

Inti: Revista de literatura hispánica

Number 40

*The Configuration of Feminist Criticism and
Theoretical Practices in Hispanic Literary
Studies*

Article 9

1994

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Dipuccio, Denise (Otoño-Primavera 1994) "*Siete lunas y un espejo: New Texts to Live By*," *Inti: Revista de literatura hispánica*: No. 40, Article 9.

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SIETE LUNAS Y UN ESPEJO: NEW TEXTS TO LIVE BY

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In *Siete lunas y un espejo*, by Albalucía Angel, a rather motley crew, comprised of three literary figures and four historical personages, meet on a camping trip that defies all sense of temporal and spatial logic. In the fairy tale setting of the forest, George Sand, Virginia Woolf, Juana de Arco, María Antonieta, Alicia of Wonderland, Julieta of Shakespearean fame, and the unnamed, la Escritora, meet and discuss their respective lives. Separating the literary from the human beings marks the first step toward distinguishing one character from another. Numerous other factors, such as nationality, historical epoch, age, and socio-economic background, differentiate these women. Despite these differences, the members of this group share a very strong bond. Each woman, be she fictional or human, French or English, queen or saint, lives a text written for her by Western European patriarchal norms. During conversations, in which they exchange philosophical, political, and religious views, the women gradually become critics of the gender-specific texts that are their lives. Some argue for substantial revisions of their prescribed roles; others suggest minor stylistic changes. In any case, these analyses lead to the exploration and possible subversion of the misogynistic canon written for women. Angel ends the play with women on the verge of creating a new set of texts to live by.

Many of the problems presented in *Siete lunas* recall issues dealt with by Alba Lucía Angel in her earlier prose fiction. Helena Araujo notes that in novels, such as *Misiá Señora* (1982) and *Estaba la Pájara Pinta sentada en su verde limón* (1973), Angel portrays women trapped in a choice between two supposedly exclusive identities: sensuous woman and self-sacrificing mother. Araujo characterizes Mariana, the protagonist of *Misiá Señora* in the following manner:

Como anti-heroína, se aventura en la ignominia, atreviéndose a señalar los mecanismos de una sociedad que honra y exalta los falsos pudores... Mariana sabe que tarde o temprano debe escoger entre el gozo sensual y el sentido de la decencia (135).

Mariana's seven sisters in *Siete lunas* dare to expose the ideological systems that limit their textual and sexual choices.

Most of us are familiar with the term "canon" and its application to literature. Angel broadens and shifts the focus from literary to gendered canons and from fictional to living texts. The scope of Angel's play parallels a series of lectures given by one of her characters, Virginia Woolf, in the late 20's. These presentations, entitled "Women and Fiction" and later published as *A Room of One's Own*, serve as an intertextual guiding light for *Siete lunas*. Woolf's introductory remarks synthesize the complex scope of Angel's play:

The title women and fiction might mean... women and what they are like; or it might mean women and the fiction that they write; or it might mean women and the fiction that is written about them; or it might mean that somehow all three are inextricably mixed together. (3)

The characters of *Siete lunas* combine each of the possible meanings under the rubric of Women and Fiction. A large part of the dramatic tension of the play stems from the confrontation of two or more fictions. For example, the fictions written about and by them do not necessarily coincide.

As a result, at least two levels of revisions function within *Siete lunas*: Angel re-writing parts for women in her play and Angel's characters re-creating roles of their lives. What both of these levels have in common, however, is that women (re)create the texts. In her article "The Changing Face of Woman in Latin American Fiction," Marcia L Welles contrasts the representation of women in literature by male and female authors. The former tends toward superficial stereotyping; the latter, toward complex characterization. Welles concludes:

The characterization of women by female authors is more convincing because the outlines are less distinct, less articulate. These women can no longer be readily identified as types. They fit into no specific classifications — as wife, mother, virgin, or prostitute (281).

Clearly enough, in the hands of this contemporary female author, the characters rebel against forces that make clichés of the lives and avoid textual typecasting.

