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Opinions expressed herein are those of individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Latin American Studies Association or its officers.

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From the President

by DEBRA CASTILLO | Cornell University | dac9@cornell.edu

Precariedades/precariado

I write this column as the United States continues to be overwhelmed by tens of thousands of refugee minors fleeing Central American violence, young people whose pasts are filled with danger, whose present is unsettled and future beyond precarious. By the time this issue of the *Forum* reaches your eyes, you will have already submitted your proposals to the Secretariat for our May International Congress in Puerto Rico, and perhaps you have been thinking over the last few months about how your work might engage the theme, “Precariedades, exclusiones, emergencias.” These three concepts address a widespread sense of urgency around key current social, political, and cultural conditions in nuestra América, while speaking as well as to both frustrations and pockets of burgeoning hope.

Each of the next three issues of *LASA Forum* will include a “Debates” section around one of these three concepts as a way of beginning the discussions we will take up more intensely in May. In this issue, scholars from Mexico, Colombia, Chile, and Argentina, along with senior scholar Michael Bérubé from the United States, speak to the concept of *precariedades*, especially focusing on the ways that precariousness in the academic workforce carries profound implications for intellectual endeavors, educational quality, and public policy. Future *Forum* issues leading up to our annual meeting will focus on the other two key concepts and will be coordinated by LASA2015 program chairs Rosalva Aída Hernández Castillo (*exclusiones* in the winter issue) and Luis Cárcamo-Huechante (*emergencias* for the spring issue).

In his influential 2011 book, *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*, British labor economist Guy Standing asks us to take a much harder look at the way globalization has been changing labor relations in general at the recent turn of the century, and

increasingly so since the economic crisis of 2008–2009. This book and its 2014 sequel, *A Precariat Charter: From Denizens to Citizens*, offer central contributions to his ongoing polemical analyses of the global phenomenon of an emerging class of workers that he calls the *precariat*, taking the term from 1980s French theory (Spanish: *precariado*, in parallel with the Marxist concept of the proletariat/*proletariado*), in order to describe a group characterized by instability, inequality, and insecurity. Regardless of considerations of national origin or political status, he argues that the way these contemporary individuals insert themselves into laboring life cannot be adequately understood by structures derived from the nineteenth-century industrial-age working class that inspired Marx and Engels. To begin with, the precariat, unlike the classic Marxist model of the proletariat, has no secure identity. Citizenship, Standing writes, fundamentally “is about the right to possess an identity, a sense of knowing who one is and with whom one has shared values and aspirations.” The members of the precariat are more “denizens” than “citizens” of the states in which they reside and—however fitfully—work.

Standing’s argument is controversial and meant to be so. Yet it resonates strongly with the rapid paradigm shifts we see in corporate preferences for a flexible, temporary workforce, the increasing popularity of unpaid internships and “volunteer opportunities” for young adults, as well as the globalized turn toward contract labor. But Standing takes his argument even further, suggesting that “the precariat is at the centre of the turmoil around multiculturalism and personal identities. A defining feature of all denizens is absence of rights.” Migrant laborers, especially those defined by ethnic and cultural difference, are the quintessential hidden face of this body of people, but they are the extreme case of a more general



erosion of rights: the right to education, the right to work, the right to migrate, the right to stay in one’s home country, the right to have rights. These precarious laborers, however silent, increasingly come to define this more general condition, epitomized in the “zero-hour contract” in which employees are required to be on call but offered no set hours or minimum schedule. Likewise, the precariat has access only to a fragmented public sphere of action to remedy these abuses: Internet cafes and social networking, the chaotic democracy of the worldwide Occupy movements, the 49,000-member Facebook group Badass Teachers.

Unsurprisingly, the scholars writing in this *Forum*’s “Debates” speak from the context of the institution most familiar to many of our members, that of university teaching and scholarship. While the conditions of the academic workplace vary tremendously throughout the Americas, one of the huge shifts in higher education in the United States and many countries in Latin America has been to move away from permanent faculty hiring toward a system of contingent, contract labor, increasing the class of denizens rather than empowered citizens of academia. Ironically, many of the educational reforms in countries from Mexico to Chile respond to stated and explicit goals to promote a “North American” model of higher education, at the same time that the United States is rapidly abandoning it. No wonder students are protesting. While it would be naive to expect answers from the participants in this debate, the short papers here are a clarion call to think more deeply and engage more actively in our local institutional practices. ■

The Otros Saberes Initiative: A Shout-Out for the “Second Wind”

by CHARLES R. HALE | University of Texas at Austin | crhale@mail.utexas.edu

The Otros Saberes initiative was founded about a decade ago at an Executive Council meeting in Puerto Rico leading up to the 2005 LASA Congress. A number of people participated enthusiastically in that initial discussion, including Sonia Álvarez, Lynn Stephen, Joanne Rappaport, and George Yúdice; over the next two years the organizing group expanded considerably. The initiative gradually evolved into a vibrant series of activities, focused especially on funded research with support from the Ford Foundation, Harvard University, the Open Society Institute, the Inter-American Foundation, and the School for Advanced Research, and on the opening of a scholarly track of the same name in the 2007 LASA Congress in Montreal. The central idea of both the funded research and the scholarly track was to promote deep and sustained collaboration between intellectuals inside and outside the academy to produce knowledge validated by and useful to both. Around the same time, an overlapping group of LASA members organized to mark the first decade of the LASA/Oxfam America Martin Diskin Lectureship by raising supplemental funds that would allow the committee to name a dissertation writer and a senior scholar who exemplify Martin’s commitment to activist scholarship. I consider this two-part award to form part of the broad spirit of the Otros Saberes initiative.

After this strong and exciting start from 2005 to 2008, which I coordinated with Lynn Stephen, and a subsequent round coordinated by Rachel Sieder, the initiative languished for five years, for reasons that others will have to explain. Fortunately it now has caught a second wind. The first two rounds of funded research focused on indigenous and Afro-descendant cultural politics and on legal pluralism, yielding, respectively, an edited volume published by SAR Press (Hale and Stephen 2013) and an

interactive website that will go live in the next couple of months. These activities also brought more than a dozen civil-society-based scholars to two consecutive LASA Congresses, exposing them to the scholarly exchange and enriching that exchange with their presence. Finally, and most important, the initiative yielded a flow of research findings and *saberes* that, because of the way they were produced, had an unusually strong chance of making a contribution to social-justice-oriented problem solving. I commend LASA President Debra Castillo, Program Co-chairs Aída Hernández and Luis Cárcamo-Huechante, Otros Saberes Track Chairs Shannon Speed and Maylei Blackwell, and Executive Director Milagros Pereyra-Rojas for creating the conditions for the second wind, and I look forward to the fruits of these efforts when we return to Puerto Rico in 2015.

This brief article, occasioned by my having been a founder and strong supporter of the Otros Saberes initiative, has two objectives. First, I review three compelling reasons—practical, ethical, and epistemological—for LASA to support and advance this initiative. Second, I note some of the challenges that faced the initiative when I rotated off the Executive Council in 2008. I conclude by emphasizing the great promise of Otros Saberes and by urging LASA members who are convinced by these arguments to join the effort to keep it vibrant.

Otros Saberes: The Rationale

In its most basic form, the practical rationale for LASA to endorse Otros Saberes is the least controversial and perhaps most compelling. It could even be presented as a matter of professional self-interest. LASA-affiliated scholars are

devoted to research and other forms of knowledge production on a wide array of topics in Latin America; civil-society-based intellectuals are keepers and producers of an enormous portion of this knowledge, available in many forms, from unprocessed data to highly sophisticated analysis. Who would deny the value of partnerships meant to garner this knowledge, allowing the scholar to achieve the strongest possible grounding for the conclusions he or she reaches?

The problem with leaving the argument in this rudimentary form, of course, is that it tends to reinforce the deep-seated hierarchies whereby the purveyors of “expert knowledge” take in available inputs like a vacuum cleaner and offer little more than an impenetrable or otherwise self-referential piece of scholarly writing in return. There are, of course, many instances—increasingly at the insistence of the civil-society intellectuals themselves—where the relationship is structured as a more horizontal or reciprocal form of exchange. Still, these arrangements retain a bottom-line logic that is often fairly instrumental—epitomized by a market exchange, whereby the scholar pays partners for their time and data—which ultimately stands in tension with the broader spirit of Otros Saberes. Ideally, the practical benefits are reaped while the relationship is fundamentally transformed: scholars and civil-society-based intellectuals work together to define a research topic, conduct the research, and interpret the results. This way, the scholar accrues the practical benefits of access and exchange, while the entire research process goes much further toward validating diverse forms of knowledge and placing them (or their creators) in sustained dialogue with one another.

The ethical mandate is equally strong, although more variable in its persuasive force, because it depends on whether LASA members and leaders endorse the ethical principles to which *Otros Saberes* appeals. Latin American studies, like U.S. academia in general, emerged in the context of class, race, and gender hierarchies, such that for generations its cadre generally hailed from white, male, and middle- to upper-class sectors of society and reproduced privileges associated with those sectors. This homogeneity did not mean, of course, that everyone agreed intellectually and politically or that they defended the privileges conferred upon them. But on both ethical and intellectual grounds, this inherited cadre of Latin American studies needed to change, which generally occurred only when excluded or marginalized groups mobilized. Again reflecting broader patterns, LASA membership today is more diversified—very much to the benefit of the field—even if we still have a long way to go.

One key element of this diversity, in striking contrast to the early days, is the presence of Latin America-based scholars. This presence challenges in salutary ways the intellectual compass and scope of Latin American studies, breaking down north-south hierarchies, both conceptual and political, which had been hard-wired into the field from its inception. Yet to leave the matter there would be to neglect, and inadvertently reinforce, hierarchies internal to Latin American societies, whose academic establishments have been built on elite privileges and exclusions that run parallel to those in the United States. The ethical mandate engages both realities in tandem: to open spaces in LASA to the greater participation and voice of those positioned on the margins of their respective societies, in both the north and the south.

The *Otros Saberes* initiative makes a modest contribution to this ethical mandate, though in an unconventional way that one hopes would be especially persuasive to LASA members. It is not an affirmative action program. (I am a strong advocate of these programs as well, an example of which is the travel fund for indigenous and Afro-descendant LASA members.) Rather, it identifies specific realms of knowledge production that have been marginalized in Latin American societies and creates opportunities for the protagonists to bring those *saberes* into the flow of scholarly exchange at the Congress and related venues. For example, the first round of research funding, which focused on indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples, posited that despite the long history of scholarly attention to these peoples, the knowledge they have produced, especially in contexts of organized efforts for redress and empowerment, has been neglected. When the six research projects came to fruition, they brought a cohort of black and indigenous intellectuals to the LASA Congress, and in addition brought forth novel research questions, forms of data and knowledge, and analyses and interpretations, thereby enriching scholarly exchange as a whole. The argument does play differently when the focus is topical rather than identity based, such as round two's exploration of "legal pluralism." But the basic logic remains: if the *saberes* in question are substantive and challenging to mainstream academia, and they are *otros*, in the sense of being marginalized or suppressed, opening these spaces will bring forth both forms of enrichment.

The third rationale is epistemological. I will present this one in a more superficial manner, both because its full elaboration would require a different and more extensive exposition, and also, quite

frankly, because a definitive argument along these lines—to my knowledge—has yet to be made. In fact, I am most comfortable thinking of this rationale as a hypothesis, which comes in two parts. First, knowledge produced as a collaboration between conventional research routines and sustained practice (i.e., efforts to resolve a problem or transform a social condition) will yield insight and understanding that otherwise would be impossible to achieve. I am reasonably confident that this part of the hypothesis has been borne out by the cumulative results of activist/collaborative/engaged research over the years. I can cite two examples from the first round of *Otros Saberes* research. The civil-society-based members of the team that studied the *Frente Indígena de Organizaciones Binacionales*, in Oaxaca and California, consisted of indigenous women intellectuals who had experienced gender discrimination within an organization that had been known mainly as a strikingly successful example of transnational indigenous rights organizing. Their practice of organizing for gender equality fused with the skills and training of academy-based researchers to produce a novel and powerful analysis of the problem. Similarly, Afro-Puerto Ricans who had experienced racism, and who themselves grappled with the complexities of internalized racism, provided leadership for an oral history project that explored these issues with unprecedented depth and sensitivity as they play out in Puerto Rico. (To pursue these examples at greater length, see chapters 4 and 7 in the *Otros Saberes* edited volume.)

The second part of the hypothesis is more challenging and potentially more far-reaching. By situating ourselves at the intersection of sustained practice and conventional research routines we participate in a process of knowledge

creation that is substantively distinct from that of mainstream research routines. Davydd Greenwood (2008) makes this argument, for example, recuperating the classical philosophy term *phronesis* to refer to “practice-proven theory,” a category of knowledge that he claims was systematically suppressed in the course of institutionalization of U.S. social science in the twentieth century. Donald Stokes makes a parallel argument for the natural sciences in his fascinating book *Pasteur’s Quadrant* (1997). Patricia Hill Collins (2000), a founding proponent of standpoint theory, presents black feminist theory as a distinct epistemological practice, with parallel reasoning. Admittedly, we still have a lot of work to do in this realm, which I view as the next frontier for those committed to opening our academic institutions to this kind of research in humanist and social science scholarship. What an exciting prospect to have LASA out front in pushing these boundaries, rather than waiting for others to validate emergent trends!

In conclusion, let me note four challenges that I hope will be addressed by the newly energized efforts in this realm. The first is institutionalization. While thrilled by the rejuvenation of Otros Saberes at the impetus of LASA’s current leadership, we should be sobered by the preceding hiatus. This program needs a solid institutional status to make it less vulnerable to the periodic shifts in priorities and commitments. The second, closely related challenge is funding. Otros Saberes requires reliable budgetary allocations that could (and I believe should!) come in part from LASA coffers, but in all fairness must be met primarily by new funds. Generous donations from the foundations cited above provided a terrific start in this endeavor and helped to prove the concept. The current challenge, I am convinced, needs to

be met through a dedicated endowment. Third, and more conceptually, we have to make sure that Otros Saberes evolves in response to balanced impetus: both what is beneficial for the Association and what the civil-society-based protagonists who participate demand and need. This piece, for example, gives much more emphasis to the former, an artifact of its particular purpose, which does not do justice to the broader endeavor. Finally, related to this previous point, we need further reflection on the ultimate objective of the initiative—to open spaces within LASA for horizontal dialogue among a wide variety of *saberes*, on the assumption that this dialogue both reflects and contributes directly to the processes of institutional and social change to which we are committed. Toward this end, some even have suggested that the initiative needs to be renamed, from Otros Saberes to diverse, plural, or multiple *saberes*. Regardless of the name, though, the challenge remains.

All this is food for thought as we prepare for what is sure to be an exciting Congress in Puerto Rico and a promising relaunch of the Otros Saberes initiative.

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Ser escritor hispano canadiense y sobrevivir: Una reflexión

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Tal vez sea arriesgado caer en generalizaciones sobre cuáles son los retos que enfrentan los escritores hispano canadienses, ya que no es lo mismo vivir en una ciudad grande como Toronto, Montreal o Vancouver o vivir en un pueblo o ciudad pequeña de esas provincias grandes. Y otra cosa es vivir en una de las provincias más pequeñas o con menos población. En mi caso, aunque mi provincia, Saskatchewan, es grande en cuanto a territorio (592.534 kilómetros cuadrados), mi ciudad, Saskatoon, la más grande de la provincia, tiene sólo 220.000 habitantes. Así que me aventuraré con algunas observaciones, a sabiendas de que no se aplican para todos los casos.

En las líneas anteriores se hace referencia a un aspecto muy importante de Canadá: su enorme tamaño. He aquí los versos iniciales de un poema mío, que lleva por título “Vivo en un país grande”, del libro *Una tierra extraña* (2005):

Vivo en un país grande
que no conozco
porque va de mar a mar,
desde lo cálido hasta las nieves
del polo donde pocos habitan.

Lo extenso de Canadá es un desafío para la gente que vive en este país. En los versos anteriores hago referencia a que “no conozco” Canadá, lo cual se puede entender como que no conozco su aspecto físico, su geografía (ahora, diez años después de haber escrito ese poema, conozco un poco más Canadá, pero queda mucho por conocer todavía), pero también se puede interpretar como que no conozco (como uno debería) su historia, la manera de pensar de la gente, y en resumidas cuentas, el alma canadiense, lo cual viene, si es que llega a darse, después de muchos años de residir en un país. Desconocer la historia de

un país o los temas que preocupan a sus ciudadanos por parte de los escritores hispano canadienses limita los aspectos sobre los cuales escribir. Como es natural, los escritores recién llegados a Canadá escriben sobre su país de origen o sobre sus experiencias tratándose de adaptar al nuevo país. Otros escritores más establecidos, como por ejemplo la narradora chileno canadiense Camila Reimers en *Cuentos de amor y de autopistas* o el boliviano canadiense Alejandro Saravia en *Letras de Nootka* se atreven a incursionar en temas canadienses relacionados con los pueblos indígenas o con la geografía, a la par de los temas latinoamericanos. El punto que quiero subrayar es que el o la escritora debe ser capaz de escribir sobre cualquier tema si así lo desea, pero si lo que quiere es escribir sobre la vida en el país anfitrión debe estar preparado para hacerlo, lo cual se logra a través del estudio de ese país, para comprender su sociedad, su cultura y su manera de ver el mundo.

Me he referido hasta aquí a la necesidad de conocer muy bien el país anfitrión, algo que con tiempo y esfuerzo se puede lograr. He aquí la continuación del poema que cité más arriba:

Este país apenas me conoce.
Soy un número con una dirección
y una fecha de nacimiento
que paga impuestos
y consume los objetos de la felicidad,
uno más de los millones que hablan inglés,
aunque todavía sueñan en español,
y va de visita a su país
también desconocido,
descolorido por los años,
el recuerdo, el sol que quema.

En los versos anteriores se tocan varios puntos, pero quisiera referirme a un aspecto bastante abstracto: el hecho de que la sociedad canadiense nos conoce muy poco o tal vez no nos conoce en absoluto en muchos casos. ¿Qué sabe el o la canadiense medio de la historia (y la vida cotidiana) de El Salvador, de Nicaragua, de Paraguay o de Bolivia, por ejemplo? Tal vez muy poco y sería poco realista o probable esperar que conocieran algo de la historia de los países de donde vienen los inmigrantes. En términos prácticos para el escritor es que aun si escribiera en inglés muchas de las referencias culturales, personajes históricos o problemas abordados no los entenderían y por lo tanto el cuento o la novela, o parte importante de ellos, quedarían fuera del entendimiento de muchas personas. Para los que venimos de países pequeños se hace difícil escribir sobre nuestro país para el consumo canadiense. Los escritores que vienen de países con una historia más conocida, porque ha formado parte de las noticias, como por ejemplo el golpe de Estado de Chile de 1973, o la figura de Hugo Chávez en Venezuela o la de Fidel Castro, que son nombres que suenan en las noticias, tienen una ventaja porque sus lectores ya conocen un poco del tema. Tal es el caso de la escritora chileno canadiense Carmen Rodríguez con su novela *Retribution*, que trata del golpe de Estado de Pinochet, o el caso de Carmen Aguirre, también chilena, con su libro autobiográfico *Something Fierce: Memoirs of a Revolutionary Daughter*, que trata también del mismo tema. Ambos libros han tenido éxito por sus propios méritos, aunque no se puede negar que el tema familiar también ayuda a que el lector canadiense se acerque a un libro del que ya sabe algo.

Estos son los versos que siguen del mismo poema, “Vivo en un país grande”, los

cuales se pueden leer como un deseo para que todos los temas e historias encuentren su espacio en Canadá, aunque cuando los escribí más bien pensaba en la oportunidad que veía en Canadá:

En este país grande
también caben los años
que nadie quiere,
las historias
que a nadie interesan,
la cara desconocida,
el acento extraño
que no calza porque
suena raro, extraño,
usted no es de por aquí,
exclaman . . .

Un desafío que los escritores hispano canadienses enfrentamos es el limitado número de hispanos en Canadá. Las estadísticas oficiales del 2006 lo ponen en 741,760. Ocho años más tarde, se espera que el número haya crecido un poco, pero la población de habla hispana en Canadá sigue siendo muy pequeña. Esto está directamente relacionado con la escasez de grandes editoriales, de librerías y de un sistema de distribución de publicaciones. Hace algunos años, el narrador y crítico colombiano Luis Molina Lora y yo publicamos una antología de cuentos de escritores hispano canadienses titulada *Retrato de una nube*. En ella reproducimos las entrevistas que les hicimos a los escritores que participan. Una de las preguntas que contestaron fue “¿Qué desafíos ha enfrentado como escritor(a) en Canadá?”. No es de extrañar que muchos se refieran a cuán difícil resulta publicar. He aquí algunas de las respuestas a la pregunta anterior. Escribe el poeta y narrador chileno Jorge Etcheverry: “El acceso al mercado editorial, la falta de

versiones de mi obra en los idiomas oficiales, y de conexiones institucionales o gremiales” (92). Pablo Salinas, narrador peruano residente en Montreal, escribe: “El simple hecho de intentar hacer literatura en español en una ciudad sin un solo periódico serio en ese idioma es ya una labor de locos” (248), refiriéndose a un componente importante para la cultura de un país, como son los periódicos de buena calidad. La mexicana Martha Bátiz Zuk responde que su mayor desafío ha sido “Primero que nada, el de la lengua. Hay menos lectores en español, comparativamente con quienes consumen libros y revistas en inglés” (25). El narrador y poeta salvadoreño Óscar Armando Tobar comenta: “Publicar en Canadá es el mayor desafío, y aún más hacerlo en dos lenguas extranjeras: inglés y francés” (301). Luis Molina Lora afirma al respecto en su entrevista como escritor: “Me encuentro en una situación interesantísima. . . me siento en un momento altamente productivo en un espacio donde no veo con claridad la posibilidad de publicaciones e intercambios literarios con otros escritores y públicos lectores en general” (152).

En otra antología más reciente, esta vez de poesía, titulada *Lumbre y relumbre: Antología selecta de la poesía hispano canadiense*, que la poeta y crítica ítalo argentina Margarita Feliciano y yo publicamos en diciembre del 2013, les volvimos a preguntar a los y las poetas acerca de los desafíos que han enfrentado como escritores en Canadá. Alejandro Saravia, poeta y narrador boliviano, contesta, en forma dramática: “La agonía de publicar. Sin redes de distribución, pidiendo ayuda a los amigos” (212). La solución ha sido para muchos escritores hispano canadienses publicar fuera de Canadá, a veces en su país de origen, como es el caso del escritor húngaro argentino Pablo Urbanyi, o varios escritores chilenos

como Jorge Etcheverry, Luis Torres, Carmen Rodríguez y Juan Carlos García, o Javier Vargas de Luna o Martha Bátiz Zuk, también han publicado en su país de origen, México. Margarita Feliciano, el poeta colombiano Teobaldo A. Noriega, Camila Reimers y Jorge Nef han publicado en España. La poeta peruana Lady Rojas Benavente ha publicado en Francia.

