

# *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*

<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb>> ISSN 1481-4374 ©Purdue University

*CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* (ISSN 1481-4374) is a peer-reviewed quarterly of scholarship in the humanities and social sciences published online in full text and in open access by ©Purdue University and in hard-copy annuals in the Purdue University Press series of Books in Comparative Cultural Studies <<http://www.thepress.purdue.edu/series/compstudies.asp>>. *CLCWeb* publishes scholarship in the widest definition of the disciplines of comparative literature and cultural studies designated as "comparative cultural studies." The journal encourages scholarship in a global, international, and intercultural context and work with a plurality of methods and approaches. In addition to the publication of articles, *CLCWeb* publishes review articles of scholarly books and publishes research material in its *Library Series* <<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/library.pdf>>. Work published in the journal is indexed in the American Humanities Index, in the Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature, in the Arts and Humanities Citation Index, and in the International Bibliography of the Modern Language Association of America. *CLCWeb* is mirrored on the website of the British Comparative Literature Association <<http://www.bcla.org/clcweb/>>, it is preserved at research libraries in the Stanford University lockss system <<http://www.lockss.org/lockss/>>, and it is archived in the *Electronic Collection of Library and Archives Canada* <<http://www.collectionscanada.ca/electroniccollection/>>.

---

**Volume 10 Issue 1 (March 2008) Article 4**  
**María Odette Canivell,**  
**"Nation Building, Utopia, and the Latin American Writer/Intellectual"**  
<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol10/iss1/4>>

---

**Contents of *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 10.1 (2008)**  
<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol10/iss1/>>

---

**Abstract:** In her article "Nation Building, Utopia, and the Latin American Writer/Intellectual," María Odette Canivell discusses the role of utopia in the foundational myths of Latin American cities and its nations. Nation building, in Latin America, Canivell claims, is tied to European myths regarding the New World, as well as to the function of writers' (*escribidores*) and intellectuals' (*letrados*) re-formulation of these myths along with their own desires/dreams as to what the ideal of Latin America means. *Escribadores* and *letrados*, who make history while re-writing the story/history of their nations, have a direct effect on the policy making and construction of the nations they represent. They are, simultaneously, actors in the epic building and/or re-building of their countries and story tellers and narrators in the texts they write/construct. Their involvement in politics is a product of the instability of the institutions in their lands, as well as they represent a legacy of a long-standing tradition in Latin American politics and in the cultural landscape of the region. Because of their dual function, policy makers and story tellers, an inherent paradox is implicit: literature as an instrument of change carries forward the desire for a construction of a "new world" which is formulated utopian. Utopias, however, are destroyed in the process of their implementation; predictably, Latin American utopias have become annihilated by the same process which allows their formulation. Furthermore, as these utopias are forged in the European ideals of harmony, unity, and order brought to the New World by European colonists, they become unattainable goals from the moment of conception. Latin America has been founded in the dreams and desires of European minds which conceived the idea of an ideal continent and tried to tame its cities and nations into a semblance of what their myths and desires had conceived.

## María Odette CANIVELL

### Nation Building, Utopia, and the Latin American Writer/Intellectual

Intellectuals in Latin America have a strong tradition of involvement in public and political matters. Unlike their peers in many other countries, Latin American "clerks" (the term is used here following Julien Benda's *The Treason of Intellectuals*) are proud of their role as public intellectuals. This is similar to Europe, where the public intellectual is a more often than not an accepted and assumed function of a writer or scholar whereas in the United States the intellectual might feel that his/her role can include political participation or not. With few exceptions (e.g., Borges) the majority of the writers, scholars, cultural leaders, and social critics have, in one way or other, been involved in politics and the public sphere. This longstanding tradition has deep roots in the foundations of each Latin American nation. Rómulo Gallegos was both known as president of Venezuela and as a writer/novelist. José Martí was revered for his poems as much as for leading the Cuban fight for independence from Spain. José Domingo Sarmiento is recognized for both his excellent literary portrayal of a dictator and for his presidency. As Raymundo Lazo suggests when he comments on the novel *Facundo*: "Sarmiento belongs to the world of knowledge and culture. In order to make these tools an instrument for humanity, his book, *Facundo*, before becoming a legacy to literature, becomes one to Life (1; unless indicated otherwise, all translations are mine).