Quite necessarily, then, the characters of *Siete lunas* embody a variety of roles. This curious mixture of fictional and real people forms a repository of female identities spanning from the early fifteenth to the late twentieth centuries. At first, some of the roles which comprise this feminine heritage may

be more to our liking than others. For example, it is easier to identify with the noble Juana de Arco than the harebrained Mar'a Antonieta. Nevertheless, even the infamous queen, whose pronouncement, "Let them eat cake," tarnished her historical image, gets a change to supplement accounts of the past and offer an alternative perspective on her character. Each woman breaks the mold of her historical, religious, or literary textualization. Furthermore, they share their private texts with one another. This exchange provides a virtual buffet of possible identities: saint and sinner, woman of letters and arms, mother and maiden, and, writer and reader. Moreover, because the women so readily share, the boundaries between texts become less distinct, suggesting that these identities do not mutually exclude one another. They represent multifaceted qualities that coexist explicitly or implicitly within all women.

Yet another consideration bears on the choice of characters for *Siete lunas*. At some level, all of the women are implicated, not only in being written, but in writing. Virginia Woolf, George Sand, and la Escritora earn money by putting words to paper. Furthermore, Alicia wants to be an author. Finally, throughout the play, Julieta, Juana de Arco, and María Antonieta gradually take charge of the literary, religious, and historical texts that have been authored for them by others. This identity of woman as writer is a relatively new one. Once again, Virginia Woolf's comments offer a point of departure for discussion. According to Woolf, one of the most remarkable aspects involving the emergence of nineteenth-century female novelists was that they wrote without having inherited a feminine literary tradition (75-78). Unlike Thackeray, Dickens and Balzac, who could tap the stylistic and thematic pool of numerous male predecessors, Austen, Eliot, and the Brontës had a few female role models who could bequeath to them a tradition of fictional and historical women. In order to establish this missing legacy, all of the characters of *Siete lunas* need to become writers. La Escritora, Woolf, and Sand represent female voices of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Nevertheless, the other characters *cum* writers establish a time line of female authors, dating from 1412, the year in which Juan de Arco was born, to the present, the year in which La Escritora lives.

Related to this focus on literary heritage is the question of cultural legacies bequeathed by the Old to the New World. A feminine European intertext informs this play. Although the seven women of *Siete lunas* are not of origins indigenous to Latin America, they embody the values of a heretofore ignored cultural ancestry. Latin America's Western European foremothers hand down a literary tradition to a contemporary Colombian novelist and dramatist. Regardless of ethnic backgrounds, these women learn to author their own texts and/or amend those texts written for them by a dominant ideology.

Texts, and their affect on individuals, become immediately apparent in the first few moments of opening scene, when La Escritora still has not met her camping mates. She wakes up, emerges from her tent, and begins preparing breakfast. The protagonist, very aware of the fact that she is alone, enjoys the

opportunity to act a little foolish. While she waits for her coffee to perk, La Escritora sings to herself, imitates the movements and noises of forest animals, and expounds in a rather melodramatic tone on the beauty of the forest. After taking her first sip of coffee, the protagonist gets even more silly and quotes a popular advertisement: “Exquisito, señora: café Sello Rojo... (Tono de propaganda de radio) en su cocina, en su salón, en su oficina...” (16). Although this opening scene is rather lighthearted in tone, it introduces the idea that texts prescribe in our lives. Despite her designation as the one who writes the texts, La Escritora drinks her coffee to the memorized script of a radio commercial written by someone else. Like any of us who have “filled it to the rim,” or “celebrated the moments of our lives,” La Escritora intertextualizes her morning bracer of caffeine. If the purpose of this, like so many camping trips, is to get away from it all, then La Escritora is unsuccessful. Elements from her late twentieth-century industrialized society impinge on this atemporal bucolic forest. Shortly thereafter, the direction of the play moves from prescribed roles for all humans to gender specific roles for women.

Like La Escritora, when each of the other six women crosses the threshold into the world of the forest, she still carries the cultural and literary baggage of her textualized life. In most cases, the transition goes unnoticed. It is as if, while strolling through their respective fictional and historical worlds, they happened upon the forest. Most of the women are unaware that their meanderings lead them across temporal, geographical and existential boundaries. For example, Alicia, the first to accompany La Escritora, bursts on stage, looking for the Mad Hatter: “¡Hola...! ¿Usted no ha visto pasar por casualidad a un conejo...?” (17). Shortly thereafter, Virginia Woolf politely greets the others and begins talking about the weather. Her conversation indicates that she is unaware that she has just completed a journey to another world: “Estos climas ingleses son siempre imprevisibles. En pleno mes de mayo y con este viento helado... (Se frota los brazos)” (20).

