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Guest Editor's Picks

Lourdes Torres

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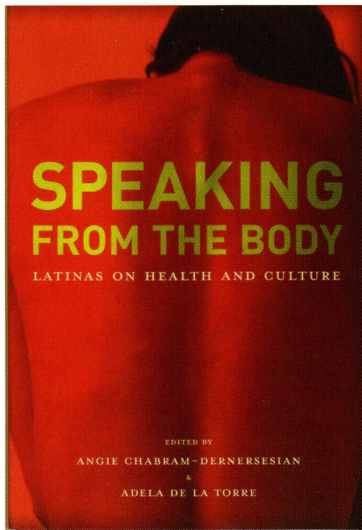
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Guest Editor's Picks

Cover Page Footnote

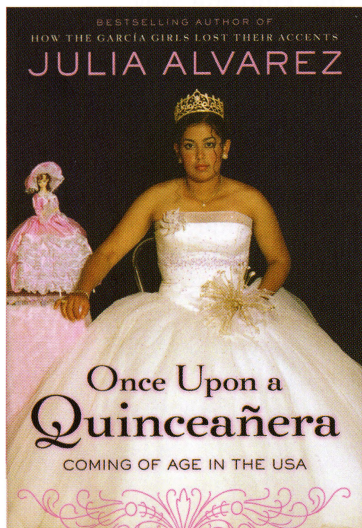
This article is from an earlier iteration of *Diálogo* which had the subtitle "A Bilingual Journal." The publication is now titled "Diálogo: An Interdisciplinary Studies Journal."



Speaking from the Body: Latinas on Health and Culture

Angie Chabram-Dernersesian (Editor), Adela de la Torre (Editor), University of Arizona Press, 2008

In compelling first-person accounts, Latinas speak freely about dealing with serious health episodes as patients, family caregivers, or friends. They show how the complex interweaving of gender, class, and race impacts the health status of Latinas—and how family, spirituality, and culture affect the experience of illness. Here are stories of Latinas living with conditions common to many: hypertension, breast cancer, obesity, diabetes, depression, osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, dementia, Parkinson's, lupus, and hyper/hypothyroidism. By bringing these narratives out from the shadows of private lives, they demonstrate how such ailments form part of the larger whole of Latina lives that encompasses family, community, the medical profession, and society. They show how personal identity and community intersect to affect the interpretation of illness, compliance with treatment, and the utilization of allopathic medicine, alternative therapies, and traditional healing practices. Speaking from the Body is a trailblazing collection of personal testimonies that integrates professional and personal perspectives and shows that our understanding of health remains incomplete if Latina cultural narratives are not included.



Once Upon a Quinceañera: Coming of Age in the USA

Julia Alvarez, Plume, 2008

Alvarez, a much-loved author—Saving the World (2006) is her most recent novel—offers an insightful look at the Latino tradition of the quinceañera, an “elaborate, ritualized fiesta” on a girl’s fifteenth birthday. Though she arrived in the U.S. from the Dominican Republic in the early 1960s, shortly before her own coming-of-age, Alvarez never had a “quince.” Intrigued with the tradition, she has now made up for missing hers by immersing herself in this popular rite of passage for a year, traveling to various Latino communities in the U.S. and documenting all the details of the quince: the mandatory limo, the photographer, the court and their professionally choreographed dances, the cake, and, above all, the gown. She also delves into the history of the ritual itself, from Mayan ceremonies to Spanish balls, and the reasons the quinceañera is thriving today in the U.S., especially as a way for girls to keep in touch with their culture. Alvarez enlivens the discussion with flashbacks to her own adolescence in Queens, adding another facet to her enlightening look at an important event in the lives of Latinas in America.--Deborah Donovan.



Women and Migration in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands: A Reader

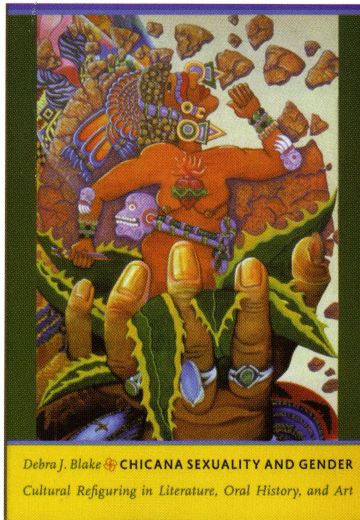
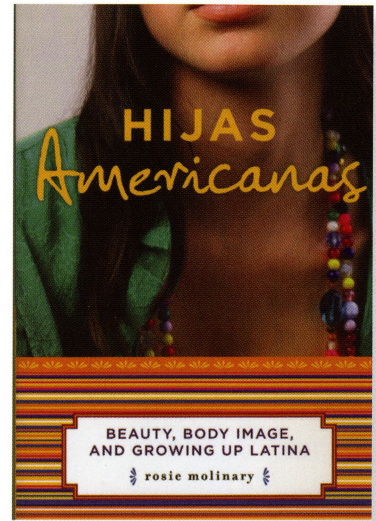
Denise Segura, Duke University Press, 2007