Cuando en las dos antologías mencionadas se les preguntó sobre qué desafíos han encontrado en Canadá, algunos escritores mencionaron la dificultad de publicar en inglés o/y en francés como un problema que hay que enfrentar. Comenta al respecto el poeta chileno Claudio Durán: “[B]ueno, la dificultad del idioma castellano en país de hablas inglesa y francesa” (*Lumbre* 35). Y sigue a continuación: “[S]in embargo, a través de Rafael Barreto-Rivera, y con sus traducciones, pude publicar . . . un libro que era como una introducción a la actividad poética de Canadá” (35). Carmen Rodríguez contesta de la siguiente manera: “El desafío del bilingüismo. He aprendido a trabajar tanto en inglés como en español” (*Lumbre* 197), en tanto que el poeta chileno Marcelo Puente Espil habla del desafío de “[H]acer entender a la gente de otras lenguas lo que uno quiere decir” (*Lumbre* 167). Norberto Velásquez, poeta colombiano, afirma: “[E]l intentar hacer poesía en inglés es uno de los desafíos mayores porque . . . la poesía inglesa utiliza otra forma de manejar la metáfora, en búsqueda de la simpleza” (*Lumbre* 281). El poeta mexicano Omar Alexis Ramos hace hincapié en el desafío de publicar en una de las dos lenguas oficiales: “[E]l desafío más grande es definitivamente el idioma. . . de por sí, muy pocos editores quieren publicar poesía, entonces el hecho de que sea en español reduce las oportunidades” (*Lumbre* 181).

Ante la falta de un público lector hispano, los escritores latino canadienses ven una posible solución en el poder llegar al gran público de habla inglesa o francesa, ya sea escribiendo en una de las lenguas oficiales, o en traducción, como es el caso de Nela Rio, quien escribe: “[T]oda mi obra literaria está escrita en castellano. Agradezco especialmente a los traductores que han permitido la existencia de mis libros bilingües” (*Lumbre* 153). Teobaldo A. Noriega publicó un poemario bilingüe español-inglés en el 2013 que tiene por título *Wayfarer: Selected Poems*, en tanto que Jorge Etcheverry publicó *El evasioneista/The Escape Artist* en 1981 y Arturo Lazo, poeta chileno, publicó *Soledad y olvido/Solitude and Oblivion* en edición bilingüe, sólo para citar algunos nombres de una lista extensa. Con poesía se puede hacer un libro bilingüe, algo que no ocurre con la novela o el cuento por razones que son fáciles de entender: primero la extensión, lo que muchas veces haría un libro demasiado grueso, segundo: no se ve bien presentar en un lado una página en español y en otra su traducción. Así, se presenta sólo la versión francesa, como es el caso de la novela *Latitudes* de la chilena Gabriela Etcheverry o el de *Cloudburst: An Anthology of Hispanic Canadian Short Stories*, que es la traducción al inglés de *Retrato de una nube*. Se da también el caso de escritores que escriben el texto directamente en el inglés o el francés. Por ejemplo, en el poemario *The Sun Never Sets* del poeta chileno Erik Martínez Richards, que fue escrito directamente en inglés en su mayor parte. Lo mismo pasa con la novela *Retribution* de Carmen Rodríguez o *Something Fierce: Memoirs of a Revolutionary Daughter*, el libro de memorias de Carmen Aguirre, cuyos textos fueron escritos directamente en inglés. Un caso menos común es el de Alejandro Saravia, quien en *Lettres de Nootka* escribe

en los tres idiomas: español, inglés y francés. Escribir directamente en inglés o en francés, si es que el o la autora desea hacerlo, es posible después de mucho estudio de la lengua. La otra opción es recurrir a traductores profesionales, aunque esto puede ser caro.

Pero no todo es negativo. A la pregunta sobre cómo ha sido su experiencia como escritor en Canadá, la gran mayoría de escritores que participaron en las dos antologías mencionadas más arriba contesta que ha sido positiva. Jorge Nef dice: “Mi obra ha sido en general muy bien recibida pero poco difundida” (*Lumbre* 93). Marcelo Puente responde: “Buena, buenísima, llena de sentimientos y creo haber expresado todo lo que he querido decir, a lo mejor me hubiera gustado tener más publicaciones de mi obra . . .” (*Lumbre* 166). Carmen Rodríguez contesta: “Mi experiencia como poeta en Canadá ha sido positiva. He publicado un libro bilingüe . . . y varios poemas míos en inglés y en español. . . han aparecido en varias revistas literarias” (*Lumbre* 195–196). Diego Creimer, cuentista argentino, desde otra perspectiva, resume así su experiencia como escritor en Canadá: “Difícil, porque el número de lectores es limitado. Difícil, también, porque la preservación del castellano exige un esfuerzo permanente” (*Retrato* 51).

El siguiente poema titulado “Vamos esparciendo los días” de mi libro *Entonces*, viene al caso porque habla de cómo los inmigrantes nos vamos apropiando del país anfitrión. He aquí el texto completo:

Vamos esparciendo los días
por ciudades y países,
por pueblos y aldeas
en los que hemos vivido.
Esas ciudades y aldeas
se van haciendo propias
y van dejando en nuestra piel
una pátina de oro
hecha de pasos y de horas,
de largas conversaciones,
de viejas amistades,
de largas caminatas
perdidos en sueños.
Vamos dejando nuestras huellas
por donde vamos,
por calles ajenas que apropiamos
aunque sea por un tiempo,
por el trabajo que tuvimos
aunque sea por un tiempo,
por parques y puentes,
en el metro y los autobuses,
en el cine y la biblioteca.
Vamos también recogiendo aguas
de un río que no era nuestro,
vamos también echando a nuestro cesto
peces de un mar que poco a poco
va siendo nuestro
porque las ciudades y los países
en que hemos vivido
también se van pegando
al cuerpo, van adhiriéndose
a la piel como un olor,
como un color de sol,
como el color verde a las hojas,
como una canción
que suena constante en la mente.

Esa apropiación a la que me referí arriba, o mejor dicho, esa necesidad de crear nuestras propias organizaciones, instituciones y demás medios para fortalecer la creación literaria de los escritores hispano canadienses, es la que ha hecho que la comunidad de escritores de habla hispana de Canadá haya logrado muchos avances a pesar de lo pequeño de la población. Aunque no sean grandes, se han creado editoriales que publican en español, como por ejemplo Verbum Veritas, Lugar Común, La Cita Trunca, todas de Ottawa; la Enana Blanca, de Montreal; Art-Fact Press y Antares de Toronto, para mencionar algunas. La Celebración Cultural del Idioma Español, que se celebra en Toronto desde hace más de veinte años, ha sido un evento cultural que ha servido como un vehículo para las artes del mundo hispánico. No se puede olvidar la labor cultural que por muchos años ha llevado a cabo el Taller El Dorado en Ottawa. Se publican antologías también, como por ejemplo *Borealis: Antología Literaria de El Dorado*, de Jorge Etcheverry y Luciano Díaz, así como revistas, como por ejemplo *The Apostles Review*, publicada en Montreal, y que, a pesar de su nombre fue fundada por un grupo de escritores hispanos y publica sobre todo en español. Es de resaltar la labor que el Registro Creativo de Autores, con el auspicio de la Asociación Canadiense de Hispanistas, realiza para promover la literatura hispano canadiense. También está la Red Cultural Hispánica, con base en Ottawa, que desempeña una labor importante en la promoción y divulgación de la literatura hispano canadiense. Luego están los traductores, los críticos literarios, los profesores, los promotores culturales y los amigos de la literatura en español quienes de una u otra manera siempre ofrecen su apoyo. Gracias al esfuerzo de muchísima gente la literatura hispano canadiense sobrevive y es solidaria con todos los que

escriben en Canadá, para que la soledad natural del escritor/a sea más llevadera en este país tan grande.

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Latin American Studies in the Indian Classroom

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In the early eighties, when I started my university studies at politically conscious Jawaharlal Nehru University New Delhi, Fidel and Che were on all the university murals and of course in the classroom. We had visiting professors for our five-year degree program who were from La Habana and had come under teacher exchange programs with Cuba, or who had left Franco's Spain to settle in India. The latter taught Spanish Golden Age literature and history but found it difficult to entice students away from the heady lectures and rhetoric of the Cubans. Cervantes and Lope de Vega were no match for José Martí. Young Indian professors spent time in Mexico and Cuba under bilateral agreements. Our literature class bibliography consisted in the main of the Boom generation authors: García Márquez, Carlos Fuentes, Julio Cortázar, and Mario Vargas Llosa, as well as the obligatory and unclassifiable Jorge Luis Borges and Juan Rulfo. As can be imagined, we read the politics of the times into their stories. We generally didn't pay much attention to literary history with its emphasis on the continuities between one generation of writers and another. Instead, the texts magically echoed to us what was happening on the Indian street. Backstabbing postrevolutionary politicians in Martín Luis Guzmán's *La sombra del caudillo* reminded us of the deadly internecine strife in our own post-Independence polity; a film like *Abí está el detalle* worked well with its humor and subversion. But we also rued the fact that the inertia of a twisted justice system would never allow for a Cantinflas-like character ignorant enough to take it on. Latin American studies were a pretext to get our own political angst sorted out. The continent was made to mean in a particular way; it was an example of revolution and resistance to hegemony. However, we didn't investigate the particular history

from which the texts had sprung. Years later these sentences from Carlos J. Alonso's *Spanish American Regional Novel* seemed relevant to our situation:

If we succumb to the temptation of identifying a revolutionary or demystifying value in the difference supposedly entailed by Latin America, we run the risk of fetishizing that difference, of becoming enamored of the critical opportunities that it affords, thereby drawing attention away from the very concrete situation of exploitation from which it arises. What I would like to propose can be summarized in the following fashion: let us indeed explore the ways in which, for example, Borges' *écriture* or Lezama's Gnostic formulations question or subvert the Western episteme but let us not make that critique contingent on their *being Latin American*. (32)

Could we have avoided this "temptation"? What to others might have seemed an arbitrary choice of subjects confirmed our beliefs. We never delved into the local politics of postrevolutionary Mexican society because there was no Internet and library resources were scarce. But our readings of a decontextualized Michel Foucault made us confident that the epistemes we were deconstructing in these novels and films and the Western episteme the French thinker worked on were all alike. The situation was not uncommon in other literature departments outside Spain and Latin America, and the use of literary theory was often arbitrary and opportunistic and substituted for any engagement with the text on its own terms.

The real challenge arose when the time came to write a dissertation. The incoherence of sprinkling literary theory on analyses of Fuentes's texts became difficult

to sustain for a hundred pages. The penny dropped when I stopped at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, en route to Mexico City, where I was to work for nine months on a Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores bilateral fellowship. On signing the register at the Hispanic Division I was unsure as to what to put down as my area of research interest. I had read all of Carlos Fuentes's works and didn't need to consult those, and I couldn't investigate French literary theory at the Hispanic division. In January 1995 the ferment in Chiapas was still in full swing, so while looking for possible pronouncements by Fuentes on Chiapas I got into a conversation with Barbara Tenenbaum, the Mexican specialist at the library. She casually asked how my interest in Mexico had been awakened in faraway India, and I spoke blithely about the first pages of Fuentes's *La región más transparente* (*Where the Air Is Clear*) on Mexico City, which reminded me so much of New Delhi in the 1970s: the stratification of society that Fuentes had laid out at the beginning, the aristocrats, the bourgeoisie, the expatriates, the scandalous parties, the exclusivity of the *popoff* crowd. His portrayal of the minute hierarchies of class and race had rung a bell and encouraged me to read his other novels, such as *Las buenas conciencias* (*The Good Conscience*), set in small-town Guanajuato, which traced the roots of a musty, rancid feudal class that I could also recognize in my own country.

Tenenbaum listened, fascinated by my impressionistic analogies. With hindsight I shrink at my ingenuous approach to research, but the flicker of interest in Latin America was due to what I thought I saw in my own land. In my mind's eye I can still imagine a dusty hamlet in the states of Bihar or Uttar Pradesh as the ghost town of Comala, where only revenge and passion reigned. The fatalism in Rulfo's texts was

similar to our karmic logic, and his desperate protagonists were like the peasants we saw in the film *Mother India* (dir. Mehboob Khan, India, 1957). Tenenbaum wanted to talk about Octavio Paz's work. Paz of course had gone much beyond the surface of Indian reality, which he had viewed often through the lens of surrealism. At that point I couldn't grapple with all the philosophical underpinnings of his texts, but it was through such chance encounters that my research started taking shape. What might have been a stray conversation for a busy specialist at the monumental Library of Congress gave a sense of direction to an obscure PhD student. Tenenbaum mentioned her own work on nineteenth-century Mexican nationalism and advised me to retrace the roots of Fuentes's nationalism to another era because certain traits were enduring. The issue in Mexico was not about the Right and the Left, as I so fervently believed, having extrapolated my contemporary university experiences in Delhi to the Mexican political landscape, nor was it just a fight between liberals and conservatives of the nineteenth century but rather between centralism and federalism.

When I reached Mexico in 1995, Yvette Jiménez Báez of language and literature studies at El Colegio de México made me understand the Mexican field of letters and cultural production à la Bourdieu. I had to read the literature that Fuentes must have read when he was growing up in the 1940s. I began studying the work of Fernando Benítez, *Los Indios de México*, in order to understand Fuentes's version of *indigenismo*. *Zapatismo* was all in the air, and Subcomandante Marcos was a hero among the student population in 1995. It was difficult not to get carried away again with local university politics at the UNAM and understand *indigenismo* through the prism of minoritarianism and oppression of

the student movements. But since every thinker of repute in Mexico had defined his or her nationalism in relation to the indigenous population, I began to retrace this chimerical phenomenon in the writings of nineteenth-century thinkers. I started visiting the newspaper archive at the Hemeroteca to find Fuentes's earliest newspaper article published in 1949, in which Aztec gods rubbed shoulders with the international set and the *hoi polloi*. And then I recognized the pseudo-indigenous characters in his other works. The Indianization of the *criollo* was the flavor of the moment, as the creolization of the Indian had been in the pre-Independence period, as a newspaper columnist had so presciently put it. I traced Fuentes's friendship and rifts with Octavio Paz, the founding of the rival publications *Nexos* and *Vuelta*, and above all Enrique Krauze and his acerbic criticism of Fuentes's version of nationalism. I was slowly learning that these rivalries had less to do with ideological schisms and more with shifts in the field of cultural production. Krauze's biographical sketch of Benito Juárez in *Siglo de caudillos* became especially illuminating on this point. It was politics and not essence that had made a fanatical Catholic into a liberal who laid down the Reform Laws to control the power of the Church. The shifts in his political position were not due to any essential change. Conservatives could be atheists, just as liberals could be fervent Catholics. After my Mexican discoveries I began to look at the history and polity of my own country with fresh eyes, free from the prejudices I had grown up with.

Today I still look for Indian analogies to bring Mexican history closer to India. Students respond animatedly when the comparison is made between the foreign Hapsburg prince Maximilian, who was invited to rule Mexico by the conservatives,

and Sonya Gandhi, the head of the erstwhile ruling party the Indian National Congress, whose Italian origins are always a talking point in any political discussion. Both rulers felt the need to ingratiate themselves with the lowliest; Maximilian's favorite constituency was the indigenous people, and Gandhi's party was said to be tilting toward the Left against a rising India's developmental aspirations.

With hindsight it would have been safer but much more sterile if I had stuck to the set of formulations that Latin America was known for: the mestizo continent, civilization and barbarism. And from our side I could have added revolution, resistance, dictatorships, feminism. But Latin American reality, literature, and history fell between these fixed rubrics. The contingencies of history, the multivoiced novels, and the myriad contradictions in reality made the above categories look archaic. The time for "felicitous formulation" was over and the "significant season" was here, to borrow expressions from Carlos Alonso. It could be argued that I was still identifying in another culture aspects of my own, but at least the comparisons were changing and in flux.

The scholar of other cultures has never had it easy. I hear strident criticism in my own country about Octavio Paz's *In Light of India* from leftist intellectuals who decry his "Eurocentric" approach to Indian reality as well as his anti-Left stances during the second half of his life; equally strident criticism comes from those on the Right who object to his stray comments on nationalism and the caste system. *In Light of India*, according to Paz, was "a more or less ordered gathering of the reflections, impressions, and objections that India provoked in me." His earlier works like *The Monkey Grammarian* or *Conjunctions*

On Becoming a Latin American Literary Critic

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and Disjunctions had never even been noticed in circles that were not intellectual. Paz's primary concern was Mexican identity, and he looked to India in order to temper his ideas about his own country. His words sum up what it means to teach Latin America half a world away: "The fact of being Mexican helped me to see the difference of being Indian—from the difference of being Mexican. . . . To a certain extent, I can understand what it means to be Indian because I am Mexican" (81).

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How does one become an academic Latin American literary critic? For that matter, how does a literary-intellectual field develop and function? The conventional pathway to literary criticism, which was partly mine, would be through an undergraduate degree in languages with the attendant classes of literature, followed by a period of postgraduate studies, first publications, and then a search for the first job. But perhaps we should first begin our answer by unpacking the terms "Latin America" and "literary criticism." What do they mean? What do they stand for? If once they could be taken for granted, this no longer seems the case in the wake of the deconstruction of area studies and that floating signifier "Latin America." And the purported goals and validity of literary criticism as a profession or a discipline, signally unloved by most creative writers themselves, have never gone unquestioned. Often seen as a luxurious adornment in the humanities, and in more recent times overrun by the high tide of cultural studies and increasingly relegated to the backwaters of language departments, "lit crit" struggles to maintain academic market share. At least that is the case from where I write in Australia.

And what about literary theory? While literary critics have not always been literary theorists, and though many are allergic to theory for fear of (or out of distaste for) its high-flown theoretical abstractions, it's hard to imagine anyone carrying out academic literary criticism these days without a minimum of theory. Criticism is thus positioned between literature and philosophy: like literature it is an inventive, quasi-literary (rhetorical) practice, but like philosophy it is a discourse that seeks to downplay (or conceal) its inevitable "rhetoricity." In this view, the distance between author and reader/critic is progressively reduced—not toward some

shared agreement on authorial intention (though that is one possibility), but rather toward literature and criticism's mutual imbrication as rhetorically constructed discourses working on the same materials. As a reading of culture and history (against the grain or otherwise), literary creation is also a critical practice; and out of an experience of critical dialogue with a literary text, literary criticism produces a creative reassemblage of its elements within an explicative narrative, which, though it have analytical and objectivist intentions, is nonetheless a creative, rhetorical replotment of a literary text's being. In the right hands literary criticism is a high, writerly art.

But there's also that other way that you arrive at literary criticism, that undocumented path, the chance apparition of a moment of literary joy, or contestation, which henceforth seems to unconsciously drive some people toward the practice of literary criticism. Either you get the bug or you don't. At least that is how it began for me. I began studying Spanish and informally studying literature when, on a lark, I went to live in Helsinki in the early 1970s. Franco was about to die and I wanted to go to Spain and experience the cultural explosion which would surely come (and did). To that end I took up studying Spanish at night school while I worked in menial jobs during the day clearing restaurant tables, shoveling snow. My teacher was a Chilean exile pursued by the DINA. Máximo was not much of a Spanish teacher (by day he was a hydrologist for the government measuring water levels in Finnish lakes), but he was a great human being. He had been studying engineering in Russia when the Pinochet coup occurred. Considered a subversive, he could not return home. Disenchanted with what he regarded as somber daily life in Russia, he moved with his Russian wife to

Finland. To supplement his income he earned extra money at night giving Spanish classes. With his lack of pedagogical method, I soon exhausted what he had to offer in terms of basic Spanish instruction, so he gave me some different texts, including poems by Pablo Neruda. With my rudimentary Spanish and a bilingual dictionary, I began to translate a few. I was less interested in the epic and political stuff than the sensual poems and the love poems. I just didn't have the education to absorb the symbolic density of the "big" poems. The other texts were a set of *informes* in Spanish that had just begun to filter out to the United Nations about the atrocities being committed in Pinochet's jails. I began to translate these as well. It was my first close encounter with the impact of the Pinochet dictatorship on real lives, since I had left Australia in 1971 before the massive influx of exiles, refugees, and economic migrants fleeing the Southern Cone dictatorships. With a mixture of morbid fascination and sheer horror, I read of the lurid torture of jailed Chilean leftists, practices so vile you would not talk about them without first sizing up your listener's sensibilities. Needless to say, I got *una buena dosis de política* with my literary studies from which, fortunately, I have never recovered.

Another key moment was my good fortune in being accepted into university as an older student who had failed high school. I wanted to major in Spanish so I could get at that amazing literature. But Latin America was "way over there," at a distance of 10,000 kilometers. I therefore took the decision to study for an MA in Hispanic literature and linguistics at the Instituto Caro y Cuervo in Bogotá in 1988–1989. As an undergraduate student I had read poetry, novels, and short stories but had never studied them with the level of sophistication of the literary theories

provided by the Caro y Cuervo. Nor had I studied literature alongside the history of the Spanish language—phonetics and phonology, dialectology and discourse analysis. But my studies occurred against a background of political turmoil, a country under siege by drug cartels and paramilitary and guerrilla groups. What we were studying, no matter what the period, could not be neatly separated from the contested ground we inhabited. And those struggles often reached into the barrios where we lived. Anyone who lived in Colombia for an extended period through the 1980s and 1990s and experienced the atmosphere of fear and violence has left a part of themselves back there. Many failed to survive it: presidential candidates, unionists, police, journalists, kids conscripted into one side of the conflict or another, not to mention all the people ostensibly outside the armed conflict, including those impacted by urban neighborhood violence.

It's therefore impossible to neatly separate literature from politics. But how we conceptualize their relationship is crucial, lest we mouth clichés about politics or sociologize literature out of business. Though the literary-critical wars between different schools of criticism have largely subsided, there is still an unspoken division between those who pursue ideology critique so as to celebrate or indict texts according to whether or not they display a progressive ideology, and those who, while not denying the political and historical entanglements of literary texts, nevertheless wish to also explain how a work of art functions *as art*. Another way of saying this is to declare that a literary text is not exhausted by social critique. In fact its true political import might be in the way it opens up a space of thinking not bracketed by fidelity to some known historical record or doctrinaire set of political values, a space

in which invention provides alternative "distributions of the sensible," to quote Jacques Rancière, different configurations of what can be thought, heard, said, and done. The literary artist has the ability to create counterworlds in which the system of normative divisions that define the relationships between people and things is placed under erasure, so to speak. And this is done, moreover, by an imaginative-aesthetic reordering of the relationship between the sensual and the rational, the "transformation of the sensory fabric of 'being together,'" as Rancière would have it.

