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Introduction

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Journal

Mester, 39(1)

Author

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Publication Date

2010

DOI

10.5070/M3391039062

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MESTER

FOCUS: ANDEAN STUDIES



XXXIX

2010

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES

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Mester (ISSN 0160-2764) is the graduate student journal of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, University of California, Los Angeles. It is published annually online (http://escholarship.org/uc/ucla_spanport_mester) and in print with the generous assistance of the UCLA Department of Spanish and Portuguese, the Del Amo Foundation, and the UCLA Graduate Students Association.

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Introduction

We are very proud to present *Mester* XXXIX 2010, the culmination of two main objectives that will take the journal on a new path: first, *Mester* is now an open-access journal that prints on demand and second, online tools that manage manuscripts' submission and evaluation will allow for a more professional and flexible process. These objectives were made possible by joining the eScholarship Repository of the California Digital Library. With the support and encouragement of the UCLA Department of Spanish and Portuguese faculty, the UCLA librarians Bonnie Tijerina and Angela Riccio, the eScholarship technical support team, past Editors-in-Chief Laura Lee (*Mester* vol. XXXVII) and Lizy Moromisato (*Mester* vol. XXXV), this year's Editorial Board, and especially the invaluable help from the Graduate Student Association Publications Director Stacey Meeker, we were able to understand the advantages and complexities of switching from a subscription-based distribution system to an open-access journal that prints only on demand. Our current editorial team was, among other things, pleased to choose and support the "green" option, and ahead we went.

The collection of articles, interviews, and book reviews selected for *Mester* XXXIX 2010 are a combination of Focus on Andean Studies and General Interest. The Andean region, source of a rich literary tradition and juncture of many different cultures, is focus of a special section. As different voices are gaining more power to represent themselves in the political and socio-economical arenas, its art (literature, film, theatre) needs in turn to be studied through frameworks that acknowledge them. This special section provides a space for some of the new ideas and critical approaches necessary to the understanding of Andean cultures and their literary production. Therefore, we are very proud to open *Mester* XXXIX 2010 with the essay by Visiting Professor Luz María De la Torre Amaguaña from Otavalo, Ecuador, "¿Qué significa ser una mujer indígena en la contemporaneidad?." Through her research and anecdotes, De la Torre (who was invited to teach courses in Kichwa at the UCLA Department of Spanish and Portuguese) tries to untangle the different historical, socio-economical, political, and psychological threads that make up the identity and value of an indigenous woman today. In this way, De la Torre joins the academic debate and presents to the

reader interested in Andean literatures and cultures a point of view that firmly rejects any intermediary or ventriloquist, as she calls it. Her article is followed by Ana M. Díaz's "La degradación del voseo en el siglo XVI: análisis de un documento indiano de 1565." Díaz's attempts to demonstrate how voseo, a term once used to express familiarity, became proper only among individuals of low social class in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Santa Fe (today, Colombia). Moreover, two interesting interviews reveal the ideas behind the work of Peruvian film director Claudia Llosa (whose film *La teta asustada* was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Foreign Film in 2010), and Chilean playwright Guillermo Calderón (author of *Diciembre*, *Neva*, and *Clase*). To close the Focus section, we are happy to present Professor Jorge Coronado's article, "Vallejo ante el pueblo: intelectual, masas y el camino a *España aparta de mí ese cáliz*." In it, Coronado affirms that Vallejo's late literary practice corresponds to a transformation in the way he conceptualizes the intellectual's relationship to the masses. Such a transformation is triggered, Coronado argues, by the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War.

Opening the General section, Krista Brune proposes an allegorical reading of two novels by the late José Saramago in "The Essayistic Touch: Saramago's Version of Blindness and Lucidity." Brune demonstrates that Saramago's essayistic proclivity gives him the opportunity to intertwine his fictional work with "political commentary, social observation, and philosophical ruminations." In "Borges y el cine: imagería visual y estrategia creativa," Jorge Zavaleta Balarezo argues that there is an undeniable link between film and Jorge Luis Borges's work, and attempts to explain how the visual capabilities of the former are translated to the latter's literary narrative. Zavaleta proposes that one of Borges's most acclaimed stories, *El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan*, is the ideal model for a film script. Cora Gorman Malone contributes to the volume with a reading of Ángel Rama's *The Lettered City*, which introduces the writings of the fourteenth-century Arab intellectual from the Maghreb, Ibn Khaldun, in order to propose an alternative way to approach Rama's famous essay. In "Epistemology and *The Lettered City*: Ángel Rama, Michel Foucault, and Ibn Khaldun," Malone suggests that *The Lettered City* shares certain points of convergence with Khaldun's own attempt at understanding the role of the lettered urban elite in his region, which helps question the adequacy of the Western concept of "modernity" in

understanding and theorizing Latin America. Furthermore, in a very interesting interview, Professor Andrew Brown opens up about his innovative work on science, literature, and popular culture. Finally, reviews of *Venezuela Speaks! Voices from the Grassroots* by Carlos Martínez, Michael Fox, and JoJo Farrell, and, Jesús Torrecilla's *Guerras literarias del XVIII español: la modernidad como invasión* accompany our collection of articles and interviews.

I would like to thank the UCLA Department of Spanish and Portuguese, the Del Amo Foundation, and the UCLA Graduate Student Association for their support. We are also grateful for the support from the UCLA Library that allowed us to digitize almost all of the *Mester* archive, now available online. Special thanks to faculty advisor Professor Efraín Kristal for his assistance this year. Thanks to the many authors who trusted us with their work. Also, I would like to express my gratitude to the team of Editors, Contributing Editors, Guest Contributing Editors, and the International Associate Editor who helped to bring about this volume and supported the significant changes to our journal. It has been a pleasure to work for *Mester* this year, and though its transformation as an open-access journal has demanded more work than I was able to envision at the beginning, I am happy to report that the job is done. We hope that the reader enjoys this selection of articles, and also, that the graduate students of our Department interested in joining the ranks of *Mester* will find both the journal management process to be smoother and the *Mester* experience to be an enlightening and enjoyable learning opportunity.

Gabriela Venegas
Editor-in-Chief Mester XXXIX
2010

Focus: Andean Studies

