“Family as The Borders of Violence in in the short fiction of Helena Maria Viramontes”

R. Allen Baros, University of Washington

In Helena Maria Viramontes’ short story collection *The Moths and Other Stories* the form and structure of family are reimagined multiple times by characters in order to create an alternative space to imagine an alternative world. Within the text, the family itself becomes a borderlands, depicting a landscape fraught with violence and oppression manifesting along gendered, queer, and even national lines. However, in this collection also exist reimaginings and reshaping of the domain of family in ways that defy traditional kinship based or even liberal conceptions of family structure. Within these restructurings of family is a disidentification with the liberal concept of the family and a turn to a formation of familia that embraces alternative identities and roles to the exclusion of liberal heteropatriarchal oppression and violence. The newly formed familia becomes a space from which the potential of a world without the violence and oppression of the liberal reality can be imagined. A place in which traditional norms can be done away with and alternatives prepared for and embraced while imagining an alternative world outside of the family that reproduces the values of the new familia rather than conscripting the family to produce the conditions of traditional heteropatriarchal liberal society. Viramontes’ short fiction points to these possibilities for reshaping family only within the space created by the alternative family and explores the dangers and difficulties in attempting to form such non-traditional affiliations, noting not only the new world making potential of such alternative forms of family, but the potential for life shattering danger when such formation are articulated but not fully realized.

“Domestic Dictatorships”

Jennifer Harford Vargas, Bryn Mawr College

In this talk I consider the intersectional role of gender and dictatorship in contemporary Dominican American novels such as Julia Alvarez’s *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents* (1991), Loida Martiza Pérez’s *Geographies of Home* (1998), Nelly Rosario’s *Song of the Water Saints* (2002), and Angie Cruz’s *Let it Rain Coffee* (2005). I trace the haunting presence of the Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo in the texts and examine how Latina novels complicate our understanding of dictatorship through their representations of domestic spaces and patriarchal relationships. I use the term domestic dictatorship to analyze how the novels figure domestic abuse in the space of the home and in the domestic geopolitical space of the United States, arguing that they ask us to consider how patriarchy dictates female subordination and represses female agency and sexuality. In drawing analogies between dictatorship and heteropatriarchy, I contend that these novels challenge the hegemonic understanding of the United States as a site of freedom and democracy at the same time that they grapple with the haunting afterlife of the Trujillo regime on social relations and aesthetic production. Moreover, I posit that the tropes of searching for a voice and for a home embody the power of fantasy, the utopian power of the imagination, and express a counter-dictatorial longing for the end of authoritarian gender power hierarchies.

“Domesticating War: Family, Time, and Nation in Post-9/11 Latina War Drama”

Belinda Linn Rincón, John Jay College, CUNY

Moderator: Richard Perez, John Jay College

27. Race, Early Modernism, and Displacement

“The story of African American expatriates in México in the twentieth century”

Anahi Douglas, CUNY Graduate Center

The story of African American expatriates in México in the twentieth century is a crucial but understudied area in the field of African American literary and cultural studies. In 1951 bestselling author Willard Motley relocated to
Cuernavaca, México where he resided until his death in 1965. Motley's Mexican period, henceforth Época Méxicana, transforms the form and content of the author's final work. There is a noticeable shift in thematic content in Motley's final novel, Let Noon Be Fair (1966), and his criticism of U.S. racism and the Neo-Imperialist dimensions of the flourishing 1950s tourist industry in Acapulco is the first of its kind. Prior to Motley's Época Méxicana, “race,” as Jerome Klinkowitz notes, “[was] a subject of little concern to the early Motley;” however, “by the end of his life [it became] a major personal issue” (xvi). It is my argument that his residence in México is responsible for this noticeable change in his work, as Mexico offered the writer and activist a “free space” to examine U.S. racial politics way from the scrutiny of de facto segregation. Mexico becomes a site of refuge for Motley and a cohort of notable African American cultural agents in the twentieth century. This legacy of African American expatriation is traceable; its routes unite cultural producers hailing from Harlem and Chicago to the México City metropolitan area, and it is rooted in larger discussions of the African Diaspora, illustrating an intricate web of rhizomatic connections spanning the Black Atlantic and the Rio Grande.

“A Sixteenth-Century Latino Poet and his Latinization of Hispania”

Paul J. Stapleton, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

In 1573 Juan Latino, who has been called “the first person of sub-Saharan African descent to publish a book of poems in a Western language,” published Ad Catholicum pariter et invictissimum Philippum, which includes the epic Austrias Carmen and a series of epigrams dedicated to the Spanish royal family and the pope. In his epic, scholars have noted that in celebrating the Battle of Lepanto (1571) Latino adopts Virgilian language, closely mimicking the account of the Battle of Actium in Virgil’s Aeneid. I would like to demonstrate that Latino also adopts Roman literary language in his epigrams, shaping Spanish national identity in classical terms, linking Spain idealistically with a Greco-Roman past. Originally a slave, Juan de Sessa had already shaped his own identity in a similar fashion, choosing to rename himself Joannes Latinus mainly because he was a professor of Latin at the University of Granada, but also as a way of placing himself within the Greco-Roman culture found in the texts he studied, creating for himself a kind of personal utopia, given his awareness of himself as an outsider, a former slave, in his own words a “black Ethiopian.” Just as he does for himself, however, Latino applies similar utopian idealizations of classical culture to his king and country via his epigrams, associating Philip II, for example, with classical heroes like Julius Caesar. In a sense, Latino makes Spain “Latina,” appropriating characteristics for Hispania which allow him to oppose it, somewhat ironically, to the “barbarism” of Spain’s non-European foes.

“Utopic Visions in Ernesto Quiñonez’s Bodega Dreams”

Karen Cruz Stapleton, North Carolina State University

In Bodega Dreams, Quiñonez articulates a fictional utopic discourse filled with cultural and linguistic practices from the perspective of the colonized and thus attempts to rewrite language in the service of a new Puerto Rican identity. He defies the more familiar hegemonic tropes of Latina/os that occur in US cultural production, such as the hyperbolic troping of Carmen Miranda for example, the woman who wears the hat laden with tropical fruit, or Ricky Ricardo the hot-headed, Latino husband from the I Love Lucy Show. In contrast, by depicting Julio his narrator, and his wife Blanca as intelligent and articulate, college-educated, Puerto Ricans, Quiñonez speaks against traditional stereotypes of Latinos, stereotypes which have been so persistently textualized in various media. Quiñonez’s narrative denies the dominant ideology by both defying certain stereotypes, as in the case of Julio and Blanca, as well as utilizing and humanizing other stereotypes, criminal types, as in the case of his best friend, his pana, Sapo, and also in the case of Bodega himself. Thus, his novel demonstrates a willingness to interrogate and critique existing representations of Latinos, in addition to the implicit power relations involved in such representation. These relations are intimately involved with aspects of Puerto Rican culture and the Spanish language. Via numerous linguistic and cultural examples, Quiñonez demonstrates a belief in the efficacy of culture: language and literature to articulate a discourse of political resistance and, even to bring about social change, and secondly, that Bodega Dreams is an embodiment of cultural autonomy and a marker of a new, more positive understanding of Latin/o identity. Quiñonez gestures to the utopic in several ways: his references to Young Lords, in his representation of Bodega’s dream, a dream deeply aligned with the “American dream,” and also in the depiction of the highly animated street life and various denizens of El Barrio that concludes the novel-and “yes, they were happy too” (213).

Moderator: TBA
“Selling Out: Sandra Cisneros, the Mainstream, and Literary Posterity”

Kara Morillo, University of Maryland-College Park

In the summer of 1990, the Los Angeles Times published Sandra Cisneros’s titular story from her forthcoming collection Women Hollering Creek, giving the author her first exposure to a mainstream reading audience. In response, a Mexican-American male reader wrote a published letter to the editor criticizing Cisneros’s portrayal of Mexican immigrants, her university degrees, her use of Spanglish, and concluded that her writing was “trash.” In other words, Cisneros was a “sell out” to the Mexican-American community. More implicitly, Cisneros’s reader criticizes her for capitalizing from her craft and her cultural background. Cisneros’s ascent into the mainstream, and thusly American letters, boldly divulges gender and cultural politics within the Chicano and Mexican-American communities. More importantly, the publications of House on Mango Street and Woman Hollering Creek by New York publishers created the demand for more literature by Latino/a writers, especially women writers. In doing so, Cisneros incited a new genre. I use stories from Woman Hollering Creek to explore how Cisneros’s work anticipated this backlash while using her newfound platform to address the tensions surrounding upward mobility, feminism, and Mexican-American culture. This paper is part literary history, part analysis to demonstrate Cisneros’s acumen as a businesswoman. I argue that once she entered the mainstream, she and agent Susan Bergholz utilized popular media to initiate the Latino/a “boom.” Cisneros’s strategic use of mainstream popularity gave her financial autonomy and literary posterity, unlike many of her historical Chicana predecessors who had to be “recovered.” While I use the term “Chicana” here, I will also address how Cisneros set a precedent for a new generation of Latina writers, or what I call the “Latina 2.0 Generation.”

“Like a Telenovela: Border-Crossing Genres and Remaking Narratives”

Adriana Estill, Carleton College

Sandra Cisneros’s review of Ana Castillo’s So Far From God praises it as a “Chicana telenovela” while Julia Alvarez says of Jennine Capó Crucet’s How to Leave Hialeah that it has an ear for a community’s “over-the-top telenovela extravagances.” But what does it mean to say a novel is (like) a telenovela? What qualities, fantasies, and futures does the comparison gesture towards? In this paper, I analyze the work this comparison does in the Latin@ literary sphere, especially given the historical and generic understanding of telenovelas as a televisial genre that is conservative both in the social values it promotes (e.g. gender politics) but also in its narrative structure that traditionally forecloses on radical potentials. Examining the circulation and cultural work of the phrase “like a telenovela” within a number of reviews, articles, and literary texts, I argue that the comparison works within texts by pointing to commonalities in motif, theme, symbol, and melodramatic pattern but operates extratextually, inviting us to equate text and television as a sort of hermeneutic of transnational Latinidad. In other words, “like a telenovela” does a complicated vaivén, a disidentification. It acknowledges the telenovela as a site of seductive heteronormative sociality and foundational “Latinidad” but also refuses that fantasy in order to remake the parameters of gender, Latinidad, and familia. It emphasizes the politics of melodrama, the way in which radical sentiment can remake the social.

Title??

Maria J. Obando, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill

When Cuban American playwright Nilo Cruz won the 2003 Pulitzer Prize in Drama for Anna in the Tropics, the mainstream theater community maintained its opinion that the play was not exactly an unprecedented dramatic work, despite its well-crafted structure and, notably, its portrayal of the transformative power of literature on the human mind. In consideration of the play’s conflicted discourses, this paper examines its strategic and self-conscious uses of intertextuality to engage in feminist ideas of female liberation. While Anna in the Tropics presumably conforms to stereotypical Latina/o gender relations, Cruz ultimately subverts this noted tropicalization through female eroticism. The play advances a system of ideological fictions palatable to mainstream audience members through its construction of familiar stereotypes that present a neatly packaged and mythic vision of Latinidad, almost mirroring the portrayal of Latinos in telenovelas. Yet, the play’s intertextuality with Leo Tolstoy’s Anna Karenina facilitates the interrogation of sexual politics, and the erotic is a tool women use to liberate themselves from the problematic patriarchy and gendered hierarchies of power. Ultimately, the play’s
feminist awakening results in transformative change that bends gender and social roles for a new fashioning of the institution of the marriage. This reconfiguration importantly critiques stereotypical representations and, accordingly, carves out a space for revised Latina/o politics of representation. My scrutiny of the play as performance reveals that the stage internally functions as a means to act out meaningful and sustained change. Further, I argue that Anna in the Tropics engages in self-reflexivity that comments on its own genre and claims the stage, or theater, as a viable site of subversion, revision and transformation.

“Chicana Feminist Semiotics: Culture Jamming / Meta-Ideologizing / Genre Subversion”

Melanie Hernandez, University of Washington

While operating through deceptively simple narrative structure, many works labeled “children’s” and “young adult” literature actually enact a complicated semiotic liberatory practice which utilizes guerilla re-appropriation tactics. Complicated sign systems are layered with additional meaning that do not simply supplant the original meaning—they fully embrace the original as a starting point to build upon and defamilize it. The result is to expose the underlying ideology and to emphasize the constructedness of their original meaning so that it can no longer be mistaken as an extension of “Nature.” I place Gloria Anzaldúa’s Prietita and the Ghost Woman and Sandra Cisneros’ Have You Seen Marie? and The House on Mango Street at the center of a literary movement that borrows methods from visual artists, reworked into prose form. In the realms of anti-corporate branding and media activism, this process is known as “culture jamming,” which “seeks to undermine the marketing rhetoric of multinational corporations, specifically through such practices as media hoaxing, corporate sabotage, billboard ‘liberation,’ and trademark infringement.” Stated plainly, a culture jammer will tweak (often through vandalism) an existing corporate message in order to embed a counterargument atop the original. It allows the culture jammer to combat the corporation’s political clout and deep pockets, using the corporation’s own media campaign as the canvas for the protest messaging. Culture jammers rely on the recognizability of the original corporate branding materials, but whatever modification they make to the original image creates a disparity between the corporation’s intended message and social protest launched through the jammed image. This is a pictographic appropriation strategy that Chicana artists have undertaken for generations. To explore this process, this paper focuses on a single semiotic chain—the signifier “La Llorona”—as its meaning is made into a sign system, imbued with ideological meaning at the secondary signification level, and finally defamiliarized and re-appropriated at a third-level signification using the process of “meta-ideologizing” as described in Chela Sandoval’s Methodology of the Oppressed. The paper uses Esther Hernandez’s “Sun Mad” as its point of departure. It then demonstrate a similar culture jam in Prietita and the Ghost Woman, and finally turns to a yet more complicated sign system re-appropriation in Have You Seen Marie?, whose original semiotic chain signifier (“La Llorona”) is only ever implied, but never overtly mentioned.

Moderator: Lee Bebout, Arizona State University

29. Latino/a Potenciales: Urbanidad, Feminismo, y Emigración

Title ??

Markéta Riebová, Universidad Palacký

Nuestra ponencia se centrará en el análisis de tiempo/espacio en la novela de Helena María Viramontes Their dogs came with them concebida entre las coordenadas de la crítica de la dystopia urbana de Los Ángeles en la segunda mitad del siglo XX y la precaria esperanza de resistencia/cambio utópico contenida en la narrativa. Para lograr nuestro propósito, analizamos el retrato literario de la frontera/el barrio como metáfora internalizada de la diferencia en la cartografía urbana de la metrópoli californiana. Seguimos tres líneas de desarrollo. The City Frontier. Primero nos interesará la dualidad dystópica/utópica de la frontera/barrio como reflejo de la tensión entre el espacio y la memoria de East Los Ángeles. El apoyo teórico en esta parte lo encontramos en los estudios de la realidad urbana angelena de Edward Soja, Raúl Homero Villa y Manuel Albaladejo, igual que en los tratados sobre utopía de Fernando Ainsa y Barbora Vacková. The Human Frontier. La siguiente línea gira alrededor de la imagen de la frontera reflejada en el mundo interior y relaciones interpersonales de los personajes de Viramontes. La base teórica se apoya en el ensayo de Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza de Gloria Anzaldúa. The Literary Frontier. Finalmente, la tercera línea de desarrollo explora la distancia que el mismo lector puede (o no) establecer ante la frontera borrosa entre la imaginación literaria y la cruda realidad extraliteraria, ante el tono sobrio del texto y la
inmediatez de las escenas violentas. En este aspecto nuestra interpretación deriva del concepto de las llamadas "estrategias de la sobriedad" acuñado por Hermann Herlinghaus.

