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Latin American Women: Finding New Heroes

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After ten years of teaching Hispanic students and being involved in the Hispanic community, I have become acutely aware that Hispanic girls fare far better than do the Hispanic boys. The girls seem to work themselves out of bilingual programs more quickly by learning English faster. The female students seem to have fewer learning and behavioral problems. They also go on in greater numbers to complete high school in the face of a multitude of barriers. These same girls continue their successes, often outstripping the Hispanic male in what may be called energy and ambition. I am constantly amazed at the Hispanic women who juggle full-time work, full-time families and full-time studies. These women, while unwilling to undermine their familial relationships, will not compromise on their educational or personal goals.

While superwomen seem less extraordinary everyday, the fact that Hispanic females have faced so much prejudice against breaking out of their superimposed (fixed on them mostly from their own culture) gender roles, intrigues me as to how they have met the challenge. The first salient fact that I have learned is that school is a socially and morally respectable outlet for Hispanic girls. The Hispanic girls' gender roles are so narrowly defined as to leave little leeway for mistakes. For example, a girl I once taught admitted to her parents that she had been sexually intimate with her boyfriend. Although she was just fifteen, her father literally forced her to marry her boyfriend. Fortunately, she was able to finish high school and was divorced soon afterwards. The Hispanic girls' roles in general are much more strictly described than are those of the Hispanic males. In light of the restrictions placed upon the girls regarding their sexuality, career goals, aspirations and conduct, school and education offer a safe and acceptable exit from the confines of the role of Hispanic female. Hispanic males have a much less structured role handed to them. In essence, their role is much less restricting, allowing them more freedom in their behavior. Yet, it appears as if this less proscriptive role has hampered the Hispanic males' chances for success, while the girl's more limited role has led to less confusion for her. In fact, the tight controls over her social behavior have propelled her to achievement in very socially acceptable arenas. Hispanic males end up not being motivated professionally nor educationally in the same way as are the girls. The boys fail more often in school and go on less often to higher education.

With all the successes for the female, one would not be surprised to find many models of Hispanic and Latin American women throughout history. In fact, as I did my reading, I was greatly pleased to find so many examples of hard working, politically active and intellectually motivated women throughout Latin America. Yet, these women appear in only specialized, advanced readings. Our students rarely find Latin American women mentioned in their history books. Where are these role models when we read about women in history? Where are the women then we talk about Latin America? As motivation for editing a collection of stories by

and about *Latinas*, we are told that "...as Latin American women, we are heirs of a culture of silence."¹ It is ironic that Hispanic females do as well as they do while their men seem to have told *both* their stories forever. Certainly I have no reason to slight my male students or Hispanic males. Yet, I tire quickly, as do my students, of reading about the same Latin American males who have discovered, founded and liberated South America. Where were the women and how did they organize their efforts and their families' lives? Their work left the men free to become heroes, but somehow the everyday social history that is so interesting and important has been trivialized and forgotten in big battles and chaos. What were the conditions that so defined and formed the attitudes in regards to being female in Latin America? The topic of women in general, and Latin American women in particular, is too important to ignore. For our students whose narrow worlds need expanding, the depth to which what they read influences them is profound.

Why do I feel that studying Latin American women would benefit my students? First of all, my female students in particular would derive satisfaction from seeing the wide reaching experiences of other Latin females. They would see new heroes emerge, while being able to identify, through their shared femaleness and Hispanic identity, with these powerful figures. They would see potential for themselves on both a local and historic level. The Hispanic boys, on the other hand, would be allowed to broaden their concept of what being female in a Latin society means. By liberating their own vision of female, the boys also free themselves. If anything, viewing females doing important things in Latin settings will balance and bring into focus an often one-sided story. By presenting such material to the Anglo students, as history, social studies or literature, a new interest may be sparked in Latin America and Hispanic culture. Too often Latin America is understudied, and by reminding students that other ways of life exist, comparisons and cultural awareness can be heightened. By allowing women a place in Latin America, a bit of spice and drama will lead to an enriched view of a "foreign" culture.

My students have always been fascinated by how other people live, how their families and households exist. What I have found in my readings for this unit is some very accessible and readable material about Latin American women. Also, some of the more complicated studies of these women and their involvement in Latin America can be sifted through and taught in a comfortable way. When we talk of women's involvement in history, we often mean in terms of family and life-style, home and social connections. All of this material is very familiar to our students. What I intend to do here is provide some background material on the female and her life-style from Iberia through Latin America with its indigenous cultures, on to the Caribbean, Mexico and to Hispanics in the U.S.—namely our students. Some writings by particularly interesting females are included as illustrative of what women thought about and how they lived in a certain time and space. Also, certain important Hispanic women will be highlighted to further foment interest and research: exercises, activities and an extensive bibliography will provide excellent resources to supplement inadequate texts. It is doubtful that we have a textbook available that would cover Latin American women's contributions to society. While I will herein provide readings to discuss, the use of a particular text, *Women in Latin American History, Their Lives and Views*, edited by June E. Hahner, is suggested. Hahner's book, (see bibliography), is a great hands-on main book, be it for a six-week or six-month study. It is only through the inclusion of women in history, and the acknowledgment of women's contributions to society that students will begin to understand to what extent women, and especially minority women, are excluded from our education. Through this realization, interest can be promoted in both Latin America and women's studies. It is imperative that students of all ethnic backgrounds become more familiar with Latin American women and their history, while understanding the different influences that have shaped their lives. The more research done by teachers and students in this field, the more unsung female heroes will be uncovered. Through the study of Hispanic and Latin American females, all students may reach a better understanding of their own culture and identity. Too often our students are turned off by materials that have little to do with their lives. To learn about Latin culture and

female and family life will stimulate students. This unit is geared to provide adequate and provocative materials to use in a social studies, English as a Second Language, foreign language, history or a bilingual classroom with the hopes that such materials will entice our students enough to continue studying women, Latin America, and Hispanic culture.

