

# OTHERNESS

NO. 2 (SPRING, 2018)

SHORT STORIES / POEMS  
UNDERSTANDING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES  
ADVERTISEMENT INDUSTRY  
LA MUJER EN TRES CUENTOS LATINOAMERICANOS  
LA FEMME FATALE  
JOURNEY BACK TO THE SOURCE

**Pictures by Students**  
**FROM THE HUMANITIES DEPARTMENT**



MAGAZINE  
ELA STUDENTS  
**LaGuardia**  
Community College



LaGuardia  
Community College



*Otherness. Magazine of the Students. ELA Department*  
LaGuardia Community College.

NO. II, SPRING 2018

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## **NOTE FROM THE EDITORS**

We are pleased to release the second issue of the magazine *Otherness*, in collaboration with the Humanities Department. The short stories, poems, essays and photographs of our yearly publication showcase the often understated high level of creativity and intellectual interests of LaGuardia Community College students in the field of Humanities. We rejoice in promoting and highlighting the immense creativity and broad interests displayed by our students. *Otherness* intends to become a vehicle for these creative impulses. Our magazine is committed to show the remarkable work produced by our students.

The Editors

June, 2018.



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Dennis Barandica studied sociology at LaGuardia Community College. He is interested in developing working class power, studying Latin American literature and working in demolition.

## EL BARRIO

By Dennis Barandica

Today I woke up a bit earlier than usual. I lost sleep trying to make sure I was on time for my class field trip to El Barrio. I took the 7 Train at Main Street in Flushing, this time the express train so I could arrive on time. No breakfast, coffee, or cigarette to stimulate my senses. Just the thought of visiting El Barrio was more than enough for my early wake up call. I got off at Grand Central and transferred to the 6 Train, expecting it to be crowded with white upper class people, but to my surprise, it was empty, except for the beautiful Puerto Rican chica with green eyes in front of me. I knew at that moment that today was going to be a good day.

I get off the 103<sup>rd</sup> Street Uptown station. The number reminds me of my hood on 103 St. in Corona and the long summer days I spent playing handball with my boy Albert. I notice that I'd been there in those streets before. A flashback sparks seconds of a memory: Domino's workers protesting for higher wages and me as a seventeen year old boy with radical propaganda, trying to stimulate the conscious of the masses to revolt. Yeah, I remember this place, from back when I believed America was close to a revolution again. I see that my classmates are all by a wall. They look like they haven't gotten any sleep. I can't help but to feel anxious as I approach them. Luckily, Judith got my drug, that tobacco that breathe deep inside my lungs. I can't help to notice the harmony between Blacks and Latinos in El Barrio. Workers doing their thing on this beautiful Spring day. But I go back to feeling anxious. Suddenly, I feel like a tourist in my own city. I don't belong and I'm disrupting the harmony of El Barrio. The reality is that this is not my city, and I don't know where I stand.

The class began with an introduction to a famous activist-poet named Pedro Pietri. To my right, I find a mural of the man. It looks like it was done in the seventies

and the color is fading away. I'm surprised that no graffiti artists or punks have gone over it. Maybe the community won't permit it, or maybe there's too many cameras around. Regardless I thought, the mural had a religious or evangelical feeling to it, similar to the early pictures of Jesus Christ our saviour. After hearing a brief description of who he was, I can't help but to find him interesting. "They worked. They worked. They worked, and they died." Then the unexpected happens, I find myself reading Pedro Pietri's poem with passion and pain, feelings created by the pictures the author evokes. "Juan, Miguel, Milagros, Olga, Manuel." Those names in his poem are real. We Latinos know them. We know them because those names and their stories are a reflection of our lives. I read his words loud and clear to wake up our souls. But I'm conscious of not letting my Latino acento come out with the words. Maybe I'm buying into the academic standards, a reflection of my insecurities. After reading the poem and hearing a description of the mural, we move forward to the next block, wondering as tourists of New York what exotic new things we will discover.

As the class walks around, I'm concerned with the idea of gentrification, the preservation of this community, and what it means that New York history will soon be gone. It seems now there is a new virus in town, destroying and transforming the essence of the concrete jungle. I look for a sign outside the windows of the local hipster cafes, one that says to the tenants of El Barrio, "Your rent is up again...". Next stop, Julia de Burgos. At first I confuse Julia with a Puerto Rican Nationalist woman that participated in the United States capitol shooting incident back in 54'. My facts might not be so clear at the moment. Perhaps it's a subconscious reaction towards the idea of El Barrio disappearing. Regardless of the mix-up, Julia inspires me. The personality disorder



Alfred Gonzalez. *Es Tremendo*. Taken at about 119th Street and Third Avenue West Side of Street. Gallery 71 974 Lexington Avenue, NY, NY 10021. Image taken from Wikimedia Commons.

der that Julia illustrates in her poem reveals to the reader the internal struggle of a woman living in a machista society, a society that forces women to behave according to a social construct and restricts the individual from their liberty to choose. I can't imagine what it was like to be a woman in those times, but I can relate to the suffocating feeling of being forced to play a social role. I can relate to the feeling of retaliation and the need to breathe that clean air of freedom. Julia you inspire me, and to the other magical

woman that slips out of my subconscious, I wish you would've succeeded at gaining Puerto Rico's national liberation.

Like I said, I had known it was going to be a good day. All the signs were clear. Now the good news as we walk to the next exhibition: my classmate Felix becomes a father. A new life born in this world. More reason to try to make this living hell into a paradise. At this point, I regret not bringing my walking shoes. Everyone is gathering up together at an-

other corner. We are in front of an old red church. We take another drive back to the past. We find ourselves again in the seventies. We're in the same corner, looking at the same church in front of us, except now there is a new gang around: the Young Lords, a gang that turned political. Inspiration for the future me. The Young Lords, a product of its times, is fighting for Puerto Rico's national Liberation. The Young Lords are helping the poor and cleaning the filthy streets of El Barrio. The Young Lords are fight-

ing for revolution and joining the Black Panthers' struggle. Then I hear Profesor Salvatierra. Now we are back in 2017. After hearing the words from Salvatierra, I can't help but to feel that no one cares. This generation is missing the fuego that freedom inspires. The pessimism of knowing that the struggle for revolution failed in the seventies crawls in my spine like a bad acid trip on a weekend. I wonder if anyone in this class feels the same way. I wonder if anyone in my class understands the Young Lords' vision. I'm not sure if they failed us or if we failed them. The times are different, the future is unexpected.

Now we are walking again. This time I'm trying to take a closer look at the people of El Barrio. They look old and beat up. Maybe El Barrio hasn't been nice to

them. Maybe they survived the flames of the past and what we see today are the honorable scars. They are looking at us, like we don't belong and I can't help to ask myself but who does? As we continue walking, I feel around me a heavy presence of pigs: cops, killers rather, the fundamental tools for state repression. A snap back into reality and El barrio is not so pretty after all. Behind these colorful murals, there is the necessary hustling that the concrete jungle demands, the corruption that clouds the air of the city, and the injustice of those in power. We now go underneath a bridge and on the other side there is a big wall with graffiti spelling the letters "H-A-R-L-E-M". Graffiti is like that girlfriend you can never forget. The colors, the rush, the vandalism is similar to the passionate act of love making. Graffiti and I go way back.

A love-hate relationship. Salvatierra is explaining the artistic contribution of graffiti to El Barrio and the New York art scene. As she is speaking, I can't help but to notice the work in front of me, to see the different crews and cats that spell their names in the cold walls of this city for a bit of recognition, something this city never gave them. At this last part of our tour I feel the most at home. Graffiti saved my life in moments where I had no direction. It helped me escape the empty rooms of my house and into the underground tunnels of New York. Now the tour is over and Salvatierra disappears underneath the tunnel. Now we are lost again in this concrete jungle, looking, like desesperados, for a place we call home.



Susana Alvis was born in Montería, Colombia. At the age of eighteen, she moved to the United States where she is currently majoring in translation at LaGuardia Community College. One of her hobbies is to write short stories that reflect her thoughts on life. She aspires to one day be an interpreter.

## HOPE

By Susana Alvis

For her, life has not been easy. Nevertheless, life has proven to be her faithful companion: sometimes ugly, sometimes beautiful, but in the end, always faithful.

“Are all the negative events in my life triumphs in disguise?” she asked herself while sitting on her bed. At this point in her journey, she contemplated life in a different way. She was no longer consumed with raging emotions that would dictate how to feel or react; rather, gentle surrender was keeping her alive through the storms of life.

Overwhelmed by her past and concerned about her future, she feared to forget how to thrive. Confused and feeling inadequate about life she thought: “to have questions with no answers is like having a beating heart without a body to place it in; if there’s no answers to the questions of why my life is full of disgrace, then what’s the purpose of wasting this breath of life?” Her own existence seemed to be her biggest threat. The conflict within her was with her expectation of a successful life and the contrast with her reality of many attempts to go out to the surface to be happy but constantly falling back into the deep waters of disappointment. In the past, she had dared to execute the plans that she thought would lead her to a happy life. Instead, she found those plans to be the deceiving roads of life. Triumph was still a dream in her heart but nevertheless a dream she would never see come to pass.

It was daylight, but the room was dark. The darkness helped her to think better. She closed her eyes in an effort to produce answers for herself. She relied on her brain and the reasons this might give her, but at this point, all her brain could do was generate more questions. Where was the wise counsel of reason when she needed it the most? Is reason reliable after all? At that moment, her heart took the lead and took her to a place where

she had never been, where there was no memory of reason but a spectrum of triumphs in the future to come that hovered like auroras in the atmosphere. This was a place to dream and succeed, a place called Hope.

Her heart guided her in the realm of Hope and she came to the understanding that beautiful things can be birthed out of pain, suffering, and dreadful struggles. The wind constantly whispered words of wisdom to the inhabitants of the realm of Hope: “human nature is ephemeral; it can never be the foundation of someone’s purpose and future in life; the flesh has its limits.” She saw that while reality screamed failures at her, Hope echoed the innumerable possibilities to triumph out of her negative events in life, her “triumphs in disguise”. While sitting in the dark, she shined like a star. With Hope flowing through her veins, she said: “smiling is my happy place; joy is the ground on which I stand.” She realized that she had visited her home. She lived in a world where she did not belong. She had been trying to live like others instead of how her people are designed to live. So at the sight of who she really was, she went out to the world to live like never before, to love like never before, to dream like never before, and to hope like never before because the future awaits in the wings of hope.





Perla Crystal Matos-Torre was born in Yauco, Puerto Rico. She is currently majoring in communication studies at LaGuardia Community College. She has been writing ever since freshman year of high school, and she hasn't stopped since. This was one of the many ideas that come from her daydreaming.

## BEYOND WHAT CAN BE SEEN

By Perla Crystal Matos-Torre



*Gothic Doorway*. Ca. 1520–30. Made in Poitou, France  
The Cloisters Collection, 1940.

**I**  
Lassen Manor was home to Prince Lassen. Within one of its many rooms, Lassen was getting ready for his next party with his trusted advisor and friend, Runo. Lassen dressed in a clean white suit with light blue cuffed sleeves. Runo wore a long white and blue overcoat over his white suit as he examined himself in the mirror.

There was a grand ball taking place at the Manor. People gathered from all over to go to meet the prince himself. The people danced, talked, and laughed. Lassen sat at his throne as he watched the party unfold. Standing by both his sides were his trusted advisors Runo and Bianca.

“Runo, I know you’re just dying to sweep

Bianca away for a dance. Go on ahead. Enjoy the festivities," Lassen said with a kind smile.

"Lassen, are you sure? We have no problem standing by you," Runo asked. Lassen only gave a sure nod.

"You are not only my advisor, but my closest friend. You deserve a good time with your lady," he said with a wink. Runo removed his large feathered hat and nodded shortly. He then put it back on as he offered Bianca a dance. They walked off to the dance floor as Lassen watched on. His pleased smile turned to a slightly solemn one as he now sat alone.

Suddenly, the walls of the manor began to crack as large pieces of marble and columns fell to the ground below. The guests ran and cleared from the ballroom as fast as they could.

"What is this? An earthquake?" Bianca asked as she tightly gripped Runo's hand as they attempted to run to safety. Soon enough, the manor began to catch on fire. The source of which was unknown to anyone. Runo and Bianca looked at the chaos unfold in front of them with wide eyes.

"Wait.. the prince!" Runo exclaimed as they turned to face the throne on the other side of the room. There they saw Lassen standing and looking for a way out. He then was able to meet eyes with the two. Just as he spotted them, a large marble column fell and obstructed any more view of him.

"Lassen!" Runo shouted.

"Runo we must find the way out and escape!" Bianca exclaimed. Runo frantically looked around and realized they were surrounded by smoke and falling debris. He then looked straight into Bianca's eyes with deep sincerity.

"I.. truly love you, Bianca," he said, unsure if they would be able to even escape. Bianca paused, being taken aback by the moment.

"And I you, my love," she then said surely. They swiftly began to make their way

around the rubble and find the best route for the door. As they climbed over a fallen column, Bianca's long white dress got caught between the rubble. Runo attempted to rip the fabric free as fast as he could until a large piece of the ceiling fell.

## II

"Legend tells of Lassen Manor that mysteriously crumbled and burned down one night a few hundred years ago due to unknown causes. Rumor has it a rival of the prince ordered for it to happen. But they also said the prince ordered for it to happen himself out of extreme loneliness. Either way, it's said to be haunted to this day!"

"Cut it out, John! You're not funny. You're gonna scare Denis," Monique said as she gave him a shove. John only chuckled.

"Cool story, John. Maybe I should take you there to explore with me one day," Denis said with a roll of his eyes.

"Hey!" John protested.

"Ah Denis! Now you're gonna scare John!" Monique warned.

"Are not!" John called after her. Denis laughed as he made his way to his room and flumped onto his bed. He decided to open up his laptop and do some searching. It was the same results as John had been saying, stories and rumors, and they were all the same. Denis furrowed his brows then made up his mind.

"Hey Denis, we're gonna be late to school if we don't head out," John called to him. Denis swiftly closed his laptop then picked up his bag and went out with his siblings.

Throughout the school day, Denis could only focus on watching the clock. Once the day was finally over, he made it out of school as quickly as he could until he suddenly ran into his brother.

"Hey Denis. Where are you going in such a rush?" He asked, Monique standing beside him. Denis gave a short sigh.

"To tell you the truth.. I actually wanted to check out the manor for myself," he

said.

"What really? You're crazy. The place is old and abandoned," Monique said.

"I kinda just want to find out if the rumors are true is all," Denis said. Monique and John looked to each other for a moment before giving a shrug.

"Fine, we'll come along with though. Can't have you getting lost," John said. Denis smiled then lead the way down to the old neighborhood.

Once they found the manor, they went inside and were met with a large ballroom. Debris and fallen columns were scattered about the floor.

"This is creepy. And it's dark," Monique said as she followed John to the back of the room. Denis looked around and noticed a large, old throne at the end of the room. He squinted at it for a moment until he suddenly saw an image flicker in and out of view. It looked like a figure sitting on the throne with a cold gaze until he disappeared. The room then began to flicker until it turned into a shining new white marble and gold ballroom that it once was. Denis then blinked hard and once he opened his eyes, the ballroom looked old again. Once he was sure nothing else was going on, he sighed with relief then turned around and was suddenly met with another figure standing behind him. Denis exclaimed and fell to the ground.

"Denis? You ok?" John called as him and Monique jogged over to him.

"Uh yeah, I thought I saw.." he began and pointed to where he saw the figure only to find nothing was there.

"Um.. there's nothing there, Denis," Monique said.

"Ah yeah, you're right. There isn't. Maybe I'm just being paranoid," he said.

"Hm well let's get out of here then. This place has some weird vibes anyway," John said. Monique and Denis nodded and began to follow him out. Denis looked back a final time at the empty ballroom before turning around and heading out.



## III

The next weekend followed so they were enjoying it as they usually did, except for Denis. He couldn't stop thinking about what he had seen back at the manor. The strange figures then the lit up ballroom. He soon made up his mind to go back and see if anything strange would happen again, this time by himself.

Denis walked down to the old neighborhood and found the manor as easily as the first time. He had a flashlight in hand as he slowly walked around the grand ballroom, waiting for something to flash to life once again. But nothing was happening. He turned around and it took him a second to see a figure standing behind a crumbling pillar that hadn't fallen. He squinted his eyes then took an unsure step back. 'So this place.. is actually haunted..' he thought to himself. Denis then cleared his throat and gripped his flashlight. "He-hello?" He tried. The figure inched closer behind the pillar. "D-don't be scared. I-if anyone is scared it's me," he continued. The figure then took a step out from behind the pillar. He gave a short nod then slowly walked over to Denis. Upon a closer look, he could see the figure was wearing a long black and blue overcoat over a black suit. On his head he wore a large black and blue hat with a couple of large black feathers stuck on it. Denis realized it wasn't the same figure who he saw sitting at the throne but it was the same one who had been standing behind and startled him the first time. "Uhh who.. who are you?" Denis mustered the will to ask. The figure tilted his head as his semblance soon became clear and he looked more like a man.

The man was afraid to speak, in fear of scaring Denis off. He shortly shook his head. "What? Can't you speak? Come on," Denis encouraged. The man fiddled with his fingers a moment then gave a nod.

"I.. am Runo. Trusted advisor and servant to Lassen Manor," he said carefully. Denis' eyes widened at hearing him. "I really don't mean to frighten you. It's been so

long since anyone had visited the manor. I'm shocked. You.. can see me?" Runo continued. Denis could only frantically nod his head. "I.. wish to know what happened. Why does the manor appear in these shambles every so often. Why does the prince change once it does. And.. where is my Bianca," he said.

"E-every so often? This is how it's always been for a few years now," Denis said. "No no, look, this is how it's always been," Runo said. They both looked around to see the ballroom become like new once again. Alive and full of light. Runo appeared to now wear his white and blue suit, overcoat, and feathered hat. "This is just how it was before.. that night." Denis looked around in utter disbelief.

"Wait a second, what do you mean the prince changes?" Denis said. Runo grew a saddened look.

"A grand ball was being hosted when everything went to disaster. The last I saw of Prince Lassen was him trying to find me. Now when the manor goes dark, his whole persona changes. He was a kind and caring prince. But with each flash of darkness, he turns cold and inconsolable," Runo explained. Just then, the ballroom around them reverted back to being dark and in shambles. "Beside Lassen changing, whether the manor is lit up or not, I cannot find my beloved Bianca. I was attempting to escape with her but once I awoke to this new darkness, I found my Bianca wasn't beside me," Runo explained. Denis remained silent as he thought for a moment.

"Uh.. don't worry. I'll help you find her," he said.

"Oh would you?" Runo said with hopeful eyes.

"Yeah. I'll help you figure this all out," Denis said surely.

The two smiled to each other before they saw something on the second floor. Runo's eyes widened at seeing the man wearing a black, blue and gold suit as he stared down at them.

"Lassen!" Runo called. The prince only

turned his gaze away as he walked ahead then vanished from sight. Runo gave a tired sigh. "Please return when the manor is flashed to normal. I promise the prince is a kind soul," he said. Denis gave a nod then made his way out of the dark manor.

"Ok... I can see ghosts.." Denis said to himself as he now paced around his room. "I don't know if this is awesome or terrifying. Both I guess." He stopped and went to sit on his bed. "Maybe if I help them with their problems, they'll be set free?" He then took out a notepad from his dresser and began to write until he stopped and scratched his head. "I guess I'll figure this out tomorrow." He then placed down the notepad and got under the covers when suddenly the door of his room came flying open.