"¿Hacia un nuevo modelo de latinidad? revistas femeninas para hispánicas en eeuu y sus propuestas de rol"

Rosario Torres, The Pennsylvania State University, Berks Campus

La denominada comunidad hispana de los Estados Unidos constituye el 17% de la población del país, cuyas empresas mediáticas han ido generando nuevos medios de comunicación escritos dirigidos específicamente a la mujer latina. La tienen como audiencia predilecta varias nuevas revistas de estilo de vida, que identifican como su misión acomodar las necesidades que consideran como propias de una mujer (en contraste con un hombre) de ascendencia hispana (en comparación con otros grupos de la población). Puesto que se caracterizan por su énfasis en la moda, en la belleza y en otros intereses tradicionalmente considerados como femeninos, pertenecen a la categoría de las denominadas revistas de alta gama; también se autodefinen como de estilo de vida y sus artículos y sus anuncios (equivalentes a más de un tercio de cada ejemplar…) presentan a la audiencia formas de comportarse y de consumir. Además, desean diferenciarse claramente de otras publicaciones existentes sobre moda y belleza por su mayor énfasis en asuntos que consideran relevantes para las latinas e intentan referirse a realidades sociales que consideran típicas o importantes para ellas (por ejemplo, la incorporación de la mujer al trabajo fuera de casa o la experiencia inmigratoria). El objetivo de mi charla sería explorar dichas revistas para averiguar cómo sus anuncios y sus artículos de contenido identifican a la mujer hispana y, sobre todo, para discernir qué idea de feminidad y, específicamente, qué noción de latina presentan precisamente estos medios teóricamente concebidos para ella.

"Variaciones de la emigración puertorriqueña a los Estados Unidos en los últimos años. Identidades en tránsito y nación soñada, experiencias desde la narrativa latina contemporánea"

Amanda Fleites Alfonso, Unión Nacional de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba

El fenómeno migratorio de los puertorriqueños hacia los Estados Unidos ha sido una constante de los últimos cien años. Sus esquemas sociológicos de antaño han variado en las últimas dos décadas no solo en el tipo de migración que se produce sino también por las condiciones en que tienen lugar y a las zonas a las que se ha desplazado. Lugares históricos de presencia puertorriqueña como New York y New Jersey, lentamente van dando paso a otras ciudades como Orlando y Houston, con gran demanda de fuerza de trabajo por su acelerado proceso de crecimiento. Con este trabajo se propone analizar las variaciones de la emigración de Puerto Rico a los Estados Unidos en los últimos años a partir del análisis comparado de algunas de las obras narrativas que han relatado, en primera persona, estas experiencias, y que sirven para delinear las tipologías migratorias en una y otra época. Analizar cómo el fenómeno de la diáspora pone en diálogo constante conceptos como las identidades en tránsito, las matrices culturales y la idea de nación como metáfora y utopía, son algunas de las líneas a desarrollar a través del estudio de una narrativa vibrante que refleja el desplazamiento migratorio y la recolocación como experiencias vitales donde, para el emigrante, Puerto Rico pasa a ser una nación soñada, un anhelo que se perpetúa en el imaginario social y que toma dimensiones subjetivas de gran connotación en las comunidades de esta isla caribeña que habitan en Estados Unidos.

Moderator: John Riofrio, College of William and Mary

30. Resistant Memories; Maternal Audacity

"Revolutionary Motherhood"

Leora Lihach, Marymount University

My presentation will focus on Salvadoran guerrilleras who strove to take the suffering out of their country during the Salvadoran Civil War. El Salvador’s iconography conceptualized the guerrillera as a praiseworthy combatant whose self-sacrifice and ability to procreate and nurture define her as a revolutionary mother. My work explores the relation between militancy and maternity as the guerrillera’s two most defining characteristics. Many guerrilleras who mobilized during the war were mothers, including the two commanders who my presentation will highlight. Eugenia and Nidia Díaz became leaders and agents of change as revolutionary mothers, envisioning a better world for all Salvadoran children. My paper incorporates the voices of Eugenia and Díaz, derived from Eugenia’s letters leading to her martyrdom and Díaz’s testimonial of imprisonment. By proposing that motherhood can empower women, my research builds on the work of gender studies scholars who have explored paths to women’s liberation.
My paper illuminates how women gain strength, courage, and a sense of agency from motherhood. For many women, their purpose as mothers has driven them to social and political activism in the face of danger. Salvadoran women’s mobilization as revolutionary mothers initiated their participation in public life and inspired many Salvadorans’ respect for female leadership. Therefore, my work reveals how revolutionary notions of motherhood can transform what is possible for women of whole nations to imagine.

“‘They Must Agree to Forget’: Counter-Cartographies in Sandra Cisneros’ House on Mango Street and Helena Maria Viramontes’s Their Dogs Came With Them”

**Cynthia Garcia**, University of California, Berkeley

In his seminal 2014 piece, “MFA VS. POC,” Junot Diaz writes: “the default subject position of reading and writing—of Literature with a capital L—was white, straight and male” (3). But what if Diaz’s analysis of the privileged reader and writer was extended to consider how we evaluate the very form of literature, that is, to what gains the status of “text”? One of the most significant ways that coloniality becomes visible is in its hegemonic influence over cultural expression and knowledge production of the descendants of colonized peoples. Since access to traditional forms of literacy have been historically denied to people of color, including Chicana/os, it is essential to consider non-conventional forms of literature/narrative, alongside more accepted forms, in order to gain a fuller picture of Chicana/o literary history. My paper examines literary works and public art forms that work to reconstruct urban histories of displacement, namely, Sandra Cisneros’s House on Mango Street, Helena Maria Viramontes’s Their Dogs Came with Them, and a mural by an anonymous artist located in the Mission District of San Francisco. Through an analysis of these works, I argue that, Chicana writers and artists reject hegemonic conceptualizations of space in order to demonstrate how the multifaceted layers of our identities can become affirmed, rejected, or interpolated in space. This also represents a call to unearth the memories/histories that were purportedly forgotten through the coloniality of the everyday. These artists’ work is ultimately a testament to the utopian possibilities of the arts/humanities/literature—to provide a place for marginalized communities to imagine new worlds and conceptualize strategies for changing their material conditions.

"Shattered Mirrors, Shards of Selves: Post-National Subjectivity in Julia Alvarez’s How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents"

**Sophia Monegro**, City College, CUNY

Moderator: **Suzanne Uzzilia**, CUNY Graduate Center

**Session 2: 10:25 – 11:40 a.m.**

**31. Cultural Activism and Mobility in Comparative Perspective**

The 1960s Universal Declaration of Human Rights confers subjecthood upon every human being. Although human rights law offers the promise of international citizenship, it relies on nation-states to recognize and confer those rights. The question, of course, is what happens to the people who are stateless? There is a disjuncture between the human rights Universalist vision and the sites of social and legal recognition. At the intersection of art and activism, artists, musicians, filmmakers, and writers on both sides of the border bring attention to the victims; challenge their invisibility; and shed light on structural inequalities, social injustices, and state violence. Beyond a focus on migration, this panel explores borders, belonging, and citizenship. This panel session explores immigration movements and the role of cultural production in comparative perspective focusing on the United States, the Caribbean, and Mexican American migration.

“Beyond Boat People: Marginalization and Mobility in the Caribbean”

**Vanessa Pérez Rosario**, Brooklyn College, CUNY

This paper examines unauthorized migration, human rights, and the role of cultural production in defining social and political belonging. Haitians, followed by Cubans and Dominicans constitute the largest number of people involved in unauthorized travel in rafts, boats, and other small craft in the Caribbean. At the crossroads of several major routes of unauthorized migration in the Caribbean, Central, South and North America, Puerto Rico has become the second most popular point of entry for smuggling to the U.S. territory after the Southwestern border
with Mexico. She will examine work such as Mayra Santos Febres’s collection of poetry Boat People (2003), Edwidge Danticat’s “Children of the Sea,”(1996) and Félix Morisseau-Leroy’s poetry Haitiad & Oddities (1991), among other works to argue that cultural production can offer powerful counter-narratives to the sensationalized violence and the criminalized representations of undocumented migrants in the media.

“Translating Dreams: Italo-Dominican youth and Translatino Struggles in Milan”

Lorgia Garcia Peña, Harvard University

This paper considers the influence of the U.S. Latino Dreamer Movement in young Italo-Dominicans political organization around issues of racism, discrimination, and disenfranchisement. The presentation examines graffiti and street performances by Nuevo Duarte, an underground youth group formed by ex-members of the international Dominican gang Los Trinitarios; and a dozen public speeches by Quisqueyanos por un Sueño, a group of young undocumented Dominican activists seeking legalization and a right to study.

“Xicanismo in Action in Ana Castillo’s So Far From God: The Counter-production of Disidentities in Queer Mestiza Spirituality”

Rachel L. Combs-Gonzalez, Harvard University

This paper takes Gloria Anzaldúa’s concept of la nueva mestiza as a point of departure and examines the relationship between sexuality and spirituality in the creation of community for minority subjects, particularly for the Chicana women in Ana Castillo’s novel So Far From God (1993). She studies the creation of a new, queer mestiza spirituality in the novel by applying Beatriz Preciado’s concept of counterproduction and José Esteban Muñoz’s concept of disidentification to see how Castillo provides new possibilities of subject formation and identification for queer Chicana women. By reading Castillo’s novel in dialogue with her theoretical work Massacre of the Dreamers: Essays on Xicanisma (1994), she demonstrates how the main character Sofia and her four daughters—Esperanza, Caridad, Fe, and La Loca—put Xicanismo to practice and construct new spiritual paradigms that value queer Chicana women and their roles in their communities as xicanista saints, leaders, and healers.

“The Visual Politics of Gender, Race, and Immigration: Intersecting Identities in the Age of Obama”

Irene Mata, Wellesley College

This paper examines how the immigrant rights movement has mobilized under Obama’s presidency to challenge the criminalization of immigrant bodies and to complicate the negatively constructed image of undocumented individuals in the public imaginary. From the DREAMers to the UndocuQueer movement, immigration rights activists have utilized the public space to create oppositional narratives that portray undocumented immigrants as complex human beings whose multi-layered identities intersect with their undocumented immigration status. Through an analysis of the work of artists like Favianna Rodriguez, César Maxit, and Julio Salgado, this paper discusses the role cultural activism plays in creating alternative narratives that challenge the reducing of immigrants to simple numbers.

32. Latinidad through the Lens of Memory: Personal and Collective Pasts and Futures

In Days of Awe (2002), Achy Obejas’ narrator/protagonist Alejandra reflects on her complicated family history of crypto-Judaism, Cuban Catholicism, and exile and asks, “Who am I in all this?” Her conclusion that she is “a consequence of events beyond my control” (192) is hardly specific to U.S. Latinos. However, this notion of self seems particularly apt for U.S. Latin@ writers whose own lives, and the lives of their characters, have been profoundly impacted by historical events. Furthermore, for Latinos in the 21st century the question elicits complex and contradictory responses due to the growth and diversification of Latin@ communities, the effects of globalization, transnationalism, and the general expansion of the meaning of latinidad. Yet memory continues to be a constant in much Latin@ writing and cultural production, as narrative device, theme, or strategy integral to the performance of latinidad. This panel will explore ways in which memory becomes a catalyst for imagining the future in an array of recent Latin@ texts, including theatrical performance, storytelling, poetry, and fiction.

“Nostalgia as Utopia: The Practices of Memory in Cuban-American Storytelling, Playwriting, and Other Cultural Things”

Raúl Rubio, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY
In stride with José Esteban Muñoz’s mode of utopian futures, this presentation proposes to approach a Cuban-American present and ponder future literary and cultural aesthetics. I will broach the practices of nostalgia, literary and beyond, while framing these practices within the discursive trajectories of theories on post-memory, post-trauma, and diaspora. My presentation intends on entertaining the formats, genres, and aesthetics of a selection of texts, with a primary focus on storytelling and playwriting.

“The ‘Other’ Latino Subject: Protest, Self-Figuration, and the Non-Places of Mariel Writing”

Raúl Rosales Herrera, Drew University

Mariel texts like those of Eddy Campa, Guillermo Rosales, and Esteban Luis Cárdenas are notable examples of Cuban exile literature, but also of a vivid U.S. literature of protest, and as markers of an exilic cultural production worthy of reassessment within the wider arenas of Latino/a literature. While several factors contributed to and exacerbated Mariel writers’ marginalization, it is precisely this alienation that stimulated the creation of texts that protest life in the U.S. and denounce the “non-place” to which marielitos have been relegated by U.S. society and fellow Cubans. Mariel writers occupy a spatial limbo; their works signal a production whose inventive genius was prompted by marginalization, and also became its mirror. Without “dreaming in Cuban” or highlighting the “American dream,” Mariel writers instead display literary talent while showcasing the exilic nightmare of their experience. Campa’s *Little Havana Memorial Park* explores present reality from its vision of a future Little Havana as a graveyard. The poem also reads as the bizarre self-representational portrait of Campa, whose own life – experiencing homelessness, peddling costume jewelry to survive, writing poems on supermarket flyers, and eventually disappearing without a trace and presumed dead – is the very dead end the poem allegorizes. Noting the authors above, including Campa, I argue that Mariel literature must be examined as both an inventory of marginalized existence in the U.S. and as complex fictionalized portrayals of authorial and communal self-representation. The text is the only “place” where the writer can express and attempt to make sense of his and his generation’s conflict.

“Latin@s Abroad: Translating and Writing Latin@ Memory in the European Union”

Marion Rohrleitner, University of Texas at El Paso

What happens to latinidad when it travels? How does U.S. Latin@ literature “translate”? And how is latinidad conceptualized, remembered, and written differently when produced outside of the United States? In this talk I will focus on the way historical memory is written and translated in contemporary fiction by two Latin@ writers who both enjoy great popularity in Europe, the Dominican American author Junot Díaz and the exilic Cuban writer María Elena Cruz Varela. One aspect their otherwise radically different work has in common is a distinct focus on gendered historical relationships between the United States and their respective countries of origin, and the ways in which these relationships affect and condition the creative imagination as Latin@s in the late twentieth century. First I will focus on the German translations of personal and collective memory in Díaz’s *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* and *This is How you Lose Her*. I ground my discussion in Lawrence Venuti’s critical concept of “foreignization” and Emily Apter’s privileging of “untranslatability” to show that the translator’s role needs to be as active cultural interpreter of cultural difference rather than “domestication” for the sake of fluency if the critical voice of Latin@ literature is to be maintained. Second, I will theorize how María Elena Cruz Varela’s novel *La hija de Cuba*, a fictionalized rewriting of the life of celebrated 19th-century Cuban writer and abolitionist Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, contributes to the reimagining of a proto-Latina writer from a European, rather than a U.S.-American perspective, emphasizing the transnational origins of Latin@ writing.

