Program arranged by the Division on Ethnic Studies in Language and Literature.

Presiding: James K. Ruppert, Univ. of Alaska, Fairbanks

Speakers: Luz María Umpierre; Martha J. Cutter, Kent State Univ., Kent; Pramod K. Mishra, Duke Univ.; Jennifer L. Gillan, Bentley Coll.; Sandra K. Stanley, California State Univ., Northridge

MLA 727. Habitus in Nineteenth-Century Spain

10:15 a.m.-11:30 a.m., Galerie 4, Marriott

Program arranged by the Division on Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Spanish Literature.

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

MLA 805. Galdós clásico y moderno

1:45-3:00 p.m., Balcony K, Marriott

Program arranged by the International Association of Galdós Scholars.

Presiding: Linda M. Willem, Butler Univ.

3. "Galdosian Odysseys," Diane F. Urey, Illinois State Univ.

A brief business meeting will follow the session.

MLA 809. Open Forum: A Discussion on the Future of Catalan Studies

1:45-3:00 p.m., Jackson, Marriott

Program arranged by The North American Catalan Society.

Presiding: Bradley Scott Epps, Harvard Univ.

Speakers: Joan Ramon Resina, Cornell Univ.; Kathleen McNerney, West Virginia Univ., Morgantown; Thomas Smith Harrington, Trinity Coll., CT

MLA 810. Pedagogy in Solidarity

1:45-3:00 p.m., Galvez, Marriott

Program arranged by Feministas Unidas.

Presiding: Beth Ellen Jörgensen, Univ. of Rochester

1. "Building Bridges: Teaching Spanish through Community Involvement," Lisa M. Vollendorf, Wayne State Univ.

2. "Building Engaged Learning Environments: Challenges and Opportunities," Lourdes María Alvarez, Catholic Univ. of America

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Conference Papers

Alexandra Oprea and Eva Woods

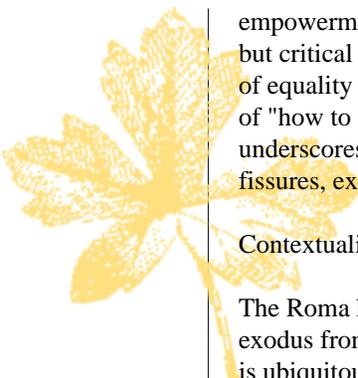
"Navigating Delicate Terrain: Negotiations Between a Romani Student and a Non-Romani Professor"

This panel centers around the question, "How do our teaching and our research take into account the racing and the gendering of scholarship?" One approach to such a question is to discuss how in Hispanic Studies courses, scholarship is raced and gendered through the claim that only certain ethnic or gendered identities have the right to speak of certain topics, a debate inflected by the arguments of Gayatri Spivak and other postcolonial feminists. Another viable arena of discussion is that posed by recent attempts to de-colonize and de-canonize the curriculum in Hispanic Studies departments; that is, the positive trend to include texts produced by women, Third World subjects, former slaves, indigenous peoples and minorities. Creating a culturally responsive curriculum is, however, by no means enough. Although both of these approaches are necessary and have contributed to a more critical and democratic pedagogical practice within Hispanic Studies, we must continue to broaden our definition of education to include pedagogical practice as a form of cultural politics (Giroux and Trend 61).

A sphere in which race and gender manifests itself in a most palpable sense is through the personal interaction of students and teachers *through* texts dealing with race and in the context of the Hispanic Studies classroom. Our project not only works through a pedagogical problem, but it also acknowledges racism toward Roma that is historically prevalent in Western society and seeks to change racist attitudes through dialogue in and around the classroom. This paper analyzes the experience of having to negotiate complex and multiple roles between Alexandra Oprea, a Romani student at Vassar College and Eva Woods, a non-Romani professor of Hispanic Studies in a course that emphasized cultural studies as a way to approach Spanish Peninsular texts. In this course of predominantly white-Anglo women, we examined texts that sometimes flaunted problematic and derogatory depictions of Calé.¹ Our source of data encompasses not only our recalled conversations during the co-teaching of a section of this class, but also interviews with other Romani students or non-Romani professors in the United States that have been in a similar situation.² In an attempt to translate and theorize our experience to a broader audience, we have situated it both within the context of current theoretical analyses of race and pedagogy and in that of the West's pervasive and institutionalized persecution of the Roma. We first provide a historical background to the situation of the Roma in Europe and the U.S. As we narrow the focus to concentrate on the participation of Roma in the educational system in general and in Hispanic Studies in particular, we include voices of Romani students. We then reproduce a dialogue in which Alexandra and Eva work through the complex issues involved in teaching and learning about race. Ultimately this project engages with the way in which we construct knowledge of Roma and representations of Roma in our disciplinary scholarship and curricular structures and how we link this epistemology to our goal of a critical pedagogy between real subjects in the classroom.³

If a liberatory pedagogy requires the examination of "pedagogical meltdowns" in order to understand "the limits and the necessary misfirings of pedagogy" (Lather 496), then we should focus not only on what seems to work but on those spaces in which right and wrong answers are not as important as the over-all process of learning. Lather calls this region of undecidability, a "praxis of stuck places." By liberatory pedagogy we mean an approach that considers "contradictory voices, counternarratives, and competing understandings" (Lather 488) as central to its philosophy. Critical, liberatory pedagogy engages with our lived problems through storytelling, it empowers students through the collective effort of affirming difference and community and transforming knowledge and subjectivity, thereby promoting new paradigms of emancipatory practice. We note the dangers of subscribing to an abstract language of critical pedagogy that does not base itself in actual classroom practice. The literature on critical pedagogy often assumes that students and teachers engage in the classroom as rational and "self-regulating" individuals and that





class interaction is based upon coherent discourses and narratives. It also implies that student empowerment and equality with the teacher is attainable but critical pedagogy fails to show how the teacher is in the position to define the utopian project of equality and is therefore already implicated in a position of privilege. So rather than an example of "how to get it right," within a disciplining dialectics of truth and negativity, our exchange underscores the open-ended process of a critical pedagogy that is aware of its unavoidable fissures, excesses, and shifting ground and that still strives for social change and new knowledge.

Contextualizing Romani/Non-Romani Interactions

The Roma have endured unthinkable treatment at the hands of *gadje* societies ever since their exodus from India 1000 years ago. In Europe, explicit and institutionalized racism towards Roma is ubiquitous. European countries subjected Roma to the Porrajmos (Romani Holocaust), slavery, and in Spain, discrimination in housing, employment, schools, and courts. Recent racism against Roma has come in the form of skin head attacks, house burnings, and systemic persecution at the hands of law enforcement bodies.⁴ In the 1930s and 1940s in Spain, local authorities made ample use of the vagrancy law passed in 1933 (La Ley de Vagos y Maleantes) that not only made it legal to prosecute individuals even considered to be potential offenders but also justified regular and massive raids (redadas) upon Calé settlements. Forced resettlements in the 1960s, through the Plan de Erradicación del Chabolismo, relocated Calé to isolated and deprived zones, thereby worsening their plight. While welfare benefits have threatened to obliterate their cultural identity, the State's compulsory reeducation schemes (through the Unidad de Trabajo Social) have pressured the Calé to assimilate and reject their traditional lifestyles. In the 1980s, the Calé were the object of large numbers of violent protests when the State tried to relocate them to neighborhoods populated by non-Calé Spanish residents.⁵ More recently, the low percentage of Calé receiving a complete education has been a recurring topic in the Spanish national newspapers. Despite the attention paid to multiculturalism in the classroom—given the huge influxes of immigrant children in certain schools—only 30% of Calé school children complete the State's educational requirements. About this problem, J.A. Madrid poignantly asks, what is it about the system that continues to exclude them?: "Pero por qué la comunidad gitana no levanta cabeza, ni en la escuela ni fuera de ella? Su caso, además de dramático, es peculiar porque, como subrayan los expertos, la solidaridad social los olvida selectivamente. Se atienden diversidades de todo tipo: regional, cultural, religiosa, étnica...y, sin embargo, los gitanos prácticamente no caben en ningún sitio."⁶

The exclusion of Calé from pertinent discourses does not only occur in Spain but also in studies of Spain in the United States. There is no recognition that the history and experience of Calé constitutes an essential facet of Spanish history and experience. The exclusion of Calé from studies of Spain in US classrooms provides us with a partial and superficial picture of Spain by ignoring an important dimension of its identity. It is for this reason that a study of Spain should not ignore the drastic over-representation (more than twenty times superior to their number in society) of Calé women in Spanish prisons, reflecting the racist, classist and sexist nature of the Spanish criminal justice system. However, most studies of Spain in the United States do ignore the Calé experience and therefore present an incomplete vision of Spanish society.

