

# PORTAL





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EDITOR'S NOTE: *It is customary for Portal to convey some sort of entryway on the cover. What I like about this cover by Mexican artist José Luis Pescador is that the volcano can be interpreted in numerous ways. Each story in the issue contains elements of a surface and something below the surface. In some cases this is literal: Aída Hernández writes about forensic anthropologists who assist and bear witness to parents in their search for bodies of disappeared sons and daughters in unmarked graves. More of Pescador's stirring work accompanies that article. "Reading the First Books" takes us deep into texts via digital tools, unlocking what's inside in a brand new way. Luis Cárcamo-Huechante tells of how hearing Ernesto Cardenal's voice on a recording during high school under the Pinochet dictatorship led him to delve into not only poetry, but other forbidden and "hidden" texts. We invite readers to ponder the volcano metaphor as they explore what is below the surface in the pages that follow.*



## FROM THE DIRECTOR



This is my first opportunity to greet you from the pages of *Portal* as the director of LILAS Benson. I came into this position with many years of connections to LILAS and the Benson Collection. I started teaching at The University of Texas at Austin in 1990, when I had an appointment at what was then known simply as the Institute of Latin American Studies (ILAS). I went on to serve as faculty in my two other “home” departments,

History and Religious Studies. During this hiatus, I still kept my finger on the pulse of Latin American Studies, especially during the precarious, daring, and experimental first years of the LILAS Benson partnership, under my predecessor Charlie Hale’s energetic leadership as director.

I come to the end of my first year as director with my eyes still open wide in amazement at the breadth, depth, and scope of the work done at the world’s premier institute and collection built around the study of Latin America. The LILAS Benson partnership is now in its sixth year, and, with the careful guidance of our top leadership team and the ongoing efforts of our hard-working and dedicated staff, the combined energies from both “sides of the house” have become a source of added vitality and opportunity for scholarly engagement and innovation.

This academic year began with a spotlight on LILAS Benson’s Black Diaspora Archive during “Black Matters: The Future of Black Scholarship and Activism,” the first international Black Studies conference ever held on the UT Austin campus. In November, we welcomed Nicaraguan writer, politico, and priest Ernesto Cardenal, age 92, who gave a stirring poetry reading at a symposium celebrating the opening of his archive at the Benson. Also in the fall, a visually stunning exhibition of treasures from the Benson’s rare books and manuscripts collection highlighted the linkages between Acapulco and Manila in the colonial Spanish world. This past spring, the annual Lozano Long Conference focused on global food issues through the Latin American lens. That was followed by ILASSA, a three-day international scholarly conference organized entirely by LILAS graduate students. In May, we wrapped up the academic year with a symposium titled “Reading the First Books: Colonial Documents in the Digital Age,” the culminating event of a two-year digital humanities collaboration between LILAS Benson, the UT Libraries, and Texas A&M that was sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

“Reading the First Books” underscores one of the prime directions in which LILAS Benson is currently headed, which is to make rare materials and primary sources available to scholars

everywhere through open-access digital platforms. A new digital initiative titled Cultivating a Latin American Post-Custodial Archival Praxis furthers this objective. With a \$700,000 grant from the Mellon Foundation, the project will focus on preserving vulnerable human rights documentation from Latin America in partnership with organizations in Mexico, Brazil, and Colombia. Another such initiative is being led by history professor Matthew Butler, who has built a collaboration between LILAS Benson and the Archivo General e Histórico del Poder Ejecutivo de Michoacán (Mexico) to digitize *libros de hijuelas*, community deed records dating from 1719 to 1929. This effort is generously funded by the British Library. Projects like these continue to attract dynamic and engaged students to LILAS Benson, and our student program, the very heart of what we do, is thriving. The graduate student cohort is diverse, representing a wide range of national and intellectual interests from across Latin America and the United States. The students’ passion and commitment to social justice is evident throughout the warp and weft of their work.

Our alumni are equally inspiring. Former students have gone on to pursue meaningful careers in NGOs, government, business, public policy, academia, the nonprofit sector, and the media. Many of them affirm that it was their study of Latin America at UT Austin that helped set them on the road to a purposeful life.

Last, but certainly not least, it bears mentioning that living in uncertain times underscores the importance of the kind of work that LILAS Benson cultivates. We feel that is crucial to provide a venue for serious, fact-based discussions and debates about important issues facing the world today, including immigration, the proposed border wall, the status of DACA students, the vulnerability of journalists working in Mexico, the crisis in Venezuela, and so much more. Through our sponsorship of lectures by scholars and Latin American public intellectuals, our timely academic conferences, our K–16 outreach programs, and our Foro Urgente series, we attempt to expand knowledge and awareness of the region beyond the walls of the university. By promoting cultural literacy, critical thinking, advocacy, and fact-based knowledge, we at LILAS Benson strongly uphold the UT Austin motto: “What starts here changes the world.”

Saludos cordiales,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Virginia Garrard". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Virginia Garrard, Director  
LILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections



## ORACION POR MARILYN MONROE

Señor  
recibe a esta muchacha conocida en toda la tierra con el nombre de  
Marilyn Monroe  
aunque ese no era su verdadero nombre  
(pero Tú conoces su verdadero nombre, el de la huerfanita violada a  
los 9 años  
y la empleadita de tienda que a los 16 se había querido matar)  
y que ahora se presenta ante Tí sin ningún maquillaje  
sin su Agente de Prensa  
sin fotografías y sin firmar autógrafos  
sola como un astronauta frente a la noche espacial.

Ella soñó cuando niña que estaba desnuda en una iglesia  
(según cuenta el *Time*)  
ante una multitud postrada, con las cabezas en el suelo  
y tenía que caminar en puntillas para no pisar las cabezas.  
Tú conoces nuestros sueños mejor que los psiquiatras.  
Iglesia, casa, cueva, son la seguridad del seno materno  
pero también algo más que eso...  
Las cabezas son los admiradores, es claro  
(la masa de cabezas en la oscuridad bajo el chorro de luz).  
Pero el templo no son los estudios de la 20th Century-Fox.  
El templo —de mármol y oro— es el templo de su cuerpo  
en el que está el Hijo del Hombre con un látigo en la mano  
expulsando a los mercaderes de la 20th Century-Fox  
que hicieron de Tu casa de oración una cueva de ladrones.

Señor  
en este mundo contaminado de pecados y radioactividad  
Tú no culparás tan sólo a una empleadita de tienda.  
Que como toda empleadita de tienda soñó ser estrella de cine.  
Y su sueño fue realidad (pero como la realidad del technicolor).  
Ella no hizo sino actuar según el script que le dimos  
—El de nuestras propias vidas— Y era un script absurdo.  
Perdónala Señor y perdónanos a nosotros  
por nuestra 20th Century  
por esta Colosal Super-Producción en la que todos hemos trabajado.



# Cardenal in Hard Times

by LUIS E. CÁRCAMO-HUECHANTE

I

IT WAS THE WINTER OF 1979. I was already in my fourth year of high school in Valdivia, in southern Chile, when my literature teacher surprised my class

by bringing in a record player. As she turned it on, a singular voice came out, with an accent that was difficult to recognize. For those of us listening on that winter morning in the cold and wet public high-school building, the Central American accent coming from the vinyl sounded unfamiliar; nevertheless, it resonated powerfully in our ears.

It was the voice of Ernesto Cardenal reciting “Oración por Marilyn Monroe” (Prayer for Marilyn Monroe). Our teacher had decided to have us listen to this single, rescuing it from somewhere in her home, where she had stored and kept hidden an edition of the book *Oración por Marilyn Monroe y otros poemas*, published in Santiago in 1971.<sup>1</sup> The early 1970s were exciting times in Chile, the years of the democratically elected socialist government of Salvador Allende and the Popular Unity party—a political period that was abruptly interrupted by the September 11, 1973, coup d’état. Now, we were listening to the voice of Cardenal in a dramatically different setting, at a time of censorship and institutional coercion in the Chilean school system. These were hard times in the whole country—without Allende, without Neruda, without Víctor Jara, without the hundreds and hundreds of people disappeared or in exile. It was a country ruled by the authoritarian and repressive regime of General Augusto Pinochet and his extreme neoliberal policies. Back to the classroom setting, the principal of my high school was

a former member of the Air Force, certainly appointed by the military government to the position; this was common, not only in high schools but in public universities subject to a system of designated principals, usually retired generals or colonels.

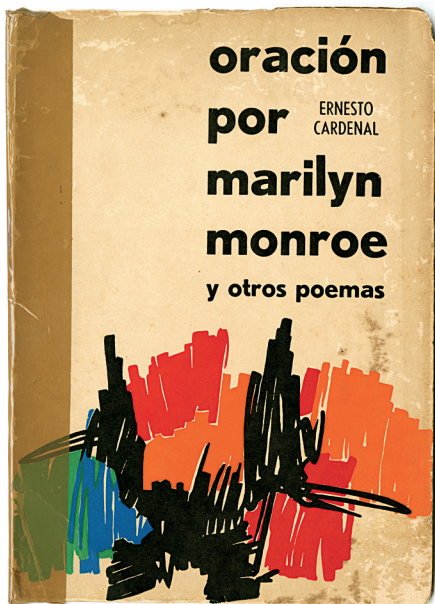
By 1979, as has been documented, Chile had experienced the hardest, most repressive period of the Pinochet years. Our teacher, however, had decided to challenge the ruling circumstances by playing in the

classroom a poem of strong anticapitalist sentiment by Ernesto Cardenal, a poet associated with a historical process of antidictatorial, popular, and revolutionary struggle. Thus, thanks to the bravery of a teacher, the voice of Ernesto Cardenal broke with our routine of studying a limited range of literary texts, mostly focused on intimate, politically inoffensive themes. In the midst of times of censorship and coercion, it was Cardenal’s verses that awoke me to an



Warhol-inspired libro-disco cover. Caracas, 1972. Benson Latin American Collection.





Cover, first edition, *Oración por Marilyn Monroe y otros poemas* (Medellín, 1965). Benson Latin American Collection.

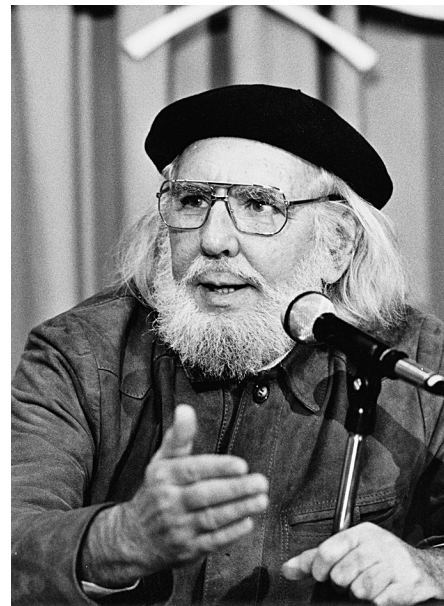
unexpectedly revelatory linkage between poetry and social issues, literary writing and collective history.

Listening to “Oración por Marilyn Monroe” gave me the sense that, in those years, it would be in poetry and literature that I would find the echoes and traces of history, rather than in the conservative manuals that were assigned to us. One year later, I found myself delving into the library catalogs as a first-year college student at the Universidad Austral de Chile. One of my first searches was Ernesto Cardenal, which led me to a 1972 edition of his book *Epigramas* published in Buenos Aires, and a 1969 edition of his *Salmos*, also published in Argentina.<sup>2</sup> These books of poetry, through their anti-Somoza feelings, began to nurture my anti-Pinochet political sensibility, a path that would lead me into the underground politics of the democratic opposition and, more specifically, to join the Socialist Youth in the Chile of the early 1980s.

Requesting and checking out Cardenal’s books was itself a journey of mixed feelings, from the initial fear to the joy of holding them in my hands. They were books that were untouched and resting for years on the shelves, probably like the single that my teacher brought to class—books that sat there quietly and unnoticed by the censors. To be sure, it was not the setting of the American university library where the visitor can directly access the bookshelves.

The visitor was dependent on the mediation of the librarian, who had to look at a request card to grab the book for it. Sometimes, checking out books of a poet like Ernesto Cardenal went unnoticed; at other times, a much more knowledgeable official knew what she was delivering to the visitor. Checking out Cardenal’s *Epigramas* and *Salmos* left me with the feeling that the librarian knew what she was handing to me, and that she was complicit in my political poetry search. This was the life of reading Cardenal and the life of university libraries in times of dictatorship in Chile. It was in those circumstances that Cardenal’s poetry acquired a broader dimension for me, as a reading of both aesthetic and civic value.

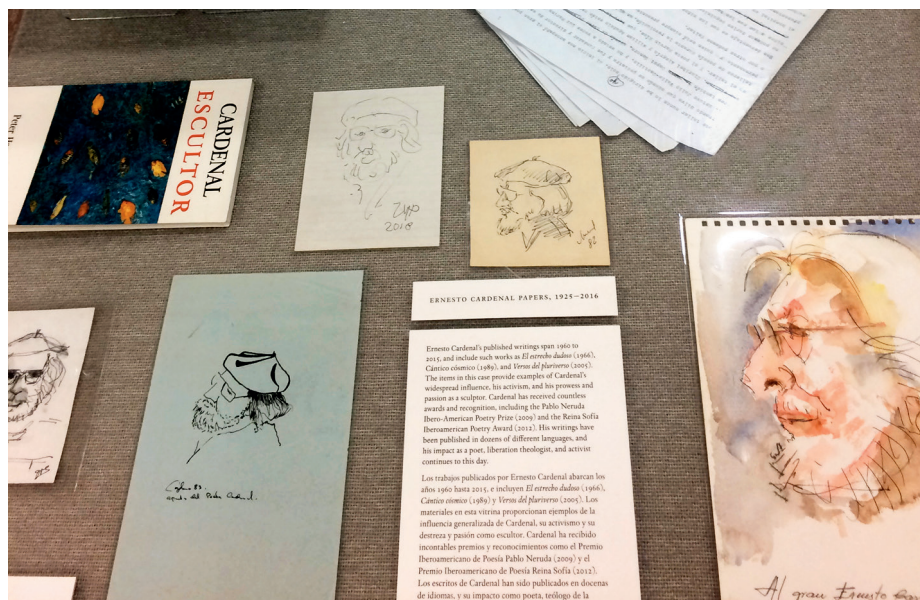
With this remembrance, I would like to situate one dimension of the poetry and intellectual work of Ernesto Cardenal in the context of its reception in the Chile and South America of the late 1970s and 1980s. In this period, Cardenal’s poetic texts circulated under scenarios similar to those of the Somoza years in Nicaragua, especially in those countries of the region subject to military regimes, such as Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, or Bolivia. Reading Cardenal offered us a literary language that spoke of common experiences: of dictatorships, of states of siege, of political violence, of censorship, of sudden nocturnal shots, of fears and silences, but also of clandestine resistance and underground politics, of



Cardenal at a press conference as Nicaragua’s minister of culture. United Nations, New York City, 1983. UN Photo 163 257 /Yutaka Nagata. Benson Latin American Collection.

emancipatory horizons, of the endurance of indigenous cultures, and the broader spiritual and natural life of the universe.

From a literary point of view, the poetry of Ernesto Cardenal arrived during decades in which poets were trapped between the Nerudean paradigm and the antipoetry of Nicanor Parra, between the lyricism of a grandiloquent rhetoric and the radical



Materials from the Ernesto Cardenal archive on display in the Benson Latin American Collection main reading room.

skepticism of antipoetic discourse. At that point, Cardenal offered us a poetry much more based in the language of history, with documental foundations and ethical impulses. The appealing literary aesthetics of the “exteriorism” coined by Ernesto Cardenal and José Coronel Urtecho invited us to engage the everyday of history in the very terrain of language. As Cardenal explained it:

Exteriorism is the poetry created based in images from the exterior world, the world that we see and touch, and which is, generally speaking, the specific world of poetry. Exteriorism is objective poetry: narrative and incidental, made with the elements of real life and with concrete things, with proper names and precise and exact details and numbers and facts and sayings.<sup>3</sup>

With this aesthetics of language, Cardenal would help the emerging poets of the 1970s and 1980s to write by engaging the “exterior world” of those years, amid the popularization of television in Latin America, the apogee of consumer society, new waves of urban expansion, along with military coups d’état, political violence, and the launching of free market-oriented economic policies that aggravated social disparities in many countries of the region. Hard times. Poetry helped us.

But, even more, in its amalgamation of historical narratives and denotative style, the poetry of Cardenal resituated the place of the self and feelings in writing, because his poetry also spoke of love, of inner emotions and spiritual values, along with religious quests and scientific references, local occurrences and cosmic mutations, politics and cosmopolitics. Likewise, his poetry invited us to set aside our own stereotypical habits of reading. In times of pressing political matters, while others urged us to only read literary works based in “socialist realism,” his varied publications guided us toward reading across ideologies and aesthetics, across languages, across cultures and times. Through his own poetry, his translations, and the different anthologies he co-edited, Cardenal led many of us to read Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams, Native American poetry, or Latin classics such as Martial or Catullus. In a way, Cardenal set the tone for a new aesthetic and ideological heterodoxy; in other words, a radically democratic view of literature and cultural production that exposed us to readings across the North/South, Western/non-Western divide, from different languages and even from the literary traditions of classical and modern empires.

