TEACHING GENDER SERIES

Teaching Gender through Latin American, Latino, and Iberian Texts and Cultures

Leila Gómez, Asunción Horno-Delgado,
Mary K. Long and Núria Silleras-Fernández (Eds.)

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Teaching Gender through Latin American, Latino, and Iberian Texts and Cultures

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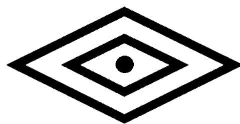

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ADVANCE PRAISE FOR
TEACHING GENDER THROUGH LATIN AMERICAN, LATINO, AND IBERIAN TEXTS AND CULTURES

Teaching Gender through Latin American, Latino, and Iberian Texts and Cultures makes a compelling case for the central role of feminist inquiry in higher education today. The volume's welcome focus on both teachers and students reminds us that the best humanistic teaching occurs in an environment of informed self-reflection and openness. Startlingly honest and deeply informed, the essays lead us through classroom experiences in a wide variety of institutional and disciplinary settings. Read together, these essays articulate a vision for twenty-first century feminist pedagogies that embrace a rich diversity of theory, methodology, and modality.
Lisa Vollendorf, Professor of Spanish and Dean of Humanities and the Arts, San José State University; author of *The Lives of Women: A New History of Inquisitional Spain*

Teaching Gender through Latin American, Latino, and Iberian Texts and Cultures makes a welcome contribution to the all too-slight bibliography on feminist pedagogy in this field of literary and cultural study. The twelve essays introduce innovative approaches to reading gender in canonical and non-canonical texts with our students in the U.S. academy. The scholars manifest a careful and conscious engagement with theories of feminist pedagogy and with the challenges of their own local praxis. In the process they create a sophisticated and lively critical discourse that responds to the fundamental question of how to teach gender and feminism in ways that respect the historical and cultural specificity of diverse "Hispanic" societies from medieval times to the present.
Beth E. Jörgensen, Professor of Spanish, University of Rochester; author of *Documents in Crisis Nonfiction Literatures in Twentieth-Century Mexico* and co-editor of *Libre Acceso: Latin American Literature and Film through Disability Studies*

What is it like to teach feminism and gender through Latin American, Iberian, and Latino texts? The rich collection of texts in *Teaching Gender through Latin American, Latino, and Iberian Texts and Cultures* provides a series of insightful and exhaustive answers to this question. A group of feminist scholars who teach Latin American, Iberian and Latino/a literatures in the US and British academia, grapple through the complex field of feminist theory, theoretical approaches, and primary texts in order to inspire a pedagogical praxis that deconstructs claims of universality, and

intertwines the personal, the political, and the intellectual. An essential book for teachers of Latin American, Iberian, and Latino/a texts, this volume will also spark new debates among scholars in Gender Studies.
Mónica Szurmuk, Researcher at the National Scientific and Technical Research Council of Argentina; author of *Mujeres en viaje* and co-editor of *The Cambridge History of Latin American Women's Literature*

This innovative volume tackles the complex subject of how to teach gender as represented by Latin American, Spanish, and U.S. Latino authors. Despite the seeming commonality of language and heritage, these texts are diverse in their expression and concerns even as they share commonalities of the female experience. Based on a feminist pedagogy that focuses on what texts we teach, how we teach them, and to whom, the authors of these twelve essays engage with works from the Middle Ages to contemporary times, and topics ranging from indigenisms, cultural icons, sexual violence, and Hispanic feminisms, to pedagogical theory. It's about time that we have at our disposal such a valuable tool that will surely enhance our teaching of literary texts through new perspectives and approaches, and that will help students read them with fresh expectations.
Nancy Marino, University Distinguished Professor at Michigan State, author of numerous works on Medieval and Early Modern Hispanic Studies

A fascinating critical and pedagogical volume on women, feminism, and gender construction for consciously gendered teachers of the twenty-first century, invested in combating phallocentrism and inequality through the study of Latin American, Latina/o, and Iberian literature and culture. Written from a historical perspective or as personal reflections that nonetheless combine theory and practice, these essays provide useful tools to teach multiple feminisms, the geopolitics of knowledge, identity conflicts, and numerous gender battles in a neoliberal era. Many of us will benefit from this book that makes us aware of where we position ourselves as educators, as we teach fiction, poetry, film, personal memoirs, and plays that successfully explore women and gender from the Middle Ages to an uncertain present of ongoing machismo and violence against women not only on the U.S.-Mexico border but across the Americas.
Oswaldo Estrada, Associate Professor of Latin American Literature at UNC Chapel Hill; author of *Ser mujer y estar presente. Disidencias de género en la literatura mexicana contemporánea*

To all teachers who have dared to challenge the construction of gender.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements xi

1. Introduction: Gender Pedagogy through Latin American, Iberian, and Latino Texts—The What, How, and Who
   Leila Gómez 1

I. Feminism in the Aftermath in Latin American, Iberian, and Latino Studies

2. Mobilizing Meanings: Questions for a Pedagogy of Women's Writing 21
   Sara Castro-Klarén

II. New Canons, New Readings in the Classroom

3. *Cada Maestrillo Tiene su Librillo*: Personal Reflections on Teaching Gender through Medieval Iberian Texts 43
   Núria Silleras-Fernández

4. "The Personal is Political": Teaching Gender and Nation through Nineteenth-Century Texts 57
   Vanesa Miseres

5. Teaching Hispanic Feminisms: From Academic Consciousness-Raising to Activism 81
   Ellen Mayock

6. Gendered Matters: Engaging Early Modern *Dramaturgas* in the Classroom 99
   Valerie Hegstrom & Amy R. Williamsen

III. Shifting the Ground When Reading

7. How to Read a Masculine Canon: Gender and *Indigenismo* 127
   Leila Gómez

8. Wild Naked Ladies: Shifting Paradigms, Gendered Approaches to María Victoria Menis's *Cámara oscura* [*Camera Obscura*] (2008) and Alberta Carri's *La rabia* [*Anger*] (2008) 141
   Cynthia Tompkins

IV. Breaking the Agreement of Silence, Teaching Uncomfortable Subjects

9. Interrogating Gendered Mexican Cultural Icons in a "Border" Classroom 159
Amanda L. Petersen

10. Approaches to Teaching Rape in the Spanish Literature Classroom: Alicia Giménez Bartlett's *Ritos de Muerte* 177
Shelley Godsland

V. Interdisciplinary and Crossroads

11. Teaching Gender for the Multicultural Workplace 193
Mary K. Long

12. Performing Gender in the Classroom and on the Stage 209
Debra A. Castillo

About the Contributors 225

About the Editors 229

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LEILA GÓMEZ

INTRODUCTION

*Gender Pedagogy through Latin American, Iberian, and Latino Texts—
The What, How, and Who*

This volume has arisen as a response to the questions that department colleagues and I had a few years ago about how to teach gender issues and feminism today.[1] On the one hand, some of us had experienced the skepticism of some students regarding the validity of feminism and gender awareness nowadays. These students perceived feminism as something from the past, tied to the historical struggle of women over suffrage, legal status and reproductive rights. Some of them even refused to be labelled as feminists. I remember on one occasion, when asking my students if they considered themselves to be feminists or if they agreed with feminism and gender criticism, one of them answered, “I want to find a husband.” On the other hand, many times there were also students who were very aware of gender inequalities, and we wanted to be able to address these students as well, and to support and channel their concerns and activism in effective ways. I have had several students who, after taking my classes or seminars, reoriented their career paths and went on to take classes in the Women and Gender program at my university and wrote their theses and dissertations on gender topics. More often than not they want to go beyond academic feminism and engage in activism and political practice.

The denial of or refusal to acknowledge feminism seems to be a general concern for instructors in US academia and beyond, as described in Toril Moi’s (2006) article in the Modern Languages Association’s Journal, *PMLA*, “I’m not a feminist, but … How feminism became the F-Word,” in which the author examined the situation of classroom debate on feminism, and reflected on the disavowal it had suffered on both the right and the left during the 90s. Although it seems that equal rights for women became more accepted and made progress during the period, there was at the same time a pervasive discourse against the very movement that had fought for these rights. As of the 90s, “feminists are presented as irrational extremists who want far more than equal rights: they hate the family, detest their husbands (if they have any), and go on to become lesbians” (Moi, 2006, p. 1736).

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This certainly generates anxiety in younger generations, who still believe that gender struggle exists and that it is important to recognize this fact. As Moi puts it, "my students take the strident, aggressive, man-hating feminist to be an image of what they would turn into if they were to become feminists. What they all see, I fear, is a woman who cannot hope to be loved, not so much because she is assumed to be unattractive (although there is that too), as because she doesn't seem to know what love is" (p. 1739). However, they all express their complete adherence to freedom, equality and justice for women. The main question for Moi is how it is that feminism became so distant from its ideals and goals in the mind of society and our students. One of the main questions of this volume is how, as teachers, to reestablish the links between the ideals of feminism and feminist (and gender) discourses and praxis in our classrooms.

What is it like to teach feminism and gender through Latin American, Iberian, and Latino texts? A completely new and different set of challenges emerges in the non-Anglo-Saxon tradition to which these texts belong. Without exception, all authors in this book work in the US and European academy, even though 50% of them are originally from Latin America and Spain. The audience of this book are also US and European sectors of academia that teach these texts as part of the curriculum in departments of foreign languages and cultures. This posits another challenge for feminism and teaching feminism, as the cultural difference bears evidence against the alleged universality of its claims. Moreover, although they tend to be grouped together, Latin American, Iberian, and Latino texts differ substantially from one another, and sometimes do not even share Spanish as the same language. It is probably important to remember here that the grouping of these texts into a single curriculum of "Spanish language and cultures" expresses once more the lingering old-fashioned demarcation of the (decadent) Castilian empire encompassing both its ex-New World colonies as well as other languages in the Iberian Peninsula itself. The "Hispanic" umbrella traditionally subsumes languages as far-flung from one another as Quechua, Aymara, Guaraní, Galician, Catalan, Basque, etc. Clearly, the internal cultural diversity within this vast demarcation is by no means just linguistic, but also encompasses ethnic, class, religious, political, and of course gender differences as well.

In addition to the hegemony of Spanish over other languages in the Americas and Iberia, the different facets of Hispanism, as a cultural model for interpretation, as a discipline's object of study, and as an academic institutional organization, have from their very beginnings involved erasure and been marked by their imperial origins. The hegemony of Spanish also had the aim of creating a homogeneous cultural essence. From the time of

the very first book of Spanish grammar, written by Antonio de Nebrija in 1492, Hispanism—after the Christian Reconquest of Southern Spain—was used as part of imperial expansion into the New World. The grammar's motto, "it cleans, sets and makes shine," points to the linguistic and cultural standardization of Spanish throughout its colonial expansion. Directly or indirectly, the studies compiled in this collection seek to dissect the supposed unity of the definition of Hispanism, and its versions of "Hispanic feminism," through careful historical inquiry. Doing so, they reveal the complex and conflicting plurality of the societies and cultures involved.

Far away from the respective national academic institutions of Argentina, Mexico, Spain, etc., in the United States or Europe the practice of grouping the object of study under the label "Hispanic" is more frequent, though not necessarily less ideological. Against this practice, the present volume breaks its title down into teaching gender in "Latin American, Latino and Iberian" texts and cultures, for the purpose of evoking realities that are more complex and contradictory, without overlooking this breakdown's own incongruities. Of course, it continues to subsume other internal differences and antagonisms, as does any classification.

Another challenge to writing on and teaching our object of study using this classification is its relatively marginal position in US and European academics. Some of the authors in this book, and also other colleagues who are critics in the field, often employ French and US feminist critical theory to analyze feminism and the work of female writers in Latin America and Spain: Simone de Beauvoir (mostly in English translation), Judith Butler, Elaine Showalter, and Toril Moi are among the most cited. This speaks to the politics of knowledge-power and the dynamics and circulation of theory in academia, and also to the complexities of using the English language to study texts that belong to a foreign tradition. I myself have started this introduction with Moi's view on the condition of feminist teaching nowadays, where she was clearly referring to the situation in the United States, since for her the "here" for "us" is the United States academy. It is important to be aware that we run the risk of subsuming differences under the rubric of an Anglo-French feminism that is not always the same as the feminisms studied by the authors in this book.

It is also important to note here that there are several commonalities between Latin American, Iberian, US and other European feminisms, for example in the first wave's fight for the right to suffrage. It was a widespread movement in Latin America in the first decades of the 20th century, with women that founded feminist parties, such as Alicia Moreau in Argentina, and Estela La Rivera de Sanhueza and Elvira de Vergara in Chile, to name just a few. In those decades there were also women workers

(laundresses, miners, teachers) who organized strikes and protests to better their conditions at work and for their families. Second wave feminism, which reflected on and sought to change women's life in marriage, family and professions, was also evident in the writing of female intellectuals such as Latin American authors Rosario Castellanos, Rosario Ferre, Elena Poniatowska and Elena Garro, to name just a few of the important feminist writers who also criticized the marginal situation of women in the literary field and their place in the canon. Third wave feminisms, with their emphasis on ethnicity, class, education and other aspects that define women's subjectivity and place in society, were part of the debate as early as the mid-seventies, for example with Bolivian miner Domitila Chungara's talk at the Foro Internacional de la Mujer in Mexico. In US academia during the eighties we find what is now called "postcolonial feminism," which considers issues of race, ethnicity, cultural borders and hybridity against western feminism, colonial situation and its effects. In Postcolonial and Chicana theory, a landmark book was *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza,* by Gloria Evangelina Anzaldúa (1942–2004), where the author incorporates her experience as a woman growing up on the Mexican-Texas border.

As far as activism goes, in Latin America the feminism of the seventies played a fundamental role in the fight against authoritarian regimes, often in alliance with leftist movements, political parties, and militant and revolutionary groups. Because of their links to these organizations and their leftist orientations, feminists usually worked clandestinely during this period, especially in countries such as Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Chile. In Mexico and Argentina, feminism was embraced mainly by the middle classes, in universities and progressive circles, and maintained its distance from grassroots movements (Ixkic & Bastian Duarte, 2012, p. 156). Feminist groups also played an important role in the transition to democracy and the fight for human rights (Jaquette, 1994, p. 1989). Starting in the nineties, feminism has gone through a process of institutionalization, forming alliances with governments and agencies such as the World Bank that support neoliberalism in Latin America (García Castro, 2001 p. 17). Some critics have analyzed the interconnection of these alliances with processes of standardization in the language of feminism, and a subsequent "depoliticization and a clear loss of radicalism within these increasingly hegemonic feminist circles. The new NGOs were forced to standardize their language in accordance with the universalizing criteria of the United Nations and to follow the agendas set by donors, which are not always mindful of the priorities of local organizations" (Ixkic & Bastian

Duarte, 2012, p. 156). Indigenous feminism and lesbian feminism are still marginal in main stream feminism.

Academic feminism and political feminism encompass a wide variety of goals, and between and within them one finds numerous internal conflicts and tensions. A landmark in Latin American feminism was Domitila Barrios de Chungara's (1975/1977) remarks at the Foro Internacional de la Mujer, held in Mexico in 1975, where the Bolivian female miner and activist questioned the essentialist perspective on "woman" implicit in the congress's agenda by emphasizing the radically different condition of women workers across Latin America. "What equality can we speak of between us women, when you and I have little in common, when you and I are so different? We cannot, at this time, be equals, even as women […]" (Moema, 1977, p. 225; my translation). With her remarks, Domitila Chungara gave a fundamental twist to the way gender struggle was understood at the time, mainly from a bourgeois, intellectual, white-creole perspective. Domitila Chungara spoke of these differences, however, using the gender awareness that the Foro made possible as platform for debate, because it was a context for female expression. At this point it is useful to remember with Jean Franco (1992) that gender is a category that cuts through others, such as ethnicity, race, and class:

> The distinction between masculine and feminine is not just one more distinction among others. Rather, it supports a whole series of dichotomies—mind/body, order/disorder, sun/moon, spirit/material, active element/passive element—upon which hegemonic cultural and political practices have been based during both the pre-capitalist period and under capitalism. It is mixed up with the entire cultural field, sometimes defining the limits of the discursive genres and the dichotomies that have structured thought, giving rise to an extensive set of symbols. To understand the workings of the masculine/feminine distinction at a given moment leads us to an understanding of the articulation between knowledge and power. Thus, "phallocentrism" or "phallogocentrism" does not have to do with the exclusion of women from power, although it may indeed come to bear on this exclusion, but rather alludes to an institutionalized system with its own practices and its own discursive genres. (p. 112, my translation)

Based on Franco's statement as to the unavoidable phallocentrism (or phallogocentrism) that shapes language and institutions, the next question is to elucidate the specific historical struggles, definitions of identity, and political contexts of women in Latin America, Europe, and North America, as well as in academic settings elsewhere on different continents. In her

article in this volume, Sara Castro-Klarén speaks to such differences and warns of the "illusions of continuity" between, for example, gender and feminist struggle in the United States and Latin America. To avoid this "illusion of continuity" Castro-Klarén advocates for the recognition of a plurality of feminisms, and for making explicit, as teachers and intellectuals in the United States (and Europe), our own *positionality* in relation to the material taught and discussed in our classrooms. This positionality should include an awareness of the dynamics of disciplines and departments in relation to economic and political mandates.[2]

Reflection on our own *positionality* is embedded in feminist pedagogy. For Robbin D. Crabtree, David Alan Saap, and Adela C. Licona (2009) feminist pedagogy includes a serious consideration and questioning not only of what we teach and how we teach it, but also of who we are in the classroom. Although their book, *Feminist Pedagogy*, does not consider Latin American, Latino or Iberian texts in the US academy, the general principle that the authors have established for feminist pedagogy supports a true understanding of agonist respect[3] for a plurality of feminisms and historical gender struggles around the world:

> Like Freire's liberatory pedagogy, feminist pedagogy is based on assumptions about power and consciousness-raising, acknowledges the existence of oppression as well as the possibility of ending it, and foregrounds the desire for and primary goal of social transformation. However, feminist theorizing offers important complexities such as questioning the notion of a coherent social subject or essential identity, articulating the multifaceted and shifting nature of identities and oppressions, viewing the history and value of feminism consciousness-raising as distinct from Freirean methods, and focusing as much on the interrogation of the teacher's consciousness and social location as on the student's. (p. 3)

Teachers' awareness of social/cultural location is as important as their mindfulness of locus of enunciation in the academy's dynamics of power/knowledge. These encompass the questions and self-reflection typical of a serious inquiry into our identity and positionality as teachers. The authors in this volume follow the principles of self-reflective and constantly monitored feminist pedagogy, and some of them make explicit their own and their students' positionality in the classroom, in academia, and in life. The goal of this book is exactly this one: to promote, as consciously gendered teachers, self-reflection and dialogue about our position and praxis in the classroom and academia on the matter of gender through both texts and contexts. For us, it is as important to discuss and

produce a fruitful conversation on the what, how, and who. The question of *who* is particularly relevant in the context of post-colonial feminism, where the gender struggle's claim to universality is contested by adding not only the categories of race, ethnicity, age, class and education, but also, as stated above, the geopolitics and dynamics of knowledge in academic settings. It is not the same to teach gender in Argentina or Bolivia, as it is to teach gender in the United States or the United Kingdom. Even within the United States, location and positionality matter, as is shown by Amanda Petersen's article on her own praxis as a woman from the Midwest teaching in the border zone of San Diego and Tijuana to students from diverse backgrounds.

The authors in this volume focus on the what, the how, and the who, and some of them not only reflect on their practice of teaching, but also elaborate on it through the use of theoretical tools. Theory and praxis, are intertwined with our personal experiences as teachers throughout the book, in which activism is also encouraged alongside critical thinking. In this regard, this volume is about the lived experience of women teaching women and gender (and also their historical and experiential situation) through Latin American, Iberian and Latino texts. The editors have chosen the word "gender" for the title of the volume instead of "women" or "feminism" consciously, because it expresses not so much the constructional or cultural condition of gender vis-à-vis sex or the essentialism of sex—as Judith Butler (1990) has shown, sex and sexual identity are also a cultural construction—but because it leaves the door open to explore women and the female condition, and their situatedness in history, in relation to other forms of sexual identity.

Although centered mainly on feminism and female writing, this book envisions a wider concept of gender and, of equal importance, it seeks to ensure historical and cultural awareness of the multiplicity of gender experiences and identities in Latin American, Iberian, and Latino contexts. Thus, this volume thoroughly explores a fundamental corpus of study, running from the Middle Ages to the 21st century, through a variety of writings and discourses such as fiction, poetry, theater, essays, personal memoirs, first-hand accounts, cinema, and course syllabi and practical guides for gender awareness in the workplace. More importantly still, it includes not only Latin American, but also US-Latino and Spanish peninsular writers and intellectuals, in an effort to better represent both the coexistence and the lack thereof that characterize Hispanic Studies departments, especially when it comes to teaching. The volume is divided into five parts. The first part includes Sara Castro-Klarén's discussion of the aftermath of feminism in relation to Latin American (and Iberian and

Latino) studies. Each of the remaining four sections contains theory, praxis and personal experience, although the focus varies according to the authors' emphasis on the following areas: opening up the canon to include female writers (section 2), different approaches to reading against monologist critical perspectives (section 3), teaching difficult subjects in relation to gender such as violence and border identity (section 4), and teaching gender in interdisciplinary and dynamic settings (section 5).

I. FEMINISM IN THE AFTERMATH IN LATIN AMERICAN, IBERIAN AND LATINO STUDIES

The chapter that opens the book, "Mobilizing Meanings: Questions for a Pedagogy of Women's Writing," by Sara Castro-Klarén, discusses the role of the academic intellectual, feminism and the construction of the literary canon, re-examining the controversy around Hispanism and Hispanic feminism, and the ideological uses of the term. Castro-Klarén analyzes in detail McRobbie's (*The Aftermath of Feminism, Gender, Culture and Social Change*, 2009) proposal on the way media and consumerism have forged a feminism that is personal and has turned its back on alliances with other groups that resist capitalism and patriarchy. Castro Klarén then moves on to analyze the way in which feminism in academia is subjected to the same criticism and, delving deeper, she examines the question of how feminism made its way into academia in the first place. In her analysis, she draws upon Foucault's explanation of the way disciplines have circumscribed themselves in response to and in negotiation with demands of power. In terms of positionality, she discusses the historically different nature of feminism's demands in the US, in Europe and in other parts of the world. Lastly, Castro-Klarén proposes that the fact of recognizing that there is a plurality of feminisms does not prevent the subject from coalescing around a hegemonic position, and the temptation to speak with one sovereign voice. Thus, Castro-Klarén proposes, following Connolly, an agonistic subject that is always in tension and flux, in order to understand the other.

II. NEW CANONS, NEW READINGS IN THE CLASSROOM

The chapters that make up the second section propose a revision of the canon in traditional areas of study, such as medieval and Golden Age literature, Latin American 19th-century literature, and contemporary Spanish, Latin American and Latino literatures. They propose courses that include reading material that had previously been excluded or overlooked.

Their courses give preeminence to female authors, feminist theory, and linguistic dissidence. Núria Silleras-Fernández, for example, opens up the canon and includes less renowned authors such as Leonor López de Córdoba (c. 1362–1420), and Clarissan nun and abbess Isabel de Villena (1430–90), who wrote a *Vita Christi* in Catalan, in which she gave the Virgin Mary, rather than Jesus Christ, center stage. Silleras-Fernández proposes that we "historicize gender performativity," considering the relationship between authors, patrons, and audiences, and also the linguistic situation in Iberia at the time such texts were written and circulated. She reminds us that multilingualism was more of a norm than an exception in the peninsula, and that authors belonged not only to several linguistic communities, but also to different ethno-religious communities. Silleras-Fernández further analyzes the role of Augustinian friar Martín de Córdoba's *Jardín de nobles doncellas* as a pedagogic text written for the future Queen Isabel the Catholic when she was seventeen, and which exhorted her to practice man's virtues. This text, that intended to masculinize Isabel, was disregarded by the queen, showing that medieval women—particularly aristocratic women—had far more agency than students tend to think. For Silleras-Fernández, "analyzing how a remote and foreign society concieved of and constructed gender, femininity, masculinity, sexuality, the body, and feminism, can help students to think not only about a foreign past, but also about their own present, and how their own society and culture treats the same issues."

Along the same lines, Vanesa Miseres, in "The Personal is Political: Teaching Gender and Nation through Nineteenth-Century Texts," recovers for her classes figures and writers who show the importance of historicizing gender in order to avoid stereotypes in the Latin American gender struggle. Miseres teaches, for example, Colonel Juana Azurduy (1780-1862), a patriotic mestizo woman who fought in the Upper Peru independence wars alongside her husband, Commandant Manuel Ascencio Padilla, and founded her own army against the Spanish forces after his death. This example and others showed how women who were excluded from the legal-political sphere for the most part, many times assumed active roles on the battlefield and as part of independence campaigns. Miseres also explores in her classes how in the second half of the 19th century, women like Juana Manuela Gorriti, Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera, Clorinda Matto de Turner, and Teresa González de Fanning also hosted *tertulias*, or intellectual salons, where the 'imagined communities' of nations "were rooted in the social interactions of these smaller but more tangible communities of writers, readers, conversationalists, and political conspirators" (Sara Chambers, 2003, p. 60, quoted by Miseres). Besides

organizing *tertulias*, and through them acting in the political sphere, these women proliferated in print culture. Their writings appeared in journals and newspapers and reflected their strong commitment to the project of building the nation and citizenship. They also founded their own publishing houses, in addition to writing novels, short stories, and essays. Miseres's article shows the importance of understanding and becoming aware of the role played by women in the beginnings of the Latin American nations, and how gender and nation intersect.

The third article of this section, "Teaching Hispanic Feminisms: From Academic Consciousness Raising to Activism" by Ellen Mayock, proposes four syllabi and course material to incorporate new Iberian, Latin American, and US-Latina female voices and gendered readings of their work in the classroom. For example, in her course, "*Voice and visibility in Escritoras mexicanas y mexicoamericanas,"* Mayock and her students examine Mexican and Mexican-American authors, from Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz to Sandra Cisneros, and explore questions related to gender and history, gender and genre, and the relations between Mexican and Chicana authors, rethinking the uses and demarcation of Spanish and English in the Spanish-language literature classroom. In her classes, Mayock does not lose sight of the intersection between literature, theory and activism, and she promotes, through "a series of feminist pedagogical practices—taking turns being discussion leaders, shared journals, invited speakers, round table discussions—" experience in leadership for her students, an active role in their own learning and feminist activism. It is worth pointing out that throughout her article, Mayock reflects on her own positionality as an academic in a well-respected small Southern liberal arts institution in the United States, aware that "How we teach the gender question in our colleges and universities is heavily influenced by geographic region, institutional history, pre-existing curricula, and the intellectual interests of departments, students, and professors." Moreover, she introduces a problematization of the "aftermath" of feminism and women's studies vis-à-vis LGBTQ demands and critical discourses in academia and the public arena.

In their chapter, "Gendered Matters: Engaging Early Modern *Dramaturgas* in the Classroom," Valerie Hegstrom and Amy Williamsen reconstruct their work at GEMELA (Grupo de Estudios sobre la mujer en España y las Américas Pre-1800), in which they have successfully advocated for expanding the corpus of Golden Age *dramaturgas*, and other female writers for the most part unknown and under-taught in the Spanish curriculum. The authors provide a valuable appendix of the recent anthologies and critical studies about these—until few years ago—forgotten

female writers to make the case for this flourishing field. The authors analyze the gender issues that arise in the Early Modern *dramaturgas*' work, and the productive discussion about these texts in the classroom around topics such as female and male cross-dressing, passing, female agency and patriarchal authority, and gendered violence, among others.

III. SHIFTING THE GROUND WHEN READING

The authors in this section propose ways of reading traditional and non-traditional texts in order to shake fossilized critical approaches and unveil stereotypical and non-historical perspectives in literary criticism and in the classroom. In my chapter "How to Read a Masculine Canon: Gender and *Indigenismo*," I propose following gender approaches to Indigenism. This prominent Latin American movement, which is part of most graduate examinations' reading lists, has represented mainly patriarchal societies without questioning them from a gender perspective, but rather from the points of view of race and class. Among the few women who did cultivate *indigenismo* was Mexican writer Rosario Castellanos, who did so following the explicit coordinates of gender. However, she went about introducing the perspective of women and gender struggle in her novels in both explicit and implicit manners. While other of Rosario Castellanos's readers have already pointed out her inclusion of female characters and representation of gender, the aim of my proposal, of reading Castellanos vis-à-vis other Indigenista writers, such as José María Arguedas and Miguel Ángel Asturias, is to explore the way Castellanos reworks typical characters of patriarchal Indigenism, undermining it from inside the genre and the movement themselves through figures such as the landowner. This type of reading is not always easy when a movement has many established trends; however, it is worth noting how feminist perspective can rewrite the canon from within. My proposal is to deeply explore the positionality of Castellanos's feminism in the history of this important literary and social movement in Latin America. In a word, I propose to read feminism at the intersection of social and literary history.

Cynthia Tompkins explores a true practice of feminist pedagogy through the presentation of the same topic and literary work under different theoretical perspectives. Following Patti Lather's seminal pedagogical strategy that consists of focusing on an event from different ideological standpoints so that students may become aware of the implications of each paradigm, Tompkins offers a variety of feminist approaches to analyze María Victoria Menis's *Cámara oscura* [*Camera Obscura*] (2008), and Albertina Carri's *La rabia* [*Anger*] (2008). The lenses are: cultural

feminism and its condemnation of the overemphasis of masculine values, French feminism and its exploration of the feminine unconscious, radical feminism and its discourse of patriarchal oppression, and lastly social feminism, which holds that the causes of oppression are multiple, resulting from class, race, and gender, embedded as they are in institutional structures. In her article, Tompkins also establishes the importance of history and the positionality of texts and authors regarding feminism, particularly in texts that reflect on the condition of women in the circumstances of European immigration to Argentina at the beginning of the 20th century (*Cámara oscura*), and the gender power dynamics in rural settings, also in Argentina (*La rabia*). Tompkins demonstrates the richness of a text that goes through different analytical perspectives and reading lenses, making them establish a dialogue rather than imposing a monological version of a given text. As Tompkins remarks, “pedagogically, it may empower students to question the attempt to impose any one interpretation.”

IV. BREAKING THE AGREEMENT OF SILENCE, TEACHING UNCOMFORTABLE SUBJECTS

In “Interrogating Gendered Mexican Cultural Icons in a ‘Border’ Classroom,” Amanda Petersen talks about the discomfort of discussing certain subjects in the classroom as a learning experience for teachers and students alike. Describing what Laura Rendón (2006) calls an “agreement of silence”—“a refusal to discuss difference for fear of creating discomfort” (p. 4), Petersen talks about the creation of a space in her classroom where teacher and students can notice nuance and articulate difference, and “actively break said agreement of silence.” The author explains her experience as a white woman from the Midwest teaching at a private university in San Diego, on the Mexican border. She specifically discusses a class where she teaches gender and border identity through the analysis of cultural icons and symbols: the revolutionary hero Pancho Villa, the revered Virgin of Guadalupe, and the highly controversial figure of “Tía Juana,” (Madam Tijuana). These symbols and icons allow her students to question traditional notions of Mexican masculinity and femininity, deconstructing seemingly unquestionable nationalistic and religious figures. What makes her teaching experience more challenging is not only the questioning of sacred or controversial icons but also, and more importantly, doing so in the border setting, where students from different social, economic, national, and religious backgrounds are engaging in the conversation. Following Mary Louise Pratt (1991), Petersen envisions her

classroom as contact zone: a "classroom that function(s) not like a homogenous community or a horizontal alliance" (p. 39). Pratt's concept directly links to the notion of the border as studied by Robert McKee Irwin (2007) and Santiago Vaquera-Vásquez (2006), who move away from a notion of border understood just in the binary terms of US-Mexico. Petersen is aware of this and recognizes that "each student has something at stake in the classroom […]: the American reads the anti-gringo rhetoric, the Mexican American student both reads about and shares personal experience with being seen as neither from the US or from Mexico, and the Mexican student both shares her personal experience of life in Tijuana and rejects and/or accepts literary descriptions of it." Following McKee Irwin, Petersen remembers that cultural icons in the borderlands "can only be constructed around the inevitable tensions, conflicts, and debates that determine the cultural complexity of a contact zone" (p. xix).

In "Approaches to Teaching Rape in the Spanish Literature Classroom: Alicia Giménez Bartlett's *Ritos de muerte*," Shelley Godsland likewise discusses her experience with "breaking the agreement of silence," but in her case around the topic of rape. Specifically, Godsland describes the reaction and comments when analyzing Giménez Bartlett's novel *Ritos de muerte* [*Death Rites*]. The detective novel provides good material to analyze rape and the circumstances around it: domestic violence, physical and psychological, family abuse, the disciplinary institutions of the law and the police, and stereotypes surrounding criminal and victim in all of these settings. Through this lens, gender struggle becomes more evident, as for Godsland, rape "constitutes a fundamental control mechanism that underpins the wider patriarchy within which my (mostly female) students and I must operate on a daily basis." Godsland follows Marco Abel's (2007) work about the portrayal of violence in literature and film and "the obvious importance of analyzing [them] because […] they bear the *pedagogical* potential for activating an *ethical* mode of encounter with violence" (p. 189, original emphasis).

V. INTERDISCIPLINARY AND CROSSROADS

In "Teaching Gender for the Multicultural Workplace," Mary Long discusses her experience as director of the Spanish for the Professions major at the University of Colorado. Long talks about the challenges of intertwining the principles and goals of the humanities and liberal arts, where the academic foundation is aimed at life skills, with the more pragmatic and applied vision of business schools, which aim to "prepare students with specific, job-oriented 'hard' skills" (Kelm, 2005). The

interdisciplinary approach of the program and the bridge it constructs between the business sector and the humanities provide the students with not only linguistic proficiency in courses such as business translation, but also with historical, literary and cultural knowledge to understand the richness and complexity of Latin American, Latino and Iberian cultures. For Long, it is fundamental to educate students on the self-awareness and questioning of gender dynamics in the classroom and their own society, in order to compare and contrast with other cultures and dismantle stereotypes. Through specific classroom activities, in her courses Long also studies the role of women of all classes, backgrounds and education, and their leadership in the business practice of Latin America and Spain, in order to fully grasp the complexities of business in global contexts.

"Performing Gender in the Classroom and on the Stage," by Debra Castillo, proposes to analyze a similarly challenging situation in online courses applied to the humanities, and more specifically to her theater project (Teatrotaller) at Cornell University, "particularly in these days of burgeoning pressure to move our classrooms to a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) environment." Among other plays, Castillo talks about Teatrotaller's performance of *Las mujeres de Ciudad Juárez*, by Mexican actor and playwright Cristina Michaus (a very stylized social drama focused on the femicide in the border city) and the connection and affective reaction of the audience, something that is very difficult to convey and grasp in online courses. Following Marshall McLuhan (1964), Castillo argues that the message is not the content in our communicative exchanges but that the medium: "This is merely to say that the personal and social consequences of any medium […] result from the new scale that is introduced into our affairs by each extension of ourselves, or by any new technology" (p. 35). For Castillo there are important signs and implicit discourses in face-to-face communication and performance that trigger an affective and emotional connection between the performers and the audience, and among the members of the audience itself, and that these fade away in online media. Castillo reminds us that affect theory in the humanities teaches us of the importance of "the kinds of values that we associate with gender-conscious scholarship and forms of academic organization, as well as with the structure of the traditional seminar class; a kind of pedagogy, in Julia Woods' succinct formulation, in which 'teaching involves hearts as well as minds'" (p. 138).

Latin American, Iberian and Latino feminism and gender studies have frequently been overlooked in academia in favor of their French, English or American counterparts. The aim of this book is to fill that gap. Fundamentally, this book is a reflection on our own praxis as intellectuals

in university classrooms. This is of particular interest in an era when academic international feminism, be it critical or pedagogical, is examining younger generations' responses to gender issues and feminism, both within and beyond the framework of nostalgia, and in relation to current debates over the term itself and labels. Along these lines, this book answers a wide range of questions such as: "Does feminism exist in the university classroom?" "How do we talk with our students about 'the gender question' through Latin American, Iberian, and Latino literature and cultural texts?" "What direction has the debate taken in academia and beyond?" "What are our criteria for selecting authors, topics and approaches in the classroom?" "How is the traditional canon contested?" "What is our own *positionality* in US and European academic settings in relation to these texts?" "How do we embrace a feminist pedagogy?" "How do we acknowledge the conflicting plurality of feminisms and gender issues in Latin America, Iberian Peninsula and Latino culture?" Although based for the most part on empirical approaches to the above questions, the fundamental aim of this book is to rethink and open new lines of debate in the theoretical field of international gender studies at large. In terms of a philosophy of teaching, the book aims to suggest new approaches to these subjects in learning/teaching settings.

If it is true, as Sara Castro-Klarén declares in this volume, that both academic feminism and feminism at large are situated in an aftermath matrix, and that there is backlash to academic feminism, how do Latin American, Iberian, and Latino gender studies situate themselves in this allegedly exhausted or attacked discussion? The critical essays in this volume propose different ways to revive that debate. Thus, the authors in this volume are promoting texts and authors that are new and in some cases unknown even within the canon, and are reflecting on still veiled gender challenges and current political disputes for women and sexual minorities. An important aspect of this volume is that it is not centered on a single author, period or specific movement, but, on the contrary, covers an ample spectrum of texts that are under-represented in literary histories and bibliographical resources. This book does not offer a single or homogeneous perspective on women and gender issues. Instead, the articles it contains seek to provide a deep historical contextualization of the texts and cultural phenomena that they study, by understanding the importance of the specificities of the different cultural milieu in which they arose. For such an approach, one must inevitably deal with the inextricable differences in class, race, ethnicity, language and politics that make up the patchwork of Latin American, Iberian, and Latino communities.

NOTES

[1] The editors of this volume first put together and presented papers as part of the workshop *Teaching the Gender Question: Towards New Solutions* at the symposium *University of Colorado Women Succeeding Symposium* organized by the University of Colorado at Boulder (2011). One year later (2012) we organized a symposium *Teaching "Women": Gendered Perspectives through Hispanic Texts* on our university campus with the support of the Spanish and Portuguese Department, the Women and Gender Studies Program, the Women's Resource Center, the Latin American Studies Center and the Faculty Conference Award. Our Keynote speakers were Sara Castro-Klaren, Cynthia Tompkins and Debra Castillo. The symposium was a great opportunity to discuss the ideas that appear in this volume with our colleagues and graduate students.

[2] Expanding outside academia, it is also important to consider the voices of women excluded from the main stream culture. For example, in her book, *Feminismos desde Abya Yala, ideas y proposiciones de las mujeres de 607 pueblos en nuestra américa*, Francesca Gargallo Celentani collects accounts of struggle and reflection from indigenous women, and reminds us that: "For years white and whitewashed—as Rita Laura Segato defines the thinking of people who, though not white, share white people's systems of values—feminism, which today has achieved significant institutionalized spaces, has only listened to the demands of women who live and want to liberate themselves within a binary and exclusive gender system, which organizes both their knowledge and their market economy equally. Therefore, when it addresses women from other nations, it seeks to educate them according to the standard parameters of its own system, without listening to their demands, without learning about their history of struggle, without acknowledging the validity of their ideas. It organizes 'leadership schools' without realizing that the very idea of leadership wreaks havoc upon the political identity of those who think collectively, being capable of individual contributions shared with society. It proposes equality with men, when in dual, non-binary processes equality is not a guiding principle of political organizing that women demand. It is irritated by the idea of multiple complementariness, which the feminists of many peoples study in order to see themselves once more as builders of a history of the Americas that is neither white nor whitewashed, where neither women in the face of men, nor their people in the face of the nation-state that contains it, experience any form of subordination, but rather interact in the historic building of their wellbeing." (p. 11, my translation)

[3] Following Nietzsche and Foucault, Connolly (1993) defines agonist respect as a sort of "spiritualization of the enemy" (Nietzsche): "Agonistic respect differs from its sibling, liberal tolerance, in affirming a more ambiguous relation of interdependence and strife between identities over a passive letting the other be. The latter may be desirable on occasion, but it is less available in late-modern life than some liberals presume. It is not sufficient to shed 'prejudice' because our identities are bound up with each other in a world where pressures to enact general policies are always active. It 'cuts' deeper than tolerance because it folds contestation into the foundations of the putative identity from which liberal tolerance is often derived and delimited. But, still, it remains close enough to liberal tolerance to invite comparison and critical negotiation, pressing its debating partner to fold the spirit of genealogy more actively into its characterization of 'the individual' and arguing against the spirit of complacency so often lodged in bifurcations between the private and the public" (Connolly, 1993, p. 382).

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I.

FEMINISM IN THE AFTERMATH IN LATIN AMERICAN, IBERIAN AND LATINO STUDIES

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2. MOBILIZING MEANINGS: QUESTIONS FOR A PEDAGOGY OF WOMEN'S WRITING

INTRODUCTION

There is no question that both academic feminism and feminism at large are now situated in an "after" matrix. Theorists have been writing about the end of the first and second wave of feminism since the 1980's, albeit with different emphasis and twists. Journalists in the United States have documented the neo-liberal backlash, and scholar-activists have characterized the aftermath of feminism in terms that spell both the exhaustion of a powerful discourse of gender liberation and a no-exit situation for many of the key convictions of gender theory. In this essay I analyze Angela McRobbie's (2009) critical account of the "aftermath" and I return to Michel Foucault's (1977/1980) questions on the production of truth in relation to power in order to refresh the importance and relevance of his questions on the problem of the author, literature as a discipline and gender studies as a discourse enmeshed in social and academic power struggles. I end with a reflection on the feminist canon formation of Latin American literature in the United States Academy. I will argue, that in the conceptualization of the field of inquiry as well as in the elaboration of syllabi for the classroom it is necessary to problematize the temporal line that continues to posit "Latin American Culture" with an "origin" in Medieval Spain. This is of course part of the problem with "Hispanism," a construct that has its beginning in the post-independence nineteenth century in which the Argentine Domingo Faustino Sarmiento categorically rejects such "origins" and the Venezuelan-Chilean Andrés Bello endeavors to retain them. After Spain lost its colonies to the wars of independence of 1810–24, Spanish intellectuals such as Menéndez Pidal and Menéndez Pelayo, under the sponsorship of the Spanish state, tried to recover the lost colonies with a "cultural" move of appropriation in a subaltern hierarchy where Castilian letters are featured as origin and past as well as future model. History and the construct "Latin American Literature" have of course proven things to be quite different. Disposing of this fallacious "origin" as well as presumptions of kinship due to the common use of Castilian is just as urgent as the problematization of space, for the troubled temporal line tends to reappear under the guise of transatlantic studies or

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even "global" feminism. On the confusion permitted, although fallacious and unnecessary, by the common use of Castilian I refer the reader to Jorge Luis Borges's articles on (1932) "El escritor argentino y la tradición" and (1952) "Las alarmas del Dr. Américo Castro."

FEMINISM'S AFTERMATH

Angela McRobbie's (2009) *The Aftermath of Feminism, Gender, Culture and Social Change* stands out for the clarity of its arguments and its political positions. It allows for the points of discussion to emerge with almost stark singularity. The fact that it squarely, from its Marxist perspective, takes on neo-liberalism's conflictive relation to certain aspects of feminism's three waves, provides a good contrast with Josephine Donovan's (2012) focus on gynocentrism and ecofeminism as portents of the future in an uninterrupted continuum of struggles and gains.[1] The recent date of publications of both books is also helpful in measuring the place of the aftermath in both space and time. The object of McRobbie's study is not exactly feminism or gender studies in the academy. What concerns her inquiry is the conceptual and political framework within which "popular culture," especially women's magazines and film, has played a decisive role in the "undoing of feminism" (p. 11). She argues that "popular culture through an array of Machiavellian elements" (p. 11) has perniciously and effectively brought about the demise of feminism. While studies like *Third Wave Feminism: A Critical Exploration* critically point to the "consumerist a-political bent of third wave theory" (Donovan, 2007, p. 201), identifying it as part of the cultural logic of late capitalism, they do not, like McRobbie analyze and decry the loss of feminism's capacity to ally itself and become solidary with other movements for liberation (from capitalism and patriarchy) occurring on a worldwide basis. Indispensable for any concerns over the struggles of canon formation is McRobbie's focus and discomfort with the pervasiveness of a powerful and popular post-modern culture that disparages feminism, and at the same time constitutes today's fulcrum in which subjectivities and interpretative horizons of college and university readers are forged, not to mention the globe's population.

What is most striking and puzzling about McRobbie's (2009) account of the aftermath is the capacity of those purveyors of popular culture to have brought about the undoing of feminism by deploying and appealing to the very central positions of feminism: freedom of choice and equality for the individual (p. 11). McRobbie, following Laclau and Mouffe (1985) in their *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (pp. 25–27), finds that, while the first and second waves of feminism and

gender politics were part of a chain of solidary struggles linked to chains of equivalences for liberation in which feminism played an important role, feminism in the hands of magazine publishers, film and television producers has been separated from these other struggles and re-presented or resemanticized as a matter of individual behaviors. The links in the chain were broken. These choices portend the liberating capacity that resides in offering infinite freedom of personal selections from a limitless menu of desires and behaviors. This freedom is well articulated and better visualized with slick photography in women's magazines and glamorous film narratives in order to convey consistently the same message: be sexy, be professionally successful, practice sexual freedom, be a successful consumer of desires and eventually marry and settle down.

