

“Transformation Was Definitely Her Specialty”: Teaching Representation with Roberta Fernández’s “Amanda”

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This essay examines critical analysis of literature, collaborative dialogue, and reflective writing as pedagogical strategies successfully employed to teach the concept of representation. All were designed for students to draw connections among interdisciplinary sources: historical, literary and theoretical. Roberta Fernández's short story "Amanda" (2002), whose protagonist is believed to be a witch, was read in connection with Tillie Olsen's poem "I Want You Women Up North to Know" (1934), and Alicia Gaspar de Alba's novels *Desert Blood* (2005) and *Calligraphy of the Witch* (2012). The analysis of the literary texts helped students to understand the misrepresentation and underrepresentation of women in mainstream culture, as well as to value the historical legacies of working-class women as leaders and role models for their communities.

Pedagogical Tenets

The learning module was taught in a sophomore course titled "Introduction to Women's Studies" at the University of Houston in fall 2012 and spring 2013. As an approved course for the Humanities, its core requirements are gender analysis, research, reading, writing, and critical skills. This intensive-writing course serves several majors and students come to the course with different disciplinary backgrounds and conceptual tools. Also, the student body at the University of Houston, which is relatively diverse and includes significant numbers of first-generation students, might, at first, find the scholarly demands of the course challenging.

My pedagogical perspective takes into account the teaching context, attunes to representation as the concept being taught, and considers the goals of the course: critical integration of sources for writing excellence when

examining gender. Anarchist and feminist thinkers have long exposed representation as a tool to exercise hierarchical power.¹ My understanding of anarchism and feminism informs how I perceive the online and physical classroom: as an educational environment where one can attend to the development of human potentialities through ethical coordination of means and ends. Thus, fostering cooperation and relational resilience facilitates the active participation of every learner and invigorates the practice of feminist theory.²

The learning experience of this course was centered on small groups, whole class, and online student-centered interactions that addressed research questions, as well as reflections on the inquiry process itself.³ Students took responsibility for providing evidence by reading and researching of relevant materials, as well as for writing self-reflections. bell hooks has theorized the classroom as the point of departure “when one begins to think critically about the self.”⁴ One student verbalizes this process:

When the class first began, I wasn’t sure how to approach assignments because I was guilty of the very things that keep women oppressed and was numb to what is going on around me. When we discussed in class, other students were able to point out things to me that I had not noticed and vice versa.

Researching and reflective writing allowed for the examination of one’s assumptions, which was a fundamental part of cooperation.

Another key point is to aim at acquisition through relationships of reciprocity that ideally become those of friendship.⁵ Our scholarly conversations were about appreciating the value of our colleagues’ arguments instead of winning a debate. Finding value in each contribution improved the creation of knowledge and activated learning, as one student pointed out:

Because there was an air of acceptance and understanding, my classmates appeared to be very comfortable expressing themselves, and we all felt that we did not have to be shy about offering ideas, even ideas that we were unsure about. In this way, the discussions were lively and fun, and there were many different viewpoints, and we were able to consider new ideas and really think about them. All ideas were accepted and analyzed.

Ideas were building blocks and no contribution was a disposable one. Each was a step towards shared knowledge.

Students agreed that making a friend is almost always more valuable than winning a debate:

Because of the constant engagement with classmates during the period or online, I have met many new people I might not have originally talked to and I've made friends. There was an overall sense of camaraderie in this class that I will really miss. As I go forward without the class, I know I will take the teachings with me. I will see the world with new eyes and I will not stand for anything less than equality.

Another student added: "This course has helped me a lot. I am now more open minded to others' opinions and I learn from them." In collaborative learning, everyone takes responsibility to contribute with well-informed interactions and creativity is stimulated in non-competitive ways.

Openness to listen and consider new ideas was fostered hand in hand with individual perseverance. Relational resilience "entails an ongoing responsiveness"; thus, resilience is relational, systemic and interactive.⁶ In other words, it derives support through friendship. I remarked to students that thinking and writing take time and energy; their strengths grew through collaboration and commitment to excellence. A student acknowledged:

I would share how I felt about our readings amongst my group members during class. The theoretical assignment, I didn't fully understand, and it showed in my writing. Once I started interacting more with my classmates, my skills improved.