"Denis! Tomorrow is Sunday we can stay up all night! Come watch a movie!" Monique yelled as she threw herself on top of him. John appeared at the door and laughed. Once Denis' slight heart attack subsided, he could only chuckle and push his sister off as he followed them into the living room.

## IV

Upon the next day, Denis felt the need to go back to the manor. He gathered his things and attempted to leave as quietly as he could.

Once in the dark manor, Denis looked around to see if he could find Runo again. "Alright so, what exactly is Bianca to you?" Denis began.

"Oh, well she's my fiancé of course. We were to have been married before the incident." Runo responded. Denis scribbled in his notepad.

"Is there anything you can tell me about Lassen?" He asked.

"Um.. I wouldn't feel right talking about the prince while he isn't around. Maybe he can tell you for himself," Runo said before looking around. Just then, Lassen appeared sitting silently on his throne. "Ah Lassen. I'm.. I'm glad to see you. This boy

is willing to help us. He's just asking some questions first," Runo explained. Lassen opened his eyes and met them with the same blank gaze as before. Denis swallowed nervously.

"S-so Lassen.Are.. are you missing something?" Denis stuttered. Lassen only stared at them until the manor began to change to its shining self. Before their eyes, Lassen changed into his white and blue suit. Once the manor settled, Lassen looked to them and finally smiled.

"Ah.. Runo," Lassen began as he pulled him into a hug. "When the manor goes dark.. it's terrible."

"I know. But now you're here, and he wishes to help us," Runo said as he broke the hug then turned to Denis.

"Ah yes of course. Hello young man. As you might already know, I'm Prince Lassen Molara," He introduced himself.

"I'm Denis," he responded modestly. "Is there anything you can tell me about what happens when the manor goes dark? What happens to you?" He asked. Lassen grew a saddened expression as he glanced to Runo.

"There's no point in hiding it if it means figuring out a way to help us. Once the manor darkens.. my innermost feelings personify. I usually show a brighter image. But if I'm being honest.. I feel alone. Runo, when you went to dance with Bianca, I felt joy in seeing you happy. But I also felt as though there was no place for me," he explained.

"Oh Lassen, Bianca and I asked if you wanted us to stay by you.."

"And how could I be so selfish as to say yes? And I believe my inner selfishness is what drove the incident to happen," Lassen continued.

"So did you.. call for the manor to get burned down?" Denis came in.

"Oh god no. Of course not. That's why I believe it was karma getting back at me," Lassen said.

"For longing companionship? Lassen, don't blame yourself for what happened.

There is a real reason for what happened that night and we will find out what it is," Runo said. Lassen gave a sad smile and nodded in understanding.

"So we have two mysteries on our hands. Where's Bianca and what happened to the manor. We can do it," Denis said surely. "So about the manor then, by now your incident happened a long while ago. So there are rumors and stories. Do you have a suspicion on someone who might've done it?" Just then, the mansion began to revert back into darkness. Runo's attire changed along with Lassen's as he regained his stoic composure. Runo and Denis looked on nervously at him.

"No," Lassen responded monotonously. "But I feel you can never trust those closest to you.." Runo's expression saddened.

"But you can trust me, sir.." Lassen only looked on at him for a moment. Creating a chilling silence. He then turned away and began walking towards the stairs before he disappeared. Denis noticed how distraught Runo looked.

"H-hey, you know he didn't mean that. Especially about you. Remember, he changes when the manor gets like this alright?" He said as he tried to comfort him. Runo gave a small smile and nodded in understanding.

"Well, Denis. You've made some progress today. Hope to see you soon to forward the investigation. But its about time you headed home for the night," he said.

"You're right. Good night, Runo," Denis said before leaving the manor.

## V

After returning home from school the next day, Denis was eager to keep looking for answers with Runo.

"Do you mind if I look around upstairs?" Denis said.

"Oh, I usually wouldn't. But if the place is in shambles down here, imagine up stairs," Runo cautiously explained.

"Well.. it shouldn't be too bad. It could lead to clues," Denis encouraged. Runo gave a sigh then reluctantly agreed. The two went up the large staircase and found themselves surrounded by sharp turning corridors with ash and debris littering the halls. "There's way too many places to look," Denis gulped.

"We could go to Lassen's room," Runo suggested. He lead the way to a room with large double doors. Denis pushed them open to find a room with an old bed and adorned with a large desk, dresser, bookshelf, and a long oval shaped mirror in the corner. All of which were covered in dust.

"Life was extravagant in the 19th Century huh. It's like walking into a museum," Denis said as he looked around. He walked up to the mirror and passed his sleeve across it to clear away some of the dust. He looked at the room through the reflection and sighed until he saw Runo through it. While he was clearly seen through the mirror, Runo looked like a blurred image. Denis cringed slightly at the sight then focused his attention to the desk behind them. He turned around and saw a few notes scattered over it.

"What's this?" He asked Runo.

"Oh, these are reminders of things that needed to be done around the manor with Lassen's approval," Runo explained. Denis looked them over then found one in particular.

"This says to... have the ovens fixed?" He said.

"Ah yes, we have two ovens in the kitchen and they needed to be looked at. They needed some type of repairs," Runo said. Denis' eyes widened.

"Where's your kitchen?" He asked urgently.

"Downstairs in the back section of the manor." Denis swiftly put the note in his pocket then jogged out of the room. Runo caught up to him and lead the way to where the kitchen would be located on the same floor. There they found the floor and surrounding walls stained all black with ash and slightly unstable. De-



Staszek99. Lubno, ruin of the palace, 2007.  
Image taken from Wikimedia Commons.

nis pushed his foot against the floor and the small hole that was there crumbled further. Through it they could see a small bit of the kitchen below.

“What are you doing?” Denis jumped back startled as he looked up to find Lassen suddenly standing just in front of them.

“Lassen..” Runo began hesitantly.

“Did you do this?” Denis asked as he regained his composure. Lassen stared at him unresponsively. Just then, the wave of light passed through the mansion reverting it once again to its former glory. Lassen’s expression softened as a weary look came to his face.

“Oh Lassen,” Runo said as he went to stand beside him.

“Mister Denis, what are you doing up here? It’s dangerous for a young man such as yourself,” Lassen warned. Denis was quiet a moment.

“Lassen.. Are you sure you didn’t cause any of this to happen? Do... do you know what happened here?” He asked as he pointed behind them to the end of the room.

“Mister Denis, I do appreciate you working to solve the mystery.. But I’m not in favor of these accusations. I’m.. I’m sorry, I need time to think about this,” Lassen said solemnly. He briskly walked passed them then disappeared. Runo gave a disappointed look at Denis.

“Now that we had him here back to normal you decide to run him off!”

“I’m sorry! But his dark self put me off. Did you see him?” Denis argued.

“Yes of course I did. But I’ve come to realize that dark Lassen and this one are not the same man. Just like my curse is to never know what became of my Bianca!” Runo exclaimed. The two stood quiet as the manor reverted back into darkness.

“Ok.. I’m sorry, I didn’t know. I was trying to connect your curses to the cause of all this. I just have to look for clues another way,” Denis said. Runo looked down at him and smiled.

“Ah well, apology accepted, Denis. I’m

sure Lassen will understand once we find him. But I do comprehend your ambition, boy. Looking for answers in anyway you can and staying determined. Reminds me of myself when I was young and of Lassen when he was a boy," he recalled. Denis smiled then looked back down the hall. "Should we look for more stuff in the kitchen?" he recommended.

"Great idea, but I suggest we leave that for next time. You can't stay with us for too long now lest your own family worry." Runo said. Denis agreed and let Runo lead him back downstairs to the ballroom.

"If the manor lights up and you see Lassen, please tell him what I said," Denis said as he walked toward the exit.

"That and more, Mister Denis. And I'm sure he'd be glad to hear it straight from you next time," Runo said. Denis smiled then made his way out and back home.

## VI

Denis went through his usual school routine before he could finally make it home and think about the manor. He stuck the note he found in Lassen's room in his notepad and scribbled away, trying to piece things together in his head more clearly. Just then, Monique and John came to his room with worried looks.

"Denis.. we know you're interested in that place so you should know, they want to demolish the manor," John broke the news as he searched on Denis' laptop and showed the first result.

"Unless someone proves its historic enough to keep around, they'll tear it down and keep it an empty lot," Monique added. Denis sat wide eyed as he looked at the screen.

"Oh my god. Guys, thanks for letting me know, I-I'll be right back," he said before jogging past them and out of the house. "Be careful!" John warned after him. Denis jogged to the manor and looked around until Runo made himself seen then lead him to the kitchen.

"Remember, Lassen could appear at any moment to slow us down," Runo warned. "Well we just have to stand our ground," Denis said. The walls, floor, and even ceiling were all stained with faded black ash especially around two large ovens that stood deteriorated side by side. On the ceiling above the ovens was the moderately sized hole they had seen from up stairs. At the sight of them, a sudden sharp pain struck Runo as he gripped his chest and harshly grunted.

"Runo? What's happening?" Denis asked urgently. Runo held his eyes closed tight as he grew louder.

"Ahh! Bianca! Bianca please! Where are you? Help me!" He exclaimed, his feathered hat falling from his head to the ground. Just then, Lassen appeared coming through the wall, briskly starting toward Denis until he stopped dead in his tracks at seeing Runo. Lassen tilted his head then looked to the broken down ovens. A stunning shock swept over him as he stared wide eyed at them.

"Guys! Guys? This is it!" Denis exclaimed desperately as he pulled out Lassen's note. "You were meant to have the kitchen fixed. But it being so suddenly used for a party, everything combusted. Probably all the inner pipe-work throughout the manor too. You know now. But it wasn't your fault!" A blinding light then came from Runo and Lassen that Denis had no choice but to shield his eyes from. After a moment, everything grew quiet. Denis blinked his eyes open again as his eyes adjusted. He saw Runo now standing calmly but with a solemn look as he stared only to the ground. He now wore a combination of his white suit, and black and blue overcoat. Lassen stood silently before slowly walking up to him and picking up the now white and blue, black feathered hat off the ground. He wiped it off and held it out to him. Runo didn't move as he looked down at the hat. Silent tears began to fall from his eyes but a small smile came to his face. Lassen looked to him with an unsure expression as Runo finally moved his eyes up to look into his.

"Lassen... I know why I'm here," Runo began as he put his hands to Lassen's face. "My solemn duty was to watch over you no matter what. I couldn't let you fall completely into darkness. I could not go anywhere until you were well enough to do so first. Everything is ok, Lassen. You are not and were never alone. You are not only the prince I watch over but also my best friend. You have friends and family that genuinely care for you. Old and new." Lassen looked behind Runo and met eyes with Denis who watched on and gave a sure smile. "So please. No more sadness. No more darkness. Let it go, son" Runo continued. Lassen concentrated his gaze to Runo's eyes until he gradually closed his. A light enveloped Lassen until it dimmed down to reveal he returned to his old self as he hugged Runo, now also wearing a combination of black, white, and blue. Denis walked up to the two and smiled. Runo and Lassen separated from the hug and looked down at him.

"Mister Denis. If we could hug you I definitely would," Lassen said cheerfully. "That's ok. Seeing you guys happy is thanks enough for me," Denis chuckled. "So.. do you know where Bianca is now?" Runo gave a sad smile and shook his head.

"I'm still uncertain. But I do know she is alright. I can feel it," he said. "I also have a new revelation," Lassen came in. "As to why we're still here..." he then pointed to a condemn notice that had fallen out of Denis' pocket. Denis swiftly picked it up and held it behind his back.

"It's alright. I know now. This darkness that befalls the manor is the actual norm. It's been like this for years, Runo. But now it is our duty to build it back up with the help of Denis. Keeping its legacy going before they take it away," Lassen explained. Runo's confused expression changed into a smile. Denis glanced between the two of them before pulling out his pencil and notepad.

"Alright... tell me all there is to know."

# PROFECIA

Por Abel Villamar

## Profecía...

Perdido y pasado de hora, buscando escenario, soñando en la aurora  
Aterriza en el mundo despojado de gloria,  
castigado con fugases memorias,  
Frágil mortalidad envuelve su estado.  
¿Quién más condenado que aquel que del delirio vive?

Aquel que acarició la dicha con el solo fin de extremar su miseria.

Arribó confundido a este mundo, tan intenso, tan fatal, tan vivo  
Su aparición no fue entre estrellas ni milagros de falsa modestia.  
Nos llegó envuelto en llanto adornado con sangre,  
Un hijo más del miedo y el engaño  
Pobre infeliz, cargará la culpa de vuestra cobardía.

Se alimentará de las sobras mismas del mundo.  
Vagará entre cuerpos sin almas y tiempos errantes.  
¡Oh! cuán grande ironía habrá en su existir  
Será fuego y lumbrera, llama que destruye y que crea.  
Se llamará poeta.

## Preocupaciones

Te cubres de quien ni siquiera necesita abrir los ojos para verte.  
Tus nervios juegan con las ganas de amar y el miedo a callar  
Y te parece extraño que tu desdichado camino de pronto se ilumine.  
¿Te preocupas de que no mire tu cuerpo?  
preocúpate de que te vea por dentro,  
de que juegue con tu locura y converse con tus sueños,  
de que te saque el aliento y libere tus deseos.  
Preocúpate de aquel beso que dormida te doy  
aquel que está cruzando bosques y desiertos para llegar a ti,  
aquel viajero loco que quiere curar tus heridas y cubrir tú desnudes.  
Ese que en cada línea de mis versos va mojando tus labios,  
ese que ahora mismo te arrulla y despide tus fantasmas,  
ese que te busca para que descanses tranquila en él,  
ese beso que te recuerde lo grande que eres mujer.

## Ninfa Urbana

El sol domina en su punto el desnudo cielo.  
Reposa un poco mi volátil sustancia bajo un cerezo dormido que suspira fértil con  
la primavera.  
En un desierto de acero y piedra encontré un manantial de hierba.  
Y apenas a veinticinco pasos de loco descansa una ninfa urbana.  
Juegan los rayos de sol como niños descalzos al correr por su piel de diamante  
Dos pajaritos terreros pasan por mi lado es presumiendo su aroma.  
Ella huele a cándido vicio y libertad.  
El viento de pronto se confabula conmigo para acariciar sus cabellos y sus descalz-  
as ganas.  
Ella yace tumbada al abrazo de la fresca tierra, mientras en mi mente un delirio  
pasea.  
Ojala y fuera yo ese verde pasto que te roza las plantas.  
Ojala y fuera yo el sol que calienta tu sangre  
Ojala se abrieran tus brazos a la cruz de mi alma.  
Que te acaricio el aliento si quiero y te encierro en versos si sueño.  
Mas nunca interrumpa yo tu digno vuelo muñequita de hechizo y carne.  
Deidad pagana tan escondida y tan santa!  
Hasta ti migraron mis golondrinas ecuatoriales.



Abel Villamar is pursuing a major in Latin American studies. He was born in Guayaquil, Ecuador. He has been living in the United States since 2014. One of his passions is to write poetry. In his pieces, he tries to embody the voice of his community and the nuances of life.



# OPEN YOUR EYES

By Cristian González

## *open your eyes*

as I wake up  
to the sound of rattling trains  
and I can't stand the smell  
of urine stained marble  
people walk past but only glance  
but never acknowledge  
me  
I'm not a pain  
I just need help  
I wasn't always like this  
I'm not a druggy alcoholic  
or a criminal  
I've falling deep into a hole  
a hole of no despair  
and I can't see the light  
I was laid off without a thought  
of where I would be  
in the next year  
but I'm here  
and it's hard when you can't pay rent  
and your last couple of dollars  
where spent  
but not on me  
I have a three year old daughter  
who used to look up to me  
you see when the world is more about money  
than humanity  
Then we end up with A world that is run by money  
then empathy we end up with  
greed  
wars  
death  
stupidity  
but you probably already know that  
because with a world with internet  
we see it all  
but refuse to accept it  
but one day it might get closer  
but until then I'll be here  
In the train station  
or Street corner



**abre tus ojos**

Cuando me despierto  
al sonido de los trenes traqueteando  
Y no soporto el olor del mármol  
manchado de orina  
la gente pasa pero solo mira  
pero nunca lo reconoce  
yo  
no soy ninguna carga  
yo solo necesito ayuda  
yo no siempre fui así  
no soy un drogadicto, ni un alcohólico  
ni un criminal  
yo he caído profundamente en un agujero  
un agujero sin desesperación  
y no puedo ver la luz  
fui despedido  
sin que nadie piense dónde estaré  
el año que viene  
pero estoy aquí  
y es difícil cuando no puedes pagar el alquiler  
y no sabes dónde gastar tus últimos dólares  
pero no en mí  
tengo una hija de tres años  
quien solía admirarme  
tú ves cuando el mundo es más sobre el dinero  
que sobre lo humano  
hasta que terminamos con un mundo regido por el dinero  
entonces la empatía deviene en  
codicia  
guerras  
muerte  
estupidez  
pero probablemente ya sabes eso  
porque con un mundo con internet  
lo vemos todo  
pero rehusamos aceptarlo  
pero un día la realidad podría tocar más de cerca  
y hasta que eso ocurra yo estaré aquí  
en la estación de trenes  
o en la esquina de la calle



Cristian Gonzalez is a twenty-one-year-old student at LaGuardia Community College. He is a liberal arts soon-to-be political science major. He has multiple goals of becoming a politician and actor, but his main pursuit is to be able to help people in the future.

**Delicate**

As the wind blows  
On that one single rose  
And the Sun shines down  
But not a drop of water in sight  
As the petals dry crumble and fall  
We wonder why  
With the answers in front of us  
We question

Why?

Why waste it on something that's dying  
And the greed takes over  
We drink it up  
Without the need too  
We wonder why  
But the answers in front of us  
We are the why

But  
Make no difference.

**Delicado**

Cuando el viento sopla  
Sobre esa simple rosa  
Y el sol brilla  
Pero no hay ni una gota de agua a la vista  
Mientras los pétalos se secan, se desmoronan y caen  
Nos preguntamos por qué  
Con las respuestas frente a nosotros  
Nosotros preguntamos

¿Por qué?

Desperdiciar en algo que está muriendo  
Y la avaricia se hace cargo  
La bebemos  
Sin que nos haga falta  
Nos preguntamos por qué  
Pero las respuestas están frente a nosotros  
Somos el por qué

Pero  
Eso no cambia nada



DOSSIER PHOTOGRAPHY

**PORTRAITS**

Jeremiah Cumberbatch *Untitled*,  
Digital Photography, 2018.



Jeremiah Cumberbatch *Untitled*,  
Digital Photography, 2018.



Govinda Bharat *Untitled*. Digital Photography, 2018.



Govinda Bharat. *Untitled*. Digital Photography, 2018.





Luisa F. Madrid. *Trumpet of Jesus*. Digital Photography, 2018.



Luisa F. Madrid.  
*Bongó*  
Digital Photography, 2018.



Luisa F. Madrid. *Bello Cigarro*. Digital Photography, 2018.



Luisa F. Madrid. *Nepal Culture*.  
Digital Photography, 2018.





Tanaisha Gilchrist. *Untitled* Digital Photography. 2018.



Maria Rahaman Hitome, *Untitled*. Digital Photography, 2018.



Maria Rahaman Hitome, *Untitled*. Digital Photography, 2018.



Luisa F. Madrid. *Ken B&W*. Digital Photography, 2018.