Within minutes after the curtain rises on *Siete lunas y un espejo*, then, three worlds converge. Alicia thinks she is in Wonderland; Virginia Woolf thinks she is in England; La Escritora thinks she is in whatever camping grounds offer respite from her unknown metropolis. Nevertheless, more than three worlds blend when these women meet. Together, they set the stage for several types of textual considerations and analyses. Each recalls some level of writing. Alicia is a written fictional text; Virginia Woolf writes texts; and La Escritora, a fictional protagonist portrayed as a writer, is both written by and writer of texts. La Escritora, Alicia, and Virginia Woolf initiate a literary revision; later, other women will add historical and religious amendments.

Three types of literature are analyzed in *Siete lunas*: children’s stories, classical theater, and GrecoRoman mythology. K. K. Ruthven discusses the ideological underpinnings of one manifestation of children’s literature: “Fairy tales among the cultural forms which help consolidate this belief that the best

thing which can happen to a girl (the passive construction is significant here) is to fall in love, get married and have lots of children" (79). Several elements of *Siete lunas* ground the characters in a fairy tale reality. The very setting of the play, the forest, recalls numerous children's legends. Furthermore, even someone with as much tragic potential as Julieta betrays some latent fairy tale qualities. Witness her first exchange with Alicia:

Julieta: ¿Por casualidad no han visto pasar por aquí a mi príncipe?
 Alicia: ¿Encantado? O sin encantar.
 Julieta: (Con adorable sonrisa) ¡Encantado! (62)

With this adorable, and, no doubt breathless, princess looking for Prince Charming in the woods, *Siete lunas* is a fairy tale waiting to happen.

Nevertheless, the characters slowly redefine the limitations of their intertextual reality. In *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* the protagonist comments on the literary potential of her experiences:

When I used to read fairy tales, I fancied that kind of thing never happened, and now here I am in the middle of one! There ought to be a book written about me, that there ought! And when I grow up, I'll write one... (58)

Alicia has similar literary aspirations: "(Soñadora) ¡Ahhh...! Yo quisiera ser escritora" (54). The text already written for and about her is not completely to her liking and she amends it. Even before she puts pen to paper, Alicia begins to rewrite through her actions. She undermines a primary sociological underpinning of fairy tales, that is, her passive integration into the patriarchal fold. Karen E. Rowe outlines the prescribed outcome for women's sexual rite of passage found in fairy tales:

These tales which glorify passivity, dependency, and self-sacrifice as a heroine's cardinal virtues suggest that culture's very survival depends upon a woman's acceptance of roles which relegate her to motherhood and domesticity.... In short, fairy tales are not just entertaining fantasies, but powerful transmitters of romantic myths which encourage women to internalize only aspirations deemed appropriate to our "real" sexual functions within a patriarchy. (239)¹

In an encounter with the Hunter, Alicia alters the stereotypical characterization of the maiden waiting to express her "'real' sexual function" within the matrimonial norm. After the Hunter greets everyone as "señoras," he eyes Alicia, dressed in her pinafore, white tights, and black Mary Janes, and quickly adds, "y señorita." Alicia's response intimates that appearances may be deceiving: "¿Y de dónde acá este cretino puede saber la diferencia...? ¿Duerme en mi cama, o qué?" (24). Despite her virginal accouterments, this rather plucky Alicia corrects an erroneous assumption made by the Hunter, and possibly the

spectator. Contrary to what Lewis Carroll would have us believe, Alicia is not the embodiment of youthful innocence.

Alicia broadens the scope of her analysis to another character in Wonderland, namely the famed Cheshire Cat. Alicia finds the grinning feline a bit ridiculous:

A mí me parece un gato simpático pero tonto y con un sentido del humor patético. Si cree que desapareciéndose y dejando colgada su sonrisa para que uno se muera de miedo,... pues está completamente frito (23).

Alicia suggests that Carroll was pushing the limits of anyone's suspension of disbelief if he thought such antics could more than mildly annoy her.