“Who am I in all this?” Postmemory and the Intergenerational Latin@ Self”

Karen S. Christian, California Polytechnic State University

For some Latin@ writers, latinidad is built on the memories of previous generations, memories that these authors and/or their characters have made their own. In this presentation, I explore the workings of postmemory – “the relationship of the second generation to powerful, often traumatic, experiences that preceded their births but were nevertheless transmitted to them so deeply as to seem to constitute memories in their own right” (Marianne Hirsch) – and the related notion of what psychologists call the “intergenerational self” in recent U.S. Latin@ fiction. I show how this interplay of family histories and subjectivity, which has been discussed extensively in Holocaust Studies and in recent scholarship on Cuban-American writing, is integral to the representation of latinidad in U.S. Latin@ writing in general. I argue that for Latin@s who lack firsthand experience of a homeland or the historical events
that have defined their communities, memory is nonetheless a fundamental part of their sense of self. Cuban-American writers like Achy Obejas and Chantel Acevedo delve into the incomplete stories passed down by their characters’ ancestors, while in Sandra Cisneros’ *Caramelo*, the narrator struggles to piece together a family history written before she was born, when she was “still dirt” (19). Novels by Dominican-American writers like Junot Díaz and Julia Álvarez, in which the Trujillo regime is never far from the surface, further underscore the vital link between history, (post)memory, and identity. These works suggest that *latinidad* is transnational, performative, and characterized by multiple and shifting positions—from nostalgic to celebratory to critical to conflicted—with respect to individual and collective memory.

33. Refugees, Social Death, and the Compensations of Literature

“Guatemalan Diasporic Fiction as Refugee Literature”

*Regina Marie Mills*, University of Texas at Austin

Despite a large influx of Guatemalans to cities such as Los Angeles and Washington, D.C., their narratives have largely been subsumed into the traditional Latino/a immigrant narrative. The importance of the historical specificity and traumatic nature of Guatemalan immigration, as a consequence of the Central American revolutions, has only recently begun to be studied by scholars such as Arturo Arias and Claudia Milian, though the field of Latino/a studies is still largely focused on immigrants from Mexico, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. Thus, through an examination of two novels by Guatemalan-American authors, Héctor Tobar’s *The Tattooed Soldier* (1998/2000) and Tanya Maria Barrientos’ *Family Resemblance* (2003), I compare how each novel differently positions Guatemalan diasporic identity around traumas surrounding the Guatemalan civil war and diaspora. Ultimately, I argue that Tobar establishes Guatemalan diasporic fiction as a kind of refugee literature, while Barrientos attempts to fit the Guatemalan diasporic narrative into a traditional Latino/a immigrant narrative using the genre of chica lit (as set out by Tace Hedricks), thus flattening out the unique historical experience of the Guatemalan civil war while also highlighting the constraints of the chica lit genre for Central American-American women writers.

“Necropolitical Labor: From Social Death to Social Mobilization in *The Ordinary Seaman*”

*Kristy L. Ulibarri*, East Carolina University

This paper, coming out of my working monograph, reconsiders immigrant labor in Francisco Goldman’s canonical novel *The Ordinary Seaman* by thinking about the way social death potentially empowers Latinas/os by becoming the catalyst for social mobilization. I argue that this narrative elucidates the way death becomes a figure for resisting ethno-racial exploitations and using that resistance to mobilize ethno-racial networks. In particular, I consider how labor is regulated through processes of invisibility and captivity in Goldman’s novel. The novel embodies this social death with the state of the decayed ship the Urus, the ghosts of Nicaraguan history, and a cat that haunts the crew and foretells Bernardo’s literal death. Yet, this is also what eventually provokes our protagonist Esteban to social action for the crew. In other words, through death, a contradictory politics between exploitation and possibility arise. The theoretical stakes of this paper are bridging the foundational theories about social death under neoliberal capitalism (as one of exploitation) with queer theories about the potentialities of “death” (through the lack of reproductive futurism). I explore this politics of death from the socio-political formations of Achilles Mbembe and Jasbir Puar to unravel the troubling economic contradictions found in theories of necropolitics. This paper rethinks these theories by putting them in conversation with José Esteban Muñoz’s and Lee Edleman’s ideas on queer futurity that both embrace and re-conceptualize its lack of (capitalist) reproductivity.

“Transnational Feminisms and Latina Interpretation of the Sanctuary Movement”

*Leigh C. Johnson*, Marymount University

The slaughter of thousands of Salvadorans and Guatemalans in the 1980s by their own “democratic” governments caused many women and men to seek political refuge in the United States or Canada. However, because the US government covertly supported the dictatorships, the resistance movement was forced underground. Part of a network, often with ties to liberation theology, individual activists in the Sanctuary Movement had to work together to bring people to safety. Despite working toward the same goals, individual activists experienced the transnational nature of Sanctuary in ways that forced them to consider their positionality and complicity in the US neoliberal narrative that denied Central American refugees a Latino identity separate from the Chicano and Native American identities. Perspectives on the Sanctuary movement depend on who is writing. Yet, the degree to which authors and
activists imagine a transnational collaboration that is not a western-centered First World feminist narrative has evolved as Guatemalan and Salvadoran American voices have emerged to tell their own stories. Demetria Martínez’s *Mother Tongue* (1994) and Helena María Viramontes’s “The Cariboo Café” (1995) are among the most well known feminist narratives of political refugees; however, this presentation focuses on poetry by Leticia Hernandez-Linares and a young adult novel by Fran Leeper Buss and Daisy Cubias to explain how the narrative of saving and resistance changes with the positionality of the storyteller.

Moderator: **Eric Vázquez**, Carnegie Mellon University

**34. Latina Utopias: Legacies, Imagination, and Narrative**

“Anzaldúa’s Legacy: A Latina/o Utopia”

**Kathryn Quinn-Sánchez**, Georgian Court University

Anzaldúa asked us to redefine our entire society by opening our minds and senses in order to erase boundaries, borders, and labels to free ourselves from limitations and to be able to work towards social justice for everyone. She taught us to shed our binary thought patterns and adopt a spirituality that infuses us with passion for social change. Latina Feminism, with the aid of Anzaldúa as well as others, has truly disrupted all categories by teaching us that we must not restrict ourselves to narrow perspectives; we must not reinforce pre-existing limitations of difference, or allow others to cage us into narrow spaces, instead Anzaldúa suggested that we embrace an ever developing, adopting, changing mode of thought while we expand our actions and hearts through rejecting the past and moving towards a “spirituality that not only transforms our perceptions of ‘ordinary’ life and our relationships with others, but also invites encounters with other realities, other worlds” (Reader 229). This paper follows the development of post-Borderlands Anzaldúan thought by engaging with and analyzing Anzaldúan terminology. The terms include: autohistoria-teoría, Coyolxauqui, nos/otras, new tribalism, desconocimiento, nepantleras and spiritual activism. I delve into these terms’ significance and how each one aids our goal of social change with an understanding that these concepts are intrinsic aspects to lived theory, and how they serve as tools that have the capacity to change ourselves and our world peacefully. Specific texts that will aid in this analysis include: *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation* (2002), *Entre Mundos/Among Worlds* (2005) and *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader* (2009).

“Imagining Latina Feminist Utopias in Nicholasa Mohr’s *Nilda*”

**Elizabeth Garcia**, Connecticut College

Following Jose Esteban Muñoz’s “idealistic mode of critique” based on Ernst Bloch’s theories of utopia and his conceptualization of “astonished contemplation” as a methodology for hope, I argue in this paper that Latina authors similarly envision Latina feminism as a utopic ideal where Latinas claim both their cultures and feminist politics creating new empowered visions of Latina feminist identities. I focus on the work of Nicholasa Mohr, and the ways in which through her child narrator, in the novel *Nilda*, she poses both imagination and the “astonished contemplation” we see the narrator experience, situated within the historical context of World War II, as methodologies for hope for a young Puerto Rican girl coming into womanhood. In the novel, Nilda, attends the Bard Manor Camp for Girls where she finds a “secret garden” in which to escape the exclusion based on race and class she experiences from the other campers. She invites into this space only those, that like herself, experience similar forms of exclusion. When she returns to the poverty and racism of her everyday life in New York City, we repeatedly see her return to this secret garden through her imagination, and thus create for herself those moments of possibility for her future. In this paper, I will explore the meaning of this secret garden in imagining a Latina Feminist possibility.

“Narrative Strategies and the Disruption of Patriarchy in Junot Díaz’s *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*”

**Victoria Bolf**, Loyola University, Chicago

This paper examines the political consequences of the narrative structure of Junot Díaz’s 2007 novel *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. Drawing on narrative theory and recent *Oscar Wao* criticism, I argue that the narrator of the novel, Yunior, desires to write a narrative not dominated by dictatorial patriarchy by giving voice to various perspectives and incorporating non-standard genres into his text; however, this effort is undercut by his inability to give up control of the story. Although marginal voices are given voice in this novel, by the time the narrator reveals his position as a character in the story as well as the narrator, it has become clear that we are getting Yunior’s
version of events, a version that, for all intents and purposes, cannot let go of the “dictator masculinity” in which Yunior has been socialized. The twenty-plus pages narrated to Yunior by Lola are the only place in the narrative where someone other than Yunior speaks, and they illustrate by contrast how tight Yunior’s hold over the story is. Ultimately, *Oscar Wao* fails to imagine an alternative to a patriarchal society. Yunior’s narrative acknowledges this failure by refusing to “end” conventionally, coming to a stop after several “endings” on Oscar’s ambiguous cry of “The beauty! The beauty!” Reading *Oscar Wao* with attention to its narrative structure and to what the narrator tells us—and doesn’t tell us—sheds light on the interconnected workings of capitalism, patriarchy, and narrative.

Moderator: **Kathryn Quinn-Sánchez**, Georgian Court University

### 35. New Memory: History, Culture, and the Politics of Latina/o Re-Membering

This panel discusses memory in Latina/o communities. While many scholars consider the historical in literary texts, few have analyzed how cultural memory, reconfigured in the present, functions as an alternative site of knowledge, a “new memory.” Our papers consider literary sites – ranging from recent novels to the processes of literary canon formation – that inscribe new Latina/o memories of culture, identity, and community. We employ methodologies ranging from archival research and trauma theory, to studies of assimilation and ecocriticism to make a case for how new memories function within contemporary Latina/o communities. To initiate a conversation about “new memory” from a comparative perspective, the panel explores how Chicana/os, Dominicans, Guatemalans, and Puerto Rican/Nuyoricans mobilize new memories as fundamental aspects of their literary challenges to regressive canons, assimilation, trauma, and gentrification.

Latina/o studies scholar David Vázquez and Chicana/o studies scholar John Morán-González reflect on the resonance of cultural nationalist traditions and how they are rethought by contemporary Latina/o authors, while Latina/o literary critic Ylce Irizarry and Central American studies scholar Yajaira Padilla examine newer diaspora narratives in order to understand how new memories negotiate migration and “Americanization.” John Morán-González interrogates the process of canon formation, since what is important about how we “remember” what the Chicano Renaissance was affects the way contemporary criticism views that moment as a precedent, antecedent, or influence on contemporary Latina/o literature. David Vázquez considers how past models of resistance are refuged by Ernesto Quiñones’s *Bodega Dreams*, especially how the novel “re-members” the Puerto Rican Movement in its contestations of urban redevelopment. As a counterpoint to older models of resistance based in ethnic nationalism, Ylce Irizarry analyzes Angie Cruz’s novel *Soledad* as a narrative explicitly concerned with Dominicans’ attempts to redress both physical and psycho-cultural losses accompanying migration. Yajaira Padilla focuses on Guatemalan diaspora communities in the U.S. in her discussion of Tanya María Barrientos 2003 novel *Family Resemblance*, which Padilla argues deploys a politics of remembrance to reconfigure the telos of Americanization by representing assimilation as an incomplete process. All four papers complicate issues of history, remembrance, memory, trauma, and what is left out of historical representation.

This panel seeks to engage the audience with the following questions: First, how can new memories foster progressive relationships with both diaspora communities in the U.S. and heritage communities in Latin America? Second, what has scholarship that has promoted traditional understandings of the historical made visible and/or occluded? Indeed, how might memory function as an alternative site of knowledge, culture, and geography? Finally, how do Latina/o authors conceive of and represent new memories to imagine more egalitarian social outcomes?

“Floricanto Now: Revisiting the Chicano Renaissance”

**John Morán González**, University of Texas at Austin

Critical anthologies such as *The Routledge Companion to Latina/o Literature* and the forthcoming *The Cambridge Companion to Latina/o Literature* operate as crucial sites of canon formation through their delineation of the categories of analysis by which Latina/o literature is interpreted. For this presentation, I will foreground the questions raised in formulating the historical positioning of the 1970s-era Chicano Renaissance for the *Companion*. The issues raised ranged from those aspects intrinsic to the project regarding principles of organization and selection of Chicano Renaissance texts (such as the boundaries of *chicanismo*, the centrality of anti-colonial *neo-indigenismo*, and the role of Chicana feminism) as well as how to respond to editorial pressures largely extrinsic to the dynamics of Latina/o literary studies, such as the marketing and editorial requirements of academic presses and the mass-market availability of any given text. In other words, what I examine is the complex situation of Chicano Renaissance
literature as it sits at the nexus of cultural capital in the current world marketplace and the academic discourses that would emphasize its utopian imaginary as a resource of hope for current and future Chicana/o communities. Ultimately, the question of how the Chicano Renaissance is remembered through its categorization in contemporary critical practice is crucial for understanding the formation of Latina/o literary studies in the present moment.

“Ritual and Reclamation: Towards a New Memory of Dominicañidad”
Ylce Irizarry, University of South Florida

Though less popularly successful, several novels published before The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao link the era of Trujillo to other fragments of Dominican memory: independence from Spain, occupation by Haiti, the Haitian genocide, and Trujillo’s assassination. Loida Maritza Perez’s Geographies of Home (2000), Nelly Rosario’s Song of the Water Saints (2002), Angie Cruz’s Soledad (2001) and Let It Rain Coffee (2006), all illustrate how personal and public memory are mutually inclusive. The narrative aesthetics these novels employ suggest interrogation of cultural memory is required to move Dominican women, particularly, toward a new memory of their ethnic belonging, their dominicanidad. My forthcoming book, Neocolonialism and Narrative: The New Memory of Chicana/o and Latina/o Fiction foregrounds how U.S. Neocolonialism – often accepted as history or “public memory” – shapes Chicana/o and Latina/o cultural memory. I outline four recurring central narratives in the literatures; each narrative articulates a distinct aspect of cultural memory: loss, reclamation, fracture, and new memory. This abstract proposes reading Cruz’s novel, Soledad, as a narrative of reclamation: a story explicitly concerned with Dominicanas’ attempt to redress both physical and psycho-cultural losses accompanying internal and international migration. Soledad, her mother, and the community of Dominican women portrayed use allegory and ritual as mediums for the interrogation of the Dominican Republic as a pre-US Neocolonialism utopia. By paying special attention to the novel’s rejection of the allegory of Dominicana bodies, its reconfigurations of physical spaces, and its recuperation of ritual, the paper will show how Soledad is a narrative of reclamation.