The exclusion of Roma/Calé from classroom discourses in the United States is partly due to the fact that there has been no massive or organized Romani political movement in the United States to respond to the historic and present anti-Romani racism in the US and beyond, therefore general consciousness raising has been minimal. It is little known, for instance, that the Roma were shipped to the Americas as slaves during colonization. The United States' history is also marred by numerous anti-Romani laws, "massive deportations" of immigrant Roma during the early 20th century, and special police units to monitor Roma, some of which are still around today (Hancock 1987). The presence of American racism toward Roma is made evident by a national survey conducted by the University of Chicago in 1989 in which Americans ranked "Gypsies" last in



"social standing" out of 58 ethnic groups.⁷ These facts are seldom the topic of discussion in the American classroom.

Hispanic Studies and Emancipatory Pedagogy

This negation of Roma manifests itself in elementary, secondary, and higher education through the ignorance of most students and university professors in the United States about the history of persecution and the Roma's extreme marginal status. The negation is also perpetuated through the romanticization and racist representation of these individuals in scholarly texts and college curricula.⁸ Groups or individuals feel empowered when they can see themselves or their history portrayed in such a way that affirms their existence. But as Janine Pease-Windy Boy has pointed out in regard to Native Americans in higher education, their inability to find affirming sources of information about themselves has underscored their invisibility and unimportance. Universities and colleges, specifically Hispanic Studies departments, can serve as important vehicles for challenging debilitating stereotypes, for understanding the history of this ethnic group, and for deconstructing cultural texts that are complicit in the oppression of Roma/Calé. One need only look to texts such as Cervantes' *La gitana* or the manifestations of Mérimée's *Carmen* in films such as Saura's *Carmen* (used to the point of saturation but with little regard to its racial politics) to see how deeply ingrained the white Spaniard's identity is intertwined with that of the Spanish Calé.

Hispanic Studies is a discipline in which the exclusion of Roma is both unacceptable and inexcusable given the history of representation of Roma/Calé in Spanish cultural production and their presence in Spain. But negative stereotypes can be found in even the most seemingly innocuous classroom material. For example, in the intermediate-level Spanish language textbook, *Conexiones: Comunicación y Cultura* (Eduardo Zayas-Bayan, Susan M. Bacon, Dulce M. Garcia, eds. Prentice Hall, 1999) the book provides the following examples for the preterit and imperfect use of *querer*:

No quisieron hablar con la gitana. They refused to talk with the gypsy.

No querían hablar con la gitana. They didn't want to talk with the gypsy (27).

If it is common practice in standard English to capitalize the names of ethnic groups, then these sentences imply that "gypsy" is not a legitimate race of people but a social type, in other words a (negative) characteristic that anyone could possess.⁹ This signifies a profound lack of racial sensitivity regarding the Calé/Roma.



Another such activity in *Conexiones* is an oral exercise centered on the story of "Mary Urbanc y la gitana" in which a North American student traveling in Granada meets a "Gypsy" ("en un viaje a Granada, se encontró con una gitana que quería leerle la mano") (31). Instead of pointing out how Roma have been branching out into a variety of professions (a phenomenon well-represented in Chus Gutiérrez's *Alma gitana* [1995]), the exercise stereotypically foregrounds the Calé as a non-historical people, timeless and out of sync with modernity (Trumpiner 1992). The chapter title for both of these exercises, "El más allá," reinforces suspicions about the supposed "strangeness" and "mysticism" of Calé individuals (as well as of Latinos).



Racial insensitivity and lack of political awareness about Roma is illustrated in a series of interviews that Alexandra conducted with Romani students of public schools in the New York area during the summer of 2001. In the following transcription, an 18 year old Bulgarian Romani student recalls his interaction with a biased teacher:

There was this teacher, a music teacher. We were talking about music and I told him that my father is a musician. He asked what kind of music he played and when I told him he played Gypsy music, he tried to say stuff like that Gypsies are bad people, that we steal and that kind of stuff so I had to get suspended. That's another reason I don't go to school cause I get in trouble too much. (10 June 2001)

The sense of "political correctness" that most teachers extend to students of color does not always apply to the Roma, and as this interview shows, some teachers feel comfortable admitting their racist misconceptions of the Roma in the classroom.

Alexandra: In another incident after one of my classes with Eva, a student after class accused me of "making up" an identity for the sake of a grade. I felt completely de-legitimized both as a student and as a Romani. Relentless stereotyping of the Roma prohibit people from believing that they could be in such proximity to Roma, i.e. in a classroom. If students and Roma are constructed as two mutually exclusive categories then I am relegated to the status of an impostor in the classroom. To people who see me as a student, I am a "fake" and to those that accept that I am Romani, I am "posing" as a student. The Romani student is then left to try to reconcile this socially-inflicted impostor complex.

Alexandra: I recall a disturbing incident that took place in another class at Vassar that resembles the one previously mentioned. One day when one of my male professors held class in the less formal environment of the cafeteria he asked me where I was from. I responded "Romania" but he was not satisfied. He said, "but you look Latina". When I finally said that I am a Romanian "Gypsy" (I couldn't say Romani cause he was not familiar with the term), he said "your ancestors used to steal children." All I could think is that he must not realize what he was saying. Due to the power relations and the gender differences inherent in this situation, he felt comfortable enough to make the comment while I was too inhibited to respond.

An eighth grade Bulgarian Romani female remembers her classroom as an environment that nourished biases about Roma:

I just had one time when we were reading "Hunchback of Notre Dame" and Esmeralda she was Gypsy so after we finished the book and we watched the movie my friends in my class, they said 'how's Gypsies?' And my teacher said they bad, they steal. And when she said that I dissed her I said 'don't talk about my Gypsies cause you don't know s**t about my Gypsies'. And she was like 'oh, that's right' and I was like 'of course its right.' (13 June 2001)

A 53 year-old American Rom tells of an incident in which an elementary school teacher asks his granddaughter if she was a witch,

Man: A teacher realized she was Rom when she read an article that my granddaughter was in. The teacher, without realizing it, (I don't believe she would do it on purpose) said to my granddaughter 'are you a witch?'

Alexandra: Did you confront her?

Man: I don't think she knew what she was saying. It's been my experience that if no one is hurt, there is no conflict going on...leave it alone. (15 June 2001)

Due to the historical and present multi-dimensional racism against Roma, some Roma have come to expect marginalization. None of the individuals involved in the above named incidents chose to take action against the biased teacher.

All, including Alexandra, gave the teacher the benefit of the doubt and reassured themselves that there was no malicious intent. Aside from the lack of access to means of redress, most of the Roma living in the US often choose to ignore incidents such as these and do not pursue legal remedies or publicity for fear of attracting too much attention to themselves and their community.¹⁰ This desire to avoid public attention is rooted in the history of persecution the Roma have faced the world over.¹¹



Issues of trust and fear are intrinsic to classroom dynamics when race cards are laid on the table. Fear of being misunderstood, misinterpreted, "disclosing too much and becoming too vulnerable; memories of bad experiences in other contexts of speaking out," (Ellsworth 316) and silencing one's voice are all too common, even when the game announced is "Dialogue." In the literature of critical pedagogy, dialogue is "the basis of the democratic education that insures a democratic state. Through dialogue, a classroom can be made into a public sphere, a locus of citizenship" (314) in which all participants can speak as equals and in a safe environment. But as Ellsworth herself points out, the unequal relations of power that define the student teacher relationship make dialogue, as defined by cultural pedagogy, impossible and potentially repressive. Repressive because dialogue in this sense is an oversimplified fiction (class as a safe space, and academia as an unregulated sphere) that perpetuates structures of knowing and power that are already in place (norms of sameness and hierarchy). In the following personal narratives, Alexandra and Eva establish a dialogue not as fully rational and disinterested subjects, but as fragmented selves, split among multiple social positionings.