Julieta also develops a critical distance from the classical play that is her life. After meeting the courageous Juana, the Shakespearean character feels that her own deeds pale in comparison. Her friends, however, assure Julieta that her contributions to the feminine identity are valid and necessary. George Sand assures her: "Tú has cumplido una de las hazañas más delirantes y más bellas de la historia del mundo" (68). Her sacrifices in the name of passionate love are as noble as Juana's devotion to pure faith. The mystical and the carnal share equal pride of place in this composite feminine identity.

A third literary revision coincides with Alicia's criticism of fairy tales and Julieta's reservations about classical theater. Virginia Woolf suggests major revisions in Roman and Greek myths that reserve active roles for males and relegate women to passive witnesses. In reference to the brave Theseus having entered the labyrinth and slain the Minotaur, Virginia states:

Las mujeres tenemos que saber que también poseemos ese poder. No sólo el poder mágico y delicioso de servir durante siglos de espejos de aumentos para que los hombres se vean dos veces más hombres, más reyes, más poderosos... (22)

Ruthven points out that Marxists censure myth criticism as:

a reactionary discourse which hinders the transformation of society by pretending that a handful of allegedly transhistorical and immutable archetypes encode the only human experiences worth having (72).

Virginia Woolf takes to task not only the criticism but the stories which inspire these archetypes. For the most part, while men slay various and sundry hybrid creatures, women stand by with trusty golden threads that lead their heroes back. Woolf challenges women to execute the daring feats heretofore reserved for men.

Closely related to the literary editing implied in *Siete lunas* are the religious and historical emendations. When Juana de Arco, literally "canonized"

in sacred texts, arrives on stage looking for her white horse, she initiates a historical revision. At first, the saint accepts the official interpretation of her life: God willed that Juana, in the body of a woman, albeit a bit virile, perform manly deeds. This idea suggests that Juana's heroic dimensions are manly. Her friends give her an updated interpretation:

- Virginia: No, Juana. Eso es lo que dicen las crónicas. Pero esa versión está pasad de moda...
- Escritora: Lo que dice Virginia es cierto, Juana. Tu hazaña está en todas las crónicas pero la historia es coja... Nosotras la hemos sacado a la luz de nuevo, con el significado que se merece. (42)

This updated history lesson shifts the focus from Juana's manly to her mystical powers. When she was burned at the stake, the fire "respected" her heart, which was later found in a river. The Maid of Orléans is a heroine not because of her participation in transient human affairs, namely the Hundred Years' War, but because of her role in an everlasting divine mystery. According to Virginia and La Escritora, male authored chronicles stress that Juana facilitated Charles VII's coronation. Their revised version suggests that Juana's involvement with wars, kings, and History is incidental. Her true worth resides in her pure faith and the last scene of the play suggests an imminent test of this quality. Juana, stripped of armor and weapons, confronts a marine, shielded in fatigues and guns. The spectator never knows if Juana's miraculous heart will protect her from the guerrilla's weapons. The scene does have a leveling effect, for the fighter has no idea what to make of his opponent: "(... la está mirando como si ella fuera un ser de otro planeta)" (79). Given the soldier's confusion, Juana may have the advantage of at least beginning the encounter on equal ground.

On the opposite end of the heroic spectrum is María Antonieta. Yet, of all the women on stage, the Queen of France proves the most capable of self-examination. While the other women laboriously edit texts written by others, María Antonieta carefully revises her own actions. Since she, like any woman, could resort to the prescribed role of submissive and dutiful wife, María could easily blame Luis XVI for the entire historical debacle. Nevertheless, despite an acute awareness of her textualization by others, María also accepts some authorial responsibility. In the two hundred years since her death, María has gained an emotional and psychological distance from her historical moment. In the first place, she recognizes that Luis XVI himself was a weak victim of circumstances. Given that Luis no longer serves as a scapegoat, María looks within and admits that her own life was shallow. A childhood memory synthesizes this realization. María recalls one day when she observed the daughters of her mothers friends:

me parecían unas muñequitas ridículas, coquetas y vanidosas... Jamás se me

pasó por la cabeza de que yo era *exactamente igual*..... ¡Y ésta es la hora en que vengo a caer en cuenta! (44).

Empowered with critical hindsight, Marfa now accepts responsibility for her actions. The Queen pleads guilty to the charge of being a bubble-headed bimbo. With the help of her camping mates, she begins to develop her intellect and compassion. Such self-awareness gives Marfa the opportunity to revise her historical character, who, correctly or not, remains an infamous principal in the blood bath of the French Revolution.