It is in these terms that I would like to situate the poetry of Ernesto Cardenal, as a poetic and literary art that emerged in a Nicaragua immersed in critical times—a

condition that made it resonate in other contexts, in the hard times of my own generation of South American realities. There, it also resounded as an emancipatory “canto” and revelatory “document” of the countercurrents of history, subjectively and collectively.

Today, here and now, it is an extraordinary gift that Cardenal’s papers arrive at the Benson Latin American Collection, in Austin, Texas. And it is likely that once again, Cardenal’s writings, and the ethical, political, spiritual, poetic, and human voice that resonates in them, will accompany us at these latitudes of the planet, in the hard times that seem to be upon us. ✨

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*Luis E. Cárcamo-Huechante is a scholar of Mapuche origin who grew up in Tralcao, a rural village in the River Region of Valdivia in southern Chile. He is associate professor in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese and director of the Native American and Indigenous Studies program at UT Austin.*

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** *This essay was read by the author on November 15, 2016, at an event celebrating the opening of the Ernesto Cardenal Papers at the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, The University of Texas at Austin. It has been modified slightly for publication in Portal.*

*Portal wishes to acknowledge Dylan Joy, processing archivist at the Benson Collection, for his extensive assistance providing images for this article and for publicity surrounding Cardenal’s 2016 campus visit.*

#### Notes

1. *Oración por Marilyn y otros poemas* (Santiago, Chile: Editorial Universitaria, 1971). The first edition of this collection of poetry was published by Ediciones La Tertulia, in Medellín, Colombia, in 1965.
2. The editions available at that time in the catalog of the Universidad Austral de Chile library were *Epigramas* (Buenos Aires: Carlos Lohlé, 1972) and *Salmos* (Buenos Aires: Carlos Lohlé, 1969).
3. Quoted by Jaime Quezada in his “Prólogo” for the *Antología de Ernesto Cardenal* (Santiago, Chile: Editorial Universitaria, 1994); more specifically, see Quezada, 19–20. Author’s translation from the Spanish.



Ernesto Cardenal reads poems from *Cántico cósmico* at the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, November 15, 2016. His selections were read in translation by Celeste Mendoza.



# Mexico in Times of Violence and Impunity

## Legal and Forensic Anthropology in Support of Human Rights

by R. AÍDA HERNÁNDEZ CASTILLO

M

MEXICO IS ENGULFED in a human rights crisis. The current atmosphere of violence and impunity implies new challenges for social anthropology and,

more specifically, legal anthropology. Long-term fieldwork in regions affected by violence involves multiple risks for researchers and students. This forces us to seek collective research strategies with interdisciplinary teams, in collaboration with civil society organizations. This article shares some of the challenges and achievements in the Mexican context, as we attempt to develop socially committed research practices amid multiple types of violence.

### Legal Activism in the Face of Injustice

Over the last ten years, the so-called War on Drugs in Mexico has resulted in 100,000 dead and 30,000 disappeared, hundreds of clandestine mass graves throughout the country, and thousands of people internally displaced. Practitioners of legal anthropology have placed our hopes in legal activism based on collaborative research, such as the use of anthropological research for the co-production of knowledge that can be used in the legal defense of the people with whom we work. Yet we face a reality of impunity, where state justice is entirely delegitimized, making it almost impossible to consider an “emancipatory use of the law.”<sup>1</sup>

During the last 25 years, my academic work has revolved around a feminist legal

anthropology based on collaborative methodologies linked to legal activism. While engaging in continuous critical reflection on the law and rights, I have taken part in initiatives to support indigenous peoples and organizations who use national and international legislation in their struggles for justice. From this critical standpoint, I helped to write anthropological expert witness reports that have aided in the defense of indigenous women in national and international legal cases. (See my book *Multiple InJustices: Indigenous Women, Law and Political Struggle*, University of Arizona Press, 2016.)

But the “emancipatory” use of the law seems to be reaching its limits where organized crime operates from within the state’s institutions themselves. The problem in certain regions of Mexico is not only impunity and the inefficiency of the security and justice system, but the fact that violence emanates from the very institutions that should protect us. The murder of six people and the forced disappearance of 43 students from the Raúl Isidro Burgos teacher training college of Ayotzinapa, Guerrero, on September 26 and 27, 2014, was a watershed moment in relations between civil society and the Mexican state. The fact that the students were kidnapped by municipal police officers and handed over to members of the criminal organization Guerreros Unidos demonstrated what was already an open secret: organized crime operates from within the state itself.<sup>2</sup>

The search for the 43 students mobilized not just their families and human rights organizations, but the entire country. Thousands of people took to the streets with the slogan “*Fue el Estado*” (“The state did it”). In response to the hypothesis that the students were murdered and incinerated in a trash dump, a search for human remains began that, while failing to locate the 43, led to the discovery of more than 150 bodies buried in clandestine mass graves. This unleashed an unprecedented national process: throughout the country, the relatives of the disappeared grabbed picks and shovels and took to the task of searching for their sons and daughters. Without losing hope of finding them alive, but acknowledging the real possibility that they were dead, family members began searching in empty lots, in trash dumps, around rivers, and on the margins of irrigation canals. Search collectives were created in Guerrero, Veracruz, Sinaloa, Nuevo León, Chihuahua, and Coahuila, which later joined forces as the National Brigade for the Search for Disappeared People.

### Mass Graves and Forensic Anthropology

The sight of horror became an everyday fact: families began to find mass graves almost daily and they began to conduct the sorts of investigations that the government had been unable or unwilling to undertake. As a result, the relatives of the disappeared have become self-taught forensic





Local police, two forensic teams, and journalists at the site of unmarked graves in Tetelcingo, Morelos. From the documentary comic *Tetelcingo: Fosas del olvido* (Tetelcingo: Forgotten Graves), illustrated by José Luis Pescador, text by José Luis Pescador and Denisse Buendía Castañeda.





Forensic specialists examine human remains in Tetelcingo. In all, 117 clandestinely buried bodies were exhumed. *Tetelcingo: Fosas del olvido.*

researchers, learning a new, specialized language of genetic tests, DNA, exhumations, *antemortem*, *postmortem*, and so forth. Each organization has created its own database with names, ages, locations of disappearance, clothes worn, and other details.

But the families have not been alone in these searches. A young generation of archaeologists and physical anthropologists specialized in Mesoamerican cultures, together with social anthropologists, decided to aid in the search for the disappeared. As was the case with the creation of the Argentine Forensic Anthropology

Team (EAAF) in 1984 or the Guatemalan Forensic Anthropology Foundation (FAFG) in 1997, the need for independent experts to witness and advise during searches for the disappeared led a generation of Mexican anthropologists to engage in forensic sciences. Since 2013, a group of anthropologists, mostly young women, has come together as the Mexican Forensic Anthropology Team (EMAF), which began developing independent expert reports for paradigmatic cases, but which, with the creation of the search brigades, also started offering training workshops and observing

exhumation processes at mass graves upon request of the relatives.<sup>3</sup>

Legal anthropologists like myself, who work on topics related to legal pluralism or indigenous rights, have been forced to delve into disciplines that bring us close to what Spanish anthropologist Francisco Ferrándiz has termed “ethnography by the mass grave.”<sup>4</sup> Wishing to use my legal activism experience to contribute toward the search for justice, I joined the Social and Forensic Anthropology Research Group (GIASF) at the invitation of my colleague Carolina Robledo Silvestre. The group includes a physical anthropologist, an archaeologist, a lawyer, and three social anthropologists. We are advised by a group of experts from areas such as geophysics, social psychology, and criminalistics, among others.<sup>5</sup>

With the institutional support of CIESAS (the Center for Research and Advanced Study in Social Anthropology), albeit on a tight budget, the members of GIASF have traveled in the last year to the states of Veracruz, Coahuila, Baja California, Sinaloa, Chihuahua, Morelos, and Nuevo León, providing training and technical and legal advice to collectives of families of disappeared people on topics related to the search for and exhumation of human remains. In addition to offering workshops, GIASF has been present at exhumations of mass graves in Coahuila and Morelos, and its members co-authored a report on the case of the mass graves in Tetelcingo, Morelos.<sup>6</sup> Yet the extreme violence, impunity, and complicity between security forces and organized crime have made it almost impossible for us to accompany judicial processes in the same way we had for our anthropological expert witness work at CIESAS.<sup>7</sup>

For many relatives of disappeared people, demanding punishment for the guilty implies putting oneself at risk and, more significantly, putting other sons and daughters at risk. This reality is illustrated in a slogan adopted by some of the family organizations: “We don’t want justice, we want truth.” Anthropologists’ experiences in legal activism are of little use when the priority of families is to find their children, to give a face and a name to the disappeared, and to end the cycle of mourning by burying their loved ones with dignity. To understand these processes, it has been necessary to recognize the meaning underlying the search for justice from below, prioritizing the demands





Illustration by José Luis Pescador

Parents of the 43 disappeared students from Ayotzinapa visit Tetelcingo in an expression of solidarity. Here, mothers speak of government efforts to silence them. *Tetelcingo: Fosas del olvido.*



and practices of the mothers and fathers of the disappeared without imposing upon them our own pre-established categories regarding justice and reparations.

### Methodological Challenges in Contexts of Violence

In contrast with the experiences of forensic anthropologists in the Southern Cone, Peru, or Guatemala, we are not operating in a context of post-internal conflict, or what has been called “transitional justice.” In Mexico, we are in the midst of an internal war that has not been recognized, and in which the perpetrators of violence could be members of organized crime or of the government in power. This has forced us to develop different strategies to reconstruct the “forensic context,” to avoid risking the safety of our team and of the families with whom we work. Links with international organizations like the Red Cross and the United Nations Human Rights High Commissioner (OHCHR) have been fundamental in the development of a safety protocol. Through an initiative promoted by the OHCHR, we joined with other forensic teams that work in Mexico to found the Forensic Space for Human Rights, a network to articulate our efforts and discuss our methodological challenges.

In the context of multiple types of violence, we believe that social anthropologists can play an important role in forensic teams, expanding how the “forensic context” is conceived. This includes acknowledging the socio-historical origins of violence and understanding the body not only as a biological entity, but in its symbolic and cultural dimensions (see the work of Elsa Blair).<sup>8</sup> As legal anthropologists, we must expand our conceptions of legality and learn from the knowledge and experiences of the relatives of the disappeared, whose conceptions of justice and reparation do not always proceed along the path of state law. We must thus put aside our belief in the importance of our own point of view and open ourselves to other understandings of restorative justice in order to place our knowledge and skills at the service of family organizations.

Our analyses of legal processes and ethnographies of state spaces can help document how “state bureaucracy” is re-victimizing relatives of the disappeared. From the moment a family formally reports a

disappearance, a “bureaucratic *via crucis*” begins, with documentation, procedures, and other tasks that often continue for years without leading to progress in the investigation. When searches are fruitful, the bureaucratic labyrinth continues in order to make sure that the human remains are identified and the bodies turned over to the relatives. Waiting months for DNA test results becomes a form of torture in and of itself.

On the other hand, our anthropological expert witness work has allowed us to analyze to what extent the ethnic/racial, gender, and class exclusions that mark the lives of the mothers of the disappeared have aggravated the conditions of vulnerability in which they undertake searches and confront state institutions. This has meant participating in workshops with members of mothers’ organizations to examine how they imagine and experience justice, beyond the accepted frameworks and procedures.

The life histories methodology I used in my previous research with indigenous women in prison<sup>9</sup> has helped to reconstruct the accumulation of vulnerabilities that mark the lives of those women and their disappeared sons and daughters. At the level of forensic anthropology, these life histories can be used to develop the “*antemortem* records” that provide the context of the disappearance and lead to future identification of the human remains. Likewise, our ability to analyze the contexts in which forced disappearance takes place allows us to reconstruct the multiple vulnerabilities and status of impunity that make forced disappearance possible. In the long term, we believe that our interdisciplinary research can help to identify patterns of forced disappearance that contribute toward prevention and, in the future, toward the search for justice.

### Crucial Work with Limited State Support

Efforts to place scientific research at the service of civil society are being undertaken with increasingly scant state support for science and education in Mexico. So, even as spaces to produce “science with consciousness” are created, the national budget for science and technology was cut by 7 billion pesos in 2017, leaving resources at 23.3 percent less than the previous year. Alliances between researchers and relatives of the disappeared face further challenges. Lacking funds for fieldwork, laboratories,

or technical equipment, Mexican researchers are forced to use their meager salaries to respond to this national emergency.

We are still at the beginning of a long road to build alliances between legal and forensic anthropology in Mexico. It is my hope that someday the research that is now beginning can contribute to finding truth and justice, and put an end to the violence and impunity that threaten our children’s future. ✨

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*This article was translated from the Spanish by Alejandro Reyes.*

### Notes

1. Boaventura de Sousa Santos, “¿Puede el derecho ser emancipatorio?” *Derecho y emancipación*, 63–146 (Quito: Corte Constitucional para el Período de Transición and Centro de Estudios y Difusión del Derecho Constitucional, CEDEC, 2012). See [https://issuu.com/defensoriaec/docs/derecho\\_y\\_emancipacion\\_boaventura\\_de\\_sousa\\_santos](https://issuu.com/defensoriaec/docs/derecho_y_emancipacion_boaventura_de_sousa_santos).
2. See Hernández Castillo and Mora, “Ayotzinapa: ¿Fue el Estado? Reflexiones desde la antropología política in Guerrero,” *LASAFORUM* 46, no. 1 (2015): 28, at [lasa.international.pitt.edu/forum/files/vol46-issue1/Debates-11.pdf](http://lasa.international.pitt.edu/forum/files/vol46-issue1/Debates-11.pdf).
3. See Equipo Mexicano de Antropología Forense, “¿Quiénes somos?” at [emaf.org.mx/quienes-somos/](http://emaf.org.mx/quienes-somos/).
4. See “Entre víctimas: investigando las exhumaciones de las fosas comunes de la Guerra Civil en la España contemporánea,” May 18, 2017, at [www.politicadela memoria.org/](http://www.politicadela memoria.org/).
5. Learn more at [www.giasf.org](http://www.giasf.org).
6. See “Fosas clandestinas de Tetelcingo: Interpretaciones preliminares,” special issue, *Resiliencia* no. 3 (July–September 2016), at [www.revista resiliencia.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Resiliencia-NUM-3-Tetelcingo.pdf](http://www.revista resiliencia.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Resiliencia-NUM-3-Tetelcingo.pdf).
7. See Rosalva Aída Hernández, “CIESAS,” at [www.rosalvaaidahernandez.com/?page\\_id=46](http://www.rosalvaaidahernandez.com/?page_id=46).
8. See the work of Elsa Blair, *Muertes violentas: La teatralización del exceso* (Medellín, Colombia: Editorial Universidad de Antioquia, 2005).
9. See Rosalva Aída Hernández, “Colectiva Editorial Hermanas en la Sombra,” at [www.rosalvaaidahernandez.com/?page\\_id=42](http://www.rosalvaaidahernandez.com/?page_id=42).



# Poverty Tourism

## From 18th-Century London to 21st-Century Rio de Janeiro

by BIANCA FREIRE-MEDEIROS

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**JULY 31, 2015.** *O Dia*, one of Brazil's major newspapers, announces that residents from three favelas in Rio de Janeiro are offering a package of "tourism experiences" for visitors interested in an authentic "cultural exchange":

the Favelando entre as Favelas tour. The experience includes not only a guided tour by a local resident, but also *caipirinhas* and Brazil's national dish, *feijoada*, and promises the visitor the possibility of spending one or two days (lodging optional) as a true *favelado*. While the newspaper chooses the supposedly neutral term *comunidade*, instead of the highly charged term *favela*, the tourism promoters

evoked the charged name twice, twisting the noun (*favela*) into a verb (*favelando*) whose literal translation would be *slumming*. In doing so, they remind us of the fascinating connections between tourism practices that occur in present-day Rio de Janeiro favelas and the practice of "slumming" that took place in poor and segregated territories in London, Paris, and New York at the turn of the nineteenth century.

### A Fashionable Mania

In 1884, the Oxford Dictionary defined *slumming* as "to visit slums especially out of curiosity or for charitable purposes." On September 14 of that same year, *New York Times* headlines announced, "Slumming in This Town: A Fashionable London Mania Reaches New-York." Throughout the *Times* article, different parts of the city were named as places of interest to the slummer. So-called black and immigrant neighborhoods were vividly recommended as offering precarious living conditions and explicit promiscuity. It was also noted that, in the English capital, slumming had generated a greater awareness of the suffering of the poor, leading to a series of health and sanitation reforms. Equivalent actions, the newspaper argued, were to be promoted by charitable New Yorkers. Bursting with racist tropes of domestic imperialism that linked the poor to the exotic Other, the article wrapped up with a recommendation to readers—potential slummers—to wear "plain and homely" clothing and to have someone familiar with the neighborhoods accompany them, someone who would "protect ladies of the party from insult and the gentlemen from violence."

