

“Are you looking for ‘Chicano/Latino Resource Center?’”

—Voice of the automated phone directory at University of California, Santa Cruz

PREFACIO Y DESPEDIDA

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Not really. The registration forms for the 2006 MALCS Summer Institute clearly state that they must be faxed back to the Chicana/Latina Research Center. I later find out that the automated directory is not wrong and that the MALCS forms express our vision rather than the institutional reality. This episode brings back memories of our battles to tame our computers when I joined Karen Mary Davalos as journal coeditor in the summer of 2003. When typing calls for papers and the myriad of documents in preparation for the re-inaugural issue, too often, and after repeated corrections, the “a” in both “Chicana” and “Latina” would morph into two rotund “o’s.” These seemingly trivial events remind us that the type of change needed to inscribe us out of silence in the world of letters can be so fastidiously minute as the act of revising the automatic spelling changes, or of finding out the many bureaucratic steps that would take to transform the name of the Research Center at our host institution.

Change can be energy consuming and generate much frustration. Tiffany Ana López, the compañera who will take my place as coeditor en la siguiente etapa del journal, elaborates on those challenges in this issue's Occasional Section, "Speaking Frankly, Documenting Struggle: Chicanas/Latinas in Academia." Speaking frankly, and refusing to adjust to any gender/genre corset, son parte de la materia prima de Norma E. Cantú, and Patricia Marina Trujillos's creative writing, Rosa Campos-Brito's essay on the work of Frances Negrón-Muntaner, and Edén E. Torres's review of Catrióna Rueda Esquibel's new book.

In my tenure as journal coeditor, one of my biggest thrills has been to verify once and again, our contributors' outstanding ability to listen to the silences in academia and in the world. Nuestra capacidad de escuchar los silencios, ver las ausencias, detectar a quién se intenta invisibilizar y desafiar esta práctica desde el salón de clase, el libro, el caballete, el film, la participación en congresos profesionales y en tribunas, marchas y movimientos por el cambio social, son las características que nos siguen nucleando alrededor de estas páginas. Es así como nos enriquece leer en contrapunto, junto a los trabajos anteriormente mencionados, el ensayo crítico de Linda Heidenreich sobre las dinámicas racistas y sexistas en torno al asesinato de la joven transgénero Gwen Araujo. Por otra parte, ante la ofensiva anti-inmigrante que vivimos en los Estados Unidos, las reflexiones de Joann Lo sobre su tarea de organización sindical nos dejan vislumbrar las formas de resistencia de las trabajadoras y alimentan nuestras esperanzas. On the other hand, Roselyn Costantino—who has witnessed the femicide in Guatemala—resorts to photography, testimonio, and an array of tools from gender studies to translate the sense of urgency and desperation that overwhelms us in the face of impunity. Yet, as Costantino writes in the closing paragraph of her commentary, Guatemalan women's "challenges are as life-threatening as ever; their responses, however, have become empowering and life affirming."

My challenge, as I continue participating in the Loyola Marymount University Colectiva and in our National Advisory Board, is to bring their voices, their ideas, their presence to our discussion tables, our conferences, and classrooms. This will continue enriching our analysis of their work while making more visible the input of the worker, the femicide survivor, the field organizer, the testimonial subject in our discussions, even if they have chosen not to belong to the academic world. As we join them in their struggle for agency, it is essential to acknowledge and compensate them for their efforts, which not only foster social change, but nurture our growth as scholars, teachers, and activists who seek to transform academia.