Marfa Antonieta's changes of clothing visually underscore her mental transformation. In her first appearance on stage, she dons regal attire: "(con miriñaque y demás afeites y perendengues)" (27). Her long gown gets tangled in the bushes; her unwieldy wig catches her off balance. Marfa cuts the all-too-familiar figure of the vain queen who dined sumptuously while the peasants starved. Later, Marfa discards her courtly dress: "(... hace su entrada Marfa. Sin zapatos, sin peluca, sin miriñaque, con un ramo de flores salvajes enorme...)" (49). Liberated from the confining cocoon of wig, hoop skirt and jewelry, Marfa Antonieta emerges as nothing more and nothing less than a woman, but one capable of self-reflection and self-improvement.

Perhaps the character that most encourages Marfa's metamorphosis is George Sand. Indeed, at the beginning of the play, the indignant author can barely stand to be in the same forest with the queen. Immediately upon Marfa's arrival, the two women engage in a heated debate. George Sand, daughter of the revolution, and Marfa Antonieta, daughter of the monarchy, attack each other's political stances. Nevertheless, when they eventually call a truce, they put aside these differences in favor of gender specific similarities. Each is a woman forced to write new roles for herself in political or literary arenas. George Sand even begrudgingly admits that Marfa died with dignity.

George Sand, in conjunction with Virginia Woolf, bequeaths to contemporary women writers two centuries of literary tradition. Unlike her successor, however, George Sand did not enjoy the luxury of signing her manuscripts with her own name. Although Amandine Aurore Lucie Dupin, the Baroness Dudevant, led a rather unconventional life by nineteenth-century standards, she is quite aware of the limits imposed on women of any age. In her *tertulia* with Virginia Woolf, she discusses two major topics: the challenges facing women writers and the canon of texts by men. Aware that any advice runs the risk of being too general to be useful, George Sand reluctantly gives one word of caution to all women writers: "pisar duro desde el comienzo.... O sea, no dejarse enredar por las doctrinas y los sofismas y los calambures con los que tratan de ganar tiempo y terreno las *deidades*..." (55). George Sand challenges women to look for and to utilize new forms of expression. She knows of what she speaks, for her own novels, originally dismissed as trivial sentimentality, have only recently been elevated to the category of "serious" literature.

With regard to the second topic of their literary discussion, Sand and Woolf “decanonize” a classic. Both women disagree with the following critical appraisal of *Madame Bovary*: “es un aporte único y profundamente psicológico de lo que se consideró entonces como el comienzo de la aventura de la ‘liberación femenina’” (57). Woolf and Sand insist that Flaubert reflected rather than created. His novel recorded a movement already begun by numerous Emma Bovaries of the period. By diminishing Flaubert’s role to that of mere reflector, Woolf and Sand debunk the myth of the creative genius of the great white male. Furthermore, they invert a traditional structure, earlier bemoaned by Woolf, namely the role of women as passive mirror to men’s activity. Seen in this light, Flaubert reflects the heroic dimensions of Emma Bovary.

Men as mirrors not only reflect women but themselves. Indeed, the mirror of the title of the play refers to three male characters. Given that women no longer serve as magnifying glasses to augment men’s deeds, the masculine presence on stage reflects and refracts his own images. Men appear on stage in various guises, but they all resemble one another because one actor plays the role of the hunter, fox, and soldier. This visual likeness complements a thematic consistency. In each instance, a man halts the action of the play, thereby suggesting that he freezes women in a set of prescribed roles. This immobilization is doubly pertinent in contrastive light of the women’s loose entrances. Although one might more readily expect to see a hunter and a fox in the woods than an eighteenth-century French queen or a fictional fourteenth-century Shakespearean character, the women, unlike the men, do not startle anyone with their entrances. The others greet her as if this encounter were quite natural. The newcomer instantly joins the group and contributes her opinions to the topic at hand. On the other hand, each time a man enters, his language and actions congeal the scene. Furthermore, what begins as a dramatic pause becomes dramatic paralysis by the end of the play.