Practitioners of slumming spanned a considerable spectrum: elite politicians, clerics, merchants, single young women committed to the church, politically engaged feminists, "rescuers," journalists, and social workers. Slums were sufficiently unknown and exotic to these visitors as to allow slummers to be labeled genuine travelers; too often indulging in ethnic stereotyping, many referred to slum dwellers as "natives" and identified explicitly with the civilizing enterprises of colonizers in distant lands.

Many slummers shared their findings on the sociability of those "dark zones" of the city, providing a moralized landscape of slum stereotypes. In his classic *How the Poor Live*, originally published in 1883, Englishman George Sims shares a conflict often present in other slummers' narratives: "I hesitate to repel the reader, and, unfortunately, the best illustrations of the evils of overcrowding are



Wilson Moraes, businessman, favela resident, and tour guide. Image from André Balocco, "Moradores vibram com possibilidade de 'imersão' de visitantes nas favelas," *O Dia*, July 31, 2016.





## SLUMMING IN THIS TOWN

A FASHIONABLE LONDON MANIA REACHES NEW-YORK.

SLUMMING PARTIES TO BE THE RAGE THIS WINTER—GOOD DISTRICTS TO VISIT—MRS. LANGTRY AS A SLUMMER.

"Slumming," the latest fashionable idiosyncrasy in London—i. e., the visiting of the slums of the great city by parties of ladies and gentlemen for sightseeing—is mildly practiced here by our foreign visitors by a tour of the Bowery, winding up with a visit to an opium joint or Harry Hill's. It is no secret in certain circles that shortly before she left Mrs. Langtry and a party of friends made a nocturnal tour of the east side resorts in the Bowery. It is safe to conclude under the circumstances that "slumming" will become a form of fashionable dissipation this Winter among our belles, as our foreign cousins will always be ready to lead the way. The London "slumming" has brought to the notice of the rich much suffering, and led to many sanitary reforms. The old Five Points would have proved a perfect paradise to the slummers, but because it exists no more let it not be supposed that the squalor and poverty that characterized that pest spot does not exist elsewhere in this city. So far the mania here has assumed the single form of sightseeing—the more noble ambition of alleviating the condition of the desperately poor visited has not animated the adventurous parties. A quite well-known young English noble, returning from a tour of the east side the other night with some club friends, observed over his brandy and soda: "Ah, this is a great city, but you have no slums like we have. I have been in rickety condemned buildings that it was absolutely danger-

Above: *New York Times*, September 14, 1884. Top: The Complexo do Alemão cable car, which appears on souvenir postcards, was built at a cost of R\$210 million. It has been out of service since September 2016.

repulsive to a degree." The line between what Sims called "a revelation of the truth about the poor" and sheer sensationalism was not always clear. Besides, slummers and philanthropists were concerned that the sensationalist exposés could spread a feeling of hopelessness rather than solidarity.

Slumming was not only documented in written texts: a few slummers also took advantage of the new medium of photography to create an interpretative frame for potential visitors and to provide proof of their own claims. Among the most remarkable uses of photography within the context of slumming is, without doubt, the work of Jacob Riis. Highly popular in his time, Riis collapsed the distinction between morality and marketing, using photographs as documents of social reality and as tools for galvanizing the sympathy of potential donors. In 1889, he published the best-selling *How the Other Half Lives*, a "kind of a slum tour," as Yochelson and Czitrom (2007) accurately suggest. A complex amalgamation of technologically enhanced strategies and narrative tools allowed Riis to present his photographs, although staged, as sheer reality.

The "slummer's gaze" walked that fine line between emotional expression and exploitation, producing conflicted repre-

sentations that, if not necessarily raising questions about causes and interdependencies, at least suggested that action should be taken. These representations speak loudly of the elite's own needs, desires, and values, which, in turn, reinforced the slummer gaze itself.

In 1928, US sociologist Nels Anderson observed in a rather pessimistic tone, "Having come into vogue with the wave of humanitarianism that swept the country in the 1880s and 90s, suddenly, with the decline of slumming as philanthropic pastime, the word [slum] became taboo, but the slum remains." Slumming had indeed ceased to be a fashionable activity, only to return on a global scale a century later.

Crossing the city and its social boundaries, slummers anticipated values, principles, and practices that are part of contemporary poverty tourism—be it in Cape Town, Mumbai, Jakarta, Nairobi, or Rio de Janeiro, where favela tourism comprises a most popular enterprise.

### The 1990s and Beyond

The Rio 92 Earth Summit, which gathered more than one hundred heads of state and ten thousand on-site journalists, was the trigger for the favelas' becoming





tourist destinations. While the army parked war tanks at the entrance of favelas, like Rocinha, that were located closer to the main conference venues, Greenpeace and some local grassroots organizations promoted a tour of the community for more than 200 participants willing to have a closer encounter with the effects of socioeconomic inequality. Private tourism promoters picked up on this new interest and, little by little, favela tourism became a profitable business.

From then on, favelas have been invaded by international tourists eager to experience what they have seen in fictional films or documentaries, and what they believe to be the realities of Brazilian society: poverty and violence, but also samba and unbounded exuberance. Meanwhile, a series of media representations of the favela as simultaneously hip, cool, excitingly dangerous, and colorfully exotic circulate the globe at an accelerating pace.

For many years, favela tours were highly criticized by the Brazilian government, the media, and most upper-class Brazilians, who viewed favela tourism activities as the perverse outcome of a combination of three variables: the unbounded greed of tourism promoters, morbid voyeurism on the part



Officers from the Police Pacification Unit were a daily presence in several favelas during the 2016 Olympic Games. Since the games, the program has fallen victim to the financial crisis gripping Rio de Janeiro state.





A tourist snaps a picture at favela Santa Marta in Rio de Janeiro.

of tourists, and the economic despair of *favelados*. In contrast, on empirical grounds, what one finds is a rich profile of types of tourists, types of tours, and *favelados*' opinions about them.

In the context of the long list of mega events that Rio de Janeiro has hosted and will be hosting, favela tours began to be officially embraced under the principles of city marketing. Two apparently incompatible logics prevailed at the same time: On one hand, favelas were “embraced” not only as territories of touristic potential and economic opportunity, but also as a fundamental part of the Brazilian national myth, so eloquently summarized during the opening ceremony of Rio’s Olympic Games, where Brazil’s favelas were showcased as the birthplace of most of its popular culture. On the other hand, those same territories, including their populations, were deemed either invisible or disposable in the context of these same mega events. In both cases, tourism was one of the most important driving forces producing “social justification” (to use a term from French sociologists Boltanski and Thevenot) for all sorts of interventions, from beautification measures to draconian removals.

Morro da Providência, considered Rio’s oldest favela, offers us perhaps the best example of how these two apparently contradictory logics could overlap. It is situated on a steep hill not far from the Porto Maravilha, one of the most cost-intensive urban development projects of the Olympic Rio. In order to build a cable car system showcasing Providência’s spectacular views, the city demolished 800 residential units in the historic favela. This gave rise to massive protests, but residents’ attempts to block the construction work were met with countless human rights violations, as documented by Amnesty International, community-based groups, and the nonmainstream media.

If curiosity about how the poor live does not constitute a novelty, then what is new about favela tourism today? What are the challenges favela tourists and favela residents face in the present?

First of all, there is greater mobility: today’s tourists cross much greater distances than their nineteenth-century counterparts, from the rich north to the global south, to experience iconic sites of poverty. Second, a large number of images and writings on poverty are circulated in the virtual space, facilitating the production and consumption of favelas as tourist destinations. Lastly, favela tours have been completely incorporated into the logic of global capitalism, turning the firsthand encounter with poverty into a commodity with a price defined by professional promoters and paid by (mostly international) tourists.

After a decade of researching favela tourism in Rio de Janeiro, I should say that a major challenge is to find ways for tourism to actually help improve the living conditions in favelas. Although tourism promoters claim that favela tourism creates a variety of sources of income for local residents, so far its impact on poverty alleviation is negligible. Yet, as other researchers have demonstrated, it does have the potential of overcoming stigmatization and discrimination—and this is not negligible when one takes into consideration that favelas and their residents have been criminalized throughout Brazil’s history. ✨

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# Establishing History

## The Black Diaspora Archive and the Texas Domestic Slave Trade Project

by RACHEL E. WINSTON



**THE VISION** for the Black Diaspora Archive at The University of Texas at Austin came into focus in 2013 as a collaborative project between Black Studies, LLILAS Benson, and the University of Texas Libraries. After years of continued successful collaboration, Black

Studies approached LLILAS Benson with the idea of creating an archive devoted to the Black Diaspora. Since its founding in 1921, the Benson Latin American Collection has actively collected Latin American materials that document communities and people of color, but it had never done so in a planned and dedicated way. Very quickly, leadership in each unit recognized the common objectives and shared vision between them, and the mutual benefit of a dedicated archival holding of material related to the Black Diaspora. With additional support from the Libraries and the Office of the President, the Black Diaspora Archive came into being, and in the fall of 2015 I joined LLILAS Benson as its inaugural Black Diaspora archivist.

This position is a special one—not only is it one of its kind, but the element of collaboration that grounds the project and guides both the quotidian and visionary work that I do to support it strays from the job description of a typical archivist. Though it may be untraditional, it suits me, and I am excited about the ways in which my professional efforts complement one another and work toward the benefit of preserving the legacy of Black people in both a local and international context.

### The Black Diaspora Archive

The Black Diaspora Archive's mission is to collect documentary, audiovisual, digital, and artistic works related to the Black Diaspora—that is, people and communities with a shared ancestral connection to Africa. While the geographic collecting area for the Black Diaspora is global, at present this collection is focused on materials documenting experiences from within the Americas and the Caribbean. In addition to collecting, this initiative aims to promote

collection use and research through scholarly resources, exhibitions, community outreach, student programs, and public engagement.

While the archive continues to grow, it remains important for me to actively bring in materials that express and represent the Black experience from the Black perspective—meaning individuals who are considered to be Black, identify as Black, or are perceived as Black. Such individuals can include scholars, professionals, and activists/activist movements, for example. Thematically, the collection seeks to reflect art and art scholarship of the Diaspora, slavery in the Americas, ethnoracial empowerment and advocacy, and the personal archives of scholars and thought leaders. These types of records can include historical works, prints, digital and born-digital content, and other rare material.

As the primary manager of the Black Diaspora Archive, my ultimate charge is to provide a fuller understanding of the Black experience throughout the Americas and Caribbean with primary sources. In the most traditional sense, this necessitates the acquisition, collection, preservation, and accessibility of archival records. However, as our communities become more connected and technologically advanced, information access and information needs continue to evolve in ways that are increasingly less traditional. User needs of today, for example, live largely in the digital realm. In facilitating access to online content, the archivist has more of a responsibility to perform outreach and promote information literacy skills in an effort to preserve the integrity of our collections and meet user needs. To be relevant and effective in responding to changing demands, it is my responsibility to remain flexible in considering how archival records and collections can be of greatest contribution value.

The burgeoning digital humanities landscape also presents exciting opportunities to engage and build the Black Diaspora Archive. Through the use of digital humanities—computational software that analyze and interrogate data, texts, and themes—we can create new interpretive readings of history generally, and the materials in Black Diaspora Archive more specifically. I am genuinely enthused by the ability to incorporate digital scholarship into the





Storefront image of Wadsworth Store, located in Matagorda, Texas (c. nineteenth century). A Black man sits in a horse-drawn buggy while a group of white men congregate near the door. Image courtesy of the Matagorda County Museum Annex for Research and Collections.

Black Diaspora Archive in its early stages, including initiatives like the Texas Domestic Slave Trade project, and I look forward to discovering new ways of integrating physical collections with digital tools and scholarship.

### Texas Domestic Slave Trade Project

In the spring of 2015, while I was a graduate student at The University of Texas School of Information, Dr. Daina Ramey Berry and I came together to assess the locally available eighteenth- and nineteenth-century archival collections relating to the slave trade in Texas and borderlands with Mexico. Through this work, the Texas Domestic Slave Trade (TXDST) project was born. Our initial research unmasked the lack of scholarship on the domestic slave trade and experiences of the enslaved in the region: it made clear the pressing need to better document and understand this historical period and to bring this content into the public and digital humanities space. Now, as manager of the Black Diaspora Archive,



Top: The home of an enslaved person and/or tenant farmer located on the Rugeley plantation in Matagorda, Texas. Image courtesy of the Matagorda County Museum Annex for Research and Collections. Bottom: View of Caney Creek from Mt. Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church, Matagorda County. Throughout the nineteenth century, the creek, known also as “Old Caney” or “Cane Brake Creek,” supported the livelihood of those living in the region.

Bottom photo by Rachel E. Winston



I am able to continue this work through the archive's collaborative partnership with TXDST.

TXDST research has proven Texas to be a central point in border crossing and slave trading. Texas gained statehood in 1845, almost twenty years before the Civil War, and settlers from across the United States and Mexico flocked to the region to exploit lenient land acquisition policies and a terrain that was prime for cultivating sugar and cotton. These early settlers brought human chattel along with them during the years prior to 1845, when the Spanish and Mexican governments occupied the territory, as well as after Texas achieved statehood. The enslaved laborers brought to the region were often stolen, kidnapped, or purchased from other points around the country. Even though it served as the western edge of the domestic trade in the United States, Texas is often overlooked as a major hub of trade in favor of neighboring Louisiana and New Orleans—a city that notoriously served as the slave trading epicenter of the Deep South. Texas, however, was active in slave trading, which included the illegal trade of enslaved people directly with Mexico, and as far south as Central America.

To best showcase and engage the rich content from this project, it is critical that TXDST research and resources be openly accessible for scholars, researchers, historians, and students. For that reason, TXDST will continue to develop as a digital scholarship project. It is important for us to illustrate this history through images of primary documents, landscape photographs, maps, and other digital content to provide the contextual information from which we encourage expanded scholarship to take place.



Mt. Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church, Matagorda County, Texas. The church was built on land acquired around 1885 by men and women who were once enslaved. The building was a place of worship and a community school until around 1930.

### Project Team

In establishing this project, Dr. Berry and I, along with our expanded and interdisciplinary research team, now have a platform to better illustrate the legacy and impact of the domestic slave trade and its influence on the state of Texas. Our team brings together undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and staff from across campus. Their individual areas of expertise in U.S. slavery, border crossing, gender, race relations, oral history, geography and mapping, public history, and the curation of historical content collectively lend valuable perspectives to the project.

### Accomplishments

Within the past couple of years TXDST has made continuous, significant progress. During the 2015–2016 academic year, the project received a Media Project Grant, funded by the Humanities Media Project in the UT College of Liberal Arts. This grant was established to promote the use of media in humanities research, with the intention to expand beyond traditional academic audiences. Specifically, the grant funded our project “Mapping the Texas Domestic Slave Trade Routes,” which enabled us to create a digital history of the Matagorda region of Texas.

Located in southeast Texas, just south of Galveston and at the confluence of the Colorado River and the Gulf of Mexico, Matagorda was an active point of commerce throughout early Texas history. However, the city's role as an entry point for enslaved people and its impact on the domestic and transnational slave trade have yet to be explored. The goal of this project was thus to document, through photos and digital media, the landscape and history of the region. Grant funds allowed for our team to visit Matagorda and surrounding counties to capture this information through research and primary document analysis at sites throughout the area. The grant also allowed for the creation of a website from which to showcase this project, which can be viewed at [txdst.la.utexas.edu](http://txdst.la.utexas.edu).

Looking to the future, TXDST is positioned to make significant contributions to the research and study of Texas and its role in the domestic slave trade. It is my hope that as the project advances, not only will the research community benefit, but the students and project team members who work with us will, too.

**LEADING THE UNIVERSITY'S EFFORT** to build the Black Diaspora Archive is a real privilege. The collaborative nature of the project has led me to discover many of the outstanding resources on this campus, and has also helped to build a network of faculty and staff who are interested and invested in the success of the archive. I am particularly grateful for the opportunity to do this work out of LLLAS Benson, where there is institutional concern for post-custodial archival practice, ethical collecting, and social justice. 🌟

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# Brazilian *Roças*: A Legacy in Peril

by EDWARD SHORE

# V

**VANESSA DE FRANÇA** is a farmer and activist from São Pedro, one of 88 *quilombos*, rural black communities descended from fugitive slaves, that call the Atlantic forest of São Paulo state and neighboring Paraná their home. Two hundred years ago, de França's ancestors escaped the gold mines and rice plantations that dotted the landscape of the Ribeira Valley, joining scores of maroon communities of fugitive slaves throughout the Americas. Runaways survived, in part, by planting rice, beans, corn, cassava, bananas, and other staple crops in thick jungles bathed by the mighty Ribeira de Iguape River. Their garden plots, known in Portuguese as *roças*, were not only sources of subsistence and income; rather, runaway slaves like de França's ancestors viewed access to *roças* as central to the very meaning of freedom: the freedom to plant *what* they wanted, *where* they wanted, and *how* they wanted.