By the end of the semester students were enjoying the success of their efforts:

Contributing to the discussion board was at first more of a task, but as time passed I came to actually enjoy it. Not only did contributing help me, but also it helped other classmates as well. I enjoyed discussing topics with my peers and being involved.

Relational resilience complemented representation as the conceptual tool being taught because it fomented the very structure of participation.

Rubrics for students' self-assessment and the instructor's feedback sequenced learning and were instrumental for strength of purpose. One student evaluated the guidelines:

One of the main things I've improved on is consolidating my ideas into less and less sentences when I address the class with input. For the class to be free flowing and for us to get all the material in there has to be concise points and well thought out responses that take little time to produce.

Other students referred to integration of sources:

The writing requirement in this course has also improved my writing skills. The intensive reading and workload has taught me to manage time and also make connections as I read. The format of the essays challenged my abilities to think critically and form complex ideas and connection between the many sources provided in each module.

Acquisition and participation were required of the students, who felt supported by guidelines, peers and instructor; all these factors worked together to increase their resolution to succeed.

Most students came to welcome the benefits of sustained rigorous work:

I am not going to lie. When I first attended class I thought for sure I would not be able to make it and I would eventually drop the course. But after remaining in the class I have learned so much about society and myself!

Another student expressed it succinctly: "Truthfully when I began this course I was skeptical about all the work but, without it, I would not have grown into a better student." Collaboration, self-reflecting, and the instructor's facilitation encouraged positive attitudes towards self, peers and learning material. It also increased motivation and group cohesion, enhancing the learning experience and content retention. The fostering of a committed community of learners provided for a more powerful acquisition of the course's intellectual and analytical goals.

Module Content: Theory and Secondary Sources

The learning module around the concept of representation comprised transnational and interdisciplinary sources. Secondary sources provided the theoretical background on related concepts to representation: constructivism and intersectionality. With their textbook, Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan's *Introduction to Women's Studies: Gender in a Transnational World* (2006), students learned how identity markers are constructed and reinforced by social, political, and religious ideologies, and how they intersect forming complex systems of oppression and privilege.⁷ Students also viewed Jennifer Lynn Siebel Newsom's documentary *Miss Representation* (2011) in order to further study how uncomplimentary or limited representation restrict women's lives and power.⁸

Following up with the transnational approach of the textbook, selected sections were assigned for a critical understanding of the persecution that women have suffered in previous historical periods because of their medical and scholastic talents. For instance, David Arnold's "Women and Medicine"

discusses the persecution of women healers in colonial India.⁹ Arnold exposes the appropriation and vilification of women's ancestral medical and technological developments that occurred again during colonial expansion. Also, Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English analyze the outlawing of midwifery in North America in the 1930s in "Exorcising the Midwives," a more recent example of the discrediting of women's ancestral medical knowledge.¹⁰

Also, excerpts from Donna Read's documentary *Burning Times* continued to explore the historical persecution women suffered for their medical and intellectual interests. Read argues that women who were role models for their communities as health practitioners, midwives, healers, and spiritual leaders were accused of witchcraft after the black plague in Europe. As a result of the Witch Craze and the Inquisition's persecution, torture, and burning of women for several centuries, the popular representation of the witch has come to represent evil and dark forces.

Module Content: Fiction. Alicia Gaspar de Alba's *Calligraphy of the Witch* and *Desert Blood*

Students critically read some excerpts from Alicia Gaspar de Alba's *Calligraphy of the Witch*. The author rewrites the history of the Salem trials from the point of view of a Spanish enslaved woman. Concepción Benavidez, an apprentice to a scribe at a convent, escapes from it and is captured in the siege of Vera Cruz in 1683. She is sold as the property of Dutch pirate Laurens-Cornille de Graffe, who sells her in the Massachusetts Bay colony for her fine penmanship. The girl from New Spain is regarded with suspicion though. Soon, she is believed to speak the language of the devil. Forbidden to speak Spanish, she is renamed Thankful Seagraves.