As an undergraduate student, my first formal engagement was with Cervantes ("ese man spikea full bacano"), then Lorca, Borges, Mistral, Arguedas, Vallejo, Cortázar, Rulfo, Onetti, Lispector, to the Boom and beyond, to Piglia and Puig, Eltit and then backwards in time to *modernismo*, to Martí and Silva, to Nájera and Nervo, and to an enduring fascination with Rubén Darío. Much later I would discover the poetry of Roberto Juarroz and Antonio Porchia. But another chance occurrence had me going to a literature conference in Guatemala in 2000 and subsequently gravitating toward contemporary, post-civil war Central American literature. As a legacy of mainly working through the canon as an undergraduate and postgraduate, I had really only read Darío and Asturias, who stand over the Central American literary landscape like two volcanoes, but not much contemporary fare, save for *testimonios* and some revolutionary poetry. I soon discovered the startling political realism of Franz Galich and Horacio Castellanos Moya, the tender fictions of Rodrigo Rey Rosa and Eduardo Halfon, the raw intimacy of Jacinta Escudos, and much more. I also made some lasting intellectual friendships. I make the pilgrimage to

Central America twice a year, 40,000 kilometers in total in two trips. Curiously enough, the tyranny of distance makes it somehow all the more rewarding.

My obsession with Rubén Darío led me to research his passage through Buenos Aires in 1893–1898, a foundational moment in Latin American literature and literary criticism, when a concentrated knot of young literary writers and intellectuals shared the cultural space of a nascent Latin American cultural modernity. It was also the period of historic transition of the writer from patronage to professionalism and thus the need to redefine his or her status and function. By day the young literary writers worked in some form of commercial scribal culture, usually journalism, where they were asked to contribute not only poems and *crónicas* but obituaries, theater reviews, travelogues, and a variety of “*curiosidades*.” By night they wrote their verses and frequented the same bars, restaurants, and literary societies. But whether by day or night, everything was an opportunity to write well. It was a period when print technology was undergoing a revolution, when literary reviews were born and died after just a handful of issues, when the hegemony of *porteño* patrician cultural tradition was buckling under the weight of mass underclass migration into Buenos Aires from the countryside and from Italy. It was also buckling under the impress more generally of French culture in the Hispanic world carried by the young literary *advenedizos* under its sway. As a consequence, along with the fervor of the new liberal capitalism came the birth of a new division of labor, including intellectual labor, which produced the professionalization and semi-autonomization of the literary-intellectual field. It was mostly a masculine affair, but as the twentieth century progressed, women and subaltern and minority

groupings discovered that it was also a space to be appropriated and occupied.

The heyday of *modernismo* is also the founding gesture of modern Latin American literary criticism, which not only ran parallel with the conquest of the authority and prestige of the literary writer but was intimately linked to its development. The struggles that ensued in the new field of cultural power, then, should not be seen as distractions from the main game (writing literature) but as constituent elements necessary for the institution of the field. One of those struggles was over a supposed clash between artistic and political values, which has regularly come to the fore in Latin American literature and criticism, especially during times of dictatorship and revolution and the Cold War. Is art’s primary function ethico-political or artistic? Who shall decide and with what warrant? Through the turn of the twentieth century, *modernismo* was often dismissed as a dilettante exercise, a turning away from the demands of nation building, squandering its currency on princesses and peacocks, chandeliers and *chinoiserie*, its erotics and delicacy (“paint not the thing, but the effect it produces”—Mallarmé) considered a discredited example of art for art’s sake and the stuff of effeminate Francophiles. Part of this attitude stemmed from the general antagonism felt by Spain and its remaining intransigent cultural loyalists in Latin America (with their protracted *casticismo*) toward France in the nineteenth century. But it was also related to the lingering conception of literature as primarily a statist practice.

I proposed with Werner Mackenbach a volume of essays taking a new approach to this literary field and positioning Darío as a “rooted cosmopolitan.” It was in this period that I began to read the criticism of

the wonderfully talented Susana Zanetti and invited her to contribute to the Darío volume. I had come late to her work. Zanetti didn’t seem to have the same international projection as other Latin American female critics, and we are the poorer for it. She agreed to write a chapter for the book. The fieldwork for my essay led me in 2007 to the library of the Departamento de Filosofía y Letras of the Universidad de Buenos Aires in Caballito. In search of the *memorias* of the Argentine *letrados* I found it fascinating to read of the *letrados* who bumped elbows and *copas* with Darío and how they each shaped their memoirs according to how they viewed their place within the cultural struggles of the time. My days in Caballito were spent scouring the archives and nights were spent listening to the harangues of my Argentine engineer landlord, who had lost his job under Menem and was renting out rooms in his house to make ends meet. Literature and politics, politics and literature.

The visit to Buenos Aires was also the chance to pursue another interest: Latin American intellectuals. I had recently read Óscar Terán’s *De utopías, catástrofes y esperanzas: Un camino intelectual* and was keen to meet him. Terán was a historian of Argentine thought and a scholar of late nineteenth-century aesthetics in Argentina. I found his e-mail address, made contact, and received a warm message inviting me to give him a call when I got to Buenos Aires. He agreed to meet me one bitterly cold day in a small café in Caballito. I felt bad because he had the flu, yet he insisted on the meeting. I asked him about how the Left was going with its self-analysis in the wake of the revolutionary period, about his years of exile, about mistakes made (and owned up to or not), about lessons learned. It’s not about abandoning the primordial gesture of the Left. Who would want to do that? It’s about critiquing theory and

practice—theories that lead to cul-de-sacs; practices that compromise ethics. That’s what Óscar went on about. Of course I had already read *De utopías*, so there were no new revelations, but just sitting with him, someone who had a reputation for warmth and generosity, someone who had invested so much heart and soul in trying to change Argentina, was reward enough. Out of the blue he revealed a secret devotion to Darío and his plans for a monograph on the Nicaraguan. I told him I was also putting together a book of essays on Darío and that it would be an honor if he would contribute an essay. We agreed to keep in touch. Several months after returning to Sydney and with the Darío book steaming full ahead, I e-mailed Óscar with a few questions and to see if he was still interested in the project. No reply. I waited and then sent another e-mail. Still no reply. By May 2008, unable to live with the mystery, I reached back through our e-mail conversations for his phone number and rang him. His wife answered: “Didn’t you hear? Óscar died of cancer in March.” I felt terrible, embarrassed, awkward, sad. He was probably sick all along, even when I had visited. I had a lump in my throat as big as a football.

The Darío volume was eventually published in 2010, complete with an essay by Susana Zanetti on one of Darío’s later poems from 1906 (“Epístola a la señora de Leopoldo Lugones”), a tour de force of critical insight and elegant expression. Of Darío, she wrote: “Si se refugia en la intimidad de la carta para contar un viaje que no se roza ya con la ilusión de la aventura del cosmopolitismo, lo hace para asumirlo como destino, un conflictivo lugar, un territorio que entrega como se entrega al olvido.” What does it all mean, then, to become a Latin American literary critic? I simply don’t know. But I do know that to do justice to the dazzling richness of Latin

American literature and the legacy of its critics, you need to write (and live) with critical passion, to quote the title of one of Jean Franco’s books. And you need to look for that other pathway into the profession, which has no signposts.

In 2013, Susana Zanetti also passed away. Let us never allow any of these writers, critics, and intellectuals to disappear into oblivion. ■

Precarious Lives

by MICHAEL BÉRUBÉ | Pennsylvania State University | mfb12@psu.edu

The facts of our situation are not in dispute: contingent faculty members now make up over one million of the 1.5 million people teaching in American colleges and universities—about 70 percent of all faculty. Many of them are working at or under the poverty line, with an average salary of about \$2,700 per course and without health insurance; some of them, as the *Chronicle of Higher Education* reported in 2012, are living on food stamps (Patton). They have no academic freedom worthy of the name, because they can be fired at will; and, when fired, many remain ineligible for unemployment benefits, because institutions routinely invoke the “reasonable assurance of continued employment” clause in federal unemployment law even for faculty members on yearly contracts who have no reasonable assurance of anything.

In 1970, the numbers were reversed: more than 70 percent of college professors had tenure. Since then, ever-increasing numbers of students have been taught by an ever-decreasing number of tenured faculty. That is the real story of the relation between student enrollments and faculty jobs, and the details are staggering. In 1947 there were 2.3 million undergraduates enrolled in American colleges and universities. In 1972, that number was 9.2 million. That 25-year period after World War II is widely understood as an unprecedented boom, demographically and economically, followed by years of retrenchment and stagnant waves. But on campus, the boom just kept booming—to the point at which enrollments broke the 20-million mark in 2009 and have remained there in the years since. And yet that continued growth in undergraduate enrollment has not been met with a commensurate investment in higher education—on the contrary. State legislatures have drastically reduced

support for their colleges and universities, offloading the costs onto students and their families and redefining higher education as a private investment rather than a public good. In the University of California system, for example, in-state tuition was \$300 as late as the year 1980 (for out-of-state students it was a whopping \$360). Today, it is over \$11,000. This is nothing less than an intergenerational betrayal: the people whose educations were subsidized in the 1960s and 1970s, the boomers of the boom years, graduated, became taxpayers, lobbyists, and legislators, and decided not to fund the system from which they benefited so dramatically.

It is routinely asserted that the current state of affairs for academic job seekers results from an overproduction of PhDs. Like the claim about declining undergraduate enrollments in the humanities, this claim is usually presented as self-evident and is followed with some loose talk about “supply” and “demand.” And like the claim about undergraduate enrollments, it is very wrong (Bérubé 2013). As Marc Bousquet has been arguing for years, the faculty workforce is made up of hundreds of thousands of people who do not have doctoral degrees—which, I would add, effectively calls into question the function of the PhD as the degree that grants credentials for college teaching (Bousquet 2008). The National Study of Postsecondary Faculty was last conducted in 2004, but as of then, 65.2 percent of non-tenure-track faculty members held the MA as their highest degree—57.3 percent in four-year institutions and 76.2 percent in two-year institutions (Laurence 2013). There is no reason to think that those percentages have gone down in the past decade and every indication that they have risen. To wit, there are many factors affecting the working conditions of

adjuncts, but the production of PhDs isn’t one of the major ones.

These numbers have implications that go far beyond the usual debates about the size of doctoral programs, because they illustrate how inadequate it is to think that we can solve the problem of contingent faculty simply by advocating that everyone be converted to the tenure track. Precisely because adjuncts are so invisible, even to the tenured colleagues they work among, it is not widely understood that many of them have held their jobs—at one institution or at many, on a year-by-year basis or on multiyear contracts—for ten, fifteen, twenty years or more. (Indeed, one of the most heartbreaking stories about adjuncts in the past few years involved one Margaret Mary Vojtko, who died destitute at 83, having lost her \$2,556-per-course adjunct job after teaching at Duquesne University for 25 years. She received no severance pay, no pension, *nada*.) Uninformed people—and this group includes many elected officials and higher-ed lobbyists, alas—tend to speak of contingent faculty in two ways: either as bright, energetic 30-year-olds who enliven their departments and disciplines, working in the trenches for a few years before getting their first tenure-track job, or as professionals with day jobs in other lines of work who agree to teach a course at a local university for pin money. That part-time, informal arrangement for people who have other sources of income (be they actors, entrepreneurs, tinkers, or tailors) is the original function of adjunct faculty and offers the only legitimate rationale for paying a college teacher less than \$7,000 for a college course; the Modern Language Association recommendation is for a minimum of \$7,230 for a standard three-credit course, and for a teaching schedule of six courses per year—for a very modest annual salary of \$43,380.

The situation is complicated still further by the terms of art by which institutions designate contingent faculty. They can be called “instructors” or “lecturers” or “visiting assistant professors” or “professors of the practice”—or pretty much anything. There is no universally agreed-upon designation for contingent faculty; there are even contingent faculty who do not want to be designated by the term “contingent faculty.” Moreover, there is no correspondence between a contingent faculty member’s title and his or her rank or degree of job security. As a result, some contingent faculty are effectively long-term, full-time, non-tenure-track faculty working on multiyear contracts for decades; some are hired on an annual basis by one institution, year after year (until they are summarily let go); still others, informally known as “freeway flyers,” cobble together an existence by teaching at two or more different institutions in an area—a course or two here, a course or two there. This is by far the most precarious form of academic employment, though it must be said that all contingent faculty are in a sense “precarious,” in the sense that they can be fired for any reason or for none, and all are subject to the fluctuating employment needs of their departments—which means, in many cases, that they are not informed about what they will be teaching or (even worse) not informed that they will not be teaching at all until mere weeks before the start of classes.

In English departments, the most precarious faculty tend to be found in introductory writing courses—a state of affairs that intensifies divisions between faculty teaching literature and faculty teaching rhetoric and composition (not to mention the divisions between the tenured directors of writing programs and their precarious employees). In the languages, the most precarious faculty tend to be

found in introductory language-learning classes, heightening once more the divisions between those faculty members and the tenured scholars of literature. As one member of the MLA Executive Council put it during my time as an officer (and I paraphrase), it is all well and good to decry the exploitation of adjuncts; but no one is going to rally around a program of action that merely alleviates that exploitation somewhat while keeping the full professors stocked with eight-student graduate seminars in *Don Quixote*.

The question before the profession, then, is nothing less than the question of how to reverse the deprofessionalization of the professoriate. That process has been under way for over 40 years now, but there is nothing inexorable or inevitable about it; there is nothing to be gained by blaming our own personnel decisions on large-scale forces far beyond our control (capitalism, or more specifically, neoliberalism), and everything to be gained—for contingent and tenured faculty alike—by implementing reforms, college by college and department by department, that will increase job security for precarious faculty. Some might benefit most from increased pay and multiyear contracts; others might be eligible, or be made eligible, for a route to teaching-intensive tenured positions. As Jennifer Ruth and I argue in our forthcoming book *This Is Not the Crisis You’re Looking For* (from which much of this essay is drawn), tenured faculty need to acknowledge that the precarious lives of their contingent colleagues are not solely the result of administrative bloat (and neoliberalism); they are also the result of individual employment contracts drafted and signed by individuals in academic middle management—deans and department heads. To put this another way, the problem has nothing to do with an overproduction of PhDs in the humanities

or in any other fields, and everything to do with the overproduction of deans and department heads willing to issue those contracts. The contingent faculty signing those contracts, of course, live in fear of the possibility that their next term of employment will be their last—because of budgets, because of a vicious student evaluation, because of an irate phone call, or just because. Only when we begin to argue—only when we begin to *believe*—that academic freedom ultimately serves the public good, and that academic freedom requires a reasonable measure of job security, will we be able to establish professional standards of employment for our precarious colleagues.

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Precariedades y emergencias de Norte a Sur: Reinención, colaboración, expansión

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Congelamiento de contrataciones para puestos permanentes, incremento de la carga de tareas administrativas y docentes, recorte de presupuesto para la investigación. Los coletazos de la crisis financiera de 2008 y la “crisis del mercado de trabajo académico” eran los temas predominantes en las conversaciones de algunos estudiantes graduados en la primavera de 2009. Como muchas veces durante tiempos difíciles, la resignación se matizaba con humor negro. Recuerdo un día en particular, mientras tomábamos café en el *lounge* de la escuela de Industrial and Labor Relations de la Universidad de Cornell, cuando un estudiante de doctorado brasileño bromeó con que los latinoamericanos habíamos llevado con nosotros “el virus de la precariedad”. Lo que para algunos estudiantes norteamericanos era una sorpresa para muchos latinoamericanos era un amargo *déjà vu*.

Hay una geografía de la precariedad. Esta adquiere distintas formas, modos de vivirla y de sobrevivirla. Históricamente, en América Latina la precariedad se asociaba al subdesarrollo —lo que para cierto paradigma eran las tareas incumplidas de la modernización—, pero las reformas estructurales implementadas a partir del “giro neoliberal” de las últimas décadas vinieron a instalar un nuevo tipo de precariedad. El incremento del desempleo y las políticas de flexibilización laboral afectaron profundamente las condiciones de trabajo relativamente estables de la sociedad industrial. Con la subcontratación, el trabajo eventual y el régimen del *part-time* se generalizaron formas degradadas de empleo o subempleo que suponían para un conjunto amplio de trabajadores no sólo la disminución de los salarios, sino inestabilidad, vulnerabilidad y la imposibilidad de acceder a prestaciones y beneficios sociales. En los Estados Unidos,

las restricciones en las posiciones de “tenure” (plazas permanentes) y su reemplazo por los “adjuncts” (empleos bajo contratos de corto plazo), que se empezaban a percibir en 2009, hablan de este nuevo modo de explotación y precarización extrema del trabajo. Hoy en día, en la mayoría de las universidades norteamericanas, la mayor parte del personal docente ejerce su labor con un contrato parcial sin beneficios.

Este contingente de profesores adjuntos, un nuevo modo de proletarización de las clases medias, es una de las caras visibles de la crisis de un modelo de universidad. El sistema de contratación por cursos flexibiliza la relación entre matrícula estudiantil y planta docente, y facilita los recortes en una institución que más que nunca se encuentra sometida a las reglas del gerenciamiento empresarial. Algunas de estas dimensiones específicas de la precarización se han comenzado a manifestar también en algunas universidades latinoamericanas que pagan a sus profesores de acuerdo a la cantidad de estudiantes aprobados e instalan una figura del estudiante consumidor que no era tan común en este lado del hemisferio. Pero, enfocándonos en los ámbitos del trabajo de la academia y la educación, las dinámicas de precarización en el Norte y en el Sur nos enfrentan también a desafíos que adquieren formas disímiles y ciertas prácticas emergentes hablan de formas distintas de habitar y combatir esas precariedades.

Quizás es ahora que debería advertir que escribo como alguien que en este momento tiene un trabajo permanente. Vivo en Buenos Aires y soy investigadora asistente en el CONICET, el principal organismo estatal dedicado a la promoción de la ciencia y la tecnología en la Argentina, pero mis impresiones acerca de la precariedad

son producto de mi paso por varias instancias de formación y trabajo en Latinoamérica y Estados Unidos. Mi primera inserción en el mundo académico, como profesora ayudante de Historia en la Universidad de Buenos Aires, fue en un cargo *ad honorem* y mis ingresos provenían de otros trabajos que desarrollaba en paralelo: la docencia en instituciones públicas y privadas de nivel elemental y medio y un empleo *part-time* en una empresa de marketing. Este tipo de trayectoria laboral no era poco común para quienes culminamos nuestros estudios universitarios pocos meses antes de la crisis del 2001 y no lo sigue siendo aun para muchos trabajadores de la academia. Cuando me mudé a Estados Unidos para realizar mis estudios de doctorado dejaba atrás condiciones de trabajo académico precarias pero, a diferencia de algunos compañeros norteamericanos, desconocía el fenómeno del endeudamiento estudiantil y, fundamentalmente, mi experiencia de la precariedad se podía inscribir en una narrativa que iba más allá de una trayectoria individual. En la década de los noventa y en los años de la post-crisis, muchos experimentábamos de algún modo diversas formas de precariedad porque vivíamos en una misma “mala época”.

Una década más tarde, nuevas experiencias de la precariedad y nuevas prácticas de emergencia redibujan la geografía del trabajo académico en América Latina y Estados Unidos. Quizás debido a las tempranas reformas neoliberales en el ámbito de la educación, en Chile la educación superior descansa en buena medida en el trabajo de “profesores-taxi”, un sistema de contratación barato y sin compromiso similar al sistema de “adjunct” norteamericano. Así como en la última década ha habido un importante movimiento de protesta estudiantil en contra de las reformas neoliberales en el

área de la educación; a nivel de la actividad docente hay asociaciones como Académicos a Honorarios de Chile (<http://www.ahonorarios.org>) que propone la organización transversal como una alternativa para “ayudar a construir *colectivamente* soluciones para dignificar la situación de asalariados o *trabajadores del conocimiento*”. Dentro de un modelo educativo estatal, la apelación a formas de acción colectivas y los reclamos definidos en relación a una actividad que se define como trabajo articulan la presentación de Jóvenes Científicos Precarizados (JCP) (www.precarizados.com.ar), una organización que, bajo el lema “Investigar es trabajar”, reúne a investigadores en formación de diversos organismos científicos y tecnológicos de la Argentina y reclama derechos laborales como seguro médico, licencias por maternidad y paternidad, aportes jubilatorios, cargas sociales, entre otros. Reclamos similares presenta en Brasil la Associação dos Pós-graduandos da Universidade de São Paulo (www.apguspcapital.wordpress.com) en intervenciones que insisten en la precarización y en la ambigua condición del postgraduado cuya labor se sitúa entre el estudio, la investigación y el trabajo¹.

A diferencia del 2009, ahora el trabajo precarizado e inestable de los “adjuncts” norteamericanos se inserta en un relato y en formas de lucha colectivas. En agosto de este año, en el College of Criminal Justice de CUNY, tuvo lugar a una conferencia de la Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor (Flaherty 2014) y en febrero otra agrupación de trabajadores llevó su reclamo al Congreso de los EE.UU. (Williams 2014). Publicaciones como *Inside Higher Education* y *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, sitios web como *The Professor Is In* y *Chronicle Vitae*, asociaciones profesionales e incluso programas de doctorado de algunas

universidades reconocen abiertamente que menos de la mitad de los Ph.D. conseguirá un puesto permanente en la educación superior. Sin embargo, como sostiene David Laurence en su columna del *MLA*, más allá de reconocer la brecha entre los insuficientes trabajos estables que ofrece hoy la academia y la sobreabundancia de Ph.D. que ésta produce, hay un desconocimiento de las trayectorias de todos aquellos que han optado por trabajar en actividades ajenas al ámbito de la educación superior, en parte porque las universidades no estarían interesadas en recolectar ese tipo de información. Algunas de estas trayectorias y narrativas han comenzado a visibilizarse en sitios web como *How to Leave Academia*, que defiende una identidad “*post-ac*”, o en *Vitae* y *Versatile Ph.D.* que, desde una agenda “*alt-ac*”, sostienen que los conocimientos y habilidades de análisis adquiridos en la formación académica pueden ser utilizadas para iniciar una carrera laboral fuera de la educación superior. Las instancias de reinversión profesional que estos foros proponen siguen la línea también del programa Public Fellows creado por la American Council of Learned Societies en 2011 con el objetivo de insertar laboralmente a Ph.D. en humanidades y ciencias sociales en el gobierno y organizaciones sin ánimo de lucro. En el ámbito de América Latina, el CONICET tiene desde el 2003 un formato de “investigador de empresa” que desarrolla su actividad de producción de conocimiento para ser aplicado al desarrollo técnico. Sin embargo, otros intentos de relocalizar a los doctores en empresas o instituciones públicas han sido escasamente exitosos para los investigadores de las humanidades.