That dream is in danger. In recent decades, the descendants of

*quilombos* have confronted an onslaught of government-sponsored projects to develop the Ribeira Valley, a region that guards the last remnants of the Atlantic forest in Brazil's most heavily industrialized state. The intrusion of cattle ranchers, mining companies, and forest rangers has led to violent clashes over land and natural resources that persist to this day. In 1982, Carlitos da Silva, a community organizer from São Pedro, was assassinated after standing up to a local rancher. The tragedy became a rallying cry. The people of São Pedro, supported by the progressive Catholic Church, researchers, and nongovernmental organizations, pressed for the enforcement of Article 68, a 1988 constitutional provision that guaranteed territorial rights for *remanescentes de quilombos* (quilombo-descendants) on the centenary of slavery's abolition in Brazil. Although São Pedro and several neighboring communities obtained legal recognition and collective land titles from the state government of São Paulo in 2001, *quilombolas* (quilombo residents) throughout the Ribeira Valley still face threats to their existence, this time from the enactment of environmental restrictions on subsistence farming that have curbed access to traditional garden plots.

"The *roça* for us, *quilombolas*, signifies life. If we do not have access to our *roças*, we have nothing," de França told the audience at the tenth annual Lozano Long Conference in February. "The *roça* is the sum of everything. What we eat, what we produce, what we sell, what we make, all of this comes from our *roças*."

De França traveled to Austin, Texas, in February 2017 to participate in the annual Lozano Long Conference, titled this year "Revoluciones Alimentarias: New Perspectives on the Contemporary Food System in Latin America." She was joined by Frederico Viegas de Freitas Silva of the Instituto Socioambiental (Socio-Environmental Institute, ISA) and more than twenty researchers, activists, and artists from across the Americas. They addressed opportunities and obstacles to transforming a global food system that is making people sick, destroying the environment, and eroding the rights of rural workers and indigenous and Afro-descendant communities, in particular. Although panelists specialized in a range of disciplines—agro-ecology, public health, law, sociology, and history—they shared a commitment to advancing sustainable farming, greater food self-sufficiency, and equitable nutritional



The *quilombola* farmer Daiane da Silva Santos plants beans with the help of a *saraquá*. Quilombo Nhunguara.





Protest organized by the *quilombola* communities of Ribeira Valley defending their lands against proposed invasive projects by mining and hydroelectric companies.

policies in Latin America. In a region where the agricultural sector has historically favored commodity exports at the expense of producing nutritious foods for local communities, de França's presentation offered Latin America and the world an alternative.

### A Tradition under Threat

For the past 300 years, maroons and their descendants have developed an alternative food system, the *sistema agrícola quilombola*, which is based on the cultivation of subsistence crops in tropical forests and the practice of low-impact farming. Their system employs traditional methods of crop rotation and slash-and-burn farming. Following the conclusion of the rainy season, usually in the month of June, farmers clear between 5 and 7 hectares of secondary vegetation with machetes before setting the field ablaze. The ashes of trees, vines, and shrubs release vital nutrients that fertilize the tropical soils upon which *quilombola* farmers cultivate their *roças*. A farmer abandons her or his *roça* after two harvests, thus allowing the forest to regenerate. She or he will then clear another field of secondary vegetation to plant a new *roça*. After several years, the farmer will return to the site of the original *roça* to “recycle” the land that was left fallow, beginning the agricultural cycle anew.

The *sistema agrícola quilombola* creates innumerable socioeconomic, nutritional, and agro-ecological benefits. For starters, the system provides a sustainable model of agricultural production and consumption in a region beset by inequality and where access to markets for nutritious food remains precarious. The 88 *quilombo* communities of the Ribeira Valley subsist largely from the fruits of

their own gardens. Through partnerships with NGOs like the São Paulo-based Instituto Socioambiental, maroon-descendant farmers have also found reliable markets for their agricultural products and artisan crafts. *Quilombolas* have never used fertilizers or herbicides; all resources necessary for planting *roças*, such as sunlight, water, and nutrient-rich soils, are found in abundance in the Atlantic forest.

Moreover, shifting cultivation and slash-and-burn farming cause minimal harm to the natural environment. In stark contrast to cattle ranching, banana farming, mining, and other extractive industries that dominate the Ribeira Valley, the *quilombo* system has not contributed to deforestation, the erosion of tropical soils, warming temperatures, or biomagnification, a concentration of toxins in certain organisms due to their consumption of other organisms that contain toxins. In fact, new research conducted by Alexandre Ribeiro Filho at the Universidade de São Paulo confirms that the use of fire for subsistence farming promotes healthier forests by removing dominant and invasive species of plants. *Quilombola* farmers act as “agro-biodiversity agents,” planting 53 different species and 166 ethno-varieties of staple crops.

Despite these positive benefits, the *sistema agrícola quilombola* is at risk of extinction. Beginning in the 1980s, the Brazilian government embraced conservation in the Ribeira Valley to combat deforestation and promote ecotourism. The creation of state parks like the Upper Ribeira Valley Touristic State Park (PETAR) and Intervalos State Park encroached on the territories of dozens of *quilombos* and small farming communities that depend on the Atlantic forest for their survival. Forest rangers enforced legislation like the Atlantic



Forest Decree (1993) and Federal Decree 28.848 (1988), which prohibited subsistence farming in secondary forests, forcing many local farmers to engage in the environmentally harmful practice of extracting peach palms (*palmito juçara*) for income, an activity that necessitates the felling of an entire palm tree. Instead of protecting rainforests from human intervention, the prohibitions have actually contributed to a dramatic reduction in food security and agrobiodiversity in one of the planet's most vulnerable tropical biomes.

The results for small farmers and traditional peoples—indigenous communities, *quilombolas*, and *caiçaras* (mixed-race fishermen)—have been devastating. Malnutrition has skyrocketed as poor communities depend on local markets for food. Many *quilombolas* incur fines and prison time for planting their *roças*.

Esperança Ramos, a farmer from Quilombo Sapatu, said, “The people were afraid to plant their *roças*. I’m still afraid to plant. I was one of the people who had to pay the fines [*multas*]. And I wasn’t the only one. There was a whole group of women who had to pay the fines. All of them had children at home who needed to eat.”

Unable to support themselves, many *quilombolas*, especially young people, have abandoned the Ribeira Valley in search of work in São Paulo, Curitiba, and other cities. Even the elders have contemplated leaving their ancestral lands for the city. Antonio Morato, a farmer from Quilombo São Pedro in his mid-sixties, explained, “We lost everything. This is all because of the restrictions on farming, you understand? We can’t do what we used to do anymore. The forest rangers don’t want us to plant our crops anymore. If we can’t do that, I’m going to have to leave. This has been such a battle for us. Without our gardens, we won’t have anything left to do here anymore.” Even worse, the major culprits of deforestation in the Ribeira Valley—mining companies, ranches, and commercial farmers—continue their harmful practices with impunity.

*Quilombolas* are fighting back. As a young girl, Vanessa de França accompanied her mother and father to collect the rice harvest. Now, at thirty, she leads a young generation of *quilombola* activists and farmers who are mobilizing to protect traditional seeds and use rights to forest resources. She serves as administrative coordinator of the Ribeira Valley Quilombola Agricultural Cooperative (Cooperaquivalê), which provides healthy and nutritious foods grown from *roças* to schools, daycares, prisons, orphanages, and hospitals throughout São Paulo.

The cooperative is bolstered by allies: ISA and the Equipe de Articulação e Assessoria às Comunidades Negras do Vale do Ribeira (Advisory Team for Black Communities of the Ribeira Valley, EAACONE). ISA has partnered with communities to organize the Quilombola Traditional Seeds and Seedlings Exchange Fair, a farmer’s market that takes place in the heartland of the Ribeira Valley. Each year, *quilombola* farmers and fishermen gather in the town of Eldorado to exchange seeds, roots, crops, livestock, fish, and oysters to promote food sovereignty and defend against cultural loss stemming from restrictions on subsistence farming. ISA and local communities have also established a seed bank to preserve rare varieties previously thought to be lost. EAACONE has provided legal defense to *quilombos* for almost thirty years, helping to mobilize communities for land rights and leading the charge against the Tijuco Alto hydroelectric project and illegal mining.

Despite this progress, communities need urgent support. Academic institutions like LLILAS Benson can make a difference in



José Rodrigues de Almeida, known as Jucão, and his wife, Aparecida Ursulino, plant corn and beans on the portion of land cultivated by their family. Quilombo Nhunguara.

several ways. In a Brazilian political climate hostile to traditional peoples’ rights and sustainable farming, international conferences like *Revoluciones Alimentarias* provide a platform for activists like Vanessa de França to share their communities’ struggles with a global audience and to enlist new allies. De França hopes the Lozano Long Conference will lead to partnerships and academic exchanges between *quilombo* communities and researchers at The University of Texas at Austin and elsewhere who are interested in issues like sustainable agriculture, Afro-descendant rights, and environmental protection.

### Hope through Future Collaboration

Beyond the power and potential of a conference lies the power of history, documentation, and the importance of the voice of a community. LLILAS Benson is pioneering archival relationships with organizations in Latin America to support the preservation of fragile documents of many kinds, including, specifically, documents from Afro-descendant groups and social groups threatened by human rights violations. ISA and EAACONE will be LLILAS Benson’s partners in an upcoming project, funded by a Mellon Foundation grant, to recuperate and digitize human rights documentation among *quilombo* communities. One of ISA and EAACONE’s primary goals is to assist *quilombolas* in establishing and curating their own community-based archives. This collaboration ensures that local activists like Vanessa de França will play leading roles in preserving the historical memory of the *sistema agrícola quilombola*, which is captured by written testimonies, oral histories, rare photographs, and film. *Quilombo* communities will invoke these archival materials to strengthen their legal claims to land, natural resources, and subsistence rights in the Atlantic forest. ✨

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Edward Shore is a PhD candidate in the Department of History at The University of Texas at Austin, and a 2017–2018 Mellon ACLS/Dissertation Completion Fellow. He is currently writing his dissertation, titled “*Avengers of Zumbi: The Nature of Fugitive Slave Communities and Their Descendants in Brazil.*”

The author would like to thank the Reed Foundation’s Ruth Landes Memorial Fund for supporting his fieldwork in Brazil, which led to collaboration between LLILAS Benson, ISA, and EAACONE, and which made the 2017 Lozano Long Conference, *Revoluciones Alimentarias*, possible.



# Anzaldúa across Borders

## A Traveling Thought Gallery

by SUSANNA SHARPE

An image is a bridge between evoked emotion and conscious knowledge; words are cables that hold up the bridge.

—Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, 1987

W

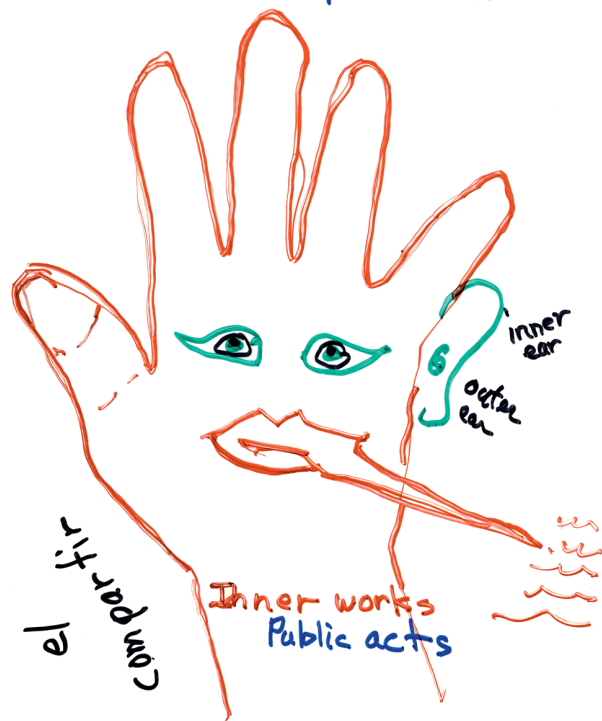
WHEN CHICANA AUTHOR, cultural theorist, and feminist Gloria Evangelina Anzaldúa died in 2004, she left behind not only a strong literary and scholarly legacy but also a complex and rich archive. Anzaldúa's closest friends knew of the author's pen-

chant for documenting her creative process, and such materials are plentiful in her archive. But the archive also contains a diverse assortment of ephemeral materials that document the author's work habits, personal and spiritual practices, and lifelong struggles with her body and illness until her death at age 61 from complications of type 1 diabetes.

Anzaldúa's archive opened at the Benson Latin American Collection in 2005, greatly expanding the possibilities for the study of the writer and of Anzaldúan thought. One of the many striking aspects of the archive is the importance of the visual world in Anzaldúa's creative process—a deep connection between words and images. According to Julianne Gilland, director of the Benson Collection, "Art is a component and an important manifestation of Anzaldúa's spirituality. In *Borderlands*, her seminal text, she talks about the sacrifices that are offered to art objects. In Western art, these rites consist of the museum, the cult of virtuosity, and the preservation of certain power structures. In contrast, 'tribal' cultures create spaces for art in the home and other settings, tending to art objects as though they were living entities." Photographs of the interior of Anzaldúa's home show that she surrounded herself with art objects and altars.

In her curatorial work at the Benson Collection, Gilland became intrigued by how Anzaldúa used visual expression to think, to write, and to teach. She turned to a series of transparencies that Anzaldúa used at workshops and lectures, which the author referred to as "gigs." This led to the exhibition *Between Word and Image: A Gloria Anzaldúa Thought Gallery*, which opened at the Benson in May 2015. The exhibition also included audio from some of Anzaldúa's talks. In her introduction to the exhibition, Gilland wrote the following:

Spiritual Activism  
Acts of Vision



Left Hand. "[H]ieroglyph of a left hand on whose palm are pictured a pair of eyes, a mouth with a tongue hanging out and the writing tip of a pen at the tip of the tongue. Los ojos represent seeing and knowing which can lead to understanding or conocimiento." Anzaldúa, "The New Mestiza Nation: A Multicultural Movement," 1992. Transparency from the Gloria Evangelina Anzaldúa Papers, Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries. © The Gloria Evangelina Anzaldúa Literary Trust. May not be duplicated without permission from the Trust.





Cenote. "I taste a forgotten knowledge triggered by an odor or some trivial incident and suddenly out pours ancestral information stored beyond the files of personal memory, stored as iconic imagery somewhere in that deep dreampool, the collective unconscious. I look at the image, try to decipher its meaning." Anzaldúa, "Llorona Coyolxauhqui, Part 6: El Cenote/The Dreampool," 2003. Transparency from the Gloria Evangelina Anzaldúa Papers, Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries. © The Gloria Evangelina Anzaldúa Literary Trust. May not be duplicated without permission from the Trust.

"A self-described 'Chicana, tejana, working-class, dyke-feminist poet, writer-theorist,' Gloria Anzaldúa also saw herself as a *nepantlera*, one who navigates a liminal space between worlds, identities, and ways of knowing. Just as fluid movement between English, Spanish, and Nahuatl was central to Anzaldúa's teaching and writing, so too was the interplay between words and images an essential element of her self-expression. These vivid documents provide an intimate view into Anzaldúa's creative process and demonstrate the centrality of imagination

and visuality to the author's theories of knowledge and consciousness."

Since March of 2016, the Anzaldúa exhibit has traveled to Mexico City; Vienna; Augsburg, Germany; and the campus of Colby College in Waterville, Maine. Throughout this journey, diverse audiences have interacted with Anzaldúan thought in a variety of venues, from art museums and gallery spaces to public and academic libraries. What layers of meaning can be added to Anzaldúa's work when it is presented to new audiences in new contexts? This article

gathers the words of curators, organizers, and students involved in these different installations as they reflect on its meaning.

### First Stop, Mexico City

*Entre Palabra e Imagen: Galería de Pensamiento de Gloria Anzaldúa* traveled to Mexico City in March 2016, where it opened at Casa de Cultura de la UAEMéx, a cultural center of the Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México, followed by Centro Cultural Border, a nonprofit space promoting contemporary arts and culture. This was the first display of Anzaldúa's images south of the Río Bravo/Rio Grande, and it coincided with the translation into Spanish of *Borderlands/La Frontera* (2015) by the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) for a Mexican and Latin American readership. UNAM collaborated to bring the exhibition, and hosted an opening talk by Julianne Gilland, artist and art critic Mónica Mayer, and art historian/critic Karen Cordero at the Museo Universitario de Arte Contemporáneo (MUAC) on the eve of the opening. Artist and scholar Nina Höchtl and professors Coco Gutiérrez-Magallanes and Rían Lozano curated the exhibition, adapting it for a Mexican audience. Höchtl, Gutiérrez-Magallanes, and Lozano asked:

"How do we read and revisit the textual and visual Anzaldúa in the present, here in Mexico? What role is played by the borderlands we inhabit, the ones in which we live and survive? In what sense does Anzaldúa help us to give voice to, and make sense of, the ways in which relationships of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and class play out in Mexico and in borderlands? What is the relevance of Anzaldúa's thought and her intellectual and visual propositions today?"

More than a year after the exhibition was first opened to Mexican audiences, Höchtl,

Photo by Alfredo Pineda





Visitors engage with the Anzaldúa exhibition at Casa de Cultura de la UAEMéx in Mexico City.