Fairy tale princes and states of suspended animation often go hand in hand. Numerous comatose heroines patiently await a resuscitating kiss from Prince Charming. Ruthven discusses the potential lessons learned by the female reader of these stories:

... she is by nature a passive creature, like the princess who waits patiently on top of the Glass Hill for the first man to climb it.... She learns also that she is symbolically dead... until brought to life by the man who will be the man in her life (80).

Angel reveals some of the more insidious possibilities of this fairy tale plot. The fox, hunter, and soldier never even kiss, let alone awaken, the sleeping beauties. They make every attempt to keep the women submerged in physical and mental stupors. As a result, when the women do wake up, they initiate acts of self-determination and self-realization. These awakenings, both literal and metaphorical, are even more impressive in light of the fact that each man

constructs barriers intended to impede, rather than encourage, movement.

When the Hunter, caring a rifle, first appears on stage, he courteously asks the women if they have seen his quarry, a fox. The women, unsettled by the sight of a weapon, are reluctant to talk. The urbane Hunter becomes frustrated and aggressive. Identifying himself as the park ranger, he demands to see a camping permit, which none of the confused women can produce. Only María Antonieta's unexpected appearance prevents the Hunter from putting an end to their camping trip. The Queen imperiously informs her subject that he is trespassing on royal property. Exit the confused Hunter, who returns that evening in his second masculine guise, the fox. With this change in costume, he escalates his attempts to immobilize the women.

In both of his appearances on stage, the fox, far more threatening than the Hunter, definitively stops the action of the play. While they sleep, the fox ogles the women. His attire and movements recall the prototypical fair tale character: "(... El zorro viste de blanco, descalzo, con chaleco de cuadritos, sombrero blanco, por donde emergen las dos grandes orejas. Cola rojiza, enorme y lustrosa. Clavel en el ojal)" (36). With a lewd smile, the fox appraises the women. His final evaluation of the sleeping beauties is: "Con que éstas son las mujercitas" (36). In their dormant condition, the women are not only unable to defend themselves, but are unconscious of the fox's threatening presence. As soon as he leaves, the women, one by one, wake up, thereby regaining their mobility and consciousness. It is as if the fox's very presence stultifies their vitality.

The women's voluntary immobility in this scene contrasts with the forced paralysis that results from the fox's second visit. Immediately following Julieta's arrival to the group, someone screams. The stage becomes a freeze frame and the women, wax museum pieces. In this state of suspended animation, the fox teases and verbally abuses the women: "Hembritas tan tenaces. ¡Tetoncitas...! ¡Culoncitas...!" (62). As he leaves the stage, the fox lets out a battle cry.

This war whoop prepares the spectator for the third, and last, facet of a masculine presence. A trigger happy conscript points a machine gun at the women and yells, "NADIE SE MUEVA" (76). This command marks the culmination of progressively hostile efforts to stop the action of the play. Equipped with a blatantly phallic repertoire of knives, swords, and rifles, the warrior threatens to prevent the women from completing their textual revisions. All the women, except Juana de Arca, are present. They try, to no avail, to rationalize with the soldier. When Juana arrives, saint and soldier meet face to face as if ready for combat. Unlike her partner, Juana does not wear her armor or carry a sword. The play ends with the battle pending. "(Las otras mujeres están sin ninguna expresión, *inmóviles*)" (emphasis mine, 79). Only Juana de Arco's victory can free them from the Soldier's incapacitating presence.

Although this last scene appears to be a rather blunt ending, it underscores

yet another revisionist goal of the play. Angel's dramatic structure is more in keeping with a feminine discourse. Perry Nodelman, basing himself on Robert Scholes's parallel between fiction and male sexuality,² describes conventional, and therefore masculine, texts in the following terms:

self-enclosed fictions with beginnings, middles, climaxes, and ends. The conventional structure of these works often seems to imply the possibility either of transcendence or of healthful adjustment to reality (256-57).