Storytelling

Alexandra: As I glanced over my "Interdisciplinary Analysis of Spain" syllabus, I noticed that one of the topics of discussion was the "Massification and Mystification of Flamenco and the Imaginary Gypsy in Music and Cinema". I was not sure what exactly the professor planned to discuss; all I knew was that I saw that word, "Gypsy", which despite its pejorative connotation, was a word I had been waiting to see addressed in a syllabus. I became skeptical. It is not uncommon for *gadje* (non-Roma) to discuss "Gypsy"-related issues from a perspective that is completely misinformed, biased, and even offensive. It was extremely important to me that the discourse be enlightening since it would probably be the first and only time Vassar students would have a chance to hear about the Roma in an academic setting.

At first, I was reluctant to reveal to the professor that I was Romani because of the myriad of insensitive reactions I usually get from non-Roma when they find out I am "Gypsy." When I told her, the professor seemed amazed and surprised yet happy to have a Romani student in her class, which is a normal reaction since there are not many of us in the United States and some of us tend to conceal our identities. Although the reaction was a typical one that I get, it still made me feel uncomfortable, like an oddity, like I did not even belong in a classroom. When professors regard Romani students with awe coupled with delight it results in the disempowerment of the student because s/he is made to feel unusual yet desirable, due to their "strangeness." This exoticization sets up boundaries for the student, designating the places s/he is expected to occupy. Because the classroom setting is outside of their designated sphere, the student's success is impeded by the internalization that s/he does not belong there.

Eva: Because my research intersects so intimately with issues of race (cinematic representations of imaginary "Gypsies" played by non-Calé women in Spanish musical comedy films) I have long been invested in deconstructing racism and investigating its historical manifestations through Spanish cultural production. When Alexandra approached me and told me that she was Romani, she was so shy and nervous that I remember thinking, "I need to make her feel comfortable, but at the same time let her know that I am happy to have her in class, and excited to have her contributions and personal insights in class." In conversations and classes with my own former female professors, we had discussed issues of voice and speaking for the Roma/Calé in great depth. Here was my chance to help empower someone through her identity. We went to my office and proceeded to discuss her family, she showed me pictures, and we started to plan how Alexandra could help lead discussions during the sections of the course which dealt with images of Calé in Spanish films and literature. Not only did it seem easy, but it was happening very quickly and I was not necessarily reflecting on what was occurring, I was instinctually coping with each situation as it presented itself. Alexandra was smiling and motivated and I felt excited that we



were doing something that really mattered. It was inspiring and hopeful to think that we might really change students' misconceptions about this ethnic group. "We" were also allowing students to take a more active role in their learning: Alex would present and the students would share what came to their mind when they heard the word "Gypsy."

This summer, after reading Alexandra's comments about our first encounter, my reactions were of surprise, hurt, and finally resignation. This is where the difficulties of critical pedagogy come into play. Alexandra was not feeling empowered but exoticized. An immense chasm separated how we positioned ourselves and one another. I positioned myself as a younger Anglo-Spanish female teacher trained at public institutions with large minority populations, working a non-tenure-track job at a private and quite elitist college and working *against* structures of power that privileged white male heterosexual subjectivity. I was positioning Alexandra as young woman college student who was both marginalized and empowered, depending on her situation. In the context of our class, however, she was triply marginalized: as a foreigner (Romanian being her first language), as a female, and as Romani. Our goal should have been instead to "understand ourselves as inhabiting intersections of multiple, contradictory, overlapping social positions not reducible to either race or class or gender, and so on. Depending upon the moment and the context, the degree to which any one of us 'differs' from the mythical norm [...] varies along multiple axes, and so do the consequences" (302).

Alexandra: Although I felt like a foreigner in the classroom, I accepted Ms. Woods' offer to construct a lesson plan devoted to the Roma. The opportunity to have a direct say in what the class was going to "know" about Roma made me feel powerful and more of an insider to the classroom. However, the pressure built as I realized that I did not know all of the sources of information about the Roma, and perhaps the ones I knew were not the best ones. I doubted myself at every step, thinking "What if I left something out," "Am I choosing the 'right' material?" and "Where do I begin?" I felt tremendous pressure as though my duty were to present "my nation" in the best possible light because non-Roma already had negative perceptions of us. Because of this pressure I steered away from discussing controversial issues within our community such as the subordinate status of women and concentrated instead on "the basics".

I began to realize the difficult task of making it clear that the Roma are actual people, not the concocted images people often have of "Gypsies". The responses I received to "What comes into your mind when you hear the word 'Gypsy'?" reflected depictions of Roma as singing, dancing, jewelry-donning characters (these are kinder than the stereotypes with which myself and other Roma are often confronted). These ultra-romanticized perceptions of Roma locate us as fictional characters in the *gadje's* fantasies. These fictional portrayals hinder Roma from participating fully in society and fail to acknowledge us as "real" human beings; we don't even exist. In effect, I had to establish that we are a "legitimate" minority and to combat the stereotypes that were not mentioned but that loomed over me: images of the fortune-telling, thieving, nomad who only exists in the past. In order to challenge the impression that being Romani means being a social type, I had to emphasize that we are a people of color with our own culture and language that still exist today, though few in numbers.¹²



Eva: I was semi-aware and rather wary of the potential problems we could encounter, but I had no previous experience teaching like this. Moreover, no one had ever prepared me to do critical pedagogy as it was certainly never discussed in any of the graduate training sessions or T.A. orientations. I had to rely on my gut instincts and my previous teaching experience. The critical pedagogy, I found out, would come later, through analysis of the events.

During these classes, Alexandra was very tense and her behavior towards the rest of the class appeared defensive. Although they showed outward concern and interest, most students had no previous exposure to this information (Alexandra's ethnic identity, the history of the Roma, the inherent institutional and cultural racism against them) and it was surely frustrating for Alexandra to have to field questions that seemed obvious or awkwardly phrased. More importantly, they were not sharing their experiences of race or discrimination like Alexandra. Alexandra and I exchanged many looks which I interpreted to be as mutual understanding and I perceived my looks at her as communicating unconditional support. But even though she had wanted to do the presentation, I did not and perhaps could not have prepared her for this experience. I was placing too much responsibility on her and ideally assuming that the student and teacher roles were interchangeable upon command. What limits should I impose? When should I speak and how do I let Alexandra speak without putting pressure on her? No definitive answers or guidelines exist for these questions. Why, then, did critical pedagogy prescribe the redistribution of power to students, as if this were a possibility?

Alexandra: I recall one particular incident in which I was "put on the spot". Ms. Woods turned to me and said, "Alexandra, do you have anything to say about the article?" I was surprised since she did not usually call on people. I did not have anything to add at that particular point and felt marginalized by being made the last word on the article just because I was the only student of Romani nationality. Other facets of my identity were being ignored in favor of my race. The professor had over-looked the fact that I was also a student; that even when it came to the Roma, I was learning like the rest of the class. Although all attention was focused on me, I was really invisible to the class because they only saw one dimension of my being. Because of my unwillingness to cast aside other elements of my identity to simplify my existence, I resisted by refusing to speak the class language of de-individualization or to act in the role of Community Spokesperson. My identity cannot be circumscribed to my race and the identity of my community is so complex that my words taken in isolation, either in class or in this article, could never do it justice.