Gutiérrez-Magallanes, and Lozano reflect on its impact in the context of Mexico's current reality: "[Given] the violent times we live in, Anzaldúa's work is a breath of life and hope. We observe that students, mostly, see in her work a universe of possibilities in terms of ways to resist the violence inflicted upon our individual and social body. She gives us elements for thinking of the self, both individually and collectively, in affirming ways and in modes of resistance."

The Mexico City curators reflect on ways in which Anzaldúa's thought challenges notions of knowledge and the university: "We strongly believe, and our experience tells us, that through the use of Anzaldúan thought and methodologies, theories and practices, the source of knowledge from the university is dislocated to the personal and collective histories outside of it in a conflictive and productive manner. Anzaldúa's *conocimientos* visualize knowledge production as (dis)located in multiple spaces with complex and challenging relationships to race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, and the hegemony of knowledge."

### Autumn in Vienna

Artist and curator Verena Melgarejo Weinandt brought *Between Word and Image* to Vienna in fall of 2016 through a *kultür gemma!* fellowship at the Vienna City Library and in collaboration with the Austrian Association of Women Artists (VBKÖ). In its Vienna incarnation, the exhibition was renamed—*A(r)mando Vo(i)ces: Una galería de pensamiento de Gloria Anzaldúa*—a bilingual play on words that makes reference to both love and combat. Melgarejo brought in new voices in dialogue with the Anzaldúa materials: Afro-Dominican author Yuderky Espinosa Miñoso presented a talk via video, "Feminisms in Latin American and Antiracist

and Decolonial Efforts." A children's workshop featured poetry by Afro-descendant and Indigenous authors from Latin America and a mapping project. Anzaldúa's transparencies served as a stimulus for a group of photographers—"Nepantleras fotografiando"—who created and exhibited work in response to the exhibition. Selected books from the Vienna public library were displayed to accompany the exhibition's theme.

Reflecting on the project's impact, Melgarejo says she was pleased "to able to contextualize Gloria Anzaldúa's work not only in academic ways but together with the outcomes of the children's workshop and the photography workshop within the Latinx community in Vienna. The public library was the perfect space for this. On a historical level, I think it was great to be able to contextualize her knowledge, which is (almost violently) ignored in the German-speaking context."

### Next Stop, Colby College, Waterville, Maine

In summer 2016, Rebeca Hey-Colón, assistant professor of Spanish at Colby College, spent two weeks working with the Gloria Evangelina Anzaldúa Papers in the Benson's Rare Books and Manuscripts Reading Room. "The richness of the materials I encountered amazed me. It also made me realize that most of the people in my small liberal arts college in Maine had likely not had the chance to experience this archive firsthand," she said.

Hey-Colón's enthusiasm was such that she was able to arrange for an installation of *Between Word and Image* at the college library in March 2017, as well as a lecture by Julianne Gilland. "It was especially significant for me to arrange for this visit of Anzaldúa's materials, given that she herself

had come to the college in 1991 to give a lecture titled 'Post-Colonial Stress: Intellectual Bashing of the Cultural Other,'" said Hey-Colón.

"Many who have read Anzaldúa for years did not know she was also a very visual thinker," she continued. "Having the chance to see her drawings has been a thought-provoking experience for them. The exhibit was also integrated into classes in Latinx Studies housed in the Spanish Department, as well as courses in the Art Department, and in the Women's, Gender, and Sexualities Studies Program."

The exhibition at Colby, remarks Gilland, is "a mark of how much Anzaldúa's work has entered the canon of US higher education and letters." In a presentation on the Anzaldúa archive to a senior seminar in the Colby Spanish Department, Gilland addressed the mythological aspects of Anzaldúan thought:

The story of the Aztec goddess Coyolxauhqui is a key metaphor for Anzaldúa. According to the myth, Coyolxauhqui, goddess of the Moon or Milky Way, was dismembered by her brother (or son), the God of War Huitzilopochtli, for not wanting to leave their sacred mountain and resettle in Tenochtitlan. Dismembering Coyolxauhqui enables Huitzilopochtli to lead the Aztecs to their new home, Tenochtitlan.

Anzaldúa writes about going through a "Coyolxauhqui process" with her body, and her body's memory, every time she writes. She calls it painful, violent work. Writing, for her, consists of composing fragments, putting them here and there, changing them, fleshing them out. It makes her feel as though she is taking herself apart, dismembering herself





At the *A(r)mando Vo(i)ces* exhibition in Vienna.

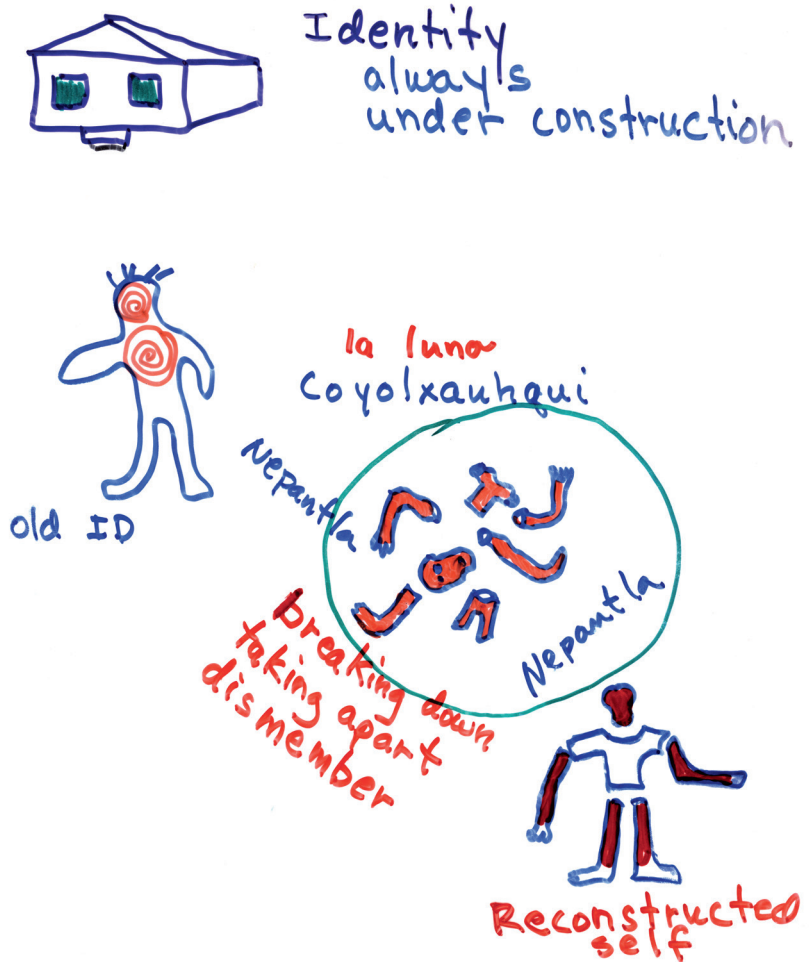
“bone by bone” and putting herself back together. She describes it as a cycle of death and rebirth, for both author and work. This process for her is *Nepantla*, a journey between worlds, or a passing from one world to another.

Anzaldúa groups the concepts of *Coyolxauhqui*, and *Nepantla* together in conceptualizing her writing process, also including the idea of the *cenote*, a reservoir or dreampool of memory and creativity, all of which are represented in the images on view here in the exhibition.

### Anzaldúa in Augsburg

At its most recent stop, in late March 2017, *A(r)mando Vo(i)ces* opened in two locations in Augsburg, Germany. Its installation at the Public Library of Augsburg from March 27 to March 29 coincided with the international conference “Beyond Borders: Literaturas y culturas transfronterizas mexicanas y chicanas,” organized by professors Dr. Romana Radlwimmer and Dr. Hanno Ehrlicher from the University of Augsburg. A longer exhibition ran from March 28 to April 30 at the Kulturcafé Neruda.

Radlwimmer is assistant professor in Spanish Literatures, University of Augsburg. She wrote about Anzaldúa in Augsburg: “The exhibition openings were accompanied by an artistic program: a transborder literary reading and music with local artists but also with Chicana writers like Norma E. Cantú. Both locations ensured a direct and diverse communication with community



*Coyolxauhqui*. “After being split, dismembered, or torn apart *la persona* has to pull herself together, re-member and reconstruct herself on another level. I call this the *Coyolxauhqui* process after the dis-membered Aztec moon goddess.” From Anzaldúa, “Bearing Witness: Their Eyes Anticipate the Healing,” 2002. Transparency from the Gloria Evangelina Anzaldúa Papers, Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries. © The Gloria Evangelina Anzaldúa Literary Trust. May not be duplicated without permission from the Trust.





life in Augsburg. In the aftermath, the exhibited imprints of Anzaldúa’s drawings were given to the Kulturcafé Neruda, an artistic, migrant-friendly space directed by Turkish-German artist Fikret Yakaboğlu. The artifacts will be on display there on other occasions in future years. Thus, Anzaldúa’s iconographic work will impact the German and German migrant community on a long-term basis.”

*A(r)mando Vo(i)ces* was curated in Augsburg by visual artists Höchtl and Melgarejo Weinandt, and was funded by the Kurt-Bosch-Stiftung.

### Next on the Itinerary

According to Julianne Gilland, the Anzaldúa exhibit’s traveling days are not over. An exhibition is planned for fall 2017 at the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP). An art space in Chiapas is another future venue. In 2018, the VBKÖ will present an exhibition combining Anzaldúa’s drawings with work of Vienna-based artists inspired by her. Gilland remarks on Anzaldúa’s accessibility to a cross section of audiences: “It has been wonderful to see how this traveling exhibition has really taken on a life and energy of its own, with diverse venues around the globe continuing to want to show the work and engage with the archive. I think it really speaks to the appeal of Anzaldúa’s thought and practice for both scholarly and creative communities, and the deep resonance that questions of identity, migrations, and memory offer for us all.” 🌟

### Anzaldúa in Mexico: Student Reflections

Students were integral to the Anzaldúa exhibitions in Mexico City in many ways, assisting with translations, audio recordings, readings, and performances related to the exhibitions. Some of the students in Mexico City shared their reflections about Anzaldúa’s impact on their lives.

“For Anzaldúa it is important not to flee from pain. She breaks that binary between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ emotions. And more importantly, that pain has to do with the many violences she lived: a colonial wound, racism, classism, grave health problems . . .”  
—Valerie

“She wasn’t concerned about the problem of the distance between theory and practice, because in her life she wove them together. . . . Nepantla has helped me understand how to work on institutional criticism. To understand tension as a space for creation.”  
—Mauricio

“looking at her drawings, her altar, her house, activating intimate talks about her with strangers also pierced by wounds, listening to her voice whispering ideas she developed after what i have known, was like looking into an obsidiana mirror, the smoky mirror, the shadow-sided one. in my very own conocimiento genealogical tree, i have set her in as my symbolic grandmother.”  
—Alejandra

“Lo que nos lega el archivo de Anzaldúa: la invitación a hablar, a dar cuenta de nuestra propia archiva ante los silencios ensordecedores que borran cuerpos y conocimientos otros. Una lengua puente: la supervivencia de nuestro pasado cuando se supone que no existiéramos . . .”  
—Jaime

*NOTE: English translations of Valerie and Mauricio by the editor; alternative spellings and capitalization in both languages per originals.*

Susanna Sharpe is the communications coordinator at LLILAS Benson and the editor of Portal. She is grateful to Julianne Gilland and to all of the other curators mentioned in the article for their assistance on this piece.



# Reading the First Books

## *Colonial Mexican Documents*

### *in the Digital Age*

by HANNAH ALPERT-ABRAMS and MARIA VICTORIA FERNANDEZ

I

IN 1595, in Mexico City, the Jesuit priest Antonio del Rincón (1555–1601) published a grammatical description of the Nahuatl language. Though other

grammars of Nahuatl existed, Rincón's *Arte mexicana* was the first to describe the indigenous Mesoamerican language from the perspective of a native speaker, and the first written by someone of indigenous descent. It has been argued that Rincón's ability to recognize many unique qualities of the Nahuatl language was the product of both his indigenous and European training.

Just over four hundred years later, Rincón's *Arte mexicana* has been published again. It is one of several hundred books in the *Primeros Libros de las Américas* collection, a repository of books printed in the Americas prior to 1601. Much like the original volume, which was printed by Pedro Balli just a few decades after the first printing press was established in the Americas, this new edition brings together indigenous language, Western intellectual traditions, and experimental technologies for book production.

Only this time, the technology is digital, and the book is being written by a machine.

The "Reading the First Books" project is a collaboration between LLILAS Benson

Latin American Studies and Collections at The University of Texas at Austin and the Institute for Digital Humanities, Media, and Culture (IDHMC) at Texas A&M University to develop technologies for the digitization of early colonial printed books. The project focuses on the books in the *Primeros Libros* collection, which was founded by a group of universities (including UT Austin) in 2010.

The original goal of *Primeros Libros* was to produce digital facsimiles: photographs of historical books that could be easily browsed online. But it soon became clear that pictures of the books weren't sufficient. People wanted to be able to use a search engine to explore the collection, and to analyze the text using computational tools. In order for researchers to directly interact with the text, the books had to be transcribed. But with almost 50,000 pages of text (and counting), typing up the books by hand would have been an insurmountable task.

That's where "Reading the First Books" came in. In 2015, a team of faculty, students, and librarians set out to identify tools that could automatically transcribe books from early New Spain. What we found is that while many tools exist that can automatically transcribe printed text, none of them was well suited to the particular challenges of colonial books.

One reason that transcription tools strug-

gled with the *Primeros Libros* has to do with the material qualities of these historical books. Books printed on a letterpress, like those from colonial Mexico, often use unfamiliar typefaces, including blackletter and italic fonts. The characters are aligned unevenly on the page, and are sometimes printed with too much or too little ink.

A second difficulty came from the way the colonial books were written. Spelling was less consistent during the early colonial period than it is today, as was the use of accents and other diacritics. Printers often used shorthand that can be hard to decipher, writing "Ö" instead of "que," for example. Finally, the documents in the *Primeros Libros* corpus frequently switch between multiple languages. In the case of a dictionary or grammar, multiple languages can even appear in a single sentence.

With the support of LLILAS Benson and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Office of Digital Humanities, we set out to develop transcription tools that could handle the unique challenges of the *Primeros Libros* collection. We also worked with the IDHMC to develop an interface for transcribing and managing the data of a large corpus of books. We are currently working with the University of Texas Libraries to make these new transcriptions available on the *Primeros Libros* website.



**¶** **Micanom**

peua yn neyolmelaualoni,  
yn amo veyac ynçan tepu-  
ton, oquimotlalili oquimo  
tecpanili yn padre Fray  
Alloso d Molina, sant Fra-  
cisco teopixqui, ynipanna  
uatlatolli oquimocuepili.

¶ Tenonotxaloni, ynic yehuatl sa-  
cerdote quinonotxa im mo-  
yolcuitixnequi.



**Y** **Max-**  
cā tla-  
ricmocaq-  
ti, notla-  
copiltzie-  
ca otival-  
la, tinech-  
nextilicoi-  
motlatla-  
col, im mo-

tliltica mocatzauaca, imib-  
yaca mopalanca: monequi  
veltiquilnamiquiz, catitla  
tlacouani, mavel yuh com-  
matimmo yollo, camieclla  
mantli ynic oticmo yolitla  
calhui moteouh motlatoca-  
uh. Ahuh ynipāpa motlatla-  
col, cēca motechmoquala-  
naltia: aub itlacamo arcan-

**¶** **Alqui co-**

miença vn Confessionario  
breue y pequeño: compue-  
stopor el padre Fray Al-  
loso de Molina, de la orden  
d el señor sant Fracisco, buel-  
to y traduzido élēgua d los  
nauas, por el mismo autor.

¶ Amonestacion, con que el Sacer-  
dote amonesta al que se que-  
re confessar.



**A** **So-**  
**ra o-**  
ye, mi hi-  
jo, **P**ues  
has veni-  
do amaní-  
festar me  
tus pecca-

dos, tu negregura y luzie-  
dad, tu hidiondez y podre-  
dumbre: conuene que te a-  
cuerdes, que eres pecca-  
dor, y que sienta tu coraçõ,  
y tengas entendido muy  
de veras, que en muchas co-  
sas offendiste a tu dios y se-  
ñor. Y que por tus pec-  
cados, esta de ti muy eno-  
jado: y si agora no

a ij te

A page from Alonso de Molina's *Confesionario breue, en lengua mexicana y castellana* (1577) with parallel columns of Nahuatl (left) and Spanish text. This is an example of a religious text missionaries used to spread the Catholic faith in Central Mexico. *Primeros Libros de las Américas*, Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries.



