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abolish academic freedom by imposing an ideological litmus test on faculty hiring.

His argument is that progressives, liberals, and Democrats outnumber Republicans and conservatives in nation's college classrooms. They do, but not as a result of any conspiracy. By comparison, the officers corps of the U.S. military is even more overwhelmingly composed of conservative Republicans. It seems to me that's more dangerous. They have guns.

As scholar activists in the classroom, our aim should be to teach students to think critically, to examine the unexamined assumptions, both in their own arguments and those of others. We should teach them the difference between a well-reasoned argument based on evidence, and polemics based on ad hominem attacks. We should teach them respect for the facts and for the truth, however conditional and incomplete our knowledge of them may be. We should teach them that not all opinions and points of view are equally grounded in reality. Most importantly, we should teach them, by example, that we all have responsibilities as citizens to contribute as best we can to the public policy process in the hope of improving the public welfare—in short, to be good citizens. Each of us should aspire to that, and to thereby become as good a citizen as Martin Diskin was. ■

"To Queer or not to Queer": Coloniality, Feminism and New Research Agendas

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My earlier incursions into Feminist and Queer Studies in the fields of Latin American and Caribbean Studies were connected to a critical questioning of the overpowering presence of colonial relations in a world defined (politically and theoretically) as "postcolonial." The "body" and its social intersectionalities and markers—race, gender and sexuality—was a key element for understanding the fictional "consensus" of Latin American and Caribbean nation building projects. Framed within what we called now Afro-Diaspora Studies, I studied non-normative sexualities as I contextualized processes of racialization, gender and sexual exclusion in Latin America and the Caribbean. In other words, homosexuality was analyzed along with racism and racialization as oppositional themes for questioning the "homogeneity" and fictive "consensus" of national discourses in Latin America and the Caribbean. I analyzed these constructions from a theoretical model I called "travestismo cultural"(Arroyo, 1998, 2003), which focused mainly on anthropological views of black and mulatto populations in Cuba and Brazil. "Travestismo cultural" mapped the conflictive textual representations of these Afro-Diasporic populations as a form of masquerade which defined a strategic, performative view of culture and power. This performative view built white Créole-intellectual discourses of identity and culture as changing processes which connected native ethnographies and literary texts to socio-political and cultural representation. Theories such as "transculturation" and "tropicalization" described how bodies (of African populations) negotiate within/outside realms of social power. Between *Travestismos culturales* and my second book project, I expanded the uses of "travestismos culturales" to "cultural drag," a term borrowed from Marcus Kuinland, a Puerto Rican performer-artist who lives in Los Angeles. Nevertheless, "cultural drag" focuses more on public agendas as means for understanding power relations in social, cultural, and political spaces for Latin American and U.S. Latino populations (Arroyo, 2002). My readings in Latin American, Caribbean and U.S. Latino cultural criticism concentrate on exile and mainly how immigrant populations negotiated, preserved or changed their culture in the United States.

While Latin American Studies has provided an interesting historical framework to discuss the role of intellectuals and state formation in Puerto Rico, Cuba and Brazil, my best research inquiries have come from the interdisciplinary dialogues among Latin American, Afro-Caribbean and U.S. Latino Studies. Within these specific disciplines, the discussions framed by U.S. Latin@-Feminist, Queer Latin@ and Afro-Diaspora global racial formations have opened up an important path to the creation of languages of critical knowledge for understanding processes of coloniality in our global-contemporary world. If before I was interested in how intersectionality, that is, the relation between race, gender, sexuality and class defined these colonial power relations "from above" (white Créole hegemonic agendas), currently, I am exploring these strategic responses or social "technologies" "from below" in a world defined by global-corporate capital and market strategies. If culture has always been, as Eduardo Mendieta has argued, always a step ahead of politics and social change, "queer" as a critical metaphor could serve as a pivotal turn to address these strategies "from

below." Arnaldo Cruz-Malavé and Martin F. Malanansan have argued in *Queer Globalizations: Citizenship and the Afterlife of Colonialism* (2002) that "the places of queer" are associated precisely with transnational circulation of capital, sexual tourism and commodities. They also make clear that, there are ways in which these transnational "horizontal" movements are working towards the formation of new alliances, community-building strategies or social agendas.

There are, nevertheless, critical problems with the uses of "queer" to redefine practices or socio-political strategies "from below," particularly if we are talking from a Latin American and Caribbean perspective. First, and as José Quiroga has argued in his book *Tropics of Desire: Interventions from Queer Latino America* (2000), if we see "queer" only as an intervention of U.S. academia associated with political-public acts such as "coming out of the closet" we would miss many of the complexities of "queerness" and social agency articulated from Latin America and the Caribbean. Second, and to continue with Cruz-Malavé and Manalansan's analysis, it could be argued that "queer" or homosexual cultures (GLBT) have been associated with the strongholds of capital and Western/ European (white) urban (gentrified) centers all over Latin America, the Caribbean and the United States, a fact that creates a clear separation in matters of class. It is clear, therefore, that "queer" is seen more as an invention of U.S. academia, and that in Latin America some local intellectuals and activists prefer to work more from "gender" or "sexuality" frameworks than to use the term "queer." But in contrast, there are some activist groups that prefer to use "queer" or "raro (a)" as a political term, arguing for public-social spaces for alternative sexualities, bisexualities, or to contest the clear intervention of the state in the censorship of the lives of its citizens. This is particularly clear in the case of LGBTQ coalitions in countries such as Puerto Rico, Brazil or the Dominican Republic. Another example is the debate that took place in Puerto Rico about Article 103 (The Sodomy Law) a legal excerpt passed into the Puerto Rican Constitution from California's Constitution in 1902, which "punished sexual relations among same-sex partners and acts against nature with other partner with ten years of prison." As Mildred Braulio states, "Puerto Rico is one of three countries in Latin America, along with Chile and Nicaragua, where both consensual and nonconsensual same-sex sexual relations are still legally defined as a crime. Activist groups in all three countries are working hard to repeal the laws which penalize these practices." *(NACLA Report on the Americas*, 31.4 1998). The activism of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Human Rights Project and other LGBT and ecumenical coalitions proved successful as Article 103 was eliminated from the Puerto Rican Constitution in June, 2003.