Eva: Until the class was over, I never knew that Alexandra had felt this way. Because we had agreed to "co-teach," I felt at the time that it was appropriate to ask if she wanted to add anything to the discussion. How was it that my efforts to provide a student with a voice and empowerment had backfired? While I was considering Alexandra my equal during those moments of the class, in part to show her the respect I held for her identity and the right to speak on the subject matter, I was going too far, overcompensating. But Alexandra was vulnerable and never thought that we had stepped outside of the teacher-student hierarchy. Even though she was participating more, taking control in certain ways of the class when she presented, she was still positioning herself as a student, and indeed she was a student: she was receiving a grade for the course and therefore was not occupying a safe space in which she could "talk back" or one in which she could be uninhibited enough to partake in defiant speech (hooks 1986/87). The power dynamic was still in place, despite my idealism. Ellsworth writes: [s]trategies such as student empowerment and dialogue give the illusion of equality while in fact leaving the authoritarian nature of the teacher/student intact (306). In the classroom, my role as professor would always carry more symbolic weight than Alexandra's student role, given the institutional constraints of the college system. Emancipatory authority (critical pedagogy) connotes the possibility of an emancipated teacher bringing to light the oppressed histories of Others, thereby suturing the link between knowledge and power (307). But how can I bring these experiences of alterity to light if I am not aware of my own conditioning within the structures of oppression?



To Conclude and to Continue

Professors cannot unproblematically empower minority students, or help them to find an "authentic voice". What we can do as students and teachers is to gain a partial knowledge of this experience of each other and to realize that all knowledge is incomplete. Our narratives are partial, imperfect, and inevitably one-sided. But they contain the seeds of a process that will require our unending critique and this process will contain implications for partially knowing other oppressions. The abstract recommendations of critical pedagogy failed: we did not reach a utopian, emancipatory level of understanding through rational dialogue. Nor did we show how "to get it" or a clear way out of these "stuck places." But our project was not a complete failure because both Alexandra and Eva had the opportunity to voice some opinions through the continued examination of what transpired in this class as well as to build a dialectic of the social and the educational that considers difference (multiple positionalities) as it fights for change.

The experience Alexandra and Eva had was representative and unique. It is representative because many Roma encounter bias in the U.S. educational system, but it is unique because few Roma experience this racism in the context of the college classroom. It is our hope that by contextualizing this unique case we not only contribute to greater knowledge about racial relations in the classroom in general, but also to the application of this knowledge specifically to the Hispanic Studies classroom. Despite the potentially few or remote possibilities that a Hispanic Studies professor could have a Romani student in their class (many Roma—especially Romani women—do not even reach college), the possibility exists. Educators should not construe the absence of Roma in their classes as absolution from action (Sleeter 51): even if there are no Romani students present in a class, it remains essential to include this experience, to examine the socially-constructed image of the "Gypsy" and to analyze how its deployment has affected the lived reality of Roma. The goal of progressive educators should not only be that they can eventually have Romani students present for dialogue in their classes but that Roma themselves will come to teach those classes. Such a goal reflects the progressive idea of the egalitarian distribution of power in academic institutions and in society at large.

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¹ We use the term Roma, (Romani being the adjective) to refer to the ethnic group pejoratively known as "Gypsies." Note the derivation of "gyp" (to swindle) from the word "Gypsy." In Spain this ethnic group refers to itself as Calé (again, the pejorative term would be "*gitano*," from "*Egipto*", the imagined place of origin of the first Romani tribes that arrived to Spain in the fifteenth century).

² This paper was written in consultation with Uma Narayan and Joy Lei, both of Vassar College.

³ It is our hope that this project also extends to how we know and represent other ethnicities.

⁴ For a complete account of Romani history, consult Hancock's *The Pariah Syndrome*. For more information on the contemporary situation of Roma in Europe, see the website for the European Roma Rights Center (www.errc.org).

⁵ For more on the situation and the history of the Calé in Spain see San Román and Gay y Blasco.

⁶ *El País digital*. December 5, 2000.

⁷ General Social Survey of the National Opinion Research Center, 1989.

⁸ See Tomás Calvo Buezas' colossal study of racist assumptions in Spanish scholarly textbooks.

⁹ See: www.cas.umn.edu/webpapers/Hancock.htm

¹⁰ Hancock, "Anti-Gypsyism..." (www.geocities.com/Paris/5121/pariah-ch-15.htm)

¹¹ Especially in Eastern Europe, Romani action against biased institutions and individuals is more common because of both the larger numbers of Roma in the region and the aggressive nature of the racism.

¹² Ian Hancock estimates that there are about one million Roma in the United States. Ascertaining the exact number is difficult because many hide their ethnicity for protection, thus the U.S. census lacks information about Roma ("The Roma: Myth and Reality" 1).



Cristina Ferreira-Pinto Bailey

Gender and Race in Brazilian Literary Scholarship, and in the Classroom:

Problems, Approaches and Strategies

Race and gender have been fundamental in my work as a literary scholar and as a teacher of Latin American literature and culture, as well as of Portuguese and Spanish languages. I strongly believe that, without these two categories of analysis, it is not possible to reach a deep understanding of Latin American culture and literature in general and, in particular, of Brazil, my main field of work. Of course I am not alone; there is today a considerable number of well-known and respected scholars, particularly in the United States, whose main field of research is Brazilian women writers and gender in Brazilian literature. Race, on the other hand, has been for a longer time the object of discussion and analysis in Brazilian studies, particularly in social studies or in the study of music and popular culture. However, its use as an analytical tool, in other words, as a way of *approaching* literary, cinematic and other cultural texts is a more recent phenomenon. I must say, though, that not many scholars have brought together the categories of gender, race, *and* class, in an effort to develop a critical analysis of Brazilian literary and cultural production. Critics tend to examine these categories separately. Those who study the literary production of Brazilian women have generally dealt with a body of works by mostly white, middle-class female authors; and those who study racial matters in Brazil have usually ignored the specific problems of women of color, the exception being works on Carolina Maria de Jesus, the black writer from a *favela* in São Paulo, who became known after the publication of her diary, *Quarto de despejo (Child of the Dark)* in 1960.

In fact, gender studies developed as a separate field within Brazilian literary studies, and the study of women writers of color, a field within a field within a field. The ghettoization of women, and particularly of minority women has not been a phenomenon exclusive to academic scholarship nor to Brazil. Rather it has often taken place within political associations such as workers' unions, a political party, or a group like the Brazilian *Movimento Negro*. Often, these groups encourage their female members to form subgroups wherein they can discuss "women's issues," as if these were not issues concerning the whole community. This situation has been found in other Latin American societies. For example, Peruvian writer Magda Portal talks in her autobiography about her political involvement with APRA, and recalls the leaders' disregard for women's problems, considered less important than problems directly affecting male workers. Eventually, the "Feminine Command" was formed to mobilize women within the workers' movement and address "feminine" issues such as domestic abuse. However, "The oppression of women cannot be regarded as secondary to or distinguishable from socioeconomic oppression because . . . [as Costa Rican author Carmen Naranjo has stated] 'the fight to improve women's condition is identical with the fight to improve society'" (Jehenson xii).

In a country like Brazil, where social relations are complex and often ambiguous, women of the dominant classes participate in the oppression of poor women and of women of color. In addition, racial discrimination is denied under the guise of a "racial democracy," and social inequality explained away as "um problema econômico" that has no ties to race and class ideology. Therefore, it becomes imperative to utilize gender, race and class as critical tools in literary scholarship, in order to situate the text under scrutiny in its proper cultural and socio-historical context. Only in this way is it possible to achieve an understanding of the complex dynamic of Brazilian society as expressed in its literature.



These three categories can and should be brought into the classroom at all levels of instruction, in an effort to encourage students to employ gender, race, and class--since these three categories are linked together in a continuous symbiosis--as critical tools in their own readings, papers and research. I will discuss next some strategies for bringing these categories to our classes; I will also address some of the obstacles and the different forms of censorship that have emerged from both individual and institutional sources which would rather portray race and gender as "foreign" elements in the Brazilian context, or as forms of "female or non-white self-victimization."

I don't think I am mistaken in saying that feminist studies entered the departments of Spanish and Portuguese on the realization that despite the ever-growing and high-quality literary production by Latin American women (not to mention women writers from the Iberian Peninsula), few were the classes that included their works. Those courses that did generally included the scarce names of "exceptional" women we know well from the old literary anthologies: Sor Juana, Clorinda Mattos de Turner, Gabriela Mistral, and a few others. In the case of Brazil, Cecilia Meireles, Raquel de Queiroz and Clarice Lispector. So we began in the same way feminist scholars in Anglo-American literature did: by offering once every so often classes on Brazilian Women Writers, Latin American Women Writers, and so on.