Oriana Rojas. *Untitled*. Digital Photography, 2018.



Luisa F. Madrid, *Untitled*. Digital Photography, 2018.



Luisa F. Madrid, *Abuela*. Digital Photography, 2018.



Nivn Alyounes was born in Libya, where her father worked as a teacher. She was raised in Doha, Qatar and studied there until college, at which point she moved to Jordan. In Jordan, she majored in fine art and worked as a teacher. After college, she married and came to live in the United States. She is currently studying at LaGuardia Community College, where she is majoring in childhood education.

## منال

هكذا كانت تُلقب المادة وهي "مادة الشريعة" لكن مُعلمة هذه المادة لا تنطبق عليها أوصاف تلك المادة . فقد كانت شخصية المعلمة ، غير متسامحة عندما تتأمل في شخصيتها تجدها متعجرفة ، ليست جميلة وسمينة بالرغم من اهتمامها بنفسها، ضخمة الجسم غليظة الملامح منكبرة. تجد في وجه هذه المعلمة الحقد المتسلط وخصوصا على البنات الغير مواطنات في إحدى دول الخليج في المدرسة الثانوية للبنات. شاءت الظروف بأن تتعايش أوقات حرب الخليج مع وجود الست عائشة ، وهي معلمة مادة الشريعة. في تلك الفترة والتي تزامنت مع بدء توافد أهل الكويت بسبب الحرب ونزوحهم إلى دول الخليج المختلفة. وكانت قد هيات لهم دول الخليج أفضل سبل المعيشة من سكن ومدارس..والخ.

تجلس البنات في الفصل وإذا تدخل على الفصل طالبات جديبات من الكويت إذ يرحب بهن أعظم الترحيب من قبل المعلمة عائشة! الفصل كان يحتوي على طالبات غير مواطنات من بلاد الشام ومن أفريقيا وطالبات مقيمات من نفس البلد . كانت منال طالبة من بلاد الشام وكانت شخصيتها جريئة ، وتحب أن تتحدث عن اوضاع الموقف السياسي الحاصل آنذاك، وتعبير عن رأيها بحرية إلى حد بعيد و تشارك أرائها مع صديقتها نادين وذلك من خلال كتاباتها على كتاب مادة الشرعية، وكان الملل في الحصة دفع منال للكتابة لأن حصة الست عائشة كانت مملة وغير شيقة. وكانت معظم آراء منال المكتوبة عن موضوع حرب الخليج والذي يحصل في تلك الفترة بمثابة ردوداً على الست عائشة و انتقاداً لموقفها ضد أهل بلاد الشام حيث كانت لاتبالي بأن تجرح أحدا بكلامها. إلى أن جاء اليوم بأن يقع كتاب منال بيدي المعلمة عائشة وكان القدر كتب لها أن تنال هذه الفرصة حتى تنتقم شر انتقام !!.

في تلك اللحظة خفق قلب منال بسرعة من شدة الخوف ودعت الله بأن لاتقرأ الشريرة كتاباتها ..وكانت هذه اللحظات أصعب لحظات في حياة منال ..وكانت لحظات صمت وتأمل في ذلك الكتاب إلى أن رفعت الست عائشة رأسها منتصرة وفي قوة صوت تقول : "أهذا رأيك إذن!!"، وكان القدر أعطاها الفرصة لتنتقم من هذه المراهقة الجميلة التي لم يكن لها ذنب إلا أنها عبرت عن رأيها ولم تؤذي أحدا بذلك. ثم أكملن الست عائشة قولها: "سوف تعاقبين على فعلتك هذه!وسترين". وأخذت الناقمة الكتاب وعرضته على الإدارة وجعلت من قصة منال قصة انتصارها ولانها لبلدها ، هكذا سُميت أحداث القصة وقتها .

معلمة الشريعة التي يفترض فيها التسامح وعدم التدخل فيما لا يعنيهها ، إلا أنها أصرت بأن حرمت منال أن تكمل مراحل الثانوية والتي فرضت عليها بأن تتذكرها طوال عمرها، المعلمة عائشة انتصرت وطردت منال من المدرسة ولم تكمل دراستها وكانت تهتمها بأنها تعدت على البلد الذي تعيش فيه بآراء ترفضها معلمة الشريعة!

"معلمة الشريعة" عائشة التي لم تطبق يوما ما تُعلم..ذنب منال سوف يبقى في رقبته . وهل منال ستسامحها في يوم من الأيام على فعلتها أم لا ؟ ، ولكن الذي حصل بعد ذلك هو أن منال تزوجت ابن عمها وهاجرت إلى كندا لتعيش بعيدا عنك يا عائشة!.



## HORSES OF GOD

By Abir Das

*Horses of God* was an amazing read that shed light on the roots of radical Islamic terrorism. *Horses of God* captures you from the very beginning with the presentation of a dead narrator. The choice of assigning this book to read at this point in time was critical. In America today, we have a lot of social issues surrounding Muslims, including a travel ban and a prejudice that has been going on for decades. This book helped those who are uninformed become informed and able to make the distinction between a common Muslim and a radical, which I personally feel is needed since ignorance is bliss and most people, like the boys in this novel, are fed propaganda and can become very corrupted by it.

“To be honest, the images were blurred, almost scrambled, but you could just about see the outlines” (11).

The presence of radical Islam is very strong in this book, and in hindsight, it is a comparison of the narrator Yacchine’s satellite dish and radical Islam. The beautiful thing about the novel is that it gives you an honest explanation of why so many extremists and insurgents originate from slums. The presentation of any religion in one of its most strict impure forms can seem confusing to most, but when you have nothing to lose and no hope at all, this is your only option. The boys in this novel were promised paradise and coming from the closest thing to hell, I can’t argue with their decision.

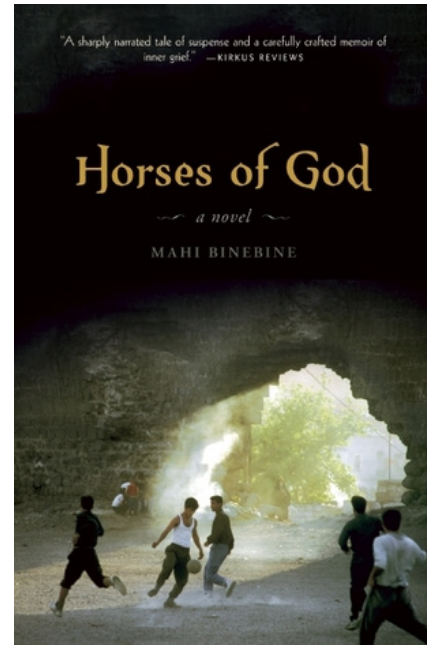
The impact of this book should go beyond the reader. I personally feel it should resonate with the political parties and educate them about this shared root of many radical Muslims, in order to prevent the launching of more hate campaigns against the common Muslim.

“I can see some scrawny kids running after a flat ball, without a care in the world; the new stars of Sidi Moumen” (162).

It saddens me that the conclusion of this book implied that there is a circle of life in Sidi Moumen, that regardless of who disappeared or what happens, there will always be a new group of victims to prey upon and the stories of these boys will eventually fade like their predecessors.

Naturalism is a big part of *Horses of God*. These boys did not choose poverty, nor did they make any decisions that led them into it. They were born into it. You feel pity for these innocent children who are plagued with poverty, crime, and no hope for a future. This book is far from fiction and it saddens me every time I remind myself that *Horses of God* throws you into a world you couldn’t possibly imagine surviving in, let alone have the will to live in.

Yachinne, when speaking about a beautiful girl from Sidi Moumen, says “Ghizlane, My sweet beloved friend, no one knows how she landed in Sidi Moumen, but she was out of place in our filthy universe” (Binebine, 73). When reading this it broke my heart, a helpless child who felt that he belonged in this filthy universe when he was simply born into it. Mahi Binebine did an excellent job of creating characters that have their own individual charm and flair. Binebine also incorporates the effect of radical Islamic propaganda and how it can affect the vulnerable and feeble minded. I appreciated this on a personal level since it helped readers unfamiliar with Islam to understand the difference and give perspective on why people feed into harmful rhetoric. *Horses of God* opened my eyes, tugged at my heartstrings, and engulfed me in a world that I will never forget.



Mahi Binebine. *Horses of God*. Tin House Books; Reprint edition (March 26, 2013)



Nigina Ortikova is a twenty-one-year-old freshman student in LaGuardia Community College. She is originally from Uzbekistan and moved in to the United States four years ago. She aspires to work for the United Nations as a journalist and human rights advocate. She is currently the Vice President of the Phi Theta Kappa International Honor's Society and a member delegate of The Model United Nations Program at LaGuardia.

## DOUBTER IN A HOLY LAND

By Nigina Ortikova

As a student who is majoring in international studies at LaGuardia Community College, I am required to take a foreign language course. People tend to choose Spanish because it is easy for English speakers and the second most spoken language in the United States. It is almost a life requirement to speak more than one language since the population is getting very diverse in every corner of the world. Also, foreign languages open new opportunities, new doors in professional field. I chose to learn Arabic not because it was just a requirement to fulfill my major but because it has a significantly deep meaning in my life. It is a language that utterly changed me.

Everything started when I was 12 years old. I stopped going to karate classes, and I was told that I was old enough to do girly activities, like learning how to cook or tailoring, that would help me to get married someday. As a girl who grew up in a religious family, my life had been designed to adapt and accept many societal rules. Nevertheless, I was not always in agreement with the society. I was thirsty. I was thirsty for answers because I was almost drowning in a world of questions that no one would answer. I had been furtively questioning my faith but I was too scared to say it.

Growing up with Islamic culture and experiencing my very first limitation as a girl shaped who I am today. Ironically, sexism gave me the desire to be a boy. I wanted to have a freedom, a freedom to decide without the male companions that the culture always insists on having. But, then I realized that I can get the same amount of freedom as a girl. I started questioning everything, not understanding certain rules that had been designed only for girls. This created a dilemma: I could not understand how can we recognize certain people as superior to others based on their gender. People around me never answered my questions beyond just saying that that's how things are, that God

created all of these rules. I was never satisfied with these answers because those people never in their life read the Qu'ran themselves. They just passed down the things that they learned, and I was not accepting it.

After I moved to the United States, diversity and cultural fusion made me look at things with different perspectives and ask questions rather than just accepting things like religious rules. If the religion suppresses people based on their gender to make an absolute patriotic society, then what's underneath religion? Is religion really part of a lust for power and control in people's lives? Is it a desire for absolute power so strong that people cannot accept equal rights no matter their differences? All of these questions stirring in me, I was continuously searching for answers. I wanted to experience every obligation on my own and learn the Qu'ran deeply to investigate the true meaning of Islam, to get the true message of Allah.

On my journey to end all doubts in my heart, I visited Saudi Arabia to see the place which is the home of Islam history and the holy Quran, where many Islamic sacred and religious places are located as well as many important Islamic events took place. I knew I would find answers there. I arrived to Saudi Arabia on April 17, 2017 and visited Mecca and Medina, which is believed to be the birthplace of the prophet Muhammad and the site of Muhammad's first revelation of the Quran. It cannot be described by words how I felt experiencing the culture, beauty, and the atmosphere. It is every Muslim's dream. It was a day when everything that I had stood for, as a human being and a person of faith, was going to be on the line. When I shared the holy square with people from all around the world of the same faith and prayed, that prayer became the center of a major controversy. I witnessed women and men treat-



ed equally with respect and dignity, and there was no such thing as oppression. I wanted to talk with people and I faced my very first challenge that I didn't consider before making the trip, which was that I didn't speak Arabic. The majority of people there were Arabic speakers and I found only a few people with basic English. I could not hear their stories or experiences, which was my first intention. I realize that in order to feel people's feelings, to know the true meaning of my faith, I should learn Arabic and read the Quran. That's what brought me to Arabic 101 at LaGuardia, where I started to see the beauty of the language. I have a goal: I will learn Arabic and continue my further education as a minor in Islamic history at New York University. Also, Arabic plays big role on my life because I aspire to be a human rights advocate and work for non-profit organizations that are specifically based Central Asia and Middle Eastern countries. I also want to work within the United Nations as a global citizen not just to influence people through education but to fight on an international level and inspire political advocacy.

Islam is the religion of peace and love. We should not change its concepts to apply to certain cultures in desire of gaining power for certain group of people; it can very dangerous to our society or even to the world. Learning Arabic will help me to discern the true Islam, to answer all the questions about my faith, and to free my soul from the prison of doubts.



Jeremiah Cumberbatch *Untitled*. Digital Photography, 2018.



Sophia Sze Nga So is currently studying at LaGuardia Community College. She grew up in Hong Kong, and she moved to New York with her family two years ago. She loves books and films.

## THE PROPHET

By Sophia Sze Nga So

*The Prophet*, primarily directed and written by Roger Allers with other segment directors include Paul and Gaëtan Brizzi, Joan C. Gratz, Mohammed Saeed Harib, Tomm Moore, Nina Paley, Bill Plympton, Joann Sfar, and Michal Socha, is an animated film produced in 2014. The film is inspired by Kahlil Gibran's book *The Prophet*, Gibran's poems are cited and his thinking is illustrated in the film. The movie captured the last two days Mustafa, from the perspective of a little girl, Almitra. The story is set during the ruling of Ottoman Empire in Orphalese, an island of Lebanon. Mustafa is a prisoned painter and poet living in a remote area in Orphalese. Almitra, whose mother, Kamila, works as a helper in Mustafa's house, is a very special girl. She cannot speak and get along with others ever since her father has died two years ago. One day, Almitra follows her mother to go to work and sneaks into Mustafa bedroom. Mustafa does not blame her, instead, he makes friend with her. On the same day, a sergeant visits Mustafa and announces that he is freed now but he has to leave Orphalese by the end of the day. The sergeant and another police, Halim, guard Mustafa to go the pier through the town. On their way to the pier, they are stopped a few times by the town people. People want Mustafa to share his idea with them because they think the words of Mustafa feed their soul. Almitra has followed Mustafa after he leaves his house and she knows that he is facing a great danger. In fact, the government coerces Mustafa to take back his statements in order to be freed. In that night, Almitra and her mother take a risk to see Mustafa with the help of Halim. Almitra encourages Mustafa and promises him to save all his poems and paintings. The next morning, accompanied by the people in Orphalese, Mustafa is killed under the gun of the regime.

Although the film contains a lot of Arabic cultural symbols like the evil eye, which

appears a few times in the movie, and is set in an Arab country, Lebanon, it is more like an American film that tries to convey Arabic culture. In overall, the story does not reflect a lot about traditional Arabic culture, especially regard to Muslim culture. This may due to the fact that Gibran was a Christian and his works display Christian ideas more. Therefore, as an adaptation of Gibran's work, the film also expresses the Christian thinking, which is a more close to the Western culture for me as an audience. It may also because the director aims to gain the sympathetic response from a wider range of audience. If the film is too focus on the Arab culture, only the audiences from the area can find linkage to it. However, when the director emphasizes more on the universal values that everyone holds, people from all cultural background can find themselves bond to the film. In the details of the film, it does not reveal much of the Arabic custom since the majority of the directors are not Arabic. For example, the physical contacts between women and men are very common in the movie; yet, not really common in the reality in Arabic countries. This shows that the directors do not have enough understanding of the culture. This reminds me of the movie *Kungfu Panda* and *Mulan*, which are also American animations that tries to displays another culture but not quite successful.

*The Prophet* also reminds me of two other movies, *Kilometer Zero* and *The Dancer and The Politician*. All of the three movies depicts the dark side of autocracy, showing how people's right and freedom are oppressed under the regimes. In *The Prophet*, people can be prisoned and killed by the government because of their words. At that time, the Ottoman Empire is ruling Orphalese with high-handed measures, freedom of speech is limited. The government views Mustafa as "seditious" for the people. Because of this reason,

Mustafa has been house arrested by the government for seven years. When he goes to the marketplace, the government once again realizes that Mustafa's words are too powerful to the people. So they forced Mustafa to choose between execution and retraction of his statements. Since Mustafa is not willing to give up the belief that he holds for his whole life, the government executes him by firing squad at last. This indicates that lives and freedom of people are unvalued under autocracy. Kilometer Zero also mentions similar plot. Common people could be caught randomly by the government and forced to join the army and fight for the country. For example, the main character, Ako, a Kurdish man who hates Iraq has no choice but to obey the rules of the country. In *The Dancer* and *The Politician*, it shows that people's right is not always respected by the regime. The belly-dancer, Sonia, fights very hard for the right she deserves. Yet, the government denies her right and hostiles her because of her career. Therefore, Sonia is detained by the police with ridiculous reason. These films show that people's right and freedom in

non-democratic places are lack.

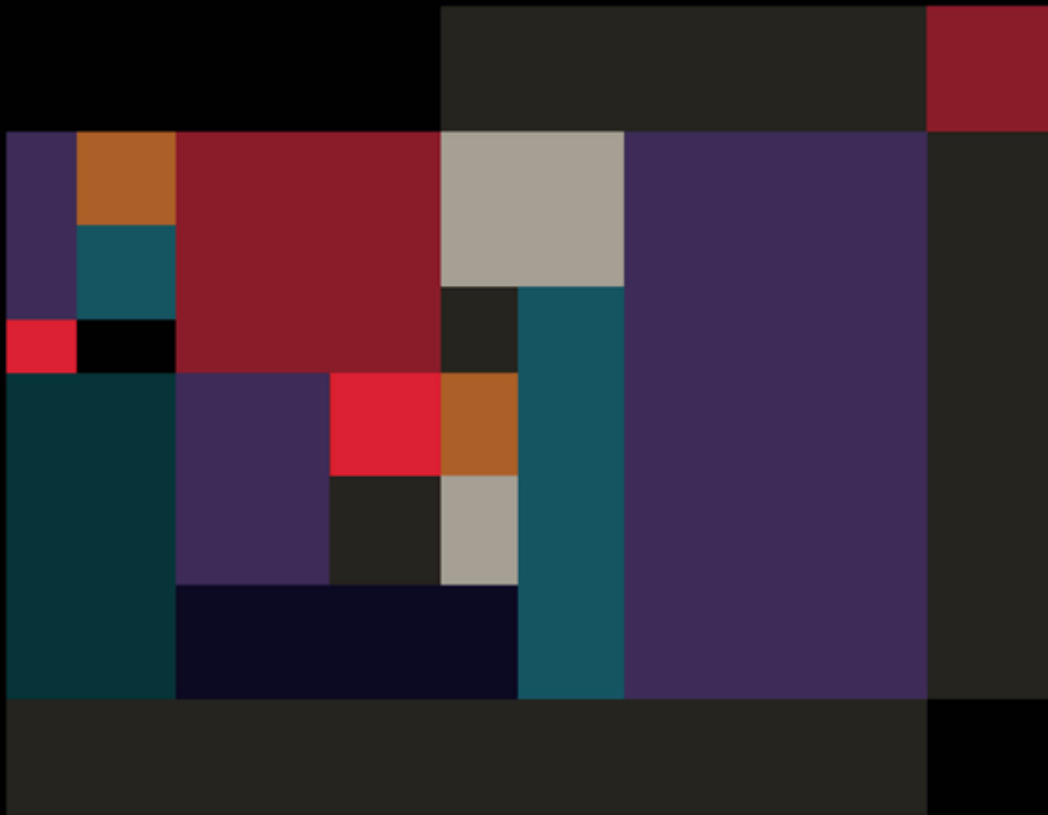
It is true that freedom is one of the main subject discussed in the film. There is a poem about freedom, encouraging people to rise above the things that bind them in order to achieve true freedom. It also expresses the idea that people's spirits are free and no one can limit our mind. There is also a hint that shows Mustafa is freed after his death because his spirit can go back to his homeland finally. Many abstract subjects are also conversed in the film through the poems of Mustafa, including: marriage, parenthood, and job. These subjects can be in the same category: love. There are two poems about love between couples. The first one is about marriage, "love one another but make not a bond of love", teaching married couples to love but at the same time give rooms to each other. Another poem teaches people to love bravely. There is a poem about love between parents and their children. "Your children are not your children. They come through you not from you." This teaches parents to love their children

but not trying to control them or shape them. Mustafa also asks people to love their jobs since every job is noble and this is the only way to bind yourself to yourself. Among all, I think the most important statement that the movie makes is about people free mind. When Mustafa is was talking to the General, he said that the government cannot charge him for spreading rebellion thinking because he just tells people what they have already known in their hearts. This implies that the authority cannot limit people's thinking, because people are born with the desire to love and to be freed.