In this sense, we as U.S.-based scholars need to be aware of the challenges that the term "queer" poses to our own research agendas. For my own research, to work directly with local community organizations and ONGs has provided productive results such as the work edited by Palmira Ríos and Idsa N. Alegría entitled *Contrapunto de género y raza en Puerto Rico* edited by the Centro de Investigaciones Sociales at the University of Puerto Rico, 2005. Although not defined openly as "queer," Grupo en Contra de la Discriminación Racial (Directed by Ana I. Rivera Lassén and Palmira Ríos) has been fighting, from a Civil Rights agenda against gender and racial discrimination in Puerto Rico. The group organized by Afro-Puerto Rican women who are professors at the University of Puerto Rico has a clear agenda against gender, racial and sexual discrimination. The work of other groups organized and directed by Afro-Latin American women such as *MUDHA* (based in the Dominican Republic and directed by Sonia Pierre, a Dominican of Haitian descent) or *Criola* (based in Brazil and directed by Jurema Werneck), enriches the ongoing dialogue between racial, gender and social discrimination, while building strategies to educate and solve problems touching poor men, women and children in our globalized world: AIDS and HIV, sexual tourism, child abuse, modern slavery, and non-citizenship (in the case of women and children of Haitian descent).

Currently, in a world defined by terms such as "postcolonial" and "global", colonial processes are incorrectly assumed by some theorists as a historical legacy of the past, while "globalization" defines economic-market parameters, with keywords such as "participation" and "social equality" for all. Coming from Puerto Rico, one of the last colonies in the Western world, also defined as a "Commonwealth" and "Free Associated State," "queer" appears as a way to understand, instead of a binary logic, a type of "third" space (above-below) in socio-political and cultural realms. In a recent conference at the University of Michigan, a Canadian colleague posed an interesting question to a panel on "Queer Representations and Performance": Why was "Queer Studies" a discipline embraced by so many scholars from the Spanish-Caribbean (Puerto Rican, Cuban, Dominican)? The question opened suggestive channels of inquiry, particularly as my answer seemed to move more and more into historical and socio-political reasons as to why this was the case: the Atlantic slave trade, an imperial neo-colonial relationship to the United States, past and present dictatorial regimes, revolutionary utopias, U.S. military invasions, ongoing circular migration to the United States (in the case of Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic), and political/economic

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exile. Some of these points could be translated easily to similar national experiences in Central America and other countries in the Caribbean Basin. Historical legacies of plantation economies, migration and a Afro-Caribbean or Native colonial work force which has influenced the complex relationships of what has been defined as colonial, or postcolonial, national or transnational.

It was clear to me that scholars who embraced "queer" studies from Latin American and Caribbean perspectives faced a type of double-edged problem in their research. On the one hand, they were seen as falling into the "marketability" of theory in U.S. academia, as they were speaking from a local/transnational/border place of knowledge that Walter Mignolo has defined for some Latin American scholarship. On the other, they were building alliances with local communities in the United States, and in their insular territories from their own activism and community building strategies. One recent example is the "Sexualidades Latinoamericanas" meeting organized by LASA Sexuality Section Co-chairs, Carlos Ulises Decena (Rutgers University) and Susana Peña (Bowling Green State University), in collaboration with Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel (University of Pennsylvania, CLAGS), Eugenio Ballou-Lausell and Gloria D. Prosper-Sánchez (Departamento de Español, Facultad de Estudios Generales, University of Puerto Rico—Río Piedras) and held during the LASA 2006 Congress in San Juan, Puerto Rico. According to the organizers: "The goals of the colloquium were the following: 1) to facilitate a comparative dialogue that analyzes both the local case of Puerto Rico and the regional discussions about sexuality in Latin America; 2) to promote future collaborations and intellectual/political exchanges between local scholar/activists and Section members; 3) to promote an open exchange of information about the status of LBGT communities; and 4) to provide a forum for Section members and Puerto Rico-based scholars and activists interested in LGBT, gender, queer, and sexuality studies to interact with each other and exchange information" ("Letter of invitation to Section members"). One of the most important outcomes of this conference was that it made possible a dialogue between U.S.- based academics with Latin American and Puerto Rican activists and scholars. One of the major areas of debate was the contributions and pitfalls of the LGBTIQ nomenclature, taking into consideration the ways in which it promotes and limits the articulation of local identities. In one of the focus groups devoted to the analysis of the intersection of "Gender and Sexuality," a group of Puerto Rican students shared their new notions of sexuality that transcended the gay and lesbian labels so common in Queer Studies and U.S. activism. This meeting was a successful example of how these dialogues could work towards new progressive research and socio-political agendas. Discussions in the fields of global racial formations, sexualities and gender studies are debating and revisiting the legacy of the Latin American public intellectual (i.e. scholar, citizen, activist) who used to work in service of the state and nation building either from right or leftist ideologies, to create new sites for public intervention from local and transnational perspectives. These public intellectuals are building pragmatic perspectives "from below" from which new critical political, civil and counterhegemonic movements have emerged. These perspectives are reinserting the subjective and the political into contemporary claims of "citizenship" and "universality" while addressing the economic, racial and social inequalities in our global world. ■

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Connecting Queer Studies of Men Who Desire Men with Feminist Analysis of Unmarried Women in Bolivia

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As legislation across the United States codifies a family model based on one man married to one woman, activists are advocating rights and respect for diverse forms of intimacy and affiliation, and anthropologists are interrogating the paradigmatic status that marriage has held in scholarship, law and policy. Conversations in LASA's Feminist Section and Sexualities Studies Section inform work including my ethnography of alternative forms of intimacy, identity and relatedness among two groups of non-normative individuals in Bolivia: women who manage households labeled "headless," "incomplete," or "broken" because a head male is perceived to be missing; and men who are labeled "detoured," "sissy," or "inverted" because they have not achieved the role of patriarchal heterosexual family head. People in both groups suffer social, economic, legal and political exclusions; they also engage in culturally meaningful forms of affinity that provide access to other kinds of inclusion, affection and resources.