La precariedad se presenta de una manera muy particular en esta área del conocimiento. Durante los últimos años en

Estados Unidos, los recortes y el cierre de líneas de investigación o, incluso, departamentos han afectado especialmente a las humanidades. Evaluadas desde una relación de costo-beneficio estrictamente mercantil, se ha puesto en duda el valor de las humanidades tanto en la educación superior como en su misma contribución al desarrollo del conocimiento (Cohan 2012). En el ámbito Latinoamericano, recientemente un colectivo de investigadores y estudiantes de postgrado de la Facultad de Filosofía y Humanidades de la Universidad de Chile ha llamado la atención sobre el hecho de que un modelo de producción de conocimiento en donde la innovación es entendida como un “proceso de creación de valor económico” trastoca la lógica creadora que puede asociarse a la producción de conocimiento en áreas como las humanidades donde el valor no puede calcularse desde una economía pensada en la inmediata solución de necesidades. En todo caso, para este colectivo, los saberes producidos por las artes y las humanidades resultan necesarios, desde un concepto de necesidad que no se restringe a la utilidad o a la inmediatez, sino a la capacidad de instalar otras formas de habitar el saber, otras posibles comunidades del sentido (Contreras, Fielbaum y Moya 2014).

Desde esta perspectiva, de lo que se trata es de extender saberes en el espacio público fortaleciendo actividades de extensión universitaria. Sin embargo, en el sentido inverso, la academia tiene que reelaborar su relación con la comunidad teniendo en cuenta que el conocimiento ya no se produce solamente en sus instituciones reconocidas, y se expande desde allí hacia el mundo social, sino que se genera y difunde siguiendo un entramado social mucho más disperso. Para ejercitar nuevos horizontes de conocimiento, que permitan forjar relaciones con formas creativas de visibilidad y empoderamiento que ya están

teniendo lugar en el mundo social, hace falta pensar la actividad académica desde temas transversales, interdisciplinarios, comparativos, con propuestas que superen los particularismos metodológicos. En un artículo publicado en 2005 en este *Forum* Mónica Szurmuk defendía el trabajo interdisciplinario propio de los Estudios Culturales para promover alternativas de intervención en la vida política, cultural y social. Una década más tarde creo que estos espacios de cruce disciplinar pueden seguir fortaleciendo modos de unir la universidad a la vida pública que hagan de las humanidades un espacio de expansión de la democracia.

Hay prácticas que expanden los saberes especializados y salen al encuentro del mundo no académico. Generando Igualdad (<http://generovarela.wordpress.com>), un proyecto en el que participan estudiantes y docentes de una universidad del conurbano bonaerense junto con miembros de organizaciones sociales, ofrece un interesante cruce entre los estudios y la militancia de género. Desde las áreas de la filosofía, la ciencia política y el feminismo, este espacio de extensión pretende abrir a la comunidad de la región un lugar de reflexión, discusión y producción en torno a problemáticas de género y sexualidad, para contribuir al desarrollo de estrategias locales de promoción de la equidad de género y erradicación de la violencia. En esta instancia, los saberes académicos se retroalimentan de un mundo social en donde la militancia de género va de la mano de una política de ampliación de derechos reflejada en la sanción de ley contra la violencia de género, la ley de educación sexual integral, o la ley de identidad de género, entre otras. Pero también hay otras prácticas del conocimiento que articulan saberes y mundo social no desde la universidad sino

desde el ámbito empresarial. Luego de identificar varios casos de analfabetismo funcional entre sus empleados, el área de responsabilidad social de AESA, una de las concesionarias del servicio de recolección de residuos de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires decidió contratar a una asociación civil que organiza acciones de promoción de la lectura y formación de lectores (<http://espaciodelij.blogspot.com.ar/>). En este marco, Mercedes Colombo y Verónica Lichtmann, especialistas en didáctica de la literatura y en la filosofía de la educación, vienen desarrollando desde el 2010 diversas actividades para acercar la literatura a los empleados y sus familias como el armado de un rincón de lectura, el desarrollo de talleres para que los padres sepan cómo elegir libros para sus hijos, una biblioteca circulante, la grabación de discos compactos con cuenta cuentos y un club de lectores pero también buscaron la colaboración de artistas para explorar los vínculos entre la literatura y la fotografía, el video y la pintura y hacer que otras expresiones artísticas pudieran conformar un nuevo capital cultural de los trabajadores y sus familias².

Estos dos ejemplos ilustran cómo la especialización en un área específica de conocimientos se práctica en una forma de trabajo que apunta a establecer una conexión con otras disciplinas y con la comunidad. El enfoque esencialmente interdisciplinar y el espíritu colaborativo del feminismo y de los estudios de género y las propuestas de lectura colectiva, en cierto modo, comparten una metodología en donde la colaboración sirve para pensar una producción de conocimiento que pone en perspectiva la relación de la práctica profesional específica con el mundo, con las relaciones de poder y afectos que lo conforman. También para mejorar las condiciones de trabajo académico y sobrevivir a nuevas formas de precariedad

hay que acudir a la colaboración y ampliar los horizontes de la práctica profesional requiere creatividad. Ahora estoy *acá*, no vivo más *allá*, pero por lo que algunos colegas me cuentan parece haber un cierto consenso en que los departamentos de las universidades norteamericanas deberían, si no pensar formas de preparar a los estudiantes para opciones profesionales alternativas, por lo menos operar cambios en la cultura de los programas que permitan a sus estudiantes concebir su propia formación de un modo diferente. Una nueva forma de pensar el problema es quizás crear una nueva narrativa para referirse al trabajo académico de un modo que nos libere de un sentido de especialización que reduzca nuestra labor a una actividad limitada a criterios de productividad mercantil para que ésta pueda volver a ser una actividad múltiple y creadora. En todo caso, creo, se trata de articular formas colaborativas de defender y mejorar las condiciones de empleo académico pero también de explorar los modos en que el empleo pueda volver a recuperar toda la potencia que puede tener un trabajo.

Notas

¹ En Argentina, a partir del 2006, hubo un incremento de becas para la realización de doctorados. En parte esto generó un “cuello de botella” porque las plazas en organismos como el CONICET y en las universidades nacionales no han podido absorber en la misma medida a ese creciente número de jóvenes doctorados. Esta brecha, que se manifiesta de manera más crítica en el área de las humanidades, articula uno de los reclamos de JCP. Por otro lado, esta organización, que representa en su gran mayoría becarios y becarias doctorales y posdoctorales, sostiene que el régimen de becas encubre un “trabajo en relación de dependencia” por lo que exigen los beneficios asociados a dicha condición. Finalmente, en 2013 el CONICET extendió los beneficios de seguro médico y licencias por

maternidad a las becarias. En Brasil CAPES, uno de los principales organismos de financiamiento de la formación académica en ese país, ya había extendido el beneficio de licencias por maternidad para estudiantes de maestría y doctorado en 2010. En marzo 2013 otro organismo brasileño, la CNPQ, modificó el régimen de licencias por maternidad de las becarias de iniciación a la investigación para mejorar las condiciones de trabajo de las científicas.

² El taller de fotografía derivó en una muestra en el Planetario (“El doble oficio de recolectar basura y crear arte”) y el club de lectura recibió una mención de la Fundación Santillana (“Cómo despertar el placer por la lectura y ganar un premio con ello”).

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Precariedades, emergencias: La precariedad que se repite

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Desde el inicio de mis estudios en literatura en Colombia una idea fundamental en la toma de decisiones a la hora de seguir mi camino como investigador y docente fue la de cómo evadir la precariedad laboral y la de recursos necesarios para continuar investigando. Creía que eso era una preocupación exclusiva de países como Colombia y que en Europa o Estados Unidos se resolverían. Después de estudiar en España y luego en Estados Unidos, me he dado cuenta que no es así. No se puede escapar de la precariedad.

Sin embargo, y de esto me di cuenta luego de buscar infructuosamente una posición con permanencia en universidades norteamericanas y luego de volver a Colombia, la precariedad no es una limitación simplemente. Es en efecto la condición de posibilidad de la investigación sobre Latinoamérica, sin importar desde dónde se produzca. Si la entendemos no solo como dada de antemano e ineludible, sino como el lugar desde el cual puede surgir la investigación, podemos entender y valorar las nuevas prácticas y los nuevos espacios desde donde se está dando la creación de nuevo conocimiento y la reinterpretación del antiguo; y no sólo entender o valorar, sino también adaptarnos a los nuevos criterios de valoración que deberemos aplicar a la hora de comprender las diferentes formas e impulsos de investigación que surgen en cada uno de los lugares donde se estudia y trabaja sobre Latinoamérica.

Al inicio de *El siglo de las luces* (1958), tan pronto Victor Hugues llega a casa de Esteban, Sofía y Carlos, varios instrumentos de medición y algunos utensilios básicos de química hacen su aparición en medio de juegos de mesa y otros pasatiempos. Alejo Carpentier parece estar narrándonos, entre muchas otras cosas, un momento preciso de la historia de

esa actividad humana que en La Habana del siglo XVIII podía ser sólo un pasatiempo o un deber de las clases altas para informarse e instruirse, pero que hoy en día llamamos investigación: la constante permutación de ideas y patrones para producir conocimientos que complementen o que pongan en tensión lo que se da por sentado. El modelo investigativo que se enseña en pregrados y postgrados, no importa si es en Estados Unidos, en América Latina o España, busca de alguna manera u otra recuperar o preservar ese imaginario de espacios y prácticas.

La novela de Carpentier tiene mucho que decir acerca de la investigación de nuestros días, pues luego nos revela que esas prácticas y esos espacios no son suficientes para lograr lo que inicialmente se buscaba con ellos. La Historia ha entrado también a la casa, y Esteban, Victor y Sofía no pararán de moverse a un lado y otro del Atlántico sin poder volver a recuperar esos juegos y experimentos que buscaban dar claridad a la complejidad de la experiencia vivida. Sin ser investigadores tal y como entendemos esta palabra hoy día, estos son personajes que están buscando en un lugar, y luego en otro, nuevos elementos para sumar a ese ensamblaje que poco a poco construyen sobre el mundo. Y al final de la novela percibimos que la búsqueda de esos elementos es un proceso en lucha constante con múltiples precariedades.

Si entendemos la investigación como esa búsqueda veremos cómo consiste en gran medida en un escape de una precariedad por medio de la otra, para de nuevo tener que escapar otra vez. Como investigadores y como lectores somos herederos del imaginario del lector burgués y del investigador autodidacta que habría de encontrar pronto su lugar en la universidad al aparecer el currículo de las “artes liberales”. Ese currículo se pone en duda

en cada vez más universidades donde se busca aumentar las utilidades de sus facultades. Sin embargo, se nos olvida que ese ideal sólo existió en unos cuantos momentos aislados y para unos cuantos afortunados. Pero que no exista ahora, o que esté desapareciendo o que lo hagan desaparecer, no quiere decir que la investigación como tal se haya acabado.

La precariedad nos rodea en la investigación, y no sólo en estos momentos. Nos ha rodeado siempre. A la hora de trazar proyectos y a la hora de investigar aparecen siempre incertidumbres, limitaciones y contratiempos, eventualidades que no permitimos que nos detengan si deseamos concluir el proyecto. El sueño de todo investigador, no sólo en las humanidades o en las ciencias sociales, es tener los recursos, los espacios y las vías que aminoren la precariedad.

¿Qué pasa si pensamos la precariedad como la condición de posibilidad de la investigación, y no solamente como un efecto y un producto de las exclusiones de clase, género, raza, edad o identidad sexual? ¿Qué ocurre si vemos la investigación como el movimiento constante desde una situación precaria a la siguiente?

A diferencia de cómo se enseña en los manuales de cada disciplina —estoy pensando en el *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, pero incluyan aquí el manual de cada una de sus disciplinas— la investigación no sólo es la definición de un objeto y una metodología con la ayuda de un archivo o de un corpus; es, también, y más que nada, la manipulación y el uso de estas dimensiones a la luz de lo factible que sea llevar a cabo esta investigación. Esa manipulación y uso de los recursos y del tiempo frente a

limitaciones ineludibles, eso es trabajar en medio de la precariedad de la investigación.

Enseñar y enseñar a investigar en literatura y cultura en Colombia es enseñar en gran parte que la investigación es en mayor o menor medida una confrontación con la precariedad. ¿Cómo lograr manejar un corpus cuando el corpus mismo no está presente en ninguna biblioteca o archivo en el país, y si está, yace sólo en idiomas que los estudiantes no dominan porque nunca han tenido los recursos ni el tiempo para hacerlo? ¿Qué hacer con estudiantes que sienten desamparo en la institución porque toda institución siempre los ha desamparado, y que por ello ven desde lejos su contacto con el tema de estudio, y que por ello no atacan el objeto de estudio con la confianza —o el exceso de confianza— de estudiantes que siempre han estado seguros de sí mismos porque las instituciones siempre les han dicho que nunca los dejarán de lado —aunque en efecto sí lo hagan? ¿Qué hacer cuando los estudiantes se aferran a la normatividad como si fuera un flotador en medio de la precariedad porque les permite crear palacios de poder y de prestigio cultural e intelectual? ¿Cómo enseñarles a los estudiantes que investigar no es simplemente repetir el conocimiento normalizado sino dejar emerger nuevas constelaciones de ideas, conceptos, señas o marcas que les permitan hablar con autoridad desde la precariedad múltiple e inacabable? No hay respuestas permanentes a estas preguntas.

Héctor Belascoarán Shayne, sin embargo, el detective creado por Paco Ignacio Taibo II, sí parece tener esas respuestas. A diferencia de los detectives clásicos, investigadores por excelencia que dependían de sus propias facultades de intuición y razonamiento y de un espacio en calma y en silencio donde poder pensar, Belascoarán

persigue las pistas en un mundo con la precariedad que le llega al cuello. Si bien sus facultades individuales son absolutamente necesarias, él resuelve enigmas y problemas porque, más que nada, tiene amigos y conoce gente. Los amplios tejidos sociales que él domina le permiten moverse, investigar y sobrepasar los obstáculos puestos por diferentes facetas de la precariedad omnipresente. Es esta asociación de personas, intereses y objetivos que permiten que el avance de las investigaciones, tanto para Belascoarán como para los estudiantes en Colombia, sigan adelante.

Y es por ello que Internet se ha convertido en el lugar propicio para que aparezcan nuevas prácticas investigativas y el lugar idóneo de divulgación y archivo: No sólo debido a la facilidad en términos de acceso físico y económico a datos, conocimientos y experiencias, sino también porque las mismas normas que en el mundo real sólo parecen interrumpir y bloquear alternativas de colaboración y asociación se disuelven o son por completo inexistentes en los espacios digitales. El código napoleónico, el texto que subyace a la mayoría de construcciones jurídicas e institucionales en los países latinoamericanos y que durante un par de siglos ha producido tanto los intentos de ordenamiento, normatividad y legalidad de estas naciones, así como mecanismos que permiten o incluso acentúan la precariedad, este conjunto de reglas no parece tener asidero alguno en Internet. El mundo de la precariedad que vivía debajo del mundo ideal creado por ese mundo código napoleónico, ese mundo que Belascoarán sabe transitar con tanta facilidad y que hasta hace poco era localizado y limitado no sólo a niveles nacionales sino regionales, con las herramientas digitales empieza a tener no sólo mayor libertad para existir sino mayor difusión.

Las respuestas a las preguntas que hago más arriba se responden por un momento con una palabra: Internet. Pero de inmediato Internet, tal y como el código napoleónico, pasa de ser solución y se convierte en problema: ¿Qué hacer cuando no hay herramientas para delimitar un corpus porque en términos prácticos es infinito? ¿Qué hacer cuando Internet se convierte en el ámbito contra el cual uno debe luchar porque la total ausencia de normatividad produce para efectos prácticos los mismos efectos que el exceso de normatividad? ¿Qué hacer cuando el hábil manejo de herramientas digitales se convierte en un campo de distinción y de poder que impide la creación crítica de nuevo conocimiento y de nuevas experiencias? Tampoco hay respuestas permanentes a estas preguntas. Sin embargo, eso no impide seguir buscándolas. Y eso es lo que se aprende al moverse de precariedad en precariedad, permitiendo que emerjan nuevos conocimientos. ■

Precariousness and Everyday Life

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What description might be adequate to the ways in which living and dying are folded together today in conditions of urban poverty in Latin America? In studies of what is termed the “new violence” (as affirmed by rising homicide rates) social scientists have portrayed low-income neighborhoods in Latin America as steeped in and largely defined by violence, a cluster of conditions involving urban gangs and criminal networks, forms of police violence, and urban poverty (Arias 2006; Arias and Goldstein 2010; Benson, Fischer, and Thomas 2008; Koonings and Kruijt 2007; Rodgers 2006; Wilding 2011). While this work has certainly gone a long way toward examining the seeming paradox of the intensification of violence during the region’s democratic transition, perhaps less attention is paid to the fragility of everyday life itself: how is the achievement of everyday life marked by loss and violence? Throughout my work in low-income neighborhoods in Santiago, Chile, I have sought to attend to the ways in which people struggle to give expression to this deep sense of precariousness, to the sense in which the smallest of actions could contain impulses to heal worlds or to poison them (Han 2012, 2014, forthcoming). I ask how these small actions, gestures, and occurrences relate to the larger forces of economic restructuring and state violence.

In May 2012, I began fieldwork in a low-income neighborhood of Santiago currently under police occupation. I will call this neighborhood “Z.” (Given the surveillance in this neighborhood, I use pseudonyms and composite characters here.) In 2001, the Chilean Ministry of the Interior enacted a policing scheme called Barrio Seguro (Secure Neighborhood) that focused intensive policing on sections of *poblaciones*, or low-income neighborhoods, understood to be sites of drug trafficking and delinquency. Secure Neighborhood

was not initiated on the basis of evidence that demonstrated certain neighborhoods to be foci of drug trafficking and delinquency. Rather, it was catalyzed by publicity around the funeral of a young man from La Legua, a neighborhood known for drug trafficking in the media and popular imaginary. A major national newspaper, *El Mercurio*, covered the funeral in the General Cemetery, in which the aunt of the young man was said to have presented herself to the newspaper as “the queen of *pasta base* [cocaine]” and to have threatened to seek vengeance for the death of her nephew.

The story spurred the subsecretary of the Ministry of the Interior to issue criminal charges against this woman for issuing a public death threat and to reassert to the press the rule of law in Chile. As he remarked then, “There is no territory in Chile where the rule of law is not in force, and the law of Aunt Nena is not in force in La Legua, the law of Chile is” (Correa Sutil 2001). Intertwined with references to the criminal underworld, with terms like “*hampa*” (riffraff or scum) and “clan” in this story and multiple stories that rapidly appeared in the days following, kinship was cast as a threat to sovereign power. Within four days of the story’s publication, the Ministry of the Interior authorized the first police occupation of a low-income neighborhood in Santiago, involving checkpoints for vehicle inspection, identity control, and the constant presence of Special Forces military police within the neighborhood.

This police occupation was replicated in a handful of small neighborhood sections popularly known as sites of drug trafficking and delinquency within the city. Only later did sociological and public policy publications lend coherence to these occupations, casting them as “necessary”

interventions that would bring these “territorially stigmatized” and “ghettoized” neighborhoods back into the normative social order (see Cornejo 2012; Frühling and Gallardo 2012). As I have written elsewhere, attending to everyday life within the neighborhood yields a very different picture of the relationship of the state and the local (Han 2013). Rather than seeing the police occupation solely in terms of an oppressive force that comes from without and enforces a social order, I observed how police officers have varied and dynamic relationships with neighbors, thus demonstrating how state violence interpenetrates the local but also how the local itself is composed of a range of relationships that express varied aspirations. Here, I turn to the ways in which life in this neighborhood is marked by loss, asking the open-ended question of how we can attend to the shadows that haunt everyday life.

Ordinary Hauntings

Z has been under police occupation for several years and is often the subject of spectacular news reports on the violent deaths of young men. But as I worked in this neighborhood, I found myself drawn into a world in which loss was lived in the most ordinary of ways. For instance, while the cemetery may be understood as a site of memorialization, it is also a site where everyday life with the dead is stitched together. On birthdays, family and friends bring cake, soft drinks, and balloons to a young man’s grave. They sit on the grass listening to music, writing messages to the young man on the balloons and launching them into the sky. A piece of cake is cut for the young man and placed on his grave. Graves themselves may be adorned with fresh flowers by a mother, sister, wife, or girlfriend who makes weekly visits. Yet the

cemetery is not the only site where the dead are incorporated into the very rhythms of everyday life.

Each night, Martita left a kiss on her son's face. A large portrait of him—her youngest son, Camilo—hung in their house's storefront, where they had worked together. She kissed her fingers and stroked the portrait, saying to him, "Good night, my son, may you dream of angels." He had been killed during a police raid. At the time of his death, he was anxiously and joyously expecting the birth of his first child, a daughter, with his girlfriend, who at the time of his death was eight months pregnant. I met Martita when her granddaughter Vivi was nearly eight months old. She is now nearly three years old. Throughout the months I spent with her, I was struck by how she sought to give expression to the affects surrounding her father. The portrait that hung in her grandmother's house also hung in her mother's bedroom and was inserted into key chains that were distributed to kin and Camilo's friends. Before she began talking, Vivi would point to her father's photo and say, "uh-uh-uh-uh." One winter night, Vivi, her mother, her mother's sister, and her two grandmothers and I were sitting in her mother's bedroom and chitchatting. Vivi began saying "uh-uh-uh-uh," pointing strenuously at her father's photo hung above the sofa in her mother's room. "Uh-uh," she pointed to me and then pointed to her father. "Lift her up Clarita," Martita said. "She wants you to lift her up to her papá." Picking her up, I stood on the sofa. She encouraged me to lift her up high, saying "uh-uh" and pointing. As she reached the point of her father's arms, she became silent, leaning her head against his arm and breathing deeply. We were absorbed with wonder. Her maternal great-grandmother exclaimed softly, "He calls her." Later, as Martita and I were

driving back to her house, Martita said to me that the calling caused her anxiety. "I just want him to rest," she said. "I fear that he is still on the earth." She supposed that his soul may be unable to leave the earth to go to heaven and rest because he has things pending: worry over how his girlfriend is raising his daughter, the injustice of his own death at the hands of the police.

Losing and Remaking a World

Martita was tormented by her son's violent death. She told me that she feared that she might die of pain, for the death of her son "killed her in life." What kept her physically alive was the fear of what her own death would do to her living sons, who also were grieving the loss of their little brother. Eventually, this torment and her fear of dying from it drove her from the neighborhood; she could not live in the house where her son had been killed, yet moving from the house and the neighborhood itself was experienced as a loss. She was bedridden and unable to eat. In this moment of crisis, her daughter-in-law and a son who lived in a different neighborhood took her in to live with them. Yet shortly before I returned to Z in August 2014, Martita had returned to live in Z. She had sold her house and most of her belongings, and she was now living with her friend Blondie. Blondie's partner had moved out of their house, but they continued to live a domestic life: eating meals together, taking tea, and coordinating the daily chores of picking up the children from school. As we sat in the kitchen, Martita related to me how she "had to live my own process," and that while some days "I remember every detail and I go back [*retrocedo*]," now she only hopes that "my health accompanies me in order to see my granddaughter live." She had a long conversation with her older son, who had

said that it was she who had to care for Vivi: "He said to me, it's you and *papá* who are the ones who look after Vivi." Martita's relationship with Vivi's mother was marred by slights and cruelties that sometimes revealed themselves through the face-to-face courtesies. Martita related to me how Vivi's mother had recently taken Vivi on a three-week trip outside Santiago without notifying Martita. It was only when Martita made her daily visit to see Vivi that she discovered that she would not be able to see her granddaughter for three weeks. "I almost started to cry right there, in front of all of them [her daughter-in-law's family]."