To conclude, this is a very meaningful movie. It is seldom to see so many philosophic ideas included in one movie. I especially appreciate how the directors match the beautiful music with the vivid animation together in most of the poem parts which enriches the film a lot. The film also teaches me an important lesson about love and freedom.

After ELS102

# THERE IS ELS103



**SENCILLO**

Español/Nivel intermedio

DOSSIER PHOTOGRAPHY

# THE CITY



Hreedoy Khandakar. *The Athletic*.  
Digital Photography, 2018.



Felix Pérez, Untitled, Digital Photography, 2018.







Makayla Marchese Reilly. *Untitled*, Digital Photography, 2018.

Juan Minaya.  
*Untitled*,  
Digital Photography, 2018.







Kelly O'Brien. *Untitled*, Digital Photography, 2018.



Tanaisha Gilchrist  
*Untitled*, Digital Photograph, 2018



## LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES LIBERAL ARTS OPTION CURRICULAR FRAMEWORK

PATHWAYS COMMON CORE	30
A. REQUIRED CORE: 12 CREDITS	12
ENGLISH: 6 CREDITS	
ENG101/ENA101/ENC101 English Composition I	3 (depending on placement scores)
ENG102 Writing through Literature	3
MATHEMATICAL AND QUANTITATIVE REASONING 3 CREDITS	3
Select one of the following:	
MAT107 Mathematics and the Modern World	
MAT115 College Algebra & Trigonometry (MAT117 Algebra & Trigonometry depending on placement scores)	
MAT120 Elementary Statistics (MAT119 depending on placement scores)	
LIFE AND PHYSICAL SCIENCES: 3 CREDITS	3
Select <b>ONE</b> of the following:	
SCB101 Topics in Biological Sciences	
SCB206 Introduction to Neuroscience	
SCC101 Topics in Chemistry	
SCP101 Topics in Physics	
SCP140 Topics in Astronomy	
SCP105 Life in the Universe	
B. FLEXIBLE CORE: 18 CREDITS	18
Select one course from each of the five flexible core categories AND one additional course from any flexible core category.	
WORLD CULTURES AND GLOBAL ISSUES (3 CREDITS)	
US EXPERIENCE IN ITS DIVERSITY (3 CREDITS)	
CREATIVE EXPRESSION (3 CREDITS)	
INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY (3 CREDITS)	
SCIENTIFIC WORLD (3 CREDITS)	



## FACTS ABOUT TRANSLATION

- Employment of interpreters and translators is projected to grow 46 percent from 2012 to 2022, much faster than the average for all occupations.\*

- The top growing states for translator/interpreter are Virginia, New Jersey, New York and California.\*

In terms of salary:

- New York and New Jersey mean wage of (\$30.26 per hour), annual wage of \$ 65,940.\*

Qualifications:

- Translators/interpreters need at least a bachelor's degree, professional proficiency in the native language and a second language\*

Major goals:

- The goal of this major will be to provide students with a strong foundation in both the English and Spanish languages, as well as in Latin American and Peninsular culture and literature in order to transfer to Hunter College to pursue a bachelor of arts degree in Spanish translation.

Possible Work Fields:

- International business, U.N., Foreign service, U.S. Dept. of State, D.E.A., Homeland Security Dept.

\*Source: BLS Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Students are advised to select one Urban Study course to complete college requirement. To complete the degree requirements from the Flexible Core, students are advised to select courses from the recommended course selections listed on the program website.

**NOTE:** Student can select only two courses from any one discipline. If you took language 101, you must take 102 in the same language. Students who have not studied one of the languages spoken in Latin America are encouraged to take two courses each in Spanish, Portuguese or French. The level of the courses will be assessed through a placement test.

PROGRAM CORE	30
LIBERAL ARTS: 6 CREDITS	
LIF101 First Year Seminar	3
LIB200 Humanism, Science and Technology	3
ENGLISH: 3 CREDITS	
ENG103 Preparing and Writing the Research Paper	3
ELA: 6 CREDITS	6
Select <b>TWO</b> from the following:	
ELF201 French Literature from a Global Perspective	
ELF250 Modern French Literature in Translation	
ELF260 French Cinema: Cultural Insights through Film	
ELS200 Latin American Literature I	
ELS201 Latin American Literature II	
ELS204 Latin American Civilizations	
ELS205 Latin American Civilizations	
ELS250 Latin American Fiction in Translation	
ELS200, ELS201, ELS204 are taught in Spanish	
ELS205, ELS250, ELF250, ELF260 are taught in English	
ELF201 is taught in French	
HUMANITIES: 6 CREDITS	6
Select <b>TWO</b> from the following:	
HUM107 Music of Latin America	
HUP116 Latin American Philosophy	
HUT220: Contemporary Latina/o Theatre in the United States	
SOCIAL SCIENCE: 6 CREDITS	6
Select <b>TWO</b> from the following:	
SSA106 Anthropology of Latin America	
SSA120 Peoples and Culture of the Caribbean	
SSH232 Survey of Latin American and Caribbean History	
SSP200 Global Politics	
SSP220 Politics of Latin America and the Caribbean	
ELA /HUMANITIES/SOCIAL SCIENCE ELECTIVE: 3 CREDITS	3
Choose an additional course from Social Science, Humanities or ELA from the above lists.	
TOTAL: 60 credits	

DOSSIER PHOTOGRAPHY

# LANDSCAPES



Savannah Nabors. *Untitled*. Digital Photography, 2018.



Tianabelle Rodriguez. *Untitled*. Digital Photography, 2018.





Tianabelle Rodriguez. *Untitled*. Digital Photography, 2018.





Juan Minaya. *Untitled*. Digital Photography, 2018.





Janai Julien. *Untitled*. Digital Photography, 2018.



Janai Julien. *Untitled*. Digital Photography, 2018.





Monica Lubera . *Untitled*. Digital Photography, 2018.

# COMING THIS FALL! SECOND WEDNESDAYS AT THE MOVIES!

WATCH LATIN AMERICAN MOVIE CLASSICS  
THE SECOND WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH DURING  
CLUB HOURS, 2-4 PM.

THE DISCUSSIONS WILL BE LED BY ERNESTO MENÉNDEZ-CONDE  
AND OTHER FACULTY MEMBERS FROM ELA, ENGLISH  
AND HUMANITIES.



## SCREENINGS INCLUDE

THE EXTERMINATING ANGEL (LUIS BUÑUEL, 1962; MEXICO)  
CAMILA (MARÍA LUISA BEMBERG, 1984; ARGENTINA)  
A TIME TO DIE (JORGE ALÍ TRIANA, 1985; COLOMBIA)  
THE SILENCE OF NETO (LUIS ARGUETA, 1994; GUATEMALA)  
MADRIGAL (FERNANDO PÉREZ, 2007; CUBA)

SPONSORED BY ELA, ENGLISH AND HUMANITIES. DEPARTMENTS AND HUMANITIES. DEPARTMENTS





Aide Sosa Ramirez was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. She is majoring in criminal justice at LaGuardia Community College. Her aspiration is to become a social worker in the criminal justice system. One of her hobbies is to visit museums in order to keep in touch with history.

## APPLE'S MARKETING

By Aide Sosa Ramirez

In recent days, it is possible to hear about products due to the many forms of advertising. We see advertising everywhere, from posters to television commercials and even on our phones. The techniques of advertising have improved more and more throughout the years to the point that consuming has become irresistible to viewers. One of the most known companies in our society is Apple. Apple is a company that provides the most advanced technology in history. Their products consist of phones, laptops, and even tablets. It is well known, due to the impressive strategies they use to target individuals, that their products consist of characteristics that can be very useful to many individuals in different ways. Apple introduces their unique advanced technology in a way in which they are able to connect with individuals at an equal level. In this essay, I will be discussing how Apple's advertising campaign is able to convince the public that they need the product, what makes their campaign unique, and how its ads are coordinated through various media.

Apple has been getting a great amount of attention due to the success they had achieved in convincing the public that they need the product. In an article, "How Apple Became so Successful That its Total Revenue is Bigger than the GDP of Some Countries" written by Andrew Griffin and Antonia Molloy, they state that "Apple doesn't usually cut down on quality - its products usually have the same kind of technological innovations as its rivals, if not more. But it [their advertising] makes them simple, pointing out how they [their products] can be used to make things easier and quicker, rather than showing off about specifications or having the latest widget or gizmo." What they mainly point out is how Apple advertisers use the preferences of the public in order to create the perfect design. Apple mainly targets those that want advanced

technology but something easy to use. Who would not want that? The popularity of the people is what they are looking for. For example, the United States is made up of a predominantly working class population. Apple targets this audience by creating the perfect commercials that show the fast and easy way to use their phones. This is how Apple became more popular within all society.

What makes this product unique is how they advertise their products. A single iPhone can cost 600.00 USD or more. In a lower income society, iPhones are even more popular. So how is it possible that these products are becoming very popular at such a high price? In an article "What is your Unique Selling Proposition" written by Steve Mueller, he points out that "Apple [...] never marketed their USP ('We provide a lifestyle with our products') or communicated this USP through expensive advertisements; instead they provided the unique selling proposition with their products (iPod, iPhone, iPad) that really spoke for themselves and offered unique characteristics that similar and comparable products of competitors (if existent) did not offer at the time of market introduction." Mueller mentions the way Apple introduces their products differently than other companies. As he mentions, the product indeed has convinced the public that the iPhone is more of a lifestyle. Many of the people that own an iPhone can in fact say that their iPhones are necessary in their everyday lives. One of the things people might find convincing is the intelligence the phone can have in order to finish certain tasks, for example, Siri. Siri is one of the features that all Apple products contain. It has become very popular due to the things it is able to do with just a command of the voice. These are the things that Apple focuses on in advertising.





Apple adv on transfer channel of Hongqiao Road Station. Image from [www.commonswiki.org](http://www.commonswiki.org)

The majority of Apple's success comes from being able to sell to the public and convincing them to buy again. In another article, "Steve Job's Advertising Strategy is Why Apple Still Tops the Market" written by Jeri Smith, shares the same idea about Apple's commercials. He mentions that "Their iconic 1984 Macintosh commercial directed by Ridley Scott introduced three decades of powerful ads. The still-recognizable iPod silhouettes led to a run of ads for iPhones, iPads, and iWatches that do a superb job of showcasing product features in a context of stunning visuals and striking soundtracks." Smith mentions the history behind Apple's very first advertising commercials. The very first commercial that Apple created illustrated a revolutionary introduction to the new Macin-

tosh computer. Many of the people that viewed the commercial immediately gave their attention. Not only that, the commercial built excitement in viewers. Smith also mentions that, "These commercials are a challenge to ignore. When the iWatch ad shows commuters floating through the air and promises '40 million iTunes songs on your wrist,' you're not going to mistake it for a Samsung ad." He agrees that Apple has unique ways to publicize themselves through developed advertising. Apple also makes sure to give their consumers a reason to come back again. They create other Apple products that work great together. These products are also very easy to use, and convenient for everyday routines. Apple has an advantage in advertising these features because they are relatable to most of

society.

Apple has become very successful due to the diversity of inspiration they use to make the right ad or commercial. They also use diverse influence for their products. In apple's website, they include the different stories of their employees, as well as their statistics to show the diversity they also have in their work field. Raunaq is a wireless test engineer from Apple. His story is included in the official Apple website where people can shop for their products. Showing this diversity in their website is just one of the many unique ways to advertise their products. Raunaq says that, "The culture at Apple allows me to be who I am and celebrate who I am." This is an inspiring quote that builds a great reputation for

Apple. Their strategy connects at a personal level to viewers in order to build an unforgettable experience. People will begin to trust them due to their personal background. This product can be perfectly sold all around the world because of their unique diversity.

Advertising around the world is more popular more now than ever. Products are well known across different cultures because of the possibilities that advertising provides. The campaign that has held

the majority of attention due to their advertising capability is Apple. Apple has influenced other companies with their expertise in demonstrating their products to the public.

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## GENDER ISSUES AFFECTED BY PROPAGANDA

By Kenya Gonzalez



Van Heusen's "Show her it's a man's world"; ad from 1951.

What is propaganda? Propaganda is an "expression of opinion or action by individuals or groups deliberately designed to influence opinions or actions of other individuals or group with reference to predetermined ends" (Goshgarian). Propaganda is seen everywhere in our daily life without us even knowing it can affect us. People in media try to put out things, be it good or bad, and we chose to believe it, without us thinking twice about it. But we can start to recognize propaganda by the seven propaganda devices: the name calling device, the glittering generalities device, the transfer device, the testimonial device, the plain folks device, the card stalking device, and the bandwagon device. But some people do not know about these devices and just believe whatever is said in media. For instance, media nowadays seems to be talking about gender issues, but how can propaganda influence this? How is it

being shown in a negative way or positive way in society?

Some may think that women and men are not treated equally as they should be and there is unequal treatment due to what is said in media. In an ad that I found called "Show Her It's A Man's World" by Van Housen Tiles (1951), you can see that there is a man laying in bed, crossing his arms behind his head, conveying that he is feeling comfortable and superior to the woman next to him. The woman is giving everything to the man. The woman is kneeling down next to the man as if he is her boss, although in fact, she is his wife. The title of the ad "Show Her a Man's World" implies that most men are treated better than women. This ad is considered as propaganda because it is trying to get its message across, which is that men are seen to be superior to women and able to control women and

tell them what to do.

Another ad I found was called "There's Another Woman Waiting for Every Man" for Chlorodont Toothpaste (1953). You can see spider webs and a woman, who seems to be dressed and is touching the spider web. Her makeup seems to be dark and you can see her facial expression. The woman is seen as a spider because she is controlling. She hunts, traps and devours men like female spiders would do to a male spider. Her nails are short so she can lure them to their "death", or in other words tempt him into having sex with her. Her facial expression seems like she is waiting for every man. This can also be seen as propaganda because they want us to derive a message from it; they want us to see that women are seeing men only for sex. Even back then there was propaganda being shown on the gender roles and is-

sues of society. Society wanted to show that men are seen as more superior and seem to be more dominant than women. During that time they thought that this was the man's role, and that explains what is being shown in these ads. In a book called *A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams, it presents the opposite. A female character named Blanche seems to have more dominance than most of the men in the book. She always stands up to Stanley who tries to gain dominance over her. She breaks the bottle and threatens to hit Stanley in the face with it, showing that she is not afraid of him. "He takes another step. She smashes a bottle on the table and faces him, clutching the broken tops. 'What did you do that for?' 'So I could twist the broken end in your face!' 'I bet you would do that!' 'I would! I will if you-' 'Oh! So you want some rough-house! All right, let's have some rough house'" (162). But during this period of time, they said that men were more dominant than women. And if women were dominant, it was a threat to society because during that time usually men had the dominance. So society was understood to hold specific roles for men and women.

In 2017, media shows a lot of propaganda without us even knowing it. Some of it may be about gender equality. There seems to be trouble with professional obstacles, meaning that in some countries women have the disadvantages of lower earnings. In an article, I found out that "The highest paying fields are still dominated by men, and on average, women earn just 77 percent of what men earn for the same amount of work" (Borgen Magazine). Women are getting paid less than men are in their jobs, which isn't fair because everyone should be paid equally no matter their gender is. This is considered propaganda, because they are putting this in an article in media so people can see, and this is a problem because there isn't equality here.

During the 2016 presidential election, Trump made an ad about the contending female candidate, Hillary Clinton, in which he calls her "dangerous". The vid-



Cropped screenshot of Vivien Leigh from the trailer for the film *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Image from [www.commonswikimedia.org](http://www.commonswikimedia.org)

eo tells us that Hillary has bad health and wouldn't be able to help the country if she becomes president because she is a woman and doesn't have the same capabilities as a man. They made this ad to put out for people to see because they want to make people believe that she should not be elected president for the reason that she is weaker than a man. She wouldn't be able to help out if there is an economic problem going on. This is what the video is trying to get us to interpret from it. This ad would be considered a card stalking device, meaning that it is showing the product's best features, telling half the truth and omitting truth or lying about its potential problems. And this video is also telling us the half truth about Hillary.

Gender issues in propaganda seem to be shown a lot in society nowadays without us even knowing it's there. In 2017, it seems to be affecting more women than men. The propaganda being put out can either be positive or negative and people will interpret it and believe it because they may think "Why not? It's on media. It must be true." And that's what propa-

ganda is usually trying to get us to do. It's trying to make people believe in every issue that is advertised without them knowing what it really is. That is the nature of propaganda. But if you know the different types and you are able to distinguish between them, then you'll know what is being putting out in media.

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## NEW YORK FORUM OF AMAZIGH FILM FESTIVAL

The annual New York Forum of Amazigh Film (NYFAF) is a free forum of shorts, documentaries, and feature films by and about the indigenous societies of North Africa, stretching from the Canary Islands to the oasis of Siwa in Egypt. NYFAF's mission is to create a space where filmmakers, scholars, writers and musicians whose work focuses on Amazigh identity and culture can share their knowledge and enthusiasm with a diverse audience. Through parallel discussions with filmmakers and scholars, live performances, art exhibits, and receptions, the New York Forum of Amazigh Film seeks to disseminate Amazigh cinema, promote understanding, and celebrate the history, culture, and language of Amazigh peoples across North Africa and in the diaspora.

Amazigh is the singular of Imazighen which means "free human" or "free man." Commonly known as Berbers, these diverse people are now spread out across North and Sub-Saharan Africa as well as in the European and American diaspora. Despite several experiences of subjugation and colonization including Roman, Arab, Ottoman, Spanish, and French, Amazigh people managed to preserve their language, Tamazight, which is written with the Tifinagh alphabet. Besides Tamazight and colloquial forms of Arabic from Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya, Spanish and French are the most common languages presented in the films during the Forum.

The preservation and the unity of the Amazigh culture is a main reason for this film forum. Another is to share this perspective with others. Exposing students to films exploring a different culture can open their eyes to a whole new way of seeing the people around them on a daily basis. This experience can not only give them a new outlook on different cultures but also teach them the value and the means of keeping a culture alive despite forms of oppression and domination. The Amazigh people are models of resistance.

Bringing awareness to the relevance of our many cultures is critical today, especially considering our government's current policies. Issues like the travel ban affect people who may belong to the Amazigh culture. It is therefore imperative, now more than ever, to be a part of the preservation of cultures.