Concepción continues to read and write in Spanish quietly into the night. She reads the poems of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, the celebrated nun of New Spain and self-taught scholar and poet.¹¹ In Massachusetts, Concepción discovers the work of Anne Bradstreet and it reminds her of Sor Juana. Concepción writes to Sor Juana about Bradstreet: "... it seems she, too, was persecuted by men for writing and using her wits, and was told she'd be better off wielding a needle than a pen. I wonder what the chosen children of God would say if they could read your words ... I wish I remembered more than that poem about stubborn men."¹² Bradstreet also becomes an inspiration for Concepción. Her poems talk about a woman's authoritative voice despite the societal indisposition to hear it.

Concepción, an intellectual spirit, is accused of being a witch and her biological daughter, Hanna, testifies against her. Hanna, a child socialized in a society crazed against the so-called witches, understands Concepción's language and her interest in reading and writing as diabolical. When Hanna is asked how she knows that Concepción is a witch, she replies, "She forces me to write and speak the Devil's tongue."¹³ The magistrate asks Concepción "and

what of the damage you have just inflicted on those Salem girls with your wicked papist verse?" To which she replies: "The Spanish language is not wicked."¹⁴ Throughout history, witches have been portrayed as women who speak the language of the devil, bitter, dangerous, and most of all, possessed by demons. Hanna is our literary alter ego. In a similar vein, if we do not unravel the received patriarchal representation of women, we wrongly judge them.

Desert Blood fictionalizes the unsolved femicides of young *maquilladora* workers in Juárez.¹⁵ Gaspar de Alba argues that bodies found in Juárez are racially and gender-profiled: most of the murdered are southern indigenous young women. Disturbing, in-your-face scenes of violence describe murder and torture in detail: bodies, bones, teeth and hair, tied hands, rape, genital mutilations, and shallow graves in deserted areas. Little personal information about the *inditas* is given. We know they emigrate to work on the border and their race and sociopolitical status make them an easy target for killers, who know their crimes will be concealed by corruption and forgotten by lack of international interest. Sometimes details on the women linger like ghostly remembrances over a narrative of horrifying graphic violence. Their fictional annihilation becomes a powerful metaphor for the real tortured, murdered, and forgotten women. Literature provided an opportunity for students to develop cognitive and emotional skills and make meaning of the theoretical concepts presented in their textbook and secondary sources.

Factual and Fictional Knowledge: A Look at Students' Reflections

Students were deeply moved by Gaspar de Alba's work. I invited them to think about the importance of studying literature. I noted that literature is revolutionary because it empowers readers, and asked students to spell out the statement. Some readily found applied benefits of our practice. They noted that reading literature had increased their vocabulary and writing skills in general:

Reading all of the literature required in this class has helped me acquire a faster reading pace [and] has also helped me recognize new intellectual words, which allowed me to use extensive vocabulary when writing my essays.

Some students found joy in listening:

I enjoy the most during class time when we actively discuss about different articles among my peers and see the agreements as well as disagreements among us and compare our opinions; not only that, after a few minutes of those small discussions, Dr. Feu encouraged us to share our conversations in a knowledgeable manner. With that in mind, I truly believe that type of interaction has not only

significantly influenced my way of thinking but it also forced me to understand the various perspectives that are put out during our class discussions.

Others mentioned that reading and writing skills had transferred to their daily practice:

The learning system has taught me ways to improve my reading and writing skills. This women's studies class for me has been a remarkable experience. The way I think, verbalize and carry myself has changed.

Moreover, literature enhances comprehension because the reader needs to participate to make meaning:

I learned quite a bit and had my eyes opened more than once in this course. It did not all sink in at once but as I began to understand the various concepts, theories, ideas, and perspectives it all became clearer.

Students also argued that literature troubles our conscience, even moves us to action:

I learned about women in history and in modern cultures that serve as role models. I understand, too, that I have a responsibility to provide a positive example to others.

Also, literature engages the reader with emotions and generates a transformative journey: "The lessons I have learned in this class will be carried with me for the rest of my life and will be what I pass on to the next generation." I had a last question: "Is reading literature a necessary scholarly endeavor?" They responded that literature makes you think critically, hardly a luxury. It also makes you more comfortable with the world and opens your mind: "Cultural sensitivity is not enough, we need multicultural appreciation and connection to improve our societies." Another student wrote in her evaluation:

The course was unique because it combined western sources with multicultural ones. After taking women's studies I think more rationally and analytically and I know how to inform myself and effectively inform others. It takes a great amount of work to break long existing ideological barriers.