Can we receive this small moment as a moment in which the world is at once lost and remade?

Martita asked me if I would like to see Vivi, and I was delighted. We walked to her house. As we stood on the street, Vivi came running out and leapt on her grandmother, who had knelt down to greet her. They gave each other a long and tight hug. Martita said, "Nos amamos. ¿Cierto?" As we sat in the living room, Vivi pointed to her mother's bedroom. Looking at me, she said, "Papá," pointing to the poster of her mother and her father that hung in the room. "Where is papá?" her grandmother asked her. "En el cielo," she responded. Her grandmother responded, "Pero no está triste, porque ¿con quién está?" "Con tío Ivo," she answered. (Ivo was her mother's brother, who also had been killed by the police, five months before her father was killed.) Then she smiled and made a twirl. Her maternal great-grandmother, seated on the sofa, let out a soft laugh. "See," she said, "they visit her at night, they speak to her at night, and because of that, she is so happy."

When I returned to Baltimore in January 2013 after several continuous months of work in Z, I attempted to write. But how to write when life and death are burned into the body of ethnography, too? The corrosions, the betrayals, and the losses are not adequately described in terms of a theory of trauma that focuses us on the repetition of an event, or in terms of a picture of healing that seeks an end to the story or seeks to erase the marks that death and violence imprint on the self and the world. Rather, the question seems to be how such darkness is lived with and gains expression. Mysteriously, it is the scorched life of the everyday itself that offers the care that heals and also offers a possibility of writing as a gesture of healing.

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Retos que confrontan los académicos en el ambiente de precariedad del momento actual

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Uno de los principales retos que atraviesa México es el promedio de escolaridad. En el 2010, el Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI) reportó una media nacional de 8.6 pero con diferencias significativas entre entidades federativas. Por ejemplo, los estados de Chiapas y Oaxaca reportaron los índices más bajos con 6.7 y 6.9 respectivamente, mientras que el Distrito Federal y el estado de Nuevo León obtuvieron los índices de escolaridad más altos con 10.5 y 9.8 respectivamente (Banco de Información INEGI). Esta diferencia substancial representa en definitiva un reto para México, y su explicación puede ser abordada desde el contexto de precariedad del sistema educativo mexicano. Deficiencias palpables no solamente existen en la infraestructura educativa, en la necesidad de una actualización de temas y uniformidad del currículo impartido, en una insuficiente capacitación a docentes así como de vocaciones reales para ejercer esta profesión. Sin embargo, una raíz profunda que ha causado precariedad y estragos al sistema educativo mexicano han sido los grupos de poder dentro del magisterio. Hasta hace poco los medios de contratación y de estímulos eran regulados por el Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación (SNTE), actor colectivo que manejaba también un modus operandi de comercialización y herencia de plazas docentes y, que había creado una carrera magisterial poco competitiva y con exigencias muy limitadas (Loyo 2002). Ante este panorama, la nueva reforma educativa 2012–2013 puede ser entendida como una estrategia política para desplazar grupos de poder. Esta última reforma educativa ejerció una poderosa atracción de la opinión pública así como en muchos casos generó contradicciones o desacuerdos por parte del magisterio a partir de un nuevo sistema de evaluación docente; lo cual desencadenó una serie de

manifestaciones y paro de labores por parte del profesorado en diferentes regiones de México. Aunque mucho se podría discutir de la institucionalidad del sistema educativo y sus reformas, el objetivo de este breve escrito es sobre todo, reflexionar en un aspecto profundo sobre la precariedad de la educación en México. Mi pregunta principal sería si ¿realmente la nueva reforma 2012–2013 podrá reducir las brechas educativas entre el norte y el sur del país? Y si, ¿la precariedad educativa es un reflejo de la débil construcción social y de identidad por la que atraviesa México no sólo actualmente sino desde tiempos de la conquista? Para tratar de contestar estas preguntas viene a mi mente el trabajo de Pierre Bourdieu, quien aborda el concepto de bienes culturales los cuales no solamente se refieren a la infraestructura y a las instituciones, sino también al conjunto de hábitos y comportamientos que él denomina como estado incorporado. Este estado o también cultura objetivada sólo cobra sentido cuando un individuo se apropia de un bien, el cual le sirve para leer, interpretar y valorizar su entorno. Considero que en la medida que el sistema educativo logre que los estudiantes interioricen el conocimiento, será la forma en que podrán incidir en su realidad, en su toma de decisiones y en la creación de nuevas oportunidades; estaría entonces disminuyendo esa brecha educativa entre las diferentes regiones de nuestro país. Por otro lado, la precariedad educativa también puede verse como un sistema que ha tratado de reconstruir o tomar modelos educativos de otros países, como es el finlandés, el brasileño o el francés, pero que evidentemente, ante las diferencias culturales, vale la pena iniciar un debate intelectual sobre los diferentes ámbitos educativos en México (desde los más limitados hasta los más fortalecidos), reconocer sus diferencias sustanciales, y con las experiencias de otros modelos

educativos diseñar uno que se adecue al contexto en que se vive. Por tanto, los símbolos pertenecientes a un territorio pueden ser pieza clave de esta interiorización del conocimiento, donde la realidad territorial externa es filtrada de manera subjetiva para hacerla interna (Giménez 1996). Estas diferencias de símbolos entre los territorios de México, prevé que dichas diferencias seguirán a menos que haya un verdadero esfuerzo por integrar un sistema educativo que aglutine elementos de diferentes regiones y se incorporen bajo un enfoque sistémico que permita un mejor entendimiento del todo, de nuestra cultura e identidad.

Finalmente considero que un análisis detallado conllevaría a analizar el entorno en el cual se desenvuelven los maestros en la actualidad. Es sorprendente ver cómo algunos de ellos, principalmente en el sur del país, acuden a zonas tan remotas donde en ocasiones los servicios e infraestructura son limitados. Las facilidades docentes son marginadas al grado que un salón de clases puede albergar a varios grupos escolares, adaptarse a varios usos, incluso de vivienda personal, o bien, utilizarse para eventos comunitarios. En breve, considero que el corazón de todo sistema educativo son los maestros, por tanto en la medida en que se resuelvan sus condiciones precarias y mejore su capacitación, el sistema educativo avanzará y logrará sus objetivos de enseñanza-aprendizaje y podrá incidir en un cambio de creencias y transformación positiva de la realidad.

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I Am Mexican but I'm Not Guilty

by OMAR FIGUEROA | Cornell University | of32@cornell.edu

"I am Mexican, but I'm not guilty." This is what I wanted to communicate that day in March 2013 at the Brownsville airport, to the Border Patrol agents and to myself. I wanted to say it to the younger me: to the 7-year-old Omarcito, the 8-year-old, the 20-year-old, the 27-year-old me—to the Omar who grew up believing that the simple fact of being Mexican on the border is reason enough to incite suspicion from immigration authorities, that being Mexican is shameful. Even though no one ever said these exact words to me, they were ideas I learned during the 18 years that I grew up on the border. (In fact, the idea that "appearing" Mexican on the border—from the Border Patrol's point of view—is indeed sufficient reason to be seen as suspicious was established by U.S. federal law in plain contravention of constitutional norms: for reference, see the majority opinion expressed by the Supreme Court justices in *U.S. v. Martinez-Fuerte* [1976]).

That day in March was the day I declared my opposition to those laws and norms. If the U.S. constitution declares that its rights apply to any person who finds him- or herself within this country's borders, it cannot be that some of us are ineligible for such protections simply because we *appear* to be non-European or nonwhite. I say "appear" because there is a very important distinction between nationality/citizenship and physiognomy. Citizenship refers to the condition of being part of a territory, and nationality is conferred by governments. Neither of the two is obviously or directly related to physical appearance. That morning in Brownsville, I was trying to clothe myself in the mantle of rights which the U.S. Constitution guarantees to all persons. But, as it turned out, the mantle didn't come in my size.

I say that my resistance that morning was dedicated to a younger me because, like many border youth, I grew up with the constant presence of Border Patrol agents and other policing authorities. It was such a constant and oppressive presence that it is even registered in the collective psyche via a joking phrase that isn't very funny but which is still often heard: "¡Agáchate, ahí viene la migra!" (Get down! Here comes the Border Patrol!) Perhaps we don't think too much about this state of surveillance and enforcement that surrounds us as Mexicans in the borderlands. But that "joke" (and other, similar ones) shows how much our consciousness was aligned to the terror of living on the border (with or without papers).

The fact of the matter is that, whether one thinks much about it or not, there's always the awareness of being watched and surveilled by various official and unofficial authorities. On the one hand, I've put enough geographic, temporal, and critical distance between myself and my former life on the border to notice the extent of the trauma I experienced. But the plain truth is that I've never escaped from that discriminatory gaze. The racist, discriminatory border follows me wherever I go, no matter how far I am from the country's borders.

My point is this: being Mexican or Latino/a on the border, it's easy to think that constitutional rights do not belong to us. In effect, this is exactly how it seems. It's what the Brownsville police wanted to remind me and Nancy of. But it isn't and shouldn't be this way. That's why we refused to answer the Border Patrol's questions that morning. I'm tired of totally submitting myself to the authority of the Border Patrol because I'm Mexican; I'm tired of denying I'm Mexican simply to avoid being bothered by authorities. That

day, I declared through my resistance that I am Mexican and have no shame in being so. I am Mexican, but I am not suspicious, I am not at fault. Mexican or not, I have the right as a person, as a human being, to dignity: to the assumption that I will be protected under constitutional law and in accordance with international norms.

Representatives of the state, the county prosecutors, say that because I'm Mexican, I have no right to resist invasive, discriminatory questioning and Border Patrol intimidation. They say that there is no constitutional law on the border, that one is not allowed to question or challenge the totalizing authority of the Border Patrol. But what I have to say to them is very simple and unchanging: My name is Omar Figueredo and I am Mexican but I am not guilty. I'm Mexican but I have no shame in saying so. I'm Mexican and I have every right to live without fear. I'm Mexican and I have the right to dignity. I'm Mexican and I don't regret it. On the morning of March 26, 2013, I was arrested because I defended my rights; I was arrested because I ceased submitting completely to the racism that sustains the border between the United States and Mexico. No more fear of the Border Patrol. No more intimidation. ■

Precariedades, exclusiones, emergencias: Presidential Panels at LASA2015 in San Juan, Puerto Rico

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The words *precariedades*, *exclusiones*, *emergencias* invite us to envision a broad range of debates at LASA2015, engaging issues across fields and approaches. These words have already inspired many LASA members to propose panels, workshops, and presentations that speak to the wide scope of these terms. In order to contribute to this discussion, we program co-chairs, together with the LASA president, have organized three presidential panels. One panel will address the current state of education, the university, and academic labor; another the impact of and possible responses to the academic dominance of certain forms of disciplinary hierarchization of knowledges to the detriment of alternative, local forms and agents of knowledge production; and a third panel will bring together prominent indigenous scholars from both North and South America to engage in a hemispheric dialogue on indigenous intellectual agency and the role of scholarship by native scholars.

When we chose the terms *precariedades*, *exclusiones*, and *emergencias* to give a thematic focus and identity to this LASA Congress in Puerto Rico, we thought of the paradox of Latin American studies as a field that is overpopulated by books, articles, research projects, teaching initiatives, and institutional arrangements that aim to foster reflection and discussion on social and economic crises, the marginalization of vast popular sectors in the region, and the cyclical irruption of social and political unrest in disparate geographical scenarios. But we hardly study or pay much-needed attention to the very precariousness of our humanistic profession, the present and future of doctoral students in the face of a shrinking job market across disciplines, and the

situation of many colleagues facing an environment of budget cuts, depletion of research funds, and uncertain prospects of institutional stability vis-à-vis increasing pressure for “productivity” at all levels, not to mention the realities of librarians and staff members in schools who undergo even more deteriorated labor conditions and higher pressure for job performance. Considering how important this is and that it’s a part of our everyday lives, this issue paradoxically has not received nearly the attention it deserves within scholarly debates on Latin America. We believe that it is urgent to address these processes of precariousness and exclusion.

At the same time, it is equally relevant to put at the center of this discussion the extraordinary flow of ideas, knowledge, and creative actions that social agents, communities, and individuals are forging to respond to the current crisis in the humanities and social sciences. It is the at-times-unexpected *emergence* of subjects, views, and practices that offers concrete alternatives to conventional models of scholarship, teaching, and education—many of them fostering new ways to relate our academic work to communities and persons in the realm of public life.

Precariousness in Higher Education

That the corporate model of “labor flexibilization” has become the rule in academic administration in recent decades has created a situation of vulnerability for students, teachers, and researchers. This subject requires urgent research and study in the Americas. For example, the recently released Delphi Project report confirms that approximately 70 percent of all instructors in U.S. colleges and universities are now

contingent faculty, which implies that they are divested of any labor rights or employment security. The squeeze on tenure-track positions and their replacement by short-term contracts has made the job market very challenging for many of our young colleagues, who can now look forward to little more than poverty-level income with no benefits. Even more precarious is the status of scholars and researchers in Latin America. According to reports from members of the Federación de Colegios del Personal Académico de la UNAM, approximately 70 percent of teaching at UNAM, the largest higher education institution in Latin America, is now the responsibility of professors in part-time positions and under temporary contracts. In many Latin American countries, scores of our colleagues have to teach in several schools to make a living, especially in countries where the academic field is small and fragmented; this situation is aggravated by the dominance of a few elite universities that end up hiring only their own students. Within the neoliberal regime of “flexible” academic labor, young and even senior colleagues have to teach here and there, a practice that has generated a whole new lexicon to describe it. For example, in Chile, *profesor hora* or *profesora hora* has become the idiomatic way to name this precarious academic status (or lack of status).

To address this pressing issue and critical reality for the profession, we will have a presidential panel on “Precarity in Higher Education Access,” which will feature activist academics who have played an important role in defending public education and advocating for the labor rights of university workers. They will share their experiences and reflections on

the current state of the academic professions, engaging the uneven realities of higher education in North, Central, and South America and the Caribbean. In this context, educator and activist María Maisto will speak about the challenges that the U.S.-based organization New Faculty Majority faces today in its effort to advocate for academic freedom and labor rights, especially addressing the precarious situation of adjunct and contingent faculty. From Latin America, we will have voices and views of leaders of student movements in Puerto Rico and Chile who have been staging claims against the profit-oriented approach of governmental agents and private investors in education. From that perspective, this presidential panel will feature speakers who are part of a growing trend that opposes the corporate model of a Wal-Mart-like type of university and actively defends a humanistic vision of higher education in the challenging scenario of the present century.

Epistemic Exclusions, Emergences, and Emancipations in Latin America

Our second presidential panel will discuss epistemic modes of exclusion in academic and nonacademic spaces. In recent decades, researchers from critical areas such as feminist, indigenous, and Afro-Latino studies have begun to criticize what has been called “epistemic colonialism” (*colonialismo epistémico*), a regime of knowledge that has positioned Western trends and methods of knowledge as the sole authoritative forms of knowledge, invoking universal perspectives and values. In our panel, entitled “Epistemic Exclusions, Emergences and Emancipations in Latin America,” we will approach the epistemic exclusions of the Global South in Latin American academic and political spaces through a dialogue between the

Maya K’iche’ sociologist Gladys Tzul Tzul and the Portuguese sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos. De Sousa Santos is a professor at the University of Coimbra in Portugal and Distinguished Scholar at the University of Wisconsin Law School; he has published important work focusing on what he calls *sociology of absences* and *sociology of emergences*. These terms reassess the diversity of human experiences that have been excluded from the Western canon. His most recent project, *ALICE: Strange Mirrors, Unexpected Lessons* (<http://alice.ces.uc.pt/en/index.php/about/>), explores the epistemologies of the South in a search for new theoretical paradigms that could contribute to social justice, with the participation of prominent intellectuals from Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Europe. Although de Sousa Santos has written extensively about Latin America and has been an inspiration for generations of Latin American scholars, this will be our first opportunity to share in his experience at a LASA Congress.

For this intergenerational and intercultural dialogue, we also have invited Maya K’iche’ sociologist Gladys Tzul Tzul, one of the few scholars in Latin America specializing in the study of indigenous forms of government and communitarian democracy. Tzul Tzul is a member of the Comunidad de Estudios Mayas, a newly formed group of Maya researchers in Guatemala. She also is a visual artist and member of the organization of indigenous photographers With Our Own Voice (Con Voz Propia). As a public intellectual, Tzul Tzul has played a fundamental role in reflecting on and denouncing the genocide in Guatemala during the government of Efraín Ríos Montt (1982–1983).

This intergenerational dialogue will be about epistemic exclusions, cognitive justice, and the emergence of “other

knowledges” that are questioning the utopias of capitalist modernities in Latin America. The link between epistemic exclusions and political and social processes will be at the center of this dialogue. In our view, these themes are central to the theoretical concerns of the humanities and social science in Latin America.

Indigenous Intellectual Agency: A Hemispheric Dialogue from Abya Yala

Indigenous leaders, researchers, writers, and artists have been progressively gaining agency in academia in different disciplines, where they have been able to engage in public debates and forums; thus, many indigenous individuals exercise their self-representation as active interlocutors in local and international academic settings. Indigenous research collectives such as the Taller de Historia Oral Andina in Bolivia in the late 1980s, and more recently the Comunidad de Historia Mapuche in Chile, the Red Interdisciplinaria de Investigadores de los Pueblos Indios de México (Red-IINPIM, A.C.), and the Comunidad de Estudios Mayas in Guatemala, among others, have become the base for many of these indigenous scholarly interventions in local and global intellectual debates.

Our third presidential panel at LASA will engage this new conversation by bringing together prominent Native American scholar Robert Warrior and indigenous scholars from Abya Yala¹ to develop a discussion about what indigenous scholarship and agency might mean in today’s academic and nonacademic worlds and in the context of long colonial histories on the continent. Osage scholar Robert Warrior is a leading intellectual and scholar who has contributed not only to the establishment of the field of American

Indian studies in the United States but also to the professional organization of native scholars and researchers. In 2009–2010, he served as the founding president of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association. Currently, he is the director of American Indian studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he is professor of American Indian studies, English, and history. Professor Warrior is the author of major scholarly works in Native American studies.

In order to widen the North/South scope of this dialogue, we have invited three other indigenous scholars. From Mexico, we will have Judith Bautista Pérez, a Zapotec scholar and intellectual from the community of San Juan Atepec, Ixtlán, Oaxaca. She is currently the coordinator of the Red Interdisciplinaria de Investigadores de los Pueblos Indios de México, a nationwide network of indigenous researchers and scholars in Mexico. From Chile, we will feature the participation of José Quidel, who is a Mapuche community authority (*longko*) from the province of Temuco, southern Chile. Quidel is a leading member of the indigenous research collective Comunidad de Historia Mapuche, a group initiative that was formally established in Chile between 2009 and 2011 as an intellectual space exclusively composed of Mapuche researchers. A fourth participant in this panel will be Kichwa scholar Armando Muyolema, who will bring into focus the experience of an indigenous researcher and educator from Ecuador working in the United States. In order to enrich this dialogue, our colleague Emilio del Valle Escalante, a Maya K'iche' scholar who teaches at University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, has agreed to help us in the co-organization of this panel.

This will be the first panel in the history of LASA in which a Native American scholar converses with indigenous scholars based in Latin America or Abya Yala South. In this manner, our presidential panel “Indigenous Intellectual Agency” will update LASA in regard to ongoing endeavors to foster more hemispheric discussion among native researchers. Such endeavors have been taking place in settings such as the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association, where one finds incipient dialogues between indigenous scholars and activists from both the North and South of Abya Yala, and even beyond the hemisphere.

¡San Juan nos espera!

We envision that this LASA Congress will offer a stimulating academic program. Our presidential panels aim to make a small contribution to the larger intellectual and academic debates that will be fostered and staged in panels and workshops by individual participants, sections, and tracks. We hope that these discussions lead us to travel back to our home institutions and our own local environments with some refreshing ideas to challenge existing exclusions, exercise new horizons of knowledge, and contribute to emerging processes that are reshaping our broader social world.

Endnote

¹ *Abya Yala* is a native term that Aymara leader Takir Mamani proposed in the late 1980s to represent what was colonized as the New World. Many indigenous organizations and leaders since then have adopted it in order to provide an alternative to the colonial naming of the continent as “America” or “the Americas.” In the Kuna language (Panama), *Abya Yala* means “land in its full ripeness or maturity.” ■

FILM FESTIVAL LASA2015
XXXIII INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION
precariedades – exclusiones - emergencias

May 27 - 30, 2015—San Juan, Puerto Rico

Claudia Ferman, Director

Film and video materials that are **not** integrated into a panel, workshop, or other regular Congress session may be featured at LASA2015 Film Festival.

Selection criteria are: artistic, technical, and cinematographic excellence; uniqueness of contribution to the visual presentation of materials on Latin America; and relevance to disciplinary, geographic, and thematic interests of LASA members, as evidenced by topics proposed for panels, workshops, and special sessions at recent Congresses.

These films and videos will be screened free of charge in the LASA2015 Film Festival, and compete for the juried designation of LASA2015 Award of Merit in Film, which is given for “excellence in the visual presentation of educational and artistic materials on Latin America.” Films and videos released after January 2014 and those that premiere at the LASA Congress will be given special consideration, if they also meet the above criteria. LASA membership is not required to compete.

Films must be received no earlier than **September 1**, and no later than **December 1, 2014**. Selection will be announced by April 15, 2014. Entries constitute acceptance of the rules and regulations of the LASA Film Festival. Film screeners will not be returned and will be deposited in the festival archives.

To participate in the LASA2015 Film Festival:

1 – Fill out the entry form and send it via email to: cferman@richmond.edu
2 – Send a DVD screener. To ensure consideration, all submissions should be mailed through express services (i.e., UPS, DHL, FedEx). Clearly indicate on the envelope: “No commercial value – Cultural Material.” Screeners should be accompanied by a copy of the completed submission form.

3 – From anywhere in the world except Argentina, send the screeners and submission forms to:

Claudia Ferman, Director
LASA2015 FILM FESTIVAL
315 S. Bellefield Ave, Suite 416, Pittsburgh, PA 15213, USA

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LASA2015 Film Festival
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Section Reports

Asia and the Americas

By Kathleen López and Adrian Hearn,
Co-chairs

On May 22, 2014, the Section for Asia and the Americas held its business meeting. This was the third meeting since the section changed its name from “Section for Latin America and the Pacific Rim” at the 2010 LASA Congress and covered the first tenure of co-chairs Kathleen López (Rutgers University) and Adrian Hearn (University of Sydney).