Although Nodelman comments most specifically on prose fiction, his definition easily applies to theater. A traditional structure of exposition, complication, and denouement ties up the loose ends and creates the illusion that, for the time being, the characters have dealt satisfactorily, or not, with their problems. *Siete lunas* avoids this identifiably masculine structure. The spectator would be hard pressed to state in concrete terms the central dramatic problem. It would be equally difficult to decide where the exposition ends and the complication begins. Rather, eight different plot lines, involving seven moons and one mirror, happen upon one another, intersect, interact, and diverge. The characters wander in and out of each other's respective texts without there being anything quite so phallic as a point to their meeting. Nothing in the play indicates how this textual interweaving affects any of the women. As the play closes, the women are waiting to see what happens between the soldier and Juana. Furthermore, even this potential climax entails some rather anti-climactic considerations. With no build-up and no clear indication of its purpose, the scene leaves the spectator with a series of questions: What is the desired outcome of this encounter? What would constitute a victory or failure for Juana? Is there something inherently feminine and masculine in the stances adopted by Juana and the soldier? Will this battle affect other women and men? The spectator can draw no conclusions. And yet, any other denouement would create a phallogocentric text, comparable to the fairy tales, myths, and chronicles, criticized by the women in the play.

In addition to the purely textual justifications outlined above, an extratextual consideration bears on the last scene of *Siete lunas*. The tensions presented in this play have only begun to surface and to be discussed in society. A definitive end would intimate that the women's movement has achieved, or not, its goals. But the jury is not in yet. This denouement synthesizes the often uncertain, sometimes contradicting, negotiations for new texts. One may hope that Adrienne Rich's assertion pertains to *Siete lunas*: "The sleepwalkers are coming awake, and for the first time this awakening has a collective reality; it is no longer such a lonely thing to open one's eyes" (35). If Rich is correct, then Juana will awaken her comrades and together they will create a literary movement. In a supportive and collective environment they will author new texts and set precedents for us to follow.

In *Siete lunas* the ideal environment for shaping this movement is the forest. Angel's staging underscores the need for women to separate themselves from the norm in order to begin their literary revisions. Helena Araujo suggests that space, and its uses, is of primary concern in Angel's prose. Araujo compares the limiting roles written for Angel's protagonists with the constrictive spaces, "espacios constrictivos" (100), in which they move. In *Siete lunas*, Angel physically liberates her characters by reevaluating the spatial patterns of the monomyth. According to archetypal criticism, three basic stages, separation, initiation, and return, mark the hero(ine)'s journey. Like so many literary predecessors, the women of *Siete lunas* initiate their adventures with a journey to the unknown. When they enter the forest, they separate themselves from spaces, such as houses, schools, churches, and, most recently, offices, in which they would enact their clearly defined roles. It is in this environment where they face the adventures of defying social norms and cultural codes, analyzing restrictive texts, and writing more palatable alternatives. Nevertheless, unlike Little Red Riding Hood and Snow White, who return home, the characters of *Siete lunas* remain in the forest, until they can appropriate their own space.

The greatest potential for writing new texts in a space of one's own resides in La Escritora. Of all the characters in the play, she is the one with the most freedom and responsibility to create new texts for her compatriots. The others, despite moderate success at breaking patriarchal norms, remain bound to the texts written for them by others or by themselves. In *A Room of One's Own* Virginia Woolf indulges in a bit of creative genealogy by giving the Bard of Avon a sister. Judith Shakespeare shared her sibling's enthusiasm and talent for writing. Unlike her brother, however, Judith never had the opportunity to hone her skills. She fell into disrepute and killed herself. Her body is buried at the intersection of Elephant and Castle. Woolf states:

Now my belief is that this poet who never wrote a word and was buried at the crossroads still lives. She lives in you and in me, and in many other women.... [F]or great poets do not die; they are continuing presences; they need only the opportunity to walk among us in the flesh" (113).

La Escritora is the only anonymous character of the play. The text of *Siete lunas* gives her the opportunity to become Judith Shakespeare. It may be that, upon returning home from this camping trip, La Escritora will begin to write. Her return, however, will not be to her father's brother's, or husband's house. These enclosures foment monmythic continuums. In order to resurrect Judith and break new textual ground, what La Escritora really needs is a room of *her* own.

NOTAS

- 1 Lieberman also discusses the sociological function of fairy tales in society. She suggests that some fairy tale heroines, such as Cinderella, in addition to being passive are "victims and even martyrs as well" (390).
- 2 Scholes states that the "archetype of all fiction is the sexual act... the fundamental orgasmic rhythm of tumescence and detumescence, of tension and resolution, of intensification to the point of climax and consummation" (qtd. in Nodelman 252).

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