Literature was conducive to critical thinking:

My final paper forced me to do a critical evaluation of the people that I judge in my everyday life. Women's studies have influenced my understanding of cultures that are different from my own community. Thus, allowing me to get rid of my judgment and accept people for who they are, not for where they come from.

The literary texts allowed for a more comprehensive and experiential approach to feminist theory.

Hence students concluded that our brain does not really differentiate fiction from reality. Because of our human capacity for imagination, a fictional character or situation emotionally moves us and raises our adrenaline, triggering our cognitive and emotional faculties, in ways similar to what reality would do. The difference, of course, is that we know fiction is safe; we do not fight back, or fly away, we appreciate the virtual scenario. In other words, plots and characters tap into our cognitive and emotive skills. As readers we sense such signals because we have the ability to infer states of mind and emotions. Humans are programmed to read emotions, and literature is a joyful challenge to test our imagination and empathy. Ultimately, fiction enhanced students' interest in the topic and provided an opportunity to experience the theoretical concept of representation.

Module Content: Poetry. Tillie Lerner Olsen's "I Want You Women Up North to Know."

When young Tillie Lerner Olsen published her poem "I Want You Women Up North to Know" in 1934, she became one of the literary voices of the Great Depression. In her poem, the author denounces the working conditions of three seamstresses, Catalina, Maria, and Ambrosa, who stitched "those dainty children's dresses" that women up north would buy.¹⁶ Olsen alerts northern buyers that such garments "are dyed in blood, are stitched in wasting flesh, down in San Antonio."¹⁷ The poet goes on to tell the seamstresses' stories. Catalina Rodriguez has an "exquisite dance of her hands over the cloth, / and her cough, [is] gay, quick, staccato, like skeleton's bones clattering."¹⁸ Maria Vasquez "for fifteen cents a dozen stitches garments for children she has never had."¹⁹ Ambrosa Espinoza supports her disabled brother "working from dawn to midnight."²⁰ The poet then asks the women up north to "finger the exquisite hand-made dresses." A feeling of terse silk comes to the readers' mind sharply contrasting with the seamstresses' childless, breaking, and aging bodies.²¹

The author hauntingly juxtaposes the luxury of northern consumerism with the unrecognized skills and the physical and emotional endurance of Catalina, Maria, and Ambrosa. Thus, Olsen's poem talks about the burdens of class, gender and race discrimination, but it also highlights the seamstresses' resilience and talent. The close reading promoted a deeper understanding of

the concept of representation and allowed students to make links between the theoretical sources and the fictional strategies to represent women.

Module Content: Fiction. Roberta Fernández's "Amanda."

"Amanda," originally published in Roberta Fernández's *Intaglio: A Novel in Six Stories* (1990), tells the story of South Texan Amanda, at work at her sewing machine.²² Students were asked to think about the emotion awakened by the first paragraph of the story, which is a particularly meaningful passage. The first line warns the reader: "Transformation was definitely her specialty."²³ Amanda was able to make out of "georgettes, piques, peaux de soie, organzas, shantungs and laces exquisite gowns adorned with delicate opaline beadwork which she carefully touched up with the thinnest slivers of iridescent cording."²⁴ Amanda worked among "luminous whirls of *lentejuelas* [sequins] *de conchanacar* that would be dancing about, softly brushing against the swaying fabrics in various shapes and stages of completion."²⁵ Then, "amidst the colorful threads and iridescent fabrics shimmering in a reassuring rhythm, ...[Nenita would remember] the uninterrupted gentle droning of the magical Singer sewing machine" and [Amanda's] "mocking, whispering voice."²⁶ Rich and radiant vocabulary evokes the fascination that young "Nenita," our narrator, experienced around Amanda at work.

However, Amanda, who never married, and provocatively "gossips about the men and the women... as she tied a thread here and added a touch there,"²⁷ "was dabbling in herbs" and two old women "came to visit her by night, much to everyone's consternation."²⁸ After the exalting beginning, the reader is drawn into a darker understanding of Amanda. Amanda is an independent, creative woman, has women friends, and knows the properties of herbs. People in town gossip about Amanda and call her a witch. Nenita has started to fear Amanda.