“Central ‘American’ Dreaming: Re-membering and Belonging in Tanya María Barrientos’ Family Resemblance”
Yajaira Padilla, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

In this paper I explore the significant tensions between political histories of US intervention in Central America and the process of Americanization in the novel Family Resemblance (2003) by the Guatemalan-American author Tanya María Barrientos. In the novel, the protagonist Nita stumbles upon her family’s hidden past of political involvement during a key moment in Guatemala’s history, the presidency of Jacobo Arbenz Guzman during the early 1950s, and thus undertakes the task of re-membering her family’s conflicted and conflicting pasts. Nita’s discovery of this alternative archive, as I contend, speaks to a particular politics of remembrance, grounded in a practice of social or popular memory capable of contesting official histories. However, because Nita must negotiate such truths/histories about her family, Guatemala, and the United States from her positioning as an ‘American,’ such revelations also act as a catalyst for critically examining what it means to belong in the US as Central Americans and to uphold the ideal of the ‘American dream.’ In essence, the novel forces a reconfiguration of the telos of Americanization. Rather than a foregone conclusion as Nita believes it to be, her Americanization or assimilation is an incomplete process. It is this notion of what I term “assaulted” or “disrupted assimilation” through the enactment of the aforementioned politics of remembrance that gives rise to Central ‘American’ Dreaming and the forging of new means of belonging.

“Remembering El Barrio: Memory and Urban Renewal in Ernesto Quiñonez’s Bodega Dreams”
David J. Vázquez, University of Oregon

This paper combines urban Latina/o and environmental studies methodologies to consider how Ernesto Quiñonez’s novel Bodega Dreams remembers the Puerto Rican Movement of the 1960s and meditates on more politically and socially effective models of urban renewal in El Barrio. The title character Willie Bodega renovates buildings and preserves the cultural heritage of El Barrio, offering a family resemblance to what Raul Homero Villa calls “barriology”–a mode of resistance that encompasses a “range of knowledge[s] and practices that form the historical, geographical, and social being-in-conciousness of [Latina/o] experience.” While barriology is grounded in urban Chicana/o communities, Quiñonez represents analogous processes in Spanish Harlem. Going beyond valorizing the barrio as cultural space, Quiñonez depicts Spanish Harlem as a unique place worth preserving and remembering. Although not explicitly an “environmental novel,” this paper claims Bodega Dreams as an environmental text. As an example of what Michael Denning calls “ghetto pastoral” the novel yokes “naturalism
and the pastoral, the slum and the shepherd, the gangster and Christ in concrete” (1998, 231). The use of ghetto pastoral underscores how cities possess natures and environments that are as important—if not more so—as wilderness landscapes. Quiñonez departs from conventional environmental texts, however, by emphasizing how racialization facilitates urban gentrification. Consequently, rather than depicting environmentalism as distinct from the people and cultures of Spanish Harlem, Quiñonez suggests that the neighborhood’s cultural and populist values offer more productive and socially just models for preserving and memorializing El Barrio.

Session 3: 11:50 – 1:05 p.m.

36. Imaginaries of Illegality
After José Esteban Muñoz, Latina/o Studies has focused largely on the performance theorist’s mediations on utopic possibilities for more liberatory futures. Less attention has been paid to his essays on race and affect. In his writings on Brownness, Muñoz not only theorized the potentiality to create a commons out of the negative affectivities plaguing minoritarian lives: he also observed that Latina/o Studies was moving towards a mode of critical inquiry that employed empirically-based analysis as its sole modus operandi. His observation is a call to theorize humanistic approaches that do not reduce brown lives to the truth games of empiricism. Gloria Anzaldúa’s famously defined the borderlands as the grounds “where the Third World grates against the First and bleeds.” Her words all too painfully illustrate the experiences of illegality: undocumented peoples are not only denied basic tenets of human existence and sustainable citizenship, today their lives are targeted for annihilation under the regime of law. The border itself is the grounds on which lawful violence renders migrant subjects as illegal and without ontology. Anzaldúa aside, however, the critical discourse on “illegality” has emerged primarily out of social science research, and few literary or cultural studies theorists have taken up such framework, thus evidencing the centrality of empirical methods within Latina/o Studies. This panel addresses this ideological and intellectual conundrum by heeding Muñoz’s call and proposing propose a humanistic analysis of illegality and Latinidad. The papers bring contemporary Latina/o children’s literature, borderlands theatre, and migrant rights anthems as a point of departure for humanizing the subjects of illegality and willing new forms of being and belonging that are fiercely utopist.

“Where are Latino/a Children in the National Imaginary of Illegality?”
Mary Pat Brady, Cornell University
Within the burgeoning field of childhood studies, Latino or Chicano or Mexican children are absent. This inattention finds its congruent approach within the realm of child labor laws, where children may still legally work alongside adults in agribusiness. Beyond this dovetailed relationship between food chains and scholarly chains, what work does the absence of “Latino” children in the national imaginary do? How has this absence been utilized by “Coming Out of the Shadows” events? Did the recent media attention to unaccompanied minors crossing the U.S./Mexico border facilitate a discussion about Latino ad Latina children in the U.S.? This conference paper will consider the intersection of legality narratives and childhood narratives through the work of Bettina Restrepo’s young adult novel, Illegal, and Reyna Grande’s Across 100 Mountains. I will suggest that these texts make explicit how the absence of Latino children from the national imaginary of the U.S. Helps make their exploitations possible.

“Anthologies of Solidarity: Music, Espousal and the Immigrant Subject”
Lorena Alvarado, Northwestern University
Dolores Huerta’s “Claro que se Puede” (2010) and La Santa Cecilia’s “ICE: El Hielo” (2013) are contemporary musical projects that elicit empathy toward the immigrant subject. These enterprises inspire my reading of an archive that entertreats a variety of publics to acknowledge the plight of the (undocumented) disenfranchised. I read the circulation and impressions of these songs as they may relate to the sentimental, a category of analysis traditionally utilized to examine literary production. Moreover, I explore the slippage between sentiment and sentimiento—the idiom of heartfelt expressivity in Latina/o popular music-- that occurs here. The familiar technique and recognizable timbres of these soundtracks that both comfort and coerce are tensely conjoined with a tradition of persuasion on behalf of the legible other.
“Latina/o Theatre, Illegality and the Borderlands’ Disposable Subjects”

Armando García, University of Pittsburgh

My essay studies the representation of undocumented migrant subjects in recent plays from both sides of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. Few theatre scholars have addressed the political condition of the undocumented migrants occupying contemporary borderlands theatre, and “illegality” itself is left out of their analysis. I address a particular conundrum in light of this critical absence: Latina/o playwrights who are most often celebrated as exemplary of American theatre are also the most likely to reproduce the human condition of undocumented migrants as feminized bodies made ready for disposability as a fact of the law, while Latin American (in particular, Mexican) playwrights consciously refuse to imagine art that reproduces the logic of terrorizing governance. Since popular forms of Latina/o theatre collude in sustaining the precariousness of migrant lives –when they depict them solely as disposable and death-ready–, I argue that a more viable future beyond the terror of illegality can be found elsewhere in plays that read North by South and theorize migrant subjectivity across geopolitical divides.

Chair and respondent, Ariana Vigil, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

37. Historical Loss: Slavery, Art, and Teaching

“Does History Repeat Itself?: Gender, Slavery, and The Uses of Fiction in Esmeralda Santiago’s Conquistadora”

Stacey Schlau, West Chester University

In her 2012 novel, Conquistadora, Esmeralda Santiago demonstrates how the modalities of the Spanish conquest continued, shaping Puerto Rican society throughout the nineteenth century. In the process, she creates a protagonist whose privileged class position as landowner and relationship to the enslaved characters in the novel highlights the racialized hierarchy and history of violence that laid the foundation for modern Puerto Rico. Destined for obscurity and domesticity, Ana balks at the expected gender expectations, instead manipulating the circumstances and people around her to ensure a future of independence and freedom. Ironically, although her ironclad sense of purpose is based in a romanticized vision of the “New World” encouraged by a reading of a soldier-ancestor’s diary, she achieves her goal, though at great cost. Jamil Khader’s notion that women Caribbean writers evince a “subaltern cosmopolitanism” opens up possible ways of (re)thinking gender and nationality in Puerto Rican cultures, as articulated in Conquistadora. I will apply the four strategies he considers to a discussion of the novel. Santiago’s rendering of the nineteenth-century sugar-growing industry in the Ponce region uncovers not only the brutality of the slavery system, but how integral that system was to the development of Puerto Rico historically, and therefore into the present and the future. Ultimately, twenty-first century readers know that the very economy on which Ana, the protagonist, depended will inevitably be destroyed by yet another colonizer, making the system in which she placed her faith obsolete and Puerto Rico dependent on the United States. The novel also points toward the future, as it reminds readers of the island’s still-uncertain status. Ana’s dislocation and search for a home on her own terms and a life of conscious choice echoes the homelessness of Puerto Rico itself. While culturally Boricua remains strong, politically the island continues to drift, in limbo as a “free associated state.” The protagonist voyages from Spain to Puerto Rico, reenacting the colonization process. As the story ends, the gendered struggle to retain control over the land is won, but Ana appears doomed to lose the racialized conflict with African and Afro-Caribbean cultures and people. Narrative fiction is used to work through the contradictions, ironies, and ambiguities inherent to the protagonist’s story, as well as that of the island that has yet to become an official country. Who knows, the (open) ending seems to imply, what the future will bring?

“’Some violation that lies at the center of my art’ : Yolanda Garcia’s Backward Glance in Julia Alvarez’s How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents”

Allison Harris, University of Miami

In Cruising Utopia, José Esteban Muñoz characterizes his work as a “backward glance that enacts a future vision” (4). This methodology looks for a “specific nexus of cultural production” in which an imagined queer utopia can be possible (3). In this paper, I employ Muñoz’s methodology to read a different horizon: Yolanda Garcia’s desire for a unified understanding of her subjectivity. Julia Alvarez’s 1992 How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents works backward in time from a difficult present to a traumatic past. Unlike Muñoz’s Stonewall Riots, which offer a positive collective fomentation of a nascent queer movement, the García girls’ nexus is one of personal psychological disturbance: their forced immigration fleeing a dangerous dictator. Merging Muñoz with Julia Kristeva’s theories of subject
formation and abjection, I argue that, rather than using the past to look forward, Yolanda Garcia is constantly trying to go back: back to the DR, back to a cohesive sense of self, back to the semiotic chora. But in this desire for return, Yolanda ultimately finds herself abjected, institutionalized, and fragmented. She learns that this return is impossible, and, in putting herself back together, her backward glance ends with a foreword look. The novel is bookended by two images that illustrate Yolanda’s ambivalent desire: the white Palmolive woman calling her back to the US and the mother cat yowling her back to the DR, illustrating that a cohesive sense of self has not yet been achieved. And yet the novel ends with a sense of optimism. Yolanda’s art suggests a possible aesthetic utopia of relationality, not yet in reach but on the horizon.

"Teaching the People without History: Historiographical Loss in Junot Díaz and Francisco Goldman,"
Carlos Martinez, Framingham State University

Junot Díaz's The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao and Francisco Goldman’s The Long Night of White Chickens contain narrators who dread the loss of history as much as they abhor the notion of false identity, and their narratives are an attempt to preclude such loss. They, like their characters, are caught between worlds that have been forever altered and deferred by the historical dictatorships in their native countries. But still they assert their historical agency, and in doing so they start to produce a new kind of historical documentation, one that writes history with the knowledge that ‘the story’ will need to be told defensively, perhaps even aggressively, with, of course, an eye toward the fallibility of fully trusting in one reading over another. Close readings of the narrators’ anxieties and of how the novelists similarly critique historiography reveal connections between how the texts address the shifting cultural and national understanding of a newly evolving, burgeoning Latino identity, one fraught with the trauma of political turmoil and instability. The new Latino narrator of these works is necessarily an amalgam of contradictory elements, but one whose core is an insistence on authenticity, an insistence that may finally help to reach audiences who are becoming more and more a people without history.

Moderator: Jill Toliver Richardson, Borough of Manhattan Community College, CUNY

38. Violence and Voice: Latina/o Literature and the Utopic Classroom

“Pedagogy, Literature, and Violence: Or, do we perpetrate violence when we teach about violence?”
Araceli Esparza, California State University, Long Beach

This project takes up some of the difficult and contradictory questions I am often confronted with both in my research and as I reflect on the Latina/o literature courses I teach. Such questions are inspired by the utopian desires theorized by José E. Muñoz in his body of work, leading me to ask, what are the productive and perhaps utopian and liberatory possibilities of teaching Latina/o literature that focuses on violence? I have learned that students are often shocked into silence when they first read literature that represents the violence of things such as the civil war in Central America, femicide in Juárez, migration and immigration, homophobia, poverty, racism, and other relentlessly multiplying forms of dehumanization. Students have visceral reactions to fictionalized histories of violence for many reasons. However, during our discussions I often learn that they feel that narratives that represent violence against working-class people and people of color epitomize their own marginalized experiences. If Latina/o literature works to (re)imagine and (re)construct silenced histories, what are the productive possibilities of affective responses? More specifically, what opportunities exist for guiding students toward productive readings of texts that allow them to see the possibilities for other ways of being in the world that such texts imagine and make possible? How can literature help them recognize their own potential to imagine and create liberatory ways of being in the world? In my presentation, I will draw on formal interviews and surveys conducted with public university students in order to shed light on these questions.

“Yo Soy Un Brainiac: Essays, Testimonios, and Reports Calling for the Educational Utopia of the Latino/a Student and Scholar”
Grisel Y. Acosta, Bronx Community College, CUNY

Essay and testimonio writers Norma Elia Cantú and Jeannie Capó Crucet, in Wise Latinas: Writers on Higher Education, and Carmen R. Lugo-Lugo and Jessica Lavariega Monforti, in Presumed Incompetent: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia, all reveal a Latino/a utopia that they desired when pursuing their academic studies and which they and other Latinos/as continue to work for: Latino/a mentorship in higher education. Countless
studies show that more Latinos/as are enrolled in higher education, yet colleges and universities have not adjusted enough to create the proper mentorship for these students, resulting in low graduation rates. Rafael Rangel Sostmann, president of Tecnologico de Monterrey University in Mexico has led an effort to steer Latinos/as in the United States to an international education at his university with the promise of higher graduation rates, a promise he has kept. If we are to keep a similar promise to our Latino/a students in the U.S., we must lead the effort to have more Latino/a professors who understand our students’ needs. City University of New York currently graduates a large number of Latino/a students, but the largest percentage of that number is for associate degrees (30.7%); we only graduated a total of 36 Latino/a doctoral students in 2011-2012. White students made up the largest percentage of doctoral graduates (70.4%), or 348. However, City College of New York’s Minority Scholars Program, which has the goal of producing doctoral graduates, looks to address the discrepancy and create the utopia that we so desire.