In retrospect, we can see that feminism, born out of capitalism itself, but paradoxically understood by some of its proponents as a defining force in the undoing of capital, did not anticipate that in deploying "freedom of choice," and "equality"[2] in tandem with the supremacy of the individual as the rock of liberating social formations, liberation became what Laclau (2005) conceptualizes as a "floating signifier" in his *On Populist Reason*.[3] As such the signifiers "freedom," "do your own thing," sexual liberation, sexual equality, and equal pay for equal work, could be appropriated and redeployed for and from rival discourses. For McRobbie (2009), this resemantization of the once rebellious discourse of culture and politics of choice and liberation amounts to nothing less than "the re-instatement of gender hierarchies through new subtle forms of patriarchal power … a kind of return to older pre-modern family based units" (p. 47). Nothing, not even Judith Butler's attempt at dismantling kinship (not just the nuclear family) as a principle of social organization can, for McRobbie, stem the victory of neo-liberalism (capital, marriage, the family, consumerism) in its battle for meaning and power with post-socialist radicalism (p. 49), the latter being the perspective which McRobbie assumes and from which her critique of the undoing of feminism departs.

Popular culture as the site where "common sense," where power is remade and re-enacted every day (Butler, Laclau, & Zizek, 2000, p. 14), is particularly disturbing to McRobbie's (2009) sense of loss of the promise of her vision of feminism for she feels that the media (film and television) dispense stories that posit marriage as happiness for a girl and thus reinstates the patriarchal order that feminism, in her view, set out to overturn (p. 12). This critic particularly laments her own observation that popular culture does not posit any other kind of alternative family arrangements as the conveyors of happiness for girls and women and thus closes the horizon of possibilities for social experimentation and liberation

(p. 12). It is interesting to note the fact that Intentional Communities—unrelated people of all ages banding to live together under a particular faith, program or community ideals—are beginning to appear again in the United States. Though none with a particular feminist bent, the *Washington Post* reports on several local communities, the oldest being the Assisi Community and one of newest bearing the name of The Green Vine Co-op.[4]

Underlining McRobbie's (2009) observation and valuation of the "loss" suffered by feminism is the assumption that marriage constitutes a less than positive social and personal condition for women in general. Liberation is taken to mean forms of sexual, gender and political organization that exclude marriage as desired, necessary or prescribed. This particular point is important to keep in mind, as it is pivotal for any discussion of the relationship of feminist theory and the formation of a canon of Latin American women writers to be taught in the United States academy. "Marriage" or "kinship" has simply not been theorized in Latin American literary or socio-political discourses. So that to introduce this discussion when analyzing any text proceeding from Latin America calls for great caution lest the interpreters violate the text's own horizons of intelligibility. In regretting the pro-family feminism theorized by Jean Bethke-Elshtein,[5] McRobbie points out this re-valuing of marriage is under-theorized (p. 31). Certainly, divorce, which had remained under-theorized but has now received a thorough longitudinal examination by Andrew Cherlin, (2009) does not appear to be particularly recommendable for any one's well-being. Well-being is, of course, another area that remains under-theorized or mis-theorized not only by feminist scholars, but by psychologists, cognitive scientists, economists and a host of other specialists in various disciplines. The point here is that we do really not know with much certainty about what kinds of social and affective arrangements are full proof "good" for human beings and thus caution and humility are in order when it comes to recommending experimentation.

Moving on from her critique of the dismantling work carried out by purveyors of popular culture (magazine editors, film makers, television producers, that is to say the educated liberal corporate elite) and citing the neo-liberal attack on feminism known as the "backlash," well documented in Susan Faludi's (1992) *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against Women*, McRobbie (2009) turns to an analysis of academic feminism. Academic feminism, she argues, became susceptible to the influence of Foucault and thus proceeded to "dismantle itself" (p. 13). The British critic writes that "under the prevailing influence of Foucault, there is a shift away from feminist interest in centralized power blocks, e.g. the state, patriarchy, law,

to more dispersed sites, events and instances of power conceptualized as flows and specific convergences and consolidations of talk, discourse, effects" (p. 13). Thus for McRobbie, feminism morphed into cultural studies under the influence of Foucault and therefore lost its thrust as a political movement in both the academy and the culture at large.

Nevertheless she takes note of the fact that it is this Foucauldian shift that opens the way for the influential and radical work of Judith Butler on the central questions of gender, its cultural production and the discourses that sustain or undermine it, as her work itself testifies. The inclusion of Judith Butler's work on the body, while admired by readers in general, and credited with much radical thinking, is decoupled from Foucault's own influential inquiry into the genealogy of sexuality and its impact across disciplines, not just feminism. In fact, McRobbie (2009) makes a point of rejecting Foucault's genealogical approach. It is curious to see this occlusion on McRobbie's part for it is an occlusion that invites speculation. One wonders, for instance, in which way does the Foucault-Butler connection disturb the theses that McRobbie puts forth on the dismantling of feminism by neo-liberalism alone in the realm of popular culture (It did not reach the academy? The culture of "choice" and self-fashioning did not pervade the academy? Are there no correspondences between the academy and popular culture? Did not the proliferation of the idea that the personal is the political guide many a scholarly project and publication?). The dismantling of feminism under the pressures of cultural studies is theoretically acceptable but it cannot occlude the fact that a considerable amount of feminist scholarship gained traction and influence in its convergence with the spidery micro-topics of cultural studies and its capacity to command the cultural pages of the *New York Times* and many highbrow liberal magazines, not just the glossy pages available at the hair dresser or the dentist. These are points of inflection that impact any consideration for thinking and practicing pedagogy about texts authored by women in geo-cultural zones other than Euroamerica.

While McRobbie (2009) gives full credit to the impact of Butler's work on gender studies, the author of *The Aftermath of Feminism* remains uncertain as to the connection of such radicalizing inquiry into gender (gender trouble and gender bending, gender performativity) and the future of a feminism that she understands to aspire to represent a more general struggle against capitalism and especially patriarchal institutions (p. 13). She particularly laments the "fact" that the media manages sexual conduct today and that as a result of the campaign against Big Feminism, as in *Fatal Attraction,* (pp. 34–37): "young women [today] recoil in horror at the idea of feminists" (p. 16). She further fears the prospect of a new conservative

feminism that posits marriage as a good outcome for a girl's or boy's life (p. 31). McRobbie argues that what she terms the "new sexual contract" (p. 54)—women are offered opportunities to gain professional credentials, good jobs, and fertility control—leads to a new feminized citizenship that has been exscinded from feminist political struggles at home and abroad (pp. 54–55).

Clearly the "new sexual contract" is not satisfactory for McRobbie (2009) and in a way brings up Freud's question again: What do women want? This question is being pursued with great vigor by sexologists, whose disinterest in monogamy and heterosexuality might be of interest to a radical inquiry into the aftermaths of feminism. Freud's puzzled question is now the title of a book by the journalist and prize winning fiction writer Daniel Bergner (2013). In his *What do Women Want? Adventures in the Science of Female Desire*, he reports on the laboratory experiments being carried out by sexologists in quest of a pre-cultural answer to women's desire. Here again we see the specter of Foucault whose *The Birth of the Clinic* (1973) anticipates the cyborg medicalization of women's desire and the scientific passion for metrics guiding the experiments conceived and described in *What do Women Want?*

McRobbie (2009) acknowledges in passing that the neo-liberalism in popular culture is not only a threat and obstacle to, but rather accounts for the current impossibility of restoring to feminism its original liberating thrust. There are other threats as well, and they vary in the degree of virulence that they represent. While she indicates a positive role played by post-colonial feminist critique of Eurocentric feminism as practiced by the influential voice of Gayatri Spivak, she does not even mention the earlier challenge to Eurocentric feminism leveled by Domitila Chungara[6]. This second occlusion is in and of itself interesting for two reasons. First, it points to a curious general dismissal or absence of any thing Latin American on the part of a British theoretician, who ironically, sees feminism's own fulfillment in its capacity or possibility of establishing chains of solidarity with other movements of liberation as theorized by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985) in their *Hegemony and Social Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. Second, such a dismissal of thought in Latin America, although not unusual in the United States Academy, should give pause to the question of the elaboration and composition of the canon in courses offered in Spanish departments (constituted by the common use of Castilian) on Latin American women writers and the history of feminism south of the border.

Finally, it is important to note here that McRobbie's (2009) analysis of the aftermath of feminism and the forces that have brought it to its

weakened present situation, include the rise of conservative feminism, a movement that she specifically decries for believing that marriage is not to be disparaged as a lifestyle for women and men. This tension too, I find important in the discussion of cultural histories and trends in Latin America and its relation to gender studies for while there has always, from Sor Juana on, been a critique of marriage and its subalternization of women in the sphere of domesticity, there has not been a theorization of marriage as per definition an institution or practice antagonist to women's freedom, fruitful organization of affects or well-being in general. Eventually, McRobbie's inquiry concludes that what we have now are *many* feminisms. While she does not delve into how and why they struggle or where they converse with each other and in relation to wider and more multiple struggles for power, she shows particular concern over the "dismantling" of feminism in the Anglo-american academy. The presence of multiple (dismantled and reemerging) feminisms in the academy, a strong aftermath in the culture at large and the globalized communication environment that McRobbie sees as the present horizon of possibilities bears directly onto the project of feminine/feminist canon construction. Plurality of feminism and plurality of locations and actors is then the lesson that the practice of canon construction needs to keep in mind at all times.

Before we go into the inquiry posed by Foucault's take on the imbrications of truth and power and the question of the intellectual (i.e. professors of gender studies, women's literature, public intellectuals, etc.), let us pause to ask a few further questions that McRobbie's (2009) study invites. Let us consider the following: 1) To what extent does this reading of the demise of feminism inform or trouble the categories of gender, gendering of authors and gendering of writing that prevail in the classroom today? 2) How do we understand, and where do we situate, the relationship of these challenged categories and their cultural matrices, with respect to our students, who, according to McRobbie are subjects molded by the hijacked feminism of popular culture? In other words, what epistemological realm do the readers of *Seventeen* or *Cosmo Girl* inhabit and in what way are they constituted as possible readers of Maria Luisa Bombal, Rosario Castellanos, Alejandra Pizarnik, or Nélida Piñon? 3) Should we not pause to ask with Hans Robert Jauss (1982): what is the horizon of expectations at play in these classrooms? Finally, how do we, students of Latin American culture, circulate the major tenets of gender studies into the formation of the canon of Latin American women writers? What precautions have we taken in light of the fact that there are always multiple gender formations and multiple ways of inhabiting the feminine?

FOUCAULT AND THE CANON

In this section I want to address the other part of the question posed by the editors of this volume, namely, the position of women intellectuals in the academy. My space is now short, but I will briefly pose some of the questions stemming from Foucault's own interpellation on the production of truth and power. What follows will be more in the form of statements for formulating questions since I do not have the space to present the evidence and arguments.

In the interview with Pasquale Pasquino, better known today as "Truth and Power," Foucault (1977/1980) remarks on the resistant reception that his early questioning of the relationship of psychiatry to power and the production of truth had come to represent not only in the Soviet Union but also in liberal democracies such as France. In retrospect, he feels that he should not have been surprised at such resistance, given the very tenets of his own thesis on the indissoluble and constitutive relation of truth to power as inscribed in practices and institutions. Foucault states that he chose psychiatry rather than physics to explore the relationships of knowledge to power because "the epistemological profile of psychiatry is a low one and psychiatry's practice is linked with a whole range of institutions, economic requirements and political issues of social regulation" (Foucault, 1977/1980, p. 111). In our inquiry into intellectuals and feminism in the United States academy, we might want to keep in mind the epistemological contours of feminism/gender studies and its acclimatization in the academy in both the development of curricula, syllabi, and certificates and degrees in order to ascertain the complexity of the position occupied by gender theory and gender academic practices in the production and distribution of power-knowledge. The history of this cultural formation has not been written yet, but we could gain some insight from looking at other related discursive formations. For example, humanists can observe with detachment the development of sexology as portrayed in *What Do Women Want?* (2013), since it occurs within the realm of the sciences. We could reflect on how the science of sexology—project proposals, grant competitions, experts with advanced academic degrees in medicine, psychiatry, biology, government and private sector grants for laboratories, pharmaceutical companies interested in developing the Viagra for women—moves along making its findings and securing an indispensable place for itself on "women" episteme and any future discussions about their "happiness."

From this empirical and discursive perspective, McRobbie (2009) is correct. The introduction of Foucault across the disciplines but especially in gender studies, in the United States academy, has steered feminist studies

and feminism itself into the field of cultural studies. Analyzed from the theoretical perspective of “Truth and Power,” feminism loses its “aura” in Benjamin’s (1969) sense of the term, and appears as an object of study as any other important but not unique development in a socio-intellectual history of the West, or as McRobbie decries, an aspect of the history of capital and its capacity to absorb challenges and reinvent itself. The question is then, to what extent should a reflection on the pedagogy of gender view the development of gender studies as one “event” among others, in Foucault’s sense of the term, in the dynamics of the power-knowledge grid that saw the formation of new subjectivities in the second half of the 20th century as it became the site of the dissolution of modern epistemologies and modern empires?

As a third instance, we could ask, how and in which ways did the feminisms of the first, second and even third wave (post-feminism) become hegemonic in the United States academy and how did the gender theory knowledge complex also become hegemonic in the pedagogy of Latin American literature and culture? What have been the corridors of transmission, how and to what extent have interdisciplinary knowledges chiseled away, if at all, the assumptions about the identity of authorship with the text, the assumption of gendered writing and practices, and above all the construction of a canon in which women writers are separated from their male counterparts, so that the unspoken cultural representation given in such course syllabi, is that women exist, work, dream and create in a sort of parallel universe. Many a syllabus’ unspoken assumption is that it is unproblematic to compare Clarise Lispector to Damiela Eltit or Nélida Piñon but not to Machado de Assis, the master of Brazilian prose who obviously looms as large as Virginia Woolf does for Lispector’s own definition as a writer. I think that a return to some of the problematic explored in “What is an Author” by Foucault (1998) and Hans Robert Jauss’s (1982) concept of horizon of expectations (*Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*) would provide an invigorating injection into the hermeneutics of the pedagogy of gender.

Clearly much more can be done with the questions Foucault poses in this and other essays on the production of truth and power. The specific historical position of the intellectual allows us to touch not only on women writers and filmmakers but also on academics. Very early on in his thought on culture Foucault remarks on the definitive eclipse of the public intellectual as modeled by Jean Paul Sartre. The sad retreat of the intellectual and his/her replacement by the expert has been aptly studied in both English-based scholarship and in Latin America. This phenomenon too is food for thought, for our questions about gender pedagogy for

women—given the conditions of literacy and access to higher education in Latin American history—have always had to wage a huge struggle for public recognition, for a voice in the very *machista* public spheres of the nation states where they were born. Often, while their male contemporaries were busy establishing national literary canons that did not include women—José Ingenieros, Ricardo Rojas—or fighting over the place of the *gauchesca* in the making of the national canon—Borges and Leopoldo Lugones—women like Bombal and Gabriela Mistral were writing and struggling to be recognized as people sitting at the same table.

MOBILIZING MEANINGS AND NEW POSITIONS AND DEPARTURES

The problematic concerning women writers, feminisms, testimonio, the canon, and questions in subaltern studies devolves into questions of temporal and spatial positionality as well as the geopolitics of before and after. I bring back for discussion the problem of positionality together with the questions of foundational authority in order to move on to a reflection on mobilizing meanings, a reflection that will enable us to avoid problems of sovereign subjects, hegemonic truths as well as congealing or passing orthodoxies. It would seem that any discussion of feminism today is not served well enough by simply accepting that there is or there was not just ONE feminism but rather there are and there will be a plurality of ways of being/acting female-feminist in different historical and epistemological sites. Such an acknowledgement of *feminism in the plural* requires a careful and considered theorizing of the question of positionality, a discussion absent in McRobbie (2009) and many other texts concerned with the well-being of women. It seems that positionality tends to afflict both examinations of feminisms on the ground and declarative feminist epistemologies.

There is no doubt that a univocal feminism, as Domitila Chungara reminded us in the 1980s, is simply not possible. However, the temptation of "speaking with one voice" in the sphere of immediate political struggles glimmers as the most effective strategy to affect change and to bring about the emancipation and well-being of women the world over. And yet it remains fraught with the perils of enunciating yet again a new sovereign subject. For instance, how do we go about pursuing one of the goals of global and radical feminism of connecting feminist Latin Americanist studies in the United States with the political reality of women's movements in Latin America, without critically revamping earlier discussions on positionality as well as the making of identities in the long dureé of Latin America's history? As Hernan Vidal's (2009) and Jean

Franco's (2009) interventions on human rights evidence,[7] entering the field of human rights in relation to feminism brings up a very healthy but also vexing discussion of what indeed is today understood as "human" as in "human rights." If we want to avoid working with an uncritical extension of the conception of the male subject in the Enlightenment and later in the Human Rights United Nations declaration of 1948 as modified by women activists, we need an acute and accurate historicism of the concept of being human imbedded in "human rights" (individual rights) so that when its reach becomes global it does not trample over well sedimented cultural differences[8] and does not ignore its inception in the Catholic thinking that ensued soon after 1492 with the conquest and the holocaust of the Amerindian populations (as the MLA 2006 Special Issue on Human Rights did when it ignored all of the items highlighted above in planning and choosing articles for this Special Issue, thus de-historicizing the problem to the detriment of our understating of "other' traditions on the subject of being human and beginning the process of solidarization with women at a truly global range). Thus, in the consideration of feminisms, canon formation, and the trans-national, positionality and its convergence with feminism in the plural becomes an indispensable first step.

This is, of course, a problem of language and rhetoric: how to write in and of the acknowledged plurality without seeming incoherent? Cynthia Tompkins resorts to the form and the figure of the kaleidoscope in her "Imagining New Identities and Communities for Feminisms in the Americas" (2008, pp. 1–33). No doubt, it is also a political problem in that speaking of the ONE or of the MANY in feminism has always implied allegiances and, allegiances call for firm identifications. Such implicit call for identification and allegiance raises the question of representation even before the dictum of the "personal is the political" made its appearance in feminist discourse. It would seem that, just as it was with the controversy over *testimonio* and the salient problem of representation in the heuristic practices brought to *testimonio* readings, a great many habits of reading need to be questioned and even unlearned in a search for new departures in feminist thinking in the age of trans-national globalization (*imperium*) and canon formation in the United States academy.

One of the new directions in which to embark might be the exploration of a terrain of thinking that would be capable of avoiding the congealment of subject positions as well as resisting the epistemological hierarchy of such subject positions. Such a move might afford more comfort and less anxiety with a lesser number of certainties. This path could offer greater openness to a permanent state of self-revising theorizing (rather than "feminist theory" in capital letters, which rushes to the newest orthodoxy of

monogamy, polygamy or celibacy, or pre-cultural desire). Positing an agonistic subject position might turn out to be a good way of avoiding the pit falls of the past and of avoiding flare ups in the present. An agonistic subject could be capable of assessing and acting in less defined and thus less restrictive ways. A less certain and less sovereign subject would be more open to dialogue, less anxious about critically considering a catholic feminism in Latin America not necessarily as bad or backward or inimical thing for after all Latin America is a region of the world where Catholicism and Evangelical Protestantism are deeply imbedded in the living cultural matrix. An agonistic position might be better equipped to open up to the promise of solidarity not only in the plurality of feminisms, but even with other less obvious, forgotten or even misperceived allies.

But before such endeavors can be attempted, it is important to say a word about the very active set of misrecognitions and misidentifications operating in the conversations among Latin Americanists working in the United States in departments of literature. In a previous intervention on *testimonio* ("Interrupting the Text of Latin American Studies: Problems of (Missed) Recognition" (l998, 2011). I tried to point out the obvious fact that some of the heated debates on *testimonio* in the field that studies Latin American culture and literature in literature departments had to do with a kind of misrecognition and misidentification given in the position assumed by the researcher. This mis-recognition is not unlike McRobbie's (2009) own as carried in her tone and rhetoric for she assumes that she speaks for all women and their (universal) liberation.

In these departments there is a rich and productive mixture of scholars and students who hail from different parts of the globe (mainly Latin America, the United States and Spain) and whose identities have formed at different historical times in different locations. The object of study shared is Latin American culture and literature. However, besides coming to the study of the object from different national and regional identitarian processes, they also bring different scholarly traditions and understandings to bear on the very making of the object of study. For instance, it is one thing to study in Argentina its women's movements from a national perspective for a publication to be done in Spanish and mostly for Argentine readers. It is quite another thing to study the "same" (they are not the "same" once cast from another perspective) movements from the perspective of a national United States scholar for a publication in English. Both subject positions are different from yet a third one: the Argentine citizen working in the United States academy and preparing a publication in English for the American academy. While recognizing that these positions are empirically different with respect to approach, constitution of the object

of study, and audience of interpreters (authorizers), it is not always equally apparent how these differences in positionality affect an unspoken and readily assumed *continuity* of identity between subject of enunciation and object of study. Thus the puzzling complaint (*reclamo*) that feminist studies in departments of literature have not had any effect in the feminist struggles in Latin America. Often in feminist and *testimonio* scholarship one finds an assumption of a continuity and even identification between the three different subject positions and the object of study. This may be so because these fields of inquiry are clearly political, deal with living subjects, and are thus traversed by a sense of advocacy: an allegiance with the cause for women's emancipation, a struggle for justice for those whose only treasure is the *testimonio* of their oppression.

This unexamined assumption of continuity has led to many polemics and misunderstandings among North and South feminists who not only do not see (or produce) the object of study—Latin American women and feminisms—under the same light and within the same parameters of understanding, but who also, in fact, respond very differently to their distinct (and unacknowledged) insertion in the knowledge-power games. When we look at the mirror image (South/North) of the situation we clearly perceive the deep positional problematic. There are almost no Latin American scholars working in Latin American universities who study United States feminism and women's movements and who reflect and write on how to affect change in the situation of women in the United States. No such Latin American scholar can be thinking and expect to have an audience with respect to trans-national feminism in the United States social or political sphere and indeed her own individual life. This differential subject-object relation needs to be recognized so that American scholars working on Latin American feminisms do not assume an easy continuity between their own feminist understandings and allegiances and those of women's movements or women writer's workshops in Latin America.

The same should be said about Latin American scholars working in the United States. What, for example, should be the reception accorded to and the authority invested in treatises such as McRobbie's (2009) book on the aftermath of feminism, Judith Butler's (2002) attempted theoretical dismantling of kinship, Sofie Fontanel's (2013) sensational claims on the benefits and empowerment of celibacy in *The Art of Sleeping Alone*, and the laboratory experiments in search of the sweet spot reported in *What Do Women Want?* (Bergner, 2013).

Such awareness of the problems of misrecognition and misidentity permeate the deployment of a trans-national feminism that emanates from the North. This is a situation that calls for an unlearning in a greater process

of decolonizing knowledge and sensibilities. Such recognition of misrecognition demands that instead of assuming a seamless continuity between United States feminist scholars and feminist discourses and acts in Latin America, a reflection on epistemological privileges and discontinuities must take place before we move forward assuming unexamined continuities and representations. In this sense I am heartened by Cynthia Tompkins (2008) intervention in the Minnesota debate, for she signals the need to focus on the limits of feminist theory and its insufficiency when it comes to representing subaltern subjectivities, groups and cultures other than the liberal subject of feminism (p. 5). But I am also wary of falling into the essentializing of the Other that occurred with *testimonio* and the sequel of studies in which the other became so preciously different that only a few privileged interpreters could have cautionary access to such otherness. In this case I would recommend a renewed critical self-awareness even in considering the recommendation that feminism move in the direction of human rights, because like all instruments devised by the sovereign subject (Bartolomé de Las Casas in imperial Spain circa 1550), it contains the seeds for misappropriation when not relentlessly and suspiciously examined in all its possible consequences. (For example, the MLA 2006 *Special Human Rights Issue* mentioned aboveleft out the entire Latin American tradition of political and philosophical thinking on Human Rights.)

In this regard I would like to return to Kirstie McClure's (1992) examination of foundational issues in feminist theory because I believe that these foundational problems have remained in feminist thinking and that declarations of a plurality of feminisms has not cleared them up. In "The Issue of Foundations: Scientized Politics, Politicized Science, and Feminist Critical Practice," McClure considers what kinds of epistemological moves could constitute a foundational ground for feminist thinking of the political. She shows that almost all proposals, when critically questioned, become indeterminate (p. 362) and thus affect directly the continuing unsettled state of the struggle for authority in feminist discourse (p. 362). Such a situation is, for McClure, "commensurate with the broader unsettling of the "political" in our time" (p. 362) in which "theories become something rather akin to ideal-type personifications of disciplined political parties, complete with loyal and mutually exclusive memberships as well as distinctive platforms, programs, campaign promises, slogans and the like" (p. 363).

In the face of such epistemological partisanship it is difficult to envision that the feminisms invoked at the meeting in Minnesota could do other than struggle for foundational authority, now on the ground of "human rights,"

and compete for the exclusive right to guide programmatic political practice. McClure (1992) goes on to observe that in these epistemological battles, "*theory* is charged with the task of providing an authoritative foundation for a unified politics capable of effective intervention in the operative dynamics of a social whole" (p. 364). A very similar statement can be made about the task now given to human rights and also to the transnational forces charged with ensuring that the mandates of human rights claims as institutionalized in secular institutions do indeed come to fruition in the realm of the practical. Such a demand on theory, McClure argues, stems from the normative, transformational, explanatory and problem solving figuration of feminism developed within a scientific model. This model of feminism is still attendant in most discussions today and so it is worth quoting from Alison Jaggar's (1983) *Feminist Frameworks*:

> Feminists are people who demonstrate a commitment to improving women's position in society. Feminist frameworks are systems of ideas, conceptual structures that feminists can use in explaining, justifying, and guiding their actions. Typically a feminist framework is a comprehensive analysis of the nature and causes of women's oppression and a correlated set of proposals for ending it. It is an integrated theory of women's place both in contemporary society and in the new society that feminists are struggling to build. (Quoted in McClure, 1992, p. 348)

McClure's critical examination of such normative feminism remarks on the finding made by Sandra Harding (1986) in *The Science Question in Feminism*. Harding states that science is not the ground but rather the question, a proposition that should indeed be put in play when assessing the work of sexology as reported in *What Do women Want?* (Bergner 2013). McClure thus concludes that "if theory is not to be held accountable for the dominant criteria of scientific adequacy, both its capacity to authorize the production of feminist political knowledge and its bearing upon feminist political practice become not questions of epistemological allegiance, but sites of political contestation in the broadest sense" (p. 364). It follows that theory itself is not the guarantor of our desire for foundations and that we inhabit a space and moment of contestation before which the only possible attitude is the making of "breathing room for the articulation of new knowledges … and new configurations of the political" (McClure, 1992, p. 365).

Among the new sites of political contestation are, for instance, the questioning of liberal, post-modern and Marxist feminism that women's discourses positioned elsewhere—Bolivia, Cairo, Algeria—have been

leveling to the brand of United States academic feminism. In his *The Augustian Imperative: A Reflection of the Politics of Morality*, William E. Connolly (1993) examines the dynamics of the invariable congealment of subject positions into sovereign subject positions even in environments suffused with the ethos of plurality. Connolly (1993) investigates the possibility of passing from sites of morality to an ethical sensibility (p. 140), an ethics of cultivation (p. 141), where what is "cultivated is not Law or a categorical imperative, but the possibility of being imperfectly established in institutional practices" (p. 141). This ethical sensibility is based on the development of "competitive relations of agonistic respect" (p. 142), an ethics which to my thinking sustains the possibility of moving beyond the precarious protocols of *testimonio* and the paradoxes of the feminism in the plural. An agonistic subject position guards against the congealment of hegemonic definitions and discourses and as such it is of particular interest for the play of feminisms in the dynamics of a North-South academy where both the object of study and the subject position of the researchers and interpreters of the "culture" at hand are always in flux.

As we look back into the many ways in which theorists have brought the transformation of big feminism into feminism in the plural, the question of positionality plays a significant role as it inquires into the problematics of subject formation and the practices of power knowledge within which we operate. Positing an agonist position—not as novel in Latin America's philosophical tradition as it is for the Anglo-American intellectual milieu—goes a long way in insisting on thoughtful and cautious reflection and preventing the congealment of new hegemonies. Such caution and pause is indispensable in thinking not only about new and old paradigms and how they can lead into blind allies, but it is particularly useful in thinking about cultural heterogeneities that involve unavoidable questions of choice which by themselves come to constitute canons. In conclusion, this paper argues that the pedagogic practices that by themselves necessarily entail canon formation would be well served by three major critical considerations: the problematization of positionality, the problem of truth/power and the plurality of feminism. Without these three major considerations at play all the time, scholars and students run the risk of constructing and adhering to new hegemonies and orthodoxies which by necessity imply uneven power positions imbricated in the play of knowledges and pedagogies.

NOTES

[1] Josephine Donovan's (2012) *Feminist Theory: The Intellectual Traditions* is now in it's forth edition—a fact which attests to its solid position and positive reception in gender studies. Catherine Simpson (2012), one of the pioneer theorist and activists in the various

waves of feminism that the U.S. academy has seen, endorses Donovan's book. Simpson, on the back cover of the book, states that it is a "superbly intelligent, lucid guide to one of the great movements of the modern world." For references to feminist scholars, movements and theories I refer readers to this book for the purposes of the discussion in these pages. It is important to note that Donovan divides feminism's temporal line into eight sections, but these moments or movements do not include an "aftermath." In Donovan's temporal line feminism starts with the Enlightenment, it then moves through respective chapters on Marxist, Freudian, Existential and Radical phases to recapitulate with one chapter dedicated to the twentieth century and cultural feminism and another dedicated to the twenty first century, the latter centered on gynocentrism and ecofeminism.

[2] See Judith Butler, "Is Kinship Always Already Heterosexual?" (2004). Here Butler argues that gay and lesbian marriage—the couple—forecloses a radical critique of the family that could put forth other social formations and kinship arrangements as possible futures.

[3] In Part II of *On Populist Reason* (pp. 129–156) Laclau deals extensively with his derridian reading of Marxist theory and Marxism movements in the twentieth century with special reference to the process of transformation of significations that he calls the empty signifier. Taking the push for democratic demands made by the Italian Communist party during the 1940s and1950s that in the end made it less autonomous(129), he writes that in the case of the Italian demands which were always political any way, the "*Same* democratic demands receive[d] the structural pressure of *rival* hegemonic projects. This generates an autonomy of the popular signifiers different from the one we have considered so far. It is no longer that the particularism of the demand becomes self-sufficient and independent of any equivalent articulation, but that its meaning is indeterminate between alterative equivalent frontiers. I shall call these signifiers whose meaning is 'suspended' in that way floating signifiers" (p. 131). See Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason* (London: Verson, 2005).

[4] See "The Zeal World" by Michelle Boorstein. *The Washington Post*. Metro Section: C6-8. Sunday, September 1, 2013.

[5] Jean Bethke-Elshtein (1941–2013) was a political scientist, philosopher ethicist and professor at the University of Chicago who published extensively on topics related to women, family, politics and ethics and was also significant for her public role as a woman intellectual.

[6] Domitila Barrios de Chungara (1937–2012) was a Bolivian labor leader and feminist. In 1975 she participated in the International Women's Year Tribune put on by the United Nations in Mexico and spoke passionately about lack of diverse representations of women's experience in the international Feminist movement.

[7] For the interventions by Cynthia Tompkins, Hernán Vidal and Jean Franco at the Conference held at the University of Minnesota in the Spring of 2007, see *Hispanic Issue on Line*, Fall 2008.

[8] On the problematic of Western feminism and its limited capacity for understanding women's religious movements in Islam see Saba Mahmood (2005), *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and Feminist Subjectivity*.

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II.

NEW CANONS, NEW READINGS IN THE CLASSROOM

NÚRIA SILLERAS-FERNÁNDEZ

3. *CADA MAESTRILLO TIENE SU LIBRILLO*

Personal Reflections on Teaching Gender through Medieval Iberian Texts

The popular Spanish saying "Every teacher has his own textbook," is a recognition that each person has her own way of thinking and acting, every "teacher" has her own way of rationalizing, of seeing, doing, and explaining things. This could not be more true for educators today. Teaching is a personal exercise that is rooted in a set of factors: the curriculum requirements of any given program and institution, along with the goals, and worldview of the professor, who is in constant negotiation with a young, diverse, and ever-evolving audience—the students. Added to this, we have to be conscious of the fact that the socialization of gender is in one way or another reinforced in the classroom by our course content, the dynamics within the class, and by the personal example we give as professors. In our postcolonial present—or even, as some would say, our "post-feminist" present (Castro Klarén, 2015; McRobbie, 2006)—teaching gender is as inevitable as it is essential, although it is not necessarily a topic that students feel immediately attracted to. As Toril Moi (2006) observed, since the 90s feminism in the US (where I teach) has become somewhat discredited in the eyes of the new generations, becoming "the unspeakable F-word."

The study of gender discourse, of discursive strategies regarding gender, and of the social and cultural construction of femininity and masculinity are part of my research and teaching, and they are all strongly present in the medieval texts that comprise, for the most part, the literature I teach. Medieval society was patriarchal and highly masculine, and this shows through both in the texts, and in the fact that most of the authors concerned were male: either clergymen, noblemen, or officials of the administration, secretaries and *escribanos* (scribes and copyists) associated with some sort of court, usually royal or nobiliary (Gómez Bravo, 2013, pp. 28–32). Some of these writers demonstrate clearly misogynistic points of view, and manifest a strong anxiety as regards femininity and women's agency. There were, of course, also female authors, although for a long time these have been excluded from the canon, notwithstanding the quality or importance of

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their work. Leonor López de Córdoba (c. 1362–1420), for example (a woman who I like to teach), wrote the first-ever autobiography in Spanish, a text that covers only part of her life and is so short that is easy to add to any syllabus on medieval literature, culture, or history. Another female author of great interest is Isabel de Villena (1430–90), a Clarissan nun and abbess, who wrote a *Vita Christi* in Catalan, in which she gave the Virgin Mary, rather than Jesus Christ, center stage. After Isabel's death, her successor as abbess, Aldonça de Montsoriu, added a prologue and concluding note. This work was then published in 1497 at the request of Isabel the Catholic, queen of Castile in her own right and queen-consort of Aragon, for the enjoyment of Aldonça's community of nuns and any others who might read it. Given the multi-layered female agency involved in its production, this Marian work has been considered by scholars a "feminist text *par excellence*" (Cantavella & Parra, 1987, p. vii; Twomey, 2013, p. 22).[1]

Patrons also played an important role in literature and culture in the Middle Ages. The relationship between authors and their patrons, or would-be patrons was often close and bilateral. Authors often tailored their works to the specific, real or imagined needs of their patrons, who could also bring their influence to bear on various aspects of the creative process (Silleras-Fernández, 2015). It was not rare for medieval women to sponsor the production of literature, and thereby, not only leave their own imprint on the texts, but also contribute to the dissemination of culture and the development of taste. This was often the case among those ladies of the upper nobility and royalty who married outside their kingdoms, and who contributed to the cross-pollination of culture by taking their literary predilections and courtiers with them to the court of their husbands.[2] Such exchanges were particularly significant before the introduction of the printing press (which occurred in Iberia around 1470)—a time when books were relatively rare and expensive objects that were copied by hand and disseminated through networks of readers who exchanged them, recommended them, or ordered their own copies made. Therefore, to fully understand a medieval text it is important to take into account the context of its production and the relationship between a non-professional author, who was often writing with the express intention of obtaining patronage from a person, an institution, or a person representing an institution, and the intended audience.

I believe that exploring what it meant to be female or male in the Middle Ages, and how this changed over time, across the different cultural-linguistic traditions, and among the various ethno-religious communities of Iberia, and how it relates to culture and identity, are fundamental matters to

consider when teaching medieval texts whether at the undergraduate or graduate level. Thus, what follows are some personal reflections regarding pedagogy and gender. For the sake of brevity in this chapter I will limit my discussion to a few general principles that I consider essential. In the first part of the chapter I will reflect on the theoretical and geographical framing of the texts I select while teaching gender, and how it relates to the canon. In the second part I will discuss how historicizing gender performativity, and analyzing the relationship between authors, patrons, and audiences enables us to better grasp the ideas embodied in the texts. I will explore these aspects by briefly examining a particular late medieval text, Martín de Córdoba's *Jardín de nobles doncellas* (Garden for Noble Maidens), considering how gender is constructed in it.

FRAMING GENDER: IBERIAN AND MEDITERRANEAN STUDIES

Medieval Iberia was a complex socio-political space that contained a shifting array of independent and interdependent principalities. Some of these territories extended far beyond the peninsula, and all of them emerged, expanded, collapsed, and combined in a continuous process of conflict and evolution. For instance, the Crown of Aragon, a dynastic aggregate that combined the Kingdoms of Aragon, Valencia, Mallorca, and the Principality of Catalonia, also included at various times lands in what is now France (Montpellier and Corsica), Italy (Naples, Sicily, and Sardinia), Tunisia (Djerba), and Greece (the Duchy of Athens and Neopatria)—constituting what has been referred to as a "Mediterranean empire."[3] Needless to say, this geo-political extension had tremendous cultural implications for the Crown of Aragon, a polity that cannot merely be described as "part of Spain." Many languages were spoken and written in the Crown of Aragon; but in Iberia, polyglossia was more a norm than an exception. Many writers, knew, and even wrote in more than one language. For example, for some time Castilians preferred to compose lyric in Galician-Portuguese instead of Castilian (Spanish). Alfonso X the Learned (r. 1252–84), King of Castile, for instance, composed his famous *Cántigas de Santa María* in Galician-Portuguese, whereas he chose the Castilian vernacular when it came to setting down his dynastic history, the *Primera crónica general*. He also promoted the use of Castilian, instead of Latin, in the royal chancery, while at the same time promoting the translation of Arabic-language literature into both Latin and the vernacular. Similarly, prior to the time of Ausiàs March (c. 1397–1459) Catalan poets preferred to compose their verses in Occitan, even though Catalan (including Valencian and Mallorcan) had been well-established as a literary language by the

thirteenth century, as exemplified by prolific figures such as Ramon Llull (c. 1235–1315) and later on by writers such as Anselm Turmeda (1325–1423). As had been the case with Castilian, the native vernacular here was seen as a language suitable for prose, but not poetry. Aragonese, another of the Crown of Aragon's vernacular languages, was not only used in the documents of the catalano-aragonese royal chancery, but also enjoyed its own sort of Golden Age in the fourteenth century, exemplified by the writer of Juan Fernández de Heredia (c. 1310–96). The picture gets even more complicated if we take into account peninsular texts written in Latin, Arabic, and Hebrew—this being the European region with the most numerous communities of Muslims and Jews at this time.

In Medieval Iberia not only do we encounter texts written in a variety of languages; sometimes the same authors wrote in several languages. The Rabbi Shem Tov ben Isaac Ardutiel of Carrión (known in Spanish as Santob de Carrión), for example, wrote his *Consejos y documentos al rey don Pedro*, better known as *Proverbios morales* (c. 1350), in Castilian, while he composed other texts, like his *Debate entre el cálamo y las tijeras* (1345), in Hebrew (Ross, 2008, pp. 181–203). Pere Torroella (c. 1420–92), not only wrote in Catalan and Castilian, but also adapted forms of the Occitano/Catalan misogynistic tradition to the Castilian verse in his *Maldezir de mujeres* (Archer, 2005, pp. 170–184). A figure like Toroella can provide us with a "teaching moment" to address the linguistic and cultural complexity of Iberia while discussing gender roles and misogyny. Nor were he and Sem Tob the only authors who adopted a literary form from one linguistic tradition and adapted it to another. This can be observed even in canonical works such as Don Juan Manuel's *El Conde Lucanor*, which is an adaptation of the Andalusi frame-tale (Wacks, 2006b, p. 89). Similarly, the *Libro de buen amor* by the Arcipreste de Hita, and Jaume Roig's *Spill*—the latter being a cruel and humorous critique of feminine nature composed in Catalan in 1460—are only two examples of adaptations of the Arabic or Hebrew *maqama* genre (Hamilton 2007, p. 103; Monroe, 2011, pp. 50–57; Wacks, 2006a, pp. 597–598).

In addition, there is also the matter of *aljamiado* texts; works that provide further testimony to the hybrid nature of peninsular culture. These texts used the Arabic or (less commonly) Hebrew alphabets to write in Romance vernacular, and therefore do not fall into a single linguistic-cultural category. They provide another pedagogical opportunity—not only by bringing non-Christian voices into the curriculum, but also for teaching gender. An excellent Morisco text that can be used in this way is "La doncella Arcollana or Carcayona." This story, which recounts the prosecution and sorrows that the female protagonist endures, can serve as a

jumping off point for considering gender construction, as well as an allegory of the prosecution of the Moriscos, and the importance of remaining steadfast in one's faith (Valero Cuadra, 2000, pp. 145, 137–240). For teaching, I recommend using a modernized version of the shorter story, written by a Morisco in Tunis, c. 1613 (Valero Cuadra, 2000, pp. 521–530).

In a reversal of the trends described above, there were Portuguese and Catalan authors from the mid-late fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries who preferred to write in Castilian instead of in their native languages, or who wrote in both (Buescu, 2004, pp. 13–14; Mendes de Almeida, 2004, pp. 901–905). The attraction that Castilian held at this time in Portugal is a function of the importance of patronage and the increasing importance of the Spanish aristocracy in the Lusitanian court. The Castilianization of the royal courts across the peninsula began with the Catholic Kings (r. 1474–1516), and continued under Charles V (r. 1516–58). It was reinforced by the continuous marriages that interwove the dynasties of Castile and Portugal in the medieval and the early modern periods.[4] In other words, this was an era in which Castilian became the dominant language of the court and aristocracy, into whose good graces and entourages, authors hope to enter—so the authors wrote in Castilian.

Finally, we need to consider the role that translation and translated extra-Peninsular literature had in this period, and how we can incorporate translated literature into the complex Iberian literary polysystem (Even-Zohar (1990, p. 45). A translated text that I like to teach while discussing gender, and one that was well known in contemporary Iberia, is the final tale of Boccaccio's *Decameron* (1353). "Griselda" was originally composed in Italian, but became very well known in Europe thanks to Petrarch's translation of it into Latin. The tale's eponymous protagonist is a paragon of spousal obedience and patience—a Job-like figure to the Jehovah of her husband, Gualtieri, Marques of Saluzzo, who marries her and, because he desires a totally obedient spouse, tests her in very cruel ways to assure himself that she is completely subservient. For instance, Gualtieri tells her that he has killed their first-born child, a daughter, and their second-born, a son. The fact that this is a lie, and that Gualtieri has merely hidden the children away is irrelevant—what is important is that in her submissiveness Griselda is willing to put her husband even before the lives of her children. At the conclusion of his cruel experiment, Gualtieri tells her that he is going to annul their marriage in order to marry a bride of higher status than the low-born Griselda. When the bride, a twelve-year-old girl, arrives at the palace, and Griselda is forced to wait on her, her only reaction is to wish the couple well in their upcoming marriage. It is at this point that Gualtieri reveals that all of Griselda's tribulations were merely a

test, and that the young bride-to-be is, in fact, the daughter he had pretended to kill but had secretly sent away. Both children are reunited with Griselda, and Gualtieri is now satisfied because he has a wife who will obey his every whim and desire without protest or resistance. This tale was widely translated and adapted, and in Iberia it was incorporated into the *Castigos and doctrinas que un padre daba a sus hijas* (*Punishments and Morals that a Wiseman Gave to his Daughters*), an anonymous Castilian moralizing text composed in the mid-fifteenth century. Previously (ca. 1388), it had been translated into Catalan by Bernat Metge, as *Valter e Griselda* (Krueger, 2009, p. xxii; Campbell, 2003, pp. 191–216). In the case of this story, the content of the tale, its popular success, and the ways it was adapted by Iberian authors, offer many pedagogical opportunities.

Thus, in the case of Iberia, the nation-state model of a uniform culture, as constructed in the nineteenth century and conceived of on a philological level as focused on a handful of peninsular Castilian texts broadly accepted as canonical by scholars and teachers, is anachronistic, and does not reflect the literary or cultural reality of the Middle Ages (Dagenais, 2005, pp. 39–40). Nevertheless the nation-state remains strongly seductive as a paradigm. It continues to be the dominant form of cultural identity and political organization today, and still informs the structure of national language and literature departments. This not only represents a distortion of history, but a failure of pedagogy; we should be deliberately on guard against narrow Castilianocentric views of early Spanish literature. By Iberianizing our frame of reference not only when we teach gender, but also when we teach the peninsular literature of the Middle Ages in general, we will not only serve our students better, but will more accurately capture the spirit of the age (Hamilton & Silleras, 2014, pp. ix–xiii; Menocal, 2006, p. 8; Resina, 2009). It should be obvious to us in our own era of globalization, transnationalism, and Oceanic studies, that we need to consider alternative constructs to the nation, and that one of these that we can bring to the classroom when we teach Medieval Spanish literature and gender is the broader Iberian frame, not to mention even wider perspectives, whether European, Mediterranean, or global. Indeed, out of these, the Mediterranean is particularly appropriate for researching and teaching a whole range of aspects of Iberian literature and culture (Kinoshita, 2009, pp. 600–608; Catlos, 2015, p. 3). One can see Iberian Studies and Mediterranean Studies as complimentary, with the later providing an alternative to Europe as conceptual and comparative framework—one that is of great use not only for research, but for teaching too.