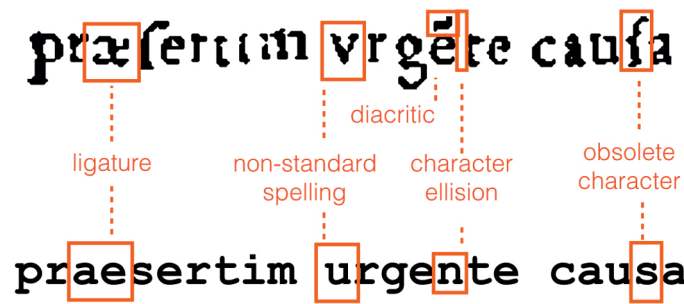
## New Texts, Old Books

The books in the *Primeros Libros* collection cover a broad range of intellectual thought from early New Spain; topics include medicine, theology, evangelization, and linguistics. Many of these books were produced by Spanish mendicant friars, who followed on the heels of the explorers and conquerors of Mesoamerica. Among them were several missionaries who worked as linguists, adapting alphabetic script to capture and write in the indigenous languages they encountered.

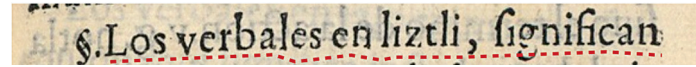
Today, the work of these missionaries is remembered within the context of the Black Legend of Spanish conquest. But as linguistic anthropologist Joseph Errington writes, “They did not understand theirs to be the work of enslaving, murdering, or displacing the local indigenous populations; it was rather to make them Christians” (2008, 29). In order to spread the Catholic faith, missionaries learned indigenous languages and searched for a fit between these unfamiliar languages and their own categories of meaning.

Many of the books in the *Primeros Libros* collection reflect this effort to bring together Spanish and Mesoamerican ways of knowing. The collection represents six indigenous languages as well as Spanish and Latin. Spanish missionaries translated religious texts and prayers into languages like Nahuatl, Zapotec, Mixtec, and Otomí. Through this work, they reduced indigenous speech to their own realm of visual images using alphabetic symbols and European writing systems. Mesoamerican indigenous languages thus became objects of knowledge at the hands of missionaries.

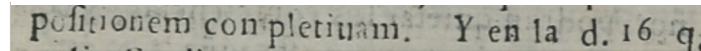
Rincón’s *Arte mexicana* is just one example of this kind of work. Rincón was among the first Jesuit priests in New Spain to be a native speaker of Nahuatl, and scholars consider him to have been the first grammarian of indigenous descent in the Spanish Americas. During the second half of the sixteenth century, he actively promoted Christian evangelization of Nahuas, taught



Wandering Baseline



Uneven Inking



Unfamiliar Typefaces



Multilingual Text

Ay proprio vocablo de logro, que es, **tetech-  
laixtlapanalizli, tetechlamieccaquixtilizli,  
y para dezir deste alogro? Cuix tetech oritlais  
tlapan, cuix tech oritlamieccaquixtj?**

Challenges encountered during the transcription process.

the Nahuatl language to other priests, and wrote one of the earliest grammars of his native tongue.

During the 300 years of imperial Spain’s rule of Mexico, mendicant friars and grammarians wrote fifty-seven indigenous language grammars (*artes*) and dictionaries (*vocabularios*) to support the task of converting the native population to Christianity. While the bulk of colonial-period grammars and dictionaries dealt with Nahuatl, other Mesoamerican languages, such as Otomí, P’urhépecha, Zapotec, Mixtec, and Maya, became objects of linguistic study using Western European frameworks (McDonough 2014, 46). In the sixteenth century, this included three grammars (by Andrés de Olmo, Alonso de Molina, and Rincón) dedicated to Nahuatl alone.

The challenge of the “Reading the First Books” project is to produce a tool that can faithfully transcribe books like these. Our goal is to improve the accessibility and discoverability of these often-overlooked texts. We want to create new opportunities for scholars to engage with these historical

documents. At the same time, we have an opportunity to look critically at our own work. We ask: Is building a machine to transcribe colonial books itself a colonial act?

## Transcribing the *Primeros Libros*

Automatic transcription tools work by analyzing the visual qualities of each character on the page, seeking to match each image to a statistical model of what the alphabet looks like. When the characters are hard to decipher, as is often the case in early-modern documents, the tools draw on context to improve their guess. Much the way we, when given the sequence “My name i\_,” can fill in the missing letter “s,” the automatic transcription tool uses a statistical understanding of linguistic patterns to recognize difficult characters.

Early-modern books like Rincón’s *Arte mexicana* are particularly difficult to transcribe automatically. The problem

lies in the “statistical understanding of linguistic patterns” and its limitations. When we started working with Ocular, the transcription tool for historical documents that we use for our research, we found that it expected all documents to conform to a single linguistic structure: English. Clearly, this wouldn’t work for the Mexican books. Worse, it felt like a return to the colonial era, when Spanish friars tried to force indigenous languages into the conventions of the dominant language. The only difference is that now English was dominant, instead of Spanish.

When we began the project that would become “Reading the First Books,” our first challenge was to try to work against these technological limitations. We were fortunate to be able to collaborate with computer scientists and linguists who helped us to modify Ocular so that it could work on multilingual texts, like the grammars and dictionaries in the *Primeros Libros* collection, as well as languages like Spanish, Latin, Nahuatl, and Zapotec. We also worked to improve Ocular’s ability to



V. S. en persona los á tomado en sí porque a llegado V. S. por la vna parte hasta la mar del norte, y por la otra hasta el mar del Sur, q̄ fon los vltimos terminos de su obispado, no perdonado qualquier distacia, ó aspereza de caminos, ni á los peligros de los Rios, ni a la diuerſidad de tantos templos mal fanos y contrarios á la falud de V. S. antes lo da todo por biẽ empleado, por cultivar y beneficiar por sus manos tantas y ta preciosas platas como nuestro Ieñor lea encomendado. Por lo qual qualquiera ministro se deve cõfundir por vna parte de no imitar a quien tiene obligacion, en padecer algo, y por otra parte se due animar a no huir deste pequeño cuydado y sudor que se le pide en deprender qualquiera lengua para abilitarfe è hazer su ministerio. Supplicó

V. E. en persona los á tomado en sí porque ha llegado v. S. por la via parte hasta la mar del norte, y por la otra hasta el mar del Sur, ó fon los vitimos terminos de su obispado, no perdonado qualquier distacia, ó aspereza de caminos, ni á los peligros de los Rios, ni a la diversidad de tantos templos mal fanos y contrarios á la falud de V. E. antes lo da todo por bierempleado, por cultivar y beneficiar por sus manos tantas y ta preciosas platas como nuestro Ieñor lea encomendado. Por lo qual qualquiera ministro se debe cõfundir por via parte de no imitar á quien tiene obligacion, en padecer algo, y por ótra parte se due animar a no huir de este pequeño cuidado y sudor que se le pide en de prender qualquiera lengua para abilitarse en hacer firministerio. Su aplicó

Automatic transcription of a page from Rincón's *Arte mexicana* (1595).

handle historical patterns in spelling, so that it better replicates the writing styles of the early colonial period. Ocular can also “modernize” transcriptions, which makes the text easier to search.

Still, there are four languages for which we were unable to build models because we couldn’t find enough sample texts on which to train our system. We hope in the future to collaborate with researchers who work in those languages so that we can further extend our project’s usefulness.

Our second challenge was to make Ocular easier to use for outside researchers, especially those working with larger collections of books. To accomplish this, we partnered with the Early Modern OCR Project (eMOP) at Texas A&M University. (OCR stands for optical character recognition.) Our plan was to incorporate Ocular into their preexisting interface, a website that allowed users to view a list of books, select the ones they wanted to transcribe, and run the transcription software with a simple click.

We encountered problems here, too. The original interface couldn’t display any accented characters, meaning that many of the book titles and authors’ names in our collection turned into gibberish. It also wasn’t flexible enough to handle many of the features that allowed our system to work on multiple languages or to handle historical spelling patterns. Fortunately, Texas A&M’s development team was excited about the possibilities of the project, and ended up fully redesigning their interface to improve a number of features, including those unique to our project.

As a result, we can now transcribe large collections of historical books, in multiple languages, from a web browser! We hope that this will end up being useful for other researchers working to transcribe digital collections. It will certainly be useful for us as the *Primeros Libros* collection continues to grow.

### Digital Futures for Colonial Books

The “Reading the First Books” project was designed to be completed in August 2017. To celebrate the project’s conclusion, LLLAS Benson hosted a symposium in May 2017 that brought together researchers, developers, librarians, and students to present and discuss the project’s accomplishments, to think about the future of the digital materials it developed, and to imagine how digital scholarship will facilitate further engagement with colonial Latin American materials more broadly.

One goal of the symposium was to draw attention to the productive relationship between librarians and researchers, which is at the heart of “Reading the First Books.” Digital projects are often oriented around research questions: How can we teach machines to read historical texts? What can large corpora of colonial documents teach us about history and linguistics?

At the same time, digital projects depend on close collaborations with librarians and information professionals. Interface development, data management, metadata, and web display were all facets of “Reading the First Books” that depended on guidance from information professionals at the

University of Texas Libraries and the Benson Latin American Collection.

Because “Reading the First Books” was born out of the ongoing collaboration between the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies (LLILAS) and the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, building relationships among researchers and librarians has been a priority. To accomplish this goal, we modeled our project on the Latin American Digital Initiatives at LLILAS Benson.

The collaborative, multidisciplinary nature of “Reading the First Books” is reflected in the variety of forums where this research has been presented, which include the Modern Language Association, the Latin American Studies Association congress, and the Society of American Archivists. Speakers at the closing symposium included faculty members, librarians, and other individuals whose work bridges the gap between researchers and librarians. In addition to its contributions to technological development and historical research, we hope that “Reading the First Books” will serve as a model for library–faculty partnerships in the development of colonial digital scholarship. ✨

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*Maria Victoria Fernandez is a graduate student at The University of Texas at Austin completing a dual master’s degree in Latin American Studies and Information Studies. For the past year she has worked as the Digital Scholarship Graduate Research Assistant on the “Reading the First Books” project.*

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# Making Beauty

## The Wearing of *Polleras* in the Andean Altiplano

by ANGELA TAPIA ARCE

L

**LUCY DOES NOT SMILE TOO OFTEN.** Like other women who wear *polleras*, she does not greet you with a wide grin, unless you are more than an acquaintance. Yet, when Lucy smiles the stars twinkle, whether or not the sun is overhead. She has two little

silver stars inlaid into her teeth. However, these stars are not the only body adornments she owns. In her hair she hangs vicuña<sup>1</sup> *tullmas*<sup>2</sup> from her two braids' ends as ornaments. She usually wears a special straw hat and jewelry, but no makeup. When she is selling “*polleras* style” clothing, she wears a *falda* (skirt). The *falda*, as wearers of this clothing call it, is a variant of *polleras* style. The major difference between the *falda* and *polleras* is that the latter are embellished with horizontal tiers in the middle of the skirt; otherwise the skirts look similar.



Women at an *aphtapi*, or food-sharing ritual, display “*bombín* proficiency,” gracefully balancing the bowler hats on their heads despite a variety of movements.

Although the *pollera* is more expensive, heavier, and more difficult to wash, this garment is still the preferred female clothing in the most important cities of the Altiplano region (Southeast of the Andes): La Paz and El Alto, Bolivia, and Puno, Peru. Academic explanations<sup>3</sup> as to why women still wear *polleras* concentrate on identity issues and ties with the social group, but the aesthetic of *polleras* needs an examination. This article is an invitation to see “the other beauty”: How do “*polleras* women” negotiate the dominant aesthetics—especially as regards their sense of beauty—in their everyday lives?

Through the wearing of these bulky gathered skirts, women of the Altiplano display their notions of female attractiveness, which contrast with the Western ideal of the tall, slim, yet curvy woman exemplified by the Miss Universe pageant. The wearing of *polleras* is more than an art form through which women express their creative skills with the intention of being appreciated for beauty, fashion, and originality. *Polleras*, similar to the Western blazer, are a classic icon of elegance in the region. They constitute a part of the basic wardrobe of Indigenous women from this area. Paying close attention to matching different colors, women dressing in “*polleras* style” wearing a multilayered skirt composed of the external skirt—the *pollera*—plus five petticoats, a blouse, a cardigan, and a shawl with a broach at the chest. The jewelry they wear matches their high-quality clothing. *Polleras* are designed for daily activities as well as special occasions, such as the Fiesta de la Virgen de la Candelaria (Celebration of the Virgin of Candelaria) in February. They are also worn at more private events like weddings, where the bride’s mother, grandmother, and mother-in-law will dress in *polleras* even if the bride herself does not.

*Polleras* style is also distinguished by the use of the highly noticeable bowler hat, known as a *bombín* or *borsalino*. As with most of the other components, the purpose of the stylish *bombín* is embellishment. It does not have a broad brim, and its function is far from that of protector against sun or cold weather. It requires practice to wear the *bombín* because women do not put their whole head inside the hat. It sits atop the head like a slightly tilted crown, precariously positioned and always threatening to fall, lifeless, to the floor. Women embrace this risk using all their talents. For in order to wear a sophisticated *polleras*-style outfit topped with the



tilted crown, a woman must move gracefully, even when bending to pick something up from the ground. These slow, elegant movements show how to wear this style of clothing. It is as if the wearers wished to embody the colossal, strong, and peaceful mountains of the Altiplano landscape. For Andean people, mountains are fundamental to human life, and they most appreciate those that are enormous.<sup>4</sup>

### A Link to the Past

*Polleras* are an Andean legacy, descended from the Andean textiles of the Inca civilization, which author Peter Stallybrass referred to as a “cloth society.”<sup>5</sup> Inca life—cultural, social, political, and economic—was organized around textiles that are still associated with the Andean region. Moreover, archaeological evidence and written chronicles indicate that Inca women wore *pollera*-type garments. Today, *polleras* still dominate the visual field as the most popular outfit in the Altiplano, even though they do not appear

in the mainstream media. Some women choose to discontinue the wearing of *polleras*, justifying the choice on practical grounds, such as the weight or the high cost of the garment. Others stop wearing *polleras* when they achieve a higher social and economic rank. Wearers of *polleras* cannot ignore the pejorative connotations of their dress, nor can they claim that they do not experience racism because of their appearance.

*Polleras* matter; they are more than mere clothes. They mark their wearers as “Indian” and as women. The Spanish expression *mujeres de pollera* (*polleras*-women) literally implies that women are made of *polleras* or belong to *polleras*. The other term for *polleras*-wearers is *chola*, a word primarily used to identify Quechua and Aymara Indigenous peoples. Due to the negatives associated with being Indigenous—“ugly,” “dirty,” and “ignorant” are common adjectives—*polleras*-women do not self-identify as *cholitas*. Instead, they say “*me visto de chola*” (I dress up as a *chola*) or “*me da bien de chola*” (I look good as a *chola*), as if being a *chola* were temporary



Photo by Angela Tapia Arce

Women in *polleras* gather to watch a *carnaval* parade in Acora, Puno District.





A dancer wears *mini-polleras* in a parade celebrating the Virgen de la Candelaria in Puno.

and changeable. Yet Andean women have been wearing *polleras* for more than five centuries.

The original and ancient *polleras* have changed, giving way to indigeneity with new edges. Before European invasion of the Andes in 1532, *polleras* were handmade with natural threads. Today, *polleras* are made of synthetic printed fabric from China. *Polleras* style has fixed and “authentic” elements, such as the two long black braids, but other components are the result of industrial technology. In Puno and other cities in the Altiplano, *polleras* created from handmade cloth are not a valued garment. They communicate that the wearer is poor and does not know what is fashionable or even how to live in the city. When a garment has been on the market for a year or longer, the price can drop by more than 50 percent because *polleras* fashion trends usually last a year. The businesspeople who control the *polleras* fashion market are mostly Bolivian *polleras*-women who travel to China to buy the fabric. In fact, La Paz functions like Paris or New York, setting what is in vogue.

### Power versus Invisibility

*Polleras* lend women a certain authority in their business dealings. A common economic activity among *polleras*-women is to sell *artesanías* (handicrafts). These merchants have different kinds of clients, and expectations surrounding the quality of their products vary based on ideas of

authenticity. *Polleras*-women in the *artesanías* business sell mostly handmade goods of alpaca and baby alpaca, as well as synthetic wool. In contrast, Lucy sells components of the *polleras* style, dealing mostly in clothing made in China. Her clients are local women who rely on her because she wears what she offers.

Unlike Lucy, the artisans do not wear the products they make. Their clients are tourists, and not only “gringos” (foreigners); many *nacionales* (nationals, mostly from Lima) also come looking for crafts from the Altiplano. While tourists frequently dress in dark tones, the *polleras* worn by Indigenous merchants are brightly colored. Even on the most crowded street in Puno city, tourists initially stand out due to their different skin, both the physical and “social skin” (clothing). The business transactions on this street embed both authenticity and otherness. For Lucy, financial transactions involve authenticity but are associated with fashion and “the other” beauty of the Andes. In both scenarios, the clothes of *polleras*-women are fundamental for selling their merchandise.

*Polleras* style is not immune to the influence of Western aesthetics, mainly as regards heterosexual consumption. This is particularly apparent in local celebrations such as the Fiesta de la Virgen de la Candelaria, which has gained international popularity. *Polleras* are present in all of the dances paying tribute to the patron saint of Puno. However, media images only show

garments that expose the female body to the male gaze. In contrast, images of Lucy, or of the *polleras*-women who sell *artesanías*, are hidden because these depictions are not welcome in the mainstream Western visual world.