Reclaiming Locas, Wild Girls and the Feminine Divine: Latina Characters in the Borderlands Embodying the Subjugated Wisdom of the Heroine’s Journey

Melissa Coss Aquino, Bronx Community College

The historical and cultural implications of the title Locas, and Foucault's theory of "subjugated knowledges" serve as a point of departure for understanding the lost wisdom retrieved through Jaime Hernandez’s more than thirty year graphic journey with embodied Latinas in Locas/Love and Rockets. In conjunction, I will present the lives of the female characters in Annecy Baez's My Daughter's Eyes and other Stories and the borders between the Bronx and the Dominican Republic where self-definition demands silence and separation from family and culture. Precisely the kind of behavior that will get a girl labeled "una loca." By expanding on Gloria Anzaldua's concept of "borderlands" as not only physical, cultural and spiritual space I include the academic borderlands comics currently occupy between "high" and "low" culture, as well as the inherently fluid borderlands of the medium itself with gutters that create "borders", panels that "bleed" into gutters and time travel that is as easy as moving from one panel to the next. Hernandez and Baez carefully erect "borderland" worlds where Latinas are able to enact and embody archetypes of female power and wisdom like curanderas, shapeshifters and tricksters to recover lost powers and histories associated with the feminine divine, as well as imagining new ones like super heroines, wrestlers, and punk rockers who establish "border crossing" as an identity and way of life, as opposed to a transgressive act to be corrected or punished. Note: How such work has been incorporated into a Latino Literature Course at Bronx Community College will be included.

Moderator: Leigh C. Johnson, Marymount University

39. From Pain to Potential

This panel includes four paper presentations that variously address hidden origins and the layering of false or familially-imposed identities as a means of constructing utopia to escape poverty and violence or economic insecurity.

“Ay, hermano, Where Art Thou?: Cristina García’s Poetic Portrait of Cuban-American Family Dysfunction”

Jana F. Gutiérrez, Auburn University

Cuban-American writing phenomenon, Cristina García, joins a melancholic fraternity in constructing a lyrical family album in The Lesser Tragedy of Death, her debut poetic collection. This curious hermanoda (ode to the Hispanic sibling relationship) presents a symbolic portrait of the brother/sister ties that bind and sometimes break. Poems rendering homage to a sibling follow a literary tradition that historically unites what geography and revolutionary politics have separated. Cuban poets writing from the Island (Dulce María Loynaz and José Lezama Lima), in diaspora (Gustavo Pérez Firmat), and in assimilation (Richard Blanco) have exalted and bemoaned fraternal bonds. But only García has devoted an entire collection to rescuing, if only through words and imagery, a wayward brother. Published in 2010, the tome delves into the complex psyche of the fractured sibling relationship. Here García presents her most biographical writing, revealing painful secrets as she mines her own family history to produce a haunting meditation upon sibling rivalry, the Latino immigrant sueño americano, and writing as both craft and catharsis. This paper interprets Cristina García’s nuclear family portrait as metaphoric touchstone for examining the broader concept of Latino Utopias. Her dystopian (re)presentation, whilst tragic, is also cause for celebration, for it epitomizes the “lesser tragedy” of an accomplished writer in search of a new aesthetic identity.
“Anticipatory Illumination’: Constructing Utopia in Raquel Cepeda and Esmeralda Santiago’s Latina Künstelrromane”

Karen W. Martin, Union University

Ernst Bloch’s concept of anticipatory illumination as a catalyst for artistic expression “is the way of being, which . . . wakes utopian consciousness and indicates to it the not-yet-become in the scale of its possibilities” (Ueding). José Muñoz’s Cruising Utopia explores the potentiality for Bloch’s hope-based framework for making (or remaking) consciousness in light of a “queer futurity” which “is essentially about a rejection of a here and now and an insistence on potentiality or concrete possibility for another world” (1). These notions of anticipation and the construction of possibilities offer rich lenses for new readings of young adult literature, given the Bildungsroman’s emphasis on awakening and transformation. My paper focuses specifically on the Latina künstelrromane Bird of Paradise: How I Became Latina by Raquel Cepeda and Almost a Woman/The Turkish Lover, the less-studied continuations of Esmeralda Santiago’s canonical memoir When I Was Puerto Rican. These works are linked in their focus on the emerging artist’s blurred origins and the layering of externally-imposed identities as a means of escaping poverty, violence, or racism. My reading explores the means by which the author-protagonists unmake cultural constructs of gender, race, sexuality, and genre as they construct a utopian aesthetic broad enough to welcome their literary production.

“Negotiating Mixed-race Masculinities: Pain, Desire and Utopia”

Jennifer Domino Rudolph, Connecticut College

“Tell her that you love her hair, that you love her skin, her lips, because in truth, you love them more than you love your own.” With these words of “advice,” Yunior, protagonist of “How to Date a Browngirl, Blackgirl Whitegirl or Halfie” (Junot Díaz 1996), simultaneously evokes a vision of an ideal body, that of his white date, as well as the pain wrought on mixed-race bodies such as his own, a pain which necessitates a constant negotiation of the here and now but pushes us to imagine a time when such a negotiation is no longer necessary in the U.S., Latin America and globally. Likewise, the mixed-race protagonists’ bodies of The Holy Spirit of my Uncle’s Cojones (Marcos McPeek Villatoro 1999) and “Nobody’s Son” (Luis Alberto Urrea 2002) inhabit a here and now which forces them to reconcile a past and define a future through negotiated constructions of their identities as mixed-race men, enmeshed in social and cultural mores related to Latin/o American and white masculinities. Through a theoretical framework combining Muñoz’s call to use the ideality of the past to imagine a utopian future and mixed-race theories which exhort us to move beyond romantic notions of mixed-race and deploy mixed-race studies as a critical tool to imagine a more racially just future, I argue that Díaz, McPeek Villatoro and Urrea employ pain, desire, and mixed-race masculinities to reveal the limits of the present and implore us to develop innovative critical interventions on Latino masculinities and beyond.

“Julia Alvarez’s Young Adult Fiction: New Coordinates of Latina/o Literary Production Empowering a More Just Collective Futurity”

Jackie K. White, Lewis University

In response to the call for examinations of “the temporal and spatial coordinates of Latino/a literary production” along with “aesthetics that unmake and remake the social . . . [and] that gesture toward an indeterminate yet just and empowering collective futurity,” my paper presentation explores recent offerings in Young Adult literature from Dominican-Latina Julia Alvarez. In particular, I analyze the ways in which her novels Return to Sender and finding miracles move the politics of transnational immigration and exile, first, across “illegal borders” and, secondly, across “imaginative boundaries.” The former follows the intersecting maturations of Canadian-American farm boy Tyler Paquette and undocumented Mexican Mari Cruz, while the latter the identity-quest of an unspecified Latin American adoptee, Milly Kaufmann. That both novels are set in Vermont adds another spatial dynamic. That both novels feature feminist and white “abuela” figures likewise offers a further element of “queerness” (as defined in the work of Daniel Enrique Pérez). In the process I discuss the under-explored area of Young Adult Literature as itself an “illegal and imaginative” border and yet one rich in potential as a “utopia” for both adolescent and undergraduate readers. Furthermore, I propose that its gaining “citizenship” in our classrooms can help us to create those pedagogical spaces into more utopic sites. I draw on theories of conscientización, nepantlismo, and oppositional pedagogy as described by Gloria Anzaldúa, Ana Castillo, Ross Chambers, and Paolo Freire as a means of integrating these various issues.
This panel aims to explore womanhood as it intersects with cultural myths and icons in contemporary Chicana and Latina fiction, theater, and performance. These presentations examine how Chicana and Latina cultural production uses myth(s) as a resource to construct literary and theatrical worlds that express an empowering collective for women’s experience and identity. These female writers employ gender, sexuality, and the body to (re)theorize cultural myths and create alternative spaces of womanhood. Kimberly del Busto Ramírez’s paper, “Learning Curves: ‘Real’ Women and the Power of the Unfetishized Flaca,” investigates playscripts by women that exploit, perpetuate, or interrogate mythical representations of the Latina body in performance. Trevor Boffone’s presentation, “La Llorona on Stage: Performing the Weeping Woman in Josefina López’s Unconquered Spirits,” addresses the issue of performing La Llorona myth with special attention to how the female body performs and stages the legend. Cristina Herrera’s paper, “Cinco Hermanitas: Myth and Sisterhood in Guadalupe García McCall’s Summer of the Mariposas,” explores the ways in which the novel challenges young Chicanitas to reject patriarchal myths and stories of “bad” women and mothers, most notably the legendary La Llorona. Finally, Jason Ramírez’s presentation, “The Playwright’s Journey: The Role of Myth in Carmen Rivera’s La Gringa,” investigates Latina identity and Rivera’s creation of the ultimate Puerto Rican myth— one inflected with a pan-cultural universality that has made the play ultra-accessible to multi-generational audiences. The papers in this panel, we shall see, analyze how contemporary writers (re)write and (re)create myths and the potential these altered mitos hold for women.

Learning Curves: “Real” Women and the Power of the Unfetishized Flaca

Kimberly del Busto Ramírez, LaGuardia Community College, CUNY

This presentation investigates playscripts by women that exploit, perpetuate, or interrogate mythical representations of the Latina body in performance. Dolores Prida’s Coser y cantar, Elaine Romero’s The Fat-Free Latina and the Snow Cap Queen, Josefina López’s Real Women Have Curves, Virginia Grise’s and Irma Mayorga’s The Panza Monologues serve as examples for how food “figures” into the development of character, plot and ultimately the reception of the curvy Latina as Other. The myth of the Latina body is (re)produced through a type of “self-tropicalization” (Silvia Spitta, with Frances Aparicio and Susana Chávez-Silverman) that licenses the designation of an intermediate body that becomes easily marked between two binaries: spectrums of Latina bodies become singular, situated and simplified, (mis)perceived as not black or white but brown, not fat nor thin. Learned impulses to become visible and to classify the Other introduce strong anxieties of leaving the Latina body unmarked. Thinner, less curvaceous Latina bodies tend to be culturally compromised, disregarded, or “disembodied.” There is power in this. What is behind the curves we have learned that real women are supposed to have? Who really possesses these “curves”? What lurks behind this particular practice of self-tropicalization? Can we shift the Latina body learning curve(s)? Ultimately, the stereotype is not an exclusive product of the heterosexual male gaze but of a collection of gazes for which we must take responsibility. The hyper-visualization of the Latina body remarks more upon the viewer than the viewed; we are Othering ourselves through others’ eyes.

La Llorona on Stage: Performing the Weeping Woman in Josefina López’s Unconquered Spirits

Trevor Boffone, University of Houston

The question of La Llorona has been widely studied in Chican@ Studies, with scholars such as Domino Pérez offering the most comprehensive overview of the legend in her landmark work There Was a Woman (2008). However, Pérez’s perspective does not adequately address the issue of La Llorona as it is seen on the stage. My paper addresses the issue of performing La Llorona myth with special attention to how the female body performs and stages the legend. Specifically, in my presentation, I will look at Josefina López’s Unconquered Spirits (1995) in order to show how the protagonists perform positive self-agency by invoking the myth and, in this way, recognize the figure as a viable image of motherhood. In this manner, this presentation seeks to demonstrate the ways in which López decolonizes the Llorona myth in order to subvert the various patriarchal systems seen in the play and humanize her protagonist, as well as La Llorona herself, by converting them from objects into subjects. Specifically, I look at the female characters’ connection to a 12-foot tree, in order to show how both woman and nature function together physically and metaphorically to anchor the play. In conclusion, this presentation, by closely examining Josefina López’s Unconquered Spirits, sheds new light on the little recognized issue of performing the Llorona myth in Chican@ theatre.
Cinco Hermanitas: Myth and Sisterhood in Guadalupe García McCall’s *Summer of the Mariposas*

**Cristina Herrera**, California State University, Fresno

Well-known Chicana writers such as Gloria Anzaldúa, Pat Mora, Sandra Cisneros, and Ana Castillo have published children’s and young adult texts, and as my paper argues, I seek to add Guadalupe García McCall’s work, especially *Summer of the Mariposas* (2012), to this body of literature that aims to bring about social change by targeting children and young adults as recipients of cultural knowledge. My paper will discuss García McCall’s most recent novel, which describes one summer in the life of a young Chicana named Odilia and her four younger sisters, who find a dead man floating in their favorite swimming hole in Eagle Pass, Texas. In this contemporary Chicana revision of *The Odyssey*, the novel traces the five sisters’ attempts to return the dead man to his family in Mexico, and along the way, they encounter mythical characters such as La Llorona, El Chupacabra, and La Virgen de Guadalupe. I am most interested in the ways in which the novel challenges young Chicanitas to reject patriarchal myths and stories of “bad” women and mothers, most notably the legendary La Llorona. Through the representation of sisterhood—cinco hermanitas—the novel encourages a re-interpretation of these myths that may potentially sever relationships between female family members. This paper will examine the novel’s encouragement of strong bonds of Chicana sisterhood through a rejection and rewriting of classic childhood myths, including the contemporary social myth of the “dysfunctional” single-parent household, thus contributing to the body of Chicana/Latina children’s and young adult literature.

The Playwright’s Journey: The Role of Myth in Carmen Rivera’s *La Gringa*

**Jason Ramírez**, Suffolk Community College, SUNY

The Obie-award winning play *La Gringa* by Carmen Rivera has earned a distinctive place in the canon of Latina/o theatre. Since its opening in 1996, *La Gringa* sustains its popularity as Repertorio Español’s longest running play, with Artistic Director Robert Federico declaring “the play continues to sell out every time we perform it.” What scores of audiences may not realize, however, is that *La Gringa’s* compelling dramatic structure was expanded from one brief, autobiographical two-person scene. Rivera was inspired to construct the full-length version of the play after reading Rollo May’s *Cry for Myth* and Joseph Campbell’s mono-mythic 12-step journey described in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. The playwright’s investigation of Latina identity became transformed by these profound influences, evolving into a cultural quest toward purification. *La Gringa’s* settings exploit Puerto Rico’s fertile fields, forests, and domestic landscapes in order to provoke introspective, meta-theatrical reveries that unite playwright, performers, and audience. As David Carrasco notes in *Cuando Dios y Usted Quiere: Latina/o Studies Between Religious Powers and Social Thought*, “sacred places, like El Yunque in Puerto Rico, allow [art to] transcend the limits of time and space, and examine the liminal spaces between worlds.” The dramatic narrative invokes threshold guardians, tricksters, and goddesses; it unfolds as a cultural catharsis framed as a homecoming, recalling sacred traditions that may rescue Puerto Rican folklore from colonization. In so doing, Rivera has produced the ultimate Puerto Rican myth—one infected with a pan-cultural universality that has made the play ultra-accessible to multi-generational audiences.