The notion of art as *littérature engagée* -- to take Jean-Paul Sartre's notion -- is not constrained to Sarmiento. Vicky Unruh suggests that Mariátegui's commitment to the European vanguards movements stemmed from his conviction that art "would capture the 'living essence' of reality" (53). The Peruvian intellectual's outlook contemplated a world in which literature was a form of political engagement, a kind of combat where critically engaged artists would breathe the winds of political change into Latin American nations. As Lazo suggests, in the case of Sarmiento, both the Argentinean president and Mariátegui viewed literature as a means to construct nation building rather than a way to accomplish other literary goals. Angel Rama goes even further; he suggests that for the Latin American *letrado* there could be no clear distinction between "science and art, narrative and fact; and consequently, between ideal projects and real projects" (29). Thus, literature becomes a part of nation building and the "ideal project" of *La Patria* turns into an extension of the literary ideal of the author. In this fashion, narrators, as Doris Sommer suggests, "could project an ideal future" (7) where the "construction" of the state ceases to be just a political project to become a literary-political enterprise. In short, these writers were writing the history of their own countries both in the symbolic, on literary plane, and in the real, political public sphere. Not only are intellectuals invested in nation building, but, as Rama claims, intellectuals in Latin America have enjoyed a long history of contribution to the political arena. "The power of the 'grupo letrado'" he states, "can be seen in its extraordinary longevity" (29). The might of the "lettered city," a term he applies to Latin American *urbes* founded as a mytho-poetic locus where "intelligence gives birth to a 'dream metropolis' embodying the illusions of universal culture" (1) has endured beyond the normal cycles of its individual members. Intellectuals in Latin America, he posits, have maintained their status from the time of colonization to our days. In claiming ownership of the "written sign" Latin American thinkers have "reached and fulfilled a social role ... becoming an independent force among the institutions of (political) power" (30).

When literature develops into an instrument of social change, its theorists might be forced to seek alternate ways to depict reality, a reality which might construct a "new world." As Unruh states regarding Mariátegui, his vanguardism was a form that could avail him the means for "creating the new Peru" (51). The Peruvian utopia, then -- just as many other utopias in the continent -- becomes a true example of a political meta-narrative present in the literary writings of its creators. In part, this phenomenon is explained by historical serendipity. The early *cronistas* of the colonial period (e.g., Cortés, Colón, de Soto, Díaz del Castillo, Las Casas) were, at the same time, active participants in the

story/history they were writing and writers writing the tale. Some of them, like Cortés or Colón, were fabulists who embellished their accounts with tales of good-natured pre-Columbian folk keen on embracing the rule of Spain and the wonders of the Christian faith. There were some exceptions, de Las Casas for example, or, to a comparatively lesser degree, Díaz del Castillo. These chroniclers elected to take a more critical stand decrying the Spanish treatment of the Native Americans. Their voices, however, were oftentimes drowned by the accounts of the "conquistadores." As Jorge Checa states in "Cortés y el espacio de la Conquista," this first group of *cronistas* (whose tales of conquest were altered to fit their political goals) is an excellent example of the dual role of narrator-conqueror. For example, while Cortés and Colón came to the New World as *conquistadores*, in the process they became storytellers using literature as a means to obtain political gains. Colón's aim was to convince the monarchs of Spain to fund his next expedition; Cortés's to assure the emperor that the Native Americans were well treated. The Spanish conqueror Cortés, Checa postulates, manipulates the reader through a fictitious account of the historical events he witnessed. In short, the *conquistador* writes his own history while, at the same time, he "creates" his own utopian version of History.