*Polleras*-women are contesting the dominant aesthetics of the West. By wearing *polleras* they maintain way of being that is a radical departure from Western standards of beauty. As Indigenous women and citizens of a modern society, they experience poverty and racism as part of their day-to-day. Despite all of this, *polleras*-women define beauty on their own terms. Through the wearing of *polleras*, they are building their own notion of beauty, even while borrowing elements from those who would reject them. The skirt and other components make *polleras* into a style of dress; the ideas surrounding *polleras* make indigeneity and modernity into a textile that is constantly being torn and restitched. ☀

*Angela Tapia Arce is a PhD candidate in Latin American Studies at The University of Texas at Austin. She was born into a Quechua family in Puno, Peru. She wrote this article during her fieldwork in the Andes.*

### Notes

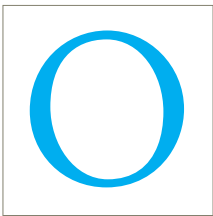
1. The finest fiber in the world comes from a small member of the camel family that lives wild in the high alpine areas of the Andes.
2. This adornment has two other names: in Aymara it is *kanachankas*, and in Quechua it is *sinkula*.
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# Digital Keepers

## The Ethics of Saving Online Data about Latin American Social Movements

by ITZA A. CARBAJAL



ON MARCH 24, 2015, Soad Nicole Ham Bustillos, age 13, and three other young Hondurans, all high school students, were murdered in Tegucigalpa. Less than 24 hours earlier, video footage had shown them publicly protesting against recent changes imposed by the Ministry of Education. The

footage displayed identifying information, including the faces of the minors, names or ID tags, school uniforms, and location. It also captured in real time the students' anger and frustrations, serving as evidence of a vexed populace. The video made the rounds on social networks shortly after Soad's student group had gathered to protest. She never made it home that day, and her body was found strangled and beaten.

As researchers continue to explore the use of digital data, there exists a crucial need for caution. Similarly, groups and individuals who work on social justice issues in Latin America have increased their use of information-sharing online to spread the word of their plight and implore others to join their cause. How often do researchers consider their role and responsibility when using and preserving online born-digital data documenting activism in Latin America? If they do practice preservation strategies, how do they navigate issues of privacy and safety, while also subverting the possibility of providing intel for surveilling institutions? This article highlights some ethical dilemmas researchers face with regard to digital data, in hopes that researchers will further develop their digital sensibilities.

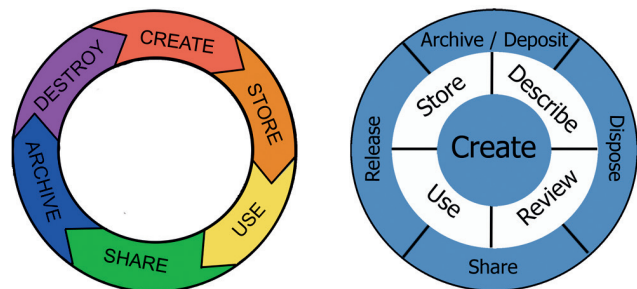
This research analyzes different aspects of the information lifecycle as it relates to the processes of handling digital data and engaging in digital scholarship. Utilizing an expanded model of the Information Lifecycle, I will focus on three areas, including the Describe, Review, and Deposit/Archive phases. These suggested stages highlight just a few approaches to cultivating a vigilant and more careful digital scholarship framework that considers both the needs of academic inquiry and the safety of the people captured through the data.

### Information Lifecycle

When using online digital data, researchers must develop a better understanding of how information typically comes into existence. The Information Lifecycle Model (Figure 1) has historically been used to convey the different stages data typically undergoes. In my research, that model has been expanded to include the additional areas of Describe, Review, and Release (Figure 2). This expanded model avoids a strictly linear and chronological structure and instead focuses on a multilayered, nonsequential, and nonlinear approach.

The multilayered design illustrates how information goes through different layers of existence that often occur simultaneously and, depending on the user, can be acted on or ignored. In addition, the nonsequential aspect facilitates an understanding that information can remain in a static state, can be handed over to another caretaker, or can cease to exist.

The expanded model more closely aligns with researchers' tendencies when handling digital data. Researchers of social movements typically start by either creating digital data, or harvesting data created by members of a movement. If the researcher creates the data or harvests raw data, she typically stores the data afterward. Given today's unstable political climate around the world,



Figures 1 and 2. Information Lifecycle Graphic (left), and Revised Information Lifecycle Graphic (right). Digital images by Izta A. Carbajal, 2016.



including Latin American countries, the availability of collected data can jeopardize the safety of individuals the data includes. Social media, an exclusively online and public platform, has recently become the topic of cyber safety discussions as more state surveillance agencies such as the National Security Agency (NSA) and local police departments turn to public platforms in an effort to identify, criminalize, and persecute organizers.

### Digital Activism Risks and Digital Freedoms

Given the fluid and intangible nature of digital media, researchers can easily forget the very real dangers participants may face when engaging in digital activism. Researchers, especially those not residing at the site of conflict, often communicate and engage with the work on the ground using information communication technologies (ICTs) such as cell phones, mobile devices, or the internet. Activist groups, in turn, share information with researchers and other members of the public through websites, blogs, and social networks. Some argue that these new possibilities have broken down barriers “created by money, time, space, and distance [with information] disseminated cheaply to many people at once.”<sup>1</sup> Despite these new possibilities, one must avoid romanticizing ICTs, as many people around the world continue to struggle to connect, and there are numerous pitfalls of over-indulging in digital engagement. One of the most fascinating and terrifying aspects of the relationship between social networks and personal information goes back to the fact that much of it is crowdsourced from the original creator and the creator’s immediate peers. Take face recognition, for example. Facebook has been said to have a 95 percent accuracy rate compared to the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s 85 percent.<sup>2</sup> Many factors contribute to the facial recognition algorithm’s success, but much can be said about an individual’s own contribution to the wealth of the personal information database. Researchers also play a crucial role in providing valuable information; for that reason, their responsibility toward activist and organizing groups is significant.

Depending on the country, activists and organizers may face dangers ranging from online harassment to death threats to actual persecution by either state officials or violent opposition groups. When contemplating the level of caution needed, one crucial step is to review the degree of digital freedom the particular country in question provides its population. Digital freedom refers to the levels of freedom countries grant their people.<sup>3</sup> Depending on the defined areas of measurement, digital freedoms can include extent of internet infrastructure, financial barriers to web access, limits on what content can be displayed, and extent of user rights, from privacy to protections from repercussions for online activity and content. Several global reports, including those by Freedom House, Council of Europe, and the Global Network Initiative, have measured the extent of digital freedoms around the world, with many reporting a loss in



Soad Nicole Ham Bustillo, 13, at a student protest in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, March 2015.

digital freedoms as more governing bodies view online interactions as possible threats to their dominance. This article focuses exclusively on the relationship between user rights while online and the ethical responsibilities of researchers when interacting with and using digital data.

### Ethics of Description

A recent trend in digital activism in the United States can function as commentary on the realities of other countries. In the wake of the election of Donald Trump, and the mighty opposition it has stirred in the United States, a particular graphic continues to spread in social network threads. During the inauguration protests, the phrase “The riot is one night . . . but metadata lasts forever,” set in a graphic

design, spread like wildfire as the news of anti-Trump demonstrations circulated on people’s devices.<sup>4</sup> As more people join efforts to dismantle the many oppressive systems in the United States and to actively combat the destructive policies of the current US administration, there appears to be a strong tendency to train new activists in ways that provide for their safety and security. Despite precautions, even if organizers and activists take necessary steps at one moment, this does not guarantee that personal information has not attached itself to their online presence ubiquitously. At many protests, digital data are now regularly captured using drones, video footage such as that recorded by body cameras, and protesters’ own mobile devices. When harvesting or accessing this sort of data, researchers must exercise caution, especially if they plan to store digital data sets for future use or to deposit their data at a university, research center, or other storage facility.

### Ethics of Review

When researchers deal with digital data, the data review phase often comes as they contemplate depositing their research data in an archive or perhaps publishing that data in print or digital form. Yet the review phase is frequently overlooked, as it can appear as though all cautionary practices took place at the beginning of a research endeavor. This assumption can be misleading, especially

considering the shareable nature of digital data. Even if a researcher makes all the correct decisions when selecting data to include or highlight in publications and presentations, this does not guarantee that others will follow suit with that same data. Depositing raw datasets is, thus, risky. Luckily, groups such as Documenting the Now, Witness, and others that work with Indigenous communities are actively developing standards and practices that emphasize notions of consent and safety regarding creators and their digital footprints.<sup>5</sup> These measures become extremely important as state surveillance tactics increasingly utilize and invest in digital surveillance technologies. As digital information becomes more prevalent in scholarship, researchers will face an even greater responsibility to



# THE RIOT IS ONE NIGHT...



COVER YOUR FACE AND HAIR - THINK BEFORE YOU TEXT  
• ENCRYPT YOUR SHIT  
• WEAR GLOVES - DON'T USE FACEBOOK, PERIOD  
• WATCH OUT FOR GOOGLE TOO - USE PUBLIC COMPUTERS OR ENCRYPTED NETWORKS  
• DON'T SPECULATE ABOUT WHO DID WHAT  
• WATCH OUT FOR RFID TAGS - DON'T PUT YOUR PICTURE ONLINE - DON'T BRAG - LEAVE YOUR PHONE AT HOME - REMEMBER THAT THE NSA READS YOUR EMAIL  
• BE CAREFUL, NOT PARANOID - NEVER SWITCH, EVER

...BUT METADATA LASTS FOREVER.

Digital image, anonymous author. Source: @YourAnonGlobal on Twitter, January 20, 2017. Accessed February 26, 2017.

review all content before handing it over to another entity.

## Ethics of Deposit and Archiving

For archivists, the relationship to researchers and their data is one of the most enduring and fruitful. Yet despite this longstanding relationship, levels of communication and understanding between archivists and researchers continue to fluctuate. When dealing with digital datasets, archivists find themselves in predicaments related to sharing and providing access online. As the chain of custody becomes blurry, even archivists who wish to protect creators' personal information face obstacles ranging from having to locate subjects and obtain consent, to deciding what information to provide in online digital archival portals. Given that much of the information on who, what, when, and where stems from the researchers' work, researchers are best suited to reviewing and identifying possible concerns. They can also help by filtering sensitive information prior to depositing data into an archival facility during any of the steps of the information lifecycle.

## Approach with Care

Many of the issues discussed in this essay stem from a US perspective, given the

author's location and familiarity. Acknowledging this limitation, the topics discussed serve as a cautionary tale about long-established colonial practices embedded in institutions in the United States and many other countries. Researchers should approach digital data with the same care as when dealing with sacred or highly sensitive physical materials, for digital data does not exist independently from its creator.

For Soad and her peers, the shared video represented both a symbol of resistance and an opening to danger. Honduran news agencies claimed that Soad's appearance on social networks had reached thousands of angry Hondurans at home and abroad, costing Soad her life. Others would claim that her appearance paved the way for more vocal and visible opposition in the many struggles Honduran students face. Both interpretations speak to the impact of Soad's digital footprint, which amplified her protest efforts and clearly threatened some. Soad's story is a warning to all: the lives of people captured in digital data exist beyond the screen, and their safety should be of the utmost concern, especially for those of us wishing to become an extension of the work being done on the ground. ✨

*Itza A. Carbajal is the daughter of Honduran immigrants, a native of New Orleans, and a child of Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath. She lives in Austin, Texas, where she is pursuing a Master of Science in Information Studies with a focus on archival management and digital records at The University of Texas at Austin School of Information.*

EDITOR'S NOTE: *This article is adapted from a paper presented by the author at ILASSA37, the 37th annual conference of the Institute of Latin American Studies Student Association, held at UT Austin in March 2017.*

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# On the Road with Barbara Hines: UT Students Visit Karnes Family Detention Facility

by SUSANNA SHARPE



IT'S 7:30 ON A Saturday morning. Barbara Hines has parked a large white van outside the law school at The University of Texas at Austin. Inside a small hallway of the school, a slightly sleepy group of students begins to assemble. Some are law students, others are master's students

in social work, most of them pursuing a dual master's in Latin American Studies (LLILAS) and social work. On this sunny morning, they will pile into the van for a trip with Hines to Karnes City, Texas. There, they will meet with immigrant women who have been detained along with their children by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) after coming to the United States to seek asylum.

Hines is an alumna of LLILAS (then ILAS) who has practiced and taught immigration law since 1975. From 1999 through 2014, she was LLILAS affiliated faculty and clinical professor of law at UT Austin, where she served as director of the law school's Immigration Clinic. She is currently a senior fellow at the Emerson Collective, which is based in Palo Alto, California. Yet despite having retired from practice and teaching, Hines has not stopped her advocacy work for immigrants nor, apparently, lost her desire to teach.

## Family Detention

Hines has been representing families at detention centers in Texas for over a decade. In 2006 she first visited the T. Don Hutto facility in Taylor, 35 miles north of Austin. Housed in a former medium-security prison, the facility is run by the for-profit Corrections Corporation of America. Children lived there in cells, detained along with their immigrant parents, who were awaiting decisions on asylum and other immigration-related issues. The children were kept locked in the cells for up to twelve hours a day in a building where no natural light entered. They were made to wear prison uniforms, given only one hour of educational instruction per day, and had twenty minutes for each meal with no additional snacks.

In March 2007, Hines became part of a lawsuit filed along with the American Civil Liberties Union and the international law firm

of LeBoeuf, Lamb, Greene & MacRae against the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) challenging the detention of families at Hutto. The suit claimed that the children at Hutto were imprisoned under inhumane conditions, citing the 1997 Flores Settlement Agreement reached in *Flores v. Meese*, which requires that immigrant children be housed in the "least restrictive" environments and that their release be without unnecessary delay. The litigation itself led to the release of dozens of children. A settlement was reached in the suit in August 2007, just before it was to go to trial. Among the results were further releases of families and a marked improvement in conditions at the facility.

As the two-year settlement was about to expire, in August 2009, President Barack Obama made the decision to end family detention, except on a very limited basis at the Berks facility in Pennsylvania. Hines, like many others, breathed a sigh of relief. But the relief was short-lived. In spring 2014, due to a variety of worsening circumstances in their home countries, particularly El Salvador and Honduras, large numbers of Central American immigrants began to arrive at the US southern border, seeking asylum. According to Hines, there is no legal way to apply for a person to apply for asylum from his or her home country. The only way to seek asylum in the United States is to show up.

The response of the Obama administration was to reinstate and greatly expand family detention, and to once again subject mothers and children to detention. Fathers who arrive with a family unit are separated and sent to a male detention facility. Fathers who travel alone with their children are quickly released. All of them are subject to expedited removal.

Under the expedited removal process, any migrant who is detained at a port of entry, such as an airport or an international bridge, or who is arrested within 100 miles of the border within 14 days of his or her entry to the country, may be summarily returned to the home country. This includes those who immediately request asylum protection. Only migrants who establish a "credible fear of persecution" are exempt from this expedited deportation



Student volunteers pose with Barbara Hines (third from right) outside the Karnes County detention facility. L-R: Tzvi Prochnik, Christina Sandwen, Ana Hernandez, Anayeli Marcos, Lynn Panepinto, Moravia de la O, Dora Gonzalez, and Logan Wexler (not pictured: Josh Brody).

process. Because asylum seekers may not be released, except under exceptional circumstances, until a positive decision on their credible fear of persecution, there was suddenly a need for increased detention space. Privately run facilities under contract with ICE quickly sprang up in Texas and New Mexico to detain Central American mothers and children.

### Credible Fear

The credible fear determination begins with an interview with a DHS asylum officer. The migrant must explain the reasons for her fear of persecution and answer questions posed by the officer. If successful, she and her children may be released to join family, a friend, or community members in the United States. ICE requires almost all asylum seekers to wear a cumbersome and stigmatizing ankle monitor and imposes other conditions of release. Fortunately, children are not subjected to ankle monitors.

The credible fear requirement poses numerous obstacles for Central American families. Asylum seekers are fleeing violence, extortion, threats, and gender-based harm in their home countries and on the journey north to the United States. Many of them have never discussed these traumatic details with anyone, let alone having to relate such private and terrifying details to an asylum officer in a legal system that is totally foreign to them. Nevertheless, they must be able to relate their experiences in a coherent and detailed manner in order to meet the threshold credible fear standard.

### A Day at Karnes

Hines and the group of students file into the large lobby of the Karnes County detention facility. There, Hines checks in with a guard at the front desk, handing over her Texas Bar card and clearance letters that have been obtained in advance so that the students can enter the facility. One by one, the students hand over their IDs. Some of them get locker keys since items like cell phones and cameras are not allowed past the security desk. After that, each visitor passes through a metal detector after placing belongings on a conveyer belt to be scanned.

