

Visiting Professorship (*Líder Académico*)

2009 September. “Líder Académico,”
Visiting Scholar in Humanities and Social Sciences
Tecnológico de Monterrey
Campus Monterrey
Nuevo Leon, Mexico.

The Líder Académico program brings to Tec an invited scholar who gives a series of undergraduate, graduate and faculty seminars, and a keynote address. I was invited to propose a series of seminars and offer an address broadly on the topics of Cultural Studies, Theories of Space, and Gender.

Lecture Series: Gender, Space, Politics.

As a series of seminars in English and Spanish about contemporary spatial theory and its utility for literary and cultural studies, we survey defining thinkers, concepts, and events, as well as moments and keywords, associated with the recent spatial turn in critical theory. At the center of our discussions is the category of gender and its crucial implication in all matters related to the sociality of space. Across the disciplines, feminists have written extensively about the consequences of the division of modern capitalist spaces into the realm of the public and the private, the center and periphery. Understood as gendered male, the public spaces of the city, the marketplace, the prison, the State, and the open road, define themselves against the private spaces of female gendered home and the domestic and “personal.” To focus questions about the present moment and the reconstitution of gender and space currently underway in the world system, we put our theoretical readings into conversation with *Gonzalez & Daughter Trucking Company: A Road Novel with Literary License* (2005), by Mexican writer María Amparo Escandón who lives in Los Angeles.

Keynote Address: Surfing the New World Order

Framing for the seminar series a set of important contemporary questions related to space, gender, and politics, this address takes up issues of the local and global as they have been reordered by globalization in the context of surfing as both a local/global subculture of some six million participants as well as surfing an influential rhetoric which articulates movements associated with new technologies and postindustrial mobilities. Drawing from ethnography, globalization theory, surf literature, film, and popular culture, I work with girl surfers and Western girlhood as a masthead of neoliberal “freedoms” to think through current challenges to and openings for activism, intergenerational and transnational feminisms, female life flourishing, and globalization from below.

Undergraduate Seminar for Hispanic Literature Majors #1. Title: Epistemologies of the South

- Exploring the implications of our keywords “epistemology” and “South,” we begin through emphasis on the sociality of space in everyday contexts (classroom, marketplace, club, gym, hospital, church, street, domestic/family) and move to the realms of hemispheric geopolitics. Reading Gloria Anzaldúa as a late twentieth century feminist border theorist to frame the twenty first century border novel of María Amparo Escandón, we take up questions of national and postnational culture, feminist testimony, global Mexicanism, issues of ethics in an era of “accidents,” and the implications of male violence and narco-trade on women’s incarceration.

Undergraduate Seminar for Hispanic Literature Majors #2. Title: Transborder Feminisms

- Using the Escandón novel as a case study, and working with de Beauvoir's claims about transhistoricity and specificity of woman as Other, we speculate about Truth and Reconciliation initiatives as they might be applied to violence of men toward women and to relations of exploitation between women. We take our lead from T&R narratives of the Tutsis and Hutus that, according to Bhabha, articulate "spaces not of confession or guilt/confrontation, but of in-between the violated and violent, accused and accuser, allegation and admission." This space becomes a site of "discussion, dispute, confession, apology, negotiation through which Tutsis and Hutus together confront the inequities and assymetries of social trauma not as a 'common people' but as a people with a common cause."

Graduate and Faculty Seminar in Humanities #1. Title: Genealogies

- Reading Anzaldúa, Lefebvre, Soja, and Arif Dirlik, we open by considering spatial thinking as it develops in critical theory in response to the linguistic turn in continental philosophy around global 1968 and situate contemporary notions of place and the "local" in contexts of globalization. Comparative concepts include Anzaldúa's borderlands as "una herida abierta," Lefebvre's dialectics and "moments" of perceived/conceived/lived social space, Soja's trialectics or thirdspaces (drawing from Bhabha and Foucault), and Arif Dirlik's critical localisms. Literature/film/art crucial sites for representation of contradiction (Lefebvre), and postcolonial and feminist theorizing of the Other.

Graduate and Faculty Seminar in the Humanities #2. Title: Space, Place, Gender

- Reading canonical works in feminist theory (de Beauvoir & Mohanty), alongside recent work on girlhood and neoliberalism (Anita Harris) and on public space and gender related to the US West/nation (Comer), we survey concepts crucial to interpreting 21st century gender and space: public/private spaces under capitalism, Woman as Other, the "Other" Woman, the decolonization of philosophy and of geography, late modern social spaces of postfeminist girlhood, and critical regionalism. Escandón's novel opens discussions about gender and state-sanctioned punishment (prisons), women of the global south, feminist geographical imaginations of "Mexifornia," and the in-between spaces (as Bhabha and Butler have noted) of Truth and Reconciliation.

Graduate and Faculty Seminar in the Humanities #3. Title: I Am Where I Think

- This concluding seminar, via readings by Clifford and Mignolo, asks whether travel today in other than the imaginative West is possible? The intervention for Mignolo is "I am where I think." Working with Clifford's notions of traveling cultures and the local as mobile, and Latin Americanist conceptions of coloniality and the challenges it poses to postcolonialism classically defined, we experiment with Mignolo's call to think not from inside the modern world but from its borders so as to bring forward not only counter or different imaginations but new epistemological dimensions from the edges of the modern/colonial world system. The feminist spatialities outlined in readings by Caren Kaplan and Doreen Massey pose related critical questions with respect to gender as they critique the masculinism of traveling theories and postmodern geography.
- Time reserved for seminar participants think aloud about their own current projects in light of our readings and discussions.

[Top of page](#)