Chair: **Trevor Boffone**, University of Houston
Moderator: **Cristina Herrera**, California State University, Fresno

**Session 4: 2:40 – 3:55 p.m.**

41. Three Queer Utopian Reading Practices, or Unmaking the Chicano/a Canon as We Know It

Queer Utopianism demands that we reconceive the trajectories of Latina/o literary studies, and there is no better place to begin this work than with the Chicano/a literary canon. Reading canonicity through a Muñozian framework means reimagining the way these texts frame our sense of the not-yet-here, settling into those potentialities, and reading slowly to reflect on what is missing even in the very tradition and sanctity of the canon. These papers show how re-reading the canon in a queer utopian light allows the contours of canonicity to emerge as a critical framework rather than a tool for uncritically shoring up essentializing notions of identity. This panel proposes three utopian reading practices by resisting the familiar, reconnecting Chicana/o and African-American literary genealogies, and reimagining the role of religiosity. Marcela Di Blasi questions the gaps in existing criticism of
canonical texts by bringing religiosity into the conversation about Tomás Rivera’s pivotal ... y no se lo trago la tierra (1971). By reading religiosity against the grain, Di Blasi reveals a critique of racially homogenizing mestizaje. Ralph Rodríguez questions about the familiarity of canonicity in his reading of Eduardo Corral’s poetry collection Slow Lightning (2012). Rodríguez’ paper proposes a way of “Making the Familiar Strange,” which compels us to reconsider the history, future, and not-yet-here of gay Chicano literature. Melissa Castillo-Garsow takes another approach by excavating previously unearthed connections between the Black Atlantic and Chicana/o borderlands. Castillo-Garsow asks how black and brown labor shape a new contemporary Chicano/a canon found well beyond the Rio Grande.

“Re(a)deeming Syncretic Religiosity in Tomás Rivera’s ... y no se lo trago la tierra”
Marcela Di Blasi, New York University
Historically, Chicano/a literary studies has not taken religiosity seriously as a source for social imagination and cultural politics. The secularism of el movimiento, Marxist literary studies, and post-enlightenment philosophy all encourage literary critics to overlook the ubiquitous and varied roles of religion in Chicana/o literary production. Some of the most radical feminist and queer readings of canonical Chicano/a fiction, however, only emerge after reconsidering the possibility of reading religiosity. This paper proposes a queer utopian reading of religiosity in Tomás Rivera’s pivotal ... y no se lo trago la tierra (1971). By reading generously for potentiality and focusing on the not-yet-here, this paper celebrates the methodology of queer utopianism. Rather than dismiss religiosity as merely an obstacle to a galvanized social consciousness, this paper finds that reading syncretic rituals closely opens up the novel to a critique homogenizing mestizaje. I interrogate how syncretic religious practices, beliefs, and rituals trouble linear temporality in Rivera’s novel. These temporal breaks resist a celebratory and uncritical mestizaje by problematizing the historical narratives made available within the novel. Women act as liaisons between temporal moments, using syncretic religious practices to connect, navigate, and critique notions of Chicanidad.

“Making the Familiar Strange: Eduardo Corral and the Not-Yet-Here of Gay Chicano Literature”
Ralph Rodríguez, Brown University
The anticipatory, the not-yet-here, and potentialities fuel José Muñoz’s Cruising Utopia. I propose to link this Muñozian potentiality and anticipation to an analysis of Eduardo Corral’s poetry collection Slow Lightning (2012). More specifically I am interested in how Corral makes the familiar—border crossing, AIDS, migration, race, etc.—strange and how in that estrangement we come to see the world and Chicana/o literature anew. I contend that in the formal measures Corral takes to render the familiar strange he asks us to think harder about the world we think we know. When asked what advice he would give a writer-of-color, Corral replied, “Your abuela is not special. Read the world. Open your mental veins. Absorb. Synthesize.” There is a tendency in writing to rely on the familiar (“Write what you know”). But when writing gets reduced to a common denominator to suit the interests of those who know what they expect from “ethnic” writers, it should be resisted. Otherwise, we get more of the same until the creative spark that should inflame writing is doused out in a wave of cultural clichés. Corral does not traffic in types. Any common theme he touches he makes anew, makes it strange, and makes it compelling. “Making the Familiar Strange” offers a politically and historically astute formal analysis of an illustrative range of Corral’s poetry. In its critical estrangement, Corral’s poetry compels us to (re)-consider the history, future, and not-yet-here of gay Chicano literature.

“The Atlantic Borderlands: Mexican American Countercultures of New York City”
Melissa Castillo-Garsow, Yale University
The final image of Alex Rivera’s film trilogy “Visible Border,” is a haunting x-ray of immigrant bodies hiding as bananas inside a shipping container (The Borders Trilogy). In bringing together the container and the immigrant body in this evocative picture of global labor and economy another equally horrifying images arises. The visual similarities of these government x-rays to abolitionist pamphlets that incorporated navel style drawings of slave ships is startling. Like the bright white xrayed images, there are no distinguishable individuals, just interchangeable laboring bodies that must be transported and/or deported. Previously, in The Black Atlantic, Paul Gilroy used the “image of ships in motion” as his mode of analysis in critiquing and expanding thought around black diasporas and black identities. By highlighting the similarities between the current day situation of immigrant transfer in containers and the legacies of the middle passage, this paper brings attention to new ways the borderland is being represented and imagined, as well as the impact of legacies of slavery on these conceptions. Building from the foundational
theories of Paul Gilroy, Gloria Anzaldúa and other writers of the Black Atlantic/Borderlands, this paper examines a diverse set of texts including plays (Hugo Alfredo Hinojosa’s play Desiertos), journalism (Jorge Ramos’ Dying to Cross), music (Mexican hip-hop from NYC), novels (Norte by Edmundo Paz Soldán), artwork (Mexican murals and graffiti in New York) to consider how black and brown labor, both past and present is shaping a new contemporary Chicano canon found well beyond the Rio Grande.

Chair, Leticia Alvarado, Brown University

42. Angels of the Americlypse: The New Poetry of Latin@ Otherness

“Opening Remarks: Angels of the Americlypse and Avant-Latin@ Poetry”

David A. Colón, Texas Christian University

The recent publication of Angels of the Americlypse: An Anthology of New Latin@ Writing (Denver: Counterpath, 2014), edited by Carmen Giménez Smith and John M. Chávez, is an event that marks a turning point in the history of modern Latin@ literature. Since the 1960s, Latin@ poetry in the U.S. has been charged with volatile, reactionary politics relating to ethnic identity and civil rights that have shaped the mainstream mode of Latin@ poetry into one of narrative expression: narratives of repercussive oppression in verse, as evinced by the poems of Corky González, Gloria Alzaldúa, Martín Espada, Aurora Levins Morales, or Pedro Pietri. Poems such as these articulate rhetorical positions counter to hegemonic discourses that have been and continue to be quite literally politicized—a substantial prerequisite for avant-garde literature; Renato Poggioli, in The Theory of the Avant-Garde, reminds us of the militaristic derivation of the term avant-garde when he explains, “the avant-garde image originally remained subordinate, even within the sphere of art, to the ideals of a radicalism which was not cultural but political.” That said, the mode of such narrative poems are less poetic than prosaic; Vladimir Mayakovsky’s memorable proclamation that, “Without revolutionary form, there is no revolutionary art,” seems unaccounted for by many modern poets who have written from Latin@ experience. But as of late there have been noticeable trends in Latin@ poetry that are moving away from what is increasingly being perceived as the antiquated, Civil Rights Era roots and sentiments of U.S. Latin@ poetry, new poetry that is beginning to answer the question that Marjorie Perloff poses to foreground the argument of her Blackwell Manifesto on 21st-Century Modernism: The “New” Poetics. Perloff asks: “what if, despite the predominance of tepid and unambitious Establishment poetry, there were a powerful avant-garde that takes up, once again, the experimentation of the early twentieth century?” Angels of the Americlypse: An Anthology of New Latin@ Writing is a virtual exhibition of new developments that exceed the extent of experimentation and postmodernist inquiry that had existed before in U.S. Latin@ poetry. As I have recently noted in my article, “Avant-Latino poetry” (Jacket2, 26 Jun. 2014), “[w]hat have appeared from this new cohort of young Latino/a poets are experiments with form, genre, aesthetics, audience, and identity, a constellation of discourses directed to fit the identity of the layered, contentious, and changing Latino/a subject in the contemporary world. These poets, by exploring the limits of poetry as well as Latino/a identity through the diversity of aesthetic and cultural intrusions in their writing, articulate a new Latino/a poetry that in turn proposes new views of Latino/a identity, views that grant more agency to multiplicitous possibilities of the present and the future than to conformist restrictions imposed from the past: a condition I regard as the avant-Latino.” These brief opening remarks preface introductions of our panel’s speakers, and will serve as a platform upon which to invite questions and discussion of pertinent themes and currents in contemporary Latin@ poetry in conjunction with the arguments made by the talks that follow.

“Angelology, Eschatology: Reading the Haunts in ‘New’ Latin@ Writing”

Michael Dowdy, Hunter College, CUNY

This talk offers a critical reading of Angels of the Americlypse: An Anthology of New Latin@ Writing. Taking the title as a departure point, I consider how languages of angelology and eschatology haunt this collection of “new” Latina/o writing. Just as each avant-garde is troubled by its arrière-garde, each “new” by a corresponding though frequently phantasmal “old,” every anthology is haunted by its margins. In their introduction, Carmen Giménez Smith and John Chávez explain that the anthology departs from “conscripted lyric and narrative traditions” and sentimentalized “abuelita poems” that frequently circumscribe Latin@ literature. As a breaking away from The Norton Anthology of Latino Literature (2010) and a breaking into the exclusionary avant-garde, defined by volumes such as American Hybrid: A Norton Anthology of American Poetry (2009), this anthology makes bold inroads on American
literatures, both in the hemispheric and national registers. *Americlypse*, a neologism borrowed from Rodrigo Toscano, thus signifies a uniquely American apocalypse during which unpredictable Latina/o languages are ascendant. Given the anthology’s imperative to gather “new” Latin@ writing, an end times context is especially resonant. This paper identifies angels and demons hovering in the margins, watching over and disturbing the selections, from the de rigueur if, I believe, becoming out-of-place (Anzaldúa), to the unexpected (Cixous). Collectively, they comprise what J. Michael Martínez calls in his Aesthetic Statement “the demands of [his] influences.” It is salient, then, that the introduction ends with a conventional representational mode, as the editors aim “to expand the landscape [of Latina/o writing] by making it visible.” This turn to a documentary mode underscores the asymmetry between a normative anthologizing imperative and the radically unassimilable work within.

“Beyond Nation, Beyond Margins, Beyond Situatedness”

**John M. Chávez**, University of Colorado, Boulder

This talk begins with a key premise: If critics and poets alike are to continue to think that Latin@ poetry is a fixed/situated art, then the artists and the art itself cannot move beyond past, critical notions of what constitutes Latin@ poetry. To borrow a term from the avant-garde poet-iconoclast Ezra Pound, and to think through the ways in which critical theory has influenced today’s Latin@ poets and their poetry, “making it new” entails reimagining the relationship between critical theory and poetry, as well as how such intersections and *transversal poetics* elide one’s tie to “nation,” one’s relegation to “margins,” and one’s desire to adhere to the “fixedness of identity.” Put simply, and put forth with courage to recast the conversation, “making it new” entails commenting on—via artistic expression, both bold in some poems and muted in other poems—the very institutions and the divergent thought that relegates Latin@ poetry to nothing more than poetry centered on identity politics and political poems. To be clear, today’s Latin@ poetry is an artistic space defined by fluidity, a space filled with multiplicities, and a path always toward inclusivity rather than essentialization and exclusivity. As I am co-editor of *Angels of the Americlypse: An Anthology of New Latin@ Writing*, I will also speak directly to the myriad ways in which the poems, poets, and commentaries included in this book fill, expand, and substantiate this emergent space of new Latin@ poetics.

“After Retrospect: Finding a Somewhere Between Vanguard and Latin@”

**Carmen Giménez Smith**, New Mexico State University

From the perspective of a co-editor of *Angels of the Americlypse: An Anthology of New Latin@ Writing*—which claims to collect contemporary work of innovative writing by Latin@s—I will discuss the terms under which the claims of a Latin@ avant-garde are made both retrospectively and looking forward to innovations that are both general to vanguard poetry and specific to Latin@ poetics. The contemporary Latin@ poet, working with an abundance of available forms of poetic construction as well as an equal abundance of *latinidads*, at once has the chance to exercise a great degree of individualism and the opportunity to engage with an array of poetry communities. Pioneers of avant-garde poetry and poetics provide vocabularies that are suitable today for the avant-garde Latin@ poet, and the rapprochement of literary iconoclasm and emergent cultural identity is happening on a significant scale as more and more Latin@ poets integrate avant-garde theories and ideals with the realities and linguistic perspectives on the periphery of a collective Latin@ identity. This talk will examine further the poems and poets of *Angels of the Americlypse* that exemplify the burgeoning dynamic between innovative poetics and innovative regards of cultural self, drawing the lines of containment that demand being crossed by poetry.

“Latin@ Poetry in the Age of Digital Appropriation”

**Sandy Florian**

This talk will explore the literary perspective of a poet included in *Angels of the Americlypse*, focusing on how my recent writing is intent on escaping constrictions of creativity vs. appropriation and poetry vs. prose. A conceptualization of the prefix *anti-* can be meaningful in exploring those undersides of being that drive the impulses of poetry: anti-knowledge, anti-wisdom, anti-you, anti-me. The ways in which present technology empowers poets by providing instant access to an ever-growing global database of world literature makes it feasible to play with source texts and incorporate them into new creations that in and of themselves demand a questioning of the very concept of *new*. This expands the field of experimentalism. Conceptualism, as Kenneth Goldsmith has explained and defended, needs raw material from outside the sphere of artistic/aesthetic regard so that the turning of non-art into art, non-poetry into poetry, can be affected through a purpose that supersedes the importance of the
object/text itself. Likewise, we can regard the labels of Latin@ identity discourse in comparable ways, and the surprises of such an exploration will fill out this talk with a discussion of what Latin@ poetry is turning into lately.

43. Heterotopias: Space, Culture, and Identity

“Fear and Loving in Las Americas: Space and Affect in Latina/o Canadian Drama”
Gabrielle Etcheverry, Carleton University

Exile and migration are often associated with feelings commonly viewed as being negative such as trauma, loss, alienation, and anxiety. But, how might love or happiness figure in this condition and how might the spaces of exile and diaspora, moreover, shape these structures of feeling? In this paper, I examine two different Latina/o Canadian dramatic works, *Fronteras Americanas* (1993) by Guillermo Verdecchia and *The Refugee Hotel* (2010) by Carmen Aguirre, and engage with some of the spatial and affective registers that shape Latina/o Canadian identity and community in these plays. More specifically, I argue that these works present audiences with two similar yet diverging visions of Latina/o Canadian community and identity based on the different affective modes that emerge in the liminal spaces of diaspora. I propose that Verdecchia’s *Fronteras Americanas* displays a highly constrained and “fearful” sense of identity and community even though it is set in the larger geographical and cultural expanse between and crossing American borders. In contrast, the sense of identity and community that develops within the relatively confined space of Aguirre’s refugee hotel is much larger, loving, and liberatory. Veering from analyses that focus solely on the role of trauma and collective memory in these plays, I suggest that their principal affective registers—which I am naming *fear* (alienation, loss, anxiety, trauma) and *loving* (revolutionary love, resilience)—signal different ways in which Canadian latinitad is imagined and signified in these works.