The co-chairs informed the meeting’s attendees about the section’s activities over the preceding 12 months:

On May 22 the Section hosted a pre-Congress workshop in partnership with the University of Chicago, entitled “Feeding the Masses: China-Latin America Agriculture Connections through Time.” The University of Chicago Center for Latin American Studies hosted the event, and the center’s director Dain Borges provided introductory remarks together with Kenneth Pomeranz of the Department of History. The event was supported by the Worldwide Universities Network (WUN), which provided funding to include speakers from Latin America, Canada, China, and Australia. A description of the event, including a link to the program, is available on the WUN website: <https://www.wun.ac.uk/news/wun-workshop-explores-chinas-relations-latin-america>.

The Section panel “Globalization, Foodways, and Development between Asia and the Americas” continued this theme with presentations from historical, cultural, economic, and geopolitical perspectives.

The Section website has been frequently updated with announcements of events related to Asia-Americas connections and

information about members’ activities and publications.

The section’s membership has remained relatively stable at 68 members as of April 2014.

In preparation for LASA 2014 panel proposals were coordinated via e-mail for those interested in presenting on the topic of Asia and the Americas. Shortly before the Congress, e-mails were sent to the member list with details of all such panels. The section co-chairs will continue to offer these services to members ahead of LASA 2015. Furthermore, since LASA 2015 will take place in Puerto Rico, the section plans to hold a pre-Congress workshop on Asia-Caribbean relations through history.

During the meeting, the incumbents were reelected to serve as co-chairs for the period 2014–2015, and the following executive council was elected: Vladimir Rouvinski (treasurer), Universidad Icesi; Ruben Berrios, Lock Haven University; Monica Dehart, University of Puget Sound; R. Evan Ellis, National Defense University; Roanne Kantor, University of Texas at Austin; Junyoung Verónica Kim, University of Iowa; and Zelideth Rivas, Marshall University.

Bolivia

By Guillermo Delgado P, Chair; Chris Krueger and Isabel Scarborough,
Committee Members

Este año los/as académicos/as interesados/as en Bolivia presentaron cerca de cincuenta ponencias a través de todo el congreso. La Sección también dió la bienvenida a los becarios de LASA procedentes de Bolivia y nuevo/as investigadores interesados/as en la temática del país.

La Sección también convocó al Taller/Workshop titulado “Bolivian Studies: In and Beyond Bolivia”. Desafortunadamente, el horario (último día del congreso, última sesión del día) no contribuyó a convocar más asistentes a esta discusión. Sin embargo, Isabel Scarborough, que tuvo que ausentarse, nos encargó presentar una encuesta que ella condujo, con el objeto de identificar intereses académicos por parte de la membresía de la Sección. Los resultados de la encuesta estarán disponibles en la página web que está diseñando la colega Annabelle Conroy. Una parte de esta página web dedicaremos a destacar la investigación, publicaciones, contactos y actividades de lo/as miembros de la Sección Bolivia de LASA. Hubieron solamente diez asistentes a este Taller, pero el nivel de participación fue activa y promisoría.

Este año los miembros de la Sección no respondieron a la convocatoria para cambiar la directiva, y debido a la ausencia de candidato/as, la Sección procedió a aceptar “voluntario/as” para poder garantizar el funcionamiento de la Sección con nuevas personas.

Nos alegra anunciar que la nueva directiva “voluntaria” será dirigida por la colega Elizabeth Monasterios (University of Pittsburgh), Annabelle Conroy (University of Florida, Gainesville), Virginia Aillón (UMSA), Martín Carrión (University of the Sciences, Philadelphia), y Núria Vilanova (American University).

Entre las sesiones que más concurrencia atrajeron se destacó el homenaje al Prof. Benjamin Kohl (Temple University) que falleció poco después de la conferencia de LASA-Washington D.C. 2013. Un grupo de colegas que estimamos sobremanera a Ben se movilizó inmediatamente después de su deceso el pasado año para inscribir la

Sesión en su homenaje en LASA 2014. Liderizado por Nicole Fabricant, Bret Gustafson, Nancy Postero, Pamela Calla, José Antonio Lucero, Andrew Orta, y Guillermo Delgado-P., la sesión estuvo enriquecida con la presentación de Linda Farthing, y la presencia de los padres de Ben.

Durante la reunión de business, la Sección también acordó crear una beca “Ben Kohl” para estudiantes bolivianos, militantes de las causas sociales que trabajen la problemática de las ciencias sociales desde el punto de vista del compromiso del intelectual y participante activo—que fue nuestro colega Ben Kohl.

Participantes de este taller sugieren: (1) armar un posible panel sobre las relaciones entre Chile y Bolivia que refuerce la comunicación comunitaria antes que diplomática/oficial con el propósito de acercar la(s) experiencia(s) vivida(s) de comunidades/familias/personas cuyas raíces se hallan en ambos países; (2) explorar acercamientos que privilegien el estudio de los movimientos del medio ambiente que afectan el área. También se continuará explorando relaciones de colaboración entre instituciones, bolivianistas de universidades extranjeras con las instituciones académicas bolivianas (PIEB, CESU, etc.), la AEB y otras colegas (Virginia Aillón) que se hallan en el país.

La Sección también presentó una propuesta para traducir la obra de René Zavaleta Mercado al inglés, respondiendo a una convocatoria lanzada por Duke University Press. Agradecemos a Mauricio Souza (Plural) y a Chris Krueger, por su directa colaboración con este proyecto. Inicialmente esta propuesta ha sido aceptada.

Brazil

By Desmond Arias, Co-chair

There were 18 attendees at the Section business meeting. The meeting began by recognizing the winners of this year’s Section prizes. The Section awarded prizes for best doctoral dissertation, best article, and best book published or defended in 2013.

The dissertation prize went to Graham Denyer Willis, who defended his dissertation entitled “The Killing Consensus: Homicide Detectives, Police That Kill, and Organized Crime in São Paulo” at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The prize committee was formed by John French, Joseph Marques, and Jerry Dávila. There were four nominations for the prize. The winner was determined by the members of the committee reading each of the nominated dissertations. The winner was chosen by consensus.

The article prize was awarded to John Tofik Karam for the article entitled “The Lebanese Diaspora at the Tri-border and the Re-drawing of South American Geo-Politics, 1950–1992.” The article was published in *Mashriq and Mahjar: Journal of Middle East Migration Studies*. Jessica Rich received an honorable mention for her article “Grassroots Bureaucracy: Intergovernmental Relations and Popular Mobilization in Brazil’s AIDS Policy Sector,” published in *Latin American Politics and Society*. The award committee was composed of Ángela Randolpho Paiva and Amy Chazkel. There were 11 nominees for the prize. Both readers read all the nominated articles and reached their decision by consensus.

Rebecca Neera Abers and Margaret E. Keck won the Section’s book prize for

Practical Authority: Agency and Institutional Change in Brazilian Water Politics (Oxford University Press, 2013).

Tracy Devine Guzmán received an honorable mention for *Native and National in Brazil: Indigeneity after Independence* published by the University of North Carolina Press. The award committee was composed of Desmond Arias, Pedro Erber, and Ivani Vassoler-Froelich. There were 13 nominees for the prize. The books were divided into groups that were read by one committee member. Two books were nominated by each committee member for a final group of 6 read by the entire committee. The decision was made by consensus.

The Section then had an open discussion that focused principally on future Section panels. The group present made two suggestions for Section-sponsored panels for the next LASA Congress. The first would focus on the 2014 elections. The second would focus on identity movements. The chairs informed those in attendance that the Section was eligible for four panels at the upcoming Congress based on having nearly 300 members.

After the discussion the Section moved to hold elections. First, elections were held for co-chair. Ivani Vassoler-Froelich (SUNY Fredonia) and John French (Duke University) were elected. The Section then elected Jessica Rich (Tulane University) as treasurer. Finally the Section elected three executive committee members. João Feres (IESP/UERJ) and Tracy Devine Guzmán (University of Miami) were elected to full two-year terms. Sean Mitchell (Rutgers University), who was elected on the same ballot, volunteered to serve a one-year term to fill the seat vacated by Ivani Vassoler-Froelich when she won election as chair. Joseph Marques (Kings College London), who was elected to a two-year term last

year, will continue to serve on the executive committee for the next year.

Central America

By Ellen Moodie, Co-chair

Approximately 35 members attended the Central America Section (CAS) meeting May 22. The Section currently has 199 members. Newly elected officers include co-chairs Sonja Wolf (INSYDE, Mexico City), and Claudia P. Rueda (Texas A&M, Corpus Christie); secretary-treasurer Sophie Esch (Colorado State); and advisory board members Héctor M. Cruz Feliciano (CET Academic Programs) and Krystin Krause (Northern Arizona University); joining continuing members Yansi Perez (Carleton College) and Erin Finzer (University of Arkansas at Little Rock). Outgoing officers are Ellen Moodie (University of Illinois), and Cecilia Rivas (University of California, Santa Cruz).

The Section sponsored three panels: a roundtable, “Violent Modernity,” about El Salvador in the 1930s; a panel on revolutionary music and images; and a panel on twentieth-century culture and politics in Nicaragua. Last year, members voted to invite a special speaker to the next meeting. We could not organize such a session for LASA2014. This year we gathered ten nominations in advance. First place went to cultural anthropologist Irma Alicia Velásquez Nimatuj, a member of the K’iche’ ethnic group. Second place went to Miguel Huezo Mixco, Salvadoran writer, poet, and political commentator. The winners of the two \$750 travel fellowships, Leonor Zúniga Gutiérrez (Nicaragua) and Sofia Vindas Solano (Costa Rica), were introduced. Co-chairs Ellen Moodie and Héctor Cruz Feliciano and Secretary-Treasurer Cecilia Rivas selected them after evaluating the five applications according

to a list of priorities: recipients should ideally be from Central America and live in Central America; they should be students; and should explain their financial need in a short statement. Next year two CAS fellowships will be offered again.

Colombia

By Constanza López, Chair

In 2014, the Colombia Section sponsored three panels and presented a \$300 travel award to Ángela Castillo Ardila, a graduate student of geography from Universidad de los Andes in Bogotá. It awarded the Monserrat Ordóñez Prize to Constanza López for her monograph *Trauma, memoria y cuerpo: Narrativas testimoniales de mujeres colombianas (1985–2000)*. This award is given in recognition of a groundbreaking work that embodies a fresh and creative approach to the Colombian humanities.

The Section held its business meeting on May 22, with 39 members present. Since it was decided at the meeting in Washington to hold elections every two years, the executive committee continues to be chair, Constanza López (University of North Florida); vice-chair, Alejandro Quin (University of Utah); secretary-treasurer, Leah Carroll (University of California, Berkeley); communications manager, Joseph Avski (Texas A&M University); student representatives, Ben Johnson (Columbia University) and Catalina Arango (New York University); advisors: Virginia Bouvier (United States Institute of Peace), Mauricio Romero (Universidad Javeriana), María Mercedes Jaramillo (Fitchburg State University), and Juana Suárez (New York University). The Section celebrated its reception at the restaurant Zapatista on May 23. For the coming year, the Section, which currently has 158

members, will sponsor three panels and will award the Michael Jiménez Prize to recognize an essay collection or monograph based on original research in the fields of anthropology, history, sociology, political science, or related areas, which demonstrates excellence in conceptual terms as well as in its impact, creativity, and possible influence in Colombia and in the field of Colombian studies. The Section publishes a monthly bulletin. We welcome all calls for papers and other communications that might be of interest to our membership (please send to lasacolombia@gmail.com).

Colonial

By Ann De León, Chair

Since its inauguration at LASA2013 and under the skillful leadership of Clayton McCarl, the Section has continued to grow as a dynamic interdisciplinary forum for scholars of the Latin American colonial world, finishing 2013 with 116 members. At the business meeting in Chicago there were over 25 members in attendance, including officers Clayton McCarl (University of North Florida), Ann De León (University of Alberta), Raúl Marrero-Fente (University of Minnesota), and Patricia Tovar Rojas (City University of New York).

The two Section-sponsored panels at LASA2014 coordinated by Mónica Díaz (“Urban Space, Spectacle and Race”) and Raúl Marrero-Fente and Magali Carrera (“Paradigm Shift: New Theories and Methodologies of Colonial Latin America”) were well attended, as were the over 30 other sessions examining colonial topics. As per the Section’s leadership proposal approved by the membership earlier this year, the following individuals will serve on the executive council for 2014–2015: Pablo García Loaeza (West Virginia University,

council member), Mónica Díaz (Georgia State University, council member and secretary-treasurer), Raúl Marrero-Fente (vice-chair and chair of awards committee), Ann De León (chair) and Clayton McCarl (council member). We are happy to report that the Section newsletter featuring Section news, awards, member publications, call for papers, and archival and scholarly resources (available on the Colonial Section website) has continued to publish quarterly. It is produced by Clayton McCarl (editor), Alejandro Enríquez and Pablo García Loaeza (assistant editors), and Rocío Quispe-Agnoli (editorial advisor). This year also saw the creation of the Maureen Ahern Doctoral Dissertation Award in Colonial Latin American Studies under the leadership of Ann De León (vice-chair and chair of awards committee). Nineteen submissions were received. Five semifinalists, selected by an interdisciplinary jury of three respected scholars of colonial Latin America, were invited to submit their full dissertations. The prize ceremony was carried out by one of the jury members, Santa Arias. Larissa Brewer-García received an “Honorable Mention” certificate of recognition for her dissertation “Beyond Babel: Translations of Blackness in Colonial Peru and New Granada” (University of Pennsylvania, 2013). Jason Dyck (in attendance) was named the winner and received a certificate of recognition and a \$500 award for his dissertation “The Sacred Historian’s Craft: Francisco de Florencia and Creole Identity in Seventeenth-Century New Spain” (University of Toronto, 2012). The generous anonymous donors of the prize were thanked and members were encouraged to donate to future prizes.

Suggestions for next year’s priorities were discussed at the business meeting, such as creating a new award for best colonial

essay by a Latin American scholar or a first book prize in order to encourage more international participation and to promote the work of scholars early in their careers. Raúl Marrero-Fente, the new chair of the awards committee, will be drafting a new prize proposal during the summer. Other priorities discussed included encouraging graduate student participation in the Section and the potential development of a website. The Section’s annual reception at Tanta Peruvian restaurant, graciously organized by Mónica Díaz, provided an enjoyable venue where members could interact and was attended by approximately 60 individuals.

Cuba

By Lillian Manzor and Nancy Morejón, Co-chairs

Two hundred forty-one scholars from Cuba were accepted for the LASA Program and 30 received LASA travel grants. One hundred thirty-three applied for visas; of these, seven applications were refused/denied.

The Section organized four very diverse panels and workshops for the Chicago Congress. It introduced a new panel subtitled “New Voices, New Perspectives” aimed at bringing together junior scholars on and off the island in order to highlight new theoretical approaches in Cuban studies. During the year, the Section streamlined election guidelines so that LASA can run its elections, and it added a graduate student representative to its executive council. It instituted the Lilia Rosa y Jorge José Domínguez Award for the best paper on a Cuban topic presented at the annual Congress. The first award will be given in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in May 2015.

The Section business meeting had a full agenda and a full audience; there were over 125 in attendance. The Section’s Premio a la Excelencia Académica en los Estudios sobre Cuba was awarded to Aurelio Alonso Tejada. Items discussed at the meeting included (1) the Section’s and LASA’s executive efforts to prevent visa denials; these were coordinated by Professor Milagros Martínez in Havana and Dr. Jorge Domínguez in Washington, DC; (2) strategies to bring younger scholars and scholars from the provinces into the Section; (3) presentation of the Domínguez Award; (4) election guidelines.

The reception held at Potter’s included a pasta bar, wine and beer, and Cuban music. Special thanks go to Elaine Scheye for organizing it.

Section election results include, for co-chairs, Lisandro Pérez (CUNY) and Rafael Hernández Rodríguez (Revista Temas). Executive Board members include Raúl Fernández (University of California, Irvine), Félix Valdés García (Instituto de Filosofía de Cuba), and Michael Bustamante (Yale). They will be joining the other three members of the board whose terms expire in 2015, Jorge Domínguez (Harvard), Everlery Perez (Universidad de la Habana), and John Kirk (Dalhousie University).

Section activities for the coming year include streamlining the membership mechanism for scholars from Cuba and outreach to younger academics and artists, especially those residing in the provinces; updating the website; and creating a presence in social media.

Sincere thanks go to Mario Bronfman (FORD Foundation), Sarah Doty (Social Science Research Council), Andrea Panaretos (Christopher Reynolds

Foundation), and the Joseph Carter Memorial Fund (University of Miami) for their contributions to the participation of scholars from Cuba in the Chicago Congress.

Culture, Power, and Politics

By Juan Poblete, Co-chair

The Section had a very productive meeting in Chicago. In addition to the numerous panels under the track heading, the Section organized a series of three very well-attended workshops under the title “Twenty-Five Years of Latin American Studies in Culture, Power and Politics.” The idea of the workshops (consecutive and in the same room, a great setting) was a critical examination of the various “turns” that have impacted the field over the past quarter century. The Section further plans to publish revised and expanded versions of the papers in a volume tentatively entitled “Turn and Turn Again: Twenty-Five Years of Latin American Studies in Culture, Power and Politics.” A call was made to Section members to identify and propose additional turns to be included in the projected volume. The business meeting resulted in the election of a new secretary-treasurer, Ana Wortman (Universidad de Buenos Aires), and the renewal of council member Silvia Kurlat Ares (independent scholar) as well as the election of Sarah Town (Princeton University) to the Section’s board. The newly elected co-chair is Justin Read (University at Buffalo, SUNY) who has been working as a board member over the last year. Jon Beasley Murray (University of British Columbia) has graciously agreed to stay on the board for another year. It was resolved that for the coming year, the Section’s priorities would be to organize an equally successful presence in Puerto Rico, and using the

Section’s accrued capital to invite one or more major figures to LASA 2015, perhaps as part of a pre-Congress workshop or conference.

The turns explored in the workshops were: post-hegemony: Jon Beasley Murray (University of British Columbia); popular culture: Pablo Alabarces (Universidad de Buenos Aires); gender and sexuality: Matthew Gutmann (Brown University); transnational: Juan Poblete (University of California, Santa Cruz); memory: Michael Lazzara (University of California-Davis); affect: Laura Podalsky (Ohio State University); ethics: Erin Graff (University of Southern California); subalternism: Gareth Williams (University of Michigan); New Latin American Left: Bruno Bosteels (Cornell University); and deconstruction and politics: Alberto Moreiras (Texas A&M University).

Defense, Public Security, and Democracy

By Deborah Norden, Co-chair

Approximately 24 people attended the business meeting; since co-chair José Manuel Ugarte encountered a travel delay and was not able to be present at the beginning of the meeting, council member Maiah Jaskoski served as secretary during the meeting.

In accordance with the Section’s decision from the 2013 Business Meeting, the Section sponsored two sessions: a panel on armed forces and society organized by Sam Fitch, and a roundtable on military roles and missions. Both sessions had at least a couple dozen people in attendance, and, even more notably, enjoyed full participation by all of those included in the panel. The Section co-chairs and board also selected two recipients for scholarship awards, discussed below. Less successful

were our efforts at recruitment during the year, and our incipient efforts to update and more actively utilize the Section’s webpage to share research and other communications. These will be priorities for the new Section officers in 2014–2015.

Because of changes in Section guidelines, we first needed to decide on our rules before proceeding to elect officers for the coming year. The Section decided to have co-chairs serve two years, staggering those so that there would be continuity. The first year co-chair will also serve as secretary-treasurer. Webpage responsibility will now move to the council, shared between one person in the second year of the term and one newly elected person. That decided, Deborah Norden (Whittier College) resigned as co-chair, and the Section confirmed José Manuel Ugarte (Universidad de Buenos Aires) to serve a second year as co-chair. The Section then elected Kristina Mani (Oberlin College) to a two-year term as co-chair, and J. Samuel Fitch (University of Colorado, Boulder) and Pamela Figueroa (Universidad Central de Chile) to serve two-year terms to the council, from June 2014 through June 2016, replacing Maiah Jaskoski (Naval Postgraduate School) and Liza Zúñiga (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile), whose terms end in June 2014. Sam and Pamela will serve alongside fellow council members Jaime Baeza (Universidad de Chile) and Rafael Martínez (Universidad de Barcelona), whose terms end in June 2015. Kristina Mani (Oberlin College) will also serve as secretary-treasurer during her first year as co-chair; Jaime Baeza will assume responsibility for the webpage, with assistance from Pamela Figueroa. Pending for next year is further discussion of how to best assure diversity between the co-chairs, since the traditional U.S./Latin America split excludes those from other areas of the world (i.e., Europe).

The Section made two awards, “The Latin American Studies Association Section on Defense, Public Security and Democracy Award for Distinguished Scholarship” Junior Scholar award, for a paper presented at LASA2013; and an award for best article published by a Section member during 2013. Each award received a prize of \$200. All Section members were invited to submit or nominate papers. We had four entries for the paper award and six entries for the article award. The Junior Scholar award was selected by a panel composed of the council members Jaime Baeza, Maiah Jaskoski, Rafael Martínez, and Liza Zúñiga; this award went to Natalia Vargas Palacios for “The Democratic Insertion of Armed Forces: The Process of Institutional Reforms in the Defense System; a compared proposal for measuring the quality of the democracy in the defense’s partial regime.” The article award was selected by the co-chairs, Deborah Norden and José Manuel Ugarte, and went to Maiah Jaskoski, for “Private Financing of the Military: A Local Political Economy Approach.”

The Section decided to henceforth offer these awards on an annual basis. We also decided to initiate a lifetime achievement award (symbolic, rather than monetary) to honor a senior scholar who stands out for his or her contributions to the field, beginning in 2015.

Economics and Politics

By Gabriel Ondetti, Chair

This past year the Economics and Politics Section introduced a new travel grant of \$500 to help a Section member attend the LASA Congress. The first grant was awarded to Elia C. Alves, a graduate student at the Federal University of Pernambuco. The selection committee was

made up of Mahrukh Doctor (University of Hull), Fernando Leiva (University of California, Santa Cruz), and Gabriel Ondetti (Missouri State University).

For the second year, we awarded two Section research prizes. The prize for the best article published by an early career Section member in the past calendar year went to José Carlos Orihuela for his article “How Do ‘Mineral-States’ Learn? Path-Dependence, Networks, and Policy Change in the Development of Economic Institutions,” published in *World Development*. We also awarded an honorable mention to Felipe Amin Filomeno for his article “How Argentine Farmers Overpowered Monsanto: The Mobilization of Knowledge-Users and Intellectual Property Regimes,” in the *Journal of Politics in Latin America*. The selection committee consisted of Sybil Rhodes (Universidad del CEMA), Steven Samford (Scripps College), and Tony Spanakos (Montclair State University). Our prize for the best article published by a member at any stage in their career went to Juliana Martínez Franzoni and Diego Sánchez Ancochea for their article “Can Latin American Production Regimes Complement Universalistic Welfare Regimes: Implications from the Costa Rican Case,” which was published by *Latin American Research Review*.