**The NYFAF Team:**

**Habiba Boumlik & Lucy McNair, (co-curators)**

**Wafa Bahri, Yahya Laayouni, Lamees Fadl, and Mustapha Akhoullou**

For more info on the NYFAF visit our [website](#) or our [facebook page](#).



Source: Jasmine Peralta, NYFAF Intern and LaGuardia Community College student



DOSSIER PHOTOGRAPHY

# PHOTOMONTAGE

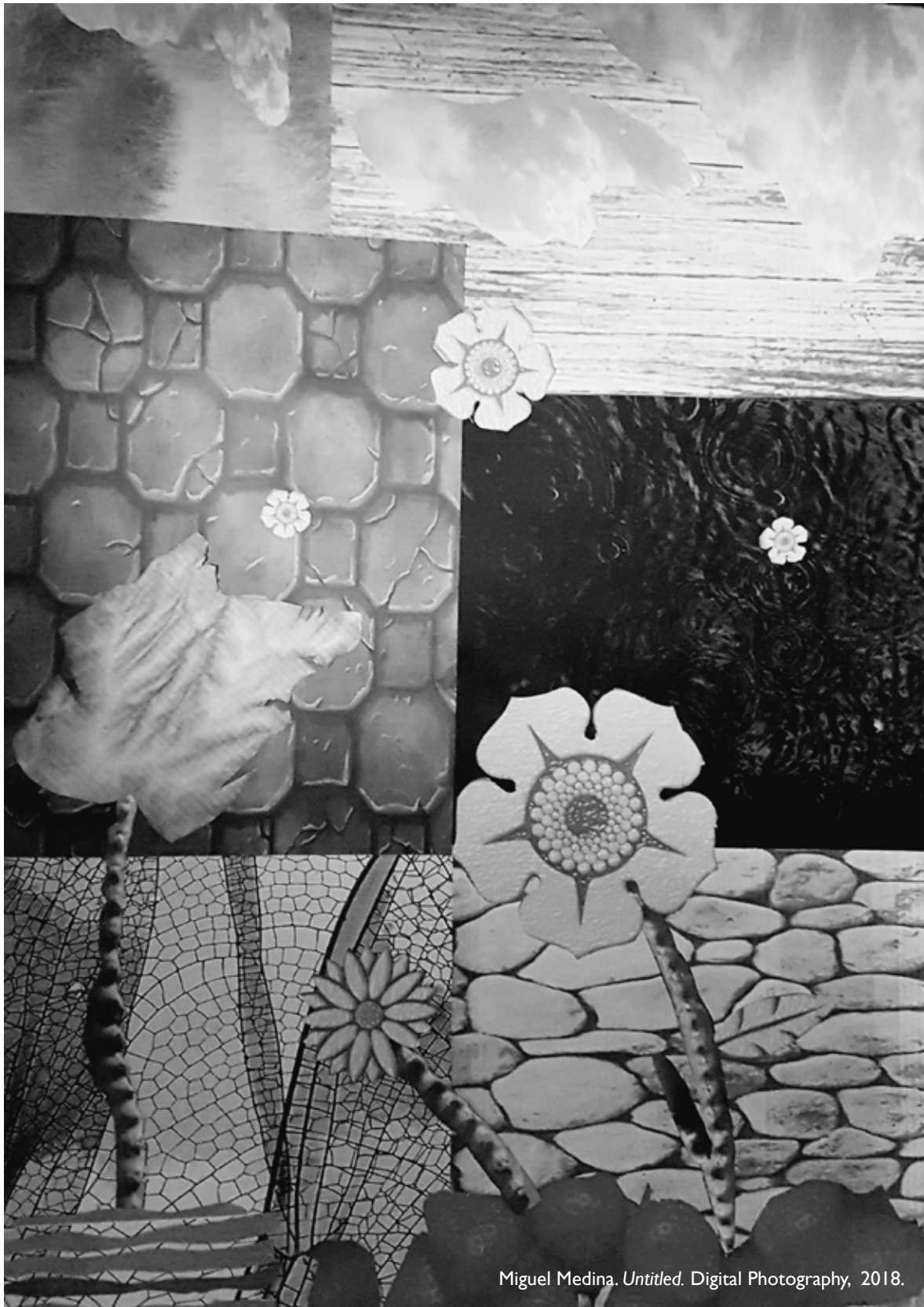


Gilenny de los Santos. *Untitled*. Digital Photography, 2018.



Gilenny de los Santos. *Untitled*. Digital Photography, 2018.





Miguel Medina. *Untitled*. Digital Photography, 2018.

**LAGUARDIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE** is the only two-year institution in the City University of New York (CUNY) to offer an Associate in Applied Sciences degree in Photography. Since 1986, LaGuardia has provided students a strong foundation in photographic technique and the confidence to link these skills to a personal artistic vision.

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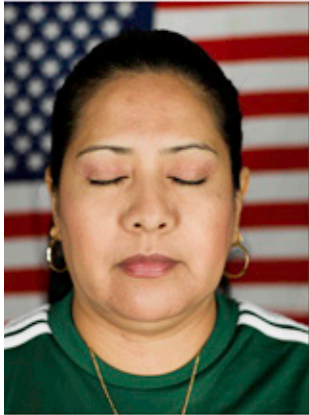


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Shally Pérez was born in Quito, Ecuador. She arrived to New York four years ago with her husband and son. She began to study Spanish/English translation at LaGuardia to help people who do not know English. She will graduate this year, and she hopes to work in the court system as an interpreter.

## DE FEMINISTA A MUJER

Por Shally Pérez

Según el diccionario de la Real Academia Española manipular es, “Intervenir con medios hábiles y, a veces, arteros, en la política, en el mercado, en la información, etc., con distorsión de la verdad o la justicia, y al servicio de intereses particulares.” Muchos pintores, escultores, poetas, cantantes, directores de cine y demás han tenido como fuente de inspiración a la mujer para sus obras maestras. Musas, esposas, madres, hijas, amigas, compañeras, colegas, administradoras, enfermeras, adivinas, cómplices, amantes y muchos más son los adjetivos que las mujeres han obtenido a través de los años. Sin embargo, ¿cómo puede ser posible que un ser lleno de cualidades y adjetivos positivos llegue a convertirse en alguien tan egoísta y ruin? En este ensayo demostraré cómo las mujeres pueden acomodar las situaciones de manera sagaz para que todo quede de acuerdo con su conveniencia y así ser siempre vistas como inofensivas y dignas de lucha. Lucha a la cual hoy en día se la conoce como feminismo.

Por ejemplo, en el cuento “La muerte de la emperatriz de China”, escrito por el nicaragüense Rubén Darío, tenemos la historia de unos recién casados, Recaredo y su esposa Suzette. En el relato se puede notar que eran una pareja muy enamorada y que él solo tenía ojos para ella. La vida de Recaredo giraba en torno a mantener contenta a su Suzette. Recaredo era escultor y tenía una fascinación por los objetos orientales. Un día su amigo Robert le escribe una carta y le envía un obsequio desde Hong Kong. El obsequio consistía en un busto de porcelana en el cual tenía la inscripción “La emperatriz de China” Desde ese momento el escultor queda fascinado con su obsequio. Fue tanta su afinidad con este objeto que le hace un lugar especial dentro de su casa. Puso el busto sobre un pedestal especial y no solo eso, sino que dice el relato que Recaredo “llegaba frente a la emperatriz,

con las manos cruzadas sobre el pecho, a hacer zalemas. Una, dos, diez, veinte veces la visitaba. Era una pasión. En un plato de laca yokohamesa le ponía flores frescas todos los días.” Esto obviamente molestó a la recién desposada Suzette, creando en ella un sentimiento de celos y venganza. La pobre ya no cantaba, ya no comía y se sentía toda afligida porque su querido esposo había dejado de amarla y la había reemplazado con una inservible porcelana. Un buen día Recaredo le pregunta insistentemente a su amada el porqué de su desolación y ella le contesta “¡La otra!” Recaredo intrigado piensa en algunas posibilidades, pero no daba con la que era el objeto de tanta tristeza hasta que al fin Suzette le pide a su esposo poder vengarse de su rival. Él sin mucho cuidado asiente y cuando menos piensa escucha un ruido en el otro cuarto. Recaredo corre para ver lo sucedido y encuentra a su preciada emperatriz de porcelana hecha pedazos. Así Suzette se siente libre de su rival y vengada.

Ahora si le preguntamos a cualquier feminista cual es el mensaje de este cuento, me atrevería a decir sin dudar que ellas aducirán que la pobre Suzette tenía razón y que hizo muy bien en romper el objeto por el cual fue reemplazada. Otras dirían que es inconcebible que Recaredo haya siquiera pensado en que su esposa podía ser reemplazada con algo tan superfluo como una porcelana. En todo caso Recaredo sería siempre el villano traicionero y la víctima sería Suzette. Todas las feministas apoyarían las razones para la venganza. Sin embargo, hay que leer entre líneas para poder darse cuenta de que la “pobre” Suzette no era tan indefensa y tan víctima como parece a primera vista. Al principio no entendí bien el papel del mirlo en este cuento, pero después de consultar un poco más pude ver lo que realmente significaba. Aleteia en su artículo 5 pájaros y su simbolismo en el arte cristiano nos explica: “No es de sor-





Cristina Peri-Rosi dedicando su libro *Estrategias del deseo*, by Mai C. Álvarez, 22 December 2004  
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prender que el mirlo (de forma similar al gato negro) se asociara con la oscuridad y los pecados de la carne. El mirlo se representa a menudo en escenas con san Benito, que luchaba diariamente con las tentaciones de la carne. Hay una historia que describe que san Benito vio al demonio aparecerse ante él con la forma de un mirlo. Reconoció la presencia satánica, la rechazó con la señal de la cruz y se fue volando." El mirlo entonces es algo en el interior de Suzette. Podría decirse que es una fuerza manipuladora. En escenas específicas vemos la aparición de este mirlo. La narración dice: "¡Las carcajadas del mirlo! No era poca cosa. -¿Me quieres? -¿No lo sabes? - ¿Me amas? -¡Te adoro! Ya estaba el animalucho echando toda la risa del pico." En esta porción me imagino a la seductora mujer tratando de mangonear a su esposo a punta de caricias para que haga lo que ella quiere al confirmar por boca de su propio esposo su amor incondicional por eso las carcajadas. Después dice: "¡Vaya que a veces era malcriado e insolente en su algarabía!" dejando ver que un berrinche era seguro si recibía un no como respuesta. De la misma manera podemos ver la reacción cuando Recaredo recibe su preciado regalo el cuento dice: "El mirlo, a su vez, hizo estallar la jaula en una explosión de gritos musicales." Tal vez Suzette pensó que el regalo contenía algo para ella, pero no fue así. Por eso vemos que "¿No habéis notado que desde que esa buena de la emperatriz de la China

ha llegado a vuestra casa, el saloncito azul se ha entristecido, y el mirlo no canta ni ríe con su risa perlada?" Pues Suzette ya no era el centro de atención de Recaredo. Caprichosa, egoísta e indiferente a los sentimientos de su esposo la maquiavélica mujer decide romper la porcelana. Entonces habiendo logrado su cometido "el mirlo, en su jaula, se moría de risa." Nada de esto lo habría podido ver una feminista que solo se centra en la angustia de la pobre Suzette.

De la misma manera, en el cuento "Emma Zunz", del argentino Jorge Luis Borges, podemos ver la historia de otra mujer. Emma encuentra una carta diciendo que su padre se suicidó y él llevaba consigo a cuestras un secreto que solo lo conocía su hija Emma. Aarón Loewenthal que era gerente al principio y después se convirtió en dueño de la fábrica donde Emma ahora trabajaba, había sido el autor de un desfalco. Este secreto había sido callado por Emma durante muchos años. Cuando ella se entera del suicidio de su padre, decide tomar venganza para que Loewenthal pague por la muerte. Planea todo con precaución. Emma tenía diecinueve años y nunca había tenido novio ni había estado íntimamente con nadie. Así que decide ir al muelle a buscar un hombre con el cual acostarse. Luego sale con rumbo a la fábrica en busca de Aarón con el pretexto de hablar con él porque ella tenía información acerca de la huelga que se estaba organizando

en la empresa. Todos sabían que Aaron guardaba un revolver en su cajón. Cuando Emma comienza a hablar para delatar a los supuestos cabecillas de la huelga comienza a tartamudear y Loewenthal sale a buscarle un vaso con agua. Cuando regresa ve a la joven con el revolver apuntándole ¡él no podía creerlo! Le acertó dos disparos. Al ver que el hombre todavía seguía vivo vuelve a disparar y lo mata. Desarregló toda la oficina y le desabrochó el saco al difunto. La mujer llamó a la policía aduciendo que el crimen fue en defensa propia porque Aaron la abusó.

Una vez más en esta historia la aparentemente indefensa y justiciera Emma podría ser defendida por el sector feminista argumentando que era la única manera en la que esta pobre mujer podía vengar el suicidio de su padre al que ella amaba. Pero una vez más vamos a ver los detalles que no son tan inofensivos si los vemos con cuidado. En primer lugar, en la carta que Emma encontró acerca de la muerte de su padre nunca se dice el motivo del suicidio. Sin embargo, Emma asume que fue por el desfalco que Aarón había cometido y sin dudarle empieza su sed de venganza en contra de él. El relato nos cuenta que a Emma "los hombres le inspiraban, aún, un temor casi patológico..." (énfasis añadido). GabinetedePsicología.com en su artículo La androfobia, ¿Por qué se tiene miedo a los hombres? nos da una luz sobre este problema. Se

define la androfobia como "...un miedo irracional a los hombres que puede resultar un gran obstáculo en las relaciones laborales y sociales de quien lo padece." El artículo nos muestra también los motivos de este trastorno: "La raíz de esta fobia suele estar en algún hecho traumático vivido, cuyo principal protagonista, obviamente, ha sido un hombre. Podríamos estar hablando de violación, abusos psicológicos y físicos, una pésima relación con la figura paterna..." (énfasis añadido) Entonces no es difícil suponer que Emma haya tenido este problema desde su infancia porque cuando dice aún se puede presumir que este problema lo había tenido desde antes y la conclusión más obvia es que la relación con su padre no haya sido de las mejores. Además, no tiene sentido que alguien que padece de este problema vaya a buscar al muelle un hombre con el cual acostarse. De hecho, el cuento dice que Emma "Pensó (no pudo no pensar) que su padre le había hecho a su madre la cosa horrible que a ella ahora le hacían." Dándonos otra pista de que su padre no era tan significativo para ella y mucho menos digno de venganza. Entonces ¿por qué "vengar" su muerte si no se la llevaba tan bien con su padre? Desde mi punto de vista ella no quería vengar la muerte de su padre en sí, sino que Emma tenía una venganza personal en contra de Aaron por lo del desfalco y alimentada por su trastorno planea el homicidio. Es así que, Aaron se convierte en el objetivo perfecto para que esta mujer saque a relucir su no tan inocente personalidad. Fue tan grande la máscara de esta mujer que al final del cuento vemos que nadie podía creer la historia que ella contó a la policía, pero lo dijo con tanta vehemencia que todos acabaron creyéndole, dice el relato: "La historia era increíble, en efecto, pero se impuso a todos" y continúa "Verdadero también era el ultraje que había padecido; solo eran falsas las circunstancias, la hora y uno o dos nombres propios." Es así que la manipulación y el odio de esta mujer ganan sobre la justicia una vez más.

Por último, me referiré al cuento "El Umbral", de la uruguaya Cristina Peri-Rossi. Esta es la historia de una mujer que no



Jorge Luis Borges in a hotel, 1969.  
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podía soñar. Por más que tratara y tratara no podía hacerlo. Su compañero por otro lado es un buen soñador y se siente confundido al darse cuenta de que ella no podía hacerlo de la misma manera. Él le cuenta sus sueños para tratar de ayudarla, pero ni aún eso la favorece. Un día tratan de construir juntos una historia para que así ella pueda soñar. Comienzan él y ella a describir lo que ven, pero poco a poco él se va adelantando en el sueño y logra ver un umbral, pero la mujer queda

abandonada, sola, asustada y perdida. En su desesperación le hunde un puñal en la espalda a su compañero y lo mata.

De nuevo tenemos aquí a una desdichada mujer a la que las feministas defenderán por matar a su compañero que fue tan egoísta como para dejarla sin sueños. Pero en realidad mostraré que no fue así. En principio su compañero siempre estaba preocupado porque ella no podía soñar, él dice: "Yo, para consolarla, le digo

que quizás tiene demasiado sueño para cruzar la puerta...” Como podemos ver esta no es la frase de alguien indiferente a la congoja ajena. Más adelante vemos que él trata de compartir sus sueños con ella para ayudarla pero que ella es caprichosa hasta para eso, él dice: “Como los niños, que no toleran las modificaciones y se deleitan con la repetición, insiste en que le cuente dos o tres veces el mismo sueño, lleno de personajes que no conozco, de formas raras, de accidentes irreales en el camino, y se fastidia si en la segunda versión hay elementos que no aparecían en la primera.” También en otra sección dice que fue él quien propuso que construyeran la historia para que ella pueda soñar, el relato dice: “Le propuse que, antes de dormirnos, hiciéramos la experiencia de inventar una historia complementaria, los dos juntos... y así, ella conseguiría por fin soñar.” Nuevamente esta no sería la idea de un egoísta y malvado hombre. La conclusión a la que llega este hombre es que la mujer “Cree que yo tengo un poder que ella no tiene; eso le produce envidia y malhumor.” Al final el resultado de tanta ayuda y preocupación para su mujer para ayudarla a soñar fue la muerte.

En conclusión, quiero aclarar que mi objetivo en este ensayo no ha sido el deshonrar a la mujer puesto que yo soy una de ellas. Más bien quiero ayudar a mi género a reconocer y concientizar de lo peligrosas que podemos llegar a ser cuan-

do no sabemos usar con sabiduría las capacidades con las que fuimos diseñadas. La manipulación y el capricho son dos armas muy poderosas. Tenemos que admitir que cuando nos proponemos sabemos usarlas muy bien para lograr nuestros objetivos que lamentablemente no siempre son los mejores. Sin duda estos dos son elementos han sido básicos en las ideas feministas. El hecho de mostrarnos perjudicadas en muchas áreas de la sociedad sin admitir nuestras deficiencias en realidad nos hace más vulnerables y más susceptibles al fracaso. Es por eso que exhorto a mis damas a dejar de ser feministas y convertirse en mujeres. Dejemos que cada uno cumpla con su rol en este mundo. El nuestro lo hallamos en el libro del diseñador que nos dice en Génesis capítulo dos, versículo veinticuatro: “Y el SEÑOR Dios dijo: No es bueno que el hombre esté solo; le haré una ayuda idónea.” Entonces cumplamos nuestro papel con respeto, dignidad e integridad siendo ayuda y no perjuicio en esta sociedad.