I quizzed students about the prejudices that mediate the gossip about the seamstress. Students argued that patriarchal and class values are invested in the interpretation of Amanda's economic independence, creativity, and rural health knowledge as the lifestyle of a witch. However, a feminist analysis would explain her choices as applying her ancestral medical knowledge in harmony with her surroundings, and valuing friendship among women when they needed it most, at old age. Students concluded that the patriarchal misrepresentation of women leaders as witches lingers on in our era. Nenita recreates the societal paradigm that translates an independent, creative, hard-working woman as something to be feared.

Nonetheless, fascinated by Amanda's designs, Nenita asks for a garment. Despite her long sewing schedule, Amanda fashions an artistic black satin cape:

...ankle-length with braided frogs cradling tiny buttons down the knee. On the inside of the neckline was a black fur trim. "Cat fur," [Amanda] confessed ...On the left side of the cape,

was a small stuffed heart in burgundy-colored velveteen and, beneath the heart, [Amanda] had sewn-in red translucent beads.... Black chicken feathers framed my face... between the appliques of feathers, tiny bones were strung.²⁹

Believing in the magical quality of the garment, Nenita gazes at the moon now

and the familiar surroundings which glowed so luminously within the vast universe while [she was] out there in the darkness, the constant chirping of the crickets and the cicadas reiterated the reassuring permanence of everything around [her].³⁰

Nenita's mother fears such a cape created by a so-called witch and hides it in the attic, but it is too late. The cape has already transformed Nenita. She has learned about creativity acquired through hard work, resilience, friendship and laughter shared among women. Love, resilience, mutual aid, and creativity become magical legacies that transform the negative entrenched gender and class prejudices that outcast Amanda.

Amanda inspired Nenita to be creative, hard-working and happy. Amanda's talent, which patriarchal prejudice discredited as "witchcraft," designed a cape that encapsulated the legacy given to Nenita. Just as Amanda reworks clothes into beautiful garments that are part of the transformation of Nenita into a self-confident being, Nenita becomes the narrator who changes readers. In fact, readers are the receivers of the magic of the cape, now crafted as a magical story. We, as readers, are given Amanda's legacy as freedom and empowerment because of a deeper understanding of our own reality. When we read "Amanda" along with Olsen's and Gaspar de Alba's work, we acknowledge the talent that is lost in economic systems where profit, not human beings, is the main criteria. While Olsen and Gaspar de Alba expose racism, classism and patriarchy, Fernández turns the story of the marginalized from a source of anger into a source of creativity and power. She achieves two objectives: (1) she compels readers to develop an understanding of the social role of women workers; and (2) passes on to readers the transformative energy of a magical cape, now in the form of a bewitching story that transcends existing paradigms on gender and class.

Indeed, "Amanda" is a transformative literary work that disrupts patterns of perception familiar to readers, as magic would do. The word "witch" comes from an Anglo-Saxon root meaning "to bend" or "to shape."³¹ Thus, Amanda, as a talented witch, has shaped our consciousness, using the cape to turn our attention to those who are most silenced: women workers. Amanda empowers Nenita to gaze confidently at the moon and shapes our consciousness to honor Concepción, the *inditas*, María, Catalina, Ambrosa, and so many lost records of women's legacies.

Conclusions

The learning module contrasted the aesthetics and politics of representing women workers' lives and their magical legacies by reading "Amanda," in connection with other primary and secondary sources. Literature made tangible abstract feminist concepts and Concepción, the inditas, María, Catalina, Ambrosa, Amanda, and Nenita became real for students. In the postscript of *Calligraphy of the Witch*, Gaspar de Alba reveals that "some of the characters in the story will be familiar to readers who know the history of the Salem witch trials [however] their representations are fictional."³² Limited or inadequate representation of women begins in archival records. The strategy of forgetting or destroying the historical record is how cultural histories are eradicated from society by official "hypo-amnesic history."³³ When archival sources are lost or destroyed, fiction can fill the gaps in reconstructing the past.

Likewise, in the disclaimer of *Desert Blood*, Gaspar de Alba discusses her resort to fiction. Her novel is based on four years of research but the infrastructure of the United States/Mexico border allows for evidence to be destroyed or invalidated. Gaspar de Alba ends her disclaimer with a disheartening "Madres [Mothers], protect us."³⁴ The invocation to motherhood is a heart-breaking criticism of patriarchy. It also gestures to the impossibility to destroy our most intimate strength: the trust developed in our mothers and her language in our early years. Similarly, students resolved that Roberta Fernández tells the story of a seamstress from the border (Laredo) because Amanda might not have had the "right" gender or the "right" class to appear in history books, but when we read the short story about her we experience common people as political actors in everyday lived practice.