For the scholar and teacher, reframing the study of medieval Spanish literature and culture in this way, and selecting and preparing representative texts can appear a daunting task, and tends to take one out of her comfort zone, forcing her to consider languages and traditions other than Castilian and that she may not be familiar with. And because one needs to work with original texts, it means that both students and teachers will need to work using translations or multilingual editions.[5] Translation, of course, has limitations and problems, and to some extent every translation is also a reinterpretation of a work; but this is a challenge that we can treat not as an obstacle, but as an opportunity for exploring the problems associated with translation and illustration of the acculturative trends that such a teaching strategy must address. As Venuti (1996) put it, a translation is the "reconstruction of the foreign text in accordance with values, beliefs and representation that pre-exist in the target language … [and] serves as an appropriation of foreign cultures for domestic agendas, cultural, economic, political" (p. 196). Although we certainly should emphasize using original language texts in our teaching, including a few translations, whether complete or fragments, over the long course of a semester can enrich a course, from my point of view. Moreover, through translation we have the possibility of including not only the voice of other "national" communities, but of religious minorities, who had their own literary traditions and ways of understanding society and the role of men and women. Thus, I try not to only teach gender as it is portrayed in works authored by female and male Christian Castilian authors, but also by authors associated with other Iberian linguistic traditions. For example, I often teach the debate on gender as it appears in Bernat Metge's *Lo Somni* (*The Dream*), a work written in Catalan, c. 1397, in which the author's fictionalized avatar and the blind Greek prophet, Tiresias, engage a clever debate on the nature of women (Archer, 2005, pp. 90–132; Butiña, 2007). Likewise, I use *El collar de la paloma* (*Tawq al-hamamah*, or *The Dove's Neck-Ring*; c. 1022), a work written in Arabic by Ibn Hazm of Córdoba, to discuss gender, love, and sexuality. Teaching these texts alongside canonical Castilian masterpieces such as el *Cantar de Mio Cid*, *Los siete infantes de Lara*, or Manrique's *Las coplas a la muerte de su padre* (all excellent texts for teaching masculinity), or alongside the *Libro de buen amor*, or works by *Converso* authors, such as Teresa de Cartagena's *La arboleda de los enfermos*, San Pedro's *Cárcel de amor*, or Fernando de Rojas's *La Celestina*, enriches students' understanding of the literature and the culture of the period, and of how gender and gender roles were constructed and understood.

HISTORICIZING GENDER PERFORMATIVITY

At this point I would like to turn to the example of a text that I have made use of in my classes: Martín de Córdoba's *Jardín de nobles doncellas*—a work that illuminates gender performativity in the Middle Ages, and provides an opportunity to show how historicizing a text can be an effective strategy for analyzing and appreciating it. The *Jardín* is a *speculum principum*, a "mirror of princes," or book of advice (in this case for a princess). Today, scholars consider this a "minor genre," but didactic/ conduct literature was, in fact, very popular and highly regarded in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period. Texts like the *Jardín* tend to be left out of the teaching canon, which as a manifestation of nineteenth century literary criticism, didn't take into consideration what was read and appreciated in the time period in question, but rather what these later scholars considered to be fundamental or essential works (Whinnom 96). Books like the *Jardín* provide a means for us explore the connection between literary texts and their practical application, and to differentiate between those ideas and habits that were prescriptive, as opposed to those that were descriptive, and the tension between each of these. These types of texts tend to be highly practical, especially those that were intended for the education of women, and are illustrated with many exemplary figures and episodes.

The Augustinian friar, Martín de Córdoba, composed the *Jardín* in Castilian in 1468 for the young Isabel (the future Isabel the Catholic), presenting himself in the text as a worthy counselor to the princess, and seeking her future patronage, while giving her very precise advice regarding women's nature and how she should behave. At that point Isabel was an unmarried seventeen-year-old, and was the most likely candidate to inherit the Castilian crown. A daughter of Juan II of Castile, she was the half-sister of the present king, Enrique IV, whose only child, Juana "la Beltraneja," was widely regarded as the product of an adulterous liaison of his wife and the royal favorite. Martín de Córdoba was banking on Isabel succeeding to the throne, and in his work he acknowledges her right to inherit (and by implication, Juana's illegitimacy). That said, he is concerned by the fact that she is a woman, and therefore feels he must provide her with a guide to deal with this fact and to counter her feminine debilities. Two complimentary solutions are proposed: Isabel should marry well and let her husband take to rule her kingdoms, and she should work on perfecting herself as an individual. This latter task is to be achieved by becoming more masculine, on the rationale that men are superior to women.

Gender, according to Judith Butler (1990), "is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time—an identity instituted through a stylized repetition of acts." (p. 97) In the text, Martín assumes a performative approach common among medieval writers: "Pues la Señora, aunque es hembra por naturaleza, trabaje por ser varón en virtud y así haga bien que no se ensalce por vanagloria, mas que abaje por humildad" ("So, the Lady, although she may be female by nature, can strive to be male in virtue, and so she would do better no to puff herself up in vainglory, but rather, bow in humility") (p. 107). Furthermore, Martín insists, Isabel should do this because being a princess implies becoming a mirror for her subjects: "E si esta conjugación han de hacer todas la mujeres, mucho más la princesa, que es más que mujer y en cuerpo mujeril debe traer ánimo varonil" ("And if all women ought to strive for such a synthesis, a princess needs to all the more, given that she is more than a mere woman, and she ought to carry a masculine soul in her feminine body") (p. 87). Martín de Córdoba's *speculum* could certainly be read by women of any social class, but it was intended specifically for the young Isabel, and presented her as a meta-gendered being, a virago: "la princesa, que es más que mujer y en cuerpo mujeril tiene que tener ánimo varonil" ("she is much more than a woman and in her feminine body needs to have a manly spirit") (p. 87). And if, as Martín de Córdoba points out, women tend to talk too much, Isabel must learn to contain herself. If women lack constancy, Isabel had to learn to be steadfast and show fortitude. Through these efforts she may become a more virtuous lady, the closer she gets to the masculine model (p. 87).

In 1469, a year after the composition of the *Jardín*, Isabel married her cousin, Fernando (Ferran) II of Aragon, and together they ascended the throne of Castile in 1474, and that of Aragon in 1479. Their path to power was not easy, and the consolidation of their position was only possible after winning a civil war against the deceased king's heir, Juana. In the event, Isabel and Fernando went on to become the most famous and esteemed of Spanish rulers, and in 1496, Pope Alexander VI (1492–1503) bestowed on them the honorific title "The Catholic Kings."[6] Their reign has traditionally been considered a turning point in the history of Spain, marked by the dynastic unification of the two largest kingdoms, the end of the "Reconquest" with the fall of Granada, the establishment of the Spanish Inquisition, the expulsion of the Jews, and the launching of Columbus's voyages of discovery.

And their marriage was, in effect, a true partnership. Historians have always acknowledged the important role Isabel played in the government; she was not a mere figurehead, but a ruling monarch. Their motto, "Tanto

monta, monta tanto, Isabel como Fernando" ("Isabel and Fernando, they amount to the same"), reflects the balance of power that characterized their relationship.[7] In fact, their chronicler, Fernando del Pulgar, described them as "a single will that inhabited two bodies" (Perez, 2003, p. 155). Hence, their reign clearly challenges common assumptions regarding the nature of medieval monarchy, and provides further evidence that rulership and kingship were not synonymous, and that, while monarchical power may have usually centered on a king, it was shared by other members of his family—most clearly, the queen (Earenfight, 2007, pp. 1–10; Silleras-Fernandez, 2015, pp. 5–7). Thus, Isabel's real life challenges idealizing works like the *Jardín de nobles doncellas*—a work that was written for her, and which advised her to step down in favor of her husband, but which she chose to ignore. In fact medieval women—particularly aristocratic women—had far more agency than either contemporary didactic works or modern historians have tended to credit them with. And this is why, perhaps, that for all his flattery, Martín de Córdoba never became part of the close circle of Isabel the Catholic, as he sought. His advice was clearly not considered worth taking.

In any case, Martín de Córdoba recognized Isabel's right to become queen, and as Guardiola-Griffiths (2011) has pointed out, the fact that the *Jardín* was printed in 1500, most likely at the initiative of Isabel and Fernando, indicates that the text could be seen as a useful instrument (p. 18). In this case, it could serve as a tool for the education and legitimization of another female ruler, Isabel's daughter, Juana, who was her mother's successor to the throne of Castile. The fact that Isabel became such a powerful queen provoked what Weissberger (2004) called "anxious masculinity" (pp. xiv–xvi), and this tension shows through in the work of those male authors who had no hope of controlling Isabel in real life, and so endeavored to contol her through the medium of their texts. Martín de Córdoba is just one of the many who tried and failed.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, there are many ways of teaching gender construction through medieval texts, and what I have presented are just a few modest reflexions regarding some elements that I consider important. In my opinion it is always rewarding to teach gender by opening up the canon to include texts written by male and female authors who belonged to different ethno-religious communities and who wrote in the other peninsular languages, because this enriches students' understanding of the complexity of medieval Spanish literature and gender, and is both more faithful to the past

and closer to our multicultural and globalized present. This is particularly necessary in the case of the Middle Ages, which students tend to learn of informally only through the distorting lens of movies and popular culture. This approach can help students understand that texts need to be historicized, not merely read, and that the reception of the texts by multiple audiences is also important. In fact, the intellectual exercise involved in revealing a very old text, as a "new" text, and analyzing how a remote and foreign society concieved of and constructed gender, femininity, masculinity, sexuality, the body, and feminism, can help students to think not only about a foreign past, but also about their own present, and how their own society and culture treats the same issues. Moreover, thanks to the energy of literary scholars over the last decades, there is now such a wealth of little-tapped non-canonical texts at our disposal that, as teachers, we have great latitude in practical terms to find works that can allow us to tease out those themes we find most interesting and important. It is through the use of such texts and the construction of a more broadly conceived canon that every teacher really can have her own textbook.

NOTES

1. Twomey (2013) qualified Sor Isabel de Villena as "the most important woman author in late medieval Spain (p. 2). For an edition in Catalan, see Hauf (1995), and for an English version, see the selection translated by Hughes (2013).
2. A very clear example of these dynamics can be seen in Violant de Bar (c. 1365–1431), queen-consort of Joan I of Aragon (r. 1387–96), a native of France who can be credited with encouraging the introduction of French Literature into the Crown of Aragon (Cortijo Ocaña, 1998, pp. 7–20; de Riquer, 1989, pp. 115–126; 1994, pp. 161–173; Bratsch-Prince, 2002).
3. In fact, the Crown of Aragon's political structure meets Horden and Purcell's (2000) definition of Mediterranean characteristics: it was a fragmented aggregate of distinct, independent but interrelated, political, economic and cultural units, fundamentally demarcated by their relationship to the sea (Horden & Purcell, 2000, pp. 10–15). See also Hillgarth (1975), who argues against the conceiving of the Crown of Aragon as a "Catalan empire" in this time period.
4. Garcia Péres's (1890) catalogue of Portuguese authors writing in Castilian includes more than six hundred authors and thousands of works. See also Martínez Almoyna and Vieira de Lemos.
5. In the last few years, several bilingual and multilingual editions and translations that are very useful for teaching have been published. For example, Bernat Metge's *Lo Somni* has appeared in a bilingual edition Catalan/Spanish, and translated to English (Butiña; Vernier). Francomano has published a bilingual edition (Spanish/English) of three Castilian *querelle* texts by Pere Torrelles and Juan de Flores. For poetry, see Barletta (2013) and Alvar (2009); the latter, *Locus amoenus* is an anthology of medieval poetry written in Latin, Arabic, Hebrew, Mozarabic, Provenzal, Galician-Portuguese, Castilian, and Catalan. These are just a few examples.

[6] In the bull “Si convenit” (19 December 1496) the Pope granted them the title of “Catholic Kings” (Saraiva, 2011, p. xxxiv).

[7] For a discussion of the meaning of this motto and the symbols associated with Isabel and Ferdinand, see Weissberger (2004, pp. 51–52), Guardiola-Griffiths (2011, p. 16), and González Iglesias (1994).

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VANESA MISERES

4. "THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL"

Teaching Gender and Nation through Nineteenth-Century Texts

"The personal is political" was a political slogan frequently used by feminists from the late 1960s and 1970s—the so-called second wave—who expanded the suffrage concern of the first wave to a wide range of issues such as sexuality, family, the workplace, or reproductive rights. The cry was popularized in 1970 when American feminist Carol Hanisch (1970) published her renowned essay "The Personal is Political," which appeared in the anthology *Notes from the Second Year: Women's Liberation*. Although she is sometimes credited for coining the phrase, her essay was simply an explanation of an idea that already existed and questioned the traditional ideological notion of separate spheres. Presuming that men and women are inherently different, this ideology contributed to gender inequalities by dictating that only men were entitled to inhabit the public space, while women were confined to the private realm of domestic life.

In the context of the formation of several feminist movements in the United States, Hanisch's (1970) essay was a response to those factions who criticized the initiative of women getting together in consciousness-raising groups to discuss their own oppression and judged it as "personal therapy" (n.p.), that is to say, for not proposing any "political" action such as protests to approach and solve women's problems. To Hanisch, this opposition between what was considered "personal" and "political" was inapplicable, since consciousness-raising was a form of political action to inspire discussion about such topics as women's relationships, their roles in marriage, and their feelings about childbearing (Hanisch, 1970). In other words, Hanisch called for a redefinition of the "personal" and "private" domains as matters of public concern and "as sites of power which need discursive legitimation" (Landes, 1988, p. 77).

In Latin America, interest in assigning the private and the personal—zones still persistently conceived as female domains—political and historical dimensions resurface in the contemporary context of the bicentennial celebrations of independence. On July 14, 2009, President Cristina Fernández granted Lieutenant Colonel Juana Azurduy (1780–

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1862) a posthumous promotion to the rank of general. Azurduy was a patriotic mestizo woman who fought in the independence wars of Upper Peru, a region which included Argentina, Bolivia, and Peru, alongside her husband, Commandant Manuel Ascencio Padilla, and founded her own armed independence movement against the Spanish forces following his death (Guardia, 2002, p. 47). In March of the same year, Cristina Fernández also inaugurated the "Hall of the Bicentennial Argentine Women," honoring the contributions of several women like the above mentioned Juana Azurduy, Eva Perón, Mariquita Sánchez de Thompson, and the Madres de Plaza de Mayo, among others, to the Argentine nation. Fernández, who started addressing many of her public speeches from that room, expressed that it had been built with the intention of creating "in the most emblematic space of political power in Argentina (the Casa Rosada), a permanent place for women, a place that we have conquered but in which our presence still faces strong resistance" (Fernández, 2009).

Two years earlier, Ecuadorian president Rafael Correa had also granted a posthumous promotion to the rank of general to another revolutionary woman, Manuela Sáenz (1797–1856), who fought beside Simón Bolívar (1783–1830) in the liberation forces, and saved his life more than once. Correa's promotion was granted as part of the commemoration of the anniversary of the 1822 Battle of Pichincha, in which the Quito-born heroine fought (Márquez, 2009). On July 6th, 2010, former president of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez, honored Sáenz for her great courage and independence and considered her to be one of the country's first feminists. Chavez called her the "Mother of the Nation" at the commemoration of the arrival of her symbolic remains to Caracas that year.

Fernández in Argentina, Correa in Ecuador, and Chávez in Venezuela have echoed the growing awareness of the need to revise established perspectives on Latin American history and make room for the development of a gender focus that emphasizes women's roles in both the struggles for independence and the processes of nation-state formation that followed. Although official historiography has often obscured or even erased female involvement in the confrontations for independence and in the political life of their societies, their participation is ultimately undeniable. Taking everyday life as their predominant sphere of action, women were always at the center of historical events in the 18th and 19th centuries that led to the establishment of Spanish-American nations. As the examples of Juana Azurduy and Manuela Sáenz show, in those patriarchal societies that excluded them from the legal-political sphere (Davies, Brewster, & Owen, 2006, p. 20), women nevertheless had a vital presence assuming not only supporting, non-combative roles such as fundraising and

caring for the sick and wounded, but also donned military uniforms and fought bravely on the battlefield and as part of guerrilla campaigns.[1]

In the aftermath of independence, women were expected to return to their traditional and proper spheres as wives and mothers. Nevertheless, they demonstrated a great capacity for participation in political life and insurrection movements throughout the first quarter of the century. For instance, upper and middle class Creole women made use of their homes to organize and host *tertulias* or *veladas*, socio-cultural gatherings in which political discussions were grounded. That is the case of Mariquita Sánchez de Thompson (1786–1868), who held pro-independence *tertulias* at her home in Buenos Aires and later during her exile in Montevideo. In the second half of the 19th century, exiled Argentine writer Juana Manuela Gorriti also hosted *tertulias* at her home in Lima, Peru, which contributed to the formation of an intellectual network and the distribution of literary and political news throughout the continent. Fashionable and mostly well-educated men and women attended these salons, such as Ricardo Palma and Manuel González Prada, Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera, Clorinda Matto de Turner, and Teresa González de Fanning. Redefining Benedict Anderson's argument, Sarah Chambers (2004) proposes that emerging concepts of the nation as "imagined communities … were rooted in the social interactions of these smaller but more tangible communities of writers, readers, conversationalists, and political conspirators" (p. 60). Thus, conversations at the *tertulias*, as well as correspondences between women, offered them "a way of acting politically," operating "as potential mediators in the increasingly fractionalized politics of the early republics" (Chambers, 2004, pp. 60–61).

Despite their contributions to the most relevant events of theirs societies, women's social and legal status remained unchanged regardless of race or class. Contradictions abounded in countries where constitutions promoted theoretical equality, qualified male suffrage, and abolition of slavery but denied women emancipation (Sánchez Korrol, 1999, p. 864). The family and women's place within it continued to be regarded as the pillar of society. Even the first steps toward female education were intended to strengthen women's primary role within the context of the family, as reproductive mechanisms bearing the new nation's future generations and transmitters of moral values and culture (Masiello, 1992, pp. 53–54). By the middle of the century, women started turning their attention to their own emancipation, demanding their rightful place in their nations. Besides, many Creole male intellectuals like Domingo Faustino Sarmiento in Argentina sought female education as an essential factor for national progress.[2]

With an increasing level of education, women writers moved beyond the interstitial spheres of salons and letters to become more visible and active within Latin American *lettered cities* (Rama, 1984), and the proliferation of print culture gradually opened up new spaces for their literary production. Their writings appeared in journals and newspapers and often dealt with deep-seated civic concerns, reflecting a strong commitment of women to the project of nation building. They also founded and directed their own publications where female writers could debate ideas, learned about others' works, and found a sympathetic source of publication. At a time when women had little or no public voice, print culture and literature were virtually the only forums for their concerns—women started experimenting more assiduously with novels, short stories, and essays.

In sum, the 19th century represents a period in Latin American history fundamental to the study of the interrelationship between the public and the private spaces as well as the centrality of gender in the ideological and discursive constructions of Latin American nations (Davies, Brewster, and Owen, 2006, p. 4). Interrogations about how and under what kind of principles gender roles and national territory were envisioned are basic inquiries in contemporary society and therefore constitute an extremely rich period to be analyzed and discussed within a literature classroom. While gender, as a theoretical concept, has been variously contested, explored, and expanded upon, relatively little has been written on the pedagogical issues it raises for teachers of Latin American literature. Considering that the act of teaching defines itself in a particular context and according to the subjects involved, this essay offers specific tools to fill this pedagogical gap and provides a description of, as well as some practical suggestions for, the development of a literature course focused on gender in the context of the nation debate during 19th century Latin America.

GENDER IN PRACTICE

Because the term "gender" is broad, there are multiple approaches to teaching gender, engaging several theoretical preoccupations. As Ferrebe and Tolan (2012) state, the rise of second-wave feminism and the concomitant development of a feminist theory can be thought of as the origin of many gender-based analyses in undergraduate programs in the United States, usually within Women's Studies, History, and Literature courses (pp. 1–2). The contribution and influence of postmodern theorists such as Judith Butler provided a framework to think of both gender and sex as socially constructed and opened up the field to Queer Studies and LGBT Studies as well as to many other interdisciplinary approaches to the study

of the roles of gender and sexuality in culture and politics across the world. But teaching gender for a Spanish program, where most of the course requirements aim to cover a limited range of texts or a specific number of periods/regional areas, still represents a challenge.

The objective of the course proposed herein is to offer an alternative to traditional and exclusively canon-focused literature courses that stands to "enrich the curriculum by offering alternative perspectives on familiar topics as well as new texts by a hitherto nearly unrepresented segment of the population" (Winn, 2011, p. 3). My primary interest is to incorporate women writers, journalists, and activists from the proposed period and to explore through their writings other expressions and opinions of social relationships, family, and the nation-state. The course could also concentrate or integrate topics such as homoeroticism, homosexuality, and other gender-related manifestations that call into question the normativity that canonical texts usually propose.

A gendered analysis of Latin American culture and literature can bring into the classroom a broad and diverse perspective on Latin American culture more representative of its diversity. By exploring the interplay between gender and political culture through the analysis of a wider corpus of cultural expressions from the 19th century—one that includes visual culture, journal articles, letters, etc.—and by confronting them with contemporary artistic works, students develop an understanding of the concepts of gender and nation as discursive constructions constantly in development and will also become aware of the interconnections between these discourses and the ongoing debates on the complex identities of Latin Americans, not to mention their own complex identities.

The title I gave the course is *Gender and Nation in 19th Century Latin America* (abbreviated henceforth as *Gender and Nation*); it is that simple for a reason. I wanted to clearly state that the notions of gender and nation will be the class organizers and that all the readings and discussions will be made through these dual lenses. The class approach is intended to demonstrate how literature and culture from the period usually portrayed nations as masculine public spaces creating a problematic situation for women who sought active participation into the newly emergent or already existing nation. Although this course was primarily developed around the nature of the woman-nation relationship, it is not solely about women. The study of "womanhood," as well as "manhood," as relational categories will allow us to raise questions on other related concepts such as race, class, colonialism, and modernity.

Gender and Nation has been offered at the University of Notre Dame, where I teach, on two occasions since I first developed it two years ago

(2012). It has been a very successful course among students, reaching the maximum number of registrants allowed (sixteen at the 400-level) and receiving positive feedback in student evaluations that, in general, have highlighted the fact that this is a course in which all the materials discussed can be linked together in a progressive and continuous construction of the learning experience. The class targets advanced or high-intermediate level undergraduates who have already taken three or four language and culture and/or literature courses, but it can certainly be adjusted to cater to other levels as well.

Most of the students who have taken the course have been Spanish majors or Supplementary majors—the latter is a popular choice at Notre Dame and combines Spanish studies with other areas of the humanities, the liberal arts, economics, or sciences. Many of them had also studied abroad in a Spanish-speaking country prior to taking the course. Courses related to Latin American history and culture, as in the case of *Gender and Nation,* easily attract students with such profiles; however, it is unlikely that these students have taken a course on gender or read non-canonical women writers (they all know Sor Juana). For this reason, I designed *Gender and Nation* in such a way that it is possible—and arguably necessary—to call on students' previous knowledge of certain topics, such as aesthetic movements or authors from the 19th century (most of them will know something about José Martí, *modernismo*, or Domingo F. Sarmiento), to subsequently introduce new perspectives and concepts related to gender that can be applied to or help us understand more in depth this vital period of Latin American history and literature. Although literature classes within my department are mostly focused on canonical texts or specific aesthetic movements, I have received very good responses both from colleagues and students to my incorporation of gender and a more diverse and less studied corpus of texts into my courses. In fact, *Gender and Nation* has been established as one of the regular courses on Spanish American literature that will continue to be offered in the future.

To implement a gendered reading of the 19th century in the classroom, I have found the following texts to be particularly helpful: Francine Masiello's (1992) *Between Civilization and Barbarism*; Doris Sommer's (1991) *Foundational Fictions*; Graciela Batticuore's (2005) *La mujer romántica*; Francesca Denegri's (2004) *El abanico y la cigarrera* and Maritza Villavicencio's (1992) *Del silencio a la palabra*. Although they mostly focus on South America—my particular field of study—these works provide the tools to analyze the consolidation of the women writers in the whole continent and offer an understanding of the social changes resulting from independence in Latin America as deeply connected with gender

roles. The historical perspective of Sarah Chambers (2004) has also contributed to class discussions on the interstitial space women occupied in 19th century societies. Moreover, the anthologies compiled by Stacey Schlau (2001), Doris Meyer (1995), Claire Martin and María Cristina Arambel-Guiñazú, Francine Masiello (1994), and Bonnie Frederick (1998) have been of great help in my selecting class readings; I have made these texts available to students every semester I have taught the class.[3] As both a teacher and a researcher, I personally value these works because of the fact that they not only revise what is known about 19th century culture, proposing new and gendered points of view and expanding the literary corpus of the period, but they also leave us space to generate our own inquiries and lines of research/class discussion. For instance, Doris Sommer's thesis on the programmatic plot of 19th century novels has allowed me and the students in my classes to explore the link between love and politics. It also has lead us to investigate other texts (I will offer examples later), literary genres, or gender alliances that existed and were popularized at that time but which do not respond to the heterosexual normativity the critic proposes.

When creating the syllabus for the class, I decided to include an emblematic image from the period that could also represent the focus of the class. The portrait of Manuela Rosas (1817–1898) by Argentine painter Prilidiano Pueyrredón (1823–1870) fulfilled this goal, and it is very compelling in many ways. Manuela, who would emerge as one of the most important political symbols of the early 19th century, was the daughter of Buenos Aires Federalist *caudillo* Juan Manuel de Rosas. After her mother, Doña Encarcación Ezcurra, died in 1838, Manuela became the nation's first lady and, by all accounts, she enjoyed great popularity. Manuela regularly participated in gatherings and festivals in honor of her father, foreign visitors were impressed by the number of responsibilities she had, and both individuals and literature from her time usually pointed out her kindness and sensibility in an obvious contrast with her father, criticized for his authoritarianism and his use of violence and oppression to deal with his opponents. One of the most prominent aspects of Pueyrredon's painting is the use of the color red, the same color that all citizens were expected to wear to symbolize support for Rosas's authority. Pueyrredon portrayed Manuela as the embodiment of Federalism, but what is striking is that she was also a representative figure of Unitarians, who depicted her—as can be perceived in José Mármol novel *Amalia* (1855)—as a victim of her father's political tactics (Masiello, 1992, p. 29). Thus, as Nancy Hanway (2003) affirms, "Manuela represents not so much the evils of the current government as the promise of a new regime identified with the feminine"

(p. 32). For these reasons, the portrait of Rosas's daughter serves the course by exemplifying one of the various ways in which women and the female body were frequently used to idealize the "emblematic citizen" of newly formed Latin American nations (Hanway, 2003, p. 20).

Figure 1. Prilidiano Pueyrredón, "Manuela de Rosas y Ezcurra," 1851, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires.

For the first class readings, I have found it useful to start with a set of theoretical texts on the concepts of nation and gender, both terms usually taken for granted as natural (Irwin, 2003, p. 187). Those readings can be skipped or expanded on according to the class level; the professor can also bring them up in class as discussions flow. Have societies always organized into nations? Has gender been understood the same way throughout history? Texts such as the classic essay "What is a Nation?" by Ernst Renan (1882/1990) or Benedict Anderson's (1983/1991) *Imagined Communities*, a historical account of the birth of the modern nation, offer an important framework through which one can make the first approaches to the complex nature of Latin American nations. Renan conceives of a nation on the basis of subjective judgments like the wish and awareness of belonging to it (the nation as a "daily plebiscite" [p. 19]) while Anderson defines it as an "imagined community," meaning that, although people of a specific nation may never come to meet every single member of their nation, they

perceive themselves as part of a larger group who share a common set of features such as language, religion, or origin (p. 49). I use both Renan and Anderson's texts to introduce students to the idea that nations are not a historical given, but the product of a social-historical process. Through their unique perspectives, these authors can help a class understand nation as a modern phenomenon (an idea also proposed by Eric Hobsbawn (1992) and Ernest Gellner (1983), an object of multiple negotiations and demands in which we can introduce gender as a force fundamental to its shaping. Anderson's analysis of the practice of print-capitalism also serves the course by encouraging the study of Latin American "foundational fictions" and their role in the establishment and reinforcement of a national identity after independence.

At this point in the discussion, I present students with some suggestions for elaborating a critique of Anderson's (1983/1991) thesis and finding possible loopholes in his ideas about the development of Latin American nations. One semester, I brought to class a series of images from 18th and 19th century periodicals to analyze, using specific examples, *who imagined* and *who were imagined* in the territory. While reading the manifestos of *La Gazeta de México* (1782), *El Mercurio peruano* (1791), or *El Perú Ilustrado* (1887), among other publications, we explored issues such as what kind of "community" was being created through the pages of those publications, what information was being shared, and what idea of "citizenship" we can deduce from there. One of the first questions that arose from students was "who could read in Latin America during the 18th and 19th century?" This query—though simple in appearance—made us reflect on how nations have been understood as a Europeanized and literate-centered societies in which popular classes and women have almost no participation, as Anderson clearly shows.

In *Gender and Nation*, my comments and reconsideration of Anderson's (1983/1991) work are supported using several studies that have appeared in the past two decades complementing or reassessing the historian's interpretation of nations and nationalisms. Just to mention some of them, both Homi Bhabha (1990) and Partha Chatterjee (1993) have stated—in the field of postcolonial studies—that nations are also *imagined* by peripheral cultures that emphasize heterogeneity and difference (Peluffo, 2012, p. 5). The collective work edited by Sara Castro-Klarén and John Charles Chasteen (2003), *Beyond Imagined Communities*, is also a great contribution to think about some of Anderson's limitations in explaining Latin American collective identities. The book departs from Anderson's contribution to the study of nations and nationalisms and recognizes that reading and writing are key aspects in the existence of a nation.

Nevertheless, it objects, among other issues, the predominant position the author gives to printed materials and the absence of gender and race as determinants of national identity. Consequently, the study presents us with a more complex panorama of 19th century Latin America by analyzing a wider variety of social and political expressions of nationalism, such as political parties, women's salons, archeology and folklore, and international expositions. Except for Sarah Chamber's (2003) chapter on literary *tertulias* in *Beyond Imagined Communities*, I do not assign these works as required readings, but I always encourage students to consult them when writing their final essays.

While this is a literature class that focuses primarily on texts, though not simply those written by renowned male intellectuals, I consider it important to include additional materials and cultural artifacts in order to revise the mentioned privilege that historians and critics have given to the written word. Every semester, I expose students to visual materials such as *costumbrista* art—the gouaches by Pancho Fierro in Peru are great for this exercise—lithography, and photographs from the 19th century, in order to incorporate other popular or aesthetic expressions that have also contributed to shaping nations and identities. Through these images, we are able to visualize gender, class, and race relationships ignored in the previously read texts (Anderson, 1983/1991; Renan, 1882/1990) and explore the ways in which the nation is imagined from a multiplicity of voices.

My main critique of the modes according to which nations have been conceived, as one can assume, stems from the fact that most studies have not considered gender—the focus of my class—to be an important aspect of nation formation. In this sense, a class like *Gender and Nation* brings together two terms that have not been traditionally associated. Mary Louise Pratt's essay "Género y ciudadanía: las mujeres en diálogo con la nación," for example, questions Anderson's view on male relationships (*fraternity*) as vital to the nation and proposes recognition of women's literary production, texts in which one can find more diverse links to the hegemonic mandates (Peluffo, 2012, p. 3). As I already mentioned, Sarah Chambers' (2004) insightful study, "Letters and Salons: Women Reading and Writing the Nation," also introduces women's participation in the nation as mediators between the private and the public domains. Through these female expressions (letters and salons), Chambers revises Anderson's (1983/1991) postulation of the nation as an abstract political sphere and proposes instead that the imagined community is built within social interactions among a smaller but more tangible group of individuals (p. 60). Since this essay outlines a comparative analysis of the correspondence of

three Creole women, Manuela Sáenz, Mariquita Sánchez de Thompson, and Carmen Arriagada, we discuss it in class together with a selection of texts by these three women. This has been a very fruitful activity because we use class time to exercise and develop a reading of literary texts vis-à-vis contemporary criticism, a dynamic students will later adopt in their own research for written assignments. Also, I bring current editions of the letters and show them Manuela Sáenz's original correspondence, which has been digitalized and made available on the web.[4]

In order to further the study of the ways gender relations affect and are affected by national projects and processes, students in my course read the work by Nira Yuval-Davis (1997), *Gender and Nation,* which provides an excellent overview of writings on gender and nationhood for students having their first contact with the subject. The author points out that, though embodied in diverse ways, nationalisms are always gendered. She then proceeds to examine the contribution of gender relations to key dimensions of nationalist projects such as the nation's reproduction and its culture and citizenship, as well as its contribution to national conflicts and wars. When discussing the first chapter of Yuval Davis's work (the only portion I assign as a class reading), a student once made a very interesting comment about the absence of gay subjects and homosexuality in the author's argument, since, the student argued, she specifically concentrates on the ideas of "womanhood" and "manhood" within the patriarchal structure. In this context, I verbally introduced the class to other approaches, such as Judith Butler's (1990) view of gender as a "performative act," to offer students additional resources with which to analyze the complexity implied in terms such as "gender," "woman," or "man."

Although the analysis is intended to apply specifically to 19th century Latin America, it is important that these opinions be also extrapolated to other contexts and periods, including students' everyday lives (Irwin, 2003, p. 187). A text that has been helpful in addressing this kind of connection between the subject of study and more contemporary or familiar topics and events is the book chapter "Gender and National Identities: Masculinities, Femininities and Power" by Sarah Radcliffe and Sallie Westwood (1996). The authors present an interesting approach to both state gender ideologies and discourses and practices of citizenship through the analysis of policies and popular beliefs established in different Latin American societies. For instance, they show that in Argentina, during the government of Juan Domingo Perón, the nation was seen as a masculine sphere (*patria*) in which women gained political agency but in which traditional gender relations continued to be the norm (pp. 135–136). Beauty contests in

Ecuador and the television star Xuxa from Brazil are also brought up to explain how Latin American media constructs racialized images of womanhood that favor white skin and blue eyes and, consequently, reinforce divisions among women on racial and class grounds (p. 139). Although Radcliffe and Westwood's article contains some errors, such as calling Manuela Sáenz the "wife" of Simón Bolívar, it also enables class discussions through which we can reflect on the continuance of 19th century gender discourses into the 20th and 21st centuries Latin America. Moreover, it helps evaluate how the same gender patterns are reproduced in the cultural products and merchandise students currently consume: beauty or sports goods, magazines, music, television, and social media. Every semester I teach the class, I draw on a series of more recent events to discuss alongside the article (which is from the 90s), and we have been able to talk, for instance, about legal regulations and even TV commercials from both Latin America and the United States that perpetuates gender inequalities and heterosexuality as social norms.

The body of the course continues with a look at several literary texts from the 19th century reflecting on the roles of women in both Latin American independence and its aftermath. Juana Manuela Gorriti's (1992) short biography (*perfil*) on Juana Azurduy is discussed together with the introduction to *South American Independence: Gender, Politics, Text*, edited by Catherine Davies, Claire Brewster, and Hilary Owen (2006). Gorriti's account draws upon her childhood memory of a visit from Azurduy to her home in Salta, Argentina, where Gorriti's father had a fundamental role in the battles for independence and served twice as the governor of the province. In the text, for example, the *salteña* writer remembers Azurduy dressed in a scarlet tunic to increase her visibility to the men and women soldiers she led in battles against the Spanish during the revolutionary wars in Upper Peru (Berg, 1995, p. 52). Class discussion first focuses on Azurduy's dual role on the battlefield, highlighted by Gorriti, since she is seen as a maternal figure by her soldiers but, at the same time, she can be the bravest among them, carrying arms, organizing the military, and facing the enemy. Pointing out this apparent "contradiction" in the description of the female soldier will help the class reflect on the limited range of options available at that time for the representation of women in literature. Gorriti needs to somewhat "justify" Azurduy's intervention in the war by giving her a maternal function among soldiers, a "feminization" of the woman's body that also seeks to offer a counterpart to the frequent masculinization of Azurduy in the discourse of male intellectuals and military authorities as well as in visual culture from her period—material that I also make available to students during class.[5]

Secondly, it is important to call the class' attention to the fact that this text was written at the end of the 19th century and that Gorriti commences it by criticizing the female model that prevailed at that time, one focused on the cult of feminine beauty and the importance of fashion among the *bello sexo*. These ideas help the professor of this course address Gorriti's interest in improving female education as well as her "political struggle for a more inclusive citizenship" (Nouzeilles & Montaldo, 2002, p. 73). Lastly, the introduction to South American Independence provides detailed information about women's participation in the wars of independence and offers supplementary examples to be analyzed or mentioned along with the case of Juana Azurduy.

A cluster of classes is devoted to the study of the Rosas period in Argentina. This is a very interesting part of the course since a student in an upper level of Spanish studies would have probably read about this historical period and/or the *rosista* literature (e.g. *El matadero* by Echeverría or Sarmiento's *Facundo*). In general, I will include a selection of the above-mentioned novel by Argentine writer José Mármol, *Amalia*. The text is too long to be read in full in an undergraduate class focused on broader issues, but I would assign the chapters I consider the most representative of the anti-Rosas perspective, namely, the first chapters that introduce the novel's plot, the description of a "barbarized" Buenos Aires, and the chapters on Amalia Sáenz de Olabarrieta (the protagonist) and the historical character of Manuela Rosas.

Amalia is one of the most popular Latin American novels and a frequently required reading in Argentina's schools. Using the figure of a feminine protagonist and a love story to convey national and social ideals (Hanway, 2003, p. 19), the novel protests the dictatorship of Juan Manuel de Rosas and provides a picture of political events during his regime. As Doris Sommer (1991) has suggested, the novel brings together lovers from different parts of Argentina—Amalia is from the "tropical" province of Tucumán, while Eduardo is from Buenos Aires—in order to symbolically propose "a unified national identity" (p. 15). For this reason, class discussions on Mármol's work usually focus on the construction of the liberal stereotype of the feminine—based on a Europeanized concept of beauty and civilization—the different ways in which the author presents the recurring dichotomy of civilization versus barbarism using gender distinctions, and the depiction of politics as a male-centered sphere, nevertheless dependent on women's roles in society.

Another gender-coded narrative from the period is Gorriti's (1907) short story "La hija del mazorquero." Similarly to Mármol in *Amalia*, the author of this less canonical text presents us with a story in which women play a

fundamental role in the opposition to the ruling Federalism. In her text, a thinly disguised Manuela Rosas is depicted positively as Clemencia, a young lady who uses activities permissible for her sex to disrupt and repair her father's oppressive actions in the public arena. When reading Gorriti's story, I would suggest that students go back to *Amalia*, analyzing the differences and similarities between the two works and thinking about possible allusions to a feminine perspective of history and politics. The article by Lucía Guerra Cunningham (1987), "Visión marginal de la historia en la narrativa de Juana Manuela Gorriti," could be very helpful in guiding this kind of class debate. I usually close this class content unit with the streaming of María Luisa Bember's *Camila* (1984). This classic of Argentine cinema tells the story of Camila O'Gorman, a transgressive aristocratic woman who decided to openly live a romance with a priest in nineteenth-century Argentina, defying the values of her family, the Catholic Church, and society. Camila was executed beside her lover, Ladislao Gutiérrez, under the command of Juan Manuel de Rosas, and her life and death became a myth of rebellion and repression in the Argentine imagination. In class, students have discussions based on a number of gender and nation related topics suggested in a movie guide I provide and are also encouraged to analyze Bemberg's version of Camila vis-à-vis the political climate in which the director lived, marked by the violence of a military regime, a recent return to democracy in Argentina, and the feminism of the 1980s. An interesting addition to the lesson plan could be to assign the students—before or after watching the film—Gorriti's (1876) version of the story in her text "Camila O'Gorman," written a few years after Camila's tragic death. This account, in opposition to Bemberg's positive view of the feminine rebellion, reinforces Gorriti's ideals of a liberal nation by portraying Camila as a negative symbol and praising a more conservative view on women instead (Vitor Bueno, 2007, p. 7). After studying this set of texts and film, students will be able to expand their knowledge of early 19th century South America with "a gendered vision of politics, society, and culture" (Masiello, 1992, p. 53).

The course continues with the study of more examples of the so-called "foundational fictions," which, as in the case of *Amalia*, will later be confronted with less canonical novels from the same period such as *Blanca Sol* by Peruvian writer Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera (1889/2007) and *En la sangre* by Eugenio Cambaceres (1887/2006). As Doris Sommer (1991) has shown, 19th century novels were written in Latin America with the strong programmatic purpose of engendering productive citizens and, therefore, providing allegories for national consolidation and the development of a nationalistic consciousness. Sommer argues that after the

wars of independence the Creole class needed to legitimize its authority by wooing and domesticating civil society. Literature—more specifically, novels—accomplished this goal by centering their plots on sentimental relationships that reproduced the most important political issues of their regions: citizen's rights, *mestizaje*, and education, among others. Later, these texts were legitimized as representative of national identity through its incorporation into education programs and school curriculums in different Latin American countries (Sommer, 1991, p. 4).

Following Sommer's (1991) thesis, I assign a selection of *María* by Jorge Isaacs (1867/1978) and continue with Clorinda Matto de Turner's (1889/1994) *Aves sin nido*, which we read in full. Doing so will take three to five classes, according to the professor's selection of readings and whether an additional bibliography is assigned in order to inform and enhance discussions. With these two texts, students will explore, for example, the topics of race and sexuality associated with national identity and the definition of gender roles. *María* is Colombia's national romance and one of the most popular 19th century novels in Latin America, even during its own time when pirated editions of the novel appeared throughout Latin America and Spain. The story narrates the idyllic and tragic love between María and her cousin Efraín. They are both natives of the Valle del Cauca and, in the middle of that romantic and bucolic landscape (settled in the family's hacienda suggestively named *El Paraíso*), the characters fall in love with each other and must face several obstacles to their romance, including Efraín's departure to study in Bogotá and María's disease, which eventually results in her dying before Efraín can return to her. Sylvia Molloy (1984) has read the novel as the Spanish-American model for the timeless *topos* of paradise lost (pp. 36–55), and, although it does not contain the kind of historical or political notes we can visibly detect in *Amalia*, *María* does provide a view of mid-nineteenth century Colombia. Readers are exposed to insightful descriptions of the landscape as Efraín travels through the jungles of Colombia and its capital and the interpolated story of Nay and Sinar, two African slaves, provides a glimpse of current racial stereotypes and the reality of South American slavery. In class, we also look at the representations of masculinity and femininity embodied in the different characters of the novel, analyzing the influence of patriarchy on the establishment of gender roles and models of citizenship.

With a combination of influences from Romanticism and Realism, *Aves sin nido* portrays the inequities of social reality in the Peruvian *sierra*, becoming a clear exponent of *indigenista* literature. The novel, written by one of the most relevant women writers from 19th century South America, narrates the story of a young married couple from Lima, Fernando and

Lucía Marín, who settle in the small Andean village of Killac and soon discover that the local indigenous people—who represented the majority of the Killac's population—were being exploited "by the very agencies that should promote justice: the Church, the government officials and tax collectors, and the legal system" (Berg, 1990, p. 306). Under the initiative of Lucía, the couple gets involved in local conflicts and takes interest in the plight of the Indians. Their struggle to fight Killac's injustices resulted in an attack on their own house, organized by the town's authorities. Juan and Marcela Yupanqui, the Marín's *protégés*, die on that occasion, and Lucía and Fernando decide to adopt their now orphaned daughters, Margarita and Rosalía. The couple plans to move to Lima so they can leave the barbarity of Killac behind and give the girls a proper education. In Lima, the love story between one of the girls, Margarita, and a law student also born in Killac, Manuel, rapidly ends in tragedy when they find out they are in fact brother and sister, both the offspring of a former priest of their village.

The professor can either propose a series of discussion topics or have the students formulate their own according to their own analyses of the novel, its social criticism, and the reforms Clorinda Matto proposes toward modernity and the integration of the indigenous population to the Peruvian nation. The class should be guided to deduce the importance of education and the role of women in these social reforms. In the novel, only educated people (Fernando and Manuel) are able to confront corrupt authorities, and women, on the other hand, are depicted as a "strong positive moral force" (Berg, 1995, p. 307) responsible for both transmitting values through their maternal role (Lucía and Marcela) combatting injustice subtly and yet effectively. Students should also discuss Matto's idealization of Indians—described as innately innocent and loyal to their communities—her limitations in addressing the causes of social and racial differences ignoring the socio-economic factor, and the "problems" we can find, from our present perspective, in the author's social reform (for example, in the fact that the Marín's fight for change only focuses on Margarita, the *mestizo* character who can only be integrated into modern society after she has been removed from her indigenous origins and all her ethnic marks erased). Discussions on *Aves sin nido* have frequently led us to reflect on current indigenous conflicts in South America, its impact on national identity discourses, and the presence of a *neo-indigenista* view in contemporary literature and cinema from the region, as can be perceived in Claudia Llosa's films. Last but not least, through the reading of these two foundational fictions, *María* and *Aves sin nido*,[6] we are able to discuss how—in a period when, paradoxically, limits in society and gender roles were being defined—literature came to dissolve the boundaries between

public and private spheres to demonstrate to contemporary readers that the personal is, in fact, political.

As has been said before, I usually like to confront these standard texts with other less canonical and more controversial readings from the period. These texts are fundamental to the syllabus' structure because they force students to revise Sommer's (1991) ideas on the programmatic goal of 19th century novels. In fact, I suggest the class read *Blanca Sol* and *En la sangre* as the counter-narrative of the literary corpus Sommer proposes, since they present alternative models of womanhood and manhood within modernized societies from the late second half of the 19th century. On one side, Mercedes Cabello (1889/2007) adopts Naturalism to tell the story of Blanca Sol, a young *limeña* who had been raised by her mother to have ambitions of wealth and social position. To accomplish this goal, she marries a man she considers stupid and ugly and has six children whom she neglects. Blanca Sol becomes a socialite and hosts many fashionable gatherings until her husband goes insane, she loses everything, and decides to overcome this economic crisis by opening a brothel (Scott, 1999, p. 238). In this story, which was deeply criticized even by other women writers of the time, Mercedes Cabello challenges the ruling-class definition of woman as mother and wife—two roles the protagonist performs reluctantly—and exposes the hypocrisy and double standards of Lima's society. As Nancy LaGreca (2009) affirms, "this broadening of the definition of womanhood acknowledges women's desires and needs and portrays those needs as human, healthy impulses, rather than as evidence of an egotism that endangered the sanctity of domestic life" (p. 104).