In the first year at my first job after graduate school, in a small and progressive liberal arts college in Massachusetts, I was lucky to be able to teach two different classes on Latin American women, one in Spanish and one in English translation (my other classes being language classes). The school administration and faculty were committed to diversity of race, ethnicity and gender orientation, values shared by most of the student body. My two classes had very high enrollment but, nevertheless, I had not one single male student in them. That situation did not bother me at the time, nor has it bothered me personally since, on the other occasions when my classes on women writers or gender issues did not appeal to male students. It is noteworthy, however, because of its implications inside and outside of the classroom, as we think of feminism and gender not only as critical tools in literary, cultural and linguistic studies, but also as social praxis.

A feminist approach to literary scholarship eventually takes its practitioner to a feminist approach to teaching, whatever the subject is, and to the realization of the impact this approach and ourselves as critics and teachers can have on our students. The ball does not stop there: the relationship among female and male students can be positively affected, and these individuals, in turn, can influence their peers outside the classroom, and so on. In addition, a feminist approach to teaching and to the literary or cultural text offers us a whole new perspective on reality, inviting us to consider issues of gender orientation, race relations, discrimination, and class structure. Thus it can effect changes in social relations; it can change how we relate to our students and vice-versa, to our colleagues and families, as well as to the Hispanic woman bagging groceries in the supermarket, or to the black person we come across in our neighborhood, in our work place, or sitting on the corner of a busy intersection in any large city, in any part of the world. A word comes to my mind, and that is respect.

This is, I believe, what feminism as praxis can do today, and call me utopian if you wish. I am certainly aware of how far we still have to go. It is also clear to me why we still need to keep offering classes on Brazilian, or Spanish-American, or Latin American women writers. I am not going to propose, nor am I planning, to actively seek male students for such courses (I've had many men, bright and open-minded, taking my classes on gender issues). However, it will be productive to discuss strategies that would help us make teaching a praxis for real life and real change. Thinking of strategies, we think also of problems, obstacles and prejudices; and then,



some questions: Why so many male students still think a course on women writers has nothing to do with them? Why so many male colleagues still think our work is of less value, and why so many men--and some women--inside and outside academia think what we do is just plain bull...?



Let me give some examples. First, a quote from a letter for my tenure review at the University of Texas, written by a well-known scholar in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese of a large and prestigious American university. After praising my scholarship, he wrote that I partook in the "blindness" of feminist criticism, such as in "the acritical use of the ideology of victimization--apparent, for example, in the inaccurate insistence that women have been excluded from the canon because they are women." Another, and very recent example: at a luncheon for a literary scholar from Spain who was visiting a Brazilian university, after I explained to the cultural attaché of the Spanish consulate present there, that I was teaching a seminar on feminist criticism, he replied: "Ah, é, está de moda agora." And finally, the reaction of a male student to a class on twentieth-century Brazilian women writers I offered in my first semester at the University of Texas: "Why a class on women writers? Qual é a diferença entre women's rights e os direitos individuais?" he asked with indignation, saying that he, as a man, felt he had been discriminated against.

In an article published ten years ago in *Hispania*, on "Teaching the Expanding Canon: A Socio-Cultural Approach to Hispanic Literature by Women," Joan Lipman Brown addressed some of the same questions I have done here, and pointed out: "Two major impediments prevent the teaching of Hispanic literature by women These are (1) the absence of a strong tradition of female-authored literature in Spanish [and Portuguese] and (2) the presumed inaccessibility of this literature for male readers" (1133). Today we can agree that the problem was not exactly the absence of a tradition of literature by women, but rather the lack of its recognition by the canon, with the exception of authors such as those I mentioned earlier.



The second problem she identifies in a way addresses my question, Why so many male students still think a course on women writers has nothing to do with them? Brown goes on to propose a strategy that would make "Hispanic literature accessible to a broad audience by specifying its cultural base" (1133). By this she means, "to situate these writings in a distinctly female and cultural context," and approaching them as one approaches a foreign literature (1133). I agree with her that it is important to situate the text, any text, I would say, in its socio-historical context. This is one lesson we learned some time ago, that there is no such entity as "Woman" or "Man," but there are rather individuals or groups of individuals formed by specific social, historical, political, and economic forces.

I find problematic however to approach literary texts by women as if they were "a culturally separate body of work," as Brown has suggested. One problem I see here is that this approach renders women's literary production--or cinematic, visual, etc.--as alien; in this way, male literature would remain, by extension, the "native," the "non-alien," the "standard" or "proper." The strategy I would propose is, in a sense, "inclusive," in that I would invite my students to approach the female-authored text as belonging and speaking to the same culture in which it was produced. In a sense, this text shares a degree of sameness with others (a novel by a Brazilian woman is, after all, Brazilian, and depicts a certain reality recognizable by most Brazilians), but it is also marked by difference--of gender, sexual orientation, race and class. These marks of difference, if examined with a critical eye and an open mind, afford the reader a different, new perspective on a given reality. Thus I believe that, ideally, a course on the Latin American historical novel or on contemporary Brazilian fiction, for example, should include writers, men and women, from different backgrounds. By the same token, a class on women writers from Brazil, or Mexico, or Latin America, should include writers of different races or ethnic groups, sexual orientation and class, as much as possible. The end goal would be to help the students become familiar with different perspectives on the same issue or situation, helping them revisit their own perspectives and beliefs.



This is the orientation I have given my classes in recent years, including a graduate seminar on "Contemporary Feminist Criticism," I taught in Brazil last summer. The objective of the course was to introduce students (some of them already PhDs teaching in other universities) to writings by feminist authors such as Hélène Cixous, Adrienne Rich, and Mary Russo. The students were from different regions in Brazil, of different ages and backgrounds, men and women, some of clearly European descent, others black, and others, like the average Brazilian, of mixed race. We had a very exciting, sometimes heated seminar, and by the end even those who were very quiet at first (particularly the male students) were totally engaged. We discussed the theoretical texts and applied them to fiction and poetry by Brazilian male and female writers. In addition, we discussed real-life situations in contemporary Brazilian society, bringing into our discussions the "touchy" matters of gender and race relations in Brazil, class difference, and sexuality. The result was, I believe, a new level of honesty among everyone, which allowed one student to discuss his experience with racism. Another heterosexual male student said he initially had felt uncomfortable with the "confrontation" implied in some of the readings, but that he had reached a new understanding of the issues raised in class. According to one of the students, a psychoanalyst in her early forties, the seminar discussions effected changes in the way the students related to each other outside of the classroom as well, and in the way they worked together on different projects and in other classes. This, I think, is feminism as praxis.

This also explains why, in addition to courses on women writers or women in cinema and literature, it is necessary for us to offer literature, culture and language classes focusing on a variety of texts representative of the social complexities and differences present in a country such as Brazil. In the case of classes in Brazilian studies at American universities, where we have many native-Brazilian students, this kind of class would allow the students a critical perspective on their own society, by deconstructing the dominant social, cultural and literary values of Brazil. As I have experienced, there may be some confrontation, but without it there is no change.

As for beginning language classes, where students have not yet achieved an appropriate level of linguistic proficiency to analyze and discuss complex issues in the target language, I believe the use of English is justifiable for specific and brief periods of time. For example, in a Portuguese class meeting four or five times a week, I would bring short and simple texts in Portuguese on themes such as gender discrimination in the work place in Brazil, and assign English-language texts on the same topic; in class we would dedicate perhaps a half class period for a discussion in English. The unit could be completed with conversation exercises and a short composition in the target language, using vocabulary learned from the Portuguese text. As students progress in their language ability, less time would be used for discussions in English and more could be done in the target language. This is just an example of how to bring gender and race into the foreign language classroom. Of course we should all engage in the everyday practice of deconstructing stereotypes that are common in language textbooks: the people in the drawings and pictures are most of the time white; women are cooks, housewives or schoolteachers, and men the lawyers and astronauts in lessons on professions, etc.