My unconventional decision to include in the same study rural women who head households and urban men who are sexually attracted to men involves drawing from sometimes disparate literatures including critical studies of women, gender and development, as well as masculinities, queer and homosexuality studies. My analysis focuses on two development initiatives that conveyed discriminatory marriage and family models: an agrarian reform and peasant union system that institutionalized a male-head-of-household model in rural Bolivia starting in the 1950s, and an HIV/AIDS

prevention campaign that promoted a gay individual model in Bolivian cities starting in the 1990s. I do not argue that these situations are parallel, nor that they are two sides of a coin. Rather, I explore how exclusion from normative models of intimacy, sexuality and relatedness, as well as participation in alternative forms of the same, are experienced in different ways by people of different gender and sexual identities and varied locations in the nation. At the same time, I consider how these experiences are connected as parts of a Bolivian landscape shaped by colonialism, inequality and poverty, and by an ongoing push for modern development on the part of the state, international agencies, and NGOs.

Feminist research across Latin America reveals that ideas and practices of marriage, family, and erotic pleasure have evolved amidst dynamics of racial-ethnic, gender and class inequality, and have been instrumental to social exclusion (Montecino 1991, Safa 2005, Weismantel 2001). Ethnography of non-normative kin and community in Latin America—including lesbian and gay relations, woman-headed households, and others—has generated new ways of looking at relatedness (Blackwood 2005, Hurtig et al 2002), and studies of Latin American masculinities move beyond marriage as the defining institution (Gutmann 2003). By exposing the trope of the "patriarchal heterosexual male" whose desire and power are widely (albeit often implicitly) understood as fundamentals of all marriage and kin systems, Blackwood (2005) reveals links between hegemonic notions of masculinity and of marriage. I suspect that assumptions about the primacy of male desire underlie remarkable contrasts in the tone and texture of the literature: whereas sexual desire and pleasure play a vital role in scholarship on male homosexuality, they are rarely mentioned in literature on woman-headed households, in which economic need and child survival are widely presented as driving concerns. I seek ways to consider both sets of factors in the choices and relationships of women and men.

Alternative ways to approach these issues are emerging from creative alliances in Bolivia in which radical activism for sexual/gender rights fuses with struggles against racism, patriarchy and neoliberal capitalism, seen as interconnecting barriers to a more equitable society and full human expression. Notable are two lively movements that have earned high visibility and popular impact in Bolivian cities and media. First is the militant feminist-anarchist movement *Mujeres Creando* founded in 1990, that works through graffiti, street installations, and workshops. Second is the *Familia Galan*, a transvestite community founded in 1997 whose energetic public outreach through theater, humor and street performance critique multiple forms of inequality and repression.

My research methods and my rapport with local actors differed considerably between the two groups considered here. Between 1988 and 1990, and through a dozen return visits, I carried out relatively traditional ethnographic research in rural communities through participant observation in labor activities, household surveys, life histories, and institutional analyses. My own pregnancy during fieldwork, and the support and advice of local women in caring for my firstborn son, led to closer human connections.

My analysis of gendered access to productive resources, including land, reveals that the sexual relationships in which all women engage—or fail to engage—have significant political and economic implications for them and their children. Following Bolivia's 1953 land reform, mostly men's names were inscribed during titling procedures, and male heads of households participated in peasant unions overseen by the Ministry of Peasant Affairs. Both arrangements contrasted with existing cultural systems for resource management, decision-making and collaborative labor—including mink'a, ayni, and ritual cargo systems—in which men and women play active, albeit distinct, roles. Local impacts of these policies have been magnified by the preference of development agencies to link technical and financial support to land ownership, and to work with peasant unions rather than more participatory local forms. In studies of several development projects that promoted the expansion and intensification of commercial production on private plots, I identified tendencies to strengthen wealthier and more normative families through their male heads. Ironically, "women and development" initiatives introduced in the 1990s sometimes exacerbated this process by offering opportunities for training, credit and improved technology that were mostly accessible to married women in relatively resource-wealthy families, in which husband and wife quotas of project support allowed them to consolidate control over greater extensions of land and water, thus diminishing communally managed resources. This affected poorer families, many of them organized around women, who had earned a livelihood by pasturing other people's livestock, gathering and selling fuelwood, and doing other activities that depend on open-access resources.

In communities I studied, some women without male partners manage thriving households with healthy children, profitable economic activities, and community respect, and some of the poorest and most marginal households are run by women alone. Women who do not live with male partners enjoy emotional intimacy, identity and relatedness through sibling, friendship, intergenerational and *compadrazgo* ties, and find sexual

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intimacy and pleasure in a variety of ways, some more, some less accepted by society.

Over the past fifteen years, I have come to know about twenty men in a loosely articulated community in the Bolivian city of Cochabamba. Participant observation with this group has been mostly in social settings, including parties at men's homes, public outings, and late nights at dance clubs, drag shows and other happenings. Whereas I had easily joined rural women and men in farm and housework, I did not participate in formal workplaces of urban men. Instead I carried out relatively formal interviews with several men in this group, and also learned much through collaborating with Tim Wright, whose sensitive dissertation analyzes changing lives and representations of men who desire men in Bolivia (Wright 2006).

In the mid 1980s, just as a powerful wave of privatization and economic liberalization policies were penetrating Bolivia, news broke that AIDS had reached the country. Consequently, some international development funds were directed to HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention campaigns, which worked together with global media and gay rights organizations to introduce new ideas about sexual relations and identities. Among these is the notion of a kind of man called "homosexual" or "gay," an independent entity with a fixed sexual nature defined by preference for same-sex partners. Like versions of strategic essentialism embraced by women's and indigenous movements in Bolivia and elsewhere, the idea of gay as an inherent type of being facilitates a sense of natural community and belonging vital in achieving solidarity and joint political action. In practice, however, the notion has not resonated very well with the diverse relational and context-specific ways in which Bolivians experience sexual desire and behavior, and perform gender identity and social relations. Although some of these men self-identify as gay in certain contexts, I choose not to refer to them as "gays" or "homosexuals" because most do not embrace, nor do their lives correspond with, the type of social identity usually associated with these labels.