Also making use of Naturalist premises, Eugenio Cambaceres (2006) narrates the story of Genaro, the son of Italian immigrants of humble origins who marries the daughter of a wealthy family if only to end his poverty and gain access to Argentine aristocratic circles. The novel is a response to the social problems associated with the immigration boom that began during the second half of the 19th century in South America. Immigrants are represented as a visible threat to Argentine identity and to the social *status quo* of the governing élite (Foster, 1990, p. 140). Under these circumstances, gender differences and sexuality become public concerns of a state that should protect its citizens from the abuse of foreign agents. Reading both Cabello and Cambaceres' novels allow us to better understand the concepts of gender and nation (or national identity) as terms in constant construction and definition, always adapting to specific contexts and social conditions.

At the end of the semester, I usually assign shorter texts such as journal articles or essays published by men and women from the beginning of the

20th century. The idea is, again, to analyze and compare them to the 19th century parameters that defined national discourses in foundational texts. Essays and chronicles by Gabriela Mistral, Alfonsina Storni, Aurora Cáceres, Manuel González Prada, and Enrique Gómez Carrillo, among other authors from these decades, can bring to the class a good number of inquiries on gender and identity in a modernized context, defined by the increasing participation of the popular classes, the emergence of new discursivities, and the formation of a more cosmopolite *lettered city*, defined beyond the limits of national identity. Also, following the class dynamic adopted at the beginning of the semester, I would conclude the course with reflection on present-day issues related to the gender debate and its relationship with public politics. At this time, I would ask students to bring to class an article, news, or video clips on a contemporary topic dealing with gender and the convergence of personal and political spheres that this term suggests. They will be free to select news from campus life, the United States or Latin America. We will organize a round table and each student will expose his/her opinions on the subject and turn in a one-page report written in Spanish. My goal with this assignment and class activity is to make students reflect about the course content as an introduction or a window to think about and analyze situations from their own contexts and realities and to consider gender as a present and necessary debate in our society, in which disparities are still established on a basis of gender and/or sexual orientation. I also seek to draw parallels between the issues we are studying in terms of Latin America's past and issues surrounding the history of the United States and the nation's current condition, in order to revise students' tendency to counterbalance a retrograde, sexist, and violent Latin America to an egalitarian United States (Chomski, 1998).

In conclusion, and taking Ferrebe and Tolan's (2012) statement in *Teaching Gender*, designing and executing this course has helped me realize that

> A focus upon a text's constructions of gender opens a productive testing ground for students, encouraging them not just to explore the power dynamics of that particular text, but simultaneously to critique the theoretical approaches with which they are being asked to work. The theorization of gender, imbricated as it so often is with personal experience, seems peculiarly well placed to prompt our students to recognize themselves as theorizers, and to see theory itself as mutable, contextual and open to debate. (p. 2)

GENDER AND NATION IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY LATIN AMERICA

UNIT 1: "Nation in Theory"

Week 1
Ernest Renan. "What is a Nation?"

Week 2
Benedict Anderson. *Imagined Communities*. Introduction and Chapter 4 "Creole Pioneers"

UNIT 2: "Engendering the Nation"

Week 3
Nira Yuval Davis. *Gender & Nation*. Chapter 1.

Week 4
Sarah Radcliffe and Sallie Westwood. "Gender and National Identities: Masculinities, Femininities and Power."

UNIT 3: "Women in Latin American Independence"

Week 5
Davies, Catherine, Claire Brewster y Hilary Owen. *South American Independence: Gender, Politics, Text*. Chapter 1.
Juana Manuela Gorriti. "Juana Azurduy."

Week 6
José Mármol. *Amalia*. Selection.

Week 7
Juana Manuela Gorriti. "La hija del mazorquero."
María Luisa Bemberg. *Camila*.

UNIT 4: "Gender and Nation in Latin American Foundational Fictions"

Week 8
Jorge Isaacs. *María*. Selection.

Week 9
Clorinda Matto de Turner. *Aves sin nido.*

UNIT 5: "Naturalism and Sexualities"

Week 10
Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera. *Blanca Sol*.

Week 11
Eugenio Cambaceres. *En la sangre*.

Figure 2. Sample course calendar

In other words, I believe that teaching Latin American culture and literature with a gendered view not only expands the possibilities of analysis of a particular context or corpus of texts (in this case the 19th century and the foundational narratives of the region), but also demonstrates to students (and ourselves as teachers) that gender and gender inequalities are not outdated issues for debate and that not all the battles have been won in that respect. Finally, I deeply believe that teaching and debating gender in the classroom is a political act that shows us, once more, that all things personal are political.

NOTES

1. More information on the participation of women in Latin American independence can be found at the following website: http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/genderlatam/index.aspx. This engaging research project lead by Professor Catherine Davies at the University of Nottingham is very helpful for students working on these topics.
2. See Elizabeth Garrels' (1994) "Sarmiento and the Question of Woman: From 1839 to *Facundo*."
3. Stockero editions of 19th century novels are also helpful as they are updated and affordable.
4. Letters by Sáenz are available at the following website: http://genderlatm.wp.horizon.ac.uk/2012/08/22/el-epistolario-de-manuela-y-simon-un-manual-de-sensaciones-un-texto-escrito-por-oleski-miranda/
5. For an analysis of the multiple images of Juana Azurduy in South American culture, see Berta Wexler and Heather Hennes' (2002) article "Corrientes culturales en la leyenda de Juana Azurduy de Padilla."
6. Other novels that could perfectly fit in a course focusing on issues of gender and nation are Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda's *Sab* (1841/2001), Chilean writer Alberto Blest Gana's *Martín Rivas* (1861/1977), or—if the professor agrees to read a translated version—José de Alencar's *Iracema* (1865/2000), Brazil's national romance. The first semester I taught *Gender and Nation,* we read *Viaje a La Habana* (1844) written by the Countess of Merlin. Focusing on this text, we explored the genre of travel writing as an effective discourse for women to conquer the public spheres of both writing and exploration beyond the domestic domain they were assigned.

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ELLEN MAYOCK

5. TEACHING HISPANIC FEMINISMS

From Academic Consciousness-Raising to Activism

With 25 years' experience teaching in the Hispanic Studies classroom, I have experimented in several different ways with the incorporation of the "gender question," thus establishing a long pedagogical trajectory open to critical reflection. In this essay, I borrow from Elaine Showalter's (1985d) notion of gynocritics to think about the following issues and themes in the teaching of gender through Hispanic literature and culture: (1) the need to give voice and visibility to the many women writers and creators whose works did not make the canon(s) of the pre-20th and/or pre-21st-centuries; (2) the introduction of feminist theories through Hispanic literature in courses not specifically listed under the Women's and Gender Studies rubric; (3) the examination of the female protagonist in Spanish literature; and (4) the design of a course titled "Hispanic Feminisms," its goals, and its association with Hispanic Studies, Latin American and Caribbean Studies, and Women's and Gender Studies departments and programs. An evaluation of the content and reception of four different courses permits an analysis of how and why we guide students in gathering information, building skills in research, writing, and oral presentation, sharpening analysis, and, in some cases, moving towards their own brand of activism.

Before leaping into the decades-old Anglo-American notion of gynocritics and justifying its use for this essay, I want to comment on feminist nostalgia and the impact of the changing modes of programmatic studies from women's studies to gender studies to sexuality studies. Over the past five years, I have heard several feminist critical scholars, both well-known and not yet known, express a profound gratitude and pride in the advances in many places of LGBTQ politics and policies, while at the same time lamenting or gently mentioning a nostalgia for women-centered politics and change. While women's studies has rightly made room—both in the academic program and in social space (both real and virtual)—for theoretical examinations and practical advocacy for LGBT constituencies and broader understandings of sex, gender, and sexualities, it has perhaps ceded space to the question of feminism and women's rights. Judith

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Butler's (1990) *Gender Trouble* was an exciting, field-changing work that allowed us to think about sex as a movable biological category and about gender as an imposed, and sometimes chosen, set of performances. As Butler (1990) puts it:

> No longer believable as an interior "truth" of dispositions and identity, sex will be shown to be a performatively enacted signification (and hence not "to be"), one that, released from its naturalized interiority and surface, can occasion the parodic proliferation and subversive play of gendered meanings. This text continues, then, as an effort to think through the possibility of subverting and displacing those naturalized and reified notions of gender that support masculine hegemony and heterosexist power, to make gender trouble, not through the strategies that figure a utopian beyond, but through the mobilization, subversive confusion, and proliferation of precisely those constitutive categories that seek to keep gender in its place by posturing as foundational illusions of identity. (pp. 33–34)

Feminist studies and practices had been heading in the direction of this confusion of binary categories for decades, and Butler (1990) was quite appropriately tapping into modes of undoing masculine hegemony and heterosexist power, while also advancing the cause for masculinity studies and an awareness that strict gender scripts can be detrimental for us all. All these years in, however, I cannot help but wonder if somehow feminism is weakened because actual women have disappeared from some of our theoretical paradigms. With continued global crises in "wars on women," sexual violence, sex trafficking, domestic violence, and education for girls and women, we can see that we have not successfully undone the privilege binary and that, at times, we have to define women as women in order to name collective problems, mobilize world resources, and establish mechanisms for sustained, creative solutions for women as women. In other words, as we move towards a hopefully and possibly post-gender world, we currently find ourselves in a theoretical and practical limbo in which so much of what we still do and so many ways in which we define our world are still based on categories of sex and gender. (I'm thinking, for example, of the admirable move in college athletics towards inclusion of all sexes, genders, racial and national identities, and levels of ability, but the fact that Title IX still uses female/male categories in legal theory and practice.) It is therefore with a degree of nostalgia that I return to Elaine Showalter's (1985d) gynocritics to underscore the importance of classroom consciousness-raising on women's and gender issues and to suggest ways in which classroom activities can translate to real world activism.

I share here a brief summary of Elaine Showalter's work in feminist criticism. In "Introduction: The Feminist Critical Revolution," Elaine Showalter (1985c) wrote of the work that had been done in feminist literary criticism since 1975:

> While literary criticism and its philosophical branch, literary theory, have always been zealously guarded bastions of male intellectual endeavor, the success of feminist criticism has opened a space for the authority of the woman critic that extends beyond the study of women's writing to the reappraisal of the whole body of texts that make up our literary heritage. Whether concerned with the literary representations of sexual difference, with the ways that literary genres have been shaped by masculine and feminine values, or with the exclusion of the female voice from the institutions of literature, criticism, and theory, feminist criticism has established gender as a fundamental category of literary analysis. (p. 3)

In this essay, Showalter (1985c) goes on to map phases of the development of feminist criticism, phases that are applicable to world literature and for which Showalter (1985c) provides examples predominantly from the United States, Britain, and France. The first phase exposes the "misogyny of literary practice" (Showalter, 1985c, p. 5), the second phase constitutes the recovery of women's writing across time and place (p. 6), and the third, and most complicated, phase is the ongoing theorizing about women's experiences and the "concept of a female aesthetic" (p. 6). In the end, this third phase is the area of inquiry that opens up women's studies to the insistence upon gender as a construct and, thus, to gender studies. For Showalter (1985), gynocritics serves "to construct a female framework for the analysis of women's literature, to develop new models based on the study of female experience, rather than to adapt male models and theories. Gynocritics begins at the point when we free ourselves from the linear absolutes of male literary history, stop trying to fit women between the lines of male tradition, and focus instead on the newly visible world of female culture" (Showalter, 1985d, p. 131).

Parallel to Showalter's incursions into feminist criticism in the Anglo and French traditions appear many seminal studies in Hispanic feminist criticism. These include, as early as 1979, Lucía Fox-Lockhert's (1979) *Women Novelists in Spain and Spanish America* and, Beth Miller's (1983) edited volume *Women in Hispanic Literature. Icons and Fallen Idols*, with a prolific collection of further studies throughout the 1980s '90s and to the present day.[1] The earlier volumes borrow from Anglo and French traditions, while also forging a "gynocritics" more particular to Spain, Latin

America, and U.S. Latin@ and to sub-regions and sub-groups of these broad geographic and demographic swaths. The trajectory of research on the "gender question" in Hispanic Studies, especially from 1975 to the present day, accompanies the development of many more courses on women writers, women writing women, portrayals of women in the traditional and non-traditional canons, feminist theory, queer theory, and gender theory. In other words, more progressive research agendas have nourished classroom approaches to gender. Especially in the liberal arts model of teaching, the reverse is also true: classroom themes and techniques motivate the production of research on feminist criticism.

How we teach the gender question in our colleges and universities is heavily influenced by geographic region, institutional history, pre-existing curricula, and the intellectual interests of departments, students, and professors. I have spent the majority of my academic career at a well-respected small, southern, liberal arts institution of the United States. My university co-educated on the undergraduate side in 1985, which changed the course of the institution's history, while also very clearly changing the demographics of the undergraduate population. When I arrived in 1997, there were few mid- or upper-level literature courses in the Spanish curriculum that included women writers, and there was only one course on women writers. This course was developed by a colleague of mine, who surely must have passed through many of the same evaluative steps that I did: look at the curriculum; analyze its trends, principally reflecting courses organized by period and/or genre; name the gaps; fill the gaps. Having finished a dissertation the year before on the female protagonist in Francoist and post-Franco literature, I was well-versed in the gender matters of gynocritics, the canon, power, sexuality, and creating a lens through which to understand central and peripheral spaces. I was not thinking about the context of the small, southern liberal arts college, but rather about the less-than-full curriculum that neglected such literary greats as Santa Teresa de Ávila, Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, Emilia Pardo Bazán, María Zambrano, Elena Poniatowska, Rosario Castellanos, Carmen Martín Gaite, Isabel Allende, Alfonsina Storni, Delmira Agustini, Rosario Ferré, and Nancy Morejón. (I haven't included Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz on this list because she tends to make her way onto even the most traditional course syllabi.) Although we all recognize that it is impossible to cover every interesting author and theme, we also know that some syllabus manipulation allows us to give "voz y voto" to more women authors and to more themes that require gender as a tool of analysis, and thus, to a broader spectrum of the publishing world and the intellectual arena.

My institution encourages consistent, creative design of new courses, and so during my second year I proposed a course on my dissertation topic, the development of the female protagonist in 20th-century Spanish literature. To complement the course, I invited Lidia Falcón, renowned author, lawyer, and founder of the Spanish Feminist Party, to a two-day visit to our university. Dr. Falcón's visit created quite a splash, one that I had naively not fully anticipated. Here she was, Founder of the Spanish Feminist Party, coming to rural Virginia to talk about communist and feminist ideals. Many students and community members in the audience were more undone by the communist overtones than by the feminist ones, thus demonstrating the potential and power ("danger") of communism and the perceived lack of potential and power of feminism. Falcón's assertion that "Feminism is simply a process of improving communism" ("El feminismo es simplemente la superación del comunismo") caused even more of a stir, and to good effect. Students in the class understood more viscerally and intellectually the challenges women face in a repressive climate and the "repression hangover" of the post-Franco era. They were also able to examine some of these issues in their own lives and environments. I tell this story to recognize that we each approach cultural canons in different ways, depending on where we teach. After the Falcón visit, I was more conscious about and more deliberate in the choices I made as I continued to teach the gender question in the Hispanic Studies classroom. I continued to take risks, but they were much more calculated and aware than those I had taken with the quick-impulse invitation to Lidia Falcón.

In her early works on feminist criticism, Elaine Showalter astutely described the various trends in feminist literary criticism in the mid-1970s, highlighted the uniting factors among the trends, and theorized about why feminist literary criticism had not yet gained significant traction. The richness of women's literary contributions across a broad geographical swath also complicates the creation of a relatively uniform approach to women's works, as evidenced by many of the trends in Third-Wave, or "multiculturalist," feminism. Nevertheless, the year 1975 served to ring a clarion call regarding women as creators and as critics, and the call was heard throughout the world. While Latin America and Spain celebrated "The Year of the Woman" ("El Año de la Mujer"), a few women authors began to approach center stage and to be recognized in the popular and academic presses. Forty years later, women creators (writers, film directors and producers, musicians, etc.) from a Spanish-language tradition or culture have gained some visibility, but not as much as forty years might indicate they should. Our high school and university curricula still reflect a

traditionalist approach to course design, and much work remains to be done. In the next sections, I describe four courses I have offered in order to expand and enrich the curriculum. In addition, I analyze the reception of the courses and assess the level to which the students have applied knowledge and skills acquired through these classes beyond the classroom.

VOICE AND VISIBILITY THROUGH THE COURSE TITLED "ESCRITORAS MEXICANAS Y MEXICOAMERICANAS"

In "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness," Showalter (1985b) examines the history, styles, themes, genres, and structures of women's writing. She emphasizes also the "psychodynamics of female creativity" (p. 248) as a way to get at the core of women's writing and to ask the question, "What is the *difference* of women's writing?" (p. 248). This course's sole focus on women writers allowed the students and me to re-evaluate women writers *as individuals* and *as a group*, to discuss canon formation and expansion, to understand the strategies of feminist criticism, and to raise consciousness about the traditional marginalization of women writers and their writings.

Our Spanish department for the most part has covered Mexican authors very well and capably. Nevertheless, except for the famous case of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, few Mexican women authors had been included in our curriculum in the incipient and advanced major levels. Two of the principal aims of this course were to fill this gap by including important Mexican women writers of the 20th century and to create a link between Mexico and the United States through the examination of works by several Chicana authors from the U.S. The course was the first one in the entire curriculum of the university to treat U.S./Latin@ authors in any way, and it required a rethinking of the uses of Spanish and English in the Spanish-language literature classroom.

The course description reads: "In this course we examine a series of Mexican and Mexican-American authors, from Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz to Sandra Cisneros. We explore the following questions: under which political circumstances do these authors write?; how do they absorb and reflect the culture of which they are an inherent part?; how are culture and gender related, and how do they manifest in the works studied?; which elements of Latin American feminisms appear in these works or are subtly incorporated?; what are the fundamental differences between the narrative, dramatic, and poetic works of these writers?; what is Chicana writing?; how are the Mexcian and Chicana authors and their works related?" ["En este curso pretendemos examinar a una serie de escritoras mexicanas y mexicoamericanas, desde Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz hasta Sandra Cisneros.

Exploramos las preguntas a continuación: ¿bajo qué circunstancias políticas escriben estas autoras?; ¿cómo absorben y reflejan la cultura de la cual son una parte inherente?; ¿cómo se relacionan cultura y género y cómo se manifiestan en estas obras?; ¿qué elementos del feminismo latinonamericano aparecen en estas obras o están sutilmente incorporados?; ¿cuáles son las diferencias fundamentales entre los escritos narrativos, dramáticos y poéticos de estas escritoras?; ¿qué es la escritura chicana?¿cómo se relacionan entre sí las escritoras mexicanas y las chicanas y sus obras?"].

In the course, we spent three weeks reading Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, spending a significant amount of time on her "Respuesta" (1691/2007) in order to use the text to establish the overarching themes and questions of the course. We spent some time, too, on "Primero Sueño" (1692/2007) so that students could grasp first-hand the intellectual and spiritual complexity and poetic beauty of the text. We also viewed *Yo, la peor de todas,* (1990) which allowed us to compare our own portraits of the life and works of Sor Juana with that of director María Luisa Bemberg. Starting the course in this way allowed students to use Sor Juana as a literary anchor (an author whom they had read before), to expand exponentially on their interpretation of her work, and to "legitimize" the feminist questions raised in her life and works, thus also legitimizing for any skeptics the goals of the course and the ensuing texts we would examine. In other words, starting with the canon implied to the students that the course had been "vetted," that it was legitimate, acceptable, to read these works and to ask these questions of the texts. This is an important point in the context of my university. With 18 students enrolled in the class (nine men, nine women), I needed a firm way in, and Sor Juana was it. At the same time, the students were surprised to be asked to talk about a feminist poetics in Sor Juana's works and about gender and sexual identities raised both in the works and in the Bemberg film. Sor Juana became for the students both a recognized part of a traditional canon and the tormented figure of an iconoclast who herself taught valuable lessons about the gender question in "New Spain." In a sense, Sor Juana captures all three of Showalter's gynocritical categories: feminine (recouping and valuing women's writing), feminist (establishing questions of patriarchy and women's full access to the world), and female ("female experience as the source of an autonomous art" (1985c, pp. 137–139), and thereby "jumpstarts" any course on gender in the Hispanic classroom.

Subsequent examinations of Elena Garro, Rosario Castellanos, and Laura Esquivel served to establish further questions about the Mexican Revolution, politics, borders, and the inscription of women in both public

and private spaces. Rosario Castellanos' very explicit call to Latin American feminism (with overt Western European influences) allowed the class to compare a "feminine" stage of writing to an explicitly "feminist" stage. Students had to evaluate how Paz (1959/1997) mapped gender questions through the figure of La Malinche, what the role of female film directors has been in the depiction of women characters, and which Mexican influences have impacted Chicana writers the most and the least. I distinctly remember what happened when a student gave an individual presentation on Frida Kahlo's contributions to the visual arts. She started her talk with, "I'm not a communist, but today I will talk about Frida Kahlo." This surprising and comical introduction to her talk afforded the students and me an opportunity to address the relationship between the artist, the message, and the audience and then, more specifically, the ways in which Frida Kahlo broke many traditional molds—her status as accomplished woman artist, living most of her life with disability, politics, and bisexuality—and created a model for many others to follow. In the end, the course served to fill gaps in the curricular canon of my department (and of the English Department) in terms of valuing women's literary production, to establish research questions about gender in Mexico and the United States, and to encourage an incipient awareness about gender questions in the students' own lives.

INTRODUCTION OF FEMINIST THEORIES THROUGH HISPANIC LITERATURE IN THE COURSE TITLED "NOVELA ESPAÑOLA DESDE 1897"

This "stock" course had traditionally included four novels by four male writers whose works spanned from the end of the 19th century to the end of the 20th century. The course description reads: "This course examines the evolution of Spanish narrative from the 19th century to the present day. By reading a series of novels and short stories, we study theme and narrative style to explore the changes this genre has experienced over more than a century. We will try to make conclusions regarding the relationship of literature to vertiginous change in politics, society, and cultures of Spain. Besides reading four novels and short stories, we will view and analyze a film for each segment of the course. All readings, films, and class discussions will be in Spanish" ["Este curso pretende examinar la evolución de la narrativa española desde el siglo XIX hasta la época contemporánea. Al leer cuidadosamente una serie de novelas y cuentos, estudiamos la temática y estilística narrativas para explorar los cambios que tienen lugar en este género durante más de un siglo. Intentamos llegar a

conclusiones con respecto a la relación entre la literatura de la España del siglo XX con los cambios vertiginosos en la política, sociedades y culturas del país de la misma época. Además de leer cuatro novelas representativas, veremos y evaluaremos una película para cada segmento del curso. Todo lo que leamos, veamos y comentemos lo haremos en español"]. When I inherited this course back in the 1990s, I changed the syllabus to include two male and two female authors and also included theoretical units on narratology, Marxism, New Historicism, and feminism. In this section I will discuss the students' reactions to the inclusion of men and women writers and to the discussion and application of feminist theory.

I teach this course every other year and therefore have changed the list of authors somewhat frequently. Nevertheless, I always maintain the two men/two women balance, a strategy which, although it does not recognize on the surface Butler's performative theories of gender, does recognize biological categories of sex and the underrepresentation of women on many course syllabi in my university. I do not mention this to students as a deliberate move on my part, but many notice and comment upon it as we get into the second half of the course. I like having them question and analyze some of my canonical choices. They recognize that I am choosing from a rich array of quality women and men authors and that I can easily establish parity in the numbers of women and men we read. I do this in a no-nonsense, this-is-just-fair way that I believe makes the students also feel more no-nonsense about parity. We have studied Larra, Pardo Bazán, Pérez Galdós, Unamuno, Cela, Martín Gaite, and Dulce Chacón. In some years, when I'm feeling particularly brave and energetic, I leave the fourth novel open and allow students to choose a novel from a list and then develop their own work on that novel. This keeps me reading the contemporary canon and keeps the course fresh, but it also changes the ways in which we can have common conversations in the course.

More polemical than the choice of authors (about which the students usually know less at the beginning of the term) is the inclusion of feminist theory as a possible approach to the texts we read in class. In the earlier years, students would write on their final course evaluations, "I liked studying theory, but why did we spend so much time on feminism?," "Why is feminist theory so much more important than the other approaches covered?" My first reaction to this response was that perhaps, in my zeal to establish the gender question in Spanish literature, I had given feminist theory a preeminent position in the course. Nevertheless, upon reviewing the course syllabus and texts, I reassured myself that we had spent exactly three weeks on each of the theoretical approaches, with an equal number of secondary articles and student-led presentations on each one. Therefore, it

was the perception of some students that "feminism had taken over." In ensuing years, I have been more transparent in explaining the four novels-four theoretical schools approach, and the students have understood better what theory does for us as critics and why certain texts lend themselves to specific critical approaches.

Students typically leave the course with an understanding of the trajectory of Spanish narrative from the 19th century through the present day, a respect for men and women novelists within the Spanish tradition, a basic understanding of what literary theory is and why it is useful, and, yes, a brief introduction to feminist literary theory in order to expand their abilities in analyzing the gender question in Hispanic literature.

EXAMINATION OF THE FEMALE PROTAGONIST IN 20TH-CENTURY SPANISH LITERATURE AND FILM

This upper-level course allows for a multi-genre approach much appreciated by students. Despite the clear thrust towards gender in the title of the course, the course can unfold in many different directions, thus allowing students a subtle "way in" to the discussion of gender. Female and male authors are included, and thematic questions addressed are: how does the female protagonist absorb and reflect the culture of which she is a part?; how are gender and culture related, and how does this manifest itself in the works studied?; what is Spanish feminism?; what are some of the challenges and victories of female authorship and authority?; what are the differences among the narrative, poetic, and dramatic portrayals of the female protagonist?

The course begins with María Martínez Sierra's *Canción de cuna*, which builds students' reading confidence, portrays a host of female types, and introduces the very complicated question of female authorship. Students have been fascinated by the personal and professional relationship between María and Gregorio Martínez Sierra and been very curious about María's deferral to her husband in claiming fame for their literary collaborations. Female and male students alike wonder at María's lack of ego and, in a sense, begin the course wishing for more appropriately-placed critical acclaim for Spain's women writers.

La casa de Bernarda Alba—both the García Lorca play and the TVE2 production—capture students' interest through the depiction of the almost all female cast, the beauty of the writing, the poignant nature of women's oppression, and the also gendered portrayal of the male suitor. The play encourages a full discussion of gendered spheres and gender roles. The last time I taught the course, the students were required to select and perform

scenes from the play. Several male students played female characters and were required to do so in a believable fashion. The live gender dynamics in the play itself and in this cross-dressing approach were further complicated when the class performed their scenes at Virginia Military Institute for an all-male, upper-level Spanish class. Hanging in García Lorca's beautifully crafted, stifling air of oppression were questions of enclosure and freedom, repression and desire, gossip and silence. The students captured live many of the limiting elements for Spain's 20th-century female protagonist.

As we continued to read more works featuring female protagonists and/or voices (Laforet's *Nada*, Gloria Fuertes' poetry, Delibes' *Cinco horas con Mario*, *Doce relatos de mujeres*, and Lourdes Ortiz' *El cascabel al gato*), students also individually prepared presentations on Hispanic feminist criticism and secondary readings on the primary authors. These included works by Spanish historians, such as Pilar Folguera, by literary critics, such as Mariana Petrea and Elizabeth Scarlett, and by the authors themselves, including Carmen Martín Gaite's personal essays from *Hilo a la cometa*. In this sense, each student read and "owned" a piece of the theory that served as the backdrop to the class. The students and I keep in mind that the feminist critical approach is one choice among many, as Annette Kolodny states more eloquently:

> All the feminist is asserting, then, is her own equivalent right to liberate new (and perhaps different) significances from these same texts; and, at the same time, her right to choose which features of a text she takes as relevant because she is, after all, asking new and different questions of it. In the process, she claims neither definitiveness nor structural completeness for her different readings and reading systems, but only their usefulness in recognizing the particular achievements of woman-as-author and their applicability in conscientiously decoding woman-as-sign. (As cited in Showalter, 1985b, p. 246)

While Showalter (1985b) seeks a more unified sense of feminist literary criticism, especially "at this early stage" (p. 246), she recognizes Kolodny's "playful pluralism" (p. 246), which is perhaps largely a function of the inclusive nature of many women's movements. This is another element ripe for debate in classes on gender: *Do*es feminist criticism require a set of stock, immovable definitions in order to appeal to the "uninitiated" (Nina Auerbach's term used by Showalter, 1985b, p. 181), or is pluralism, what we now might call multicultural feminism, a necessary and inherent aspect of feminist criticism? In this 1985 essay, Showalter remarks that feminist literary theory has much to learn from international feminism (p. 247), and

certainly the many Hispanic critics cited earlier in this essay have taken feminist literary in new, and, in some cases, less male-centered, directions. The final project for this course employed explicit feminist pedagogical practices. For the project, students had to choose a text featuring a female protagonist not covered in class, write an analytical paper on the text in which they fully evaluated the role of the female protagonist according to the overarching themes of the class, do a creative interpretation of the work through a painting, song, short film, script, poem (etc.), and serve as a peer reviewer for a classmate's project.

Students responded to the feminist aspect of this course much more positively than to the short imposition of feminism in the 19th- and 20th-century Novel course. They liked treating broad aspects of gender for both female and male roles, and they liked reading female and male authors. I believe that students in general had increased exposure to gender studies before enrolling in this course through the establishment of our women's and gender studies program and therefore understood the program and its forms of analyses to be more mainstream. Finally, I believe that the performance exercises and the autonomy of the final project drew students into the course topic and required them to be both mature and engaged in the course materials.

This course showcases Showalter's (1985a) gynocritical approach in that it offers a wide variety of women (and some men) authors, it employs feminist literary theory as a means to examine the course texts, and it asks students to think about the possibility of a female aesthetic.

DESIGN OF COURSE TAUGHT IN ENGLISH FOR THE LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN STUDIES PROGRAM, "HISPANIC FEMINISMS"

The courses I have described to this point get students thinking actively about gender, but they do not necessarily get them working actively outside of the classroom or its course texts. This fourth course, so broadly conceptualized as a way to think about Hispanic Feminisms across Spain, Latin America, and the United States, became a way for students to engage in course questions and problems beyond the walls of the classroom. This was achieved, in large part, through the curiosity and hard work of the students themselves, through the reinforcing mechanisms of the two interdisciplinary programs that sponsored the course (Latin American and Caribbean Studies and Women's and Gender Studies), and through the visiting speakers for the course. In addition, unlike the other three courses described, this course was offered in English and, therefore, empowered both bilingual (Spanish-English) students and English-speaking students to

carry course questions on Hispanic feminisms beyond the classroom experience. Many of the students at my university who take the introductory course on women's and gender studies have little to no exposure to Hispanic feminisms (depending on the professor in charge of the course in a given semester), and so this "Hispanic feminisms" course establishes that Hispanic feminisms are often more rooted in women's experiences as part of a collective (e.g. family, work unit, political party) and are often more attuned to intersectionality (social class, perceived race and/or skin color, religion). In addition, students must come to understand the complex diversity of Latin American and Caribbean regions, nations, and diasporas.

It was clear from the outset that this course aimed to develop students' knowledge of the theories and practice of "Hispanic Feminisms." This course had three units: Spanish feminism(s), Latin American feminism(s), and U.S.-Latina feminism(s). We began by establishing a rationale for our use of the polemical term 'Hispanic,' which succeeded in layering on the major course themes from the start. In this conversation, some students self-identified as "Hispanic" or with different terms ("Latina") and then discussed why they made these choices. In addition, we read a series of articles from *The Latin@ Condition* (1998) in order to understand the scholarly dialogue taking place about imposing terms of identification and/versus embracing such terms. These themes included feminism as theory and practice and feminism as personal and political, the intersections between and among gender, color, race, place of origin, religion, and socioeconomic class, and feminist practices with non-feminist labels. Students were asked to develop a geographical area of expertise to provide more daily foundation for the class and to attempt to cut through the broad geographical swaths covered. More importantly, through a series of feminist pedagogical practices—taking turns being discussion leaders, shared journals, invited speakers, round table discussions—students learned to be in charge of their own learning and to develop a platform surrounding Hispanic feminist activism.

This was a small class of all women students. The size of the class allowed the intensive feminist pedagogies to work at their highest potential because there was ample time for formal and informal student presentations and for guest speakers. The two assigned research papers required students to research and become experts on one women's organization from Spain and one from Latin America. Students came to understand how to define women's issues and gender issues in general, the elements of grass-roots organizing, the constant tension between theory and practice, and the cultural implications of being a woman and/or of being a feminist. Each

student reported to the class on her chosen organization, thus painting a diverse picture of the manners and motivations of women's activism and allowing the students to ruminate on how to become an activist and how to define an activist agenda over time. I like to think of the classroom as a potential space for what Wendy Lynne Lee (2010) calls "the activism of the ordinary" (p. 229), an understanding that we can start small, in our own classroom or backyard or lunch table, to make small differences among people we know. Once students have studied grass-roots and more large-scale activist programs, they will see that "starting small" can lead to big change.

The course texts were particularly advanced for a 100-level class, but the students rose to the challenge. They appreciated learning theory and seeing how it makes its way into the day-to-day practice and struggles of activism, but they seemed to like even more that there are intelligent ways to extract lessons from the struggles themselves. Class visitors presented on the Pasionaria (Dolores Ibárruri), Afro-Caribbean cultural production, and the women of Juárez. This focused view of women's activism that is not necessarily self-declared as feminist allowed the students to see that a platform does not have to be labeled 'feminist' for it to expound upon some ideals of equity and equal access. In particular, the students became extremely alarmed about the situation in Juárez (in 2008, this was) and its lack of exposure in the United States media. One journalism student decided to write a series of op-eds on Juárez for Virginia newspapers. A student majoring in sociology and minoring in Latin American and Caribbean Studies (LACS) wrote her LACS capstone paper on women in Mexico, with a thematic focus on violence, and an English major with a minor in Women's and Gender studies wrote her English honors thesis on Rosario Castellanos' and Giaconda Belli's notions of feminism in the Latin American context. In addition, this student graduated and went on to teach English in Tucson, where she implemented a five-part unit on local activism. I was gratified to see that students had brought their prodigious critical thinking skills to bear on human rights issues and real, live social justice. Although no students in that course chose to focus on Spain for an activist project, I will be curious to see if Spain's current political situation (e.g. abortion laws), economic crises, and youth activist movements (e.g. 15-M) will modify the students' orientation in future iterations of this course.

This course succeeded in going beyond Elaine Showalter's gynocritical view because it moved students from the concept of the female aesthetic into a fourth stage, one that recognizes the students' ability to grasp advanced concepts about women, gender, and sexualities in the Hispanic

world, to read and write intelligently on the issues, and to apply their theoretical knowledge to a platform that both means something to them and has the potential to make small and large changes in the world.

Elaine Showalter (1985b) has characterized certain generalized national approaches to feminist criticism:

> English feminist criticism, which incorporates French feminist and Marxist theory but is more traditionally oriented to textual interpretation, is also moving toward a focus on women's writing. The emphasis in each country falls somewhat differently: English feminist criticism, essentially Marxist, stresses oppression; French feminist criticism, essentially psychoanalytic, stresses repression; American feminist criticism, essentially textual, stresses expression. All, however, have become gynocentric All are struggling to find terminology that can rescue the feminine from its stereotypical associations with inferiority. (p. 249)

Hispanic feminist criticism, so broad in its geography and so deep in its concepts, works in many cases to redefine and revamp family structures that have shaped women's writing, to revalue women's private and public contributions to society, and to recognize linguistic experimentation from gender to gender, genre to genre, and region to region. Raising students' awareness about Hispanic feminist traditions and enhancing ability to speak and write about them succeeds in amplifying the students' worldview, along with that of their departments and universities. It also "normalizes" the presence of women creators and theorists on university syllabi across the curriculum and advances discussions among intellectuals and activists surrounding some of the most polemical topics within feminist critical paradigms: unification versus pluralism; nation versus world; multiculturalism; theory and/versus practice; blurring of lines between sex and gender; inclusion of ecological questions in a feminist framework. Engaging with students in these conversations augments both their and my sense of civic responsibility and activism on questions of equality in the Hispanic world.

NOTE

[1] See References for a fuller listing of works on the Hispanic feminist literary tradition. See also Chapter 8 of *The 'Strange Girl' in Twentieth-Century Spanish Novels Written by Women* (Mayock, 2004) for a synthesis of feminist literary writing in the Spanish context through 2004.

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6. GENDERED MATTERS

Engaging Research on Early Modern Dramaturgas *in the Classroom*

After almost three decades of researching and teaching the many Early Modern women writers who wrote in Spanish across the globe, certain moments stand out in acutely vivid detail: A well-intentioned mentor, discretely pulling one of us aside after a conference panel to admonish, "You have real potential—I don't want you to waste it on these women writers—you'll only marginalize yourself." Or, a junior colleague who reacted to a proposed General Education course on *Women Writers of the Spanish Empire* by exclaiming, "Oh, how disappointing! I thought you'd contribute something important, on Cervantes or someone else who matters …." Spurred into action by many such experiences, in the mid 1990s, we began speaking about Early Modern Iberian and colonial Latin American women playwrights in formal and informal sessions at a series of academic conferences. One of us had seen a 1990 student performance of Ana Caro's *Valor, agravio y mujer* directed by Vern Williamsen, and the other was working on an edition of María de Zayas's *La traición en la amistad* and had looked at the manuscripts of several plays by women dramatists in Spain's National Library.[1] Inspired by these opportunities and perhaps naively enthusiastic, we soon realized we had entered relatively unchartered territory. When we compared notes, we found that in our entire undergraduate and graduate careers, we each had only been taught one Early Modern woman writer, so our combined experience was limited to Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and Santa Teresa de Jesús. In Joanna Russ's (1983) terms, we were taught that "She wrote it, but there are very few of her" (p. 76).[2] Sor Juana—and by extension Santa Teresa—was a "*décima musa*," supposedly an anomaly in the world. In response to this dearth of materials and the dominant critical position expressed at "Un escenario propio," a conference on women's theatre held at the University of Cincinnati in 1994—"Women playwrights writing in Spanish have no literary heritage … they write in a vacuum"—we joined forces with a talented group of researchers to promote greater awareness and understanding of the contributions of Early Modern *dramaturgas*.[3] We also

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sought out other specialists who shared our interests and published a volume of critical articles on these authors (*Engendering the Early Modern Stage*). We hoped to ensure that *dramaturgas* would gain entrance into the literary canon by teaching their works and encouraging our colleagues to include them in their courses.

Despite the tremendous progress made since the early 1990s in the recovery of dramatic texts by these literary foremothers and the production of materials to support teaching them (see the appendix following this article), efforts to incorporate Early Modern women writers into curricula have yielded rather disappointing results.[4] Of equal concern is the fact that many Hispanists and literary scholars outside the field of *comedia* studies seem to remain relatively uninformed, if not disinterested, regarding the fundamental literary contributions of these playwrights and the substantial body of critical discourse now available about their works. In this essay, then, we will suggest some ways that the study of theatrical texts by women writing in Spanish during the Early Modern period may serve to enrich discussions of gender and discourse, both theoretical and practical, in the classroom and beyond.

We cannot deny that the culturally-constructed nature of gender affects (and often delimits) the ways that human beings experience life. One can argue that given this gendered context, a woman could write the exact same play, with the same characters, employing identical words as a man and the two texts could have very different meanings. While many of the works we mention here do question established paradigms, we do not mean to suggest that a female-authored text *has to do* something radically transgressive in terms of gender (or anything else) to matter. Even texts written by women in the Early Modern period that re-inscribe the patriarchy matter, because as Ruth El Saffar (1990) noted, "women transgress a major set of cultural codings when they take up the pen"—even if they do not directly challenge patriarchy or other social structures (p. 1). Even as we analyze specific instances of resistance, we resist the idea that male authors set the aesthetic standard and that female authors become significant only as they transgress that standard. In the largest sense, women authors, and the diversity of experiences—real and imaginary—that they represent, matter because they existed historically and women's history/herstory itself matters.[5] In order to gain a fuller appreciation of human experience, we must critically engage with *dramaturgas* and their legacy; moreover, we need to consider their beliefs and perspectives, even when, or perhaps especially when, theirs do not align with ours. We must, as Chandra Mohanty so cogently demonstrates, resist the homogenization of women's experiences.

Hence, we should consider alternative strategies, in our classrooms and in our scholarly practices, as Badía, Bernard and Gasior (2012) suggest in their work on teaching Early Modern women. We need to build on insights provided by feminist thinkers like Susanne Luhmann, Annette Kolodny and others who challenge commonplace educational practices. We must question unproductive structures that reify binary oppositions, including that between theory and literature. All too often, literary scholars bemoan the privileging of theory over texts; in this instance, however, theory may provide us a way to foreground the very texts we wish to promote. Rather than engaging in often counterproductive canon skirmishes regarding aesthetic value, we should campaign for inclusion from a position of strength. Many contemporary theories address issues that directly relate to works by our *dramaturgas*; even more significantly, these texts often illuminate contemporary theories by revealing their limitations. As we will demonstrate, engaging with works by these pioneering women playwrights clearly illustrates how gender matters in critical analysis; thus, we should advocate studying these contestatory texts across the curriculum, especially in literary theory classes. Barbara Simerka's (2013) recent and impressive volume *Knowing Subjects: Cognitive Cultural Studies and Early Modern Spanish Literature* explores the ways that cognitive science's engagement with Early Modern texts has enriched both fields. The volume provides insights into several woman-authored texts; it also highlights how those very texts lend nuance to the theories themselves. From a different angle, Catherine Connor makes a strong case for the *comedia* as a promising site for the study of embodied cognition. In a forthcoming article, she asserts that the dramatic works of Zayas and Caro "testify to the writers' keen perception of the complexity of human bio-cultural development" which enables them to anticipate "discoveries" of the twenty-first century relating to gender and gendered identity. Indeed, whenever we teach plays by Early Modern *dramaturgas*, gender issues inevitably enter the discourse: female and male cross-dressing, passing in its many forms, female subjectivity and agency, patriarchal authority, gendered violence, *écriture feminine*, the male gaze, and—in convent theatre—exclusively female casts and audiences all pose important challenges to many dominant stances.

CROSS-DRESSING AND GENDER PERFORMANCE

Contemporary considerations of transvestism and the performativity of gender profit from the examination of Hispanic classical theatre written by women and performed by actors of both sexes, since this tradition provides a crucial counterpoint for assumptions regarding drama and gender

dynamics based on all-male Shakespearean stagings. In some cases, as illustrated by Connor, *comedia* texts anticipate theory. When Leonor becomes Leonardo in the oft-quoted example from Caro's *Valor*, she affirms that "mi agravio mudó mi ser" [my betrayal changed my being] (I. 510). Current scientific studies of the impact of emotional trauma on brain chemistry and sex typing suggest that such a fundamental transformation is indeed possible (Moir & Jessel, 1991; Hines, 2004). Other *comedias*, including Sor Juana's *Los empeños*, proffer what could be considered primers on the performativity of gender, as in the comic scene when Castaño dons female garb, complaining about the restrictions of the garments to the audience as he transforms from *gracioso* to *dama*.

Cross-dressing has long been a favorite topic among *comedia* scholars. Part of the critical fascination stems from the fact that cross-dressing works differently in Spain than it does in England. Students and theatre practitioners alike often assume that the Shakespearean model, in which boy actors play all the female roles, is the norm for all theatre of the Early Modern age. However, as mentioned above, on the Spanish stage female, as well as male, actors performed. Women actors played the roles of women who cross-dressed as men. Cross-dressing female characters became a staple of male-authored *comedias*; even Lope de Vega (1609) mentions them in his *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias*.

In terms of gender, cross-dressing matters, of course, because costume—the way we dress—functions as the most obvious outward marker of gender. The kinds of clothing that culture and laws (*pragmáticas* issued by the king) required people to wear set limits on their behaviours (in terms of both gender and of class). Nevertheless, cross-dressing women figured prominently in Early Modern Spain. Both Catalina de Erauso (1592–1650) and Queen Christina of Sweden (1626–1689) enjoyed a certain celebrity status—playwrights made them the title characters of some of their works. The king rewarded Erauso with money for her military services and she even received a special dispensation from Pope Urban VIII to continue dressing as a man. Correspondence from the same time documents how the Spanish people looked forward to a royal visit from the cross-dressing Swedish queen who had converted to Catholicism; unfortunately, plans changed and the visit was cancelled. Royals and rebels were not the only women who cross-dressed in public. Although forbidden to do so, actresses sometimes wore their masculine costumes outside the walls of the *corral* theatre. And cross-dressing female characters abound on the stage in *comedias* penned by men and women.[6]

When women playwrights write female cross-dressers, it means something different than when male playwrights do so because of the

inescapable gender dynamics involved.[7] Critics have long recognized that cross-dressing and other *"varonil"* female characters in the *comedia* break gender norms and become strong and independent individuals.[8] In comparison with Tirso de Molina's Juana from *Don Gil de las calzas verdes*, who creates multiple roles for other characters and teaches three of them how to dress and act "male" like she does, Shakespeare's Rosalind, who simply teaches the man she loves how to love a woman, looks effeminate.

Mindful of the potential power cross-dressing offers female characters, Lope de Vega urged:

> Las damas no desdigan de su nombre.
> Y si mudaren traje, sea de modo
> que pueda perdonarse, porque suele
> el disfraz varonil agradar mucho.
>
> [Don't let your ladies be unladylike,
> and if they should disguise themselves as men,
> since such cross-dressing never fails to please,
> ensure they do in ways that may be excused.] (2009, vv. 280–83)

Lope wanted his women actresses and characters, even those who cross-dressed, to maintain gender norms, to behave like women. For the Lope of the *Arte nuevo*, the woman who dressed as a man did not please because of the ways she could transgress social and cultural norms, but because, as Carmen Bravo-Villasante recognized in her pioneering study, women in male costumes showed off their legs in a way that titillated audiences. As demonstrated by Lope's words and the many injunctions that warned against the lustful desires cross-dressed actresses could incite, playwrights and audience members could still objectify the women who portrayed these strong characters.