An honorable mention was awarded to Kenneth C. Shadlen and Elize Massard da Fonseca for their article “Health Policy as Industrial Policy: Brazil in Comparative Perspective,” which came out in *Politics & Society*. The selection committee for this award was made up of Eduardo Gomes (Universidade Federal Fluminense), Kathryn Hochstetler (University of Waterloo), and Rose Spalding (DePaul University). At the 2014 LASA Congress we sponsored two sessions. One was a

panel on “The Politics of Health and Pharmaceuticals in Latin America” and the other was a workshop on “Latin American Political Economy: Why Do Fieldwork When the Data Are All Online?” Both were well attended and very stimulating.

Approximately 20 people attended the Section’s business meeting. We congratulated our award winners and discussed a number of issues facing the Section, including a proposed shift to a staggered system of council elections, the procedure for selecting our sponsored panels, and the possibility of holding a reception at LASA2015. We did not hold elections this term because we were still discussing how to organize the terms for the officers and we wanted to collect feedback on this issue at the annual meeting. However, this summer we will be electing two new council members, who will each serve two-year terms, overlapping with the existing members for one year. In addition, this coming term we will again be organizing two Congress sessions, awarding one or possibly two LASA travel grants, and awarding two research prizes. We may also organize a reception in San Juan.

Ecuadorian Studies

By Rut Roman, Chair

Siendo las 20:15 del jueves 22 de Mayo 2014, se inició la reunión de la Ecuador Section de la Latin American Studies Association (LASA) a la que asistieron 16 personas. En la reunión se trató el siguiente orden del día: (1) Informe de actividades a cargo de Rut Román, Chair de la sección, (2) Renovación de una parte del directorio, (3) Ruegos y preguntas.

La Chair, Rut Román, saludó a los asistentes e informó sobre las siguientes actividades desarrolladas por la sección

desde la última reunión realizada el 30 de mayo de 2013. Se pidió la colaboración de todos los asistentes para fomentar la suscripción de miembros de LASA a la sección de ecuatorianistas debido al descenso de afiliaciones a la misma, lo que repercute, entre otros aspectos, en los recursos que obtiene la sección. Este momento la sección tiene 101 integrantes.

A la sección le correspondió organizar dos paneles en el congreso internacional de LASA. Luego de una convocatoria abierta, en la que podían enviar propuestas todos los integrantes, la sección decidió auspiciar los siguientes paneles para el congreso de Chicago: “Tensiones y tensores de la historia ecuatoriana a través del arte: La memoria social revaluada (1920–2013)” a propuesta de John L. Walker (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University); “Yasuní-ITT como síntoma: La praxis del gobierno ecuatoriano de la Revolución Ciudadana” a propuesta de Francisco Sánchez (Universidad de Valencia). Para la selección de propuestas, se tomó en cuenta que vengan de áreas distintas y que una de ellas provenga de artes y humanidades.

Rut Román agradeció todas las personas que colaboraron para que el VI Encuentro de Ecuatorianistas, sea un éxito. Para el detalle de las actividades presenta el documento que contiene el informe académico y económico, resaltando la gran cantidad de ponencias presentadas y el saldo a favor en lo económico.

Se debatió sobre la realización del VII encuentro de Ecuatorianistas, con énfasis en el lugar de realización. Adrián Bonilla sugirió que el Encuentro de la Sección se realice a la par del Congreso de Ciencias Sociales organizado por FLACSO, propuesta que en el debate se desecha porque los integrantes de la Sección creen en la necesidad de realizar en el Encuentro

de forma autónoma. Los integrantes de la Sección están de acuerdo en la necesidad de que el congreso se realizase fuera de Quito con el fin de dinamizar y estimular las iniciativas de desarrollo académico que se están dando en las diferentes provincias del país. Se pide a Esteban Ortiz, profesor de la Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manta que consulte la posibilidad de que esa universidad sea la sede del nuevo encuentro. Si las gestiones que se realicen en Manta no se concretan de forma positiva, se recibirán propuestas de otros integrantes de la Sección para determinar la potencial sede del nuevo encuentro.

Se invitó a todos los integrantes de la Sección a que enriquezcan las distintas secciones de las página web.

Se informó que el dinero de “becas” que dispone la sección se ha usado para fomentar la participación en el encuentro de Ecuatorianistas, en lugar de auspiciar la participación en los congresos internacionales, tal y como se acordó en Washington 2013.

El premio al libro sobre estudios ecuatorianos fue para: *Whose National Music? Identity, Mestizaje, and Migration in Ecuador*, de la investigadora Ketty Wong. Así también, el jurado decidió hacer mención especial del rigor y calidad académica de los siguientes textos: *El eje del universo: Chamanes, sacerdotes y religiosidad en la cultura Jama Coaque del Ecuador prehispánico*, de Andrés Gutiérrez Usillos; y *Gender, State, and Medicine in Highland Ecuador: Modernizing Women, Modernizing the State 1895–1950*, de Kim Clark.

Rut Román agradeció el enorme trabajo realizado por el jurado integrado por el Dr. José Yáñez del Pozo (Universidad Católica del Ecuador), Dr. Pablo Ospina

(Universidad Andina del Ecuador), y Dra. Carmen Fernández Salvador (Universidad San Francisco de Quito). Al concurso se presentaron siete trabajos. El concurso sobre artículos se realizará en el próximo encuentro de ecuatorianistas.

De acuerdo a los reglamentos de la LASA se procedió a la renovación de una parte del directorio. Se eligen un nuevo Chair y vocales de la sección; el secretario-tesorero tiene un año más de ejercicio. La sección quedó integrado de la siguiente forma: Chair: Teodoro Bustamante (FLACSO-Ecuador), Secretario-tesorero: Francisco Sánchez (Universidad de Valencia); Vocales: Kimberly Lewis (Brown University); Kathleen McInerney (Saint Xavier University, Chicago, and the Center for Inter-American Studies, Cuenca), Camilo Mongua (FLACSO) y Esteban Ponce Ortiz (Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí).

Educación y Políticas Educativas en América Latina

By Cecilia Pittelli and Daniel Schugurensky, Co-chairs

The meeting of the Section Education, Pedagogy and Education Policy in Latin America took place on June 22–23, 2014, in Chicago, with the attendance of 45 delegates. The new officers who were elected are: Oresta López (COLSAN Mexico), chair; Patricia Sommers (University of Texas, Austin), co-chair; Mauricio Horn (Universidad de Buenos Aires), secretary-treasurer. Council members include Cynthia Adlerstein (PUC Chile); Erwin Epstein (Loyola University, Chicago); Teresa González (Universidad de la Lagna, España), and Felipe Pérez Cruz (Cuba).

Some plans for the upcoming term include the publishing of the Section's first newsletter. Responsible for this project will

be Oresta Lopez and Mauricio Horn. Patricia Sommers will be in charge of proposals for special panels for LASA2015 in Puerto Rico.

The Section will promote a publication that allows a link between two important groups of educational researchers in Latin America, the Education Section of LASA and Comparative and International Education Society (CIES), Latin American Special Interest Group (LASIG). This task will be overseen by Erwin Epstein.

Colleagues of the Section who are journal editors will have an open invitation to collaborate on the following education journals: *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, published in several languages and indexed in Scopus, Redalyc, Qualis; interested parties may contact Gustavo Fischman (Arizona State University); *Revista Argentina de Educación Superior*; *Revista Latinoamericana de Educación Comparada*; and *Revista Latinoamericana de Política y Administración de la Educación*, contact Norberto Fernández Lamarra (Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero).

It was agreed to promote an honorary Lifetime Achievement Award from researchers in the field of education of Latin America (diploma and artwork); and a recognition award for young researchers, for contributions in educational research based on best doctoral thesis (diploma). Responsible for this project will be Felipe Cruz and Vera Felicetti (Centro Universitário La Salle).

Environment

By Jennifer Horan, Chair

At the Environment Section business meeting we had a lengthy discussion about

LASA2015. The meeting was attended by two individuals. We did not have elections. We will have elections at the 2015 Congress. Section Chair Jennifer Horan (University of North Carolina, Wilmington) reported that as of the last tally before the Congress, the Section had 81 members. Second, the Section travel grant awardee, Monica Bendini, was unable to travel to LASA and her award was returned to the Section.

This year, the Section sponsored one panel and one workshop. The panel was titled “Citizen Participation in Environmental Conflict” and the workshop was titled “Emerging Research Issues in Latin American Environmentalism.” As in past Congresses in which we used this topic in a workshop format, participants were very engaged and encouraged the Section to continue the workshop. The Section will continue to sponsor a workshop for the 2015 Congress. Unlike the standard panel approach, the workshop allows several more scholars to present their work, to present it in an abbreviated form, and to receive significant feedback from the workshop members as well as the audience.

Ethnicity, Race and Indigenous Peoples

By Emiko Saldivar, Chair

The Section meeting took place on May 23, 2014, and a meeting with the representation of *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies LACES* was conducted on May 24. The following describes both meetings and the agreements reached.

More than 10 percent of the members of the Section were in attendance at the Section business meeting. The elections were confirmed and the composition is as follows: Monica Moreno Figueroa

(Newcastle University), chair 2014–2016 according to the new two-year term voted for; Lorena Ojeda Davila (Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo), secretary 2014–2016, and four council members: Christian Teófilo da Silva (Universidade da Brasília), 2013–2015; Lucas Savino (University of Western Ontario), 2013–2015; Tianna Paschel (University of Chicago), 2014–2016; and Antonio Espinoza (Virginia Commonwealth University), 2014–2016.

The chair presented the finances of the Section. It was agreed that, as more than Section members attend the Ethnicity, Race and Indigenous Peoples (ERIP) conference, the council would decide on the motion of charging an extra amount to all people that attended the conference for the Section to support delegates’ travel, regardless whether they were already members of ERIP or not.

Regarding the third ERIP conference publications, the council explained that only very few papers were selected to be published in *LACES* and that the conference call had created the expectation that more papers would be published. The council recognized that the procedure for this was not carefully thought through, as the council didn’t have the capacity to edit and propose special issues or collections for publication. It was unfortunate not to notify participants that more publications would not occur and this should be taken care of in following conferences.

Meeting attendees discussed the situation of the webpage. Marc Becker, who is in charge of the e-mail lists and the webpage, is happy to update and maintain the webpage but needs members’ input.

The fourth ERIP conference will be held on October 2015 at the Virginia

Commonwealth University. This was announced by McKenna Brown and Antonio Espinoza.

Europe and Latin America Section (ELAS) By Erica Resende, Co-chair

In line with decisions taken last year in Washington (for which see last year's report), the agenda for ELAS in 2013–2014 was to organize the Section panel for the 2014 LASA Congress in Chicago, hold elections, and establish a Facebook page and a Twitter account for ELAS. ELAS organized one official panel for 2014: "Relaciones Europa-América Latina y el Caribe: Nuevas tendencias, nuevos desafíos. Las cadenas de valor, las relaciones transatlánticas y las migraciones en la relación birregional." A Facebook page was opened in June 2013; all members have been invited to visit it and post calls for papers and research opportunities, as well as share publications and other materials of Section interest. Regarding elections, Roberto Dominguez (Suffolk University) was elected as the new co-chair, Flavia Guerra Cavalcanti (Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro) as treasurer, and Bert Hoffman (GIGA Institute of Latin American Studies) and Pedro Caldentey del Pozo (Universidad Loyola Andalucía) have been appointed to the Advisory Council of ELAS. Suggested ideas for panels to be sponsored by ELAS in 2015 are: European Studies in Latin America, and the 2015 Summit CELAC-EU. Proposals should be sent to the co-chairs no later than August 20, 2014.

This year's travel award recipients were Joaquín Roy, Christian E. Ghymers, and Antonio Fidel Romero Gómez. They all presented papers at this year's Section panel and each received US\$250.

Film Studies

By Constanza Burucúa and Carolina Sitnisky, Co-chairs

The business meeting of the Section took place on May 22, 2014, and was attended by 21 members. It was coordinated by Constanza Burucúa, co-chair, and Beatriz Urraca, secretary. The attendants were informed about the Section's membership increase (more than 12 percent from the previous year) as well as the streamlining of the Section's finances (procuring a healthy fund for next year's board). Other topics relevant to the members that were discussed in the business meeting included the opportunity for the members of the Film Studies Section to contribute and curate one section of next year's LASA Film Festival by proposing between five to six new movies from one of the following regions or countries: Central America, Paraguay, Chile, or Venezuela.

Through consultation with the members, one panel and one workshop were selected for 2015. Members suggested and voted for the following topics: panel, "Tecnologías y políticas de acceso en nuevos formatos" (including video); and workshop, "Sistemas de distribución, acceso y circulación." After the business meeting the Section found out that, thanks to the membership increase, there will be a third preapproved Film Studies section for LASA 2015. The modality of this section (panel or workshop) and its topic will be selected by the 2014–2015 newly elected board members in consultation with the Section members.

This year's Film Studies Section successfully organized one workshop and one panel. The workshop "Considerations on Film Production in Latin America" was organized by the Section's co-chairs and included panelists Chris Meier (University

of the West Indies, St. Augustine in Trinidad and Tobago), Michelle Farrell (Fairfield University), and Constanza Burucúa (University of Western Ontario); Beatriz Urraca (Widener University) acted as the workshop's moderator. The panel "Identity and Memory in Contemporary Latin American Cinema" was organized by Dianna Niebylski (University of Illinois, Chicago) and chaired by Carolina Rocha (Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville). It included panelists Natalia Pinazza (Birkbeck College, University of London), Paul Schroeder Rodríguez (Northeastern Illinois University), Inela Selimovic (Wellesley College), Carolina Rocha, and Dianna Niebylski.

Prior to meeting at LASA's 32nd Congress in Chicago, the section conducted electronic elections organized by LASA's Secretariat to renew our board representatives. The results are the following: Cynthia Tompkins (Arizona State University, Tempe), chair; Valentina Velázquez-Zvierkova (University of California, Davis), secretary-treasurer; Dorian Lugo-Bertrán (Universidad de Puerto Rico, Río Piedras) and Álvaro Baquero-Pecino (University of Alabama), council members.

Food, Agriculture and Rural Studies

By Cliff Welch, Chair

The Section had a lively meeting with 30 members present. The changed name of the Section, more accurately reflecting the research interests of members, appeared to inspire renewed dynamism in the group. The meeting reaffirmed prior decisions to no longer host a reception and invest resources instead in travel grants and the Section's popular and successful series of pre-Congress field trips. By-law changes were approved and new officers elected.

Chair-elect Nashieli Cecilia Rangel Loera (Universidade Estadual Paulista/CERES) agreed to serve as Section chair for two years; elected were Fina Carpena-Méndez (Oregon State University) secretary-treasurer; and Rodrigo Bulamah (State University of Campinas) and Pablo Laguna (El Colegio de Michoacán), council members. Participants congratulated Thais Tartalha (Universidade Estadual de Campinas) for winning the Section's first junior scholar travel grant in the amount of \$800. She offered to work with the board as webmaster of the Section's site and Facebook page. Most discussion revolved around initiatives for the 2015 Congress and proposals for the Section's position on policies to be debated at the Section chairs' meeting. Nashieli agreed to head a task force to revise travel grant rules and criteria. Steven Zahniser offered to write brief descriptions of field trip experiences in Chicago and Washington, DC. Gustavo Setrini volunteered to organize the field trip in Puerto Rico for May 26, 2015. Proposals were made for Section panels and workshops. Consensus was reached in proposing to LASA that travel grants be adequate to cover economy class airfare and include a waiver of Congress registration fees; and a continued practice of consulting Sections regarding the nominations and appointment of track chairs.

Gender and Feminist Studies By Linda Stevenson, Co-chair

To start off the Section's 2014 activities, in a half-day pre-conference, many ideas were discussed for future pre-conferences and panel themes: to coordinate with Puerto Rican women's and gender studies colleagues for 2015; to explore the precariousness of knowledge production in academia; ongoing examination of the

intersections of race, class, and gender, in particular as it relates to migration in/from the Caribbean; and/or a practical idea of publishing in the varying venues of international feminist journals. A dinner at a local restaurant followed, honoring contributing authors to a new Section-sponsored book edited by Sara Poggio and Maria Amelia Viteri and titled *Cuerpo, educación y liderazgo político: Una mirada desde el género y los estudios feministas* (FLACSO-Ecuador, 2014).

The Section sponsored four panels, selected by executive council members. The titles and organizers were: "A 40 años del golpe: dictadura, género y sexualidades en Chile" (Hillary Hiner, Universidad Diego Portales); "Género y generaciones en las memorias de la reconstrucción democrática en el Cono Sur" (Cristina Scheibe Wolff, Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina); "Enacting a Translocal Feminist Politics of Translation in the Latin/a Américas" (Rebecca Hester, University of Texas Medical Branch); "¿Vidas precarias de la modernidad? Cuerpos, sexualidades y luchas feministas en América Latina y el Caribe" (Veronica Schild, University of Western Ontario). With LASA, the section co-sponsored a Celebration of Life Reception for Helen Safa, one of our pioneer LASA leaders and founders.

The business meeting was led by 2013–2014 co-chairs Marta Zambrano and Linda Stevenson with approximately 43 in attendance. The agenda included discussion of a change in the Section by-laws, proposing that the two Section chairs will serve for staggered two-year terms so that one will always have had a year of experience. For the coming 2014–2015 year, one of the co-chairs will have a one-year position, and the second will have the first two-year staggered position. Two awards were given for the

Section's Elsa Chaney Competition for Best Papers by Junior Scholars, to Jennifer Piscopo in first place (\$600) for "States as Gender Equality Activists: The Evolution of Quotas Laws in Latin America," and to Carolina Castellanos Gonella in second place (\$400) for "The Most Desired Position: Brazilian Female Traffickers in Inferno." Nominations were taken at the meeting and elections held, resulting in the 2014–2015 council: Edmé Domínguez R., University of Gothenburg, Sweden (co-chair, 2014–2015); Hillary Hiner, Universidad Diego Portales, Chile (co-chair, 2014–2016); Cecilia MacDowell Santos, University of San Francisco (treasurer, 2013–2015); Emilia Barbosa, University of Kansas (secretary, 2014–2016); and three council members: Cristina Scheibe Wolff, Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (2013–2015), Lucia Saldana, Universidad de Concepción, Chile (2013–2015), and Marta Subiñas, FLACSO-Mexico (2014–2016). The Section reception was held in the Palmer House Hotel on Friday evening, May 23, with approximately 35 in attendance.

Historia Reciente y Memoria

By Alejandro Cerda and Aldo Marchesi,
Co-chairs

The Section meeting was held on Tuesday, May 22. Between 20 and 22 people attended. First, a vote was held to ratify Aldo Marchesi (Universidad de la República) and Alejandro Cerda Garcia (Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Xochimilco) as co-presidents of the Section for a further year (2014–2015). It was also suggested that Juan Hernández (University of Puerto Rico, Rios Piedras) serve as Section secretary, replacing Samantha Quadrat (Universidad Federal Fluminense). Both proposals were endorsed unanimously by those present.

The award ceremony for the Best Book about Recent History and Memory was held during the meeting. The award received 12 nominations. The jury consisted of Hillary Hiner, Juan Hernández, and Américo Freire. First place was awarded to Steve J. Stern for *Luchando por mentes y corazones: Las batallas de la memoria en el Chile de Pinochet*; second place went to Alberto del Castillo Troncoso for *Ensayo sobre el movimiento estudiantil de 1968: La fotografía y la construcción de un imaginario*; and Honorable Mention Young Investigator went to Eden Medina for *Cybernetic Revolutionaries: Technology and Politics in Allende's Chile*.

The Section will sponsor a workshop titled “Human Rights: Critical Insights from Gender, Class and Ethnicity” at the LASA2015 Congress. The sponsored panel will have as a preliminary subject “Emerging Debates in the Field of Memory: Conflicts and Social Movements.”

In September 2014 the call for the Best Article about Recent History and Memory will be announced and will call for the carrying out of a virtual discussion forum in which the members of the Section and other members of LASA will be invited to participate, starting from an agreement with the Red Interdisciplinaria de Estudios sobre Memoria Social (RIEMS, Argentina-Chile).

Health, Science, and Society

By Rebecca J. Hester, Co-chair

This past year the Health, Science, and Society Section aspired to implement two new awards, one for best article and one for best dissertation. While several board members were enthusiastic about this idea, the plan ran out of steam as the year went on and never came to fruition. We were

able to coordinate a special panel on embodiment and post-neoliberalism at LASA2014 in conjunction with the Body Politics Track. The panel stimulated great conversation about post-neoliberalism and its various manifestations (or lack thereof) in Latin America. Just prior to the meeting, the Section had 55 members.

At the business meeting in Chicago, we reinvigorated the plan to give awards and decided that we will award \$100 for the best article in our Section and \$250 for the best dissertation. We will send out a call in early fall 2014 for submissions in both categories. In addition to implementing scholarly awards, it was decided that we need to create more connections and exchanges between Section members. Specifically, we want to develop spaces for intellectual exchange and collaboration. We will do this in the coming year by developing a Facebook page for the Section, creating a bibliography that includes publications from the last three years of all of the Section members (or at least those members who respond to our request to send us their recent publications), keeping our LASA webpage current, and updating and expanding our member list. We are also planning a Section “meet and greet” at the next LASA Congress in Puerto Rico. Our business meeting was attended by five people so we were not able to vote on any items, as we didn’t have quorum, but we will be holding an e-election to add two new members to our board.

International Migrations

By Sara Poggio, Co-chair

According to decisions taken at our business meeting in Washington, DC, on May 30, 2013, our agenda for the Section on International Migrations in 2013–2014

included publishing a newsletter, creating a webpage, organizing a pre-conference, and sponsoring two sessions for LASA’s Congress in Chicago, all completed early on and throughout the period. Under the direction of Michaela Reich, we published two numbers of the newsletter distributed to our members by e-mail and posted on our new website, which included topics on international migration of interests to our membership, information for diffusion about members or provided by Section members, and books reviews. All events planned for the Chicago Congress by the Section of International Migrations were organized with the total participation of our membership, including a call for papers for our sponsored panel and roundtable, as well as for presentations in the pre-conference, “Migration and Citizenship,” held on May 21, 2014, which was sponsored by the provost’s office of UMBC. The activities were well attended and promoted enriching discussions to be developed by the Section.

After introducing participants to the history and activities of the Section, our business meeting included a discussion on the future of our newsletter and webpage and the possible activities for the Congress in Puerto Rico in 2015. It was decided that we would again organize a pre-conference and sponsor two sessions, and we considered some topics and formats for the activities that will be further discussed with the members of the Section. The business meeting was attended by 12 members, and 3 council members were added to our executive committee: Anahí Viladrich (CUNY), Daniela Celleri (University of Hannover, Germany, PhD candidate), and Judith Boruchoff (University of Chicago).