Local conceptions of manhood help to better understand how these men organize intimacy, identity and relatedness. Studies of masculinity in the Andes identify two poles of ideal characteristics that take different forms and precedence depending on a man's social context, relations and age (Fuller 2000). Heterosexual conquest, dominance and youthful virility, frequently used to epitomize Latin American manliness, are associated with *machismo*. As men get older, ways to achieve and express masculinity shift toward realms associated with *hombría*, notably work, family and community. Some men engage in a range of homoerotic behaviors without being labeled—or identifying themselves—as deviants. I do not find it fruitful to think about these men as being "in the closet." Rather, their professional behavior, strong extended family commitments, and male camaraderie seem to coexist with, rather than mutually contradict, their homoerotic experiences and relationships. Others—men in disadvantaged economic and racial-ethnic positions, men who do not enjoy healthy family or homosocial relations, and marked sex workers or transvestites—are more vulnerable to being labeled according to their homoerotic practices, and to being treated in degrading, sexualized, and violent ways.

Social tensions and exclusions that impede the formation of an identity group based on sexual preference became evident in institutional efforts in Bolivia. In the early 1990s, an internationally-funded program for education and prevention of HIV/AIDS among men who have sex with men was established in the city of Santa Cruz, together with a gay center and activities designed to help make the target group more visible. The program's first director, Tim Wright, found that only a small portion (and by no means a cross section) of men who have sex with men in Santa Cruz participated in project activities such that this chapter of gay genesis left out many men who were too poor, too rich, too white, too indigenous, too masculine, or too feminine. Over the past decade, uniquely Bolivian ways of identifying have evolved via surprisingly diverse local and international influences and alliances. A 1999 "Congress of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transvestite, Transsexual and Transgendered People of Bolivia" brought together eleven organizations and networks. In 2006, non-conforming gender/sexuality groups are meeting in constituent assemblies to rethink the nation's government from the ground up, and have found unprecedented access to official politics.

State policies and international development initiatives have brought certain family norms into diverse Bolivian lives. Yet census and survey data, as well as ethnographic research, show that the practices and meanings of a significant portion of Bolivians do not correspond with official models. Initiatives that ignore or undermine existing forms of belonging and collaboration are counterproductive to stated goals of national development. Rural development programs that exclude households without male heads, and that strengthen normative families in ways that jeopardize others, limit success in improving the well-being of rural populations. Public health programs that exclude from outreach, education, and support Bolivian men who have sex with men and who do not identify as gays, as well as programs that treat gays as individuals, independent of extended family and social context, limit their success in curbing the spread of HIV/AIDS.

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"Pájaras y maricones" 'llegó la hora': un relato de mi experiencia en el movimiento LGBTIR dominicano

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En julio de 2001 tuvo lugar en Santo Domingo una celebración multitudinaria del Día Internacional del Orgullo Gay y Lésbico con el eslogan "Llegó la hora". Este evento, primero y único realizado hasta entonces en la isla caribeña, marcó un hito en la historia del movimiento LGBTIR (Lesbianas, Gay, Bisexuales, Transexuales, Transgéneros, Travestis, Intersexuales, Raras/Raros).

En aquel momento, era profesora titular en el Departamento de Estudios Puertorriqueños y Latinoamericanos de John Jay College of Criminal Justice en la Universidad Municipal de Nueva York (CUNY). Era la única profesora dominicana con un trabajo a tiempo completo (*full-time position*) en John Jay, cuyo escaso cuerpo docente de origen latino contrastaba con la preponderante matrícula estudiantil latinoamericana, en la que las dominicanas y los dominicanos eran mayoría.

Además, era una de los/las tres académicos/as *junior* de origen dominicano que ocupaban posiciones a tiempo completo en CUNY, el sistema universitario público de la ciudad de Nueva York que concentra la mayor cantidad de estudiantes dominicanos y dominicanas.

Estaba completando el proceso de solicitud de permanencia (*tenure-track*) y una demanda legal a John Jay a través de la Unión de Profesores de CUNY por discriminación racial/nacional y de género al dudar de la veracidad de mis títulos universitarios para negarme la continuidad del puesto mediante un plan en el que habían sustraído uno de los seis años que llevaba en la institución, amparados en la categoría ficticia e ilegal de profesora visitante (*visiting professor)*.

Consciente de mis responsabilidades como integrante de la minoría académica de origen latino y dominicano, compartía mis responsabilidades docentes con la participación en los comités de la facultad, la realización de investigaciones y publicaciones y la asesoría estudiantil en John Jay y en otras unidades de CUNY. Colaboraba en actividades comunitarias y motivaba a mis estudiantes a interesarse por los aspectos sociales, políticos y culturales a través de la sesión Conciencia Cultural y Redes Comunitarias ("Cultural Awareness and Community Network").

Salir del clóset

En aquellos años no desarrollé, sin embargo, la confianza suficiente en mí misma para salir del clóset en el aula universitaria. Temía que el eventual rechazo a mi identidad/orientación lésbica en un ambiente conservador heteroxesista afectara mis posibilidades de obtener la permanencia o *tenure*.

Mi afán por conseguir la "permanencia" laboral en John Jay estuvo vinculado por muchos años a mi apego a una experiencia sexual clandestina con una mujer negada a salir del armario. Mis dificultades para desapegarme y liberarme me mantuvieron cautiva de una relación a distancia de larga data, en donde la fantasía y la espera sin límites ni condiciones constituían su único sostén. El empeño por aquella relación me mantuvo en una posición zigzagueante en el activismo lésbico neoyorquino, en donde la salida del clóset es una condición *sine qua non* para formar parte del liderazgo de organizaciones como Las Buenas Amigas

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(LBA). Muchas veces me negué a asumir el protagonismo público que me era requerido, amparada en mi imaginaria condición de intelectual en el armario en un ambiente académico conservador. Esa fantasía sólo era explicable en la mente de una lesbiana, como yo, que padecía la terrible enfermedad del clóset.

La observación de mi proceso autodestructivo y mi firme determinación me permitieron dejar aquella relación en el año 2000 y buscar herramientas espirituales que me ayudaran a desapegarme, luchar contra el ego y conseguir ser feliz e independiente. Mi práctica de la técnica de meditación Vipassana me fue preparando espiritualmente para lograr mi liberación. En el proceso de introspección y observación fui descubriendo y aceptando que el placer y el dolor no son permanentes, que la liberación y la construcción de la felicidad están en mí misma, y que sólo yo soy responsable de la realidad en que vivo.