“From Allegory to Heterotopias: Space, Culture, and Diaspora in Contemporary Dominican Diaspora Literature”
Virginia Arreola, Hiram College

Contemporary Dominican diaspora writers, such as Rita Indiana Hernández, Loida Maritza Pérez, Angie Cruz, and Junot Díaz, take one of the most common tropes of what Doris Sommer calls nineteenth-century foundational novels—the national allegory—and destabilize its use and purpose by undermining the consistency of its symbolic value. These authors subvert the family-as-nation allegory by using *indeterminate allegories* defined by Brian McHale as: “overdetermined allegories: they have *too many* interpretations, more than can possibly be integrated in a univocal reading. The result of overdetermination is indeterminacy” (142). Their use of indeterminate allegories ultimately breaks the connection between the characters and what they represent. As a result, the trope is queered and loses its ability to stabilize complex concepts, such as nation, national space, and culture. Hernández in particular replaces the allegory with a heterotopic world that represents the queering effect diaspora has on traditional notions of national space and identity. As Michel Foucault explains, heterotopias do not follow the rules of syntax, grammar, and word-meaning, allowing for the formation of spaces within a text that reflect even the most complex of experiences. Disrupting the allegory allows these authors to create a literary space to reflect a reality experienced by those in the diaspora but that has yet to be fully identified. Through a heterotopic aesthetic, contemporary U.S. Dominican and Dominican diaspora authors offer their readers a “glimpse [of the] worlds proposed and promised by queerness” (Muñoz 1).

“Language, Identity, Urbanscapes in Demetria Martínez’s *The Block Captain’s Daughter*”
Elena Avilés, University of New Mexico

Chicana author Demetria Martínez draws from within the landscapes of her imagination a tale that weaves issues of history, immigration, land, and women. In *The Block Captain’s Daughter* (2012) Martínez’s urban plot invites the reader to understand the intimate lived experiences of burqueños. The author explores the idea of creating a space of transnationalism through a connection to land. Writing gives presence to the global reality of the borderlands where her protagonists testify to the multigenerational immigrant experience that have shaped and defined Albuquerque’s character. In her narrative, landscapes give voice to the lived experiences of physical environments and its residents. This paper will discuss how Martínez uses urbanscapes to explore culturally specific attitudes that define New Mexico and the essence of n搬家omexicano identity politics. Once again the author demonstrates how writing is a form of political activism, as her words establish how Chicanas traverse real and imagined urbanscapes to articulate Chicana identity. Her writing continues to show how Chicanx writers continue to trespass territories and unbind boundaries to reveal the dynamic borderlands culture of the Southwest.
Moderator: *Eric Vázquez*, Carnegie Mellon University

### 44. Identifications, Disidentifications & Other Syntheses in New Latina/o Writing: A Plática & Poetry Readings

This panel is offered in honor and in dialogue with the visionary work on identification and disidentification bequeathed to us by Jose Esteban Muñoz. It is designed as a hybrid plática and poetry reading, in which poets, teatristas, and editors will frame their works in relation to their negotiations of power structures and modes of discourse, followed by readings of excerpts from their newly published works and works in progress.

“Critical Queer Masculinities: A Plática and Reading from *Brazos, Carry Me*”

**Pablo Miguel Martínez**, University of Louisville

“Towards a Critical Masculinity?: Lyrical Meditations on Gender, Race, and Violence from Houston to Havana—Selections from *Red Leather Gloves & At the Risk of Seeming Ridiculous: Poems from Cuba Libre*”

**B. V. Olguín**, University of Texas at San Antonio

“Theater of the Rowdy: Queer Cantinera Performance and Philosophy”

**Vicki Grise**, Independent Playwright

“Re-Creating the Latin@ Queer Canons and New Works”

**Lorenzo Herrera y Lozano**, Editor of *Kórima Press*

Moderator & Discussant, **Jackie Cuevas**, University of Texas at San Antonio

### 45. Latin@ Studies Abroad

Our panel focuses on Latin@ Studies in a transnational context, theorized broadly and creatively as work that explores what it means to read, write, teach, create, and live life on the margins of nation(s), of culture(s), of communities, and of our own selves. This panel aims to probe intersection of pedagogy and research to explore how the teaching of Latin@ Studies outside the cartographies of the US academy enriches, challenges, informs, and perhaps transforms our own work as scholars. We are interested in work that explores how working in a transnational or international context challenges scholars to re-think pedagogy and cross borders in the classroom, but also how these challenges and innovations have led to new epistemologies. This framework poses a series of questions we seek to explore. What is the difference between the transnational and international in Latin@ Studies and how does this become part of our pedagogy and scholarship? In what ways do the personal and academic aspects of international and transnational scholarship interact: how do the everyday (daily life) personal experiences of working, living, and teaching in non-U.S. institutions or with scholars outside the U.S. academy to move us beyond comparing texts from different traditions, and actually translate (or not) those different traditions in the classroom and in our research? Is Latin@ Studies scholarship created outside the U.S. academy by U.S. scholars always already international, and what kind of comparative framework is needed to contextualize it? What kinds of international networks, created through circulation, travel, the technologies of modernity can help to sustain international solidarity amongst scholars working abroad? How can we facilitate better connections with international institutions that can lead to productive collaborations? How then, do we as Latin@ Studies working in transnational or international contexts, "translate" those experiences into our research? Thus, our central research question is: how can the teaching Latin@ Studies outside the USA create new forms of knowledge that push the boundaries of comparative literary studies? While we welcome comparative analyses that engage various intersections of cultures, we are not explicitly seeking papers that deal with the international experience, such as teaching Latin@ studies abroad. But we do seek explicitly trans/crossdisciplinary submissions that probe the field imaginary of transnational Latin@ and American studies in interesting, creative, and productive ways. Submissions should be mostly in English; however, Spanglish, Portañol or code switching between English and Spanish or Portuguese and English is acceptable, as long as a translation is provided in the final version.

"Latin@ Studies Abroad: Reflections on Teaching Three Years in Turkey"
Richard Rodriguez, in Brown (2002) writes that “Race is America’s theme.” This is not a groundbreaking statement. However, it was not until living and working abroad in Turkey that I came to fully understand the meaning of race as America’s foundational issue. While teaching in Turkey, often my students would directly ask me why race matters so much in the U.S. They were very aware of why ethnicity matters (Turkish-Kurdish issues are still significant culturally to the Turks), but consistently they noted, with confusion, frustration, and best, boredom, about how it seems that “Americans are obsessed with color”. Although for race and ethnic studies scholars, race and ethnicity continues to be under-theorized in the mainstream academy, for my former Turkish students races was something that they conceived of as an unnecessary focus. As a critical race scholar and teacher (and as a Latino), such comments were hard to grasp. My pedagogical impulse to encourage further debate amongst my international students (or even to simply introduce topics) centered on the importance of talking about and thinking about diversity. Thus, this paper is a critical reflection on the classroom experiences of an openly queer, Latin@ scholar who taught and lived in Turkey for three years. In that time, I designed the first ever Sexualities Studies course at my former university, taught John Water’s cult classic *Pink Flamingos* (1970), and habitually presented race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality as major themes of America.

“Latin@ Studies Abroad: Making the Transnational International”  
**Jennifer A. Reimer**, Bilkent University & University of California, Berkeley  
This paper will share various pedagogical experiences and strategies in teaching Latin@ literature, particularly the works of Gloria E. Anzaldúa, Sandra Cisneros, and Junot Díaz, in the non-U.S. academy, with non-U.S. students. Experiencing transnationalism on multiple and lived ways as a Latin@ Studies scholar abroad over the past two years has deepened my intellectual engagement with the idea of what transnationalism means in/to Latin@ and American Studies and challenged me to develop new pedagogical skills to adapt to the challenges of teaching non-US students in a non-US context. In teaching transnational Latin@ Studies outside of the U.S, I have had to confront how many in the U.S. take for granted the right to struggle and how this assumption is expressed in minority literature. I have also realized how easy it is to convince American students that Ethnic or Latin@ Studies matters to them because it is part of their national histories, identities, and culture(s). In attempting to make U.S minority studies relevant to non-U.S. students in Turkey and Switzerland, I have been challenged to find sources of shared conflict, such as patriarchy. When students can relate concepts in Latin@ Studies to their own experiences, communities, and identities, they make Latin@ Studies relevant to their lives and take a greater interest not only in their coursework, but also in the larger pursuit of knowledge as undergraduates. Although I was familiar with working with students for whom English was a second language in the United States, my international students have greater language challenges when it comes to reading/writing/speaking in English. I have learned how to adapt my pedagogy for students with limited English language comprehension by choosing shorter readings and highlighting core concepts through keywords and vocabulary building, as well as plenty of cooperative learning in small group work in class. I have also drawn inspiration from Chela Sandoval’s “decolonizing methodologies,” bringing in alternative pedagogical practices into the classroom (such as meditation, yoga, visual art practices, or creative writing that focus on Anzaldúa’s *autohistoria teoría*) that form the basis of much U.S. woman of color theory. As a result of these many challenges and opportunities, I have re-evaluated how "transnationalism" as a field and a methodology in much of Latin@ Studies in the U.S. is often unaware of/doesn't value work in American/Ethnic/Latin@ Studies being done by scholars and students at international institutions. Thus, I have come to more deeply appreciate how the "transnational" must also be international. The ultimate goal of this presentation is to raise awareness of our own biases and privileges working within the U.S. academy and challenge ourselves to think innovatively about how to make Latin@ Studies relevant to a diverse (international) group of students in the on-going struggle to decolonize ourselves from the wounds of colonialism, patriarchy, racism, sexism, and heteronormativity.

“Chinese in Puebla, Mexico: Fieldwork Rumminations of a Transnational Study”  
**Juan Periñáez de la Rosa** and **María Cristina Manzano-Munguía**, Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla  
During the late XIX and early XX centuries President Porfirio Díaz supported several commercial relationships with different countries, including China. The relation with France, for instance, was about technology and architecture. China’s relationship with Mexico was mostly related to the offer of cheap labour force for the railroad
construction across the nation. So there was more than one “Chinese community” across Mexico and most of them were subject to racism and attacks from the vast majority of Mexicans, including the government's antichinese policies (see for example Gomez Izquierdo’s work 1991). When the railroad construction was completed, many Chinese residing in Mexico had to find ways for survival and thus, some established restaurants, others worked in the mines, in dry clean stores, and supermarkets. Today Chinese are still immigrating to Mexico and we can find the second, third and even the fourth generations of Chinese descendants who have never been to China. This paper will explore the transnational life of the Chino-Mexicano (Chinese-Mexican) so as to know how the first generation arrived to Mexico, what Chinese-Mexicans did for living and how they accepted/rejected the “Mexican way of living or being. We are planning to document the multiple channels of communication that have been established between them and the families still residing in China. At the end we are trying to give an overview on how “being transnational” is defined from below (e.g., from the praxis of the concept).

Session 5: 4:05 – 5:20 p.m.

46. Homosociality and Queer Futurity in Chicano Literature

“Learning to Be Vulnerable: Queer Utopianism in the Fiction of Manuel Muñoz”

Omar Figueredo, Cornell University

Rather than disavowing fear and allowing it to silence women’s urgent needs, Audre Lorde suggests that “We can learn to work and speak when we are afraid in the same way we have learned to work and speak when we are tired,” (“Transformation”). In other words, transformative action follows from acknowledging such feelings of vulnerability. Lorde’s position resonates with recent attempts in ethical thought (Judith Butler; Erinn Gilson) to develop this susceptibility to being affected by others as an ethico-political resource to be cultivated rather than eschewed or avoided. As a marker of our ontological relationality, vulnerability “is not simply an opening to harm but an opening to all experience, negative, positive, and ambiguous” (Gilson, *Ethics of Vulnerability*). How might the cultivation of such an openness (even where it’s potential outcomes may be ambiguous) intersect with José Esteban Muñoz’s critical push for a queerness that is relational without succumbing to the romance of community and that is motivated by hope as a methodology against degraded politics masked by practicality? How might Latina/o literature cultivate vulnerability as an ethico-political resource? This paper proposes to think through these questions by turning to the representations of unfulfilled longings for collectivity and connection in the fiction of Manuel Muñoz. These desires are often interrupted in Muñoz’s accounts of life in the Central Valley by performances of strength, security and detachment; and, while it is the avowal of insecurity that assures greater relationality, it is also the more difficult move. Thus, Muñoz’s fiction provides a fruitful addition to ongoing discussions on ethico-political idealism, vulnerability and the critical role of fiction.

“On the homosociality of vatos”

David William Foster, Arizona State University

José Galvez (Tucson, 1949-) became in 1984 the first Chicano to win the Pulitzer Prize for his photography, which has focused on the texture of everyday life of Mexican Americans in the Southwest; currently, he resides in North Carolina, where he has attracted praise for his efforts to document the growing Hispanic presence in that state. The importance of Galavez’s work lies in the intensity with which he is able to capture salient details of Chicano life in a photographic oeuvre going back forty years to when the long history of Chicanos as field and farm hands was complemented by the migratory tide toward urban centers. This tide not only took individuals and families with generations in the United States towards a variegated spectrum of urban centers; it also included new arrivals from Mexico and Central America who, bypassing rural life (from which many of them come in their countries of origin), end up in the city, whether in fringe areas or, increasingly, the central core, where one of their functions is to in-fill older, often decaying, downtown residential areas. What is characteristic of José Galvez’s famous collection of images on Chicano men, *Vatos* (2000) is the fact that it has a major grounding in natural language in the way in which the images are correlations of “illustrations” of the key Chicano poem “Vatos” by Luis Alberto Urrea (1955). Urrea’s poem runs sixty lines in litany fashion, with one or two lines correlated with a specific photo by Galvez. What is striking, about both Urrea’s poem and Galvez’s photographs is the emphasis on homosociality, the unbroken weave of bonding between men such that they affirm themselves first and foremost before and in terms
of reciprocal recognition and their conduct is designed to display and reinforce the mutually enacted codes of masculinity. In homosociality, the way in which one is a man not if he strives not for the approval of women, but for the approval of other men; women, in their adoration of the man who is accomplished in performing the masculine gender norm, reinforce the approval of other men. This essay examines the ways in which Urrea’s poetic language and Galvez’s photographic language give form to the homosocial matrix.