The learning module educated students on representation and women's contributions; it exercised their reading, writing, critical, cognitive, and emotional skills as well. Literary analysis was conducted in a cooperative approach that nurtured a community of learners. Fiction and introspection complemented feminist theoretical concepts being taught by opening the public space to everyone involved. On the last day of class, students were instructed to prepare an activity called "Give it Away" in which they shared their knowledge in fun and creative ways. We walked through campus and they engaged fellow students with games and fun tests. I prepared an activity too. I said aloud a list of statements and I paused after each one so that students could cheer if they agreed:

I understand my emotions better. I have self-discipline. I can relate complex information into a coherent argument with supporting evidence. I can build strong personal bonds with people who do not think like me. I feel confident about my contribution to the world. I am curious to know how society works. Reading literature is exciting. I am happy to pursue

excellence. I enjoy working in groups. I enjoy being friendly and approachable. I can help others grow.

As students cheered, their faces showed great pride. Amanda had worked her magic. Their achievements bolstered their self-esteem and they came to value the opportunity to strive for excellence in a rigorous educational environment. In other words, the comprehensive and experiential approach triggered students' cognitive and emotional potentialities.

Students' reflections have been the inspiration to write this article and pass on their own magical legacies. After reviewing the selected comments shown here, I see an acquired openness to question other silences:

I use all of the tools we have learned in class in my everyday life. Essentialism, classism, intersectionality, and myriad others are now part of my everyday life. They allow me to better understand the world around me. My life has changed because of this course and as a man, a third wave feminist, a critical thinker, and an improved writer, I can't say I would have it any other way.

Another student mentioned: "I took this class because it was required, but I really grew to like and enjoy this class to the fullest. Learning about women empowerment was what I needed." The semesters I taught this course I was saddened by the violence reported at Unites States' universities. Critical analysis of society and cooperation are students' valuable contributions to change our dystopian reality.

The concept of leadership came up in several evaluations of the course. Harvard research on leadership highlights the importance of developing emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, social skills, and cross-cultural appreciation.³⁵ A student shared this reflection:

I am so grateful for having taken this course and gaining the knowledge and new point of view on society. Furthermore, working within a group has taught me many skills to not only be a more efficient member but also a stronger leader as well.

Transnational feminist theory and friendship helped students to critically examine society and themselves.

Fiction trained students in relational resilience. As one student noted:

I am grateful for this class because it has taught me to appreciate the struggles of equality and encouraged me to reach out. I now find myself tweeting powerful quotes and facts that I hope will encourage my friends. It had taught me a load of things that I will be able to carry on through my entire

life. Not only the materials were educational, they were extremely interesting that made me self-reflect at home.

On resilience, another student commented:

Last thing I want to mention that surprised me and now urges me to make a difference by doing small gestures is when Dr. Feu showed us a depressing video of human trafficking and we read *Desert Blood*. I assumed that she saw the desperation and sadness in our eyes and she said, “You cannot let these facts overwhelm you. You will continue to embrace the power you have and make changes to improve our life.” That meant so much to me that I will forever remember and embrace it throughout life.

Fiction and feminist theory had democratized our classroom space and beyond.

On cross-cultural skills, a student revealed:

The most significant change that I’ve made was the interaction with everyone, disregard or their race, gender, class or nationality. I look beyond to discover the inner beauty of each and every human.

Students learned life-long critical and communication skills:

I felt everyone benefited just by discussing and building deeper class relationships with classmates. This class has taught me a lot about sticking up for myself in a respectful manner to others.

Students were already applying their cognitive and emotional development to their everyday life.³⁶

As I read students’ reflections, I see the transformation: feminist theory, fiction, and cooperation have opened their minds and their hearts to learn magical qualities from people. They have become more resilient, reflective team players and learned and esteemed transnational legacies. Both content and analytical tools will be handy for their future personal, professional, and societal challenges.³⁷

Notes

¹ See, Francisco José Cuevas Noa, *Anarquismo y educación. La propuesta sociopolítica de la pedagogía libertaria*. Madrid: Fundación de Estudios Libertarios Anselmo Lorenzo, 2003;

and Jesse S Cohn, *Anarchism and the Crisis of Representation. Hermeneutics, Aesthetics, Politics*. Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2010.