Long before its geographical discovery, America was "created" in an "imaginary dream of the utopian search for its cities of gold, its peaceful, joyful island of Utopia" (Fuentes 18). By the time the continent had been actually discovered -- *recte* conquered -- the European imaginary had granted the New World an almost magical mythical status. From Colón's fantastic descriptions of men with tails of monkeys, to Cortés's self-serving affirmation that the inhabitants of the Indies were peaceful loving souls keen on embracing the civilizing influences of Spain, Latin America was born as the embodiment of the ideals of perfection that the Europeans of the time held as true. Fernando García Cambeiro and Gabriella Ricci della Grisa argue that, when the conquerors arrived in the New World, they encountered a reality far different from what the European "imaginary" had conceived. The world that greeted them was populated by hostile natives, bizarre deities, and strange myths. Its History was recorded in pictographs, not writing. The symbolism present in the rites and traditions the Europeans witnessed in *The Indies* was completely foreign to anything these conquering warriors had ever encountered. After pacifying the lands, it seemed clear to the *colonizadores* that their first task was to "write" the History of America. But how does one go about writing a history which, from the European perspective, has not been recorded, where there is no evidence of any written alphabetic language, nor a record of historical events of easy access for the European mind bent on writing this history? The answer for the *letrados* of the Americas was to continue this "invention" and making one up. Some, like Cortés, accomplished this feat by assuring his feudal lord, in this case the monarch of Spain, that his subjects were most eager to be conquered; others, like Colón, in his dogged obstinacy to accept that neither the biological diversity nor the geographical landmarks could possibly correspond to some other place than Cathay by refusing to believe he was in America. In short, whether by denying reality or creating a new one, these writers of history "wrote" their own utopian account of a reality which they could not fully explain. Cambeiro and della Grisa argue that Latin America, unlike Europe, lacks a "past weighed down by history" (41). On the contrary, the preterit of Latin America has been forged in its myths: The legend of El Dorado, the Fountain of Eternal Youth, the Return to Paradise, the Uroboro, etc., all these fantastic tales shaped the mind of the Latin American writer; conversely, the *escribidores* re-worked these stories into new hybrid narratives symbolizing the region's syncretism.

Contrary to Judeo-Christian cosmogony, firmly rooted in a desire to bring order and harmony to a world of chaos, the *Popol Vuh* claims that when "the word spoke" the earth and the fire were born. Little wonder that its heirs, Latin American writers who wrote down history and performed in its historical/political theater, would conjure a world which, by its own enunciation had to be annihilated. Speaking about utopian hopes in practical politics, Stephen Bahn claims that utopia "forms the concrete expression of a moment of possibility, which is however annihilated in the very process of being enunciated" (qtd. in Reed 671). The political history of Latin America almost reads like that.

Novelists and poets as presidents, senators, diplomats, and ministers constructed its history at the same time they were experiencing it. As writers "writing" and "constructing" utopias, they could dream of a perfect nation; but when they became a part of the political "machine," their dreams died. If utopia perishes when it becomes an actual "articulated" project, the role these intellectuals played as politicians caused this demise. Even if their personal political utopias had to be abandoned in the world of "real politics," these intellectuals shared a common dream. Contrary to expectations (when one considers the diversity of their backgrounds) there are some notable characteristics these authors share (although I am not discussing artists such as Diego Rivera, Frida Kahlo, and Carlos Merida, and their status as public intellectuals, it should be noted that their role in politics was very similar to that of the Latin American writers I explore in the paper). In the first place, these writers have a *panlatinoamericanista* vision. As Cambeiro and della Grisa suggest, Latin America lacks a "factual" written historical past. On the one hand, the absence of a written account of its origins hinders its citizens from finding a traditional cosmological *Ursprung*; on the other, it allows for the "psychological un-tracing of national frontiers in favor of a common destiny" (41). Unlike Europeans, who speak mostly in terms of geographical limits, Latin American intellectuals think of themselves as representatives of a class of/for the region. When Mario Benedetti criticizes First World Nations for their blind, imperialist, and unilateral position against underdeveloped countries (their neighbors of the South), he is writing from a multi-lateralist perspective. In his poem "El Sur también existe" he offers a contrasting vision of underdevelopment, poverty, and corruption, but also hope for a new tomorrow made by the men and women of *el Sur*, which stands not only for the geographical location of Third World Countries, but for the Latin American utopia "here, near the roots, where memories are hidden and nothing is forgotten, and there are those who live, but also those who die, here all of us together achieve the impossible, to make it known for all the world to see, that the South is also alive" ("pero aquí abajo / cerca de las raíces / en donde la memoria / ningún recuerdo omite / y hay quienes se descueren / y hay quienes se desviven / y así entre todos logran / lo que era un imposible / que todo el mundo sepa / que el Sur también existe [213]).