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## LA REPRESIÓN DE LO FEMENINO

Por Luis Filgueira

La represión de lo femenino es una ley no escrita, o un pacto no verbal que rige nuestras vidas a lo largo de los tiempos. Es una constante que nos mantiene en la zona de control, sabiendo que, si cruzamos esa delicada línea entre lo masculino y lo femenino, seremos menos respetados, juzgados, o nuestras acciones tendrán menos influencia sobre los demás. Socialmente estamos más decididos a aceptar a una mujer que grita a un hombre en público a diario, o que una hija se pelee con su padre que a un hombre que le grite a su esposa sólo una vez o tenga una pelea con su hija. En este caso nos haremos una imagen de él como un presunto maltratador. Lo mismo sucede si un hijo se pelea con su madre. La diferencia a la hora de juzgar si el hombre o la mujer realiza la acción es siempre subjetiva e injusta y parece ser que esa ley no escrita nos bloquea el raciocinio y no nos permite ver la igualdad entre ambos sexos, etiquetando al hombre de agresor y a la mujer de vulnerable. Parece ser que la igualdad, pese a los avances nunca llega. En los tres relatos que he seleccionado los personajes femeninos de “El umbral” de Cristina Peri Rossi, “Emma Zunz” de Jorge Luis Borges y “El Árbol” de María Luisa Bombal, se destacan los conflictos de tres mujeres que luchan contra sí mismas por el mero hecho de haber nacido mujer en una sociedad que, hasta los días actuales, parece considerar su rol como menos eficaz o tomado menos en cuenta en decisiones importantes.

Una diferencia que quiero destacar, antes de analizar los personajes como tales, es la sutil diferencia a la hora de relatar los cuentos que está marcada por el sexo de la persona que lo escribe, considerando que este pequeño detalle es vital al a hora de leer entre líneas los relatos. De los tres autores dos mujeres y uno es hombre. En “El umbral” se pueden leer frases como “una vez allí, dándonos un beso en la frente, nos separaremos” mar-

cando una distancia entre lo que supuestamente se podría imaginar uno cuando un hombre y una mujer duermen juntos. Esto ocurre más frecuentemente cuando la persona que escribe el relato es una mujer, independientemente de su orientación sexual o, podría ser, un hombre homosexual. Sucede lo mismo en el relato de “El árbol”, cuando la escritora relata que “la vida consistía para los hombres en una serie de costumbres consentidas y continuas. Si alguna llegaba a quebrarse, probablemente se producía el desbarajuste, el fracaso. Y los hombres empezaban entonces a errar por las calles de la ciudad, a sentarse en los bancos de las plazas, cada día peor vestidos y con la barba más crecida.” En este caso no solo vemos un cliché en el que muchas mujeres creen que un hombre soltero, viudo o divorciado no tiene completa capacidad para ser un hombre de éxito en el terreno personal, sino también se puede intuir que la persona que relata la historia es, posiblemente, una mujer. En el caso de “Emma Zunz” la diferencia es más notable y, es posible, que la manera de describir al personaje vea afectada por el hecho de que el autor es un hombre. Este personaje es dinámico, lleno de acción, coraje y decisión, esperando a tener la oportunidad que le garantice que todo puede salir como lo previsto. Se podría pensar que este personaje podría tener tintes lésbicos, como puede suceder en el relato de Peri Rossi “a su lado hay una mujer de cabellos cortos y rubios. Los ojos son azules. No, corrigió ella, son verdes, con reflejos azules”. Sin embargo, al saber que el cuento es escrito por un hombre esa posibilidad se desvanece y vemos la parte masculina del escritor enriqueciendo el personaje de Emma con firmeza y eficacia, sin lugar para dramas psicológicos femeninos antes, durante o después del crimen.

En “El umbral” tenemos que hacer un esfuerzo de delicadeza y comprensión a





María Luisa Bombal

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la hora de plantearnos por qué Brígida no sueña. Si fuese Luis el que no sueña podríamos pensar en grandes de la literatura como Segismundo "Yo sueño que estoy aquí destas prisiones cargado, y soñé que en otro estado más lisonjero me vi. ¿Qué es la vida? Un frenesí. ¿Qué es la vida? Una ilusión, una sombra, una ficción, y el mayor bien es pequeño: que toda la vida es sueño, y los sueños, sueños son". Al ser el personaje femenino el que tiene problemas para soñar llega menos la complejidad al lector. Un detalle que la autora podría profundizar

en el guiño que, inconscientemente, hace a las Mil y una noches. Esa llegada a la noche contando una historia que no se termina porque los personajes duermen y se debe volver a crear el mismo ambiente al día siguiente para volver a llegar a un punto en el que se necesita seguir explorando es interesante y siempre enigmático. El relato de "El umbral" aborda la frustración del personaje femenino y, a la vez con detalles sensuales, rozando el erotismo "y el hombre consigue inyectar a través de las paredes del túnel, como la membrana del útero, sus sueños

al guardián". La protagonista, una mujer sin nombre vive obsesionada con soñar a través de los demás para sentirse realizada. Existe la posibilidad de que no se atreva soñar porque realmente puede estar deseando cruzar el umbral que separa la persona que pretende ser con la que realmente es. Esta falta de aceptación personal, como a querer ser y no poder, la persigue durante todo el relato que, nos confunde entre dos diferentes realidades, con un posible asesinato de la libertad. Esta frustración de no poder ser ella misma todo el tiempo, se centra en su miedo a cultivar la imaginación. "A veces, ella me pide que yo le cuente mis sueños, y sé que luego, en la soledad de su cuarto, con la luz apagada, escondida, como una niña que está a punto de hacer una travesura, intenta soñar mi sueño". Dar un paso más allá y abandonarse a soñar parece imposible y puede deberse a sus inseguridades. La autora traspasa el círculo narrativo a otro más profundo una vez se cruza el umbral de una manera brillante, donde el lector decide saber qué pasa porque se pierde la realidad. Uno puede conectarse con su ser completo sin necesidad de buscar las respuestas en otro pero ella no se arriesga. Quedarse en el umbral es una tortura, fracasando en su idea de volar a los misteriosos viajes que nos lleva el inconsciente. Es un canto a la represión lésbica de una mujer que no se acepta ni se escucha. Si el personaje que no puede soñar fuese el hombre el cuento sería muy diferente. Se podría achacar la culpa a la mujer, a la relación de pareja o, incluso, a la responsabilidad laboral. Si el hombre fuese apoyado por la mujer podría tener matices homosexuales. Es difícil aceptar que un hombre se fije como meta en la vida temas que parecen simples a simple vista, o que busque en su mujer apoyo psicológico ante una situación en la que se pueda mostrar vulnerable. Una mujer graciosa puede ser una persona ideal para tener hijos. Un hombre gracioso parece que no es respetado. En cuanto a las alusiones a Mozart y a Chopin, que se dan a lo largo del relato, Brígida "¿sabía tan poca música! Jamás había conseguido aprender la clave de Fa. Jamás". Detalles así hacen pensar que en vez de potenciar la historia con

cierta cultura musical, el relato podría haber continuado sin ninguna mención a la música o cualquier otra tampoco afectaría el relato. Una persona puede ser brillante y carecer de oído musical o tener falta de interés por la música.

Leyendo el relato de “El árbol” de María Luisa Bombal es posible destacar una más clara división de roles. El vigor e intelecto se manifiestan en Luis, el hombre viejo y muy trabajador, mientras Brígida, la hermana menor de seis se refugia en un árbol que se ve desde su ventana, siendo pasiva, dócil y marginada. En este cuento la represión y frustración también viene de lo femenino. Se ve normal que Luis trabaje y Brígida sea mantenida. La autora nos trae el foco al mundo interior de lo femenino. Sería impensable leer el relato intercambiando los roles y tener la misma reacción. Imaginar a un hombre que está en la casa sin hacer nada y pensando todo el día en que nadie en su familia lo acepta porque es diferente a los demás, se siente desatendido y dependiente de una esposa que trabaja duro es complicado de creer, sobretodo porque depender económicamente y quejarse de que no se recibe atención suele relacionarse con lo femenino. En este relato se establece un punto de vista donde las mujeres tienen carencias que vienen de la infancia e intoxican la relación con sus graves frustraciones sin plantearse si las personas que las rodean tienen derecho a su momento, incluso a quejarse. En este relato Brígida solo se siente escuchada por el árbol, que se personifica, no por Luis pero él tampoco se siente atendido. No hay comunicación desde el principio. Cortando el árbol llega la luz, y con esta la aterradora realidad donde Brígida ve a un hombre viejo. Ella quiere amor, viajes y locuras. Quizás esté deseando ser madre pero no es clara. Decidiendo irse una vez el árbol ya no esta es una metáfora atrayente pero no del todo convincente. Brígida quizás regrese porque tiene un techo seguro, con una persona que le da protección ante una sociedad machista y exigente. Viendo a Luis como tan solo un hombre viejo es muy duro e inapropiado. Ella jamás se plantea si él es feliz o tiene inquietudes. Si un hombre deja una mu-

jer que lo mantiene y protege y encima la ve como una vieja la sociedad feminista y las mujeres lesbianas pondrían el grito en el cielo. Brígida no será bien recibida una vez deje el hogar porque es una mujer poco agraciada, torpe y separada, en una sociedad donde lo femenino es insuficiente para sobrevivir. Si fuese Luis el que se va seguramente podría rehacer su vida. Muchas personas entienden que un hombre necesite rehacer su vida porque creen que quedarse solo es casi una desgracia.

El tercer relato que he elegido es “Emma Zunz”, de Jorge Luis Borges. Este relato es el que más me ha gustado porque, además de ser muy breve, dinámico y bien escrito, tiene una triple lectura. A simple vista parece ser que esa carta que Emma encuentra sobre el supuesto suicidio de su padre hace que germine en ella una venganza hacia Lowenthal, uno de los judíos dueños de la fábrica. Releyendo el cuento, vemos cómo Emma aprovecha la muerte de su padre y pierde la virginidad con la persona más vulgar que pueda encontrar, dejando que él le pague como si fuese una prostituta, cargando así más sus razones de venganza. La tercera razón y que más me apasiona es esa psicosis que tiene desde que era pequeña con el odio hacia los hombres. Emma no aceptó nunca las palizas, vejaciones y violaciones que su padre le hizo a su madre. Ese asco y fobia la hace pasar hasta los diecinueve años sin tener ningún tipo de contacto sexual con hombres. Una vez lee la carta algo en su interior se dispara y lo persigue de una manera muy calculada. Planea cómo llevar a cabo el asesinato del dueño de la fábrica pero no para vengar la supuesta muerte de su padre, sino para satisfacer su verdadera y cruel psicosis en la que veía en los hombres solo sus desgracias. Seguramente irá a prisión; pero no importa porque tomarse la venganza por uno mismo cuando el daño es tan profundo y por tanto tiempo, a esta clase de individuos, les merece la pena. Es una llamada de atención a la sociedad de niños que intentan ser adultos responsables pero sus problemas psiquiátricos no están resueltos. Emma ha vengado a su madre pero no se ha vengado a sí mis-

ma. Este relato es comparable a Ricardo III de William Shakespeare, donde bajo benignas apariencias nos dejamos llevar por un personaje con diabólicos planes. También tiene matices de Lady Macbeth “Está ronco el cuervo que grazna la fatal entrada de Duncan bajo mis dominios. ¡Venid, espíritus que servís ideas de muerte, castradme y vestidme de pies a corona con negra crueldad! ¡Espesad mi sangre! ¡Cerrad al remordimiento el paso; que ninguna compasión humana turbe mi cruel propósito. ¡Venid a mis pechos y mudad mi leche en hiel, vosotros, ministros del crimen, allá donde estéis, invisibles formas al servicio del mal! ¡Ven, densa noche, y cúbrete del humo lóbrego del infierno! ¡Que la hoja del puñal no vea la herida que hace, ni el cielo pueda gritar a través del manto de sombra: «¡Basta, basta!»”.

Una vez analizados estos relatos se puede observar que el comportamiento humano siempre será examinado con lupa, siguiendo unas directrices sobre lo que está bien y lo que está mejor. El sexo masculino y su agresividad irá marcando unas pautas que el en el femenino no funcionan. El hombre no puede parecerse a la mujer para tener éxito. La mujer debería de encontrar su camino sin buscar igualarse a su semejante porque lo que de naturaleza es distinto nunca llegará a ser parecido. Hacer, buscar o imitar al sexo diferente para ser tratado con los mismos derechos no es buscar la igualdad, es plagiar. En muchas culturas lo femenino es bonito, en otras es ridículo pero, a fin de cuentas, todos y todas tenemos partes masculinas y femeninas. Si no lo aceptamos y no lo mostramos no gozaremos de crecimiento personal pero sabemos que nos garantizamos una mejor calidad de vida y supervivencia sobre los demás.



Alfred Stevens. *Lady Macbeth*  
Undated, oil on canvas,  
127 x 97 cm.  
Musées communaux de Verviers  
Image from  
[www.commonswikimedia.org](http://www.commonswikimedia.org)

#### OBRAS CITADAS.

“El umbral” de Cristina Peri Rossi

“Emma Zunz” de Jorge Luis Borges

“El Árbol” de María Luisa Bombal

“La vida es sueño” de Pedro Calderón de la Barca

[http://www.rae.es/sites/default/files/La\\_vida\\_es\\_sueno\\_para\\_RAE\\_2015.pdf](http://www.rae.es/sites/default/files/La_vida_es_sueno_para_RAE_2015.pdf) (27)

William Shakespeare, “La tragedia de Macbeth” Obras completas, Acto I, Escena V Edición de Aguilar





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## CARACTERIZACIÓN DE LA MUJER EN LA LITERATURA LATINOAMERICANA

Por Diana Marcela García

La literatura es el reflejo de la sociedad en la cual se origina. La sociedad latinoamericana está marcada por una perspectiva conservadora con respecto a lo que se espera de la mujer, tanto en su rol en la pareja como en la familia. Los personajes femeninos en la literatura latinoamericana muestran cómo las limitaciones impuestas por el entorno impiden que las mujeres se desarrollen como seres autónomos, generando conflictos e infelicidad en sus relaciones. También evidencian cómo solamente actos definitivos de total independencia les permiten a estas mujeres obtener el control de sus vidas. Los personajes descritos en los relatos de *El Umbral*, *El Árbol*, *Emma Zunz* y *la Muerte de la Emperatriz de China* pasan por un proceso de transformación que da como resultado un giro radical en el desenlace de sus historias. Este ensayo analizará cada personaje femenino de las historias anteriormente mencionadas, con el objetivo de señalar sus puntos en común. Luego de esto, se compararán estas mujeres con la mujer actual, para finalmente llegar a una conclusión sobre la imagen de la mujer en la literatura latinoamericana.

El primer personaje femenino a analizar corresponde al relato llamado “*El Umbral*,” escrito por Cristina Peri Rossi. Esta mujer, cuyo nombre no se conoce en la historia, siente una gran frustración debido a su incapacidad de soñar, haciéndola sentir inferior a los demás, especialmente a su pareja. Al ser incapaz de encontrar una solución a su problema, ella espera que su pareja sea capaz de ayudarla, sin embargo él no lo consigue. Esta situación ocasiona un conflicto, pues ella comienza a experimentar un gran resentimiento hacia su compañero, mientras que él se siente atrapado en un callejón sin salida. Al final de esta historia, la frustración lleva a esta mujer a matar a su pareja, cuando éste está a punto de atravesar el umbral del sueño, como forma de superar su sentimiento de inferioridad: “En-

tonces – continúa- ella se precipita hacia adelante, hacia el aura vaga y oscura que dejaron los pasos de él, por el corredor sombrío, y antes de que trasponga el umbral, le hunde un puñal en la espalda”. El umbral en este caso representa las distintas restricciones que la mujer experimenta al relacionarse con su entorno; estos obstáculos le impiden realizarse como ser humano y desarrollar una identidad definida. Ella ve su relación de pareja como la piedra que se interpone en su camino hacia el umbral, por este motivo solamente logra la resolución definitiva de su conflicto cuando se impone a sí misma ante su opresor.

Un aspecto importante a destacar en esta historia es que, aunque fue escrita por una mujer, la voz narrativa es el personaje masculino; esto afecta la versión de los hechos y, en consecuencia, la descripción del personaje femenino, puesto que su visión de los acontecimientos es parcial. En otras palabras, la mujer de esta historia y sus acciones son presentadas desde la perspectiva masculina produciendo una caracterización negativa, ya que la voz narrativa no entiende en su totalidad sus sentimientos ni los motivos de su actuar. Quizás la decisión de la autora de escoger al personaje masculino como voz narrativa sea intencional; llevada a cabo con el objetivo de poner en evidencia cómo muchas veces la mujer presenta una imagen distorsionada desde una perspectiva masculina, debido al desconocimiento de sus complejidades.

El segundo personaje analizado es Brígida, protagonista de la historia llamada “*El Árbol*,” escrita por María Luisa Bombal. Como el personaje anterior, Brígida tiene una limitación, con la diferencia de que ésta es de tipo intelectual. Esta limitación produce un estado de inmadurez que la sumerge en un mundo de fantasía, alejándola de la realidad. Esta joven se casa con un hombre mayor que ella, amigo de





Dario Alpern. *Gomero de la India en el Parque Mitre dentro de la Ciudad de Corrientes, Argentina.*

2017

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su padre, quien parece amarla a pesar de sus defectos, y a quien ella ama mucho en un principio. Sin embargo, la actitud distante del esposo, quien no le dedica suficiente tiempo y no le demuestra su amor, desencadena el conflicto principal. Brígida, quien al principio tuvo una actitud sumisa frente a su esposo, decide tomar venganza a través de su silencio y su desamor; actitudes pasivas por medio de las cuales ella se mantiene alejada de la realidad. Poco a poco, esta joven va descubriendo la verdad del desamor de su pareja, así como la vergüenza que éste siente hacia ella. Finalmente, se da un cambio radical en ella cuando el árbol, símbolo de su mundo de fantasía, es destruido, obligándola a regresar a la realidad, descubrir sus verdaderos deseos y actuar conforme a ellos:

“¡Mentira! Eran mentiras su resignación y su serenidad; quería amor, sí, amor, y viajes y locuras, y amor, amor...”

—Pero, Brígida, ¿por qué te vas?, ¿por qué te quedabas? —había preguntado Luis.

Ahora habría sabido contestarle:

—¡El árbol, Luis, el árbol! Han derribado el gomero”

En esta historia el conflicto de pareja es

presentado de una forma más imparcial, ya que la voz narrativa no corresponde a ninguno de los personajes. Como resultado, se puede apreciar las características de ambos personajes de manera más profunda, y a su vez entender más claramente las razones que llevaron al personaje femenino a actuar del modo en que lo hace. En esta historia la mujer pasa por un proceso de evolución gradual, dando como resultado la liberación de las ataduras mentales y emocionales que la mantienen en una posición inferior. Este cambio la lleva a transformarse en una mujer con la seguridad y la madurez necesarias para actuar de forma autónoma, dando fin a una relación que la hace sufrir y encontrando al final su felicidad.

En tercer lugar se encuentra el personaje de Emma Zunz, protagonista de la historia que lleva su mismo nombre, escrita por Jorge Luis Borges. Esta joven también sufre limitaciones en su entorno a causa de su posición social, ya que es una obrera que aparentemente se queda desprotegida y sola a partir del momento en que su padre es internado en la cárcel. Esta situación de desprotección la lleva a tomar una actitud de sumisión e inseguridad, especialmente en su trabajo,

lugar en donde sigue las normas al pie de la letra con el fin de evitar conflictos. Aunque su padre le cuenta que es inocente al revelar que Aarón Loewenthal, gerente y dueño de la fábrica donde ella trabaja, es el culpable de la injusticia que está viviendo, Emma no se atreve a hacer nada al respecto, debido a que este hombre se encuentra en una posición de poder. El suceso que desencadena su transformación es el suicidio de su padre, puesto que produce en ella un deseo de venganza muy fuerte. En consecuencia, Emma pasa de ser una niña inmadura y carente de carácter en un principio, a ser una mujer que controla su entorno, tomando la justicia por su propia mano.