² There is ample scholarship for critical pedagogies. This course blended instructional techniques because adhering exclusively to a theoretical perspective for emancipatory education would be an oxymoron in terms.

³ A note on weekly reflections: guiding questions helped students to summarize, evaluate and integrate sources, classroom participation, and self-evaluations. Students assessed their work following the criteria provided with rubrics and my overview as instructor. By the end of the semester, students were ready to complete the steps needed to write a paper and had applied the assessment criteria to their own work.

⁴ bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress. Education as The Practice of Freedom*. (New York: Routledge, 1994), 47.

⁵ Anarchist, feminist, and postcolonial scholars have long addressed the positive impact of affective communities. See Leela Gandhi, *Affective Communities: Anticolonial Thought, Fin-de-Siècle Radicalism, and the Politics of Friendship*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006.

⁶ Elizabeth Flynn, Patricia Sotirin, and Ann Brady, *Feminist Rhetorical Resilience*. (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2012) 5, 7.

⁷ Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan, *An Introduction to Women's Studies: Gender in a Transnational World*. Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2006.

⁸ Jennifer Siebel Newsom, *Miss Representation*. New York, NY: Virgil Films, 2012.

⁹ David Arnold, "Women and Medicine." In *Introduction to Women's Studies: Gender in a Transnational World*, eds. Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan. (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2006), 80-84.

¹⁰ Barbara Ehreinreich and Deirdre English, "Exorcising the Midwives." In *Introduction to Women's Studies: Gender in a Transnational World*, eds. Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan. (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2006), 77-79.

¹¹ Students learned more about the baroque scholar viewing two video reviews on Henry Godinez's play "The Sins of Sor Juana." See, "The Sins of Sor Juana: Interview with Henry Godinez," YouTube video, 4:36, posted by Goodman Theatre, July 7, 2009, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zbj22TS2pnQ>. "The making of The Sins of Sor Juana," YouTube video, 5:55, posted by Goodman Theatre, June 15, 2010, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l3hNFzWQEJI>.

¹² Alicia Gaspar de Alba, *Calligraphy of the Witch*. (Houston, Texas: Arte Público Press, 2012) 264.

¹³ *Ibid*, 295.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 340.

¹⁵ Alicia Gaspar de Alba, *Desert Blood: The Juárez Murders*. (Houston, Tex: Arte Público Press, 2005).

¹⁶ Tillie Olsen, "I Want You Women Up North To Know," *New Labor Forum* (Routledge) 16. 2: 135-137. (2007): 135.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 135.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 135.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 135.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 136.

²¹ *Ibid*, 137.

²² It was read as a short story on its own in the anthology *Herencia* (2002).

²³ Roberta Fernández, “Amanda.” In *Herencia: the Anthology of Hispanic Literature of the United States*, ed. Nicolás Kanellos; co-editors, Kenya Dworkin y Méndez ... [et al.]; coordinator, Alejandra Balestra. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University, 2002), 308.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 308.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 308.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 308.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 309.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 310.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 311-2.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 312.

³¹ Donna Read, *The Burning times*. (New York: Wellspring Media, 1999).

³² Gaspar de Alba (2012), 437.

³³ Benjamin Hutchens, “Hypo-Amnesic History and the An-Archive.” In *The Future of Anarchism. Substance. A Review of Theory and Literary Criticism* 113. 36. 2, 37-55 (2007), 41.

³⁴ Gaspar de Alba (2005), vi.

³⁵ *Harvard Business Review on Leadership*. (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1998).

<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.shsu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=17090>.

³⁶ Some enhancements are not shared here because of their more private nature but they entailed job changes and improvement of relationships with friends, coworkers and relatives.

³⁷ I thank my students for letting me grow with them and my colleagues for always being ready to support my work, in particular Debra Andrist, Jesse Cohn, Frieda Koeninger, Beverly McPhail, Jorell Meléndez, William Novak, and Samar Zahrawi.

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