One or two of the volunteers go with Hines to procure a special cart set up with all that they will need for a day of credible fear preps, intake interviews, release *charlas*, and more. The cart holds a laser printer, paperwork, folders filled with forms, pamphlets to be handed out. At one time, the cart had contained crayons and coloring books to distract young children while their mothers relayed devastating events to the volunteers; the crayons were prohibited one day without warning, a stern facility supervisor announcing that the children could no longer use them because property had been defaced.



Barbara Hines at Texas Law, The University of Texas at Austin.

Bottom photo by Stephanie Swope; top: Susanna Sharpe



The student volunteers will be carrying out work coordinated by RAICES, or Refugee and Immigrant Center for Legal and Educational Services, a nonprofit agency based in San Antonio that provides free and low-cost legal services. RAICES came to Karnes in fall of 2014 to continue work begun by the Karnes Pro Bono project, a collaborative effort of the UT Immigration Clinic, the law firm of Akin Gump, and concerned lawyers in Central Texas begun in August 2014. Each weekday, a RAICES lawyer and sometimes a legal assistant work at Karnes. They are joined by lawyers and other volunteers from Austin and all over the country.

On a typical weekday, RAICES will have a list of women who have signed up for a free consultation to prepare for their CFI. Staff attorneys and volunteers will go through the list as quickly and efficiently as possible, meeting with women in groups or one-on-one, depending on the nature of the interviews they need to have. Sometimes volunteers must meet with children, such as when a child has his own credible fear case. Examples of this are when children are being aggressively recruited by gangs, or when their lives have been threatened because of their reluctance to join a gang.

Women at Karnes learn about pro bono legal services by attending a “Know Your Rights” legal orientation offered by American Gateways, through word of mouth, from an announcement board where RAICES posts signup sheets, or by receiving a RAICES business card from another detainee. However, ICE is only required to inform a woman about pro bono legal services if she fails her credible fear interview.

On the Saturday in question, there are no RAICES volunteers present, so Hines is “running the list,” making sure women who have signed up for appointments are being paged and brought to the visitation area, assessing who needs what kind of meeting or counsel. The visitation area at Karnes is more or less the size of a large elementary school classroom, with four small, private meeting rooms adjoining it. Volunteers meet with detained women in those rooms to the extent possible, but when all of the rooms are occupied, they are forced to meet with the women in the nonconfidential visitation area.

Throughout the day, Hines fields a variety of questions from her student volunteers. She has paired law students and LLILAS/social work students in teams to meet with women at Karnes. The meetings involve filling out a basic intake form with biographical information, and, when possible, inquiring about conditions in the infamous *hielera* or icebox (a Customs and Border Patrol facility that is the first stop for detainees) and the dog-kennel-like *perrera*, often the second stop before Karnes or Dilley, another detention center. If the list of women waiting for interviews is long, there is often not much time to hear about the journey or the conditions along the way. By far, the most important aspect of this interview is preparation for the credible fear interview. This has paid off, as women who have received pro bono services at Karnes have a very high rate of success in the CFI.

Most of the student volunteers speak Spanish, although not all. The non-Spanish-speakers are paired with a Spanish speaker. The LLILAS/social work students and law students bring different, and complementary, approaches to their meetings with detained women. One social work student talked about wanting to help women prepare emotionally for their interviews using a variety of relaxation techniques, such as breathing. Even on a day when the list was long and there were many names to get through, students of both schools take the time to listen, to ask gentle questions, to grab a few tissues from the cart if needed.

### “Baby Jail”

Barbara Hines does not hide her dismay at the existence of family detention facilities: “baby jail,” she calls it. As an immigration attorney, she is among the most knowledgeable and widely respected in her profession. She has a plethora of information at her fingertips, and can come off as tough and no-nonsense when discussing cases. But scratch the surface by talking to her about children in detention and you see pure heart and outrage. “To see children in prison,” she said in a 2014 *Austin Chronicle* interview, “I never thought I’d see that. A child should never be in prison.”

Perhaps one of the reasons Hines is so effective is that she turns her deep sense of justice into action, both as an attorney and

as an educator. She says that teaching at the UT law school was the most rewarding time of her career. “I felt that I made an impact in immigration law and advocacy.” She is heartened by the vibrant advocacy community that has arisen in response to US immigration policy and to the recent wave of anti-immigrant sentiment in Texas and the rest of the country. In fact, she says, opinion polls show that most people in the United States do not have extreme views about immigration and immigrants. “The laws are an aberration of history,” she says.

### The Road Home

Sometime after 4:00 p.m., the day’s interviews are done. Students have recorded the notes from their interviews in an electronic log so that RAICES staff will be able to follow up. Hines has consulted on cases and answered many questions. The list of women is updated with their current status and paperwork is stored in file folders. One by one, Hines and the students file out of the visitation area, past security, and retrieve their IDs and belongings. Outside the detention center it is sunny and the air feels good after a day in the windowless visitation room. The group snaps a quick photo at the van before piling in to head home.

On the two-hour ride back to Austin, the talk turns to the recent presidential election and the rise of anti-immigrant sentiment. How might the prevailing rhetoric about immigration and immigrants shift? Hines offers the following: “We are a nation of immigrants. We need to remember that immigrants contribute to the US economy and are an engine of economic growth. Anti-immigrant rhetoric distorts reality, creating a fear of immigrants as criminals. We need to deconstruct this message.”

That is a tall order in the current political climate, but Barbara Hines remains undeterred. ✨

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*Susanna Sharpe is communications coordinator at LLILAS Benson and the editor of Portal. She has traveled to Karnes City with Barbara Hines on numerous occasions to volunteer with RAICES.*

*Barbara Hines is an award-winning immigration attorney and emerita faculty at Texas Law, The University of Texas at Austin. She is an alumna of the Institute of Latin American Studies (ILAS, class of 1969).*

# Focus: Faculty and Staff

by SUSANNA SHARPE

## Pilar Zazueta

In 2012, Mexico attained the dubious distinction of becoming the world's number one consumer of soft drinks, passing previous first-place holder the United States. And although Mexico is no longer in first place (Argentina now claims that title), the increasing consumption of sugar and ultra-processed foods is the topic of a national conversation about diet and the rise of chronic diseases in the country. According to historian Pilar Zazueta, this conversation has been a long time coming.

Zazueta is lecturer and undergraduate faculty adviser at the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies. Last February, she brought her considerable expertise in food history to bear as co-organizer, along with Raj Patel, of the 2017 Lozano Long Conference, “Revoluciones Alimentarias” (Food Revolutions).

In her work on the history of food consumption in twentieth-century Mexico, Zazueta identifies key and contradictory forces that have contributed to the modernization of the Mexican diet. Last century, Mexicans underwent a nutritional transition from mostly vegetarian meals that were low in dairy and based on locally grown staples and grains, to the consumption of



ultra-processed foods high in fat, sugar, and simple carbohydrates. Demographic expansion, urbanization, and growth in household incomes all contributed this shift in dietary habits, as did interaction between government, producers, and consumers.

Some of these changes were set in motion by the post-revolutionary governments of the PRI. “After the revolution,” says Zazueta, “the government saw itself as an engine of economic development.

Diet was seen as an area in need of intervention.” The agrarian nature of the revolution prompted state attempts to balance rural interests with urban ones, incentivizing industrialization and promoting urban development. Such government policies favored the soft-drink industry, ushering in Coca-Cola franchises, whose bottling and distribution generated jobs and revenue. This also benefited the agrarian sector: sugar production increased to support the manufacture of soft drinks.

Reflecting current observations about the ills of the world's food system, Zazueta's research points to the paradox of scarcity and plenty. On the one hand, she investigates the effects of food insufficiency—the lack of food; on the other hand, she looks at the damaging effects of diets abundant in calories, fat, and sugar.

After the Mexican Revolution, the government promoted health and well-being of the population by investing in sanitation and health services, and by trying to improve people's diets. Yet, according to Zazueta, “government investments in Mexico were never enough to keep up with demographic growth. In order to feed its citizens, the Mexican government imported food and sold it at subsidized prices, to the



detriment of national producers, especially the most vulnerable ones.” Urban consumers were the main beneficiaries of these subsidies. By the 1960s–70s, hunger was no longer a problem in cities. Now, it was diseases associated with affluence and the sedentary lifestyle—obesity, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, and type 2 diabetes.

Meanwhile, also in the 1970s, medical publications began calling attention to the harm of sugar and ultra-processed foods. In 1976, Mexico’s Consumer Protection Agency began to actively educate the public about diet and nutrition. Yet these initiatives would lose steam a few years later, when Mexico was gripped by an economic crisis in 1982. Since then, says Zazueta, nongovernmental agencies have emerged as champions of consumer protection, especially after the year 2000. Despite negative reactions in the food industry, Zazueta regards NGO efforts as very successful: “their triumphs have included soda taxes and efforts to regulate the marketing of ultra-processed foods to children,” she says.

Zazueta is writing a book that traces the history of the nutritional policies of the Mexican state. She describes some of the factors that have led to their failure:

“The government intervened on both the supply side, through investment in local agriculture and importing food, and the demand side, attempting to induce behavioral changes through education and public information campaigns. The food policies always fell short of their goals and were vulnerable to corrupt practices, but by the late 1970s became broad and reform oriented. After the oil crisis, Mexico underwent a process of economic restructuring, and by the 1990s the country did not have a comprehensive national food policy. Instead, the government built a patchwork of focalized antipoverty initiatives and individual family-based nutrition programs. Yet cohesive strategies to increase access to healthy food, like fruits and vegetables, are still largely lacking.”

Zazueta’s book promises to be a fascinating contribution to understanding the history of food in Mexico, and how good intentions on the part of government were no match for economic reality. The global lessons and implications of the shifts in Mexicans’ diet and health are still unfolding.

Zazueta has taught at The University of Texas at Austin since fall 2013. She teaches the capstone seminar for Latin American studies majors and Politics of Food in Latin America. In addition to authoring articles and commentary in English and Spanish on food and health in Mexico, she is a frequent contributor to television reporting on US politics for Telemundo, and has authored op-eds on Mexican culture in Texas newspapers.

### Laura G. Gutiérrez

To understand what interests Laura Gutiérrez, try watching a few videos of Astrid Hadad. You will see colors and over-the-top costumes, you will hear a variety of Mexican and Caribbean music, some of it with satirical lyrics, you will see scenes laden with layers of cultural references and messages both subtle and outlandishly humorous. Hadad is a queer political cabaret performer, one of the artists featured in Gutiérrez’s book *Performing Mexicanidad: Vendidas y Cabareteras on the Transnational Stage* (University of Texas Press, 2010).

Since fall 2013, Laura Gutiérrez has been associate professor of Performance as Public Practice in the Department of Theatre and Dance at The University of Texas at Austin. She was hired by the department to build bridges with LLILAS and Latina/o Studies. In this capacity, she organized the 2015 Lozano Long Conference, “Nuevas Disidencias: Youth Culture and the Remaking of Politics in the Americas.”

Through the primary lens of performance studies, Gutiérrez looks at a range of types of performance, from cabaret to civil disobedience, in settings both live and mediated (i.e., “where there is a screen”). “I think of the body as an important meaning-making site for expanding our understanding of discourse beyond language.” To this examination of the body in performance, Gutiérrez also brings critical race theory and feminist and queer theory.

Currently, Gutiérrez is combining these ways of thinking about the body and ways of viewing performance to write about Mexican films from the 1940s and 1950s that feature cabaret performers; in particular, she explores the figure of the “*rumbera*.” One aspect that interests Gutiérrez is the films’ portrayal of Afro-diasporic dance and



culture, references that are “displaced onto a white body” in the films (think Carmen Miranda). Gutiérrez asks, “Where is blackness within Mexican cultural production, and what sort of work is it doing?” This is particularly interesting, as she points out, if we consider that this era in filmmaking coincided with the height of *mestizaje* and nation-building in Mexico.

“When you examine these mid-twentieth-century films through the lens of race versus the lens of gender and sexuality, you straddle a line between being critical/analytical, and admiring the way in which gender and sexuality norms are pushed in the context of conservative Catholic society,” Gutiérrez says. “But these ways of thinking need not be separated.” Her current research ponders this notion and others. And since present-day performers still draw on elements from the films, often via parody, she continues to explore the films’ connection to contemporary performances, as well as the history and different meanings of cabaret in Mexico and the implications of its increasing accessibility and proliferation today.

Since arriving at UT Austin, Gutiérrez has been active in the leadership of the Department of Mexican American and Latina/o Studies (MALS) in the College of Liberal Arts, serving as either associate chair or interim chair since fall 2015. She will transfer her affiliation from Theatre and Dance to MALS in fall 2017, where she will teach undergraduate and graduate courses on Latina/o and Latin American performance and visual culture.

## Zhandra Andrade

Step into Zhandra Andrade's office and you will see evidence of world travel. An ornate metal box from Mexico, inlaid with blue-and-white tiles, sits atop an embroidered Chinese tablecloth. Andean scenes jump out of hand-sewn squares from Peru. On the bookshelf, a tiny Australian koala dressed for a journey through the Outback is kept company by several *alebrijes*, Mexican fantasy animals made of papier-mâché and painted in bright colors. The only thing remaining of some Colombian coffee is the decorative bag it came in, while a green tin of Japanese tea has not quite been finished. The bar of soap from Greece might not get used, since the label is pretty, and somewhat unusual.

Andrade herself has lived in three different countries, but the souvenirs in her office are tokens of appreciation from visitors from across the globe. As LLILAS Benson's Visitor Programs Coordinator, she welcomes and orients researchers who have come to campus to use the vast resources of the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection. She loves this aspect of her job—receiving people from all over the world, learning about their research, their place of origin, and their culture.

A native of Valencia, Carabobo, Venezuela, Zhandra Andrade has worked at LLILAS Benson since 2013. In addition to coordinating visitors, she is the course scheduler, a systems job that satisfies her “geek side,” she says. She is widely known by colleagues to be a whiz with spreadsheets, numbers, and all things IT. She is also known and admired for her tenacity and discipline: she earned her master's in educational administration from The University of Texas at Austin College of Education in May 2017 while working full time and raising two daughters, Kazandra, eleven, and Zamantha, six, along with her husband, Miguel, a U.S. Army veteran.

Andrade was the first in her family to go to college. She began her higher education at a Grays Harbor Community College in Washington State. Her mother, Cecilia, was prohibited from finishing high school, and her late father, Ramiro, was orphaned at age seven and never finished elementary school. He encouraged his daughter to get a college degree. Both parents were born in Colombia, and lived as immigrants in



Venezuela during Andrade's childhood and younger adulthood.

Andrade says the higher education master's program sharpened her awareness of the struggles common to minority and first-generation students—struggles that set them apart from many of their peers and with which she herself can identify. “I was told when I started community college through a workforce program, that my only option, the only degree I could choose out of the whole college, was the hospitality program, nothing else,” says Andrade. Through the encouragement of an adviser from Colombia, she earned associate degrees in both arts and business, and went on to study management information systems at Washington State University for her bachelor's degree.

She hopes to be a similar voice of encouragement to others. She would also like to find a way to work with veterans who are pursuing a higher education degree. Her firsthand knowledge of the hurdles faced by veterans who have returned from combat makes her highly qualified to be of service to them.

In her newfound free time, she hopes to do more dancing (salsa and merengue) and some camping with her family. She avidly keeps the cultures of Venezuela and Colombia alive for her daughters, preparing *arepas* and other traditional foods at home. Is there a PhD in her future? At the moment, that is not even a question. For now, on the heels of two years of hard work, Zhandra Andrade plans to play a little more. 🌟

## LOZANO LONG CONFERENCE

February 21-23, 2018

Creation, Consumption, and the Modern Life of Spanish American Artifacts

LLILAS Benson will collaborate with the Blanton Museum of Art for the eleventh annual Lozano Long Conference, featuring works of art from the museum's collection of Spanish Colonial art and the Benson Collection's Rare Books and Manuscripts.

In the aftermath of the Spanish conquest of the so-called New World in the early sixteenth century, complex cultural negotiations developed among the Spaniards and the Indigenous populations. Artifacts of all kinds produced at the time are silent but powerful witnesses to such negotiations and exchanges.

How does the analysis of material culture inform our understanding of social interactions? How do we understand the relationships that people of different backgrounds have with Spanish American artifacts today when they are perceived as “cultural heritage”? What are the ethical components of studying, preserving, collecting, and exhibiting material culture of the period? Why does the colonial past matter, and how it could help us shape the future?

The 2018 Lozano Long Conference will provide a forum to reflect on these questions, welcoming scholars from Latin America, Spain, and the United States to ponder meanings and original circumstances of the manufacture of a wide variety of artifacts, interrogating their social life into the present and their extension into the future.



Unknown Painter, *La Virgen niña hilando* [The Child Mary Spinning], Cuzco, Peru, mid 18th century. Oil on canvas. Collection of Carl & Marilynn Thoma.





“Wake up.” Graffiti on a wall in the center of Puno, Peru. This is a “collaborative” photograph, originally shot by Yoalli Rodríguez and reshot by Angela Tapia Arce with Yoalli at her side at the request of *Portal* editor Susanna Sharpe. Rodríguez and Tapia are LLILAS PhD candidates. They were in Puno together after LASA2017, the Latin American Studies Association Congress in Lima.