A través de su sacrificio, Emma construye su propia historia, al mismo tiempo que se impone a su opresor, ejecutando un plan minuciosamente calculado. Este hecho demuestra la capacidad de la mujer de crear una identidad propia cuando finalmente se decide a reaccionar, descubrir su fuerza interna, y finalmente acabar con la dominación de los obstáculos de su entorno: “La historia era increíble, en efecto, pero se impuso a todos, porque sustancialmente era cierta. Verdadero era el tono de Emma Zunz, verdadero

el pudor, verdadero el odio. Verdadero también era el ultraje que había padecido; solo eran falsas las circunstancias, la hora y uno o dos nombres propios.” En resumen, esta historia muestra la evolución de un personaje que se libera de las ataduras que condicionan su conducta, haciendo justicia al imponerse al villano que le había quitado lo más importante en su vida.

Por último, Suzette, personaje femenino del cuento “La Muerte de la Emperatriz de China” escrita por Rubén Darío, también se encuentra atrapada en una existencia de limitaciones; en su caso las paredes de su casa son la jaula donde vive como un pajarito que solamente canta para su amado. Esta imagen representa la mujer “ideal,” caracterizada por ser dulce y entregada por completo a su pareja; esto implica la adopción de actitudes de dependencia emocional, sumisión total y falta de autonomía en la toma de decisiones. El conflicto se da cuando Suzette ve en la estatua de la Emperadora de China una amenaza a su mundo ideal, provocando en ella sentimientos de celos, tristeza y rabia, al ver que la estatua esta robándole el amor de su esposo. Primero, ella sufre pasivamente, encerrada en su jaula, hasta el punto de debilitarse física y emocionalmente. Como sucede con los otros personajes, el dolor desencadena una transformación interna, cuyos frutos se evidencian en un acto decisivo y de gran autonomía. Esta acción clave la lleva a resolver su situación, rompiendo con la imagen irreal que ella proyectaba para complacer a su pareja.

La estatua de la Emperatriz de China representa el concepto idealizado de la mujer que Suzette se había esforzado tanto por mantener durante toda la historia. El acto de romper la estatua es la forma del personaje de eliminar un paradigma que la limita y le impide ser una mujer real, para poder mostrarse cómo es realmente frente a su esposo. Desde su encierro, Suzette comunica con un acto liberador que no es un pajarito, sino una mujer de carne y hueso que reacciona frente a las actitudes de su pareja:



Rubén Darío  
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“¿Qué miraron sus ojos? El busto había desaparecido del pedestal de negro y oro, y entre minúsculos mandarines caídos y descolgados abanicos, se veían por el suelo pedazos de porcelana que crujían bajo los pequeños zapatos de Suzette, quien toda encendida y con el cabello suelto, aguardando los besos, decía entre carcajadas argentinas al maridito asustado:

—¡Estoy vengada! ¡Ha muerto ya para ti la emperatriz de la China!  
Y cuando comenzó la ardiente reconciliación de los labios, en el saloncito azul, todo lleno de regocijo, el mirlo, en su jaula, se moría de risa”

Los personajes analizados previamente reflejan la realidad de la vida de la mujer latinoamericana, caracterizada por el predominio de sentimientos de frustración causados por limitaciones impuestas por la sociedad, complejos de inferioridad, así como también conflictos con el sexo opuesto y la búsqueda de su verdadera identidad. En el desenlace de cada historia se observan acciones decisivas que muestran la culminación de un proceso de transformación, resultando en la consolidación de los personajes femeninos como

sujetos autónomos. Aunque se ha avanzado mucho en el camino, puesto que la mujer se ha abierto paso en la sociedad disminuyendo la desigualdad de género y creando nuevos conceptos de feminidad, su tarea de definirse a sí misma aún no ha terminado. Al no llevar el “molde” creado por la sociedad patriarcal, la mujer debe conocerse aún más, analizando sus complejidades a profundidad, para descubrirse a sí misma en su totalidad: “Y ahora empieza el desconcierto: la mujer no es santa, ni prostituta, ni madre. La mujer es tan contradictoria, compleja, ambigua e indefinible como lo es el hombre” (Roig 30).

Como se pudo observar en todos estos relatos, la relación con el sexo opuesto ocupa un lugar de suma importancia en el proceso de construcción de la identidad femenina, así como en su establecimiento como sujeto en igualdad de condiciones. Aunque la mujer consiga escalar en el aspecto económico y social, si no hay una relación más equitativa en sus relaciones de pareja, los conflictos persistirán: “Cuando la prevalencia del pluralismo y los valores democráticos en la sociedad se traduzcan en relaciones ig-

ualitarias en el amor; el feminismo podrá dejar de existir. Pero como todo esto es ilusorio o poco probable por el momento, el feminismo tendrá razón de manifestarse en nuestra vida y en nuestros escritos” (Nagy 51).

Actualmente la mujer latinoamericana sigue en el proceso de construcción de su identidad. Mientras tanto, la sociedad aún le impone ciertas normas y roles que en muchas ocasiones entran en conflicto con su deseo de ser un sujeto activo con voz y voto sobre su propio destino. Se supone que la reivindicación de la mujer va en contra del concepto de feminidad, caracterizado por un comportamiento sumiso, armónico y un carácter delicado acorde a las expectativas que la sociedad ha generado frente a su género; por este motivo la mujer aun experimenta conflictos al tratar de encontrar una identidad propia. Encasillar a la mujer en ciertos roles, tales como el de madre y esposa, le impide realizarse completamente como un ser autónomo y dueño de sus actos, generando desigualdad en la sociedad. Las autoras latinoamericanas son un ejemplo de los obstáculos que presentan las mujeres para establecer su propio concepto de feminidad, debido al concepto impuesto desde siempre por la sociedad: “Hace un cuarto de siglo atrás escribió Gabriela Mistral que las mujeres latinoamericanas ya no tenían miedo de escribir, porque “poseen la lengua en abundancia.” Pese a todo esto, no es una tarea fácil establecer la ruptura con el estereotipo femenino tradicional, construido históricamente por la racionalidad y la ideología sexista patriarcal, que se manifiesta en los caracteres femeninos en varias obras” (Nagy 47).

En esta labor de construcción de la identidad femenina, la literatura tiene un papel clave. Las escritoras crean personajes desde su visión femenina, más reales y complejos, que reivindican la imagen de la mujer, en contraste con los personajes creados por hombres, mayormente caracterizados por la polarización de la personalidad femenina. La mujer está reescribiendo su historia a través de la literatura, sin embargo esta tarea tomará

tiempo, puesto que se trata de derrumbar una perspectiva adoptada durante casi toda la historia de la humanidad: “Y es aquí donde radica la gran dificultad: pues si bien se ha descubierto que no se forma parte de una minoría, todavía es escasa la tradición de la propia imagen, sin polarizaciones. La “palabra de mujer” es un deseo, pero todavía no es una realidad” (Roig 29).

En conclusión, a través de la literatura se pueden observar los diferentes cambios que atraviesan las mujeres en el proceso de descubrimiento de su verdadera identidad. Especialmente en sus relaciones de pareja, la mujer en un comienzo busca llenar las expectativas creadas por el hombre, situación que tarde o temprano genera conflictos. Solamente en el momento en que la mujer se define a sí misma, a través de acciones decisivas, es que ésta logra construir una identidad propia. Por esta razón la literatura femenina debe constituirse en un instrumento de utilidad, con el fin de lograr una transformación de la cultura de género en la sociedad, partiendo de la mujer misma como única solución a este paradigma.

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## REVISANDO LAS NOCIONES SOBRE LA *FEMME FATALE*

Por Annie Stutzman

La *femme fatale* es un término que se ha usado para designar a varios personajes femeninos de la mitología, el folklore, la literatura, las películas, el arte, y otras formas de narración en culturas de todo mundo. Sin embargo, a pesar de ser una designación bastante aceptada, el concepto de la *femme fatale* se es un tanto amorfo: carece de una definición rígida y se aplica a mujeres muy distintas. Se supone que ella es quien seduce, manipula, y pone en peligro a los hombres. Pero, según la feminista Jess Sully, la *femme fatale* es meramente una mujer que posee el poder masculino. Por lo tanto, parece que la definición depende mucho de la imagen que se tiene de la mujer. Para algunos, la designación de *femme fatale* es una maldición, para otros una glorificación.

En un principio, había iniciado este ensayo con el objetivo de examinar dos personajes ficticios: Aura, de la novela homónima de Carlos Fuentes y Carmen -la protagonista de la película del realizador español Carlos Saura- y determinar si en ellas cabe hablar del arquetipo de la *femme fatale*. Pero, para poder juzgar estos casos específicos, es necesario precisar qué significa exactamente la *femme fatale*. Se dice que ella seduce, pero durante gran parte de historia el término 'seductora' se ha usado peyorativa y excesivamente para dominar a las mujeres. Yo dudaría en clasificar a alguien como *femme fatale*, por temor a estar participando en prácticas misóginas. Por eso, en este ensayo, para evaluar quién es y quién no es la *femme fatale*, deseo preservar esta imagen de seductora pero; primeramente, me gustaría dejar a un lado la connotación de maldita que la rodea.

La definición que ofrece Jess Sully tiene muchas implicaciones positivas. Apunta al hecho de que muchas veces quienes están acusadas de ser *femmes fatales* no son seductoras en verdad; sino más bien mujeres que sencillamente tienen poder

del hombre. Aun más, la definición de Jess Sully implica que una mujer, sí bien manipula con su sexualidad, no es diferente que el hombre, que usa su sexo para controlar la sociedad. Ella no es malvada, provocativa, ni misteriosa, y no debe ser tratada como una novedad. No obstante, encuentro que sería más eficaz prevenir el mal o excesivo uso de la palabra la *femme fatale* o 'seductora', si fuera más preciso. Por siguiente, voy a proceder a hacer unas estipulaciones.

Primero, la designación de *femme fatale* se les ha dado solo a mujeres que sí, de hecho, seducen. Además, se debe entender muy bien que la seductora es estratégica y que 'seducir' insinúa deliberación. Cualquier mujer que deliberadamente atrae o incita la atención de otro no puede ser considerada ni seductora y ni *femme fatale*. Es importante que se haga esta aclaración, porque sin ella, la designación de *femme fatale* es solo una acusación vacía y misógina que se usa con demasiada frecuencia para dominar e incluso violar a las mujeres. Si consideráramos, por ejemplo, a figuras históricas como Hatshepsut del Antiguo Egipto, Catarina la Grande, de la edad dorada de Rusia, o hasta Hilary Clinton de hoy, parecería cierto. Son mujeres que poseen el poder masculino, pero no son necesariamente seductoras. Y si han sido etiquetadas como tales, esta acusación fue hecha por miedo y para menospreciar su poder. Por lo tanto, para desaviar dicho uso, es muy importante que la definición de la *femme fatale* sea muy exacta.

Otra estipulación que me gustaría hacer es que la definición de la *femme fatale* se restringe a solo mujeres que seducen específicamente con su sexualidad. Hay ciertos personajes en la historia de la literatura que no seducen con su sexualidad. Por ejemplo, Scheherezade de Las mil y una noches seduce el rey Violente de Persia con sus palabras, gracias a su ingenio para narrar cuentos. Pero, para



que ella no sea juzgada equivocadamente tampoco, no quiero colocarla en la misma categoría de mujeres que seducen sexualmente con su cuerpo.

No quiero que Scheherezade seduce más noblemente que otras mujeres, porque no opino que la seducción sexual sea, en sentido general, moralmente corrupta. De hecho, si hubiera algo verdaderamente corrupto en la *femme fatale*, se debería buscar en su intención. Se podría decir vagamente que uno de los propósitos de la *femme fatale* es obtener algo de su interés. Digamos, por ejemplo, la venganza, la protección o el poder. Por supuesto, también su objetivo podría ser solo es infligir destrucción, pero aquí, de nuevo, es el punto en donde surge el misógino. Si concediéramos que el motivo de la *femme fatale* es solamente dañar, o que ella es, como otros insisten, "malvada", se debería reconocer que lo malo sería su intención, no en el acto de usar la sexualidad femenina para lograr cosas de su interés.

Aunque muchos, en particular muchos religiosos cristianos, discutan que usar la sexualidad para lograr los deseos es un acto inmoral, quiero insistir que esto argumento desatiende el contexto social. La mujer usa su sexualidad en vez de sus virtudes, como se le exige porque, según la larga historia de patriarcado, la mayoría de mujeres no tienen virtud o valor. La sociedad no le da valor a la mujer. Tradicionalmente, ella no podía influir por los medios del hombre porque ella no tenía acceso a dichos. Muchas veces, no poseía la educación del hombre. Muchas veces, no disponía del dinero porque no le estaba permitido trabajar como a un hombre. Ella solía ser relegada a la posición de la casa. Se le decía que su ser era su cuerpo, pero contradictoriamente tampoco su cuerpo le pertenece. Incluso en épocas más reciente, en las que las mujeres tienen más acceso al mundo del hombre, su sexualidad está todavía bajo el control de manipuladores medios masivos ma-



Poster for a circa 1896 American production of Georges Bizet's *Carmen*, starring Rosabel Morrison, and under the management of Edw. J. Abra[ha]m  
Image from [www.commonswikimedia.org](http://www.commonswikimedia.org)

nipuladores, de normas sociales sexistas, y de la existencia continuada de violaciones sexuales. El cuerpo de la mujer es continuamente negado a ella porque es lo que más temen los hombres. El deseo dominar se podría llamar como surgiere la feminista Karen Horney "womb envy", una inversión de la teoría freudiana del "penis envy" o como revisa otra autora feminista, Mary Daly, un miedo general al poder creativo de mujeres.<sup>1</sup> Las teorías abundan y se vale mucho discurso, pero el punto que deseo convencer es que la *femme fatale* no es esencialmente malvada. Al usar su cuerpo, la mujer está reclamando su cuerpo, está tomando control

sobre su sexualidad, que apropiadamente le pertenece a ella. Y esto debiera celebrarse, a menos que persiga dañar sin causa a otras personas.

### Carmen

Ya que creo haber satisfecho suficientemente las cuestiones de clarificación, puedo volver a mi tarea original. Me gustaría mirar primeramente al personaje de Carmen porque, aunque ella posea muchas características similares a la *femme fatale*, yo no la clasificaría así. La primera razón es que ella no seduce. No cabe duda de que es segura, atrae a



Lidia Andrade. *Colégio do Caraça: conjunto arquitetônico e paisagístico. Brasil, 2007.*  
Image from [www.commonswikimedia.org](http://www.commonswikimedia.org)

otros =y como se ve en la escena de su audición individual de danza-, ella tiene control sobre su sexualidad. Pero, como se ha mencionado, parecerle atractiva a otros no es seducir. Si se dijera que ella es una seductora solo por atraer a otros, sería un abuso sexista de la palabra 'seductora'. Asimismo, no se puede decir justamente que por estar segura de su sexualidad ella tiene intenciones de manipular.

De hecho, en su primera audición de grupo, poco después del comienzo de la película, no hace nada para llamar la atención o manipular a nadie. Más bien,

es el director, Antonio, quien la elige entre grupo. Luego, Carmen estudia humildemente, si puedo juzgar, bajo la primera bailarina. Cuando Carmen se pone a practicar con Antonio, otra vez, su comportamiento no es extraordinariamente sexual sino más bien calmado e inocuo. Si hubiera un caso de manipulación, sería de Antonio, que le hace muchos gestos sexuales, le exige que sea más pasiva y cumple con su cuerpo.

Luego, el vínculo entre ellos se hace más complicado cuando comienzan a tener relaciones sexuales y se revela que ella tiene relaciones adicionales con otros

hombres. Sin embargo, esto no significa que Carmen seduzca a Antonio para obtener algo de su interés. Si ella es una mujer promiscua -aunque yo lo considero muy misógino también-este es un asunto por debatir en otro lugar.

### **Aura**

Por cierto, el personaje Aura es muy dócil si se le compara con el carácter seguro de Carmen; no obstante, sus casos son muy similares: Aura atrae pero no seduce. Además, como en Carmen, es el protagonista masculino el que se in-

fatúa con ella. Aura solo aparece ante el protagonista para cumplir los pedidos de su tía, la Señora Consuelo. Por lo tanto, otra vez, sería inadecuado decir que Aura seduce a Felipe o que ella es una *femme fatale*. Por otra parte, si consideramos a Aura como una extensión de Señora Consuelo y si evaluáramos a esta última con el mismo criterio, el análisis resultaría bastante distinto. Es claro desde el principio, por el anuncio inicial en el periódico, que la Señora Consuelo intenta deliberadamente atraer al lector/Felipe. Entonces, bajo el disfraz de la joven y misteriosa Aura, Consuelo lo seduce. Al principio lo tienta con la timidez y belleza etérea de la joven. Luego Consuelo lo engaña, al usar lo que él cree son los avances sexuales de Aura. Por tanto, ya hay una intención distinta en la Señora Consuelo de seducir sexualmente a Felipe. Parece que ella sí satisface el criterio de la *femme fatale*.

A diferencia de la Señora Consuelo, no resulta claro cuál es la intención de Aura. Ella aparece en la narración como una criada obediente de Consuelo y como se revela después, no tiene autonomía sobre su cuerpo. Sus acciones están controladas por una fuerza exterior. Así, Aura no califica como *femme fatale*. Ella parece más bien su antítesis. Como la Virgen María, Aura es solemne y sumisa. Es joven y bella, pero modesta y dedicada devotamente a su tía Consuelo, quien se podría interpretar como su Dios. Aun más, es posible que Fuentes haga este tipo de alusiones en la novela. Al decidir que Aura debe huir con él, porque ella sufre bajo la tiranía de Consuelo, Felipe declara indignamente que Aura es “como un icono más de ese muro religioso,” en otras palabras, como la Virgen quien debe seguir la palabra de Dios.<sup>2</sup>

Es interesante leer el contraste entre Consuelo, la *femme fatale*, y Aura la Virgen María, desde una perspectiva feminista. Según la teóloga feminista Mary Daly, la figura de la Virgen se puede interpretar, sin mucha imaginación, como una herramienta de la sociedad patriarcal. Para los cristianos ella es un retrato venerado de la joven que acepta humildemente la

maternidad. Pero, según Daly, esta concepción sagrada no es una elección voluntaria, sino una obligación o hasta una violación. Y la imagen de esta mujer joven, quien entonces sigue como una virgen, subordinada y en servidumbre a su hijo, crea el ideal imposible de una mujer perfecta. Ella representa una ilusión que otras mujeres fracasan perpetuamente en lograr.

Desde este punto de vista, la significación del relato asume un mensaje feminista. *Aura* es la historia de la mujer que lucha por cumplir el ideal femenino. En verdad, Fuentes hace muy bien en revelar lo absurdo de esta lucha. Su protagonista, la Señora Consuelo, va tan lejos como fabricar la quimera de Aura, quien, como la Virgen, representa todo que le falta a la Señora, todo que le es inalcanzable: la juventud, la belleza, la fecundidad. Consuelo hace todo posible por evitar la realidad de su envejecimiento, su pérdida de belleza, su ausencia de hijos. Por las cartas de su esposo, el Señor Llorente, se revela que en sus años anteriores, Consuelo enloqueció en el jardín, tratando de cultivar hierbas para estimular su fecundidad. Pero luego ella niega que exista un jardín. Niega todo que le recuerda las insuficiencias de su juventud “¿Cual jardín?”, “¿ratones?”, “¿gatos?” responde ella.