The "impossible" the author alludes to corresponds to the "concrete expression of a moment of possibility" which the poet, in a Heideggerian instant, makes possible with the might of words. Taking a cue from the cosmological tradition of the region, as represented in *Popol Vuh*, the "word" creates the world. This *panlatinoamericanista* vision that Benedetti so gracefully portrays in *Un Padrenuestro Latinoamericano* and "El Sur también existe" is a logical consequence of the reinforcement of the perception of Latin America as a Utopia. In *The Buried Mirror* Carlos Fuentes revisits some of his ideas of the cultural theory of the Conquest of America. The New World, he claims, was invented, not discovered. The author of this invention was the European Renaissance man who imagined the creation of America as the locus of both the City of Gold and Utopia. As Cambeiro and della Grisa summarize it, America was envisioned by conquerors, writers and the general European public as "Utopia, paradise lost, the mythical project seeded in the archetypal conscience of Mankind" (41). Hence its cities, planned according to Rama as a "mythopoetic locus" where harmony, order, and civilization converge to tame a land in a representation to its people of an Eden-like garden much in need of constant pruning. James Holston analyses this desire to rule the wild American nature in his study of the city of Brasília. In *The Modernist City*, Holston suggests that the Brazilian capital is an excellent example of the "metaphysical colonization of the Other" (75) where the savage, indigenous jungles of the New World are conquered by the European ideas of what an "ideal metropolis" should be, and its values, traditions and past are replaced by those of the Western Civilization.

Lucio Costa's design of the master plan for the city, Holston argues, reflects the deep influence of the Bauhaus, as well as Le Corbusière's world view. The perfectly planned image of this modern *amautorum* -- sprouting from the jungle of Minas Gerais like a mythological giant who magnanimously grants humans a metaphysical/empirical refuge from chaos -- made Brazilians think that the architects were playing a joke (*brincadeira*) on the general population. Costa's design, Holston

announces, embodies the "classic conventions of mythic narrative and epic poetry" characteristic of the Latin American unconscious and "the foundation mythology" present "in the plan's literary sense" serves to explain the internal paradox anticipated within the construction of the city of Brasília (65-67). The capital, built under CIAM: Congr s Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne guidelines, incorporated the perspective of the "ideal" city that Europeans (who had set the CIAM strategies) would have liked to build. With Europe's cities already constructed, the possibility of creating a metropolis embodying the progressive social foundations that generations of European had dreamt of was irresistible. The paradox emerges when policies and strategies designed for European loci are transferred, without much empirical practice, to Latin America. As a result, Holston argues, Bras lia is a failed city, with parks that fail to serve their purpose and empty *plazas* where the community does not come together as intended. Its ontological mission to develop what was then one of the poorer states and transfer people and resources from the old capital, Rio, to a new region, is at odds with the mythical-magical origin of its conception. The utopian belief fostered by Don Bosco's dream of a new capital -- as embodied by the cross which is the focal point of the layout -- fails to fulfill its potential. The Salesian priest who initiated the move to found the Brazilian *amautorum* gave us a poignant account of his dream city: "Between parallels 15 and 20 there was a long and wide depression, in the vicinity of a lake. Thus spoke a voice, over and over again ... when they come to explore the riches buried in these mountains, here will rise the Promised Land of milk and honey, of unconceivable wealth" (qtd. in *The History of Bras lia* <[http://www.infobrasilia.com.br/bsb\\_h5i.htm](http://www.infobrasilia.com.br/bsb_h5i.htm)>). The Brazilian metropolis appeared to subsume, at its completion, both the dream and the concrete possibility of a viable utopia. Here state planners, architects, and intellectuals came together to erect a brick and mortar witness to a dream. But like the intellectual's vision of the ideal state, Bras lia has failed to fulfill its potential. In his master plan of the capital, Costa argues, "founding a city in the wilderness is a deliberate act of conquest, a gesture after the manner of the pioneering colonial tradition" (qtd. in *The History of Bras lia* <[http://www.infobrasilia.com.br/pilot\\_plan.htm](http://www.infobrasilia.com.br/pilot_plan.htm)>). This need for domination in the shape of taming physical matter resembles the struggle for "spiritual" control of the *escribidores*. Whereas the conquerors of steel and builders of the city wanted to domesticate the tangible Latin American wilderness, their intellectual counterparts, the *letrados*, were carving its intangible assets, culture, literature and politics using words as their chisel (I should like to note that while Bras lia is perhaps one of the best known examples, other Latin American cities envisioned as the *amautorum* of the Americas include Mexico [see Trillo] or the Paraguayan reductions of 1609-1767 [see Naspy]).