The problems that we may face doing feminist scholarship appear sometimes to be fewer than the ones we have teaching gender, race and class; other times they seem to be more, and more serious. Nowadays many departments still want to hire scholars who do research on gender and on women writers (although perhaps not as eagerly as five or ten years ago). Nevertheless, being a feminist and a feminist scholar can still pose serious threats to the probabilities of someone getting tenure; and you may wonder why you never get invited to give a talk at the monthly gathering of faculty in your department.

Before, I spoke of feminism in the classroom as a form of praxis for everyday life. I would hope this is also true of feminist scholarship. After all, feminist scholars have effected some considerable changes in our literary canons. Likewise, our work on Latin American and Peninsular women writers, and our use of gender, race and class as analytical categories has



allowed us to deconstruct the social, cultural and literary values dominant in Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian studies and societies. This is, however, a work in progress. Our scholarship must continually reflect the fact that we are studying the literary and cultural production of complex and ever-changing societies. Our scholarship, as well as our teaching, then must take into account not only gender, but also race and class. As I said before, these categories work in a symbiosis, and only by addressing them simultaneously can we reach a deeper understanding of our fields and continue to have an impact on the profession.



Debra A. Castillo

"Fem theory/glob"



Sara Castro-Klarén's "La crítica literaria feminista y la escritora en América latina" (Feminist Literary Criticism and the Latin American Woman Writer), one of the most well-known and frequently cited essays in the Latin American feminist corpus, in 1985 highlighted a call to action in which she recognizes, "We now have a goodly number of texts written by Latin American women, but we still have not elaborated theoretical positions derived from the reading of those texts" (43). In a later article, Castro-Klarén specifically takes up the discussion begun in her "Teoría del la crítica literaria . . ." ("In a way, what I would like to do here is to continue the essay written five years ago" [Vidal 95]). She ends this essay, like her earlier one, with an imperative call to action: "the study of Latin American literature is ripe for a re-writing of its history. The figure of Women and the subsequent problematics implied by its presence should cause a profound re-thinking of the possible history of Latin America and its symbolic systems" (105), that is, both Latin American literature and history, and the history of literature, require immediate and profound re-examination. Such necessary re-examination, with the concomittant reconstruction of a literary genealogy that moves women from the footnotes to the main text, that fills in the temporal and topographical gaps between Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and Luisa Valenzuela, represents, indeed a transgenerational biographical (or, radically, an autobiographical) act. It is also a politic and political strategic move.

From where I stand here in the First World, both economic and cultural globalization seems a self-evident fact, with implications ranging from shopping mall construction to university curriculum development. Nevertheless, even if we accept the theory that globalization has inescapably and universally impressed itself upon turn-of-the-21st century modernity, numerous questions remain. What are the blind spots in globalization theory? How is globalization differently understood in the US-European (or Eurocentric), and Third World(ist) theoretical locations? Chilean Martín Hopenhayn asks us to think about the possibilities of a globalization that "podría movilizar energías liberadoras. Me refiero al enriquecimiento transcultural, al encuentro con el radicalmente-otro. . . . Más que respeto multicultural, autorrecreación transcultural: regresar a nosotros después de pasar por el buen salvaje, ponernos experiencialmente en perspectiva, pasar nuestro cuerpo por el cuerpo del Sur, del Norte, del Oriente . . ." (32-33). Hopenhayn is in this respect a utopic visionary, drawing us with him into the seductive, provocative celebration of cultural multiplicity as a new kind of freedom, achieved through international travel and through the near-simultaneous exchanges at the speed of electrons in the contemporary communication net.

In a recent paper, Santiago Castro-Gómez comments, however, that the normative understanding of modernity in Latin America is necessarily different in kind from the Euro-American, and that this temporal belatedness reflects a qualitative distinction in theoretical structures of thought about modernity: "a diferencia de lo acaecido en Europa, la consolidación de la modernidad cultural en América Latina no precede al cine, la radio y la televisión, sino que *se debe* precisamente a ellos. . . . La modernidad en América Latina desafía, entonces los marcos teóricos generados por el 'proyecto de la modernidad'." It is precisely this anti-normativist perspective that Castro-Gómez analyzes in his recent work delving into the still relatively unexplored territory of modern Latin America's philosophical difference from, and potential contributions to, the metropolis (3-4). There is in this argument a strong claim for a supplementary reading of this Euro-identified theory, one that comes from the south, from the peripheries of modernity. Even further: this southern take on theory, suggests Castro-Gómez, will not only serve as a supplement to the metropolis, but can provide the foundation for a counter-theoretical stance that will challenge some of modernity's most basic and assumed premises.



Reading together Castro-Gómez and Hopenhayn reminds us, too, that the "nosotros" and the "otros" in the latter's commentary are more ambiguous than they might look at first glance. From one point of view, the "us" is the international body of scholars who read and enjoy thinking about questions such as those raised in these fairly abstract, relatively dense, academic articles and books. Both Hopenhayn and Castro-Gómez, in this brief capsule, serve as exemplars of representative projects for Latin American engagement and dialogue with the challenges of thinking globally from outside the Euro-American axis. They are the others within the purview of the globalized theoretical network, the oppositional thinkers who frequently serve to remind metropolitan totalizing thinkers of the local particularities and regional realities that offset as they undergird theoretical analyses. The questions they pose are essential ones; furthermore, the nuanced engagement with thinkers such as these men reminds us of a crucial blind spot in much First World theorizing, and provides a resource for deeper and more powerful thinking.

From another perspective, people like Hopenhayn and Castro-Gómez--along with other scholars such as Ernesto Laclau, Enrique Dussel, Gayatri Spivak, or Homi Bhabha, to name just a few--represent courtesy members of the First World "us", always marked by (and often celebrated for) a putative or real aura of otherness, that in turn and paradoxically makes them "other" to the intellectual institutions of their home countries as well as, obviously, other to the subalternized citizens inhabiting those local realities. Still further; in this playing off of the global "us" vs the local "other," there are many, many others who inexplicably remain on (or even imperceptibly off) the margins of theory, who perhaps cannot globalize, even if they want to, because their experience does not fit conventions that allow for the first opening into dialogue. Tendentiously, I would say that by and large this is women's case.

If, following Jameson, we agree that at the heart of discussions about globalization is the theorization of a totality, even if an untotalizable one, then a serious gap arises with respect to at least 50% of the human race, who remain almost entirely absent except for passing references in the vast body of theoretical work associated with thinking through the implications of globalization in contemporary society. This is what Kaplan and Grewal, following Vivek Dhareshwar, call the predominant "male agon" in the international cultural debate, a largely unexamined ethos which, they theorize, may derive at least partially from the Marxist heritage of many prominent thinkers and from the well-known limitations of Marxism with respect to gender-conscious analysis (354). Beyond the obligatory feminist article in any anthology on the topic, the extensive mainstream bibliography on globalization rarely engages rigorously with gender-conscious research, and tends instead to acknowledge vaguely the importance of international feminism without doing close readings of or entering into dialogue with these works. Raquel Olea says it well:

Women have been the subjects neither of the project of modernity nor of the crisis of this project; historically absent from the pacts of discursive, social, and political power, our recent incursion into the public sphere still situates us on the margin, outside of the spaces valorized by dominant culture. . . . Feminism comes from "no-where" into spaces where its discursivity does not yet have a history, where it does not yet have the capacity even to negotiate or enter into alliances. (197)

Feminism, and indeed, women in general, represent real problems for these theoretical exchanges, and as a result tend to be all but ignored, as a complicating variable that somehow seems to be uncomfortably, and indeed almost self-consciously, displaced outside the boundaries of ongoing discussions. As Olea intimates, feminism seems to come from no-where, and while its location in the public space has by now become technically unavoidable, the possibilities of engaged dialogue remain severely limited. Jean Franco would agree. She writes, "the class privilege of the intelligentsia has always posed a problem for Latin Americans, but in women's writing it becomes particularly acute since women writers are privileged and marginalized at one and the same time." (52).