Many a cross-dressing woman written by a male playwright dons masculine clothing because her lover, the conquest over, has moved on. The jilted woman dresses as a man in order to move in the masculine spaces of city streets and country highways with the ultimate goal of finding her lover and winning back her honor through marriage. Though their female characters sometimes end up with the same conventional marriage commitments at play's end, *dramaturgas* give their cross-dressing women stronger motivations and more deeply transgressive desires. Ana Caro's Doña Leonor, who becomes Leonardo in *Valor, agravio y mujer,* could be a typical woman wronged, except that she has no marriage plans. Her goal is to find the man who left her behind, and she openly discusses

her plan to kill him.[9] In Angela de Azevedo's *El muerto disimulado,* Doña Lisarda, her virginity intact, rejects her female garb and her name, emphasizing that she is now Lisardo. She believes her brother dead, and her father has died of a broken heart, so she takes on the masculine role of defending her family's honor. She plans to find her brother's murderer and, like Leonor/Leonardo, kill him.[10]

The first Spanish woman to draw a parallel between her own transgressive act of writing and the act of a woman killing a man was the fifteenth-century nun Teresa de Cartagena. Sor Teresa believed that if Judith could take up the (phallic) sword and defeat Holofernes, people ought to believe that she (Sor Teresa) could take up the (phallic) quill and write a treatise:

> For clearly it is more within the reach of a woman to be eloquent than strong, and more modest for her to be skilled than daring, and easier for her to use the pen than the sword. (Seidenspinner-Núñez, 1998, p. 93)

Ana Caro and Angela de Azevedo reversed this logic in their plays. If they could wield their pens to write Leonor/Leonardo and Lisarda/Lisardo, then their characters could wield their swords to defend and restore their own honor. Both Leonor and Lisarda end up marrying their marks, but not before besting them in a sword fight. In Sor Marcela de San Félix's *Muerte del apetito,* the female characters Alma, Desnudez, and Mortificación do not stop until they have killed the male character Apetito twice: the first time Desnudez chokes him; the second time the three women work together to run him through with a sword. Breaking *comedia* conventions, both violent acts take place on stage.[11]

Plays by Early Modern *dramaturgas* also question the performance of gender by male characters. Male cross-dressers are rare in the theatre of the period, but Sor Juana's Castaño and Azevedo's Clarindo stand out among them. Castaño's onstage change from masculine to feminine apparel may have more to do with female gender norms than with male. In his article "Sor Juana as Feminist Playwright," Christopher Weimer (1992) argues that the *gracioso* in drag "criticizes … conventions of female identity and behavior" (p. 97). The nobleman Clarindo's cross-dressing as Clara allows him to move in female spaces from which men are typically excluded.[12] In the second part of Feliciana Enríquez de Guzmán's *Tragicomedia,* Yleda grows angry with her husband Birano, the prince's squire, for undervaluing her. She draws his sword, takes his helmet, and forces him to exchange his armour for her skirt. Next she gets him to wash in a spring that magically removes all of his facial hair, and both Yleda and Birano begin to refer to

him as Birana. Yleda also convinces Beloribo to wash in the same spring, and then leaves the two of them alone to woo each other. Pan and two other libidinous minor gods come upon the pair and try to seek their sexual favors. The ease with which the two men accept their new identities and rapid shifts in desire in these scenes underscore the performative nature of gender.[13]

As this overview of cross-dressing and gender performance demonstrates, these dramatic texts penned and performed by women often interrogate the intersectionality of identity, thereby providing multiple ways of initiating discussions of gender. In fact, we have found that one of the most fruitful ways to engage students in productive conversations about cross-dressing and breaking other gender norms is to involve them in performance in the classroom. When students represent scenes from female-authored plays (and for comparison purposes male-authored plays), they become verbally and physically invested in the meanings of those scenes. Such activities can easily be adapted to suit the level of any class; for instance, in co-convened groups, graduate students can sometimes serve as "directors" to help undergraduates grasp the complexity of the passages in question.

PASSING

Equally promising are the insights that our *dramaturgas* can yield into theories of "passing." Theoretical explorations of passing—the attempted transformation across lines of social identity categories—have, for the most part, analyzed the workings of race or gender in the United States. Most often passing is associated with the tensions between phenotype and racial categories in the post-Civil-War U.S., as represented, for instance, in Nella Larsen's 1929 novel, *Passing*. More recently, Judith Butler, Pamela Caughie, Nadine Ehlers and others have theorized passing and its relationship to the performativity of identity. As useful as it is for an understanding of individual subjectivity, the limited focus of current U.S.-based work on passing inevitably constrains and even predetermines the possible theoretical models of passing and its representations. Sean McDaniel and Joyce Tolliver's forthcoming book, *Writing Counterfeit Subjects: The Representation of Passing in Spain*, suggests that "passing stories arise at times of anxiety about changes in the reliability of certain social categories for determining social meaning and individual identity." They demonstrate that "passing tales are powerful: not only is tension created by the imminent possibility that the pass will be exposed, but the examination of how passing acts are represented and received reveals the

contours and power of the social categories that are transgressed" (p. 3). McDaniel and Tolliver's work reveals that race is not the universal fundamental category determining social station and privilege; in cultures such as that of seventeenth-century Spain, religion as an identity category takes on a crucial role. Even in cases where the social category most obviously transgressed is that of class, the workings of gender and religious categories impinge repeatedly on those of class, and at times become inextricable from them. When we think of gender passes in the *comedia*, attention immediately turns to myriad *mujeres vestidas de hombre*. Even more compelling in terms of what we learn about cultural construction of identity are the less frequent *hombres vestidos de mujer*. As mentioned above, in Azevedo's *El muerto disimulado*, Clarindo takes advantage of the fact that he is presumed dead. This nobleman dresses as a merchant woman named Clara, engaging in a double pass. Though women, including his cross-dressed sister, note her incredible resemblance to the dead man, they accept Clara as a woman; yet, they treat her as a fellow noblewoman despite her attempt to sell them wares. Perhaps this suggests that, in the period, a convincing class pass was more difficult to sustain than a gender pass—one need only think of historic figures from 16th-century Spain like Catalina de Erauso for possible precedents of successful gender passes. Or, this failed class pass could reflect the dominant culture's necessary fiction that one's nobility/one's blood will tell regardless of one's circumstances. No matter which interpretation one chooses, one cannot deny that this text provides fertile territory for exploring the boundaries of passing. By foregrounding the theoretical issues such as these raised in women-authored *comedias*, we will not only contribute to the elaboration of more inclusive theoretical paradigms, we will also create greater interest in the literary artistry of Early Modern and Colonial *dramaturgas*. This, in turn, should facilitate their inclusion in courses and classrooms across disciplines.

SUBJECTIVITY, MIMETIC DESIRE, AND FEMALE AGENCY

Female-authored plays often cast women characters in the role of subject instead of mere objects. Several convent plays by different authors include a character named Alma as protagonist. Alma becomes a female version of Everyman. She enjoys subjectivity and agency, and can choose among various suitors: el Esposo or el Pastor, and Apetito, Celo Indiscreto, el Universo, el Mundo, etc. These plays deal fundamentally with the meaning of a woman's life.

In many canonical *comedias*, women serve as nothing more than foils for male desire and male rivalry. This coincides with René Girard's (1976) theoretical construction of mimetic desire, based in part on analyses of Early Modern Spanish texts, in which he "posits women almost exclusively as the object of triangular desire" (Gorfkle and Williamsen, 1994, p. 17). Sedgwick (1985) convincingly argues that "Girard's reading presents itself as one whose symmetry is undisturbed by such differences as gender, although the triangles that most shape his view tend, in the European tradition, to involve bonds of 'rivalry' between males 'over' a woman …" (p. 23). Significantly, when triangular relationships emerge in plays penned by *dramaturgas*, they often highlight the rivalry between women over the same male objects of desire. At times, when the wronged woman cross-dresses to avenge her own honor as does Leonor in *Valor, agravio y mujer*, the woman actually courts her rival for her man's affections, thereby entering a second triangular relationship in which she becomes her galán's "male" rival. Thus, she is no longer relegated to the role of object but is portrayed as an agent of desire in two simultaneous relationships, which, in turn, question many dominant assumptions regarding "compulsory heterosexuality."[14] To borrow Judith Butler's (1994) phrase, these texts often serve to "contest the heterosexual matrix" (p. 10).

In María de Zayas's *La traición en la amistad*, Fenisa takes center stage as a desiring subject. She competes for the affection of every man in sight—just hearing her friend Marcia describe Liseo, a man she is interested in, suffices to whet her voracious appetite and incite her unquenchable desire. Throughout the course of the play, she blatantly pursues multiple men, openly declaring "Gallarda condición, Cupido, tengo: / muchos amantes en mi alma caben" ["Cupid, I am in quite a tate. There is room for lots of lovers in my soul"] (Hegstrom, 1999, vv. 1463–64). Although some have labeled Fenisa a "Don Juan in skirts," as others have demonstrated, she does not play the role of "burladora," interested in only deceiving. Hegstrom (1994) notes in her early article on the play,

> In Fenisa, Zayas creates her extreme example of a *mujer varonil.* This character takes on the masculine role of deceiver, loving every male with whom she comes into contact. Not quite a *burladora*, Fenisa's philosophy is not 'love 'em and leave 'em,' but 'love the one you're with.' (p. 63)

Interestingly, Fenisa evokes very strong reactions among contemporary college students. David Pasto's Oklahoma City University production of the play faced a tremendous challenge when, after months of rehearsal, the student playing Fenisa withdrew, stating that she could not represent such

an immoral character (Williamsen, 2012). In animated class discussions generated by the play, students often express open admiration for Fenisa and her relentless pursuit of her own satisfaction. Still others criticize her for her betrayal of her friends, citing that they all know a woman like her that "cannot be trusted." Interpretations of the play's ending, in which everyone is paired off except for Fenisa, also vary widely. Some see that she remains free—unfettered by marriage; others feel that she now faces being alone—the very fear they felt drove her earlier behaviour. All express astonishment that a figure like Fenisa could have existed—even if only in a dramatist's imagination—almost four centuries ago. In turn, this realization allows them to question accepted societal norms and to consider what has/has not changed.[15]

Despite the serious issues raised in these *comedias*, humor also plays a pivotal role. Tellingly, Caro and Zayas both employ sexual humor and innuendo throughout their works. In *Valor, agravio y mujer*, the inert body of one of the *graciosos* is the butt of several jokes at men's expense. When Flora examines his phallic shaped tobacco horn, quipping in dismay "¿Hombres, que aquesto os dé gusto?" [Men—to think that this could give you pleasure!], the point is well taken. In Zayas, joking references to cuckolds abound. Yet, one moment shifts from expected humor to the unexpected: Lucía counsels Fenisa, stating that her grandmother always advised having more than one man around—so if any one got away, there were more to take his place. Students often react with surprise and even shock when they realize that Sor Marcela de San Félix also includes ribald humor in her convent theatre, particularly in the innuendos and actions of her character Apetito.

Additionally, as others have noted, sometimes metatheatrical moments comically highlight the dramatists' awareness of the transgressive nature of their incursion into the public sphere. Critics often cite the exchange in which the two *graciosos* in *Valor, agravio y mujer* express their dismay at the audacity of women poets who now dare to write *comedias*, explicitly stating they would be better off to stick to weaving and sewing.[16] By expressly flouting her violation of the norm, Caro advocates for her own agency. Even the closing lines, "… Pídeos su dueño/ por mujer y por humilde/ que perdonéis sus defectos" [Its author, as a woman, and a humble one at that, asks that you forgive its shortcomings.], often disregarded as merely formulaic self-deprecatory remarks, highlight that the author is indeed a woman, thereby marking the stage as women's territory.[17]

PATRIARCHAL AUTHORITY

The critical commonplace that there are no mothers on the Golden Age Stage has proven quite resistant to change despite growing evidence to the contrary. Templin's (1935) early inventory of mothers in Lope de Vega plays did little to change this misperception; other scholarly efforts have fared little better. Most recently, Judith Caballero's (2011) dissertation employed insights from cognitive science to demonstrate how the prevalence of this critical myth reveals the power of "selective attention." She combined this theoretical framework with painstaking archival research, yielding a corpus of hundreds of *comedias* that feature mothers. Interestingly, in several of the women-authored plays, the ever-present father figure is missing. None of the four leading ladies in *La traición en la amistad* has a father present seeking to control her actions; this allows them greater freedom to manipulate their circumstances and take charge of their own destinies. Rosa in Maria do Céu's *Clavel y Rosa* and Rosaura in Caro's *El conde Partinuplés* enjoy the same kind of independence. Although in many cases there is a brother who purportedly assumes the paternal role, fraternal efforts to exercise patriarchal authority are usually revealed to be ineffectual at best.

Even more significant, however, is the way that several of the female-authored plays illustrate bell hook's (2014) assertion that "Patriarchy knows no gender." In case after case, women characters themselves enforce patriarchal norms. At the end of *Valor, agravio y mujer*, it is the women who decide and enforce the conventional marriage pairings; however, the asymmetrical ending problematizes the formulaic ending. One *gracioso* initially refuses marriage, accepting only when money enters the bargain, thereby underscoring the materialistic nature of marriage transactions; the other *gracioso* ends up alone, bemoaning his fate. It is interesting that contemporary stagings of the play tend to "normalize" the ending by having everyone pair off at the end. When three different (male) directors were asked to explain this decision, they each stated that they were seeking an ending that would "satisfy" a contemporary audience. Disconcertingly, the transgressive force of Caro's work seems diminished by such choices.

Whereas a great deal of the criticism on *La traición en la amistad* has focused on the collective solidarity of the women who join forces against the renegade Fenisa, less attention has been paid to the way that Marcia and the others enforce societal standards.[18] As they punish Fenisa for expressing her own desires and/or for thwarting their own, they align themselves with traditional patriarchal structures. Awareness of women's collusion in patriarchy through their participation in the oppression of other women has

formed part of the critique of Zayas's prose works for some time, especially in criticism of her *Desengaños*. For example, in *La inocencia castigada,* the narrator highlights that of all the wrongdoers who collaborate in the cruel torture of Inés, the behavior of the sister-in-law was singled out as being especially egregious because, as a woman, one might have expected greater compassion from her. *La traición* operates in a similar fashion by foregrounding women who serve to enforce patriarchal norms in the absence of men. Ultimately, this play proves not to be merely ambivalent, but rather multivalent, inviting myriad contradictory interpretations. As the curtain falls, female solidarity reigns, yet it serves to reinforce patriarchal order by penalizing Fenisa for exercising her own sexual agency.

WOMEN AS AGENTS OF VIOLENCE

In the same keynote address at the National Women's Association Conference in Puerto Rico where she repeated that patriarchy knows no gender, bell hooks (2014) spoke passionately about the need for feminist pedagogy and feminist practice to come to terms with the violence inherent in oppressive patriarchal systems. These remarks, in turn, prove to be a powerful lens for the consideration of violence in these Early Modern plays penned by women. In *comedias* by Ana Caro, Angela de Avezedo, and others, women often replicate the violence that characterizes their male counterparts. Yet, of all characters, Zayas's Fenisa proves the most disturbing in this regard. Undeniably, here was a woman who was exercising her agency and asserting herself as a sexual subject, yet feminist scholars often find her unsettling. Alison Jaggar's (1989) assertion that "only when we reflect on our initially puzzling irritability, revulsion, anger, or fear may we bring to consciousness our gut-level awareness that we are in a situation of coercion, cruelty, injustice or danger" (p. 161) serves as a catalyst for a renewed examination of Fenisa that unveils a troubling aspect of her behavior towards others that criticism has avoided. León, the servant *gracioso*, actually has the greatest number of lines in the play, and steals the show in many scenes. His humor and wit enliven the moments when he takes center stage. Yet, he is marginalized because of his class. Those who outrank him treat him cruelly. First, one of the male characters hits him with little provocation. Then, in a subsequent scene, Fenisa violently abuses him, knocking out several of his teeth. Though the incident is milked for its comic potential in all its eschatological glory, the violence, once unmasked, underscores the cruelty perpetuated by the social structure of the time. Here, Zayas does not depart from theatrical convention, nor does she seem to transgress accepted norms or to question the treatment of servants;

rather, she capitalizes on the mistreatment of a member of a lesser social class as comic fodder. In contemporary stagings, this scene, in all its abusive glory, still elicits laughter; yet, upon further consideration, it renders visible uncomfortable legacies from Zayas's time that still persist in ours. We should resist the tendency toward homogenization that would gloss over this fissure in an attempt to render Zayas palatable; instead, we should confront this and other issues raised by the text so that we can move beyond the realm of unquestioned and unquestionable privilege.

ÉCRITURE FEMININE / WRITING THE FEMALE BODY

One might argue that Zayas, in creating Fenisa, explores "the in-between" when writing the "heterogenous," "erogenous," swimming, flying woman whom Hélène Cixous (1976) describes in "The Laugh of the Medusa" (pp. 883, 889). Nonetheless, Azevedo also comes close to creating a character who writes the female body in her brilliant student, Irene, in *La margarita del Tajo*. Like Cixous's gestation drive, Irene's desire for learning and her willingness to share that with other characters is a "desire-that-gives" (p. 893). But two male characters—a monk and a married man—symbolically penetrate and invade the female body. Her tutor, Remigio, poisons Irene with a potion that gives her body the symptoms of pregnancy. When others learn of her "dishonor," jealous Britaldo sends an assassin who stabs her and throws her body into the river. Azevedo seems to anticipate Cixous's critiques of Nietzsche's "systematic reducing of woman to the place of seduction," in which she calls seduction a "gift-that-takes" invented by men (p. 888). In *La margarita del Tajo*, the "gift-that-takes," which leads to death, is undeniably masculine. Irene does not seduce; Remigio and Britaldo are the men "who would like to take everything" (p. 888). At the play's climax, the curtain in front of the discovery space is drawn to reveal Irene's miraculously preserved, dead body.[19]

Irene's graphically depicted death forms part of a "long history of gynocide" (Cixous, H., 1976, p. 888), but Soror Maria do Céu's trilogy of *autos* about St. Alexis and her rosary of plays about the Virgin Mary approach—in their cyclical natures—*écriture feminine*. Cixous claims that a woman's "speech … is never simple or linear or 'objectified,' generalized." A woman's writing is bodily, made of menstrual blood, the "white ink" of "mother's milk"; rather than arriving at a single, linear climax, a woman's writing "never stops resonating" (pp. 878, 881). This view suggests that women's writing is cyclical, complex, multiple.[20] Soror Maria tells Alexis's story three times using three different literary modes, and her five Virgin stories will repeat again when they end, because the

rosary is circular. Cixous did not know about these *dramaturgas*, of course. She believed, just as we were taught in graduate school, that "after plowing through literature across languages, cultures, and ages, one can only be startled at this vain scouting mission" (p. 878). We need to insist on correcting their omission by including their writing, which begins to "inscribe femininity" (p. 878), in our undergraduate, as well as graduate, courses.

THE MALE GAZE

In *Feminism and the Honor Plays of Lope de Vega*, Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano (1994) problematizes the question of the "male gaze" in Early Modern Spanish theater, arguing convincingly that the diverse make-up of the *corral* audience would lead to fragmentation of meaning and to multiple readings of the same performance. Citing Julien and Mercer, she writes, "the very heterogeneity of the *comedia* audience argues for the possibility of competing meanings negotiated by 'conflicting identities within the "imagined community" of the nation'" (p. 242). Groups of audience members and individual spectators will not necessarily identify with the male gaze. Lope de Vega may have wanted his female characters to behave like women, but the playwright loses control of the performance when he sells his written text to the *autor* or *autora de comedias* (the managers of Early Modern theater troupes). The majority of male audience members may objectify women actors playing strong female characters, but the women spectators in the *cazuela* and the noblewomen in balcony windows view the play from a different perspective. The divided female gaze in the *corral* theater takes in the performance by the *mosqueteros* in the patio and the male spectators on the *gradas,* as well as the show staged by the acting company. The *dramaturgas* were aware of their divided audience. Both Sor Juana's Castaño and Zayas's Lucía speak in asides directly to the women in the audience.

Leonor de la Cueva y Silva's *La firmeza en la ausencia* focuses on the male gaze, but because Armesinda withstands King Filiberto's advances, rather than falling victim to them, he can become the object of the gaze in the play, the character who does not behave normatively and so stands out in the action of the play.[21] Some of the plays written by *dramaturgas* objectify male characters, positioning them as objects of the gaze within the play by allowing a *mujer esquiva* to choose among several suitors. In *El muerto disimulado,* Jacinta's father offers her this option—she can marry anyone she wants, as long as she agrees to marry. In *El conde Partinuplés,* Rosaura is able to gaze on her three suitors through magic without their

awareness. Similarly, in *Clavel y Rosa,* Rosa sets the terms of the competition between Lirio, Narciso, Bien-me-quiere, and Clavel.

Some of the *dramaturgas* found ways to eliminate men entirely from the theatrical equation. Azevedo served as lady-in-waiting to Isabel de Borbón and perhaps Azevedo and the queen's other female attendants performed her plays before the queen. In the convent, nun-actresses performed all the roles—female and male—in plays written by nun-playwrights before an all female audience. This arrangement allows female actresses to perform gender in ways that will create meanings that resonate with their female audience members.[22] Sor Francisca de Santa Teresa's character Mundo, a lascivious old man who tries to woo young nuns during their profession ceremonies, comes onstage stumbling without his crutches or eyeglasses, wearing make-up to try to hide his wrinkles. The actress and the audience must have enjoyed the role and the performance.

Even this cursory examination of the issues raised by the consideration of select Early Modern women playwrights reveals how much they have to offer contemporary scholars and students. If, as bell hooks (1994) contends, "the classroom remains the most radical space of possibility in the academy" (p. 12), it is precisely here, in our classrooms, that we should engage our students in dialogue with these dramatists. Their literary works, their creative achievements, and their historical circumstances reveal complexities that are often hidden. Their voices, undiminished by time, destabilize established binaries that are often reified as cultural heritage or societal norms. Thus, we can employ their vibrant artistic legacies to enable our students to think beyond narrowly prescribed limits, so that education can indeed become a "practice of freedom."

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NOTES

[1] We would like to dedicate this article to Vern G. Williamsen, an inspiring educator who included María de Zayas and Ana Caro in the classes he taught at the University of Missouri-Columbia beginning in 1968. We also want to thank Michael Boglovits from UNCG for his invaluable assistance in the final preparation of this article.

[2] At the beginning of her chapter on “Anomalousness” in *How to Suppress Women’s Writing,* Russ (1983) lists seven ways to dismiss women writers:

She didn't write it.
She wrote it, but she shouldn't have.
She wrote it, but look what she wrote about.
She wrote it, but "she" isn't really an artist and "it" isn't really serious, of the right genre–i.e., really art.
She wrote it, but she wrote only one of it.
She wrote it, but it's only interesting/included in the canon for one, limited reason.
She wrote it, but there are very few of her. (p. 76)

[3] Several studies now exist that treat the contributions of *dramaturgas* as a group and the gender questions raised by their works, including Teresa S. Soufas's (1996) *Dramas of Distinction: A Study of Plays by Golden Age Women*, Catherine Larson's (1996) "Valor Judgments, or Women Writers and the Comedia" and (2000) "You Can't Always Get What You Want: Gender, Voice, and Identity in Women-Authored *Comedias*," Hegstrom and Williamsen's (1999) *Engendering the Early Modern Stage* and Lisa Vollendorf's (2003) "Desire Unbound: Women's Theatre of Spain's Golden Age." Please see our forthcoming article, "Staging Gender in the Spanish Literature Classroom: Teaching Early Modern *Dramaturgas*" for a related pedagogical overview and strategies. Because of the limited scope of this article, we cannot begin to do justice to the extensive bibliography of criticism that now exists on the plays by Early Modern and colonial women playwrights.

[4] Although there has been a marked increase in critical activity on and theatrical productions of plays by Early Modern women writing in Spanish, their presence in the classroom is still somewhat limited. A recent informal inventory by William R. Blue (2014) indicated that many *comedia* courses at the graduate level include at least one work by a *dramaturga*; however, a survey of GEMELA members reveals that in our teaching we tend to focus on the same one or two works to the exclusion of others. In addition, undergraduate students rarely have the chance to study the playwrights unless they are taking a course specifically dedicated to gender. Moreover, the percentage of women-authored versus male-authored texts in anthologies has remained almost constant, just as Robinson (1991) found was the case for English anthologies. (See Williamsen, 1999, "Charting Our Course.")

[5] It also matters for Hispanism that, in literary history, Ana Caro is in fact the first professional woman dramatist, receiving paid commissions for her pieces at least a decade before Aphra Behn.

[6] For an extended discussion of Erauso and cross-dressing in Early Modern Spain, see Sherry Velasco's (1997) *The Lieutenant Nun: Transgenderism, Lesbian Desire, and Catalina de Erauso.*

[7] Robert Bayliss (2007) makes this very argument in "The Best Man in the Play: Female Agency in a Gender-Inclusive *Comedia*." See also Beatriz Cortez's (1998) "El travestismo de Rosaura en *La vida es sueño* y de Leonor en *Valor, agravio y mujer*" and Edward H. Friedman's (2008) "Clothes Unmake the Woman: The Idiosyncrasies of Cross-Dressing in Ana Caro's *Valor, agravio y mujer.*"

[8] Carmen Bravo-Villasante's *La mujer vestida de hombre en el teatro español del Siglo de Oro* first appeared in 1955, and Melveena McKendrick first published her ground-breaking study *Woman and Society in the Spanish Drama of the Golden Age: A Study of the* Mujer Varonil in 1974.

[9] Rosie Seagraves (2012) deciphers the conflict between Leonor's murderous motivations and the play's conventional happy ending in her article "Violent Masculinity Onstage and Off: A Rereading of Ana Caro's *Valor, agravio y mujer* through the Memoir of Catalina de Erauso."

[10] On gender questions in *El muerto disimulado,* see Maroto Camino, (2001) "Transvestism, Translation and Transgression," Múzquiz-Guerreiro (2005) "Symbolic Inversions," and Gabriele (2008) "Engendering Narrative."

[11] The best studies of gender in *La muerte del apetito* appear in the anthologies of Arenal, Schlau, Sabat-Rivers, and Susan Smith.

[12] On Clarindo and female space, see Hegstrom (2007) "*Comedia* Scholarship and Performance."

[13] See Reina M. Ruiz (2005) *Monstruos, mujer y teatro en el Barroco.*

[14] For an insightful analysis of feminized desire in Azevedo, Caro and Zayas, see Vollendorf's (2003) article "Desire Unbound."

[15] Many studies now exist regarding gender in *La traición en la amistad.* See, for example, Wilkins (1991) "Subversion through Comedy?," Soufas (1994) "María de Zayas's (Un)Conventional Play," Larson (1994–1995)"Gender, Reading, and Intertextuality," Stroud (1995) "The Demand for Love," Rodríguez Garrido (1997) "El ingenio en la mujer," Campbell (1998) "(En)Gendering Fenisa," Delgado (1998) "Lesbiagrafisis," Gabriele (2004) "El mundo al revés," Leoni (2007) "The Convenient Demonization of Fenisa," Bayliss (2008) "Feminism and María de Zayas's Exemplary Comedy," and Paredes Monleón (2013) "La fuerza de la mujer."

[16] Caro also interrogates class as well as gender. In a significant passage, Ribete, a *gracioso*, also rebels against the societal limitations of class and the literary conventions of his role, stating that although he was born of humble origin, he could still be brave.

[17] With reference to *Valor, agravio y mujer* and gender issues, please see also Soufas (1991) "Ana Caro's Re-Evaluation" and (1996) "A Feminist Approach," Williamsen (1992) "Re-Writing," Maroto Camino (1996) "Ficción," Gorfkle (1996) "Re-Staging Femininity," Dougherty (1996) "Out of the Mouths of 'Babes,'" Alcalá Galán (2001) "La cárcel del cuerpo," Leoni (2003) "Silence Is," Rhodes (2005) "Redressing," Ortiz (2005) "La mujer en hábito de comedia," Rodríguez-Jiménez (2006) "Writing Beyond the Ending," and Bates and Lauer (2010) "Performativity."

[18] For studies about female friendship in women-authored *comedias,* see Gorfkle (1998) "Female Communities," Wyszynski (1998) "Friendship," Maroto Camino (1999) "The Space of Woman's Solidarity," and Alcalde (2002) "La hermandad entre mujeres."

[19] Other approaches to gender in *La margarita del Tajo* can be found in Maria João Dodman's (2012) "Notions of Man and Manhood" and Christopher Gascón's (2005) "Female and Male Mediation."

[20] Alison Weber's (1996) *Teresa of Avila and the Rhetoric of Femininity* reveals St. Teresa's *écriture feminine.*

[21] Feminist readings of *La firmeza en la ausencia* include Soufas (1989) "Regarding the Woman's Response" and (2000) "The Absence of Desire," Voros (1993) "Calderón's Writing Women" and (1997) "Armesinda's Dream," and Aronson (2007) "The Threat of Rape."

[22] On the performance of convent plays, see Hegstrom (2014) "El convento como espacio escénico y la monja como actriz."

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III.

SHIFTING THE GROUND WHEN READING

LEILA GÓMEZ

7. HOW TO READ A MASCULINE CANON

Gender and Indigenismo

INTRODUCTION

As part of my ongoing research on literatures of the contact zone and cultural theory of hybridity, I often teach the problematics of Indigenismo both as it has been articulated in theoretical approaches and as it has been represented in cultural practices such as literature, photography, film, etc. This paper aims to find an answer to a surprising situation that I was faced with a few years ago when the students in my graduate seminar were reading *Oficio de tinieblas* (1962, translated as *The Book of Lamentations*) by Rosario Castellanos as an Indigenista novel. Castellanos is one of the authors that graduate students in our department needed to cover in order to pass their comprehensive exams (before the graduate examination process was revised), along with other Indigenista writers such as Miguel Ángel Asturias and José María Arguedas, so it often happened that I taught Castellanos alongside one or both of these other two authors. It surprised me that in some occasions, when describing Leonardo Cifuentes, the landowner character in *The Book of Lamentations*, some of the students did not consider the first scene, in which this character rapes an indigenous girl. I found that the students were reading this landowner character according to the canonical interpretation of such figures in Indigenista novels, especially according to the way Arguedas portrayed them: proud, manly, skilled, and admired by other characters in the novel, and often the narrator himself. How did my students fail to consider the rape scene in the first pages of the novel, and how did that scene showing an abusive sexualized landowner not problematize canonical conceptions?

For those who are acquainted with Castellanos's feminist work and ideology, this first scene cannot be disregarded. The narrator gives a long description of the circumstances that lead to the rape and the mental state of Marcela, the indigenous girl, after being raped. Her life, feelings and thoughts are actually introduced to us much earlier in the novel than those of Cifuentes. I first noticed then that, regarding this traumatic scene of rape,

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we as readers did not have the analytical tools to establish their importance in the narrator's project. However, given the analytical *habitus* of Indigenista criticism, in which the landowner figure is a fundamental character to the story and to peasant society, especially in the Andes and Mexico, the analysis of the dominant masculine figure (the landowner) has already been made available to us through an established tradition of criticism.

In this chapter, I study the reading *habitus* of Indigenista novels in the classroom, and provide a contextualization of Castellanos as an Indigenista author within the historical and ideological debates of Latin American criticism, specifically in terms of her feminism. Such contextualization has proven be useful in against-the-grain discussions with my graduate and undergraduate seminars. Thus, this article explores the intersection between Indigenismo and feminism in Latin America, its conflations, contradictions and alliances, which, in the case of teaching Castellanos, I believe are of paramount importance. Understanding this context, which includes critical debates on Indigenismo, Indigenista writers, and also the reading of her complete work, essays and interviews, biographical notes, etc., I provide a background and analytical framework through which the rape scene in *Oficio de tinieblas* cannot be overlooked in the classroom setting. It is also important to understand our own practice as readers and teachers, and the way our professionally developed perceptions of texts get in the way when dealing with the subversive proposals of writers such as Castellanos, who blur or contaminate stereotypical characterizations of a fixed genre, in this case Indigenista novels.

In this way, this chapter seeks not to give "tips" or instructions on how to teach Indigenismo and gender, nor even to describe my own experience as a professor specialized in the area, but to go beyond these practical matters and reflect on the habit of teaching these topics, and, through this reflection, make explicit assumptions that are often hidden in our pedagogical practices.

ROSARIO CASTELLANO'S INDIGENISMO

Oficio de tinieblas (1962) is a novel with various narrative threads that intersect the stories of Ladinos and landholders, lawyers and politicians, with indigenous leaders and their followers. The novel moves between two historical moments: that of the Chiapas Caste War (1869–1871)—an uprising of the Chamulas against the landowners, in which the indigenous people crucified a boy to turn him into their god—and the agrarian reform period under president Lázaro Cárdenas (1934–1940). Although in the

novel the two movements seem to take place side by side, they are in fact far apart both temporally and ideologically. The Caste War was not connected to the state's fight for reform, but was, on the contrary, an autonomous movement which was by no means motivated by the government's promises of land ownership to the Chamulas. In reality, it was a movement of self-defense against the landowners, with a strong religious component. Historians base this view on a young Chamula woman's discovery of a set of sacred stones carrying a divine message of protest, a story retold in *Oficio de tinieblas* through the sacred stones in the cave, which are interpreted by the Ilol Catalina Díaz Puiljá. Although both are social justice and protest movements, the novel clearly shows how they follow different political agendas and correspond to different ethnic groups, on the one hand, the Chamulas (and the novel's Ilol Catalina) in the case of the Caste War, and on the other, President Cárdenas's legal-bureaucratic group. The novel suggests that both groups' failure is based on their own internal disagreements. Their varying interests and methods render them unable to form a united front against the powerful conservative powers of the landowners and the church.

The Caste War, though fictionalized in the novel, was a real rebellion with messianic overtones, as pointed out by Victorien Lavou (1993), and not a case of the indigenous population latching onto the state's promises. This is precisely how the novel attempts to portray the conflict, principally through the indigenous leader Catalina, who has the ability to decipher the message of the gods. Her adopted son, born of the rape of Marcela, is the boy who will be crucified so that, through this ritual, a Chamula boy can bring to his people the same benefits that the "white" god brought to the Coletos. There is a long and deep-seated tradition among Chamula communities of sacrifice carrying with it the promise of salvation, and it is in this context that the crucifixion of Catalina's child should be understood. In his study of *Oficio de Tinieblas*, René Prieto (2000) analyzes the language used by Catalina in the cave, and the divine message that she (re)transmits, as pre-phallic or pre-symbolic, along the lines of Julia Kristeva. For Prieto (2000), it is the language of guttural sounds, which is prior to the articulation of patriarchal grammar. Nevertheless, Catalina should also be studied as the charismatic figure that made the novel's Indian rebellion possible: "In effect, she believes she possesses a supernatural power that not only lets her perform miracles, but also allows her to interpret the will of the gods. Hence the admiration and fear that she arouses among her countrymen" (Lavou, 1993, p. 326, my translation).

The topic of female leadership is explored by Castellanos through the figure of the Ilol Catalina, who is in fact the only woman in the novel with

the ability to mobilize the masses. As for the Ladino (or criollo descendants) women, they are wholly confined to the life of the home. Within the two social settings, the indigenous and the criollo, there are disagreements and internal conflicts, foremost among them those stemming from gender struggles. The Ilol Catalina is constantly engaging in gender conflicts with her husband, who looks down on her for not being able to bear children. As has been pointed out by Martin Lienhard (1987), the novel sets out to pick apart regional society by examining its relationships, be they social, ethnic or sexual, and from all possible perspectives (p. 569). This wide array of perspectives is crucial to understanding Rosario Castellanos's feminist proposal, for without it, we would not understand that the social groups involved are not homogeneous, and that is of paramount importance in class discussion. Rather, power struggles become part of social dynamics not only through ethnicity, but through gender as well.

According to Rosario Castellanos's biographers, she came upon the story of the Ilol and the stones with a divine message during the Caste War, while working in the Instituto Nacional Indigenista (INI) in San Cristóbal. The author herself has discussed why she began to work with this institution after she had written her first Indigenista novel, *Balún Canán* (1957):

> When I discovered this facet, I looked for a job that would satisfy certain ethical demands and a certain desire for justice. I even applied for, without having the slightest possibility of being of use to them, a job with the Instituto Nacional Indigenista. Since childhood I had always socialized with the Indians. After gaining some perspective, I realized what the Indians were like, and what they should be. I felt indebted to them, as an individual and as a class. I became aware of this debt when I wrote *Balún Canán.* Coming to terms with it gave rise to other books, and to my activity as director of the puppet theater run by the Instituto Indigenista in San Cristóbal. (Espejo, Beatriz, 23) [My translation]

As director of the puppet theater, Castellanos wrote scripts which the puppeteers performed in a sort of roving theater troupe. Many of the plays were intended to teach the indigenous audience about farming, hygiene, history, rights and civic duties. The author also led the project of translating the Mexican Constitution into the Tzotzil language. Castellanos recalls these activities with an awareness of her own lack of knowledge and inexperience, but at the same time with enthusiasm and intelligence. It has been noted that, as with the work of Lázaro Cárdenas and his public land

reforms, the INI and its tasks were not aimed at “Indianizing” Mexico, but rather at “Mexicanizing” the Indians, i.e. integrating them into the flow of modernization. As such, it should be pointed out that Castellanos participated in an institutional state process that placed indigenous people in a position of subordination to a bourgeois state, which in turn positioned itself as the representative of modernity and civilization. Nevertheless, Castellanos did reflect on the complicated relationship between the Mexican intelligentsia and the indigenous people, with all its fissures and discord, not only in *Oficio de Tinieblas* (1962), but also in her first Indigenista poems and her novel *Balún Canán* (1957). Her narrations juxtapose voices and perspectives that shed light on and contradict one another in a sort of dialogue, such that it is difficult to argue that the discourse of the state, the Mexican intelligentsia and modernity is in fact the predominant one. On the contrary, the very state for which Castellanos worked and its projects of Mexicanization, is exposed and questioned in her novels and stories (see the study *Cooptation and Complicity*). This, however, does not mean that the political success of the indigenous voices in Castellanos is guaranteed. As Estelle Tarica (2007) has shown, the intimate and aestheticized language of indigenous voices, not just in Castellanos’s novels, but in all discourses based on an asymmetrical power relation favouring the state or Ladino society, falls into the same hegemonic vehicles that lead to populism and the denial of social change. This is essentially true if we bear in mind that the only audience for which this multi-layered novel was intended was literate, Spanish-speaking society, and not indigenous society. To read the ethnic conflict without reading the internal fissures caused by gender struggles is, in fact, to allow the dominant (state) discourse on Indigenismo to absorb her criticism. This contextualization, which situates Castellanos as part of the Indigenist movement, far from being redundant, helps calibrate students’ perspective on the role of male and female Indigenistas writers in national building processes.

CASTELLANOS AND THE INDIGENISTA’S READING HABITUS

More than twenty years ago, female critics had remarkable insights regarding the way Latin American criticism was oblivious to the analysis of gender perspectives regarding traditional and canonical literature such as Indigenismo, whose works and authors occupy a secured space on our reading lists and syllabi, both in Latin America and the United States. Lucía Cunninghame Guerra (1990) made it very clear that traditionally, Indigenista literature has not been analysed from a gender perspective but

mainly from a point of view that considers ethnicity, geography, and socioeconomic factors:

> Within a critical discourse marked by the hegemonic values of a patriarchal bourgeoisie, the problem of unity and diversity in Hispano-American literature has tended to be analysed though a vision of heterogeneity based on ethnic, geographical and socio-economic elements. In spite of the impact of recent studies revealing the specificity of a feminine subculture, whose subordination has kept it silent, the factor of gender and sex has so far not been taken into consideration as another element that contributes to the great many rifts that run through our Latin American continent. (p. 37, my translation)

I would add to Guerra Cunninghame's list that literary criticism has also focused on the discursive discord in the encounter between Indigenista intellectuals and the indigenous world being represented. Here I would include acts of stylistic "appropriation" of indigenous speech by intellectual and non-indigenous/Ladino authors, and the sources upon which they base their stories (*Popol Vuh*, *Chilan Bal* and other myths, legends, rituals, dances, colonial texts, etc.) to lend them an air of ethnographic fiction. This ranges from a romantic, folkloric and paternalistic picturesqueness (Clorinda Matto de Turner) to avant-garde and transcultural experimentation (Miguel Angel Asturias), to the more complex issues surrounding testimonies like that of Rigoberta Menchú. In a tradition that began prior to José Vasconcelos's (1926) conception of *mestizaje* in *La raza cósmica*, the issue of social/ethnic/discursive hybridity has dominated critical studies of Indigenismo, the principal authors of which have been Antonio Cornejo Polar (1989), Martin Lienhard (1987), Ángel Rama (1974) and Néstor García Canclini (1990). The issue of gender has not generated interest within the topic of Indigenismo's discursive hybridity. The phenomenon is interesting if we consider that, as a feminist writer, Rosario Castellanos has been studied from the perspective of gender, but not in terms of feminism's effect on Indigenismo. The handful of praiseworthy articles on the topic of gender in the work of authors such as Arguedas, with readings on sexuality and love in his novels, has likewise revealed that Indigenista literature tends to present the masculine point of view on gender and sexual relations as universal or normative. In the words of Sara Castro-Klarén (1983):

> Before making any comments on sexuality in the work of José María Arguedas, it must be made absolutely clear, so as not to repeat it over

> and over, that sexuality in humans and even in animals is always and without a single exception presented from a masculine point of view. This does not mean that women do not participate in sexual acts or display certain attitudes of different kinds towards sex, but rather than even in the case of characters who are merely sketched out—Marcelina, Santacrucina, Kurku, doña Gudelia, doña Gabriela, La Señorita, Opa—it is a masculine voice and position that is observing, reporting, interpreting and evaluating the act. This fact is highly important since it indicates, not as central, but rather as normative, the secondary and objectified position of women in the society(ies) that Arguedas depicts and recognizes as reality in the whole of his work. (p. 55, my translation)

Creating a new perspective and tradition of readings surrounding Indigenismo is no small task for readers of Rosario Castellanos, insomuch as the questions surrounding Indigenismo ignore gender issues. In the classroom, then, I ask my students and myself, "What is the basis of the alliance between Rosario Castellanos's feminism and her Indigenismo?," bearing in mind that Indigenismo is always a discourse of intellectuals and politicians about indigenous people, almost always defending them as the Other upon which modernity must enact a plan of salvation. There are two ways to understand this alliance in Rosario Castellanos, and both of them have to do with her marginal position within the Mexican intellectual scene. One could object that Castellanos held academic and diplomatic posts which clearly indicate that her position is far from marginal, but rather dominant. However, the marginality of women in the Mexican humanities is undeniable, as well as the marginality of Chiapas, not just as a state with a large indigenous population, but also as a region of conservative landowners in Mexico's collective democratic imagination. Thus, one could speak of a marginality based, if not on class, then on gender and region. Regional marginality is an important topic when coming to terms with all Indigenismo phenomena. As Ángel Rama (1974) and Cornejo Polar (1989) have already discussed, provincial intellectuals, who are often mestizo, carry the burden of making a symbolic space for themselves, one which is already open in the case of their cosmopolitan counterparts. Through the Indigenista discourse, provincial intellectuals find a means to legitimate themselves in a political struggle for discursive authority, particularly when the state itself also creates and secures the same sort of discourses in its own policies toward indigenous peoples, through institutions such as the INI, for example. This issue is amply portrayed in both Castellanos and Arguedas (1941),

for example in his *Yawar Fiesta*, a novel in which a group of intellectualized mestizo students, who are migrants from the provinces to Lima, aim to lead the fight to bring justice to the indigenous people, but at the same time seek to bring them education and modernity. As Rama (1974) argues:

> What we are witnessing [in the Indigenista movement] is a new social group propelled by the dictates of modern economic development, whose educational margin varies according to the area and the level of economic progress, a group that proposes clear compensations for the society it makes up. Like all groups that acquire mobility—according to Marx—this group understands the complaints of all the other oppressed social groups, and it interprets these complaints as if they were its own, fortifying its wavering strength with multitudinous support. This new group undoubtedly found itself in solidarity with the complaints of the masses, although, at the same time the masses clearly served as a disguise: the injustices endured by the masses were even more flagrant than those directed toward the new emerging group; and furthermore, these masses had the undeniable prestige of having forged an original culture in the past, a claim the groups emerging from the lower middle class could not make. In their silence, the multitudes became, as it were, more eloquent, and in any case, comfortably interpretable for those who had the necessary instruments: the written word, the graphic. (quoted by Cornejo Polar, 1989, p. 24)

Ana Peluffo (2005) makes a similar claim in her study of the 19th century feminism of Clorinda Matto de Turner. For Peluffo, Matto de Turner used the sentimental discourse of Indigenismo to place a feminine vision of a social problem on the intellectual stage, thus creating a space of legitimacy for both intellectual women and domesticity in Peru. According to Peluffo (2005), the author uses fiction to advance a variation on Rama's formula, "Mesticismo disguised as Indigenismo." Here it is "feminism disguised as Indigenismo," where the agendas of two different social groups in two different states of marginality are woven together. In the case of Matto de Turner as Indigenist author, this takes the form of a sentimental or "feminized" depiction of the indigenous people's difference (p. 17). I believe that it is important to discuss Castellanos's Indigenismo with my students within the same framework, where it is not only the gender struggle which overlaps with the Indigenista discourse, but the author's Chiapan (regional) origin as well.