Architects and masons deal with physical matter, with concrete substances situated outside the realm of our consciousness. As such, when matter has been shaped into a finished product (i.e., a building, a city), its essence is completed. Humanity, Xavier Zubiri claims "is the only animal that is not imprisoned in a specifically determined medium but is constitutively open to the undefined horizon of the real world" (2). Humanity is a project in progress always inventing and re-inventing itself in the process of living. Human beings transcend their immediate surroundings in many ways, through art, literary creation or the political and social construction of a universe they can claim to inhabit. In Zubiri's view, humanity creates artifacts that are not only made ad hoc for a determined situation but are also situated in the reality of things, in what these things are "of themselves" (42). In a certain sense, mankind lives simultaneously in two dimensions, that of the present (informed to a certain extent by the past) and the future, where humanity "constructs artifacts he has no need of in the present situation against the time when he might have need of them. He handles things as realities" (42). While the animal only "settles" life, humanity "projects" life. This is why humanity's industry is not found to be fixed or to be mere repetition; rather it denotes an innovation, the product of an invention, of a forward-moving, progressive creation.

Cities and nations trying to be constructed are all, in a sense, unfinished projects, carved of the dreams and hopes of its creators. Intellectuals, as members of humanity, are also men/women striving "to become" (the Spanish word of *devenir*) a certain kind of reality. They are works of "nature

in progress." In this binary attribute lies the root of their predicament. The problem with intellectuals, Robert Merton posits, is that they "have to be converted to the notion that they, too, are human and so, to follow the Terentian phrase, not alien to study" by their own selves (405). The intrinsic paradox of a subject studying himself as a subject is emblematic of the Latin American intellectual. As such, it informs his/her account of his/her story/history. In *El Pez en el agua*, Mario Vargas-Llosa narrates the vicissitudes of his political campaign in the failed 1990 bid to the presidency of Perú. Some social scientists might argue that a first person account of the latter's defeat and the surprising victory of an unknown engineering professor of la Universidad La Molina, Alberto Fujimori, is a superb instrument to describe first hand witnessed political events. After all, who, better than Vargas-Llosa, would know what happened to deny him victory? But like his other politician/intellectual fellows, Vargas-Llosa is "too close" to the subject to be an effective storyteller; or, for that matter, to attempt to be an impartial witness. Thus, the story falls flat. The Peruvian writer's narrative and history of his land of birth reads like a bitter rationalization of a campaign that got out of hand. From an explication of his initial decision to run for the presidency because "once more Perú has fallen into barbarism" (37), to his disavowal with the results, which he cannot quite comprehend, the author (who shortly after his defeat renounced Peruvian citizenship and became a Spanish national) forgets that he is writing History at the same time that he is living and acting/performing it. In writing fiction as if it were reality, he loses sight of his ultimate goal: an unbiased and "real" account of the events in the history of his homeland. As author/performer he fails to notice *where* the borders of reality end and his (and his fellow Peruvian citizen's) utopian dreams collide. Like him, many Latin American intellectuals involved in politics shared a dream: to create a better nation and to bequeath their compatriots the gift of a better world. Whether these dreamers were *padres de la patria* arguing for independence from Spain, or modern day intellectuals criticizing the abuses of a given un-democratic regime, Latin American writers had an idealized view of the state product, in many cases, of their own Western civilization's upbringing. We must think of literature, Edward Said claims, as the "inscription of certain kind of forces: libidinal, psychological, historical forces" (35). Assuming that literature is, essentially, about human experience makes you fall into the trap of an epistemological literature. Most of powerful Latin American literature, Said continues, is not about the daily experience, but rather about the fantastic (35). The world of the fantastic, although grounded in myths and stories the conquerors may have brought to America from Europe, is a world of the extraordinary, the "un-real," that which is present in the imaginary consciousness of a certain given culture. Literature in Spanish America is characterized by this element of the extraordinary. From the early letters of Colón to the picaresque novel of Catalina de Erauso, authors in Spanish letters have subjected their world to the fascination of the otherworldly, the unexplainable. According to Cambeiro and della Grisa, the *Popol Vuh* embodies the history of Latin America "from the perspective of the discovery of the New World, an event which subsumes the utopian expectations of medieval Europe" (65). In the same guise, the accounts of writers and intellectual of the history/literature of their homeland includes their individual desires for a "working" State, their dreams of a just, fair, and harmonious nation. In the hopes of furthering those expectations, writers and intellectual leave the literary plane and enter the political sphere as public intellectuals. Literature as nation building ceases to be utopian and threatens to become reality. Utopia, however, is literally the domain of the no-where. Seldom did these writers' expectations find a true home.