"Desde la orilla"

Mi complicidad con el Dr. Torres Saillant en el Instituto de Estudios Dominicanos (DSI) me permitió participar en la conferencia "Desde la orilla: la diversidad como reto de la nación democrática", que tuvo lugar en Nueva York y Santo Domingo en junio de 2001 y reunió por primera vez a académicos/as, activistas y artistas de ambas orillas. Discutí con él la constante exclusión de los asuntos lésbicos y gay en la academia dominicana. Como consecuencia, aquel evento se convirtió en el primero en su género en analizar la problemática de las minorías sexuales dominicanas en las voces de académicas y activistas lesbianas.

No era totalmente consciente de lo que se avecinaba en el proceso de realización de la conferencia "Desde la orilla" o de su eventual resultado. Sin habérnoslo propuesto, ésta coincidió con la celebración del Día Internacional del Orgullo en Nueva York, a la cual asistieron por primera vez activistas y académicos/as dominicanos/as.

La conferencia estuvo precedida de controversias que habían emergido en Santo Domingo a raíz de la violación de los derechos humanos y ciudadanos de la comunidad LGBTIR, lo cual la impulsó a asumir una presencia política pública. Primero, mediante el reclamo en carta pública al jefe de la Policía Nacional (el temible general Pedro de Jesús Candelier) para que revirtiera su decisión de retirar de manera deshonrosa a dos miembros de la institución acusados de haber sido descubiertos en actividades homosexuales. La segunda acción fue el reclamo a las autoridades policiales de levantar la orden de cierre del *stand* gay y lésbico en la Feria Internacional del Libro, donde a punta de cañón, y amparados en la legitimidad conferida por la alta jerarquía católica, fueron retiradas las activistas lésbicas que trabajaban en la Feria.

Esos acontecimientos motivaron la celebración en Santo Domingo del Día del Orgullo, para lo cual las y los activistas locales contaron con el apoyo directo de quienes en la diáspora organizamos "Desde la Orilla," en cuyo escenario promovimos la toma de conciencia y la participación, distribuimos volantes y convidamos a las/los participantes a apoyar y asistir a tan histórica celebración.

Todo ocurrió tan rápido que, de buenas a primera, me envolví en la promoción de la celebración del Orgullo durante la conferencia, al tiempo que salía a la luz pública como lesbiana a través de mi participación en entrevistas en periódicos y programas de televisión. Esto tomó por sorpresa a algunas/os de mis colegas y generó fuertes reacciones en el integrante de mi familia más autoritario: mi padre, cuya incapacidad de respetar mi decisión produjo un rechazo y una ruptura definitiva en nuestra relación que nunca pude enfrentar, ni siquiera en la víspera de su ida a destiempo.

A partir de julio de 2001, decidí que no sería nunca jamás el depósito de las retóricas homo/lesbofóbicas que con tanta saña e impiedad lanzaron en mi presencia amigas, amigos y familiares de Santiago. Rompí mi vínculo tradicional con Santiago, delimité mi demarcación geográfica como lesbiana públicamente asumida y me convertí en hija adoptiva de Gazcue y la Zona Colonial de Santo Domingo. Me lancé a disfrutar la experiencia sexual y la amistad con lesbianas feministas que transformaron mi vida para siempre en aquel inolvidable verano y enseñé a mis familiares en el Cibao a disfrutar y compartir la hermosura de las relaciones lésbicas. Encontré un lugar común en suelo dominicano. Por primera vez en más de tres lustros de experiencia de vida migratoria y diaspórica, sentí que pertenecía a esta tierra.

Percibí que hay mucho trabajo por hacer para impulsar el reconocimiento y respeto de los derechos humanos y ciudadanos de LGBTIR, mejorar sus condiciones socioeconómicas mediante políticas públicas incluyentes y lograr su acceso al escenario político. Y decidí que quería formar parte de ese proceso de lucha que iniciaron en experiencias anteriores grupos como Mitilene, Movimiento Gay 11 de Mayo, El Grupo de las Cinco y ASA en los años ochenta; Ciguay, Chinchetas y Chancleta en los noventa y Gaylesdom en 2001. Así que cuando regresé a Nueva York, tenía la sensación de que había llegado el momento de empezar a prepararme para el retorno a mis orígenes. Y así lo hice un año más tarde.

Maestra y lesbiana

Perdí el miedo. Esa decisión me ayudó a entender que necesitaba mejorar mi papel de modelo como maestra lesbiana mediante el inicio de un proceso de salida pública del clóset que enseñara a mis estudiantes a comprender que cada ser humano debe ser respetado en su integridad y merece el reconocimiento y la protección de sus derechos tomando en cuenta su identidad/orientación sexual.

Decidí abandonar el proceso legal que había iniciado contra John Jay para disfrutar en paz y armonía el poco tiempo que me quedaba en aquel espacio. Introduje cambios significativos en mi trabajo docente y en mis investigaciones. Los efectos perversos de las actividades terroristas del 11 de septiembre de 2001 incrementaron el odio racial/nacional y la censura en los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica, lo que me demostró que el camino que había iniciado era el apropiado.

Empecé a diseñar un proyecto de investigación sobre la historia del movimiento LGBTIR dominicano que he presentado en diversos foros en Canadá, Estados Unidos y México, cuya primera versión en inglés ha sido publicada en la Internet gracias a la solidaridad del colega norteamericano Richard Ammon. (Ver, <http://www.globalgayz.com/domrep-JP-news.html>.) En el mismo planteo la dificultad de consolidar el movimiento en la Isla debido a los obstáculos generados por la presión del poder fáctico de la Iglesia católica, la homo/lesbofobia preponderante en los medios, sectores sociales y políticos, y la condescendencia de sectores medios LGBTIR con la discriminación reinante, al sustentar el clóset como la mejor forma de vida por miedo a la pérdida del status quo y los beneficios que de allí derivan en una sociedad altamente excluyente.