ON THE LANDOWNER

The figure of the landowner occupies an important role in Indigenista fiction. Take, for example, the novels of Arguedas, where the landowner is transformed into a figure of anthropological inquiry, given the prominence of the local strong man in the Andean world (Portugal, 2007). In *Yawar Fiesta* (1941), for example, the strong man don Julián is not only the dominant figure shaping the indigenous people's lives, but has himself also been altered to the point of possessing a deep understanding of the Indian soul, which is in part the source of his power. The association in the novel between don Julián and Misitu, the wild bull that the *ayllus* want for their bullfight, is significant. Misitu, like don Julián, is an object of both fear, and admiration and respect for the indigenous inhabitants. In *Los ríos profundos* (1958) as well, there is a sort of symbiosis between the preacher Abancay and the figure of the strong man, because of the power that his ideas hold over the Indians. Special attention to this figure also shows up in don Froylán in "Warma Kuyay" (1935/1975), don Aparicio in *Diamantes y pedernales* (1954) and in don Bruno in *Todas las sangres* (1970). It is interesting to point out that both don Julián and the preacher are desexualized figures, which cannot be said of the figures in the other novels (Portugal, 2007, p. 194).

Something similar can be observed in the novels of Castellanos. In *Balún Canán* (1957), the Coleto landowner César is in many ways similar to don Julián in *Yawar Fiesta* (1941), a man who speaks the language of the natives and enjoys their admiration and respect. César tells them stories, presides over their religious festivals, and, unlike don Julián, is in fact sexually abusive with the indigenous people, a fact that Esteban, his illegitimate nephew, despises. In *Oficio de tinieblas* (1962), the landowner don Leonardo Cifuentes has lost all traits that might tie his ancestry to the indigenous world, and while he is portrayed as a strong and domineering man, what stands out most in his description is the sexual and verbal abuse he directs at Indigenous and Coleto women. In this respect, we can say that Castellanos incorporates a new description and definition of the perception of the landowner in Indigenista novels. By situating the rape of Marcela, the indigenous girl, in the first pages and focusing on the character's psychological stance, the narration veers away from the canonical interpretation of masculinity as the norm in Indigenista novels, where strong men are portrayed as wise and paternalistic. However, it is important to highlight that this reading is not so evident when the habitus of Indigenista criticism silences gender-based readings of rape or female

leadership. In this regard, Jonathan Culler's (1980) proposal about approaches to literary language is key:

> To read a text as literature is not to make one's mind a *tabula rasa* and approach it without preconception; one must bring to it an implicit understanding of the operations of literary discourse which tells one what to look for. Anyone lacking this knowledge, anyone wholly unacquainted with literature and unfamiliar with the conventions by which fictions are read, would, for example, be quite baffled if presented with a poem. His knowledge of the language would enable him to understand phrases and sentences, but he would not know, quite literally, what to make of this strange concatenation of phrases … because he [would] lack the complex "literary competence" … (p. 102)

In their training to become readers of literature, our students must develop this literary competence that Culler (1980) speaks of. One could point to a literary competence for Indigenismo that establishes certain readings of the landowner as a dominant figure in indigenous society. In *Oficio de Tinieblas* (1962), the figure of Leonardo Cifuentes alters the traditional characterization of the landowner, his preconception and his function within the narrative structure, since after the rape scene the character never reestablishes his position as respected boss by the natives, nor in the eyes of the reader for that matter. In this respect, the rape scene is key to understanding Castellanos' break with the traditional model of the landowner as portrayed in Indigenista novels. Through this break and transformation, Castellanos alters the masculine perspective on the character, situating in the center of the scene a female point of view of this figure as physical and symbolically dominant in the indigenous world, in accordance with gender relations.

CONCLUSION

The framework used to analyze Castellanos's novel can also help to interpret the critics' debates on *Madeinusa*, a film directed by Claudia Llosa in 2006. The film, which can be seen as neo-Indigenista, portrays a fictitious community in the Andean highlands, where an outsider from Lima arrives during the unconventional religious celebration of the death and resurrection of Christ. According to the community's beliefs, during the three days that followed Christ's crucifixion, or *viernes santo*, God cannot see people's sins because he is dead. As such, during these days people commit all kinds of excesses and transgressions, including non-

consensual incest. At the end of the film, the young female protagonist kills her abusive and alcoholic father and runs away to Lima, the city of her dreams, to which her mother also fled in the past. Lying, she blames the outsider for the death of her father while she is covered by the complicity of her sister.

Critics have reacted passionately to Llosa's description of the Andean village, even though it is clear that both the village and the ritual are fictitious. Nevertheless, as has been pointed out, Peruvian critics—who know the Indigenista tradition well—point out that there is a clear contemporary trend describing Andean communities as part of a "barbarous" pre-modern Peru, one specific example being the novel *Lituma en los Andes*, by Mario Vargas Llosa (1993), where villagers are portrayed as superstitious cannibals who are irreconcilable with civilization (Wolfenzon, 2010). Reading the film according to this corpus, and given that Claudia Llosa is in fact the niece of the famous Peruvian writer, a certain group of critics has chosen not to welcome her film. Another group of critics, however, defends its aesthetics and points to its universal portrayal of human vices. In any case, however, the main proposal of the film, the new subjectivity of women's self-determination, is overlooked by both sets of critics (Silva Santisteban, 2006). The fact that a young female from the Andes takes charge of her destiny has been noticed, conversely, by feminist readings in academia (Kroll, 2009; Wolfenzon, 2010).

I wanted to recall the case of *Madeinusa* as another example of how we never read as a tabula rasa, and how traditional debates get in the way of feminist readings. Making our students aware of these critical predispositions or *habitus*, and creating new traditions of reading, are necessary conditions in order to enrich our understanding of pioneering artistic proposals, and to monitor our own teaching environments. Moreover, and as this paper showed, in my seminars, I maintain that Castellanos's and Llosa's work cannot be fully understood without knowing the critical background from which these authors emerge and the audiences to which they speak. The reconsideration of the critical framework of Indigenismo and the study of the historical processes these authors deal with are indispensable to make our students better readers of feminism and its complexities in Latin America.

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8. WILD NAKED LADIES: SHIFTING PARADIGMS

Gendered Approaches to María Victoria Menis's Cámara oscura [Camera Obscura] *(2008) and Albertina Carri's* La rabia [Anger] *(2008)*

How do we speak about teaching gender through Hispanic texts in a world riveted by images, in the context of seemingly instant access to globalized mass media? How do we approach the issue of gender in a "post-feminist" era marked by discussions on "undoing gender" and post-humanist notions? Following Patti Lather's (1991, 2001) seminal pedagogical strategy that consists of focusing on an event from different ideological standpoints so that students may become aware of the implications of each paradigm, this chapter offers a variety of feminist approaches to analyze María Victoria Menis's (2008) *Cámara oscura* [*Camera Obscura*], and Albertina Carri's (2008) *La rabia* [*Anger*], underscoring the pedagogical implications of each standpoint (pp. 159–161). This practice illustrates the importance of resisting "easy" or too limited readings of complex works by showing the richness that can be extracted by using different theories as reading lenses rather than imposing any given theory as ideological rule. Pedagogically, it empowers students to question any attempt to impose one and only one interpretation.

Menis's (2008) *Cámara oscura* and Carri's (2008) *La rabia* are alike in focusing on the female quest in search of a "voice." Additionally, the protagonists are outcasts because they fail to comply with the normative idea of beauty (Gertrudis is dark and wears glasses) or ability (Nati is mute). Furthermore, both films are engaged in an intertextual relation. Thus, while *Cámara oscura* is based on Angélica Gorodischer's homonymous short story (2009), the first of the five digitally animated sequences of *La rabia* inscribes and subverts the cautionary tale that frames it. More importantly, both of these films include a counterpoint between a realistic diegesis and animation—intended to depict the protagonist's stream of consciousness. Therefore, the interconnection between these registers, or intermediality, provides an additional level of complexity to these remarkable Argentine films.

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Gorodischer's (2009) "Cámara oscura," is a short story told from the point of view of a smug narrator who perpetuates hegemonic ideology by blaming his grandmother Gertrudis for a number of wrongs, beginning by being born as her Jewish-Russian family walked down the planks of a German ship into an Argentine port, which leads to legal questions about her nationality. Later, she is blamed for being cross-eyed, bow-legged, small, and dark (Gorodischer, 2009, pp. 104, 109, 111).[1] Yet even as the narrator recognizes that his grandfather, a handsome rich widower, married Gertrudis because he considered her ugly and concluded that she would be faithful because she would be grateful to him for relieving her from the stigma of spinsterhood, he cannot forgive his grandmother for abandoning her husband and eight children to elope with an itinerant French photographer (Gorodischer, 2009, pp. 112, 115).[2]

Following the short story, Menis's film shows the three-day wedding celebration that went on without Gertrudis (Mirta Bogdasarian), who was already busily working at her new husband's farm. Similarly, Menis shows that Jean Baptiste (Patrick Dell'Isola), the photographer, succeeds in convincing Gertrudis to pose in the family picture (Gorodischer, 2009, p. 116). The photographer's tales about World War I attract Gertrudis to the dinner table, and she reciprocates by offering him liquor while he smokes outdoors (Gorodischer, 2009, p. 117). Similarly, in both the short story and the film adaptation family members notice that she has left only because her daily chores—clearing the dinner table, preparing breakfast, and so on—are yet to be done (Gorodischer, 2009, p. 118).

Figure 1. The photographer convinces Gertrudis to pose

While Menis's photographer is neither blond nor lanky as in the short story, the greatest departure lies in the film's development of the couple's attraction. Though the story elides the couple's interaction, the film shows that the photographer is attracted by the color of Gertrudis's preserves and the novelty of her flower-arrangements. He exhibits curiosity about her cooking and appreciates her interest in poetry. Menis resorts to stream of consciousness to stress their similarities. Thus, as a child Gertrudis daydreams about a fairy who appreciates her beauty, which underscores her awareness of being viewed as an ugly duckling, and grants her the wish to fly. Similarly, foreshadowing his investment in Surrealism, which he considers the logical outcome of the carnage of the First World War, the photographer "sees" forks in the middle of the fields. The mutual acknowledgment of their attraction appears as a series of pictures at the end of the film, ranging from a reclined Gertrudis in a silk petticoat, to one of the happy couple posing for the camera.

Figure 2.

La rabia (Carri, 2008) focuses on the repercussion of the emotional distance between Poldo, a rural worker (the late Víctor Hugo Carrizo) and his wife Ale (Analía Couyeiro), on the behavior of their mute daughter Nati (Nazarena Duarte). Thus, while Poldo transfers his affection to a shop-owner's daughter (Dalma Maradona), his wife engages in a sadomasochistic affair with Pichón, a neighbor (Javier Lorenzo). Unbeknownst to her mother, Nati is aware of the encounters. Ladeado (Gonzalo Pérez), Pichón's son and her friend and protector, accompanies

Nati when they chance upon their parents having intercourse. Though Ale is unaware of their presence because Pichón had covered her head, he seems to ignore the children because he proceeds with renewed zest.

Though her parents are unaware of the reason, Nati seems to undress every time she witnesses her mother's affair. In order to put a stop to this behavior, Poldo tells the child a story purportedly about her mother's great uncle, who took to drinking and gambling because his wife would undress in the fields. Poldo notes that on one occasion, the great-uncle gambled away his belongings as well as the wages of his employees at the train station. Enraged, they beheaded him, but his ghost appears sporting a tuxedo as though he were going on to a casino. Poldo adds that the ghost, who carries his head in his hand, throws his cape over nude girls so that they learn not to undress; however, if they persist, he returns to eat them up. Poldo concludes by assuring Nati that, according to some women, the ghost buries its head in a hole close to the ranch.

Figure 3. Nati sees the couple

Yet, the digitized sequences based on Nati's drawings do not depict the father's story. Instead, they allude to her mother's affair. In her sketch of the couple, the male is branding a rifle, exactly as she had seen Pichón at the landowner's house. When the ghost appears, the man wearing a beret points his rifle at him but cowardly retreats leaving the woman behind when he realizes that the shots are in vain. After covering the woman with the cape the ghost leaves.

Figure 4. Nati's version of the story

While Patti Lather (1991) focuses on forms of authority and legitimate knowledge, conception of the individual, material base, view of history and place of community/tradition in order to illuminate and compare the remarkable differences that result from shifting the approach from pre-modern, to modern, and postmodern paradigms (pp. 160–161), we will focus on the effect of different ideological standpoints on gender as well as their pedagogical implications in the analysis of *Cámara oscura* (Menis, 2008) and *La rabia* (Carri, 2008). As a shortcut, and given their emphasis on integrating feminist theories in the classroom, I begin with the four main ideologies that Carolyn Zerbe Enns and Ada L. Sinacore (2005) identify in second-wave feminism: namely liberal feminism, cultural feminism (which may include variations of French feminisms, even though Enns and Sinacore elided them), radical feminism, and socialist feminism.[3]

The oppression that liberal feminists attribute to "gender role conditioning and irrational prejudice" (Enns and Sinacore, 2005, p. 26) is apparent in "Cámara oscura" (Gorodischer 2008) to the extent that Gertrudis assimilates the social expectations of beauty and internalizes her failure to meet them. As a child, when the family poses for a picture, her mother asks Gertrudis to remain downcast so that no one notices that she is cross-eyed (p. 114).

Figure 5. Gertrudis covers her face in the family picture

In the film adaptation, the child covers her face with a doll. While racial prejudice is evident in the story's reference to her dark complexion, the film deflects race by having the fairy of the animated sections shed the dark layers that cover the child's face. Finally, despite her outstanding scholastic abilities, gender role conditioning and prejudice prevent Gertrudis from furthering her education.

Figure 6. The fairy queen of the flowers perceives Gertrudis's beauty

Likewise, in *La rabia* (Carri, 2008), the constraints of gender role conditioning and prejudice are evident in the expectation of Ale's

submissiveness. Therefore, when Poldo slaps her for speaking up for Pichón, no one dares to defend her. Similarly, though Nati's clothing inscribes gender expectations, she subverts them by undressing. Finally, as a girl, Nati is expected to be quiet and tractable. Instead, she is loud and unpredictable.

Cultural feminists argue that women are oppressed as a result of the "devaluation of women's ways of knowing and connection" and "overvaluation of masculine values" (Enns & Sinacore, 2005, p. 26). This is evident in Gertrudis's daily life, insofar as her many skills are taken for granted. When Gertrudis sees her daughter busily grading assignments on the solar system, she confides that she has pondered the mysteries of the universe since childhood. The sphere of women's activities seems more circumscribed in *La rabia* (Carri, 2008). Ale appears cleaning, or taking care of her daughter. Her playfulness is limited to trying on the landowner's clothes with Pichón. Any attempt at resisting the doxa, such as Ale's affair, Nati's undressing or her loud vocalizations, is penalized. Nonetheless, Carri allows for female bonding when Nati comforts her mother after being slapped in public, and Ale reciprocates by wishing that one of the monsters of Nati's drawings would spirit her husband away.

Figure 7. Nati knows that bloody vengeance springing from her home is about to reach Pichón's

French Feminisms, which share the paradigms of Cultural Feminism, are conjured up by the representation of the unconscious through daydreams in *Cámara oscura* (Menis, 2008) as well as the digitized sequences that

suggest thought processes in *La rabia* (Carri, 2008). Hélène Cixous (1976) mentions Jean Genêt among those who engage in writing the body "because poetry involves gaining strength through the unconscious" (p. 879); therefore, the photographer's reveries in *Cámara oscura* reinforce the notion of *écriture fémenine* in Menis's (2008) film. Along these lines, Nati's fears, expressed through the digitized sections, evidence the process of writing with the body.[4]

Radical feminism attributes the causes of oppression to "patriarchy and male control of women's bodies" (Enns & Sinacore, 2005, p. 26), which is evident in *Cámara oscura*, (both story and film), since no one expects Gertrudis to leave her (rich, handsome) husband, especially after having so many children. Similarly, both in the main plot of *La rabia* as well as in the interpolated story, males (husbands) are expected to control female (their respective wife's) bodies. Therefore, while Poldo does not appear to consider the possibility that his wife may be betraying him, the purported great-uncle is emasculated by the fact that his wife has regained control of her body.

Finally, according to the parameters of socialist feminism, the causes of oppression are multiple, resulting from class, race, and gender, embedded as they are in institutional structures (Enns & Sinacore, 2005, p. 26). Thus, even as the wife of a well-to-do farmer, Gertrudis is subjected to multiple layers of oppression. Patriarchal rules bar her from participating in (Jewish) religious celebrations. Though intelligent, gender prevents her from access to higher learning. In sum, patriarchal oppression is multilayered, reinforced as it is by legal and religious norms, the educational system, and peasant customs. Isolation and lack of opportunity also affect Ale, who is oppressed by class and gender. While neither Gertrudis nor Ale is expected to resist, violence permeates everyday life, so disruption of the established order unleashes tragedy.

Other approaches, such as Rosi Braidotti's (1999) glocalization, would call for historicizing these texts.[5] Thus, *Cámara oscura* (Menis, 2008) underscores the impact of the arrival of six million immigrants in Argentina between 1875 and 1920, as well as their influence on the country's racial/ethnic configuration, language and customs. Fundamentally, this massive immigration gave rise to the fiction of Argentina as an imagined community—a white population tracing its ancestry to European immigrants—which to an extent elided the Spanish conquest and colonization from the national imaginary.[6] Poignantly, the action is set in Colonia Villa Clara, Entre Ríos, 1897, which refers to the rural Jewish settlements founded by Baron Hirsch.[7] Similarly, *La rabia* (Carri, 2008) alludes to an ongoing semi-feudal lifestyle, which originated with the

conquest and consists of having an overseer tend to livestock and buildings while the landlord resided in the city, and in this case Buenos Aires. The embedded story is set between 1850 and 1930, given the allusion to great-uncle's nickname, "el inglés" (the Englishman) due to his light complexion and his job at the train station, run by the British at the time.

Further historicization includes taking into account the specificity of the Argentine context; particularly the interaction between feminism(s) and social movements during the transition to democracy.[8] Argentine feminism is framed by the increased participation of women in politics due to the imposition of a quota system. The aftershocks of the 2001 financial collapse led to increased participation of women in neighborhood assemblies, the *piquetero* (picket) movement, and the taking over of factories by their workers. The annual national feminist encounters that have taken place since 1995 (Di Marco, 2011) have also been influential in recognizing a feminist awareness.[9] These huge achievements, however, are tempered by the ongoing influence of the Catholic Church on the struggle for access to contraception and legal abortion, an increase in violence against women, as well as the pervasive infiltration of drug and human trafficking.[10]

The fact that both of the films are heteronormative speaks volumes about the Argentine doxa.[11] Additionally, both texts assume and endorse the isolation of women, including mothers and daughters. Indeed the symbolic space of the mother is as absent as are all standpoints challenging dimorphism. While *Cámara oscura* (Menis, 2008; Gorodischer, 2009) and *La rabia* (Carri, 2008) allude to the social construction of gender by way of ideological messages reproduced within the family, as well as the embedded story that stresses the need for "*señoritas* to remain dressed," both Gorodischer (2009) and Carri (2008) speak to the force of sexuality. While sexual attraction is tempered in Menis's (2008) movie by the intimation of kindred souls, conjoined by a rich imagination, and an exquisite aesthetic appreciation, raw sex speaks through sadomasochistic practices in *La rabia*. Likewise, in the father's story, the great-uncle's wife's unbridled sexuality emasculates her husband who turns to drinking and gambling.

From a deconstructive standpoint the taboo regarding naked female bodies is pregnant with meaning insofar as the women reject the trappings of civilization and return to a primeval state. To the extent that they reject social norms, these women dangerously conjure up the demons of anarchy. Naked ladies (including Nati) unleash death and destruction onto the males who attempt to control them (Poldo and the great-uncle of the story). Yet, female nudity is relational, a discourse prone to many interpretations. The

fact that it is presented in three media—the short story, the main plot and the digitized sequences—offers three versions of a single interdiction. Furthermore, the father's pedagogical intent gives way to a slippage, since the great-uncle's wife of the cautionary story becomes Nati's mother in the child's drawing. Nonetheless, by extension the figure involves all other nude girls/women who reject patriarchal order, such as Nati herself. The consequences are devastating both in the digitized story as well as in the main storyline. The monstrous naked woman is associated with the ghost, and ambiguity surrounds the ontological status of the other women who saw it bury its head. That is, were they dead or alive?

Whether we focus on the materiality of bodies from a philosophical standpoint originating in Edmund Husserl via Maurice Merleau-Ponty (Abram, 1996), or through Nobel Prize physicist Niels Bohr's theories (Barad 2008), the end result is a post-humanist world. Following Darwin, Elizabeth Grosz (2011) contends that humans are "now forced, or at least enticed, to listen, to respond, to observe, to become attuned to […] nature […] as ever-striving, as natural selection, as violence and conflict" (p. 24). Accordingly, Darwinism would explain the principles of natural selection in both films. In *Cámara oscura* (Menis, 2008), good looking León (Fernando Armani) married a beautiful woman who soon preferred shopping over his company. Therefore, as a widower, he chose to marry the ugliest woman around, however, given his shallow and vain nature, Gertrudis would also leave him. Thus, the movie fleshes out the survival of the fittest in the mutual discovery of two kindred souls trapped in bodies that others would disregard, since Jean Baptiste is lame and Gertrudis fails to conform to traditional notions of beauty. Poldo appears to resent Pichón's dismissive comments about Nati because he perceives them as an implicit attack toward his masculinity for failing to produce a normal child. Paradoxically, the fact that Poldo died and not his intended victim reinforces the notion of the survival of the fittest. This point is underscored even further when Ladeado avenges Poldo, who was kind to him, by killing his abusive father. These deaths reinforce the threat posed by women from a patriarchal viewpoint, which assimilates them to nature, especially in the Darwinian paradigm of the struggle for survival in the brutal context of rural life. Insofar as the women are linked to nature, the sheer materiality of the body leads us to a post-humanist world. Thus, by focusing on issues of gender, sex, and nature at two historical points a century apart, the need for personal responsibility and respect toward the other that these films suggest, includes, by implication, the environment.

While definitions of affect range from "the evolved cognitive and physiological response to the detection of personal significance" (Neuman,

et al., 2007, p. 9) to "*virtually synesthetic perspectives* anchored in (and functionally limited by) the actually existing, particular things that embody them" (Massumi, 2008, p. 35, emphasis in the original), affect allows for rethinking the dualism of the mind and the body as well as identity politics by emphasizing "the carnal ways of being in, experiencing and understanding the world as fundamentally relational" (Liljeström & Paasonen,2010, p. 1).[12] Far from being universal, affect is marked by intersectionality, insofar as it involves associations related to race, class, capitalism, patriarchy, and gender, but also states of mind, such as depression, or a sense of achievement. Most importantly, it is intergenerational insofar as it incorporates new information regarding the subject's historic context and social formations as well as parental influences (Flatley, 2008, p. 79).

Instead of dwelling on affect in terms of reception, which will vary according to the abovementioned factors, I will focus on affect as portrayed in the diegesis of both films. Thus, from the very beginning Menis shows the mother's dissatisfaction toward the unexpected baby girl for whom she had no name. While the undercurrent of feeling between Gertrudis and her father, whom she takes after, is suggested in the film, he does not publicly take her side. Gertrudis's alienation is underscored by contrasting her musings about the universe with her spoiled husband's calls for a glass of water. As suggested by the flower garden she tends to as well as by the pleasure she derives from sunsets and full moons, Gertrudis has a sensitive nature, yet her husband and children alike dismiss it time and time again. Therefore, *Cámara oscura* (Menis, 2008; Gorodischer, 2009) clearly portrays Gertrudis's compliance by acquiescing to an arranged marriage, by bearing six children (or eight in the short story), and working non-stop all along. In short, Menis (2008) not only succeeds in substantiating the reasons for Gertrudis's elopement, but also draws admiration for the protagonist's courage at beginning a new life and satisfaction at the unlikely chance of meeting a kindred soul.

Similary, though *La rabia* (2008) may be read as a metaphor about the inherent violence of rural life, reception will vary. Thus, those with a rural background may not feel that the slaughter of a pig in real time is dramatic. Nonetheless, the fact that the movie begins with a rather blunt disclaimer "los animales en esta película vivieron y murieron de acuerdo a su hábitat" (animals used in this film lived and died according to their habitat) naturalizes the multiple instances of violence.

Figure 8. Post-script

Thus when Ladeado smashes a bag against a tree and subsequently throws it into a pond, where it moves before going under, the audience begins to realize that it may be witnessing a drowning. Indeed, later on it learns that the bag contained the brood of the rodent (*vizcacha*) he intends to domesticate. The need to feed his pet leads to hunting a hare—another agonizing instance of five dogs against wildlife—which he proceeds to barbecue for the enraged *vizcacha*, pent up as it is in a small cage. Ladeado is ordered to dispose of dead sheep and hens. More importantly, he has to witness the sacrifice of his favorite dog, blamed for the death of the livestock. These events are reinforced by the violence that taints interpersonal relationships, such as Pichón's whipping of Ladeado, and Poldo's abusive behavior. While Ale naturalizes her husband's death by a passing reference to a stray bullet, even Nati becomes tainted by violence when Ladeado teaches her to shoot, and when she aims the rifle she is supposed to be dusting as her mother cleans the owner's house.[13] Though the open ending is ambiguous, Ladeado's satisfaction at having shot his father is obvious.

Yet, students ought to understand that the very notion of feminism should be further deconstructed, beginning by the issue of gender. In order to do so, we shall rely on Judith Butler (2004), who argues that the notion of gender is contested, especially in the name of sexual difference. For instance, the sociological approach "endorses a socially constructivist view of masculinity and femininity, [but] displac[es] or devalu[es] the *symbolic* status of sexual difference and the political specificity of the feminine" (p. 185). Furthermore, dimorphism, sexual difference, and gender become

quite entangled. While the intersex movement opposes unwanted surgery, the transex movement sometimes calls for elective surgery, and queer theory by definition opposes "all identity claims, including sex assignment" (Butler, 2004, pp. 6–7). In other words, any definition of feminism is subtended by, "the debates concerning the theoretical priority of sexual difference to gender, of gender to sexuality, of sexuality to gender" (Butler, 2004, p. 185). Furthermore, these debates "are all crosscut by … the permanent difficulty of determining where the biological, the psychic, the discursive, [and] the social begin and end" (Butler, 2004, p. 185).

Enns and Sinacore (2005) attribute specific pedagogical approaches to different types of feminisms, ranging from liberal feminism's "cooperative learning [aimed at increasing] skills and self-esteem, [and] gender fair teaching [focused on supporting] student success in nontraditional areas of study" to cultural feminism's "learning through connection and relationships" (p. 26). While radical and socialist feminism coincide in "consciousness-raising," radical feminists link learning to social change and integrate affective and cognitive learning, and socialist feminist pedagogical strategies involve "challenging educational and social structures that produce inequality" (Enns & Sinacore, 2005, p. 26). Even though the specificity of the pedagogical outcomes attributed by Enns and Sinacore (2005) to the various feminisms may be debatable, they speak to the development of feminist pedagogy.

In the early nineties Elizabeth Ellsworth (1992) identified the factors that condition any attempt at developing a critical pedagogy, namely: the instructor's implication in the structures (gender, race, class) s/he struggles to change; the partial nature of knowledge; the multiple and contradictory expectations for individual woman's politicized voice; the trust, risk, fear and desire that surround issues of identity and politics in the classroom; and the acknowledgement that interpersonal, personal, and political unity is necessarily fragmentary, unstable, chosen and struggled for, since it results from the way social relations are structured by difference (pp. 90–129).[14] Ellsworth's (1992) seminal insight regarding the inherent play of these factors is echoed by Patti Lather's (2001) call to keep the heterogeneity of critical pedagogy in play. Indeed, Lather (2001) posits undecidability as "a constant ethical-political reminder that moral and political responsibility can only occur in the not being sure" (p. 187). By offering a series of interpretations resulting from shifting approaches to films focusing on events set a century apart, I endorse Lather's (2001) call to engage in the "promise of practice on a shifting ground" (p. 191).[15]

NOTES

[1] Gorodischer's (2009) "Cámara oscura" can be accessed at: http://peopleandstories.files.wordpress.com/2010/05/camara-oscura-cuaderno.pdf

[2] Despite the tidbit about her possibly being aware of her husband's indiscretions in town, justified as they are because of his gender.

[3] Enns and Sinacore (2005) include causes of oppression, tools for changing learning, and the respective pedagogies (p. 26). In the following chapter, Enns and Sinacore (2005) focus on "Diversity feminisms" defined as postmodern, women-of-color, antiracist, lesbian, third-wave, and global perspectives (pp. 41–68).

[4] For critiques on French Feminism see Spivak.

[5] On glocalization see Kraidy (1999).

[6] On the Argentine fiction of being descended from Europeans and therefore different from the rest of Latin Americans see Kaminsky (2008).

[7] Baron Hirsch's first settlement was founded in 1891. Azicovich (2006) notes that there were eight settlements (colonias) in Entre Rios, two in Santa Fe, Buenos Aires, and La Pampa respectively, and one in Santigo del Estero (p. 29). On Jewish settlements in Argentina see also Winsberg (1963).

[8] On the differences between Euroamerican and Latin American feminisms, see Tompkins (2008), "Imagining."

[9] On Argentine feminism see Tompkins (2003).

[10] The legal figure of femicide associated with the recent rise in the number of women being burned by their partners is often referred to as *Wandarization*, in remembrance of the first victim, Wanda Taddei, wife of the drummer of the *Callejeros* band.

[11] The "Ley de matrimonio igualitario," which ensured marriage equality by allowing people of the same sex to marry, was sanctioned on July 15, 2010 and implemented on July 21, 2010, ahead of all other Latin American countries. For the full text see http://www.lgbt.org.ar/00-derechos,15.php

[12] "The connection between affect and interpretation has a long tradition (Gallop 1988; Pearce 1997; Armstrong 2000; Sedgwick 2003; Ngai 2005). Similarly, the affective dimensions of feminism itself have also been taken under scrutiny (Hooks 2000; Ahmed 2004; Ngai 2005; Probyn 2005)" (Liljeström & Paasonen, 2010, p. 2).

[13] Katherine Dreier (1920) attributed Argentine social unrest to the naturalization of violence at the stockyards, a phenomenon she had already addressed regarding Chicago (1918–1919).

[14] Conversely, Daphne Patai (2012) argues that the underlying political imperative weakens the quest for knowledge. Instead, Patai calls for "the suppositions that teaching and research are not, and ought not to be, either feminist or masculinist" so that the modern university becomes a place that emphasizes "*how* to think, not *what* to think, [by] acquiring intellectual tools, [and not] hand-me down-political doctrines" (p. 678, emphasis in original).

[15] Lather (2001) quotes Derrida (1994), "to do and to make come about, as well as to let come (about)" (p. 191).

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IV.

BREAKING THE AGREEMENT OF SILENCE, TEACHING UNCOMFORTABLE SUBJECTS

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9. INTERROGATING GENDERED MEXICAN CULTURAL ICONS IN A "BORDER" CLASSROOM

INTRODUCTION

Not long ago, while shopping at a big-box store, I overheard a father lovingly playing and chatting with his young daughter in Spanish. This was nothing out of the ordinary, as I live near the Mexico-US border. He asked her for a kiss and she playfully refused. He began to sing and play with her: *Villana, eres una villana conmigo, villana*. On one hand, they were a happy father-daughter playing in a carefree and affectionate manner. On the other, I, a professor of Hispanic literature and culture who over-analyses gender dynamics and the weight of the word, thought but why? Why does refusing to kiss her father mean that she, a 3 or 4 year-old girl, becomes a villainess? How do these seemingly innocuous messages infuse our daily gendered experiences and dictate our actions? As the child grows older will she indeed become the villainess because she refuses kisses from a wishful suitor? Will she (re)appropriate the identity of villainess and purposefully rebel, embracing this negative label? Will becoming a villainess mean that she is somehow discounted or written off for not behaving "appropriately?"

Often observations as simple as this one allow me to reflect on how we approach teaching gender in the 21st century. In my Language and Literatures department at the University of San Diego (USD), language courses often provide just as much challenge as our content courses—which I will discuss more specifically in this article—because of the linguistic limitations that often cause instructors to lean on well-worn stereotypes and structures. These stereotypes reinforce the hegemonic discourse of our gender binaries and heteronormative tendencies. In Spanish language classes, transgender or gay students ask themselves whether they should be *guapo* or *guapa* and closeted or questioning male students feel out of place when we ask the seemingly innocent but oh-so-loaded question *¿Cómo es tu novia?* Although I no longer ask such questions at the private, Catholic institution where I am a member of the faculty, I have yet to come across the brave female student who says, *I don't have a* novio *but my* novia *is wonderful!* I have, however, had many

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students who have chosen to come out in their written compositions, and I see that my role as educator is directly linked to seeking ways to create a safe space for challenging dominant cultural norms. Even though I admit that I do not have all the answers about how to deal with gendered questions in a perfectly nuanced way, I regularly remind myself to create a space in which to bring to light both the students' and my own discomfort with these linguistic and gender binaries. I see this uncomfortableness itself as a learning experience for all of us. In other words, I have learned to embrace the uneasiness and break what Laura Rendón (2006) calls an "agreement of silence"—"a refusal to discuss difference for fear of creating discomfort" (p. 4). By creating a space in which a student can notice nuance and articulate difference, I aim to actively break said agreement of silence.

THE "BORDER" CLASSROOM

My upper-division courses and the Hispanic studies content courses I teach in English, on one hand, pose no fewer challenges despite the more advanced linguistic acuity of the students. In my undergraduate classrooms, when gendered topics emerge, female students wonder why they should care about feminism since they not only perceive it as a male-bashing discourse but they also believe that their gender does not negatively affect them in any way. Male students ask why they are being punished for the abuses of the years before them, since they adamantly believe that they are "not sexist." Despite the blanket rejection of the feminist label that students in Latin America and the US alike often express, students have been trained to see merely binary differences and inequalities, in particular when the female gender is disadvantaged. However, when we begin to discuss the implications and disadvantages of masculine cultural norms as well, the male students are shocked—if not somewhat uncomfortable—to be brought into the question of gender.

This chapter engages my experiences teaching Mexican/Border literary and cultural studies at a private Catholic university. The campus, situated in a beautiful, privileged space on a hill, is located just 25 miles from the Mexico-US border. While geographically close to the border, the distance between San Diego and Mexico allows for its presence to be ignored (or purposefully forgotten). At USD, the female Mexican and Mexican American[1] students somehow both blend and clash with the Anglo SoCal "valley-girl" aesthetic. Some embrace a hyper-feminized version of femininity and some reject it outright. The young men range from surfer dudes and privileged preppies, to seminarians and Mexican American DJs.

My classes are comprised of native Spanish speakers, Spanish as a heritage language speakers, and non-native Spanish speakers. The cultural and linguistic diversity in these classrooms enables students to critically examine the gender assumptions they make based on their personal experiences because their classmates often offer vastly different views from their own. Accordingly, their discussions on gender-related issues tend to take into account the Mexican cultural context and also their own experiences and cultural backgrounds and identities.

For my classrooms, gender offers a fruitful platform for discussing Mexican and border identity through the lens of cultural icons and symbols. In our debates, gender takes centre stage as we delve into traditional notions of Mexican masculinity and femininity based on cultural icons, such as the Revolutionary hero, Pancho Villa, the revered Virgin of Guadalupe, or highly-controverted figures such as "Tía Juana," the fabled madam of Tijuana. Discussions that challenge popular knowledge surrounding these cultural icons and deconstruct the seemingly unquestionable—for example, the Virgin of Guadalupe as both a nationalistic and religious figure—have proven to be engaging. On one hand, the students who strongly identify culturally with these icons have a difficult time examining them as cultural constructions. On the other, Mexican nationals often embrace the challenge of looking at them critically with enthusiasm. Finally, the Spanish-as-a-second-language students may struggle linguistically but often delve into the critical process without many preconceived notions. Together, their contrasting perspectives and unique strengths come together to enrich the classroom immensely. This wealth of perceptions makes USD's "border" classrooms an opportune space for critically engaging gender in Mexican and border studies.[2]

In the content courses on Mexican literature and culture, the predominant USD student on campus—white, wealthy, and from an educated background—combines with not only the Tijuana-raised, American-born and distinctly economically privileged student, but also with the Mexican-born student attending university because of a generous national scholarship for underprivileged youth, and the shy heritage speaker confronting his or her fears about using Spanish in a formal setting. Kim Potowski (2012) has written at length from a sociolinguistic perspective on how the heritage language learner's identity can be transformed and recreated through language study and I suspect that, when provided an opportunity for critical reflection, the transformative experience extends to classrooms such as these with a multiplicity of viewpoints.[3] The endless combinations of student populations, described in generalized categories here, form a sort of classroom contact zone where privilege and cultures

"meet, clash, and grapple with each other" in ways that attempt to decentralize and question the notion of homogeneous and hegemonic centers (Pratt, 1991, p. 34).

As a middle-class white non-Hispanic academic, born in the Midwest, raised in San Antonio, and publicly educated, I am aware of my position of power and privilege and attempt to facilitate critical conversations that allow the clash of privilege and culture to be embraced. While non-heritage students might view my identity as more accessible, it can also be viewed as a barrier by those whose backgrounds are deeply steeped in the topics I teach. After all, are my students not correct to wonder what on earth this white woman is doing teaching Mexican literature and culture classes in the first place, especially to students who are nationally or culturally Mexican? While I cannot pretend to understand fully and completely all that this encompasses, I do see my role as prompting students to think critically about the literary and cultural texts at hand and to expose the texts' ideology and arguments while encouraging them to examine their own positionality and identity. Again, Rendón (2007), with her pedagogy of *sentipensante*, reminds us, as educators, to seek out more multi-faceted learning experiences by encouraging self-reflexivity in our classrooms in order to consciously break the implicit agreement of silence.

As we—my students and myself—come together, we form a classroom contact zone. Mary Louise Pratt (1991) uses her famous term to describe a "classroom that function(s) not like a homogeneous community or a horizontal alliance" (p. 39). Pratt's concept of the contact zone, discussed here in terms of the classroom, also has been directly linked to the notion of the border by scholars such as Robert McKee Irwin (2007) and Santiago Vaquera-Vásquez (2006) as a means for moving away from discussing the border region solely in terms of the US-Mexico binary. In this sense, in my classrooms at USD, we form a "border" classroom contact zone, even if we do not always directly examine "border" topics and even as it is possible to ignore the presence of the border itself in this privileged space of private higher education. Pratt's application of the contact zone to the classroom is significant because it establishes a framework for describing the different perspectives that are challenged. The concept recognizes that each student has something at stake in the classroom discussions and different motivations for enrolling in the class. The Anglo student reads the anti-gringo rhetoric, the Mexican American student both reads about and shares personal experience with being seen as neither from the US nor from Mexico, and the Mexican student both shares her personal experience of life in Tijuana and rejects and/or accepts literary descriptions of it.

One such example occurred just a few weeks ago while beginning a critical discussion of works that consciously engage language to construct identity.[4] I asked students if they knew what the term *pocho* meant. One timid American student looked at with me big eyes and emphatically shook her head no. A Mexican student from Sinaloa answered that it was an insult used to describe someone who spoke Spanish poorly and wasn't really from Mexico (any longer). Another student shared how, when she was a child, her Tijuanense cousins started taunting her by calling her *pocha* only a few weeks after she moved to San Diego. Then a Mexican American student from California exclaimed with a smile, *Soy yo. Yo soy pocha*. As she described what the term meant for her, she began to outline *pocho/a* as insult for some, but also a subversive identifier for herself and others. Although some students were hesitant to understand how an insult could also be empowering, the sharing, reflexive exchange was a means for students to share what they have at stake in language and identity, even as the texts we subsequently analyzed were written in historical contexts that differ vastly from their lives.

GENDERED CULTURAL ICONS

The examples I describe in this discussion of gendered cultural icons stem from my undergraduate seminars, which, in very broad terms, are designed to examine the dominant national and cultural discourses throughout Mexico's history—often through the lens of cultural figures or icons—and to analyze how historical moments and figures have been reinterpreted as the needs of the hegemony have changed. There are generally few formal theoretical readings, although critical essays and chapters are often included. Looking at various texts that treat the same cultural figure allows students to see texts not "as objects" but rather as "textual processes" (Irwin, 2007, p. xvii). This multi-layered cultural-studies based focus helps students cultivate their understanding of important concepts such as hegemony and narratives of national identity, and of what these narratives exclude. A cultural studies approach allows the discussions to broaden and to include items that might seem insignificant to them—such as the interaction I heard outside of the big-box store—so that they can look at "texts" that subtly send messages to us every day. As Danny Anderson and Jill Kuhnheim (2003) remind us in their introduction to *Cultural Studies in the Curriculum: Teaching Latin America*, this "approach brings to the surface certain assumptions about identity, power, social difference, and expression; it openly questions just what counts as culture and how our concepts of culture are formed and transformed throughout history" (p. 8).

In the examples I discuss here, gender is key as I encourage students to critically analyze cultural artifacts and texts and as we strive to look beyond binary, reductive, and heteronormative gender and cultural notions. Robert McKee Irwin (2007) establishes the concept of a cultural icon as different from a myth or a legend because it is a symbol that represents a greater cultural phenomenon or movement and depends on "dialectics and multiple layers of meaning" (p. xviii). In his discussion, he argues against a notion of cultural icons as fixed figures that exclude "tensions, conflict, or debate" but rather states that cultural icons in the borderlands "can only be constructed around the inevitable tensions, conflicts, and debates that determine the cultural complexity of a contact zone" (p. xix). For McKee Irwin (2007), the fundamental characteristic of the longevity of a cultural icon is "its elasticity, its attractiveness to multiple peoples, and its ability to signify differently in multiple contexts" (p. xix). While the icons I have chosen to discuss here—Pancho Villa, the Virgin of Guadalupe, and "Tía Juana"—are not exclusively cultural icons of the borderlands, McKee Irwin's (2007) concept of the multi-dimensionality of the figures resonates for students and allows them to accept the invitation to view these figures from various perspectives. The discussions of these icons do not begin in an abyss as most students in the classes have some existing notion of them. Ultimately, these cultural icons allow us to begin to unpack gendered images within their students' personal experience and within a collective imaginary.

PANCHO VILLA AS MASCULINE CULTURAL ICON

To start our discussion of Pancho Villa, we often begin with our perceptions about who the Revolutionary war hero was and what he represents. Generally students have at least heard his name, whether from the local supermarket bearing his name or from the reproduction posters that proclaim, "Pancho Villa wants YOU gringo to join the Mexican Revolution" from San Diegan touristy souvenir shops (Figure 1). The humorous, bordering on mocking vision of Villa starkly contrasts with the strong nostalgic image of him as revered Revolutionary hero that some students have grown up with in their families of origin. The post-Revolutionary narrative of the revolutionary as the defender of the poor and indigenous who were excluded from Porfirio Díaz's Mexico is strong in many students and makes questioning and deconstructing this cultural icon challenging.

Figure 1. “I want YOU gringo” poster (Peterson, 2014)

Figure 2. Pancho Villa souvenir (Petersen, 2014)

The course in which we most discuss Villa is centered on the Mexican Revolution so students also examine “Greetings from the Revolution” postcards from the San Diego-Tijuana border region, which link these topics to our geographic space. I find that generally students are eager to accept the post-revolutionary discourse of the Revolution as fact and have a more difficult time recognizing the nuanced and problematic realities presented in their course readings. In part, the tendency to simplify and homogenize concepts is an undergraduate characteristic yet the students who were raised hearing the post-Revolutionary lore glorifying the Revolution and seeing Pancho Villa as an exalted hero were generally resistant to complicating that vision.

In preparation for reading about Pancho Villa, students read newspaper articles celebrating the heroes of independence in 1910 together with newspaper articles on the centennial celebration of the Revolution and bicentennial of Independence in 2010. In these discussions, the way in which masculine heroes and ideals of masculinity are constructed in the national discourse are common threads. Students learn key terminology about gender as a construct and continue to implement these ideas as they contrast formal military photographs of Díaz with those more informal images that document revolutionary leaders when they enter into Mexico City. These images give rise to ongoing discussions of class and race throughout the semester.

In relation to Pancho Villa, students read different accounts of him in Mariano Azuela's *Los de abajo* (1916/2003) and Nellie Campobello's *Cartucho* (1931/2003) and continue to discuss how masculinity and heroism are treated differently in these works. They also read selections from Reed's biography of Villa that depict Villa's role in creating his own persona, and consider a similar theme in the film *And Starring Pancho Villa as Himself* (2003).[5] The multiple depictions of Villa allow the students to see him as a complicated figure of national heroism and masculinity and to begin noticing the confining aspects of this version of masculinity even as he continues to be an iconic and popular figure today.

Our conversations turn principally to gender when the students view *Entre Villa y una mujer desnuda* (García, Berman, & Tardán, 1996). The film depicts Pancho Villa as a ghost who haunts the subconscious of the male lead. An educated *mujeriego,* Adrían's conversations with the comical Villa character reveal his internal conflict surrounding national pride in post-revolutionary Mexico and his interactions with women. The protagonist, Gina, a successful career woman, is attracted to his stereotypical male prowess but also begins to demand more respect and commitment from him, which causes more angst in Adrián (and Villa's ghost). When Gina decides to abandon her attraction to more macho men and to take on a much younger and more open-minded lover, both she and Adrián are forced to reassess their notions of traditional and stereotypical gender roles.

While the observations the students make are not surprising for scholars of gender, Adrián's obsession with Villa and his conversations with Villa's ghost allow students to grasp the irony behind (national) hero worship and models of masculinity. Both the failed ideals of the Revolution and of rigid gender norms haunt the characters of the film. One particular scene that tends to help students visualize these changes is when Adrián professes his love to Gina and Gina rejects him. Villa's ghost, in the background,

receives multiple bullet wounds and lies dying, Gina confesses she is in love with someone else, and Adrián stops listening to Villa's chauvinistic advice. The over-the-top ridiculousness of Villa's machismo forcibly brings to light how images of this male cultural icon have reinforced negative characteristics of masculinity that are limiting to both men and women. Furthermore, Gina's grappling with what type of man and masculinity she is attracted to creates a space for discussion of topics such as women's roles in encouraging hyper masculinity versus embracing more "modern" or self-actualized male roles, as represented by her younger lover. All the while, these conversations circle back to concepts of national identity and students are given an opportunity to reflect collectively on how these notions of masculinity are questioned and reappropriated.