## Works Cited

- Benda, Julien. *The Treason of the Intellectuals*. Trans. Richard Aldington. New York: William Morrow and Company, 1928.
- Benedetti, Mario. *El Sur también existe*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 2001.
- Benedetti, Mario. *Un PadreNuestro Latinoamericano*. México: Editorial Nueva Imagen, 1980.
- Canivell, María Odette. "The Crisis of the Intellectual? Nation Building, Literature and Political Contributions in Latin America and Europe: A Comparative View." Conference paper. *Linköping Electronic University Press* 18.25 (2007): <<http://www.ep.liu.se/ecp/025/018/index.html>>.
- Checa, Jorge. "Cortés y el espacio de la Conquista." *Modern Language Notes* 111 (1986): 187-217.
- Fuentes, Carlos. *La Nueva Novela Hispanoamericana*. México: Joaquín Mortiz, 1974.
- Fuentes, Carlos. *The Buried Mirror: Reflections on Spain and the New World*. New York: Houghton and Mifflin, 1992.
- García Cambeiro, Fernando, and Gabriella Ricci della Grisa. *Realismo Mágico y Conciencia Mítica en América Latina*. Buenos Aires: Estudios Latinoamericanos, 1985.
- Graulich, Michel. "Myths of Paradise Lost in Pre-Hispanic Central Mexico." *Current Anthropology* 24.5 (1983): 575-88.
- History of Brasilia, The* (2008): <[http://www.infobrasilia.com.br/bsb\\_h5i.htm](http://www.infobrasilia.com.br/bsb_h5i.htm)>.
- Holston, James. *The Modernist City: An Anthropological Critique of Brasília*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1989.
- Lazo, Raymundo. *Facundo: Civilización y Barbarie*. Buenos Aires: Porrúa, 1991.
- Merton, Robert. "Social Forces: Role of the Intellectual in Public Bureaucracy." *Social Forces* 23.4 (1945): 405-15.
- Naspy, C.J. "The Archaeology of the Paraguayan Reductions (1609-1767)." *World Archaeology* 8.3 (1987): 398-410.
- Rama, Angel. *La Ciudad letrada*. Hanover: Ediciones del Norte, 1984.
- Reed, Robert Roy. "From Utopian Hopes to practical Politics: A National Revolution in a Rural Village." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37.4 (1995): 670-91.
- Said, Edward. "Orientalism Revisited." [Interview] Middle East Research & Information Project [Merip Reports] 150 (1988): 2-36.
- Sommer, Doris. *Foundational Fiction*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1991.
- Trillo, Mauricio Tenorio. "1910 Mexico City: Space and Nation in the City of the Centenario." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 28.1 (1996): 75-104.
- Unruh, Vicky. "Mariátegui's Aesthetic Thought: A Critical Reading of the Avant-Gardes." *Latin American Research Review* 24.3 (1989): 45-69.
- Vargas-Llosa, Mario. *El Pez en el agua*. Barcelona: Seix Barralt, 1998.
- Zubiri, Xavier. "The Origin of Man." Trans. A.R. Caponigri. *Contemporary Spanish Philosophy*. Ed. A.R. Caponigri. Notre Dame: U of Notre Dame P, 1967. 42-75.

Author's profile: María Odette Canivell teaches English and interdisciplinary studies at James Madison University. Canivell's recent publications include the monograph *Repercusiones del Pensamiento de Freud en el Mundo Moderno* (2001) and the articles "Catalina de Erauso: Genio y figura hasta las sepultura" in *Cajon de Escritura* (2007), "Los intelectuales públicos en Centroamérica: Literatura, metafiction y tiranía en las novelas de dictadura" in *Cajon de Escritura* (2007), and "Catalina de Erauso: Translating Genre" in *Human Affairs* (2006). In creative work, Canivell published the novels *Maria Isabel* (1995) and *La Historia de Hans Zimmermann* (2000). E-mail: <[canivemx@jmu.edu](mailto:canivemx@jmu.edu)>.