“Good as Yesterday”’s Queer Futurity: Muñoz with Muñoz

Ricardo L. Ortiz, Georgetown University

Moderator: Lee Bebout, Arizona State University

47. ¿Queer Brown Futures?: Utopia & Apocalypse in Latina/o Speculative Fictions

José Esteban Muñoz’s Cruising Utopia opens with an epigraph from Oscar Wilde: “A map of the world that does not include utopia is not worth glancing at.” For Wilde, utopia is unattainable but nevertheless vital because it sets the course of human progress. Similarly, Muñoz reformulates queerness—and we may add brownness—as utopian, as that which lets us feel the limits of the here and now in order to dream better possibilities. Today, however, the apocalyptic rather than the utopian dominates popular culture. Violent images from the U.S.-Mexico border, Ukraine, Iraq, Gaza, Liberia, and Missouri inundate our news-feeds; fictions in every media repetitively reenact the destruction of our world. Why? If, as Muñoz insists, utopia helps us imagine better possibilities for a future, how does the future look through the lens of apocalypse? Is apocalypse merely destructive or does it offer its own futurity and critical leverage? Our panel explores these tensions between utopia and apocalypse in Latina/o cultural production. Moreover, our papers delve into the recent trend in contemporary Latina/o literature, visual culture, and performance that engages speculative fiction to explore how the genre is deeply invested in current socio-political discussions of Latina/o inclusion and exclusion from narratives of national progress, immigration, “illegality,” and citizenship. Our panel demonstrates the ways authors, visual artists, and performers of color represent corporeal and metaphorical monstrosity and instances of haunting that invoke post-apocalyptic dystopian realities, transform and queer history, and index the social in new unseen ways.

“Cotton, Sugarcane, and Blood: Destructive Utopias at the End of the World”

Maia Gil’Adi, The George Washington University

My paper presents Manhattan and the Caribbean as inextricably linked post-apocalyptic spaces that are the (re)producers of material and metaphorical death, and point to the long histories of exchange between these regions, including the transatlantic slave trade, colonialism, and imperial power. These histories cannot be quelled, but constantly re-return and haunt these spaces. I read Cristina García’s Dreaming in Cuban alongside Colson Whitehead’s Zone One and Alejandro Brugués’s film Juan de los Muertos to argue that the fetishistic desire for violence within these texts is a form of textual retribution against these spaces and histories. Demonstrating an investment in the materiality of embodied labor, Latina/o spectrality, and consumerism, these texts present the American neoliberal nation as always post-apocalyptic and constructed by zombies, while the Caribbean is relegated to an atemporal space without possibilities of a generative future. Importantly, the corporeal and metaphorical monstrosity and instances of haunting presented in these texts invoke post-apocalyptic realities that transform history and index the social and the political in ways I term “destructive utopias.” Working with José Esteban Muñoz’s depiction of queer futurity and potentiality, I identify within these texts, however, a space of the utopian achieved through violence, a “surplus” of the monstrous and destructive. Instead of promoting the regenerative capacities of the utopian, my paper argues that these texts mine history in speculative ways not to imagine a utopian future, but to exhume vengeance and violence that complicate our notions of progress, justice, and incorporation.

“Atomic Asco”

Robb Hernandez, University of California, Riverside

At Harry Gamboa, Jr.’s solo show, Brown in Black and White at the Exploratorium Gallery at California State University, Los Angeles (1982) art historian Shifra Goldman observed his uncanny ability to “give the sensation of viewing three, possibly four worlds whose conflicting realities elbow each other.” Through photographic technologies, Gamboa’s work opens virtual portals transporting his viewers across temporal distances and worldly spheres bringing the future to bear on the past. This has direct bearing on what Gamboa has called “urban exile,” a
term redolent of alien and alienating existences in the “glitter and gangrene of urban reality.” While his artistic vision is dystopic, it is a discourse permeating Asco, the Chicano avant-garde collective he co-founded with Gronk, Willie Herron, and Patssi Valdez in 1972. In this talk, I argue that Asco’s visual idioms recall a “science fiction” tendency something suggested in Latino cultural studies but as yet, undefined. Drawing on Shelly Streetby’s concept of the “speculative archive,” I exact how these performances anticipate cyberpunk, a filmic and literary subgenre popularized in the 1990s. “No Movie” image-texts like, The Gores (1974), Slasher No. 9 (1975), and Double Genie (1981) show nihilistic ends of media technology, post-apocalyptic camera-generated environments, and self-image statements made through what I term, “chicanautical drag.” By literally “trying on the future,” I posit that Asco fabricates retrofuturistic embodiments quoting Atomic age design. Dressed for disaster, they are forerunners of Latino futurism showing alternative Chicano ontologies “dragged” across time, space, and transplanetary dimension.

“Ground Zeroes, New Worlds: Apocalypse, Fractals, and Utopian Aspirations in the Minor Key”

**John D. Ribó, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill**

What if the bombs have already dropped? What if the aliens have already landed? What if Columbus, Cortez, Pizarro, the diseased blankets, the slave ships, the US Border patrol, and countless other calamities were the horsemen of the apocalypse already arrived? By posing such questions Gloria Anzaldúa, Junot Díaz, and numerous other Latina/o artists, writers, and intellectuals have speculatively redefined the present as post-apocalyptic dystopia to critique the status quo, to offer alternative historical perspectives that give voice to the losses and traumas of the silenced and marginalized, and to demonstrate how histories national, regional, local, and personal distort time and space for victims of violence. Because if “Cada cabeza es un mundo,” then violence on any scale is potentially an apocalypse in mise-en-abîme, refracted and tessellated across individual psyches and collective consciences. If Muñoz seeks through utopia an alternative to the negation of relationality and the lack of futurity in Queer theory, my talk aims to explore through apocalyptic and its aftermaths how temporalities and structures of feeling typically associated with the negative such as melancholia might be productively paired with concepts like the fractal to stake out utopian aspirations in the minor key. Can individuals and communities disproportionately vulnerable to violence, trauma, and loss because of gender, sexuality, and ethnicity find metaphors borrowed from postapocalyptic speculative fictions that encourage solidarities through recognition of our losses? Can speculative fictions help us imagine better futures while never forgetting traumatic pasts?

Chair, **Matthew David Goodwin**, University of Massachusetts Amherst

48. **Sonic Dramaturgy, Belonging and Utopia**

“Staging America through Sound: Universes’ Ameriville”

**Patricia Herrera, University of Richmond**

“Staging America through Sound” examines the ways the poetic theater ensemble Universes creates a soundscape that produces and circulates conceptions of resisting citizens. Using their signature aesthetics of mixing an array of musical genres from jazz to blues, hop hop, bolero, and salsa Universes render sound as a structure for thinking about methodologies of liberation. In Ameriville, Universes examine not only New Orleans, but also the country at large. The title suggests that New Orleans is America in microcosm, and, by extension, that Katrina happened to all of us. Ameriville explores issues of race, poverty, politics, history, and government through the lens of Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath. This paper argues that in staging these experiences Universes creates a soundscape of belonging that grant citizenship to individuals, who are often perceived as foreign, illegal, or other. In so doing, Universes aurally maps a history of resistance that repositions Latinos, African Americans, and Native Americans as active agents of society.

“Making Sense of Luis Valdez’s Zoot Suit: Listening to Soundscapes of Nationhood, Race, and Gender,”

**Marcy McMahon**, University of Texas, Pan American

This paper analyzes how Luis Valdez’s play Zoot Suit – including the Mark Taper and Aquarius Theater Productions in 1978-1979 and the Broadway production in 1979 – stages 1940s racial politics through its sound design and music. I listen to the sonic and aural elements of the playscript and pivotal productions -- including the actor’s vocal bodies (such as the pachuco accents) and the soundtrack (which includes pachuco swing, jazz, and Mexican folk music) – to spotlight how the play intervenes in dominant soundscapes of Latina/o communities. I argue that
various productions of the play create crucial listening spaces for contemporary audiences to hear 1940s era politics of nationhood, race, and gender. The paper uses interdisciplinary frameworks from sound studies, Latina/o studies, and theater and performance to analyze the role of “sound dramaturgy.” With the phrase “sound dramaturgy,” I refer to the practice of making sense in theatrical productions, which includes closely listening to the aural dimensions of a script and its translation into sound design, vocal bodies (actors), and music. Much of the scholarship on Zoot Suit has focused on the importance of the play’s visual elements, including the fashion and style of the zoot suiters, as central to the way the text stages the zoot suiter identity and Mexican American youth’s response to racial politics of the 1940s. My essay argues for the under-theorized role of sound in various productions of Zoot Suit as well as in the broader work by El Teatro Campesino. To this end, the paper also analyzes the role of the musicians who collaborated with Luis Valdez and created music and sound for the early productions of Zoot Suit (such as Daniel Valdez, members of Los Lobos, among others).

“Sounding out against violence in Matthew Paul Olmos’ so go the ghosts of Mexico”

Patricia Ybarra, Brown University

Chicano playwright Matthew Paul Olmos’ so go the ghosts of Mexico (2013) surrealistically dramatizes the story of Marisol Valles Garcia, a 22 year-old criminology student who became the police chief of Praxedis de Guerrero, Chihuahua. Unlike many others, she used non-violent tactics, promoted and an unarmed police force to counter narco-trafficking activity in her hometown before threats from the cartels led her to come to the US and apply for asylum. Although ostensibly the play’s heroine, the true protagonists of the play are the ghosts of México, who represent those killed by violence under President Felipe Calderón’s narcoguerra (2006-2012). Olmos play renders these presences sonically—through music coming through an old car radio—as well as through an invisible army of the dead. This paper explores how the play, and its three productions in México and the US, stage these ghosts so as to remember those killed and critique the transnational aspect of drug commerce. Special attention will be paid to how the aural production choices conjure the memory of past/present violence and gesture toward a possible future that requires mass mobilization against Neoliberal violence rather than individual heroism. I argue that the play and its productions expose what Ileana Rodriguez calls the limits of Liberalism and what Sayak Valencia refers to as Capitalismo Gore within a theatrical frame.

50. Scene of Learning, Scenes of Labor: Negotiating Class, Language, and Nation in Latina/o Literature

Inmaculada Lara Bonilla, Hostos Community College, CUNY

The 21st century continues to see a process of renewal of Latina/o self-referential genres. Latina author’s appropriation and refashioning of non-fiction writing (of self-writing, particularly) displays a radical critique of historical discourses and projects challenging identities that prefigure utopian futures with new relations of power and visions of communitas. Since the 1980s, we have seen multiple and hybrid re-castings of genres such as the historical essay, the chronicle, testimonio, the memoir, the genealogical autobiography, or autobiographical poetry. Through feminist and queer appropriations of these genres, contemporary Latina writers continue to revisit not only the shape of old forms, but also the contours of the writing body and of the communal “self” and its inherited discourses. One of the main strategies in this process of appropriation is a neorealist aesthetics that combines a focus on the materiality of writing and the representation of experience in the body. Issue no. 11 of Hostos Review/Revista Hostosiana (Stirred Soiled: Non-Fiction Writing by Contemporary Latina and Latin American Women Authors) captures this neorealist challenge to oppressive notions of history, community, and the self, as authors reclaim the role of experience in the conceptualization of these elements. Among the collection of previously unpublished texts included in the issue, two are key to understanding this aesthetics emphasizing on the material and bodily origins of writing as a means to envision new futures: “Unfinished Notes On a Writing Process” by Gloria E. Anzaldúa and “Histerimonia: Declaraciones de una niña traficada, o por qué no pude escribir este ensayo,” by Aurora Levins Morales. This paper brings these two little-known texts in conversation with each other in order to explore the realist underpinnings and the use of the material and bodily aesthetics in the rewriting of history, self, and in
“La Mala Educación”: Dystopic Performances in *Hunger of Memory*, *Always Running*, and *Burro Genius*

**Laura Halperin**, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Inspired by the call for papers that will “honor Muñoz’s commitment to making the classroom a transformative and sustaining space of intellectual and imaginative growth,” this paper will examine literary representations of harm instilled in classroom settings. I will analyze such portrayals in Richard Rodriguez’s *Hunger of Memory* (1982), Luis Rodriguez’s *Always Running* (1993), and Víctor Villaseñor’s *Burro Genius* (2004). I will explore how the practices of discursive racism in classroom settings affect the protagonists in these memoirs; and I will maintain that the insistence on English as the language of school and the language of the public sphere has long lasting, damaging repercussions that shape the development of the protagonists as they come of age. If, according to Muñoz, “teaching is ‘the performance of utopia’,” in that the role of educators is “to foster a critical acuity within their students that would enable them to ‘face the present and embrace a better place and time’,” then what does it mean when educational systems stifle students’ critical acuity by silencing them? Does this indicate a substitution of utopia with dystopia? Drawing from Gloria Anzaldúa’s discussion of linguistic terrorism and Richard Ruiz’s analysis of voice in his research on language-minority students, I will argue that the suppression of Spanish in school settings is a linguistically and psychologically violent practice that makes it incredibly difficult, if not impossible, for students to “face the present,” let alone the future.

“Latina/o Labor and the New Economy”

**Randy Ontiveros**, University of Maryland

This paper takes up Héctor Tobar’s *Barbarian Nurseries* (2011) to explore the question of how the 2008 “great recession” and its aftermath is affecting the types and conditions of Latino/a labor in the United States. In the novel, Araceli Ramirez works as a housekeeper for a *nouveau riche* family in Orange County. Her employers, a Mexican-American man and an Anglo woman, are struggling to preserve their showy lifestyle in the midst of an economic downturn that has decimated their stock portfolio and their home equity. To adjust, the couple lays off their gardener and nanny and forces Araceli to pick up the slack. My presentation, which is part of my research for a book on the suburbs in Latino/a history and culture, will argue that the dramatic conflict in Tobar’s novel is built on the ways in the austerity policies of the “new economy” are driving a wedge between working-class Latinos/as—especially immigrants—and middle-class and upper-class Latinos/as. The service sector and what geographer Richard Florida calls the “creative class” represent the two fastest-growing areas of the 21st-century economy, and their interests are often directly opposed. Official multiculturalism, though, often obscures this conflict through its continued idealization of upward mobility and the American dream. Tobar’s fiction gives readers insight into the everyday experience of these macroeconomic shifts, and gives an imaginative alternative to the dystopia of austerity.

“Aristeo Brito’s National Ghosts”

**Marissa López**, University of California, Los Angeles

Aztlán promised a kind of Chicano utopia, predicated on a nationalist vision of brown children of the sun united through history. It has come under a fair amount of fair critique, and yet the critique of the nation launched by feminist and queer Chicanos in the 1980s and 1990s gels uncomfortably with a post-nationalist, neo-liberal ideology that toes the dystopic line. For, what is the postnational – in the humanities at any rate - if not the sheepish acknowledgement of past transgressions and the expectation for the transgressed to fall into ideological line? If the colonial powers can recognize the futility and racism of the nation, then should the postcolonial not follow suit? This is the central problem of the postnational, and it is one that scholars have real difficulty in parsing. Is the nation always such a bad thing? This is the question that Aristeo Brito attempts to answer in his novel El Diablo en Tejas (1976). In it, Brito documents the history of Presidio-Ojinaga, along the U.S. border with Mexico, from 1883 – 1970. Brito uses history, specifically the history of cotton farming in the region, as a double-edged sword that both documents and deconstructs the Mexican American community in this small, south Texas town. Brito’s narrative is broken into three parts, each concerning a particular historical period, and each employing differing narrative strategies. Throughout the course of the novel, the Mexican-American community is systematically destroyed by Anglo land developers, but then quixotically, and not altogether successfully, reconstituted through the writings of a family of journalists. History and narrative emerge in the novel as abstract opposing forces, which
simultaneously destroy and reify community and time. The diabolical workings of history, invoked in the novel’s title, demonstrate the problematics of the “postnational” that scholars are grappling with today.

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