Inicié la construcción de redes con la comunidad LGBTIR en el plano local e internacional. Me integré en el CLAGS, LBA y OUT Poc Pac en Nueva York, y en Gaylesdom en Santo Domingo. Inicié mi participación en actividades LGBT en España durante mi docencia de verano en universidades de Andalucía, Salamanca y Madrid.

Paralelamente, empecé a buscar una institución académica que apoyara mi trabajo en la República Dominicana como una lesbiana públicamente asumida. Expliqué con honestidad y claridad meridiana mi interés al profesor Ruben Silié (cofundador y ex director de la FLACSO), quien me abrió las puertas de la institución. En la actualidad coordino el Programa Política, Género y Sociedad en donde el análisis del movimiento LGBTIR y feminista constituye una variable transversal en cursos de postgrado, conferencias y proyectos, y es el tema central de un monográfico de la revista *Vértice* de próxima publicación.

Desde mi retorno a la República Dominicana en 2002 he estado trabajando como académica y consultora. En mi docencia e investigaciones siempre cruzo las variables de género y orientación sexual como causas de discriminación.

Acción política

He estado envuelta en el activismo LGBTIR, cuya observación y vivencia me impulsaron a formar el grupo lésbico cultural-literario Divagaciones Bajo la Luna, que congrega a escritoras y artistas noveles y veteranas de ambos lados de la orilla en un proyecto editorial cuyo fruto ha de ser una antología de lesbianas dominicanas a publicarse en 2006 con la subvención otorgada por ASTRAEA y el apoyo de LBA y GALDE (Gay and Lesbian Dominican Empowerment).

Al mismo tiempo, decidí encauzar la formación de un comité de acción política que, respondiendo a la naturaleza inestable y dispersa de la participación y el activismo local, permita la confluencia de intereses de las diversidades sexuales en una coalición, el CAP LGBTIR. Integrado mayoritariamente por jóvenes, el CAP participó en el diseño del primer foro sobre las minorías sexuales realizado en FLACSO y la primera semana de celebración del Orgullo en Santo Domingo en junio de 2005.

La visibilidad y la desafiante acción política del CAP han resultado, por un lado, en el rechazo de integrantes de la élite tradicional gay y lésbica con ataques directos a mi reputación, seguridad personal e integridad física y, por otro, en la formación de alianzas con sectores progresistas LGBTIR y heterosexuales. Como resultado, se ha producido un giro en el debate y la acción política en la Isla, un reforzamiento de mis vínculos con la comunidad LGBTIR de la diáspora y el movimiento lésbico-feminista radical. Paralelamente, se observa la emergencia de grupos de jóvenes, como *Los/Las Muchachos/as de la Mesa de Atrás* y acciones dirigidas desde COPRESIDA: sector gubernamental dedicado al tema del HIV-SIDA.

Una realidad compartida de la identidad y el activismo lésbico juvenil lo definen las *Prosas del Ropero* de Deyanira García (Sargenta G), joven rapera de la diáspora en Nueva York, cuyo trabajo en lenguaje Dominicanish nos invita a salir del clóset para luchar contra los desmanes causados por el rechazo a la diferencia y por la discriminación.

JIMÉNEZ POLANCO continued...

Lesbian Dominican
I'm a lesbiana Dominicana
Don't understand por qué te asombras tanto mi pana
Don't be surprised-la verdad eso no es nada
Is society that makes you think this is cosa rara
Pero B.S. déjame que te cuente
For soy lesbiana desde my mother's vientre
Believe me not, ese es tu problema
La verdad no me importa ya lo que de mí piensas
Enough tiempo de justificaciones
Los preguntones y sus cojones
Que no se quillen cuando yo les diga
That I'm a lesbiana since I was a niña
¿Qué como lo sé? Dime tú como sabes
Que eres straight
¿Cómo explicarme
Que es normal 'cause siempre lo has sabido?
Qué coincidencia, así me he sentido!
No fue que me violaron
Tampoco que me maltrataron
Amor de mis padres no me ha faltado
Menos porque un hombre no me ha penetrado
No, I don't have low self-esteem
I love me for whom I'm born to be
That's exactly why hoy estoy aquí
No voy a esconder what I truly feel

Lesbian Dominican
Métanme a cualquier can
Donde las tigras estarán (4x)
Gozando mi joven vida
My dear pana paso mis días
Enough tiempo viví a escondidas
De esta sociedad que tanto hostiga
There was a time that I was dead
Just because I had to play straight
Pero all that is now forgotten
'cause I'm a lesbian y todos los saben
i use mis vestidos or mis pantalones
mis sweats rojos or mis maones
I'm not a fem, nor I am a butch
Los estereotipos I leave them for you
Can't waste my time
Con tus argumentos que mi lesbianismo
Es cosa de un momento
Vengo escuchando eso hace tiempo
Y ni la fe en Dios me ha quitado esto
Not going to change what it's meant to be
I love my girls, it is what it is
Y no hay excusas to explain my feelings
Me gustan las mujeres and with them I'm chilling
No importa cual sea su raza
A mi me gustan toditas esas gatas
Que se alborotan cuando tú les bailas
And give you the world cuando ellas te aman ■

SEXUALITIES continued...

Transnational Bodies, Queer Borders
The Challenge of Latin American and Latino/a Sexual Identities