Aura es también la historia del hombre afrontando la ilusión de la mujer perfecta. Al principio, Felipe ve a Consuelo solo por su vejez: los ratones en su cuarto, y las migajas en su lecho. Y al ver la imagen vieja y sangrienta de Aura en la cocina, él queda muy perturbado. Sin embargo, en las escenas que siguen, cuando él empieza a darse cuenta de que Aura no es la mujer joven que había imaginado, no le importa. Ella “parece de cuarenta” dice él, pero de todos modos procede a besarla y de hecho, le promete que la amará para siempre.<sup>3</sup>

Aún más, se puede considerar que la Señora Consuelo, como su esposa, crea la imagen de él mismo como un hombre joven. Y quizás, la narración se trata, de un modo más general, sobre la transpiración de la juventud. Cualquiera que

sea el mensaje, Fuentes lo deja para los lectores. Para una lectora feminista, él presenta una oportunidad para un discurso fecundo. Crea su *femme fatale*, junto a un personaje femenino más sumiso y atractivo. Además, crea la *femme fatale* bajo una luz nueva. A pesar de tener control sobre Aura y seducir con éxito a Felipe, Consuelo sale descontenta, sin lograr sostener la ilusión de la juventud y belleza. Por eso, Fuentes ilustra el dilema

inevitable de la *femme fatale*: ella puede seducir o manipular a un hombre e incluso a unos hombres, pero ella, sin embargo, no deja de ser prisionera de los ideales y sistemas sociales.

#### CITAS

<sup>1</sup> Daly, Mary. *Gyn/Ecology: the Metaethics of radical feminism*. (London: The Women's press, 1995), 45, 100-103.

<sup>2</sup> Fuentes, Carlos. *Aura*. (New York City: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1965.), .88.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 108.



Tyler Gooding is currently a student of LaGuardia Community College and is majoring in International Studies. He hopes to transfer to George Washington University in Spring 2019 to help him pursue a career in the United States Foreign Service.

## READING ALEJO CARPENTIER'S JOURNEY BACK TO THE SOURCE.

By Tyler Gooding

"Journey Back to the Source" and "The Marvelous Real in America" are both great pieces of work written by Alejo Carpentier. "Journey Back to the Source" is a short story that depicts the life of Don Marcial, Marques de Capellanas, starting with his death and ending with his birth because of magic performed by a former old servant of Marcial. While "The Marvelous Real in America" is written in the form of an essay, in which Alejo Carpentier travels across the globe to places like the Soviet Union, China, "the world of Islam" and finally back to his home of Latin America. It is once he returns home he realizes the uniqueness of the literary movement flourishing in the Americas, marvelous real, in comparison to the literary movements of the countries he visited. Both pieces work together to give an understanding of what exactly marvelous real is, the former gives an example of marvelous real being used while the latter helps define it. In the following paragraphs I'll be defining what Alejo considers marvelous real to be and how it's used in "Journey Back to the Source", explaining how time is used in that story and describing the social class and social roles of women in that story.

According to the editor's notes of "The Marvelous Real in America," marvelous real is when "the fantastic inheres in the natural and human realities of time and place, where improbably juxtapositions and marvelous mixtures exist by virtue of Latin America's varied history, geography, demography, and politics (Carpentier 75)." This goes along with the belief that in Latin America, reality and magic are closely intertwined due to its extraordinary history and geography. So, when marvelous real is to be used in literature, it needs to have some magical elements but be grounded in a realistic plot for the most part. This applies to Alejo Carpentier's short story, "Journey Back to the Source" in which marvelous real

is used throughout to great effect. The story starts with an old "Negro" man that is watching the destruction of the deceased Don Marcial's estate, when the workers leave the demolition site due to it getting late, the old man starts working some magic. The old man's magic repairs the estate, he then walks into the house and the reader starts to realize that the old man is making time go backwards as in the story at this point, the funeral of Don Marcial is taking place. He comes back to life soon after this and we witness his life from him being an old man, a married man, a young adult, a teenager, a young kid, a toddler, an infant and at the very end, a fetus. Throughout his life we meet a few characters like his wife, Marquesa, his father, The Marques, and his father's African servant, Melchor, who we can assume is the old "Negro" man in the beginning of the story. Melchor turns out to be a very important character as you learn in the story he played with a very young Don Marcial and had a good bond with him. This bond could explain why in the beginning of the story he seemed to take so much interest in what was being done to the estate. I took the time to explain the plot of this story to help make clear how the marvelous real was used. Other than Melchor using magic to make the story go back in time showing Don Marcial's life and repair his home, the story is pretty much grounded. The titles given to many of the characters like Don, Señora and Father given to the priest, are true to the culture of Latin America. The stages of Don Marcial's life are acutely realistic, for example, as a young man he attends a Seminary (which is basically a form of college so to speak), taking exams and learning about the great philosophers of ancient history like Aristotle. All of this gives a great example of the use of Marvelous Real.

The use of time in "Journey Back to the Source" was hard to understand on my





Alejo Carpentier  
Image from  
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first read but after reading the story for a second time, I fully understood it. The story is warped by Melchor, the old man, use of magic which makes time go backwards, depicting the life of Don Marcial. It starts to become clear that time is going backwards as we initially start with Don Marcial being dead and a few sentences later he is waking up from his death but still sick (this sickness is most likely what killed him). In part III, the story says “the candles lengthened slowly, gradually guttering less and less. When they had reached full size, the nun extinguished them and took away the light (Echevarria, Short Stories 223).” This is interesting as if time was going normally, the nun would be lighting the candle and instead of the candle lengthening, it would be shrinking as the fire melts the candle wax. This is just one example of the small details that helped me see that time was indeed going backward. Another is in part VI, when the story says “Marcial had the strangest sensation that all the clocks in the house were striking five, then half past four, then four, then half past three.” This is clearly the author of the story, Alejo Carpentier, trying to subtly let the reader now that time is going backwards.

The social classes and social roles of women are sprinkled throughout “Journey Back to the Source.” One of the ways in the story you get a feel for a character’s social class is the titles they are given. For example, Marcial has the title Don in front of his name which is usually reserved for royalty, a wealthy noble or just a person held in high regard in society. Marcial also attended the Royal Seminary of San Carlos, which most likely wouldn’t have been possible if his family wasn’t wealthy as I’m pretty sure in this period most people couldn’t afford to send their children to college as the whole family had to work. It is made clear that Marcial and his family are nobles or wealthy as they have a servant, who is Melchor. Melchor is clearly at the bottom rungs of society because of the fact he is a servant and is African. In the story it says, “he was descended from conquered princes (Echevarria, Short Stories 230),” so if things worked out better he could’ve been a prince if his ancestors weren’t subjugated. The social roles of women throughout the story is very one dimensional. In my eyes, women in the story are portrayed as only being useful for the sexual gratification of men.

In part III of the story, it talks about a naked woman being in the room with Don Marcial, looking for and putting on her clothes then mentions gold coins being left out. From this one can assume that the gold coins left out were meant as payment for the women who we can also assume was most likely a prostitute. The story also talks about Marcial seeing a woman named Maria de la Mercedes in part V until he got married to Marquesa and in part VI, mentions him having relations with Señora de Campoflorido.

In conclusion, Alejo Carpentier’s term, marvelous real, is as described in his essay, “The Marvelous Real in America,” it’s when “the fantastic inheres in the natural and human realities of time and place, where improbably juxtapositions and marvelous mixtures exist by virtue of Latin America’s varied history, geography, demography, and politics (Carpentier 75).” This description of the term can be seen throughout “Journey Back to the Source,” where we see the concept of magic being able to make time go backwards, being grounded in the reality of Latin American culture of the time Carpentier is describing. “Journey Back to the Source” and “The Marvelous Real in America,” both highlight the magic of the history, culture and geography of Latin America.

DOSSIER PHOTOGRAPHY

# COMMUNITIES



Luisa F. Madrid. *Domino Tension*. Digital Photography, 2018.



Luisa F. Madrid. *Cigarros*. Digital Photography, 2018.



Luisa F. Madrid. *Sikh Men* Digital Photography, 2018.





Savannah Nabors. *Untitled*. Digital Photography, 2018.

## ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHERS

**HREEDOY ANIRBAN KHANDAKAR** was born in Germany and raised in Bangladesh. He is currently majoring in Commercial Photography (Fine Arts Photography option) at LaGuardia Community College. His interest lies in storytelling through photography and filmmaking. He grew up playing soccer and was involved in theater to practice acting. He loves to face the unknown, thus loves traveling a lot to interact with others.

**JANAI JULIEN** was born in Castries, St. Lucia. He is currently majoring in commercial photography at LaGuardia Community College as he continues on his path to becoming a professional photographer. Four years ago he started teaching himself how to use a film camera & have been enjoying it since then.

**KELLY O'BRIEN** was born and raised in Long Island, New York. She is currently majoring in Commercial Photography at LaGuardia Community College. Her goal is to evoke feelings and embrace adventure through imagery while delivering tales of life's trials and tribulations. She aspires to capture reality and become a voice for the voiceless.

**GILENNY ROSA LIA DE LOS SANTOS ROSARIO** was born and raised in a small town along the Atlantic coast in the Dominican Republic. She started attending to LaGuardia Community College in 2015 as a second language student in the CUNY Language Immersion Program. Currently, she is studying to become an industrial designer and hoping on being transfer to City College to get her bachelor degree in Architecture.

**SAVANNAH NABORS**, was born in Memphis, TN. She is Majoring in Liberal Arts for Japanese at LaGuardia Community College. Her passion is to travel all over the world to learn about different cultures, explore unfamiliar places, and meet new people. She loves taking pictures and practicing yoga.

**MARIA RAHAMAN HITOME** was born in Chittagong, Bangladesh. Two years ago she moved to United States. She is currently majoring Commercial Photography in LaGuardia Community College. She is passionate for traveling.

**JEREMIAH CUMBERBATCH** was born in Molineux, St. Kitts. At the age of 11 he moved to the United States with brother and sister to live with their dad. Jeremiah is currently majoring in Commercial Photography at LaGuardia Community College. One of his hobbies is to produce music, which is where he found the impulse to capture phenomenal moments with images.

**TANAISHA GILCHRIST** was Born and Raised in Queens NY and later moved to Brooklyn NY where her passion for creating was born. She is a Graduate from Laguardia community college where she majored in Commercial Photography. She learned and developed her skills and love for photography here. Fashion photography is her field of interest, ever since she was in High School she had a passion for creation new looks and taking pictures. She has been accepted into FIT for fall 2018 where she will pursue a BS Degree in International Trade & Marketing. She is an aspiring author, and one day wants to be well known for her creative contributions to changing the fashion industry.

**LUISA F. MADRID** is a documentary photographer based in New York City and Miami. She found photography to be a discipline that could fulfill both desires. By pointing her camera at individuals on the fringes of society, or covering topics that are difficult to discuss, Luisa's photography is not only to capture images that are pleasing to the eye, but that also start a conversation.

**GOVINDA BHARAT** studied business at LaGuardia Community College. He is interested in renewable energy, its applications in remote and underserved areas around the United States.

**MONICA LUBERA** was born in Brooklyn, New York and is studying Early Childhood Education at LaGuardia Community College. She is passionate for photography and teaching. No matter where she is, she always finds her camera in use whether it is has to do with nature, people or art, she will always find something to take a picture of. She would love to have the opportunity to teach children about photography.

**BENJAMIN PIERRE GABET** was born in Marseille, France. He moved to New York City 5 years ago to follow his passion for Photography. He is currently majoring in Commercial Photography at LaGuardia Community College. His great curiosity brought him to travel the world and learn from different cultures. He is interested in working on documentary photography projects and aspires to be a photojournalist.

**JUAN MINAYA** was born in the Mao, Republica Dominicana. At the age of six moved to the United States. His interest in photography began while he was in the army. He continues to develop his interest by majoring in commercial photography at LaGuardia Community College. He hopes to one day he will start his own photography studio.

**TIANABELLE RODRIGUEZ** was born in the Dominican Republic. She has a passion for photography. She loves traveling and taking pictures.

**ORIANA ROJAS** was born in Venezuela Caracas. She moved to New York City when she was 14 years old. She recently graduated from la Guardia Community College.





# ELC 250 Chinese Literature in English Translation

中国文学 英文翻译

THIS COURSE IS OFFERED IN THE HYBRID MODE EVERY SEMESTER ON Mondays, from 3:25 to 5:35 p.m. (This is a 3-credit liberal arts elective that satisfies the "World Culture and Global Issues" requirement of CUNY Pathways. Knowledge of Chinese is not required. Pre-requisite – ENG 101.) For details, please contact Prof. Arthur Lau  
Education & Language Acquisition Department  
(B 234Q, [alau@lagcc.cuny.edu](mailto:alau@lagcc.cuny.edu), or 718-482-5626.)

What are the characteristics of Classical Chinese poetry?

What are some of the banned books in Chinese?

Do you know "Mu Lan" is more than a Disney animated movie?

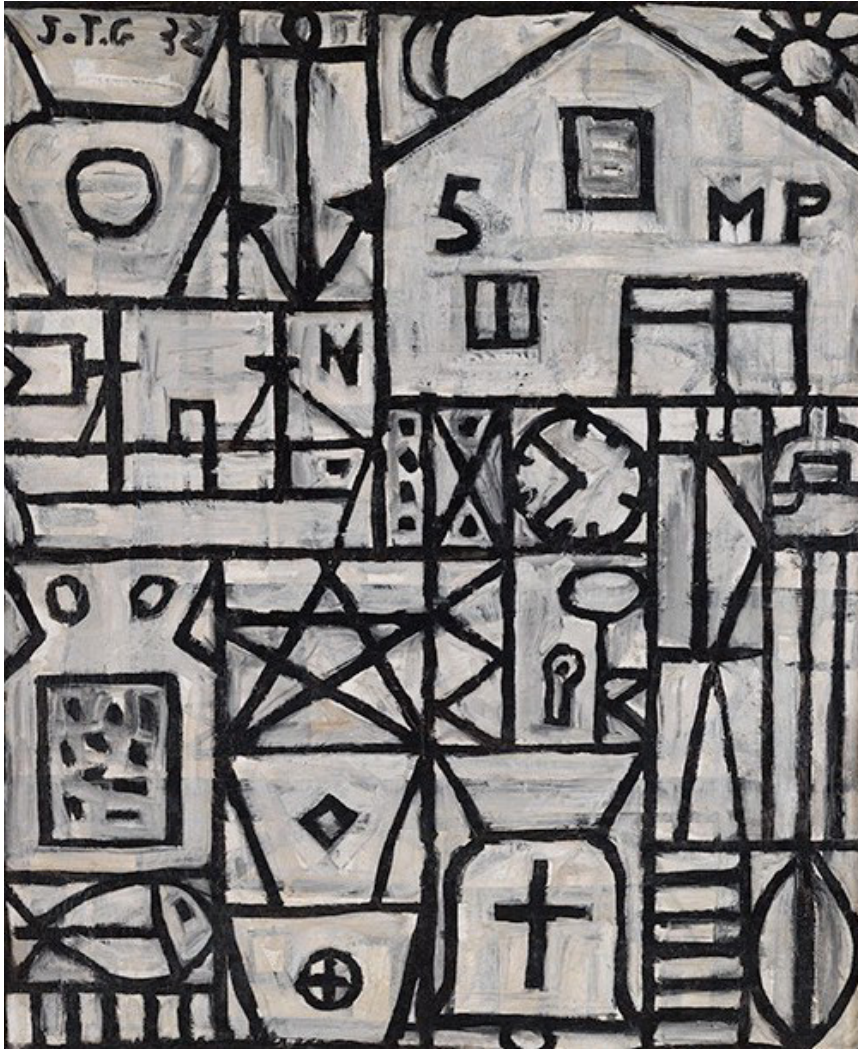
How many Chinese writers have won the Nobel Prize for Literature?

What pieces in Chinese literature inspired revolutions and rebellions?

How are Confucian and Buddhist ideas reflected in Chinese literature?



# ELS250 LATIN AMERICAN FICTION IN TRANSLATION



Joaquín Torres-García, Gare. Oil on canvas, 65 x 54 cm., 1932. Colección Cisneros, Caracas.  
Image from [www.commonswikimedia.org](http://www.commonswikimedia.org)

## READING

Rubén Darío  
Horacio Quiroga  
Octavio Paz  
Jorge Luis Borges  
Carlos Fuentes  
Julio Cortázar  
Gabriel García Márquez  
Mario Vargas Llosa  
Reinaldo Arenas  
Roberto Bolaño

**& MORE....**



# ELS204

LATIN AMERICAN CIVILIZATIONS



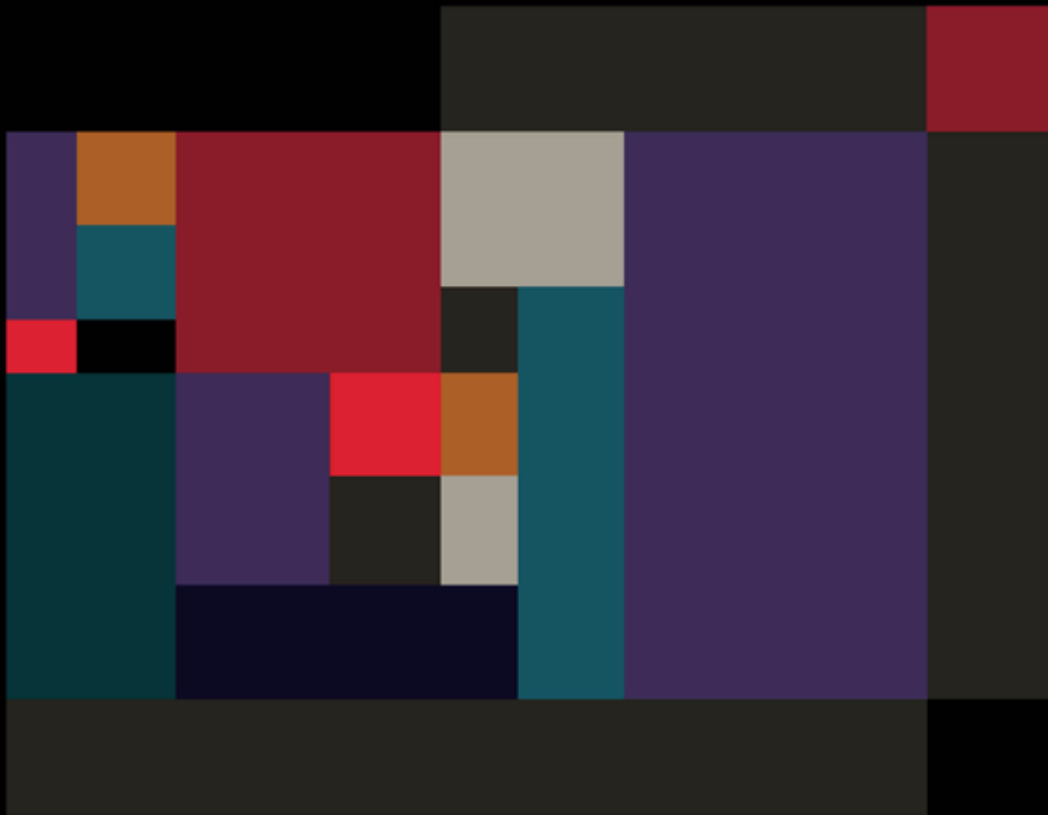
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After ELS102

# THERE IS ELS103

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