Labor Studies

By Cecilia Senén González and Roxana Maurizio, Co-chairs

The Labor Studies Section business meeting took place on Thursday, May 22, 2014, and 17 members participated, including 6 members of the Section committee. Founding members of the Section also participated, such as Peter Ranis and the chair of the track Viviana Patroni. The discussion was animated and dynamic. We had a full exchange of opinions, new methods of communication were proposed, such as to update the list server, and we also discussed subjects for future panels at the 2015 LASA Congress, whose theme—“Precariedades, exclusiones, emergencias”—shares similarities with the concerns of the Section. During the Congress we organized two Section panels, one about labor institutions, unions, and working conditions in Latin America, and another titled “New Strategies of Working Class Struggle in Latin America: Cases from Argentina, Chile, Peru, and Mexico,” which was coordinated by the members of the postgraduate students committee, a leadership structure that we have had for two years. We held a competition for papers with awards of two travel grants of US\$500, with winners chosen by the co-presidents and secretary-treasurer. Applicants submitted their *curricula vitae* and filled out a form with the travel grant proposal. The key criteria were the importance of the field of study, clarity of the presentation, and appropriate theory. The winners were Ana Miranda, researcher with FLACSO, Argentina, who studies youth and work; and Katherine Eva Maich, a PhD student from University of California, Berkeley, with the theme “Household Worker Legislation in Peru and New York.” Future objectives proposed were updating the website and

organizing a miniconference at the next LASA.

The election took place after the Congress and confirmed the continuing terms of the Section’s secretary-treasurer, Maggie Gray (Adelphi University), and co-chair Roxana Maurizio (Universidad Nacional de Gral Sarmiento/CONICET), as well as reelecting Cecilia Senén González (Universidad de Buenos Aires) as co-chair. Our returning council members are Rodolfo Elbert (Instituto Gino Germani/Universidad de Buenos Aires) and Brian Finnegan (AFL-CIO), and our newly elected council members are Olga Sanmiguel (University of Cincinnati) and Kimberly Nolan García (Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas, CIDE, México DF). The Graduate Student Council co-chair Pablo Pérez-Ahumada (University of California, San Diego) has a new co-chair, Gabriela Pontoni (Universidad Nacional de La Matanza, Buenos Aires), one new member Bárbara Medwid (Universidad Nacional de La Pampa), as well as returning members Ricardo Nóbrega and Joe Bazler (Cornell University).

Latino/a Studies

By Deb Vargas, Co-chair, Virginia Arreola, Secretary, and Alexandra Gonzenbach, Graduate Student Representative

The Latina/o Studies Section continues to provide an important forum for scholars and activists. The Section sponsored three panels at the 2014 Chicago Congress and presented awards for best book, best article, and best dissertation. New co-chairs Carlos Decena and Kirstie Dorr were unable to attend the business meeting and we appreciate Virginia Arreola for attending on their behalf. The Section concluded the year with 134 members and qualified for three sponsored sessions at

LASA2014. Unfortunately, the move from an 18-month to a 12-month conference period created some confusion for the members and some participants failed to register in time and thus were dropped from the program. Thus, only two of the accepted three Section panels made the final program. The three original sponsored sessions were “Blackness in Latina/o America: Working Across Latina/o and Black Studies,” organizer and chair, Kirstie Dorr (University of California, San Diego); “Disreputable Latinidades: Beyond Respectability in Latin@ Studies,” organizer and chair, Carlos Decena (Rutgers). The roundtable was titled “Latin@ Queer Chicago,” with organizer and chair, Deborah R. Vargas (University of California, Riverside).

During the business meeting we announced the awardees of the Section prizes. This year we changed our prize policy to require submissions/award recipients to be registered Latino Studies Section members. The prizes and winners along with the selection committee members were: Outstanding Book Award: Desirée Martin, *Borderlands Saints: Secular Sanctity in Chicano/a and Mexican Culture* (Rutgers University Press, 2014); selection committee: Merida Rua (chair, Williams College), Felicia Amaya Schaeffer (University of California, Santa Cruz), Jason Ruiz (Notre Dame). Honorable Mention: Susana Peña, *Oye Loca: From the Mariel Boatlift to Gay Cuban Miami* (University of Minnesota Press, 2013).

The Outstanding Article Award went to Mark Overmyer-Velázquez for “Good Neighbors and White Mexicans: Constructing Race and Nation on the Mexico-US Border,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 33, no. 1. The Selection Committee consisted of Yolanda Padilla (University of Washington), Daisy Reyes

(University of Connecticut), and Jorge Iber (Texas Tech University). An Honorable Mention was awarded to Jillian Hernández for “‘Chongas’ in the Media: The Ethno-Sexual Politics of Latina Girls’ Hypervisibility,” in *Girls’ Sexualities and the Media*, edited by Kate Harper et al. (2013).

The Dissertation Award was presented to Leticia Alvarado for “Abject Performances: Aesthetic Strategies in Latino Cultural Production” (New York University, Department of American Studies, 2013). Members of the Selection Committee were Virginia Arreola (Hiram College), Johana Londoño (SUNY Albany), and Pedro García-Caro (University of Oregon).

During the Section business meeting we proposed three possible Section-sponsored panels for the 2015 Puerto Rico LASA Congress roundtable: a conversation bridging Latino and Latin American studies, a themed panel focusing on Puerto Rico, and “Emerging Topics in Latino Studies” featuring only graduate students.

The Section welcomes four new officers: Co-chairs Carlos Decena (Rutgers) and Kirstie Dorr (University of California, San Diego); Secretary Virginia Arreola (Hiram College); and Graduate Student Representative Alexandra Gonzenbach (University of Miami).

Mass Media and Popular Culture By Silvia G. Kurlat Ares, Chair

In line with decisions taken at the Washington, DC, Congress (for which see last year’s report), the agenda for the “Mass Media and Popular Culture” Section in 2013–2014 was to organize a Section panel for LASA2014 in Chicago, to organize a pre-conference that took place on May 21,

2014, to update the Section’s website, and to update the listserv. These last two items were completed early in the year, as the Section built up its presence on the website provided by LASA and organized an e-mail list software. We used the list to circulate information among members (for instance about events and research grants) and to encourage communication and the sharing of research. Our Section panel in Chicago provided us the opportunity to discuss issues of theory and objects of study within popular culture and to continue the rich dialogue started the day before during the pre-conference where we addressed topics as diverse as traditional mass media in community settings, new e-communities and communications, the relations between politics and popular culture, and the role of the state as a regulator in mass communications.

The business meeting confirmed the continuing term of the Section’s chair, Silvia Kurlat Ares (independent researcher) and a new co-chair, Matthew Bush (Lehigh University), as well as the renewal of board members Pedro Pablo Porben (Bowling Green State University), Giancarlo Stagnaro (Tulane University), and Pablo Alabarces (Universidad Nacional de Buenos Aires). The board welcomes new member Juanita Darling (San Francisco State University). It was resolved that for the coming year, the Section’s priorities would be (1) to rewrite the Section’s definition and charter, especially in the light of the discussions that have taken place during the Chicago Conference; (2) to organize a Section panel that would address a major issue within the field; and (3) to continue the active enrollment of Section members in order to increase visibility and presence within LASA.

Peru

By Elena Alvarez, Chair

The Peru Section business meeting took place on May 22, 2014. As of late April the section had 187 members. About 19 people attended the meeting. We held elections at this time to replace a few of our officers since the section had already elected Jo-Marie Burt (George Mason University) to replace Elena Alvarez (Business and Professional Women, Inc.) in the 2013 congress. Guillermo Salas (Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú) will replace Iliana M. Carrasco-Diaz and will co-chair the Section in Peru. Carlos Parodi (Illinois State University) will be the new secretary-treasurer. Claudia Salazar (Sarah Lawrence College) will be a new director. Elena Sabogal (William Paterson University) and Américo Mendoza-Mori and Tracy Devine Guzmán (both from the University of Miami) are continuing directors of the section. Elena Alvarez and Iliana Carrasco are ex-officio members of the Section. Elections are to take place again at the 2015 Congress to replace some of the directors.

We had a productive meeting that summed up the activities of the past year. The section was very active with its sessions, the two prizes, management of our Facebook site, the reception outside the hotel in Chicago, and the travel grants. As is our tradition, we awarded a prize for the best book published by a member between the 2013 and 2014 LASA Congresses. We did not award a prize for the best essay this year nor did we select a Life Achievement scholar. The Section awarded two partial travel grants.

The Section received two applications for travel grants and the selection committee made up of Angelina Cotler, Enrique Mayer, and Elena Sabogal selected two

grantees based on merit and the criteria agreed upon during the Peru Section Business Meeting at LASA2010. Each candidate was required to present the title of paper, summary of paper, and a budget, and each received a partial grant to cover travel and other expenses. Grantees were Roger Merino (University of Bath, \$1,200) and Alba Hesselroth (American University, \$500).

The Flora Tristan Book Award was given to Felipe Portocarrero Suarez for *Grandes fortunas en el Perú, 1916–1960: Riqueza y filantropía en la élite económica* (Universidad del Pacífico, 2013). The book and essay awards were co-chaired by David Scott Palmer and Isabelle Lausent-Herrera.

Political Institutions (LAPIS)

By Felipe Botero, Chair

The LAPIS business meeting took place on May 22, 2014. About 12 to 15 people attended the meeting. We did not hold elections at this time. Elections are to take place at the 2015 Congress. We had a productive meeting that summed up the activities of the past year. The Section was very active with sessions and two awards: an award for the best paper presented by a member of our Section at the 2013 Congress, and an award for the best book published during 2013 by a member of our Section. Furthermore, we awarded two full travel grants and a third that was split between the two people who tied for third place in the selection process. The following term we plan to continue the activities of the sessions, awards, and travel grants.

Travel grants were awarded to María Laura Tagina, Raúl Sánchez-Uribarri, Mariana Caminotti, and Diego Ayo. The committee was formed by Julieta Suárez-

Cao and Miguel Centellas. To assign the grants, the applicants submit their CV and fill out a form with the title and abstract of their papers, the city from which they are traveling, the amount of funding already secured and the amount of funding pending. The committee evaluates the documents submitted and decides to whom the grants are to be allocated.

The Best Paper Award (\$100) was given to Alisha Holland and Brian Palmer-Rubin for their paper “Who’s In Charge Here? When Clientelistic Brokers Represent Interest Organizations,” presented at the 2013 Congress. The committee was formed by Kirk Hawkins, Moira MacKinnon, and Brian Wampler. To determine the winner, the committee reads the submitted papers and debates which one is the best in terms of overall academic quality and relevance to the study of political institutions in the region.

The Donna Lee Van Cott Best Book Award was given to Scott Mainwaring and Aníbal Pérez-Liñán for *Democracies and Dictatorships in Latin America: Emergence, Survival, and Fall* (2013). The committee was formed by Sherrie Bayer, Rossana Castiglioni, and Felipe Botero. To determine the winner, the committee reads the submitted books and debates which one is the best in terms of overall academic quality and relevance to the study of political institutions in the region.

Scholarly Communication and Research

By Sarah Buck Kachaluba, Chair

The business meeting of the Section for Scholarly Communication and Research (previously called Scholarly Research and Resources) was held on May 22, 2014, from 8:00 to 8:45 p.m. Eight people attended. We discussed the following

issues: the need to administer elections, the need to increase membership, the history of the Section, and themes on which to focus 2015 programming.

Review of term activities and plans for the coming term: We sent out numerous calls to nonrenewed members, other LASA members, and Latin Americanist information professionals who we thought would be interested, sent out messages via social media, and handed out bookmarks to encourage LASA members to join the Section.

Section members organized three sessions at LASA2014 on human rights archives, Open Access in North and Latin America, and digital humanities. All were well attended with at least 20 people in the audience. For next year we have two panel ideas: one on scholarly communication/open access and/or publishing and another on how to effectively do archival and library research.

After the conference those who attended decided via e-mail to change the Section name to more accurately reflect our mission and attract members.

Sexualities Studies

By Joseph M. Pierce and Guillermo de los Reyes, Co-chairs

The Sexualities Section business meeting took place on Thursday, May 22, and was attended by 18 people. We held elections, confirming the new co-chairs of the Section, Laura Arnés (University of Buenos Aires) and Maja Horn (Barnard College), as well as the secretary-treasurer, Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel (Rutgers). During the meeting we announced the winners of the Carlos Monsiváis Award (social sciences) and Sylvia Molloy Award

(humanities), discussed future topics for sponsored Section panels, and revisited the possibility of holding a pre-conference for LASA 2015.

This year we sponsored two Section panels, one of which explored new perspectives in the study of sexualities in Latin America, while the other was organized in collaboration with the Southern Cone Section and focused specifically on narratives of love, sex, and gender in the region. Both were well attended, and we are looking forward to exploring new possibilities for collaboration with other Sections in the future.

The 2013–2014 Carlos Monsiváis Award for best peer-reviewed article in the social sciences was awarded to James Green for his article “‘Who Is the Macho Who Wants to Kill Me?’ Male Homosexuality, Revolutionary Masculinity, and the Brazilian Armed Struggle of the 1960s and 1970s,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 92, no. 3. Abel Sierra Madero was awarded honorable mention for his article “Cuerpos en venta: Pinguismo y masculinidad negociada en la Cuba contemporánea,” *Nómadas* (Bogotá), no. 38.

The 2013–2014 Sylvia Molloy Award for best peer-reviewed article in the humanities was awarded to Carlos Riobó for his article “Raiding the ‘Anales’ of the Empire: Sarduy’s Subversions of the Latin American Boom,” *Hispanic Review* 81, no. 3; with honorable mention for Matthew J. Edwards, “How to Read Copi: A Historiography of the Margins.”

We would like to thank the Monsiváis committee members, Horacio Sívori and Jordi Díez, as well as the Molloy committee members, Dara Goldman and Lawrence La Fountain-Stokes, for their work this year

reviewing articles for quality of research, analysis, and writing, and for contribution to the field of sexualities in Latin American and Latino social, cultural, and intellectual contexts.

Southern Cone Studies

By Leila Gómez, Chair

Between LASA2013 and LASA2014 the Section coordinated several projects and activities for its members. The following is a summary of what was accomplished for LASA Chicago and presented to the 36 Section members who attended the last business meeting: five panels at LASA Chicago (three official for the Section): two panels co-organized with the Sexualities Section of LASA; one panel on memory and post-dictatorships; one panel on nineteenth-century studies; and one panel on ethics organized by the graduate students of the Southern Cone Studies Section.

The Section invited recognized scholars from Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, and the United States, as well as members. In this way we secured an open dialogue among our members and guests. The organizers of these panels were not only the chair (Leila Gómez) and the treasurer of the Section (Gloria Medina), but also several of its members (Fernando Blanco, Walescka Pino-Ojeda, Joseph Pierce, and Jason Bartles). Section guests from the Southern Cone and the United States were José Carlos Chiamonte, Lila Caimari, Elizabeth Lira, Mabel Moraña, Alex Borucki, Fernando Degiovanni, Daniel Link, Gabriel Giorgi, Jaime Barrientos, and Jaime Parada, among others.

This was the second consecutive year for our Book Awards in the Humanities and Social Sciences. The Humanities Book

Award in 2014 was for Francine Masiello for *El cuerpo de la voz: Poesía, ética y cultura* (Beatriz Viterbo Editora, 2013). The jury also gave an Honorable Mention to Valeria Grinberg Pla for *Eva Perón: Cuerpo, género, nación; Estudio crítico de sus representaciones en la literatura, el cine y el discurso académico desde 1951 hasta la actualidad* (Editorial de la Universidad de Costa Rica, 2013). The book award in Social Sciences went to Rebekah E. Pite, *Creating a Common Table in Twentieth-Century Argentina: Doña Petrona, Women, and Food* (University of North Carolina Press, 2013). The jury for the humanities consisted of Ana Pizarro, Gwen Kirkpatrick, and William Acree. Carlos Sanhueza, Eduardo Elena, and Manuel Vicuña formed the jury for the social sciences. The Book Awards were announced prior to LASA Chicago and during the business meeting a ceremony was held in honor of the awardees.

The Section has submitted a proposal to the LASA Executive Council to host a Section journal, *Conversaciones del Cono Sur*, and is currently waiting for their approval.

The Section opened and maintained social networks among members, including a website, a Facebook page, and the mailing list. Many thanks to the coordinators Katherine Karr-Cornejo, Sebastián Díaz, and Laura Demaría.

Scholars that received financial help for LASA 2014 were Elizabeth Lira and José Chiamonte (room and board and conference fees). Both were also awarded travel grants from LASA.

At the Chicago Congress, Fernando Blanco (Bucknell University) was elected and was introduced to the members of the Section as the new chair.

One of our priorities this year was to appoint officers for our Advisory Board. The Section voted and decided to invite former chairs and co-chairs to be part of this new committee. We also discussed ideas and logistics for a LASA Section conference in the Southern Cone, after LASA2015. Section officials: chair of the Section for the period 2013–2014, Leila Gómez (University of Colorado at Boulder); chair of the Section for the period 2014–2015, Fernando Blanco (Bucknell University); treasurer 2013–2015, Gloria Medina-Sancho (University of California, Fresno). Advisory Committee for 2014–2015: Laura Demaría (University of Maryland, College Park), Álvaro Fernández Bravo (Universidad de San Andrés, Buenos Aires), Luis Cárcamo-Huechante (University of Texas, Austin), and Leila Gómez (University of Colorado at Boulder).

Venezuelan Studies (SVS)

By Alejandro Velasco and Margarita López Maya, Co-chairs

The Section business meeting was held from 8 to 8:45 p.m. on Thursday, May 22, 2014. Thirty-nine members attended. Section chair Margarita López Maya presided. After welcoming attendees, the meeting began with a brief note that the council had opted not to hold a formal reception because the costs of doing so at the conference venue would deplete our budget and could be better spent on Section awards and other Section initiatives.

One such initiative was LASA SVS-Caracas 2013, a miniconference of papers and panels on Venezuela that was presented at LASA Washington, DC, and then again in Caracas in July. The Section contributed \$1,000 to sponsor the event. The chair invited council member Vicente Lecuna,

who helped organize the conference, to read a report from the planning committee. The report praised the organization and execution of the conference, which was held at the Universidad Católica Andrés Bello, and recommended institutionalizing the event by holding it every other year.

Discussion of the report ensued. Council member Maria del Pilar García Guadilla recommended alternating between Caracas and venues outside the capital (e.g., LUZ). From the plenary an SVS member who attended the miniconference observed that it was sparsely attended. The time of year (during final exams) and the political situation in Caracas were mentioned as possible problems. For future events more attention to scheduling and to promoting participation was urged, perhaps by making the event free to students (registration fees this time were necessary to defray costs incurred by holding it at a private university. A benefit of holding it at a public university like the UCV is that space would be free and thus so would registration). All told, the plenary agreed with the report's recommendation to make LASA-SVS Venezuela a regular, Section-sponsored event, with the aforementioned issues to be considered by future planning committees.

Section Secretary Alejandro Velasco then announced the final membership numbers for 2013 which stood at 133; this means that SVS will be able to sponsor three panels for LASA Puerto Rico. The final number of members is 26 fewer than 2013, however the chair offered special thanks to the membership—especially those outside Venezuela—for registering given that financial difficulties facing Venezuela-based scholars were especially acute this year. After announcing the panels sponsored by the Section for Chicago, and thanking the selection committee for their work (David

Smilde and Iraida Casique), members were encouraged to submit proposals for Puerto Rico as soon as possible and reminded that Section sponsorship guarantees inclusion in LASA2015. The chair noted that a new selection committee would need to be convened, and a comment was offered about the need to establish selection criteria, perhaps by focusing on themes left out of LASA's track system.

Discussion turned to the status of the special fund created in 2012 with monies from Open Society, and designed specifically to help Venezuela-based scholars defray the costs of attending LASA. The chair reported that after the fund was eliminated given supposed lack of use, she and former chair David Smilde (who helped create the fund) continued to lobby LASA for explanations and reinstatement under clearer guidelines. The chair noted that while their efforts proved unsuccessful, she felt that the ground had been laid with the LASA Executive Committee to alert them of the problems facing Venezuela-based scholars in terms of travel and resources. Smilde added further pertinent details: LASA's policy is to limit travel grants to every three years, while many in Venezuela need yearly support—hence the importance of continuing to press for a Venezuela-specific fund. Also, only LASA—not individual Sections—is authorized to make arrangements with outside organizations, so that future efforts to solicit funds should coordinate more closely with LASA from the start. The chair concluded the discussion by reiterating that there is now greater awareness among the LASA leadership that the issues facing Venezuela-based scholars are not merely bureaucratic and should not be seen in that light, and with a small push, it might spur some action to benefit Venezuelanists.

Next, the chair asked Javier Guerrero to announce the recipient of the inaugural Fernando Coronil Book Award, created in 2013 to recognize “the most outstanding book on Venezuela, in English or Spanish, in the humanities or social sciences, published in the previous two years.” Nine books entered, of which the committee (comprised of Guerrero, Maria del Pilar García Guadilla, and Paula Vasquez) unanimously selected Reuben Zahler’s *Ambitious Rebels: Remaking Honor, Law, and Liberalism in Venezuela, 1780–1850* (University of Arizona Press, 2013) as the winner, and Jana Morgan’s *Bankrupt Representation and Party System Collapse* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011) as a unanimous runner up. After reading the committee’s endorsements of each, circulating a copy of Zahler’s book, and following a hearty round of applause from the plenary, the chair formally presented the awards in absentia to both authors. Zahler will receive a two-year membership to LASA. In addition, both authors received a copy of Coronil’s *El Estado mágico*, and an artisanal Venezuelan wooden box filled with handcrafted Venezuelan chocolates. The chair thanked the committee for its work, and reminded members that the next round of biennial Section awards would be for Best Paper presented at LASA (in 2014 or 2015), and would be announced ahead of the meeting in Puerto Rico. Once a committee is convened, it will begin to solicit submissions.

The chair then asked new members in attendance to introduce themselves and their work, and several did so. The floor was then open for any comments from members. García Guadilla asked about the status of an SVS website, which was an item discussed in 2013. The chair noted that council member Iñaki Sagarzazu (not present) had explored the issue and

reported to the council pros and cons of several options, including a Facebook page, a standalone website, and a LASA-sponsored website. After brief discussion, the plenary agreed to open a Facebook page, and an ad hoc committee was formed consisting of Elizabeth Nichols, Cecilia Rodriguez, and García Guadilla to create the page and to establish criteria for what is posted. The plenary did decide to keep the page closed, for SVS members only, for the moment.

Finally, Secretary Alejandro Velasco announced the results of SVS elections, hosted by LASA. Fifty-nine members voted, with the following results: chair of the Section for 2014–2016, Javier Guerrero (Princeton University); secretary-treasurer of the Section for 2013–2015, Alejandro Velasco (New York University). Newly elected members of council, through 2016: Margarita López Maya (resident in Venezuela), Alicia Ríos (Venezuelan, resident outside Venezuela), Guillermo Guzmán Mirabal (resident in Venezuela), and Gina Saraceni (resident in Venezuela). Continuing members, through 2015: María del Pilar García Guadilla (resident in Venezuela), Iñaki Sagarzazu (Venezuelan, resident outside Venezuela), Yorelis Acosta (resident in Venezuela), and Vicente Lecuna (resident in Venezuela). ■

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