by **Israel Reyes**
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A point of contact between debates in Latin American Studies on transnational identities (García Canclini 1989) and analyses in LGBTQQ Studies[1] of global sexualities (Altman 2001) is that both scholarly areas tend to focus on how the expansion and diversification of capital have deterritorialized marginal subjects, while infusing the local cultures of developing nations with mass media paraphernalia of the developed world (see also Martín Barbero 1987, Mato 1997). Latin American and Latino/a LGBTQQ Studies have addressed this simultaneous push-and-pull in the context of theories of the border (Saldívar 1997), cultural mestizaje (Anzaldúa 1987), and identity formations (Muñoz 1999). Yet social class and racial politics often set up blockades against the itinerant sexual identities that ostensibly cross national borders, whether as part of transnational migration or as part of a global media culture. As someone who has worked with Latino/a literature, cultural studies, and issues of sexuality in a Spanish and Portuguese Department, one of the areas of inquiry I have found crucial in addressing these scholarly fields and their intersections has been language. In my book, *Humor and the Eccentric Text in Puerto Rican Literature* (2005), I examine how writers like Nemesio Canales, Luis Rafael Sánchez, Ana Lydia Vega, and Pedro Pietri use a self-reflexive type of humor that capitalizes on the incongruities in language to estrange, and often queer, Puerto Rican national identity to itself. They often satirize, caricature, parody, and unmask the Puerto Rican diasporic nation through humorous representations of subversive gender and sexual identities. I undertake a more focused study of gender and sexuality in Puerto Rican literature in a recent essay published in *Revista Iberoamericana* (2005) on the role of the "gay uncle" in the fiction and autobiographical work of Judith Ortiz Cofer. In Ortiz Cofer's *The Line of the Sun* (1989) and *Silent Dancing: A Partial Remembrance of a Puerto Rican Childhood* (1990), the interplay between the English-language text and Spanish-language "post-memory" (Hirsch 1997) can enact a closeting of homosexuality in the family narratives. As suggested by the title of Ortiz Cofer's memoirs, this closeting performs a "silent dancing" around the issue of homosexuality, either as part of the diegetic narrative family drama or as part of a narrative intertextuality between fiction and autobiography.

Issues of sexuality also challenge the intersections between Latin American and Latino/a Studies when transnational queer writing subjects re-imagine the homeland. In these texts, U.S. cultural and literary norms can act as occluding mirrors in which queer Latino/a subjects may misrecognize their own positionality. This is certainly the case with Richard Rodriguez's *Brown* (2002), which I discussed in a paper delivered at the 2004 Jornadas Andinas de Literatura Latinoamericana (JALLA) conference in Lima, Perú. A work in progress, this essay compares the notions of mestizaje and cultural hybridity from both the Latin American and North American perspectives. I argue that Rodriguez's iconoclastic notion of "brown" emerges as much from the author's personal experience as a gay Mexican American living in multi-racial California, as it does from the discursive space of U.S. individualism, the religious traditions of the Catholic Church, the privilege of class ascendancy, and access

to global media. Rodriquez's text presents a challenge to notions of cultural hybridity by refusing to resolve the many contradictions in his own identity, in particular the obvious clash between his homosexuality and his professed Catholicism. Unlike Gloria Anzaldúa's gay-friendly, utopian "mestiza consciousness," Rodriguez's "brown" resists bridging the gaps between cultural mestizaje's contradictory identities, which paradoxically results in a text whose foremost pedagogical concern is to use mestizaje to erase political and ideological difference. Another picture emerges from Latin American scholars such as Hugo Achúgar (1997), who articulates a Latin American notion of mestizaje that pays close attention to the geopolitics of national discourses and posits not only a hybridity of race and cultural traditions, but also acknowledges the contingencies of multiple epistemological subjects that emerge from very distinct historical and political postitionalities.

Because issues of gender, sexuality, and transnational identities traverse many different fields of scholarship, interdisciplinary approaches to these questions often produce a more multi-faceted analysis of the discourses, performances, and lived experiences of LGBTQQ Latinos/as and Latin Americans. At the 2006 LASA Congress in San Juan, Puerto Rico, I participated on a panel that discussed gay tourism in Latin America: "De pájaros y alas: Turismo queer en América Latina." My presentation considered how tourism can serve to disseminate global gay identities while still enforcing a rigid hierarchy of race and social class. I attempted to combine a critical examination of the media, music, and cultural practices associated with gay tourism with a site-specific study of a gay circuit party in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. I found that while many U.S. gay tourists describe their liberating experiences of travel, Mexican gay locals can see themselves as confined to play certain roles that help promote tourism's economic exchange. In interviews with both tourists and locals, a conflicting picture develops between the euphoria of escape and limitless eroticism for the tourist, and the mundane labor and the danger of HIV/AIDS that characterizes the experience for Mexican locals in the tourist industry. Yet some of my Mexican interviewees described their roles as a necessary compromise that provided economic benefits, even though they looked with suspicion at the liberal openness of U.S. gay culture.

The research I have done in these areas has had a profound effect not only on my teaching, but also in mentoring and advising students and student groups. Invariably, in the Latino literature courses and Latin American Studies courses I teach at Dartmouth College, I include materials that will address issues of sexual identities. For example, Achy Obejas's short story collection, *We Came All the Way from Cuba So You Could Dress Like This?* (1994), and her first novel, *Memory Mambo* (1996), raise important issues of how sexual categories like top/bottom or butch/femme, which are often universalized from a North American perspective, run up against very different gender models that emerge from Latino and Latina family dynamics. Furthermore, Obejas's works show how tensions between different Latino groups, such as Puerto Ricans and Cuban Americans, can undermine the establishment of queer communities of color. At an institution like Dartmouth, where Latino and Latina students come from a broad range of experiences and regions, but find no well-established Latino community in the rural New Hampshire setting, these tensions can surface and complicate the development of a sense of community on campus. Nevertheless, Latino student groups have invited me to speak on several occasions on the experience of being a "double minority": Latino and gay. So while questions of national or regional identities, race, and class have challenged the parameters of a cohesive Latino community on campus, issues of gender and sexuality often serve to catalyze more inclusionary practices. It is paradoxes like these that characterize the complex intersections of gender and sexuality with Latin/o American Studies, yet perhaps it is because of these ambiguities that recent scholarship in these areas has found such fertile ground.

Endnote

1 At the 2006 LASA Congress in San Juan, Puerto Rico, members of the Sexualities Studies Section discussed the expanded acronym LGBTQQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Questioning) during its Latin American Sexualities Symposium, held at the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras campus.

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SEXUALITIES continued...

Comparative Ethnic Sexualities and Interdisciplinarity in Latin(o) American Research

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During the last LASA Congresses I have found myself in a small predicament. How to attend the business meetings (and cocktail parties) of the Sections pertaining to the areas of my research? In one evening, usually a Thursday, I am to attend the meetings of Sexualities, Gender and Feminist, and Latino/a Studies Sections, most scheduled concurrently. It's actually played out well, as I've managed to keep attuned to the changes and improvements within tracks, the discussions of the philosophies and missions of each Section, the announcement and commentary of recently published research, and new developments and criticism in the fields. Most significantly, I witnessed the re-naming of the GLBT section as the "Sexualities Section" in 2004, which acknowledged the realities and diversities of our research and constituents. In our last meeting, March 2006, I attended the highly successful "Latin American Sexualities Symposium" at the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras, which gathered a diverse grouping of academics, activists, student-scholars, and general public from a wide variety of research and professional backgrounds.