VIRGIN OF GUADALUPE AS FEMININE CULTURAL ICON

In the case of the Virgin of Guadalupe, given that USD is a Catholic university, the students' experiences range from a deep personal and spiritual relationship, to a cultural familiarity with her derived from their family of origin, to vaguely knowing that she exists. Additionally, in Southern California most students are exposed to every kind of popular representation possible of La Virgen—from tattoos to bumper stickers and graffiti art. The deeply religious and personal symbolism of La Virgen for many of the students makes it difficult for them to view her as a multidimensional cultural icon and their initial tendency is to reject more kitschy and irreverent treatments of her.

We often introduce the Virgin of Guadalupe by asking a few students to tell the story of her apparition to their classmates and to explain what she means to them or their family. The students analyze the classic image of her and describe what "ideal" traits of femininity are depicted in her pious and subservient body language and whether or not they are realistic for women's lives. Sometimes a religious studies and pre-seminarian student will share more in-depth details regarding official Catholic teaching on her miraculous apparition. Students examine artistic depictions of her appearance to Juan Diego in 1531 and discuss the symbolic importance of his indigenous identity and of Tepeyec within the context of the Conquest and period of colonization.

Although the Virgin of Guadalupe is a topic of discussion in most of my classes on Mexican literature and culture, the reading list for the course on the literal and figurative ghosts of Mexican narratives dedicates the most time to the topic. La Virgen as cultural "ghost" refers to a process of re-signification and re-appropriation that has taken place upon her figure since

her apparition. Throughout the semester, the students examine other gendered cultural ghosts, such as la Malinche in Octavio Paz (1959/1997) and Jean Franco's (1999) essays. Because the students' relationship to La Virgen is often very strong, we read McKee Irwin's (2007) introduction to cultural icons that I mentioned previously before we begin discussing more controversial and irreverent treatments of her.[6] Within this discussion of a cultural icon as a multi-dimensional figure with various levels of signification, I invite them to be open to considering that the Virgin of Guadalupe is not only the religious figure with whom they might have a personal, spiritual relationship but also an evolving icon that has changed and been capitalized upon.

To begin their investigations on La Virgin, the students read Fray Servando de Mier's (2001) "Apología" to reveal the debate regarding the origin of the well-known image and the beginning of an autochthonous discourse in the years preceding Mexico's Independence. The importance of the apparition of the Virgin so that the Spanish could justify the conquest and the value of their colonies in the new world is emphasized as well. The students readily recognize the parallels between the appropriations of her image for political purposes when they see artistic representations of Hidalgo raising her image in his *Grito* for Independence, revolutionaries entering into Mexico City holding her banner, and Vicente Fox's 2000 election campaign speech that used her image for photo opportunities.

Students then turn their attention to two essays on the Virgin that speaks directly to the re-signification of her image. First, they discuss Carlos Monisváis' (1996) essay on the Virgin as not only "un hecho religioso y un proyecto de nación a partir de imágenes" [a religious fact and a national project based on images] (p. 181), but also as an industry of popular imagery and art. Intellectually, students grasp the topics that Monsiváis (1996) discusses; namely the scandals caused by so-called blasphemous art in Mexico, and the cult of La Virgen in secular contexts. The students also read Rubén Martínez's (2000) depiction of "La virgen indocumentada"—the border-crossing virgin who is a source of inspiration for Mexicans and US Latinos. Martínez (2000) establishes various ways to be Guadalupanos, spiritually but also culturally. His descriptions of the celebrations and connections with La Virgen and pre-Colombian sacred beliefs make sense for many of the students and they begin to understand more kitschy and popular usages of her image.

In our final discussions about the Virgin, we delve into more irreverent depictions of her image and how she has been reappropriated as a subversive and feminist icon. For instance, I show them photos from my personal collection of graffiti and street art, generally one that depicts La

Virgen smoking a joint (Figure 3) and another of her dressed as a revolutionary Zapatista (Figure 4). Students observe the differences from the classic image of the Virgin with her eyes downcast humbly to the images of her projecting active rebellion and resistance. In our conversations, students are mostly open to discussing the messages about subversive femininity and utilizing La Virgen as a figure of empowerment, even as some take issue with depicting her using marijuana.

Figure 3. Pot-smoking virgin (Petersen, 2012)

Figure 4. Zapatista Virgin (or Virgin of the Disappeared) (Petersen, 2013)

Lastly, we move our discussions to Chicana feminist painter, Alma López's (1999) depiction of a strong, defiant and brown woman in *Our Lady*. The woman's gaze in the painting directly challenges the viewer and wears little clothing but dons boxing gloves to reiterate her rebellious and disobedient nature.[7] Students' reactions to this image are generally strong and negative so we begin by discussing what López's motivations might have been for creating this image. They reiterate ideas they have discussed previously, how La Virgen can mean different things to different people and generally arrive at the conclusion that perhaps López is seeking to embrace the empowering aspects of the virgin for women while resisting the limiting, restrictive elements of such a pious and pure feminine model. Within the framework of cultural icons, the Virgin of Guadalupe becomes a powerful figure for discussing gender, even as many students strongly reject more irreverent manifestations of her in the beginning.

"TÍA JUANA" AS THE UNMENTIONABLE CULTURAL ICON

The lore surrounding the origin of Tijuana's name is vast but the story of Tía Juana as a hospitable cook who welcomed travelers at Rancho Tía Juana is well known. Gil Olmos (2008) explains that the story often includes how her hospitality extended to provide prostitutes to the weary travelers, thus creating Tijuana's fame as a city of prostitution. The story serves to establish the undeniable connection between the border and prostitution. In this discussion, I use "Tía Juana" to describe the figure of the prostitute and the topic of (border) prostitution. Students' cultural knowledge about border prostitution is often dominated by a desire to ignore unpleasant topics or a tendency to solely see the women as victims; both reactions reflect students' inclination to simplify complicated problems. Although Tijuanenses and San Diegans alike would rather pretend that prostitution and sex trafficking does not exist in their cities, our course discussions lead them to see the power behind breaking the silence surrounding topics that can be taboo in other settings.

In my course that is centered on the narratives and cultural production of the border, we have a section that focuses on the representation of prostitution in the border region. Students who call Tijuana (and the greater border region) home or regularly visit family there demystify the border for those who have only heard stories. Depending on the semester, many students in this course have spent significant time in Tijuana with University Missions volunteering and participating in community-service learning projects, while others have become familiar with Baja from surfing expeditions or family vacations. In our opening discussions for the course,

we describe society's stereotypes about the border before reading several critical essays on the border and border identity, including Santiago Vaquera-Váquez's essay (2006) on the multiplicitous perceptions surrounding the border. Most have seen movies or heard songs that glorify the *leyenda negra* of prostitution on the border and in Tijuana.

Although the texts that primarily deal with prostitution are few, many of their readings have indirect references to the topic. Miguel Méndez's (1992) *Santa María de las Piedras* has a few rowdy scenes from a northern Mexico brothel and narrates an example of a "good prostitute" who is "saved" by the client who falls in love with her.[8] Students notice how Méndez's depiction of the brothel is reminiscent of a scene from a western movie made in Hollywood. Rosario Sanmiguel's "Callejón sucre" (2008a) and "Un silencio muy largo" (2008b) give an intimate portrait of the lives of women who have worked or are working in cabarets in Juárez, yet the element of sex work does not quite take center stage. That said, gender dynamics and why Sanmiguel elects to narrate "Un silencio" from a cabaret are a large part of our class discussions.

Rosina Conde's (2001) "Viñetas revolucionarias," begins our more direct discussions on sex work. Conde's (2001) short story has vignettes of women (and a man in drag) preparing to dance on stage in a club near the tourist zone of an unnamed border city. The students notice that the stories are narrated from the point of view of the dancers and debate Vaquera-Vásquez's (2006) assertion that the "male colonizing" gaze is subverted by this narrative view-point (pp. 706–707). As we discuss the more negative aspects of the border such as prostitution and sex work, I find some students begin to feel defensive and ask why it is important to examine topics like these that do not define their experience or the essence of what the border is for them. They wonder if we are perpetuating stereotypes by discussing such topics and if the authors who write about prostitution are not glorifying it, even if unintentionally. As a class, we brainstorm on reasons for why it could be important to consider prostitution in general and in relation to the border specifically. Their conclusions usually reveal a recognition of the dangers of silencing difficult or unpleasant topics. In Rendón's (2007) terms, they conclude that is important to break the society's implicit agreement of silence and that ignoring the topic might be as grave an error as accepting border stereotypes as unquestioned fact.

As we proceed, critical texts on sex work have proven helpful to give students more contexts in which to frame their arguments. Debra Castillo's (2012) article on work and choice that is centered around her work with prostitutes in Tijuana reminds students of the agency that sex workers have and how our viewing them as merely victims undercuts women's

authority.[9] A talk at USD by Catherine MacKinnon (2010), a strong anti-prostitution advocate, gave a counter point to Castillo's (2012) point of view with her arguments that sex work is exploitative in any form. Providing contrasting perspectives has proven helpful for allowing the students to see the complexity of the issue and makes it more difficult for them to oversimplify their discussions of the issues.

Finally, Conde's (2001) "Sonatina" and Eduardo Antonio Parra's (1999) "No me quiten lo poco que traigo" challenge the heteronormative discourse surrounding prostitution and sex work. Conde (2001) depicts a protagonist in an abusive lesbian relationship who is conflicted about being forced to leave prostitution by her girlfriend. Parra (1999) creates a transvestite protagonist who views the act of having sex as a means of performing femininity and also as an economic means towards a sex change operation. Both of the narratives include mentions of violent hatred towards the protagonists because they are homosexual and because they are involved in sex work.[10] These texts allow for rich discussions about violent discrimination against homosexuals and sex workers and why Conde (2001) and Parra (1999) might have been motivated to write these short stories. At this point in the semester, the students' reactions become less dominated by the uncomfortableness of the topics while they grapple with two characters who clearly express agency when entering into sex work but who also undoubtedly suffer the violent consequences of sexual and gender difference and discrimination.

CONCLUSION

While I do not have perfect approaches for interrogating gender in my "border" classrooms, I find that welcoming the difficulty of the contact zone and creating a space to challenge the dominant discourse surrounding gender and national identity helps students to cultivate a willingness and ability to critically engage figures as ubiquitous and multi-dimensional as the cultural icons I have discussed here. The layered approach to these subjects is one that is important in Hispanic studies courses in that it helps students view different power structures and historical contexts at play in questions surrounding gender. In this process, each of us present in the classroom is provided the opportunity to evolve, grow, and transform our identities and to view cultural phenomena in our everyday lives with a critical and questioning eye. Although the classroom contact zones that are formed in different regions and universities might manifest unique challenges and dynamics compared to the ones I have mentioned here, paying attention to similar subtleties and nuances while creating space for

students to break the "agreement of silence" surrounding difficult topics of difference and gender dynamics is essential for our students.

NOTES

[1] I have chosen to eliminate the hyphen as a gesture of political sensitivity and to recognize that these dual identities are now permanent and accepted (Potowski, 2012, p. 182).

[2] I use quotation marks around the term border classroom because USD's classrooms differ greatly from more literal border classrooms, as my colleague Sara Potter at the University of Texas El Paso has described to me in our conversations about student demographics in our respective institutions.

[3] For a detailed and nuanced discussion on heritage learners and a socio-linguistic approach to identity, see Potowski (2012).

[4] We discussed Jesús María H. Alarid's "El idioma español" (1889), Jorge Ulica's "Do you speak pocho …?" (1924), and José Antonio Burciaga's "Un poema en tres idomas y el Caló" (1977).

[5] The movie selections I made were influenced by conversations with Fernando F. Sánchez as he was writing his and Gerardo García Muñoz's detailed and nuanced discussion of Pancho Villa as an anti-heroe.

[6] When discussing the reappropriation of the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe, Gruzinski's (2001) chapter on the Baroque image is essential, even if it is likely too challenging for many undergraduate courses.

[7] The public's scandalous reaction to this painting is well documented in *Our Lady of Controversy: Alma López's Irreverent Apparition* (López, 2011).

[8] Castillo, Rangel, and Solis (2004) reveal that people are generally more comfortable with prostitutes who have been forced into their line of work by circumstances rather than women who have exerted agency in choosing sex work.

[9] Students who wrote their final papers on sex work along the border also read Castillo's article with Rangel and Solis on Tijuana prostitutes and their clients.

[10] Although it is beyond the scope of this article, I have also turned their attention to the topic in terms of human trafficking in "Tecún Umán: La pequéna Tijuana" by Virginia Hernández (2008). This short story is a disturbing narrative of a young girl who is sold to a madam on the Guatemala-Mexico border so that her family members can cross.

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10. APPROACHES TO TEACHING RAPE IN THE SPANISH LITERATURE CLASSROOM

Alicia Giménez Bartlett's Ritos de Muerte

In *Teaching Literature*, her book-length reflection on a lifetime spent doing just that in US universities, Elaine Showalter (2003) includes a chapter she titles "Teaching Dangerous Subjects." There is no pun intended here, for the "subjects" in question are not Showalter's students but the topics that may arise during the discussion and analysis of literary texts in the classroom in undergraduate and graduate courses. One of these "dangerous subjects" is rape, about which Showalter says:

> Teachers of sociology, psychology, and law, among others … know that they have to be careful and thoughtful in introducing controversial and emotionally-charged subjects into the classroom. Martha Nussbaum points out that 'many courses in criminal law do not address rape for precisely this reason, and those that do exercise special care to promote a sensitive atmosphere in the classroom.' Literature professors should not feel like wimps if they do the same. (p. 130)

This highly regarded feminist scholar and pedagogue thus concedes that those of us whom she identifies as "literature professors" do not have to deal with the issue of rape, that we "should not feel like wimps" if we leave it off our syllabi. However, I read in her text an implicit exhortation that we not elide the subject, even though she acknowledges that addressing it with learners can be fraught and demanding. James Tomkovicz's (1992) lengthy paper on teaching rape in the university serves as a precursor to Showalter's perception of the difficulties of approaching it in the learning space, and he warns that "[d]iscussing rape has the potential to destroy or at least severely damage the educational atmosphere in the classroom" (p. 500), and create conflict, differences of opinion and group disharmony (pp. 501 & 504). Talking about rape in a college course can thus prove tough for learners and tutor alike.

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However, from my own perspective as a female who teaches as a feminist, it is essential that the theme be explored with undergraduates if it is referenced in a work of fiction that forms part of a syllabus. What is more, as I detail later on, for a final-year course that I developed I purposefully strove to identify for study a novel that foregrounds violence and sexual aggression against women. I made this decision because, in line with feminist scholarship on the matter, I posit that rape constitutes a fundamental control mechanism that underpins the wider patriarchy within which my (mostly female) students and I must operate on a daily basis. Marco Abel's (2007) work on portrayals of violence in culture provides us with another consideration of the reasons for addressing such topics as they appear in fiction. Abel talks about "the obvious importance of analyzing … the space of film and literature because … they bear the *pedagogical* potential for activating an *ethical* mode of encounter with violence" (p. 189; original emphasis). What I see this to mean is that teaching and learning activities centered on the study of the representation of aggressions such as rape in cultural products can function to get undergraduates thinking about and understanding the wider causes and consequences of such actions, while at the same time querying their own attitude towards them and how their point of view might have been informed by general opinion, media or the "film and literature" of which Abel speaks.

Although in her monograph Showalter (2003) doesn't explain in detail what she means by "rape," most of her readers (and the wider public) will likely perceive the term to refer to non-consensual sexual activity imposed on a woman by a man, and it is this broad meaning that I will work with here.[1] (I will return to the issue of defining the term later on.) Using Showalter's observations from *Teaching Literature* as a starting point, in this essay I want to describe and discuss my own experience within the UK university system of teaching rape in literature with specific reference to Spain. As I participate in the design and delivery of introductory and general programs on Hispanic culture as well as my own research-led specialist courses, heterosexual rape is a theme that may well turn up in any number of classroom scenarios, in fictions from Golden Age drama to Lorca's poetry to late-twentieth-century women's novels. It is one of these that I have identified and selected as a key text that foregrounds and explores sexual assault of the female in Spain today, and is the work on which my students and I focus our discussion of cultural responses to and attitudes towards rape in contemporary Spanish society. This is *Ritos de muerte* (1996) by Alicia Giménez Bartlett, the first novel in her detective series that features police inspector Petra Delicado. The narrative recounts how Petra and her sidekick, the redoubtable Fermín Garzón, trawl through

a post-Olympics Barcelona in the search for a serial rapist who marks his (always young and physically fragile) victims with a flower-shaped metal instrument. Studying a genre fiction structured around the question of rape stimulates consideration of the ways in which particular sorts of writing can function to analyze actions that the State and the legal system posit as "criminal." However, examination of a novel such as *Ritos de muerte* also brings to the fore much wider gender issues, such as the broader problem of male violence against women, and the significance of the patriarchy to gendering access to power; notions that combine to form a context of structural gender inequalities of which rape is another signal and symptom.

My students and I read *Ritos de muerte* in a ten-credit final-year optional course called "Investigating Iberia" that is devoted to the Spanish detective novel and reflects my long-standing research interest and expertise in this particular field. It runs for ten two-hour sessions over one semester. The aims of the module are to hone students' analytical skills when responding to a cultural product, to perfect their abilities to discuss and write about their findings in a cogent and intelligent way, and to develop substantially their understanding of key socio-political issues within the society in which the text they are reading was produced. On the program, we examine the *novela negra* as a product of the Transition, developments within the genre following the period of decline of the *novela negra*, and how these relate and respond to the recuperation of lost historical memory of the Civil War and dictatorship, and conclude with Giménez Bartlett's novel as a sample woman-authored fiction that foregrounds gender matters in the late twentieth century and constitutes an early example of the police procedural in Spain that would serve to normalize perceptions of the nation's police forces. Its thematic focus on what learners tend to view as a life-shattering crime recalls Showalter's (2003) observation that "whatever text you end with [in a course] is an invitation to some kind of closure—apocalyptic, nihilistic, or comic" (p. 141). At the University of Birmingham, learners all study Spanish language, either as part of a Single Honors program in Hispanic Studies, or in combination with another subject that may be an Asian or European language, Commerce, Music, Geography, etc. They therefore usually have excellent linguistic skills and can read and appreciate the nuances and subtleties of the novels on the syllabus for my course, one of many on offer during their final year of undergraduate registration. All participants have studied Spanish on the UK campus in years one and two of their undergraduate degree, while their third year was spent overseas in order to perfect their knowledge of the language and Iberian cultures, usually in Spain or sometimes in Latin America. Course members thus have a solid grasp of key contemporary and historical issues

affecting the Hispanic world, and this combines with their linguistic ability and personal maturity to create a dynamic and participatory classroom environment. Most learners are from the UK, although a number of European undergraduates also take part in the group via the government- and EU-funded Erasmus student exchange initiative, and on occasion we have been joined by an individual from outside the European Economic Area—for example, an exchange student from the USA or a visitor from Latin America. In the main, those who sign up for the option are female, a situation that reflects the wider profile of the Foreign Languages student body. This sex skew serves to keep gender issues—particularly aspects of women's studies—at the fore in the lecture hall, and foments debate to which many of those present feel they can contribute from first-hand experience in a supportive female-focused environment. This gender slant of the group that studies literature is not unimportant because it can significantly inform the direction that discussion about the textualization of sexual assault of women, for example, can take. Indeed, in her study of what she calls "fictional representations of rape and torture" (p. 3), Laura Tanner (1994) says that "the reader in the scene of violence must negotiate a position relative not only to the victim and violator but to the attitudes about violation encoded in representation and experience through reading" (ibid.). Classroom-based evidence suggests that in almost all cases female learners responding to a fictional text about rape identify, or at least empathize with, the gendered victim, an observation to which I will return later on in this essay.

Discussion forms one of the core activities on the program during my weekly meeting with students. While they must of course have a solid knowledge of *Ritos de muerte* itself, I also ask them to carry out relevant background reading as part of the University of Birmingham's move towards the promotion of Enquiry Based Learning (EBL) as a key pedagogical strategy for undergraduates as well as postgraduates. Once in the seminar itself, a brief introduction by me of a key topic is generally followed by examination of the theme in small break-out fora of three or four people who use their private preparation to inform their critical stance. After this we engage in group feedback led by me as the tutor, and note-taking whereby I summarize debate on the whiteboard in order that everyone follow the lines of argument. Members of the class are permitted to use and develop these shared ideas in the 3,500-word essay that forms the assessment for the option, although most papers contain significant amounts of original research as students may choose any topic on which to write—provided this is negotiated with the course coordinator. *Ritos de muerte* serves as an ideal text for teaching with a subject-centred approach,

here of course focusing on rape and the wider issues of gender violence and female citizen safety.

In our initial session to discuss the novel, the undergraduates and I firstly consider its generic identity as a police procedural. Using George Dove's (1982) now seminal *The Police Procedural* as a starting point, we establish the origins of this sort of crime fiction and their link to the conservative politics of the US in the 1950s (conventionalism, conformism and traditional attitudes continue to characterize this particular type of writing in many cases up to the present day, and are extremely relevant to the way it portrays and scrutinizes gender issues). Learners are encouraged to develop their thinking about the gendering of the sub-genre with further reference to essays by critics such as Sandra Tomc (1995) or Lorraine Gamman (1988/1994) (a work that, although now no longer recent, contains still-relevant postulations), or to my own *Killing Carmens* (2007) in which I analyze Giménez Bartlett's fiction at length with specific consideration of the implications of its generic status. Classroom debate has tended to conclude that the genre's inherently conservative and patriarchal nature is ideologically incompatible with the expression of any real feminist principles or notions, and that this complicates its protagonization of a female police officer (at least one who does not subscribe wholesale to the force's patriarchal and conservative ethos). With specific allusion to the topic to hand, we then move on to explore in depth how, given its strongly masculine bias, the police procedural can possibly work to expound and investigate rape. Course participants often perceive a contradiction in Giménez Bartlett's selection of detective sub-genre and her choice of crime in *Ritos de muerte*. Many students have pointed out that rape is not "simply" an illegal act, and that the consequences and implications for its victim(s) are life-destroying and life-changing. They have also frequently noted that "reducing" the status of rape merely to that of a contravention of the law can function to obscure the far wider realities of gendered power imbalance and violence against women that can underpin patriarchal society, a notion explored with reference to *Ritos* by Nina Molinaro (2002) in her "Writing the Wrong Rites?," an article that learners find of great use in formulating their ideas on their initial consideration of rape in Giménez Bartlett's cop fiction.

Our general presentation class devoted to genre classification and preliminary consideration of the portrayal of rape in *Ritos de muerte* provide an introduction and starting point for two further sessions during which my students and I develop our thinking on issues relating to the form of violence represented by Giménez Bartlett. Initially we work to try to understand what is meant by the term "rape," and how this relates to the

novel under scrutiny. I put it to learners that one definition proposes: "A man commits rape when he engages in intercourse … with a woman not his wife; by force or threat of force; against her will and without her consent. That is the traditional, common law definition of rape" (Estrich, 1987, p. 8). Most course participants are savvy enough to know that this explanation is now outdated and outmoded in Western Europe and many other parts of the world, and, with reference to the alluded to impossibility of rape within marriage or other intimate partnerships, they emphatically claim that non-consensual sexual activity in such a context can and does constitute rape.

Indeed, this topic gave rise to a heated classroom moment protagonized by the students themselves. Because I give learners ample space during lectures for expression of their ideas and thoughts, they tend to feel comfortable sharing experiences and personal views relevant to the text under scrutiny, and on one occasion a woman tutee recounted the case of a close girlfriend who had been raped by her (male) partner. In response to this true-life story, another female member of the class expressed incomprehension of the situation, and explained that such an act could not possibly constitute rape if the attacker was the victim's boyfriend. The strength and vehemence of the reaction from other learners—both male and female—was overwhelming; without exception they responded, almost as one, loudly and vigorously, attempting to out-shout each other in order to explain that if a man forces sexual activity on a woman this constitutes rape, whatever the relationship of the assailant to his prey. Although on that occasion my students and I did not take the opportunity to develop the discussion to assess their own and wider social attitudes to the rape of prostitutes by clients, for example, this is a query that in the future I will pose to the class in order to assess whether the sort of views that came to the fore when the true-life episode was discussed are extrapolated by learners to other scenarios, too.

Tomcovicz (1992) recounts how similarly powerful learner responses were evoked when he included the subject of rape on his program: "strong feelings clearly motivated some of the comments [on the topic]" (p. 487). Introducing the theme to the classroom can thus sometimes elicit passionate and unexpected reactions from learners that the tutor must manage, often spontaneously with recourse to skill sets that were not addressed in any part of our professional training. These particular techniques were called on during another incident in my own lecture theatre whereby, during a group discussion of rape in *Ritos*, a female student suddenly got to her feet and rushed from the room. She subsequently came to my office to talk to me face-to-face and, without articulating her experience(s) in any detail, made it clear to me that she had been the victim of rape at some time prior to

enrolling at university. In the class scenario I considered it best procedure to continue teaching in order to calm the other participants, and sent a close female friend of the then absent undergraduate to locate and comfort her. This is yet another issue that Tomkovicz flags, for he talks of "forces operating below the surface … when a … class takes up one of the most divisive issues of our times" (p. 481), and in this regard he goes on later to mention those "students in the class who had been raped" (p. 492). As I discovered, these women (and perhaps men) can turn up in any seminar room, on any program, and their responses and those of their fellow learners may require spontaneous but careful negotiation by the lecturer.

Those enrolled in the course also energetically defend their proposition that rape comprises not only forced vaginal penetration by a man's erect penis or object used by the male aggressor, but *any* unwanted sexual activity that is imposed on female by a member or members of the opposite sex. Susan Brownmiller's (1975/1993) now classic *Against our Will* summarizes just this view, and learners have found the feminist scholar's definition essential to bolstering their own:

> A sexual invasion of the body by force, an incursion into the private, personal inner space without consent—in short, an internal assault from one of several avenues and by one of several methods—constitutes a deliberate violation of emotional, physical and rational integrity and is a hostile, degrading act of violence that deserves the name of rape. (p. 376)

Detailed observations like these are important to reading *Ritos de muerte*, mostly because the novel proposes vaginal penetration as the meaning of rape (initially by a penis and later, when the aggression is perpetrated by a woman, by a door handle). My students have expressed the opinion that the author's view of what rape means is inadequate and limited, and that it fails to show understanding of the much wider implications of the term (which are indeed recognized by Article 179 of the Spanish *Código Penal*). With reference back to our initial discussion of Giménez Bartlett's work, they argue that even the generic and ideological limitations of the police procedural, and the need to define rape as a crime in legal terms, should not preclude the textualization of aggressions besides non-consensual penile penetration of the vagina. As a tutor I view learners' knowledge and vehemence as ideologically and sociologically encouraging because they provide evidence of these young women's understanding that sexual assault can and does take many forms, and that these need to be articulated in order to raise awareness of gender violence and its meanings and implications for society in the Spanish context and beyond.

If course participants evince criticism of what they determine to be the very limited notion of rape discernible from reading *Ritos*, they are equally resounding in their reaction to the portrayal within the work of both the victims and the rapist. When analyzing and discussing how Giménez Bartlett writes the aggressed females, students have tended to express frustration and displeasure with the textual techniques used by the author. The undergraduates often pick up on that part of the novel in which the victims are described as "esos ratones que hemos cazado en una trampa … el pelaje suave, los ojos como dos minúsculos botones" ["those mice that we have caught in a trap … soft furs, eyes like two miniscule buttons," my translation] (p. 41), and point out that shared traits are their youth and physical fragility, as well as their provenance in the least privileged areas of Barcelona. Course attendees generally reject the suggestion implicit in this portrayal that only small, weak young girls from poor neighbourhoods will be raped. Indeed, they understand that any female can be subjected to sexual attack by a man or men, and they often support their stance by citing from their reading of Brownmiller's (1975/1993) two chapters in *Against our Will* that focus on the victim of rape. They observe that Giménez Bartlett does mitigate this posture to some degree when she notes in *Ritos* that of the women in an aerobics class, "Cualquiera de ellas podía ser violada a la salida de clase, marcada con una flor. Todas … parecían susceptibles de ser empujadas a una pesadilla que destrozaría sus mentes y quizá también sus vidas. En cualquier momento, sin una auténtica razón." ["Any of them could be raped on their way home from class and marked with a flower. They all … seemed vulnerable to being caught up in a nightmare that would destroy their mental well being and probably also their lives. At any moment, and with no real reason," my translation] (p. 42). However, students also point out that the officer does not include herself on her list of potential victims, and they argue that this is because, as a member of the police force, she feels she is protected—either simply by dint of her membership of it and her ownership of a regulation firearm, or because she considers that male cops can protect her, thus perpetuating what they say is the invalid notion that some women won't ever be raped.

The universality of possible victim status that learners identify is yet another topic that they often extrapolate to their own situation. Brownmiller (1975/1993) says that "rape … is … a conscious process of intimidation by which *all* men keep *all* women in a state of fear" (p. 15; original emphasis), an assertion with which many female students have agreed and identified. In the safe, largely female space of the classroom, they share their strategies for trying to deal with this fear: never walking alone across campus at night, watching out for who might be near them in public spaces,

checking their dwellings when they arrive home to ensure that no potential assailant is lurking there … They tell me that they deployed these mechanisms during their year abroad in Spain, too, and are realistic about the realities of female unsafety in contexts that include their usual habitat of second-city Britain, and far beyond, too. As a feminist tutor I want to exhort them to "reclaim the night," in the words of the call popular in the 1970s (and still used by a London-based feminist network), but, as a woman, I am as aware as they that one can become a victim of sexual assault "just because" one is female. Interestingly, and also sadly, from my perspective, classroom discussion of *Ritos de muerte* and the topic of rape has never once taken the route of considering the prevention and eradication of this form of gendered violence; we all seem to accept that, like other forms of aggression against women, it is so deeply rooted in patriarchal society that its extinction is but a utopic and unachievable dream.

In relation to the concern with victimhood and female safety, students acknowledge that rape can of course occur in the urban environment of a metropolis like the Barcelona portrayed in *Ritos*, just as it can happen in the Birmingham that they inhabit as undergraduates. However, they tend to agree with each other that, despite Petra Delicado's reassurances to the victims that they were in no way to blame for what happened to them, the novel seems to suggest that the girls' occupation of the city space alone, late on and in the dark might be read as a sign of their collusion or culpability in their sexual assault. Course attendees reject this implication outright and with rotundity, and, referring back to their comments on their own moves to ensure their safety in both public and private spaces, explain that despite the need they feel for such measures, a woman's location, behaviour or attitude can *never* be considered in any way a contributing factor in rape; responsibility for the violence, they say, lies solely with the man who perpetrates it. They have often concluded by reading in *Ritos* an implicit criticism of the raped girls as "silly" or "foolish," the effects of assault on whom are not explored in the text. These are important and, for a tutor teaching from a feminist perspective, heartening assertions, for they run contrary to views that are still widely held in Spain, the UK and elsewhere: that a woman who is raped must be in some way responsible for what she was subjected to.

Classroom comment has also highlighted the group's perception of what they see as the offhand and unfriendly way in which Inspector Petra Delicado deals with the aggressed girls and the mother of one of them. Although they do note that the police officer mitigates her attitude somewhat by never questioning the victims' account of their ordeal, nor the

veracity of the event of rape, they perceive that her brusqueness does little or nothing to evince support of and empathy for an assaulted woman. If we recall Tanner's (1994) claim that a reader of rape must identify with one of the parties in the violence, then it is clear that on the course that I teach, the female readers of *Ritos de muerte* take the side of the aggressed girls, while also showing in their discussion of their fear of assault at least some identification with them.

In our final class devoted to Giménez Bartlett's first novel in her Petra Delicado series we address the textualisation of the rapist, another subject that arouses extensive debate and vehement responses from course participants, as well as revealing their feminist consciousness with regards to the wider social problem of gendered violence. The serial sexual attacker in *Ritos de muerte* is eventually identified as a young man from an unskilled working background who lives in a miniscule unaesthetic apartment with his step-sister/fiancée and overbearing and dominant mother. During this session I ask students to consider a number of points: what is the profile of a rapist and why does a man rape, and how does what they know about this figure and his motivations relate to their reading of the character in the fiction under scrutiny. Learners find chapter 2 of Julie Allison and Lawrence Wrightsman's (1993) *Rape. The Misunderstood Crime* useful as preparatory reading here as it overviews the many personality traits and types that over the years have been posited as characterizing the rapist. Although members of the study group are usually willing to offer an in-class summary of the findings from their private reading, they tend to focus more on their critical view of the male aggressor in *Ritos*. They note that, like his victims, he hails from one of the least privileged parts of Barcelona, and they propose that this feature reinforces the author's postulation that rape is carried out by and primarily happens to those who, unlike Petra, are not bourgeois, and that this insistence on class issues obscures the reality that rape can be perpetrated by anybody and visited on women of any social provenance. Learners also express indignation that the rapist's mother is blamed for her offspring's actions, and they often cite that part of *Ritos* that classifies him as "un tipo apocado y sin carácter, castrado por su madre" [a bland guy with no character, castrated by his mother] (p. 181), and, in a more detailed description:

> Un joven sometido a una férrea disciplina despersonalizadora podía llegar a estallar, dedicarse a ser diferente y aun opuesto en otra parte, incluso vengarse de un elemento femenino tan totalizador. Y escoger chicas débiles para hacerlo, demasiado temeroso de la ciclópea figura maternal.

> [A young man subjected to a rigid despersonalizing, discipline could end up exploding, devoting himself to being different and even contrary in another context, even seeking revenge against such an overpowering female presence. And choosing weak girls for the purpose, because he was so afraid of the Cyclopean maternal figure. My translation] (p. 149)

In response to the question of why men rape women, then, students are unwilling to concede to the mother blame posited by Giménez Bartlett, and instead usually discuss reasons much more in keeping with feminist explanations such as those espoused by Lee Ellis (1989) in *Theories of Rape*, for example, or Brownmiller's (1975/1993) theories explored earlier. While they acknowledge that rape may be multi-causal, they say that, in general, men rape women because they *can*, that males who rape are motivated not by sexual desire, but by the quest for power over the opposite sex.

Rather than *teaching* "the gender question" in my classroom, I would say that I guide and encourage my students to explore it in as many ways as possible on each of the courses that I deliver. The final-year undergraduates who investigate the topic of rape in *Ritos de muerte* tend to be singularly mature ideologically, sociologically, and intellectually, and carry out their own reading preparation around the subject and have shown that they are willing and able to sustain coherent debate in the lecture hall setting. Time and again discussion refers back to the inequalities that underpin and characterize gender relations, not only in the Spain in which the novel studied is set, but also in many other national arenas, too, and learners posit these as the primary explanation for rape. Course participants demonstrate a feminist awareness in their condemnation of the failure to acknowledge that rape can comprise many more forms of assault than non-consensual penetration of the vagina by the erect penis or an object; of any attempt to posit a female's blame for or collusion in the act of her rape; of the suggestion that rape occurs only in the least favoured socio-economic groups; or that there is not always an explanation for the rapist's actions other than his quest for gendered power. My observation of the confidence and authority with which many (mainly female) undergraduates enrolled in the option evince these assertions in the group format are heartening for the future of feminist consciousness—not only in my own country but, given these young learners' linguistic and inter-cultural skills and awareness, in other contexts as well. These are students who won't accept mis-representation of the causes and consequences of this form of violence—one to which female tutees have a particular relationship of fear and

possibility and, sometimes, sadly, real experience, and of which all class participants show a keen understanding, regardless of their sex. In her own study of teaching rape in Margaret Atwood's fiction, Lisa Tyler (1998) notes how "[i]ndignant female students scold Atwood and her narrator … for treating rape too lightly, for not taking it seriously enough … No woman who had experienced rape could discuss it in such a cavalier fashion, some of them angrily say in class discussions—and a handful speak from painful personal experience" (p. 51). It seems to me, then, that by addressing the gender question in my Hispanic Studies classroom—specifically the problem of rape as a form of gendered aggression—I am contributing in my own small way to the formation of a new generation of feminist-aware women *and* men (although male learners are fewer in number in Modern Languages) who, like those taught by Tyler, will continue to question and probe gendered inequalities and injustices just as we, their tutors, have been doing for many years.

NOTES

[1] With this definition I of course do not mean to negate the existence of homosexual rape, but want only to make clear that in my classes my students and I focus on male sexual aggression against the female.

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V.

INTERDISCIPLINARY AND CROSSROADS

MARY K. LONG

11. TEACHING GENDER FOR THE MULTICULTURAL WORKPLACE

INTRODUCTION

There is on-going debate in the United States about the best way for higher education to prepare students to become thoughtful world citizens who can compete successfully for jobs in the global environment. Students today must develop creative, critical, analytical, and pragmatic skills necessary to respond to a wider variety of cultural, economic, social, and political variables at a faster pace of change than their peers have faced in the past. Furthermore, given the nature of global supply chains, multi-cultural contact in some form is a daily reality for a large number of professionals no matter if they work within the United States or abroad and it goes without saying that gender issues are interwoven into every aspect of contemporary life and work. Interdisciplinary programs which provide a balance between a liberal arts and professional school education are a model with a proven track record for meeting these complex educational goals. This article will present the topic of teaching gender through the lens of one such interdisciplinary program: The Spanish for the Professions major at the University of Colorado-Boulder.

The Spanish for the Professions program and this article are guided by several premises. These premises are: 1) Business is a historically important sector within society, and the grave failures of contemporary neo-liberal projects to appropriately regulate large business practices should not blind us to the historical contributions and future positive potential of for-profit enterprise in combatting poverty and increasing individual agency particularly in the micro, small, and medium size business sectors. 2) A wide and deep grounding in historical, literary, artistic, and linguistic knowledge of cultures outside the United States combined with an understanding of contemporary trends is essential for overcoming isolationist tendencies within the US and for preparing future business professionals to cooperate internationally in the creation of sustainable, equitable business practices. 3) When women's educational and economic status are improved, all of society benefits; thus, an integral

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part of the project of ending oppression of all peoples worldwide is to honor culturally diverse practices of feminism and to acknowledge and study the work of women at all class levels. 4) Understanding the growing role of women in leadership and as professional mentors is a key to creating equal opportunities not only for women but for all members of world societies. 5) Because of the ubiquitous nature of gender issues in the professional world, it is important to weave considerations of gender and women's issues throughout the four core Spanish for Specific Purposes courses rather than to create a stand-alone Gender in the Professions course.

In what follows, I first describe the design, philosophy and context of the Spanish for the Professions major as well as the placement of gender issues. Next I present a consideration of some of the challenges related to cultural and class stereotypes related to the role of women that I have faced while teaching in this program. Finally, I will provide data about the role of women in business in the Latin American, US Latino, and Iberian settings and describe specific classroom activities that I have developed to help students to combine the different sources of cultural and gender theory and knowledge in a way that overcomes stereotypes and opens up avenues of cross-cultural communication and deeper self-understanding. I will close with a reflection on how the approach I describe here fits into the contemporary need for new approaches to discussing gender issues as well as aiding students to develop true intercultural competence defined as "the complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with those who are linguistically and culturally different from ourselves" (Fantini, 2014).[1]

THE SPANISH FOR THE PROFESSIONS MAJOR

The Spanish for the Professions major at the University of Colorado Boulder was created in 1973 and is designed around the study of Spanish language, Latin American, Iberian[2], and US Latino cultures and cross-cultural communication within multicultural business and non-profit contexts both in the United States and internationally. This is a 59 credit, interdisciplinary major which includes 32 credits of language, literature, culture, and Spanish for Specific purposes courses (12 credits of the 32) in the Spanish and Portuguese Department, 15 credits of business and economics courses and 12 more credits in a third related field. The demand for professionals with a high level of Spanish language proficiency and intercultural competence combined with this interdisciplinary background has grown quickly over the years. Mainstream US businesses

are increasingly interested in embracing the growing Spanish-language market nationally and also in expanding their international reach. Furthermore, businesses owned by both Spanish and English speaking Latino professionals "are growing at more than twice the rate of all US firms." Latino entrepreneurs make up 20% of all new entrepreneurs in the country and Latino-owned businesses contribute nearly $500 billion in revenue to the national economy (United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, 2014). Finally, in all Latin American countries and in Spain there is an autonomous business tradition shaped by an on-going exploration of the optimal balance between pure free-market and government-regulated trade as well as an established history of successful participation in the international arena. Companies within this tradition are interested in working with well-rounded, bilingual professionals who can provide insights into the US market.

The Spanish for the Professions major combines both the values placed by the liberal arts on "an academic foundation for life skills" (Kelm, 2005) with the more pragmatic applied vision of business schools which aim to "prepare students with specific, job-oriented 'hard'skills" (Kelm, 2005). The interdisciplinary approach of the program has become increasingly pertinent in light of some of the grave failures associated with the global, neo-liberal project that have generated sharp critical analysis within the humanities and concerned self-reflection within the business sector. In recent years, multiple and intertwined issues of sustainability and equity have emerged in the humanities and in business, and are an essential part of the Spanish for the Professions program. Furthermore, the complexities of the history of US business practices and US-influenced financial support and government intervention in both Spain and Latin America during the 20th century must be considered.

In the four Spanish for Business communication and translation/ localization courses, we create a bridge between the humanities and business by guiding students to adapt and incorporate the theoretical, historical, literary, linguistic and cultural knowledge they gain from the humanities courses into the practical applications they develop for the professional world while also mastering the analytical styles of each discipline. To this end, we explore the role of business in society and prepare students to enter the multicultural professional world by exploring examples of best practices and by emphasizing the difference between what Ciskszentmilhalyi and Rochterg-Hallon (1981) have defined as "terminal materialism" (materialism for materialism's sake) and "instrumental materialism" (material possessions should not be regarded as life goals, but as means to achieve life goals) as well as Korten's (1999) discussion of the

difference between money and wealth: “Money is a number. Real wealth is in food, fertile land, buildings, or other things that sustain us” (p. 2). In addition, my approach is infused with a hermeneutic philosophical tradition in which “hermeneutics becomes a theory of the text, which takes texts as its starting point, but ultimately comes to see the world as textual insofar as human existence is expressed through discourse, and discourse is the invitation humans make to one another to be interpreted.” (Simms, 2003, p. 31, quoted by Hall, 2009, p. 29) Thus, as we teach students technical vocabulary and the etiquette of professional communication, which support the knowledge of business theories and practices they bring from the business school, we also provide them with cultural information and communication strategies for participating in, analyzing, and shaping the discourses of business within and across cultures.

Women are taking an increasingly important role in the creation and propagation of these discourses both within the United States and in the Spanish-speaking world. This is important progress. Experts in all sectors emphasize that lifting women out of poverty and creating equal economic opportunities is crucial to the success of all. As Christine Lagarde of the International Monetary Fund has observed, “all economies have savings and productivity gains if women have access to the job market. It’s not just a moral, philosophical, or equal-opportunity matter. … It just makes economic sense” (quoted in Barsh, 2014, p. 2). Women’s equity is a key subject in both humanities and business traditions and specifically in the business context “research shows that what is good for women is good for business organizations as a whole, especially for organizational leadership” (Maxfield, 2005, p. ii). In light of these facts, an important element of the Spanish for the Professions program is guiding students to process historical and contemporary cultural concepts of gender roles[3] as well as theoretical and practical information about gender interactions in general and in the business setting in particular both in the US and abroad.

Another key element of the program is to provide students with models of dialogic practices that enhance the possibility of cross-cultural understanding by emphasizing the dynamic process of combining awareness of self and other that any attempt to understand requires. The courses are designed to prepare students to meet and cooperate with individuals of all genders by increasing their knowledge about professional practices, cultural traits and traditions in ways that support and enrich communication with individuals, rather than trapping students within narrow stereotypes that can impede individual cooperation. The information provided is intended to balance concepts of economic and professional status about the students’ future business counterparts;

exercises are designed to lead students to reflect on their own awareness and attitudes in order to listen to individual, varied stories thus gaining deeper insights both about their interlocutors and themselves. Both the knowledge and the practices greatly enhance students' achievement of high-level Spanish language proficiency as well as informed intercultural competence, which will support effective and appropriate interactions with co-workers in the multicultural workplace while also preparing students to make professional choices that support long-term, sustainable, economic, social, and gender equity.

In my experience, many students already enthusiastically embrace the values of sustainable and equitable development as well as a commitment to gender equity. Having chosen a major that will lead them outside their "native" comfort zone many are motivated to pursue work across linguistic, cultural and national borders not only because of their love of the language and cultures or because of a desire to be transformed through travel but also in order to "make a positive difference in the world" or as some put it, "give back." Because of the remarkable level of material comfort available to many in the United States, students who study regions that include emerging economies like many in Latin America have a tendency to equate "making a difference" with helping to provide opportunity to those they perceive to be less fortunate than themselves because of economic disparities. Many students are attracted to social entrepreneurship and microfinance initiatives as well as NGO development work. We do include the topics of social entrepreneurship, microfinance, and NGOs in the classes and our exploration of these topics include considerations of how impoverished communities are positively impacted when the women in a community are provided access to education as well as economic support and professional training to pursue business ventures.

CHALLENGES OF UNBALANCED UNDERSTANDING

Yet the good intentioned desire to "make a difference" can have unintended negative consequences if students do not acquire a fully balanced view of the societies that they study in conjunction with a deeper understanding of their own. In particular, when preparing students in this major, I have found that there is an imbalance in the knowledge available to students about the middle and upper-middle class sectors of society in general and in particular about the status of women in professional careers in Latin America, Spain, and US Latino communities.