Likewise, Amie Parry's trenchant response to the presentations in the 1994 Duke University Globalization conference is apposite: "one of the ongoing concerns of the conference was the question of feminism and its role in resisting the effects of globalization, a concern that was brought up in various contexts but was rarely itself the subject of prolonged discussion" ("In Place of a Conclusion" 376). Parry articulates a frustration that many of us academics have felt when participating in conferences and other intellectual exchanges; our colleagues openly and frankly acknowledge the importance of international feminist contributions to their projects, but rarely go beyond the one-sentence reference to the essential importance of the advances to theory by transnational feminists (a list of names typically accompanies this footnote). The ubiquity of this throw-away acknowledgement in the glaring absence of any real engagement with feminist theories or women's texts comes to seem a way to avoid an intractable problem without pretending that it doesn't exist.

Widespread discussions and the creation of international networks in preparation for the 1995 Beijing Conference on Women signal, as Sonia Alvarez has noted, both "a vertiginous multiplication of the spaces and places in which women who call themselves feminists act today and a reconfiguration of feminist identities" as well as a "significant decentering of contemporary Latin American feminist practices . . . contribut[ing] to a redefinition and expansion of the feminist agenda for social transformation" (298-99). Often this redefinition has taken the form of questioning older models of theory production as well as hierarchical patterns of social organization to create more fluid structures. Pratt's discussion of the effect of this widening of the agenda on theory-construction is apposite: "Theory . . . resists heterogeneity and multiplies its terms and categories only if someone with access to the process insists on the need to do so. . . . The picture diversifies because others--the Others--are now in it. Indeed, for noncitizens, fragmentation and disintegration better describe what existed before, when the categories of the social or the political were homogeneously defined through structures of exclusion and willful ignorance" (435).

As men and women from throughout the world met in conferences and symposia in various locations throughout the world, they began the exchange of ideas and the exploration of issues of significance to women that is continuing today. Conferences and publications from established presses throughout Latin America and the United States demonstrate an increasing interest in writing by Latin American women and a growing commitment to research in gender issues on the part of literary critics, philosophers, social scientists, anthropologists, etc., even as--paradoxically--the post-1990s women's movement in many Latin American countries seems to have lost visibility with the selective mainstreaming of their work and with what is frequently perceived as the fragmentation with respect to social, political, literary debates.

Though the heroic days of demonstrations and barricades seem already to be receding to the past, the need for considered and positioned theoretical stances particular to Latin America remains urgent, not only for the specific conditions obtaining there, but also so as to avoid the more general impasses of work in feminism.

Nelly Richard reminds her readers of the consequences of the traditional global division of intellectual labor. From a Latin American perspective, theoretical feminism, she reminds us, is still seen to function largely within the context of the European and North American university structure. Euro-American-based and Latin American-based Latin Americanist feminists differ not only in the degree of commitment to theoretical discourse within their specific social contexts, but also for that subset of Latin American feminists located in academic settings in



Latin America, there is also a significant difference in academic feminist institutional locations: US. Latin Americanist feminists work more in humanities; Latin Americans tend toward social sciences (Kaminsky 9). While I do not have the space here to go into the implications of this disciplinary divide, I would like to suggest that one of the reasons for the apparent lack of exchange of theoretical discussions between Euro-Americans and Latin Americans has to do precisely with the disparities in the construction of knowledge in these very different disciplines.

At the same time, a more expansive model of the unequal global exchanges of theoretical capital would also take into account the mediary function of Euro-North American Latin Americanist feminists, who are largely disauthorized as theorists within the academic sites in Europe and North America. In the northern hemisphere, theory still tends to be associated with what happens in French and in English. Latin Americanist feminists in these locations often have a strange/strained relationship with colleagues working in those more theoretically-privileged languages. As Kaminsky writes trenchantly: "The racism and xenophobia that results in this country's devaluation of the Spanish language also devalues the thinking that is expressed in that language" (1). In this respect, the Euro-North American Latin Americanists who serve as a primary market for both Latin American literary and critical-theoretical works encounter reduced possibilities of circulation in the academy for their own work, as the culture of the Euro-North American academy tends to downplay their contributions to either theoretical or cultural discussions. An obvious case in point is the extraordinary Anglo-French career of Brazilian novelist Clarice Lispector who, thanks to the idiosyncrasy of Hélène Cixous' interest in her work, has become a major figure in international theoretical circles, to the exclusion of both Euro-North American and Latin American feminist thinkers.

I agree with Nelly Richard and Verónica Schild that it is now impossible to talk about Latin America, even from within Latin America, without reference to metropolitan discourse. Richard, for instance, would acknowledge that her own metropolitan debt is very much apparent in her theoretically informed, rigorous analyses of feminist theory in the Chilean context.

Strikingly, almost all of the writers she cites in the article quoted above, "Feminismo, Experiencia y Representación" 'Feminism, Experience, and Representation,' are writers firmly ensconced in the Euro-North American theoretical canon (Wittig, De Lauretis, Butler, Kristeva) or are Latin Americans and Latin Americanists whose primary location is the U.S. academy (Franco, Guerra, Vidal, Santí). Thus, implicitly, Richard hints that the theory/praxis divide is far more complexly negotiated than her programmatic statements may suggest, and that these nuances may help account for the increasing quality and quantity of exchanges among, say, Anglo-American Latin Americanists in the North American academy (Franco, Kaminsky, Pratt, or myself, for example), Latin Americans in the North American academy (Molloy, Castro Klarén, Guerra, etc.), and Latin American feminists in Latin America (Richard, Araújo, Sarlo, Poniatowska, etc.). While these exchanges still occur along the margins of the more established structures of the literary theoretical institution, increasingly, together, Latin American and Latin Americanist feminists are posing a challenge to the Euro-North American cultural biases of theoretical discourse.

A contributing factor to a more fruitful dialogue has been the literary feminists' growing awareness of the limited and shrinking market for literature, in Latin America as elsewhere, under pressure from television as narrative genre of increasing preference, popular song as the preferred poetry, and testimonios as an ever-more heralded hybrid of oral and written cultures. U.S. Latin Americanist literary feminism is increasingly aking cognizance of popular culture forms, and as it moves closer to culture studies, there are opportunities for renewed connections with the strong tradition of well-developed, social science-based Latin American feminist theories.



There is another factor that needs to be taken into account as well, though it has been severely undertheorized at this date. Compuserve and AOL and the web have moved into Latin America faster and more effectively than I ever dreamed possible, back in the Stone Age of the 1980s, when communication was still largely limited to computer jocks in research institutes. A decade later the scenario has completely changed, with the greatest acceleration in this transformation occurring as of the mid 1990s. Since that time, indigenous women have been transmitting their messages from the mountains of Chiapas, the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo have set up their website and instant action network, and NGOs began serving as conduits for international networks of everything from grassroots agrarian movements to rock groups. Verónica Schild quite rightly points out that since the 1990s feminist NGOs "are engaged in the production of knowledge, including categories that become part of the moral repertoires used by the state" (93). While international networks such as these have often become extremely controversial, since it is not clear that they are either representative or accountable in any traditional sense (Alvarez 312-13), nevertheless, they pose intriguing new challenges for the future.

It is entirely unsurprising, thus, that Latin American writers have accompanied Latin American political and social movements into the communication age. Given the much lamented difficulties of text distribution for all except the most prominent writers, the instant and international distribution possibilities of the net (albeit sadly deficient in royalties) offer obvious attractions. Writers can get their works out to an ever-larger international community of casual readers, fellow writers, and literary scholars, and do it extremely rapidly and efficiently. I will give just one example to anchor this point. In late October 1997, a colleague sent me an e-mail to tell me about her recent trip to the US-Mexico border, and mentioned, among other things, that she had picked up a copy of a local Tijuana newspaper only to discover that Rosina Conde (an author who has interested me for a number of years) was publishing a novel called *Genara* in installments in that paper. I was delighted to hear about Conde's new work. After checking the web and verifying that this particular paper did not seem to exist online, I immediately wrote an e-note to a friend in Tijuana, who also happened to be a librarian at the Universidad Autónoma de Baja California, to ask if he could check his archives and save me copies of the installments. Instead, he wrote back with Conde's e-mail address. I wrote her, expressing my interest in her book, and she responded with a query about whether or not I would be interested in reading a copy, which she would be happy to send me as an e-mail attachment. And so it came about that less than 24 hours after I learned of this novel's existence, and several e-mail exchanges later, it was downloading on my computer and printing out in the comfort of my home.