As I worked through the dialogues that developed during the symposium, the Section meetings and the panels of the Congress, I was reminded that much of my own work is comparative, interdisciplinary, and affected by multiple area studies within the conceptualizations that have become Latin American and Latino/a Studies. In fact, as I thought about these issues, I realized that many of the panels I attended were approached in an interdisciplinary manner. Interestingly, at one of the Section meetings some members shared similar concerns about the challenges, complexities, and benefits of membership in multiple Sections of the Association. Many shared details about the bodies of their research and how more of their work was becoming multi-faceted and relevant to more than one LASA grouping.

In my case, much of my work deals with issues of "Latinity" in the United States, and my arguments are, in many instances, solidified by a comparative ethnic rationale. Interestingly enough, the absence of an ethnic studies section allows me to work through the diverse disciplines that I concretely touch upon in my research. In my scope I continuously bridge the analysis of literary and cultural production with issues of sexualities and gender, community formation, ethnic relations, civic engagement and activism. I approach the aesthetics corresponding to the demonstrations of national ideologies and queer identities in the performance of Latinas vis-à-vis other ethnic performers in the United States. In one piece pertaining to the performance of politics in standup comedy, I examine the work of Cuban-Puerto Rican Latina Marga Gómez in comparison with that of Asian-American Margaret Cho.

More generally, along those lines, in various other projects I utilize a comparative ethnic studies approach, and extrapolate meanings based on identity topics found in the performances and personas of a diverse group of multi-ethnic artists, stand-up comics and solo performers. I analyze the discursive representation of these topics, mostly related to the negotiations of gender,

sexualities and ethnic identifications. I envision such performances as activism and the performers as "practitioners of political agendas" (Schlossman, 2002), truly involved in shaping civic changes via their artistic endeavors. I look closely at their "cultural agency" (Sommer, 2005) and analyze points of similarities and contention between the different ethnically-encoded messages, such as the use of self-deprecating humor among other performance and performative topics. Common devices utilized by these performers include: takes on the use of ethnic and national stereotypes, coming out and coming-of-age anecdotes, queer aesthetics, community formation, sex and sexuality, body culture and consumerism.

My proposal is not only to analyze the cultural production of these performer-practioners in a comparative manner, but also to juxtapose their messages with spectatorship, in turn observing how these affect communities, culture, and political agendas. As such, I postulate on how the productions of these performances and the performers themselves affect and are affected by local and global queer culture, alluding to what Arnoldo Cruz-Malavé and Martin F. Malanansan have posited as the framework of "queer globalizations". Beyond capital exchanges, I am interested in envisioning how community celebrations, such as as GLBTQ pride festivals, comedy and film festivals, athletic clubs, local ethnic and multiethnic associations become spaces of catharsis, particularly observing how ethnic integration or non-integration occurs within and throughout these GLBTQ groups.

In one segment of this research I look at the performers featured by Boston's The Theater Offensive community organization, whose mission is to "form and and present the diverse realities of queer lives in art". This organization's annual "Out on the Edge" festival has highlighted queer ethnic performance, as well as what could be labeled "white" and "international" queer theatre. As such, Boston's Latino/a queer community—mostly Puerto Rican, Dominican and Brazilian—has experienced performances by Marga Gómez, Carmelita Tropicana, Tim Miller, Hanifah Walidah, and Quentin Crisp, among many others. Their programming and "guerilla theatre" has allowed me to give texture to my ongoing research. In the same light, the local Boston Latina/o GLBTQ group called *Somos Latinos* has organized this year's Latino/a Pride event as well as a variety of support and cultural events. Among the Pride festivities, they featured a panel composed of representatives from various ethnic groups, which they called "De Colores". At this panel members of local ethnic activist groups, many associated with local campus ALANA (African, Latino, Asian, Native American) groups exchanged ideas about community outreach, city politics, transgender rights and marriage equality.

Recently, as was confirmed at the symposium in Puerto Rico, Latin American and Latino/a communities are discussing the "labels" of the constituents that partake in GLBTQ groups. As such, it seems that the "Q", which has traditionally signified "queer", has received the double meaning of "questioning", a signifier of those in flux, which has already been a standard label in many U.S. circles. In fact, for many groups in San Juan, their acronym is formulated as LGBTQQ, being inclusive of both meanings of the "Q". On the other hand, some symposium participants debated the tricky role that the "queer" label has within Latin/o American communities (not to mention a similar situation with Queer Theory) and as such prefer the use of the "A" label signifying "ally" or "*aliado/a*", which has become regularly used on U.S. college campuses. Although Boston's GLBTQA Latina/o community does not have the size or programming as has U.S. cities such as Chicago, New York, or Los Angeles (or San Juan, Puerto Rico, as we saw during LASA2006), Boston's considerable Latino/a university student population seems to drive much of the local queer citizenship. While local organizations such as the Male Center (Men's Action Life Empowerment Center) provides health outreach, the space where it is housed provides community empowerment and cross-cultural exchange. Pertaining to these spaces, I am particularly interested in what Juana María Rodríguez maps in her book *Queer Latinidad: Identity Practices, Discursive Spaces* (2003), specifically in the chapter "Activism and Identity". In that chapter, she argues that queer identity formation and representation is not as much of an analytical priority as that pertaining to "identity practices", "discursive spaces" and activism. Much like Rodríguez has for Proyecto ContraSIDA, I will continue to examine Boston's queer community agencies, specifically the Latino and multi-ethnic presence, such as Somos Latinos, The Theater Offensive, The Male Center, etc., observing the engagement of community programming, cultural production and socio-political activism. In line with my ongoing project which analyzes comparative queer ethnicities in theatre and performance, I will continue to parlay observations which entail the practice(s) of queer identities in the local community and the roles that "ethnic" considerations can provide for new currents of Latin(o) American research.

RUBIO continued...

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