The initial causes of the paucity of knowledge in the United States about professional sectors in the Spanish-speaking world lie outside the

university setting. First, there is little information in the popular press about the professional sectors in relation to both men and women in the multiple countries and cultures that are often grouped under the umbrella term "Hispanic." This scarcity of data has been exacerbated in the past few years by the alarmist and politicized focus on border security, immigration and drug violence. Whether immigration issues are presented as a humanitarian crisis or a dire threat to national security, the focus is almost exclusively on the lowest socio-economic sectors and this focus has exacerbated misguided, stereotypical, and factually inaccurate concepts in the United States about a generic concept of "Hispanic" culture as a threat.[4] Second, the entertainment media in the United States has only recently begun to counteract ingrained class and gender stereotypes offered to the mainstream in film and on television. Specifically, Spanish, Latin American, and Latino men are often portrayed as violent, repressive, and "macho" or overly sexualized "charming" lovers, while Spanish, Latin American, and Latina women are either portrayed as submissive victims or exotically sensual sex symbols, and many of the characters are defined as coming either from extreme poverty or drug-financed excess.

Unfortunately, these media-inspired impressions can sometimes be reinforced once students enter the university. To avoid this problem, it is necessary to consider the possible impact of inaccurate popular assumptions on the reception of academic studies. In the business sector there are studies that address the importance of cultural differences for management practices. Geert Hofstede's (n.d.) work on cultural dimensions is particularly well known. This work provides insights into how five different social constructs function within different cultures. The categories themselves (power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, and indulgence) do provide material for fruitful consideration of differences in relation to these categories and related communication styles between cultures since the data base is set up to facilitate the comparison between countries. Yet, this data still lends itself to making generalized statements about cultures that can feed into stereotypes (particularly those that relate to the category of masculinity) that users may previously hold. In addition, the emphasis on national cultures as a whole precludes the consideration of how to interact with individuals. On the humanities side, there is a rich tradition in Spanish language and literature departments of analyzing literary texts and films created by women, which portray the historical and contemporary limits that have been placed on women's lives as well as the discursive strategies they have used to name and challenge those limits. In other humanities and social science classes that focus on Latin America, Spain, and the US Latino community, there is important

work being done to educate students about grave economic injustices faced and violence suffered by contemporary impoverished and working-class women and the repression suffered by women of all classes in all eras. In addition to providing content, the humanities and social sciences coursework is essential to helping students to understand the social construction of cultural norms and to develop the ability to decenter from values they may perceive as "absolute" in order to gain a more flexible and nuanced analytical approach to cross-cultural and gendered interpretation. Yet here too, there is a dearth of up-to-date information about the advances made by and for women in professional domains such as higher education, business and leadership in Spain, Latin American, and US Latino communities during the past twenty years.

Certainly an awareness of the needs of at-risk populations is extremely important and the fact that "women account for around 70% of the world's poor" (Burand, 2010, p. 435) cannot be overlooked when studying the business and non-profit setting of any region inside or outside the United States. However, sometimes the academic study of such challenges can unwittingly play into the framing of immigration issues in the popular press since an exclusive presentation of research that primarily seeks to reveal injustices in the international setting can predispose learners to interpret all cultural differences in gender interactions as evidence of dysfunction. Even when gravely troubling issues (such as unjust treatment of women workers in Maquiladoras (factories) at the US-Mexico border and the horrific history of disappearances and murders of young women in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico) are presented from a concerned point of view, an exclusive focus on the most dramatic gender and economic inequalities can lead students to perceive women from regions affected by these issues primarily as passive victims in need of sympathy, rescue, and protection rather than also as vocal advocates for justice and progress who are active in leadership roles that create positive change within their own societies. This knowledge imbalance can also lead to a narrow vision of men as macho "strongmen" who aim to enforce a rigid patriarchal code.

Ultimately, failure to recognize the resilience, creativity, and activist capabilities of women in lower economic groups, along with the failure to perceive that an upper-middle class, college-educated woman executive has a completely different life experience and range of influence than, for example, a budding micro-business woman owner in a rural setting can be problematic not only for the success of a business transaction but also for any desire to create cross-cultural understanding and goodwill (that is, to "make a difference"). Misguided "good intentions" can cause more harm than good by alienating potential partners from all economic classes and

furthering perceptions of US citizens as not only ignorant but also arrogant. Furthermore, the unbalanced representation of gendered violence and economic injustice "outside" US borders can blind students to the equally persistent problems of gendered violence and economic injustice "inside" US borders. All of this creates complications for developing true intercultural competence which will enable students to "establish and maintain relationships with individuals, communicate with minimal loss or distortion of meaning and collaborate to accomplish tasks of mutual interest or need" (Fantini, 2014).

WOMEN'S PROGRESS IN PROFESSIONAL SECTORS

The first step in correcting the unbalanced understanding of professional settings in the Spanish-speaking world is to provide students with concrete information about the progress made by Latin American, Spanish, and Latina women in professional and leadership sectors. The past two decades have seen several women elected as presidents in Latin America,[5] significant numbers of Spanish women in both Spanish and European Union ministry posts,[6] the appointment of Sonya Sotomayor to the Supreme Court of the United States, and the entrance of large numbers of Latin American, Spanish, and Latina women into a wide variety of professional ranks. The textbook we use for the first course in the Spanish for Professions sequence has a chapter focused on "The Office" that includes a reading titled: "Men, Women, and Work" which provides the first opportunity in the program to present students with necessary information. The reading includes employment statistics about progress made for women in the general "Hispanic" world, as well as historical consideration of the impact of class differences on women's opportunities, and an explanation of the "traditional roles" for women and men influenced by the concepts of *Marianismo* (the Virgin Mary as the ideal model for women) and *Machismo* [described as a philosophy in which men are encouraged on the one hand to be "generous, dignified, honorable and gentlemanly," but also to see themselves as superior to women, and dedicated to proving their virility a la "Don Juan" (Doyle & Fryer, 2015, pp. 197–199)]. The reading is somewhat short, places great emphasis on continued inequalities, and the presentation of *Marianismo* and *Machismo* tends to reinforce stereotypical concepts of macho men and passive women but it provides a starting point. Fortunately there are more and more studies emerging that can provide further information and a nuanced presentation of regional differences. For example, the two volume *Gender and Women's Leadership: A Reference Handbook* (O'Connor, 2010) includes the

chapters “Women as Leaders in the Latina/o Movement” (Mancillas, 2010), “Women’s Leadership in the European Union” (Galligan, 2010), “Women’s Leadership in Latin America” (Gentleman, 2010) as well as other chapters on broader topics that include reference to women from these regions. In 2005, the Interamerican Dialogue, a policy group, in conjunction with Simmons School of Management published “Women on the Verge: Corporate Power in Latin America” which provides extensive country-by-country data about an “amazing success story:” “Women in corporate Latin America are approaching 35% at the department/area head and director/manager levels” (Maxfield, 2005, p. ii). In relation to Spain, the recent 228 page study “Mujeres empresarias en la economía española” [Women Entrepreneurs in the Spanish Economy] (n.d.) provides a thorough overview of the history, current state, and needed improvements in the status of women in the Spanish business and entrepreneurial sectors.

INCORPORATING INFORMATION INTO ACTIVE KNOWLEDGE

The second step in correcting the unbalanced understanding of professional achievement in the Spanish-speaking world is to design activities that help students to incorporate the new information into active knowledge. When presenting students with the data from the reading provided by the book along with the supplemental materials, it has been interesting to note that in spite of the fact that the reading does discuss class differences and emphasizes that many of the gender inequalities discussed in relation to the “Hispanic” world have also been a historical reality in the United States, students still tend to conflate class differences and somehow, the balanced informational readings alone are not enough. Students still articulate the more “Hollywood” version of gender differences imbedded in stereotypical concepts about generalized “Hispanic” culture, and this stereotypical view can lead students to overlook similar gender inequality issues in the United States taking an attitude of “they” have these problems and “we” do not.

The phenomenon of students reverting to erroneous stereotypical understanding even in the face of accurate and explicit instruction is not a dilemma unique to cross-cultural understanding or gender studies. Studies about experiential learning (there are many, see for example Wojciech & Botham, 1998) have provided valuable insights into how people learn and how erroneous assumptions are best changed: explicit instruction must be backed up or replaced by interactive discovery in order to transform the information into active knowledge that students retain over time. The solutions I have found for my classes are twofold. First, in addition to the presentation of facts described above, I have incorporated a new body of

texts: writing exercises tied to biographies of Spanish, Latin American, and Latina women executives and interviews with Latin American men and women executives. Second, I have implemented a scaled intra- and inter-gender communication exercise that leads students to contemplate their understanding of gender issues in the workplace within the United States.

The biographical texts come from business journals such as *Latin Trade* and *Latina Style* that now regularly include profiles of women business leaders from the regions we study. There are also a number of on-line resources (websites, Facebook pages) linked to Professional Women's organizations in Spain, Latin America, and the United States (in relation to Latina professionals) focused on the role and promotion of women.[7] Many of these sites contain short biographies and even interviews and testimonials. Another body of interviews that I use in the first Spanish for Professions class comes from a series of short videos, "Cultural Interviews with Latin American executives" developed by Orlando Kelm (n.d.) of the University of Texas, Austin.

I will focus here on the activities I have developed in relation to the Kelm cultural interviews since they are part of the first Spanish for the Professions course and lay the foundation for on-going exploration of gender issues throughout the other three courses. All activities are carried out in Spanish. The principles of the exercises followed here are applied to the biographical texts and other types of on-line interviews throughout the four courses. The cultural topics covered by the Kelm interviews are extensive and not all focus on gender issues, although all topics include responses from both men and women. For the unit focused on gender interactions in the office I use two topics: "Foreign Women Executives" and "Machismo." In total, students watch 12 interviews with three men and three women from four different countries. Each of these professionals has been asked to speak spontaneously about the topic at hand. A wide variety of opinions and definitions are expressed. The three women are all high level executives and talk about both the challenges and the support they have received in their career. The students watch the videos at home and prepare a one-page "summary/reaction" essay to share. We use the essays in class to support small-group and whole-class discussions about their reactions to the videos. The testimonial nature of the videos and the variety of opinions expressed help students to see beyond stereotypes to individuals and thus allow them to begin to imagine the variety of ideas and individuals that they will encounter in real work places. The fact that the executives represent different nationalities helps students to see beyond a generic concept of "Hispanic" culture. Another advantage of this activity is that when they are writing their own reactions to the opinions expressed,

they are better able to articulate their own understanding of how they perceive gender differences. They often find that the situations and values described by the Latin American executives are not as radically different from their own experience and views as they may have imagined. For example, both the men and women executives observe that women must work harder to prove themselves, but also affirm that if they do quality work, they will be respected. Students feel that this is also true for business settings in the United States. On the other hand, when the opinions do seem to demonstrate larger differences or somehow fulfill the stereotypical expectations, new angles are added: for example, one of the men states that he does not accept the definition of "machismo" that defines men as superior, but he does believe that men and women have different talents and different roles to play. This executive's observations help to eliminate the "Don Juan" image of the macho man and students are always intrigued by this man's answer which leads them to discuss their own ideas about gender differences. With their reaction essays in hand it is much easier for the class to share their thoughts with each other, and on subsequent essays and exams on the topic they demonstrate a more sophisticated and flexible understanding of the cultural differences and similarities in relation to gender.

This activity inevitably leads to the discussion about conditions in the US, since learning about other cultures requires that we deepen our understanding of our own. Yet students find it hardest to carry on a classroom conversation about men and women in the US workplace. Over the years I have noticed that neither gender initially feels comfortable speaking candidly in a mixed group. So, I have developed the following scaffolded activity which moves students from intra-gender analysis to inter-gender communication. First, I have the students create two groups: the men and the women. Then, I ask them to each create two lists: first a list of the five most important things that they believe their gender looks for in a job/career and subsequently a list of the top five things they believe to be important to the opposite gender. Then we come back together as a group and put all four lists on the blackboard. They are always surprised by the results. First they are surprised to see the goals they have in common: to be challenged, to be respected, to have a chance for growth, to make a difference, to be taken seriously, to support themselves, to take care of family. And second they are surprised by the fact that the men's list for the women is more accurate than the women's list for the men. I have done this activity over a number of years, and it has always turned out like this. So on one level these exercises provide a reminder to students that an important element in supporting and encouraging women to develop

professional goals is to recognize that many men have heard and support this message for women and should be affirmed as partners in the cause of equity and not alienated by being trapped behind stereotypes about the male will to dominate and repress. Given that a recent survey used to gauge the progress of women in the work place used the category of "Do you feel understood?" to compare the status of men and women, these results are intriguing. In the survey, "a majority of women, for instance, felt that their male colleagues didn't understand them very well, though a majority of men felt well understood by the women" (Angier, 2014, p. 1). There is not, however, a category in the survey for "Do you think you understand others?"

The differences between the men's and women's understanding of each other in my classes often transition to a discussion about stereotypes about men and machismo in US culture: The women tend to put as the first value for men, the desire for power or "to be number 1;" yet the men very often put as first value for themselves "take care of family" and seldom place "to be number 1" in the top five. While both "being number 1" and "taking care of family" seem to be patriarchal values there is a significant difference between wanting "to be number 1" and wanting to take care of others. This stimulates discussion in a variety of directions. In particular, considerations of the need to "take care of family" place professional achievement goals into a broader full-life context which allows us to circle back into some of the points brought up in the cultural interviews with Latin American executives about views of life/work balance, the intertwining of professional identity with personal life and family roles as mother or father, and pragmatic issues like access to adequate childcare which impact the ability of women (and sometimes men) to advance professionally. Listening to the variety of points-of-view offered in the interviews and reflecting on their own ability to judge the goals of the opposite gender emphasize the importance of achieving understanding through listening (not just making assumptions) in order to effectively work with others whether internationally or at home.

The qualities of "being a good listener" and "being understanding or empathetic" have often been rejected in the US professional setting as "feminine" values that somehow indicate "weakness." Yet listening and understanding what motivates others are key strategies to gaining and maintaining positions of leadership. In fact, a classic business success manual, Steven Covey's (1989) *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* lists as Habit 5: "Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood," and more contemporary theories of centered leadership have begun to explore these and other "feminine" values in management as the path to correcting

the recent failures of short-term capitalist thinking (Barsh, 2014). “Being a good listener” and “being understanding or empathetic” are also key strategies for achieving intercultural competence and developing successful cross-cultural cooperation as has been shown here. In addition, an initial focus on developing the relationship between individual business players before focusing on the financial goals of a business transaction is highly valued when doing business in Spain, Latin America, and US Latino culture. Thus, through increased information about gender equity in professional sectors in Latin America, Spain, and the US Latino community, reflexive listening and analysis of interviews and biographies combined with opportunities for guided self-reflection, students in the Spanish for the Professions major acquire knowledge about the lives and attitudes of multiple individuals and learn strategies of communication which will enable them to resist the power of stereotypes in order to work successfully in multicultural settings with the unique individuals who will be their professional partners. Furthermore, through these exercises the process of “teaching gender through Latin American, Latino, and Iberian texts and culture” becomes one in which students have not only begun to learn specifics about gender issues in the target cultures, but have also gained insights into gender issues in their own.

CONCLUSION

In spite of the fact that the headlines inform us of new atrocities committed against women on a daily basis, much ground has been gained in affirming equal rights for women during the past 30 years. Given the growing focus on the inclusion of women in power structures worldwide, combined with the growing presence of women in leadership roles, an activist feminist approach based exclusively on a “theoretical framework of masculine domination” (Blanchard, 2009, p. 121), no longer seems to be the most productive way to address on-going and urgent problems of continued gender inequity and violence. While it is important to acknowledge the historical reality and contemporary evidence of masculine domination, it is also essential to acknowledge and explore the progress that is being made, and to recognize that there are a growing number of women both in the United States and in the Spanish-speaking world in leadership positions who direct, teach, mentor, and hold professional power over men and other women as well as a growing number of men who fully support women’s equality. In fact, men and women throughout the United States and Latin America and Spain work together productively and harmoniously on a daily basis. There are also common goals shared across cultures and

between genders within the professional settings because the professional training often creates a shared culture that transcends national, ethnic, gender, and sometimes even linguistic differences. Understanding such realities is essential to the process of continuing to address ongoing issues of gender inequality in a way that engages both men and women without limiting the role of women to victim and that of men to guilty aggressor.[8]

As has been discussed in several of the articles in this collection, the traditional feminist narratives and theories no longer seem to be sufficient to address contemporary concerns, in part because people have become uncomfortable with what some judge to be the excessively militant stance of second wave feminists and in part because the growing presence of women in power positions has not lead to as rapid a resolution of gender inequalities and reduction of violence as many have hoped over the years. There is an on-going need for new theoretical, narrative, and practical approaches to continuing to address issues of gender equity. This article has presented an approach that integrates the theme of women's professional status throughout a curriculum in a matter-of-fact way, calmly addressing injustices and noting advances in order to emphasize the nature of "women's issues" as "human issues" that hold keys to social equity and economic stability. In this process personal narratives, biography, and interviews are privileged over theory in order to cultivate habits of listening and understanding that will allow students to gain insights into what motivates others and thus give them the power to create successful interactions within and across different cultures. This approach has proven to be successful in providing structure and guidance for both men and women students who have gone on to have successful careers and make a positive difference in multicultural settings.

NOTES

1. The definition and guiding principles of Intercultural Competence were defined over thirty years ago by intercultural and foreign language educators and there is an extensive bibliography on the topic. This definition and the summary of concepts in this article comes from the succinct overview provided by one of the founding experts in the field, Profesor Alvino E. Fantini during the ACTFL Culture SIG Webinar, "Exploring Intercultural Competence: Concepts, Components, Implementation, and Assessment" which is available for members of ACTFL through the Teaching and learning of Culture SIG section of the ACTFL website.
2. Cataluña is one of the most significant business regions on the Iberian Peninsula. We do discuss the economic role and cultural concerns of Cataluña in our courses. However, Spanish is the language of focus in this major, Thus throughout the article I will also refer to "Spanish-speaking countries" without the intention of excluding Cataluña since the people of Catalan also speak Spanish. Students in our department do have the unique

opportunity to study Catalan language and culture and can receive elective credit within the Spanish for the Professions major for these courses.

[3] Throughout the entire program we do include discussion of all genders (male, female and transgender) as well as all sexual orientations. In this article I will focus primarily on discussions and activities that explore perceptions of traditional heterosexual male/female roles and concepts of women's equity that do not explicitly include discussion of sexual orientation.

[4] See for example the work of Samuel Huntington, or debates surrounding controversial immigration legislation in Arizona (Billeaud, 2014).

[5] For example, just since 2000, Michelle Bachelet, Chile; Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, Argentina; Laura Chinchilla, Costa Rica; Dilma Rousseff, Brazil.

[6] For example, in 2009 women held the following percentage of Senior Ministry appointments: 43% of Basic (Foreign and Internal Affairs, Defense, Justice); 100% of Infrastructure (Transport, Communications, Environment); 57% of Sociocultural (Social Affairs, Health, Children, Family, Youth, Older People, Education, Science, Culture, Labor, Sports) (Galligan, 2010, p. 335).

[7] For example, http://congresomujer.mx/

[8] Sheryl Sanberg's recent book *Leaning In* would seem to contradict these assertions. However, it is important to keep in mind that she is able to focus on the low numbers of women who have made it to the very highest administrative levels precisely because women have succeeded extensively at lower levels. It is important to understand and acknowledge the successes, even while striving for further gains. The book has been translated into Spanish as *Vayamos adelante* with a prologue written by Chilean president Michelle Bachelet.

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12. PERFORMING GENDER IN THE CLASSROOM AND ON THE STAGE

Some years ago, my students performed a play by Argentine Nora Glickman, *Una tal Raquel,* in a number of different locales: our home university in Ithaca, as well as in New York City, Belgium, and Mexico. We were very pleased by the enthusiastic reception in all these sites, and intrigued by the differences in the audiences' responses. In Mexico City, for example, the play was applauded as a classic melodrama, with all of the exaggerated affect typical of that genre. In New York City, however, where the audience included a significant number of Argentine exiles, the play was received very differently. After the show, the lead actress, a Puerto Rican woman named María Burgos Ojeda, was instantly accosted by a group of Argentine women, who disconcertingly, began to share with her very intimate details of their lives, making connections to the character she played just a few moments earlier. María tried to gently remind them that she was an actor, that she had been playing a role, that it wasn't her, that she was uncomfortable with such confidences, but it didn't seem to make a difference.

More recently, the group performed *Las mujeres de Ciudad Juárez* by Mexican actor and playwright Cristina Michaus, a very stylized social drama focused on the femicide in that border city. The performances were sold out, the actors received standing ovations, with many in the audience in tears, especially with Ana Goya Arce's portrayal of a raped and murdered child near the end of the play. Afterwards, the most repeated comment I heard from these galvanized audience members was, "I had no idea this was happening; what can we do to help?" I hasten to add, that, strikingly enough, among the people who "had no idea" about the ongoing outrages were very smart students who had taken other courses with me, and with my colleagues, in which we read both scholarly articles and fiction about this tragedy, talked about it extensively in class, and showed documentary film footage, including Lourdes Portillo's famous *Señorita Extraviada.*

Lest I seem entirely solipsistic, I am likewise intrigued by the very different audience reactions (as recorded in the kind of online videos that

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are such helpful supplements to our class materials) to two of Coco Fusco's (2008) presentations on the work she later published in *A Field Guide for Female Interrogators.* In one video, Fusco is in performance mode, dressed in military gear; the recorded audience finds her presentation hilarious. In another presentation on the same topic, now in academic drag, albeit accompanied by her small child, who wanders in and out of the frame, the audience is sober, respectful.

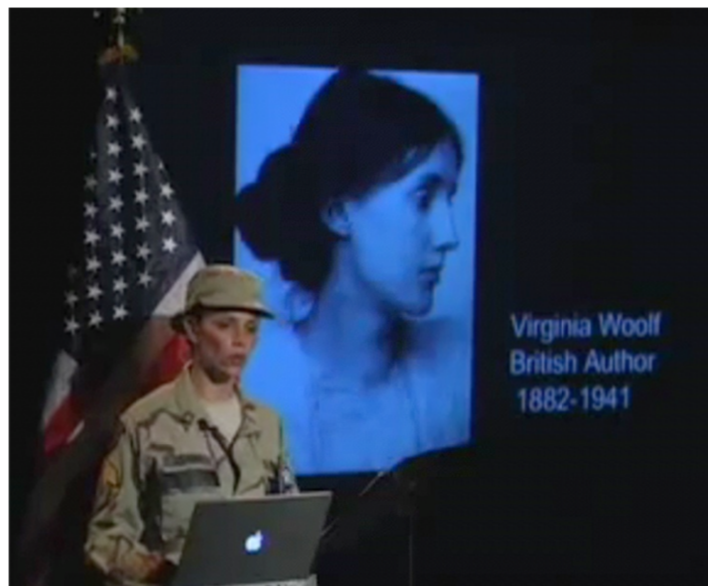

Figure 1. Youtube screen shot. Coco Fusco. (2009, December 2). "A Room of One's own: Women and Power in the New America." Performance Space 122*, New York, NY*

While watching Fusco, my students and I are admittedly less focused on the content of the presentation and more on the spectacle itself. Since the responses contrast so profoundly, we have to ask what expectations audiences are bringing to these two events. How do we respond to Fusco the mother/academic on the one hand, or Fusco the military official on the other? Do we even think about the child as a performer, interrupting and randomizing the academic speech act? What cues tell us to laugh in one instance, to respond intellectually in another? What kinds of learning take place in these two different performances on the same issue? What is the difference for students in my class in watching videos of these performance events, and walking over to Africana Studies on a Fall afternoon to listen to Coco Fusco in person?

Figure 2. Vimeo screen shot. Coco Fusco. (2009, March 10). *Operation Atropos.* Museum of Contemporary Photography

These anecdotes (and I could multiply them) point to something similar, with implications that I would like to explore in this paper. Returning to my own group: on the one hand, at some level the investment of the audience in these plays is not surprising. The theater group Teatrotaller[1] often privileges plays with a social message for our performances. In plays like those by Glickman and Michaus, there is a coincidence not only of women playwrights and women-centered scripts, but also an important pressure put on highly charged questions related to the social construction of gender (and the same could be said for Fusco's performances of her own work, one of the reasons I chose this material as a third example). The feedback loop among me as a feminist professor who has done scholarly research on the topics of these plays, the two gender-sensitive men who directed these particular productions, the cast, and the audience can be a very complex one, and much could be said about the way live performance continues to have a generative role in a society that we often see as turning preferentially toward other kinds of media spectacles for information and for entertainment.

More generally, on the other hand, I want to explore how this particular kind of performance project can serve as a point of entry into thinking about other kinds of professorial performances and other kinds of

classrooms, particularly in these days of burgeoning pressure to move our classrooms to a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) environment.[2] While our pedagogies are always rapidly changing, the discussion of online education has generated particular fervor, with 2012 being touted in higher education media as "the year of the MOOC" (Pappano, 2012), the year when a popular university president was briefly ousted for not jumping quickly enough on the technology train, and Thomas Friedman (2013) wrote in a typical *New York Times* celebratory article: "there is one big thing happening that leaves me incredibly hopeful about the future, and that is the budding revolution in global online higher education. Nothing has more potential to lift more people out of poverty … Nothing has more potential … to solve the world's biggest problems."[3] But by mid-2013 we learned that the MOOC honeymoon was over, with the blow back around the San Jose State University philosophy department rejection of a Harvard social justice course, and even more embarrassing, Coursera's all too public failure with a course on fundamentals of online education (all the commentators pointed to the irony) that had to be cancelled after one week. And yet, our universities are pressing forward, perhaps with slightly mitigated energy, but enthusiasm nonetheless.[4] While much of this energy is focused on the introductory technologically-themed courses in math, engineering, business, and computer science, some developers have also focused on the development of both cMOOC (horizontally organized) and xMOOC (controlled and assessment-based versions of traditional lecture classes) courses in the humanities, leaving many of us with an underlying fear that the goal of such courses is to downsize already stressed arts and culture programs in favor of STEM fields (this is, of course, the core of the San Jose State argument).

Like many of us, I find myself torn: I do theater production courses, and I have also initiated international live videostreaming ones. So I have to ask myself about the efficacy, for instance, of my recent "Bodies at the Border" course for my collaborators in Kolkata and El Paso, where the issue of stubborn embodiment was central to the course, albeit filtered through chat, facebook, wiki, twitter, and screen presences as well as professorial interlocutors in all three sites. I think of how powerful it was to participate in the production of a quadrilingual play based on elements discussed in that course, presented in Kolkata in February 2013, and how much less effective is the video of that performance for my students in Ithaca. And then I think again about the strong effect, the strong affect in my theater production courses of live performance and live audiences.

What made María Burgos an inevitable confidant for intimate secrets? What made the audience break down when Ana Goya, an adult woman,

evoked, almost as a poetic metaphor, the body of a mutilated child? How do we take account of the impact of embodied performance, the physical, three-dimensional, living, moving body, in the classroom and on the stage, speaking and moving, breathing, sweating, spitting? How does our own embodied or virtual presence in the real or video-streamed classroom shape learning experiences and teaching outcomes?

Figure 3. Alexander Santiago Jirau, María Burgos Ojeda. Una tal Raquel *(2000). Directed by Jacky Bibliowicz*

Figure 4. Ana López Ulloa, Ana Goya Arce, Marcela Fernández, Paige Feldman. Mujeres de Ciudad Juárez. *(2011). Directed by Jimmy Noriega.*

One first point of entry might be through traditional understandings of audience identification with a character as presented in one of the performative genres—film, theater, street performance—where the member of the audience is seduced into (some, like Brecht, might talk about manipulation by) the world and the emotions displayed on stage. Yet, while suspension of disbelief is an honored tenet of theater, none of these plays were realistic in the classical sense often decried by avant garde theater theorists—i.e., elaborate constructed set, invisible third wall, etc.—the kind of effects that in any case films seem to do so much better than live performance these days. Both the Latin American plays are denunciatory events, social movement theater, which we played on a nearly bare stage, dependent on music and lights to contribute to the delimitation of space and creation of atmosphere. Thus, the audience was seeing anything but mimesis; these were lyrical representations, overtly so, and any suspension of disbelief was generated by asking the audience to deliver themselves affectively to these performing bodies, who supplemented their physical work with a few props, in the absence of more elaborate cues.

In our preparations for the plays, the group did extensive background research on the situation of Jewish immigrants in Buenos Aires at the turn of the 20th century in the first case, on the ongoing violence across the border from El Paso, Texas in the second. We read texts about the issues addressed, listened to voices of people from those sites, studied the physicality of the women's bodies in contemporary images we gathered from books and from the internet. We also worked thoughtfully with techniques we had learned from our readings of Bertolt Brecht and Augusto Boal, debating how to avoid the easy catharsis of classic drama that sends an audience home satisfied and unchanged, struggling productively with how to incorporate techniques from theater of the oppressed. On stage, every nuance of speech, every gesture, every step the actors took, was carefully considered and blocked with an almost military precision. And yet, for the audience, this scholarly and performative apparatus gave way before an affect that impacted them as straightforwardly real, more real, in fact, than the "really real" material they had been exposed to through other media outlets, albeit differently packaged, sometimes repeatedly.

Already in 1964 Marshall McLuhan was arguing that message is not the content in our communicative exchanges, as people often assumed and theorized; instead, he argued that the medium is the message. It is worth recalling the context for this famous, much-cited phrase.

> In a culture like ours, long accustomed to splitting and dividing all things as a means of control, it is sometimes a bit of a shock to be reminded that, in operational and practical fact, the medium is the

> message. This is merely to say that the personal and social consequences of any medium … result from the new scale that is introduced into our affairs by each extension of ourselves, or by any new technology. (p. 35)

McLuhan (1964) begins with a reference to the material-rational nature of "a culture like ours," that is, a hierarchical culture privileging values often associated with masculinist structures of organization. In our contemporary context, the highly controlled and necessarily scripted performances in courses we think of as MOOCs seem a byproduct of technology and not an ideological position. At worst, they seem to draw on performative praxis unreflexively for production-value purposes. One deliciously ironic MOOC story involves apparently hiring actors to play the role of students in simulated discussions with the professor, in order to mimic the pedagogical structure of the small classroom for an audience projected in the tens of thousands (see e.g., Heller, 2013). The reason is clear—real students would not perform nearly so well, or look so attractive. After all, the massive enrollments require and justify the high production values, and production costs alone mean that very little can be left to spontaneity or serendipity.

McLuhan (1964), however, points immediately to the flaws in this understanding of how things work based on hierarchy and control. Rather than division and order, he points to a loss of control, or of the illusion of control, moving his emphasis to the personal and social. The point he wants to make is a different one from the corporate course developers; it is not about control (focused on narrow considerations of bits of content) but instead on the presumably transparent level of the medium of transmission. The medium *is* the message; the content cannot be decoupled from the means of delivery, whether by human gesture and voice, or by technologically mediated forms. Furthermore, these consequences are highly dependent on matters of scale. While probably the farthest thing from McLuhan's mind, nevertheless, his famous catchphrase echoes with Carol Hanisch's equally memorable 1969 phrase, "the personal is political," and both continue to speak to important strands in feminist pedagogy. The medium matters. Bodies matter.

McLuhan (1964), of course, was particularly remembered for anticipating the role of technology in shaping our intellectual landscapes. Later thinkers like Friedrich Kittler have built upon his work, and helped us think more carefully about the materialities of communication and their social and political (we should add here, "pedagogical") implications in the 21st century, where the breathtaking changes in media have created opportunities McLuhan could not possibly have imagined outside the realm of science fiction. N.Katherine Hayles (2005), for instance, sees human and

computer moving ever closer together in Kittlerian fashion through media effects, resulting in a formation she famously has called "posthuman," in which humans and machines interpenetrate in novel and surprising ways (p. 7). Most recently, she has argued that the material semiotics of this changing environment gives rise to a "new kind of subjectivity characterized by distributed cognition, networked agency that includes human and non-human actors, and fluid boundaries dispersed over actual and virtual locations" (p. 37).

This too involves an issue of scale, as these human actors and temporalities intersect with technology and grounding material cultures. I think it sobering and instructive in this respect to look at video gamers' chat as an example of one end of the continuum Hayles (2008) describes. In their forums, gamers often make denigrating references to their "meat" analogues, as if they were casually dismissing an odd, inferior carbon-based life form only loosely correlated to the real selves, which are, of course, lodged in servers and zip around the world in zeros and ones. And yet, of course, this reference to meat creates (at least in my mind) inescapable mental pictures of gamer bodies, hunched over their computers, which to me seem far more inescapably present than their World of Warcraft avatars. The medium changes the message. The medium of the message changes the affect of the receiver, whether we are dealing with "meat" or virtual bodies.

As we instructors shift ourselves more and more ineluctably into our own post-human avatars with the technological extensions of our courses, we need to think about this uncomfortable opposition between meat and the virtual, and its corollary in the utopian, universalizing underpinnings of MOOC rhetoric, which often seems directly derived from gamer ethos.

Following upon the recent work of Judith Burnet and her colleagues, let us remind ourselves of a few of the dangerous tech myths in education, before we ponder a bit more closely why they are important to us as gender conscious/feminist scholars and teachers. Burnet et al. (2009) ask, schematically, what kinds of myths we implicitly use to define what our technologized society is like. Here are some of their suggestions. Modern society is:

- Connected and global—there is no one and nowhere "outside."
- Time and space have changed, and we can talk to anyone anywhere at anytime in the twinkling of an eye, that is, we can transcend our bodies.
- The new age is more democratic, open and accessible to all, with more opportunities to exercise choice and participate in decision-making.

– We can address the division of the world between developed and wealthy and the developing world by taking the technology of the developed world and diffusing it to everyone everywhere. (p. 13)

I suspect the ideology underlying this familiar optimism may bear some responsibility for the irrational ups and downs of the stock market valuation of dot.com companies as well as gamer hyperbole about virtual lives. The challenge for us is to engage critically with such claims and the technologies behind them. Both Coursera and Udacity are for-profit enterprises; EdX, with the imprimatur of Harvard and MIT to give it traction, calls itself a non-profit, albeit a "self sustaining" one (Sramana & Agarwal, 2013). Unspoken, of course, is the modern magic by which courses with very high production values and very high initial costs, can both be touted as free education (to students) and as potential sources of vast income (to the stockholders).

Along with Hayles (2005, 2008), other theorists of new media technologies like Brian Rotman (2008), Lisa Nakamura (2008), and Henry Jenkins have long been studying the effects of new media on our experiences of our bodies and our sense of human agency. Rotman (2008), for instance, finds that the confrontation of text and image is being reconfigured in emancipatory ways

> with the result that technologies of parallel computing and those of a pluri-dimensional visualization are inculcating modes of thought and self, and facilitating imaginings of agency, whose parallelisms are directly antagonistic to the intransigent monadism, linear coding, and intense seriality inseparable from alphabetic writing. (p. 3)

This is in many ways an exciting project for feminist thinkers, and represents one strand of the opportunities opening up to us through the new media technologies now at our disposal.

Judith Butler, in an essay closely linked to her 1990 book, *Gender Trouble*, famously asks the question, directed toward the legal and political establishment: "What constitutes the 'who,' the subject for whom feminism seeks emancipation?" (p. 327). Twenty years later, the important question in the new media context, Rotman (2008) suggests, is not about the "who" of the emergent self, but rather "*what* and *how* is this self"? (p. 81), since "not only is thinking always social, culturally situated, and technologically mediated, but that only by being these things can it happen in the first place" (p. 91). Rotman here highlights something that social scientists have been arguing for a long time: all knowledge is situated, dependent on local realities, immediate relationships, and specific cultural understandings. If the "who" is still located within the regime of control and law, Rotman's

"what" and "how" look toward aspects of body and gesture neglected by these hegemonic epistemes.

At one extreme, already in the 1930s, French playwright and theorist Antonin Artaud (1958) argued for a theater more attentive to gesture, and less dependent on verbal scripts. In his famous essay on Balinese theater he decries "our [European] purely verbal theater, unaware of everything that makes theater, of everything that exists in the air of the stage, which is measured and circumscribed by that air and has a density in space … which derives from the mind's capacity for receiving suggestion …" (p. 56). As the essay develops, Artaud argues that Balinese theater could teach "our" excessively rational, overly verbal, European theater a thing or two about spirituality, about the metaphysics of gesture, about the "movements, shapes, colors, vibrations, attitudes, screams" (p. 56) that for him define his controversial approach to spectacle. Unlike European theater, in the Bali of Artaud's imagining, the critical emphasis remains on these ritualized qualities, located in emphasis on the physical rather than the verbal, highlighting the role of the performative spectacle that does not rely on a pre-existing dramatic text.

Rotman (2008) references Artaud (1958) in his discussion of the importance of the recuperation of gesture in the cybernetic age, adding to that earlier theorist's performance-based understanding an important reminder of gendered effects: "by the mid- to late-nineteenth century, gesture had fallen victim to a scientific psychology which subordinated an emotionalized (implicitly feminine), gesturing body to a rational, speaking mind" (p. 16). Yet, while the visual protocols of cyberspace have the potential to disrupt the linear, rational literate self of alphabetic writing in favor of a more fluid and less ordered range of possibilities, this potential is not always fully realized, and I would suggest, each media regime has deep implications for the constitution of the subject and her horizon of agency. The local "what" and "how," while tantalizingly approachable in the vast body of material we call the web, are still too likely to be downplayed in mass media, if only for marketing reasons. In this respect, the presumably universal qualities of the online environment only lightly mask a continued deep western, masculine bias.

Rotman (2008) finds hope precisely in the possibility of breaking down the Western, masculinist, rational focus of linear writing and incorporating once again that tagged as feminine, what Artaud (1958) called the "movements, shapes, colors, vibrations, attitudes, screams." When reading commentaries on feminist online pedagogy, these are, in fact, some of the aspects that are often highlighted. Every study I have read hastens to insist that the enhanced options for online collaborative and networking efforts

must be linked to substantive discussion in small groups offline. Thus, in feminism and technology forums, excitement about the rich body of material now accessible for classroom use is tempered by insistence on the importance of free flowing discussion in local classrooms, where local bodies and local effects take precedence.

Lisa Nakamura (2008) contributes to the discussion a more nuanced perspective on how racial understandings continue to play a prominent role in these electronically mediated identities, something implicit in Artaud's (1958) uncomfortable evocation of Bali (or elsewhere in his work, Tibet or Mexico) as the new centers of world culture. In the mythic version of technological advance, we "transcend" our meat bodies; Nakamura, among others, rightly reminds us that race and gender are far stickier constructs. Indeed, the very concept of "transcending" the body, on further examination, clearly shows its Anglo-European white masculinist roots. "Simply put, race and racism don't disappear when bodies become virtual," she argues, and she gives this recognition of racism's continuing relevance a historical point of origin: "It was only after the digital bloom was off the dot.com rose [around the turn of the 21st century] that it became possible to discuss cyberspace as anything other than a site of exception from identity, especially racial identity" (p. 1677). Nowadays, she argues, questions about representation and technology cannot ignore the role of racialized bodies in producing the information society, whether in constructing computer parts or taking apart discarded devices, or in another context, working in virtual sweatshops performing outsourced jobs.

Nonetheless, many of us continue to function as if media were transparent and technology an unequivocal good. I want to suggest that in its ideologically charged erasure of ethnicized and sexed bodies, the current trends in higher education are returning us precisely to the 1960s mindset decried by McLuhan (1964)—an illusion of control over highly fragmented systems comes down to privileging precisely and exclusively the things those systems do well. The scaling effects of MOOCs tend to push ever more to the background precisely those unexplored gendered, raced dynamics. My son, Carlos Castillo-Garsow, a professor of mathematics education at Eastern Washington University who regularly publishes on computer-based education, grew up with Teatrotaller and wrote me the following:

> There are things that are easy to do online and things that are hard to do online. When you try to run an online course, the medium puts pressure on people to downplay the importance of things that you can't do easily in it. Restricting a class to what can only be done online is like restricting a theatre to producing a play using only two

> spots as their lights. Suddenly the way of communicating with the audience becomes all about where you place those spots, and the play is about what you highlight with those spots. …
>
> Sometimes the right choice is things like lectures and drills—things that MOOCs do well. But sometimes … the right way to read a play is going through the process of performing it. You can't teach Teatrotaller as a MOOC. It's impossible. In a world where Cornell moves to MOOCs, that's Cornell saying that the things students learn by doing Teatrotaller are not important, whereas the things students learn by reading the play and listening to a lecture on it and writing a paragraph in their email about it are important. The medium controls the message. (Personal communication, 2012, September 2006)

To take another performative analogue: what is the relation between attending a performance (imagine a rock concert), watching the video of that performance, or playing a game in which one can choose Mick Jaggar as their avatar? Answer in 140 characters or less and discuss on your electronic blackboard.

There is another, sinister implication as well, having to do with social class, access, and a politics of location. I go back here to one of the myths adduced by Burnet and her collaborators (2009), the myth that "we can address the division of the world between developed and wealthy and the developing world by taking the technology of the developed world and diffusing it to everyone everywhere" (p. 13). Much of the praise of online education is focused precisely on this aspect: that anyone, anywhere can have access to the best and most advanced education in the world, taking courses from top professors at Harvard, MIT, Stanford, Berkeley. Indeed, Friedman's (2013) article cites the little boy in Cairo or the fifteen-year-old in Mongolia doing the circuits course. *Wired Academic* (Davos, 2009) features a twelve-year old Pakistani girl (enrolled in Udacity's Artificial Intelligence and Physics courses) who at one point in the interview with Udacity founder Sebastian Thrun, says, "I think that MOOCs may allow peace in the world." Thrun, of course, is the same individual who confidently predicted in 2012 that "in 50 years there will be only 10 institutions in the world delivering higher education and Udacity has a shot at being one of them" (Leckart, 2012). I wonder about how the boys in Cairo and Mongolia, and the girl in Pakistan, achieved the advanced English language skills that allowed them access to the course materials. I wonder which will be the other nine institutions, and whether any of them will be offering courses in languages other than English. I wonder whose

idea of democracy underlies this educational change, and whether any idea of democracy can support so much monovocalism.

While I have been expressing my qualified enthusiasm, and very real concerns, mostly in terms of gender, it is important to recognize that the corporate university is particularly bad on these race and class effects as well. One of the wider implications of the move to MOOC classes is an analogous shift in our local academic organizations. Considerations of curricular innovation move from collegiality and consensus building—not coincidentally, the models associated with what is stereotypically defined as a female style of management—to private sector hierarchies, which by definition are more mechanistic and "rational."

Affect studies are very popular these days among humanist scholars, and this interest in affect theory aligns itself neatly with the kinds of values that we associate with gender-conscious scholarship and forms of academic organization, as well as with the structure of the traditional seminar class; a kind of pedagogy, in Julia Woods' (2009) succinct formulation, in which "teaching involves hearts as well as minds" (p. 138). And while the web is clogged with inaccuracy, in culture studies as in mathematics, worrying through ideas at the personal level is the hallmark of the small class; facts are what you can get from Google.

One of the most vital lessons I take from my theater production course is the importance of telling stories, in informal as well as in rigorously formal ways, as a form of pedagogy and a kind of feminist activism. Whatever I and my students gain in a video-streamed course, this is one of the major losses. Even the more modest Sebastian Thrun of 2013 might agree. He has tempered his earlier hyperbole and now says,

> I believe that online education will not replace face to face education, and neither is it supposed to. Just as film never replaced theater plays and many of us prefer to watch sports live in big stadiums, online will not abolish face to face interaction. It is a different modality.

Producing a play and sharing it with an audience necessarily foregrounds embodied effects, involves bringing the entire self to a project. This means engaging the practice of pedagogy in the classroom, and also taking it out of the classroom into traditional and nontraditional performance spaces where the who, and the what and the how are necessary (if often contested) knowledge, where we learn, and offer to others, embodied narratives rather than the academic facts. In this respect, as De Angelis (2010) argues, "our critics are not going to do it for us, so it is up to writers and theatre makers—male and femal—to make gender trouble, and to audiences to ask the questions critics don't" (p. 559). In the times of increasing

corporatization, it may mean reminding ourselves, and our colleagues, of the continuing relevance of this often dangerous pedagogy, with its unpredictable effects and affects, in classrooms that engage human struggles with all the pain and inconsistencies that will inevitably arise.

NOTES

[1] Teatrotaller was founded in 1993 (Spanish for "Theater-workshop"), was founded in 1993 by a group of enthusiastic and energetic students with the idea of promoting Spanish, Latin American and Latino cultures through theater. Teatrotaller has devoted itself to the production of plays in Spanish "Spanglish" including classical, contemporary and experimental plays of Hispanic origin, with a regular schedule of performances in April, August, and November each year. The group has also performed nationally and internationally in invited festivals.

[2] The most discussed models are Udacity (launched January 2012), Coursera (April 2012) and EdX (May 2012), both of the latter with significant elite university presence. Discussions so far suggest that while most MOOC courses are badly considered and badly structured filmed versions of not-very-effective classroom performances, the top courses ask us to rethink the educational model in significant ways (see Ripley, 2012; Davidson, 2008, 2012)

[3] For a sampling of articles discussing this issue see Friedman, Heller, Leckart, Morrison, Pérez Peña. University of Virginia president Teresa Sullivan was reinstated sixteen days later after massive protests by students and faculty at that institution. Morrison's "Online learning insights" blog of 5 February 2013 is the source of the "honeymoon is over" quote. See also Kolowich *Chronicle of Higher Education* articles.

[4] My own home campus is now officially part of the EdX consortium, with several courses advertised on that platform, although not the much-touted social science offering, "Six Pretty Good Books," which was funded by Google and is offered on Google's platform.

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