“A deeply felt and thoroughly researched work, Woman and Migration in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands brings together some of the most important feminist voices in the field of immigration and transnational studies. I think Gloria Anzaldúa would have been proud to see how the authors of this book took her concept of the borderlands and grounded it ethnographically in the sorrows, struggles, and dreams of contemporary Chicana and Mexican women. A timely and courageous book that speaks to the major issue of our time--the search for home across and between and despite borders.”--Ruth Behar, author of Translated Woman: Crossing the Border with Esperanza's Story. “Denise A. Segura and Patricia Zavella have compiled a spectacular collection on gender, migration, sexuality, work, and family. Timely, provocative, and imaginative, the essays in Women and Migration in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands will become essential readings across a variety of (inter)disciplines: Latina/o studies, cultural studies, sociology, anthropology, gender studies, Latin American studies, American studies, urban planning, and public policy.”--Vicki Ruiz, author of From Out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth-Century America.

Hijas Americanas: Beauty, Body Image, and Growing Up Latina

Rosie Molinary, Seal Press, 2007

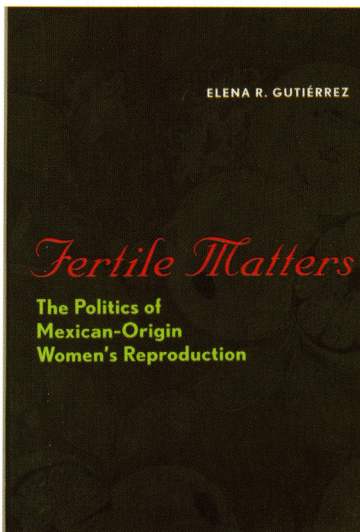
“Young Latinas grow up dealing with two, often conflicting, sets of expectations about how they should look, how they should act and how they should dream, points out Molinary, a poet, teacher and first-generation Latina born to Puerto-Rican parents, in this study. Drawing on the responses of more than 500 women who answered an extensive survey, Molinary lays out the most pressing tensions and obstacles for Latinas around issues like body image, religion and sexuality. In chapters titled “Turning Gringa” and “How Latina Are You?” she weaves together her own stories with the anecdotes of her survey respondents. The extensive quoting of other Latinas imbues the book with an honesty that will likely be appreciated by young readers. (June)”--Publishers Weekly (Copyright Reed Business Information, Inc.)



Chicana Sexuality and Gender: Cultural Refiguring in Literature, Oral History, and Art

Debra J. Blake, Duke University Press, 2008

“Debra J. Blake makes a great contribution to Chicano/a studies, feminist theory, folklore, and literary studies. Much has been written on La Malinche, La Llorona, and the Virgin of Guadalupe but Blake’s study is one of the most thorough, perceptive, and brilliantly argued.” --Maria Herrera-Sobek, author of *Chicano Folklore: A Handbook*. “Debra J. Blake’s approach to the discussion of the archetypes of La Malinche, La Llorona, and La Virgen de Guadalupe, and her inclusion of other lesser-known figures, allow her to go beyond the mere rehashing of the same old discussions as she introduces women’s voices whose very existence questions the archetypes. By including and analyzing personal narratives collected in a series of interviews, the author explores the real-life existence of these figures in contemporary Chicana lives. This scholarly and illuminating text offers a fresh view of these often oversimplified images and icons found in Mexican female iconography.” --Norma E. Cantu, author of *Canicula: Snapshots of a Girlhood en la Frontera*.



Fertile Matters: The Politics of Mexican-Origin Women's Reproduction

Elena R. Gutiérrez, University of Texas Press, 2008

While the stereotype of the persistently pregnant Mexican-origin woman is longstanding, in the past fifteen years her reproduction has been targeted as a major social problem for the United States. Due to fear-fueled news reports and public perceptions about the changing composition of the nation’s racial and ethnic makeup—the so-called Latinization of America—the reproduction of Mexican immigrant women has become a central theme in contemporary U. S. politics since the early 1990s. Using the coercive sterilization of Mexican-origin women in Los Angeles as a case study, Gutiérrez opens a dialogue on the racial politics of reproduction, and how they have developed for women of Mexican origin in the United States. She illustrates how the ways we talk and think about reproduction are part of a system of racial domination that shapes social policy and affects individual women’s lives.

The Sexuality of Migration: Border Crossings and Mexican Immigrant Men

Lionel Cantu (Author), Nancy Naples (Author), Salvador Vidal-Ortiz (Author), NYU Press, 2009

“In this path-breaking book, which is startling for what it reveals and what it innovates, Cantú shows how sex and the state are intimately related in one of the greatest dramas of our time, international migration. *The Sexuality of Migration* is a work of inspiration, integrity, and scholarly creativity.” --Perrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, author of *Gods Heart Has No Borders: How Religious Activists Are Working for Immigrant Rights*.