Writers and critics can engage in dialogues heretofore impossible or exceptionally complicated--exchanging drafts of work-in-progress and completed but still-unpublished fictions and critical appreciations, responding to queries, providing access to out-of-print works through downloadable files. Through the increasingly pervasive computer network, underrecognized writers from Spain, Puerto Rico, Argentina, and the U.S. can meet and share their works. Some of these fictions are more traditional in form and style, while others respond directly to the inspirations of the technology that underwrites their conditions of possibility: creating web-based poetry journals, collaborative fictions, and online mixed genre creative works that include text, sound, and moving images.

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END-YEAR TREASURER'S REPORT 2001

Submitted by Candyce Leonard

01 November 2001

NOTE: Due to the rise in postage and printing, our general fund will not support the newsletter and an increase in membership dues is necessary. Beginning with the Jan-Dec 2002 renewals, the membership dues are as follows. We appreciate your continued participation and support of Feministas Unidas.

Graduate Student:	\$10
Asst. Prof, Full-time Instructor, Independent Scholar, Other	\$15
Full or Assoc Professor	\$20
Institution	\$25

Balance dating from 09 May 2001:

(1) Scholarship Fund Balance	\$ 1,960.00
(2) General Fund Balance	1,546.33
[COMBINED FUNDS BALANCE	\$ 3,506.33]

Disbursements from General Fund:	(1) Dec 2000 newsletter postage	365.87
	(2) May 2001 newsletter postage	233.64
	(3) May 2001 newsletter printing	528.26

General Fund Subtotal	<hr/>	\$ 418.56
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Credits:	Dues, general donations & dividends	325.29
	Scholarship Fund	10.00

TOTALS	(1) scholarship fund balance	\$ 1,970.00
	(2) general fund balance	\$743.85

Dear Colleagues and Friends of Feministas Unidas,

Feministas Unidas has two funds: the General Fund that principally supports the newsletter and that sometimes contributes to the annual meeting at MLA, and the Scholarship Fund whose sole purpose is the mentoring and development of younger scholars.

Even with donations from various members, a careful study of our budget over the past two years demonstrates that our general fund is unable to support the postage and printing costs of our bi-annual newsletter. The only practical solution is a slight increase in membership dues that we hope will make possible the continued publication of our newsletter.

We appreciate your continued participation and support of Feministas Unidas.

Candyce Leonard, Treasurer and Membership Recorder

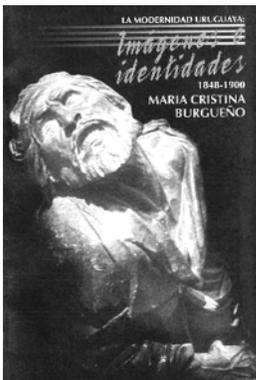
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Graduate Student:	\$10
Asst. Prof, Full-time Instructor, Independent Scholar, Other	\$15
Full or Assoc Professor	\$20
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Reseñas/Reviews

La modernidad uruguaya: imágenes e identidades. 1848-1900. María Cristina Burgueño. Montevideo: Linardi y Risso, 2000. 189 pgs.



Este ensayo, iniciado con un capítulo introductorio que examina la situación política y social de Uruguay a partir de la segunda mitad del siglo XIX, analiza la producción literaria de esta época como reflejo del discurso dominante que logra construir el imaginario de identidad en la sociedad uruguaya. María Cristina Burgueño identifica la inestabilidad del estado y la incertidumbre sobre el futuro del país como las causas más importantes que llevan a los escritores de esta época a promover una serie de imágenes nacionales o “referentes de identidad” para la construcción del concepto de nación o patria. Estas imágenes fundamentales como la del gaucho, el indio y los héroes nacionales son usadas y manipuladas por “letrados” para iniciar el proyecto de identidad nacional y la construcción de la nación uruguaya. Las diferentes representaciones ambivalentes de estos grupos sociales se analizan muy minuciosamente en cinco textos. La novela *Caramurú* (1888),

de Alejandro Magariños Cervantes; Los poemas *La leyenda patria* (1879) y *Tabaré* (1888), de Juan Zorrilla de San Martín; la novela *Ismael* (1888) de Eduardo Acevedo Díaz, y el ensayo *Ariel* (1900), de José Enrique Rodó. Por medio de la lectura crítica y cuidadosa de Burgueño, llegamos a entender que las representaciones de la identidad uruguaya están fundadas en las inclusiones y exclusiones de individuos, grupos y acontecimientos de la comunidad imaginaria uruguaya. Estas imágenes o representaciones se logran insertar en el imaginario social del pueblo por medio de la manipulación de los discursos de los que tienen el poder de la escritura: Blancos, hombres, ricos y letrados, los cuales excluyen las voces que están al margen del sistema político y cultural como los indios, los negros, los gauchos y las mujeres, para satisfacer su agenda política y de poder. Burgueño con este ensayo aporta una nueva visión al pasado histórico y literario del Uruguay. Las representaciones literarias de los indios, gauchos y héroes, como imágenes de identidad en el imaginario decimonónico, no coinciden con la verdadera situación que sufren estos grupos en la vida real. Por esta razón, el genocidio de los indios y de los gauchos no es mencionado por los autores de los textos estudiados en este ensayo. Finalmente, la abundante bibliografía, las buenas notas y la claridad del discurso, hacen de este ensayo un libro fundamental que contribuye al entendimiento de cómo se conforma la comunidad imaginaria uruguaya a través de la producción literaria y cómo del mismo modo podemos cuestionar esas mismas construcciones.

María Martell
Arizona State University

Publications

How women writers shaped Latin America

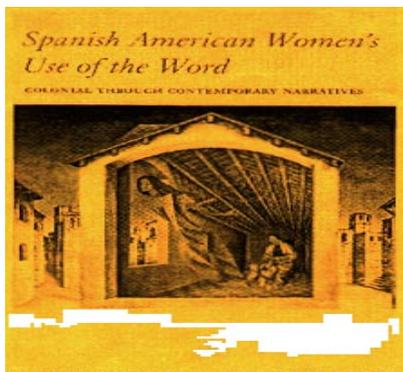
**Spanish American Women's Use of the Word
Colonial through Contemporary Narratives
STACEY SCHLAU**

Women's participation, both formal and informal, in the creation of what we now call Spanish America *is* reflected in its literary legacy. Stacey Schlau examines what women from a wide spectrum of classes and races have to say about the societies in which they lived and their place in them.

Schlau has written the first book to study a historical selection of Spanish American women's writings with an emphasis on social and political themes. Through their words, she offers an alternative vision of the development of narrative genres—critical, fictional, and testimonial—from colonial times to the present.

The authors considered here represent the chronological, yet nonlinear development of women's narrative. They include Teresa Romero Zapata, accused before the Inquisition of being a false visionary; Ursula SuArez, nun and writer of spiritual autobiography; Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, author of an indigenist historical romance; Magda Portal, whose biography of Flora Tristan furthered her own political agenda; Dora Alonso, who wrote revolutionary children's books, Domitila

Barrios de Chungara, political leader and organizer; Elvira Orphée, whose novel unpacks the psychology of the torturer, and several others who address social and political struggles that continue to the present day.



Although the writers treated here may seem to have little in common, all sought to maneuver through institution and systems and insert themselves into public life by using the written word, often through the appropriation and modification of mainstream genres. In examining how these authors stretched the boundaries of genre to create a multiplicity of hybrid forms, Schlau reveals points of convergence in the narrative tradition of challenging established political and social structures. Outlining the shape of this literary tradition, she introduces us to a host of neglected voices, as well as examining better-known ones, who demonstrate that, for women, simply writing can be a political act.

STACEY SCHLAU is Professor of Foreign Languages and Women's Studies

at West Chester

University. She is the author of *Viva a! siglo, muerta al mundo: Obras escogidas de/Selected Works by Maria de San Alberto, 1568-1640*, and coauthor of ***Untold Sisters: Hispanic Nuns in Their Own Works***.

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