If one speaks of Hispanic woman as a modern entity, one must return to the roots of what Hispanic means to truly understand her. If we speak of the formation of Puerto Rican women, we not only have to speak of Spanish and African influences, but we must also study Taino Indian culture for its input. When we talk of Latin American women today, we must delve into the Iberian Peninsula and the Moorish-Islamic frame of reference. None of these contemporary entities exists in isolation. We need only to return to Spain to go further back to the Athenian society and its way of training women as wives and mothers. To speak of women we must speak of marriage and family. Yet, we can look back to medieval times and discover that marriage was basically a business contract. Until the Council of Trent, a marriage could be validated by its own participants. The idea of childhood as an intrinsically different stage of life didn't emerge until relatively modern times, when life spans increased. With the development of the importance of childhood, the need for more tightly controlled childcare evolved. Thus, society became more child-oriented and motherhood and fatherhood became more clearly defined. Women's roles especially became more clear. From the Moors, the Iberian society inherited the concept of the seclusion of women. In Medieval Iberia, conditions were so tenuous and turbulent that a finely drawn and elaborate protective system of segregating women from men developed and hardened into a way of life. The maintenance of a powerful force, i.e. strong, fierce men in the face of such violent times, helped re-define those highly venerated characteristics of womanhood. These characteristics include such hooded terms as being virtuous, pure, good and innocent, an innocence almost defined as ignorant. In fact, Iberian law code identified women as "imbecilitas sexus," an imbecile by her very nature. ² Even as Latin American females come of age in the 20th-century, they still find themselves bound by 13th-century legal codes (Las siete partidas).

As women's lives transformed the Iberian peninsula, the Indian cultures of what would one day be Latin America were developing and living out their own gender roles. There seem to be as many views on the importance of women in Indian cultures as there were distinct groups. Some anthropologists feel that Indian women had little influence over the survival of their people. Others feel that certain women were quite powerful. It is thought that while the Aztecs revered their woman in the role of wife and mother, she still had to be inherently good, pure and virginal in her life. Though she could inherit and possess goods, she was still isolated, submissive and paternalistically protected. The Aztec women in general were segregated from the rest of society. Within the higher echelons, both sexes were educated, however. Because women were allowed to be priestesses in the Aztec world, young girls were entrusted to these women's care. The girls were taught to weave and embroider and were trained in most sacerdotal duties. Both sexes were well-drilled in discipline and morality. At marriage age, the young girls were released to the secular world. To attract a husband, (selected by the gods), modesty, neatness and hygiene were stressed. Parents taught their daughters to preserve their simplicity and to revere their husbands. Polygamy was allowed with wives expected to live harmoniously side by side. Aztec women appear to have been treated kindly by their husbands, while being allowed to enjoy a rather tranquil and lazy life, spinning, embroidering and reciting ballads. This indolent life seems a far cry from that of Indian women in Latin America today. In an article by Elinor Burkett in *Latin American Women* (ed. by Asunción Lavr'n) entitled "Indian Women and White Society: the case of 16th-Century Peru," we are told that Indian women in 16th century Peru worked extremely hard. They were not only entrusted with the bearing and raising of children, the caring of animals, the spinning and weaving and the gathering of fuel, herbs, fruits, but they also participated side by side with the men in the planting and harvesting. Inca women were known to be particularly powerful in the political arena, but were

virtually powerless legally. Society was, once again, patriarchal, but perhaps some of the power of women stemmed from the fact that there were four times as many women as men in the Lake Titicaca area in the 16th-century. If one reads *The Triple Struggle: Latin American Peasant Women*, a personal and well documented book by Audrey Bronstein, one sees that the tradition of backbreaking work by the Andean women of today has continued. These women remain isolated from mainstream society, but have found relief from their solitude through women-run labor cooperatives.

The strength and power of Puerto Rican women within their society, in comparison to other Latin American women, is in some part based in the highly developed importance of women in the major indigenous culture of the island of Puerto Rico—the Tainos. The Taino women were strong women of great influence. “Cacicas,” female tribal leaders, existed. Women were definite rulers in Taino culture and worked as equal partners with their men. Though the Taino culture was polygamous more often than not, some women Tainos had more than one husband. Unfaithful women existed, but in fact, only adulterous men were chastised for this behavior. Somehow, one feels the towering strength of Taino women present in Puerto Rican culture today.

Wherever there may have been a particularly strong female element before the Conquest of the New World, this powerbase soon fell asunder hand-in-hand with the men’s fate upon the arrival of the conquerors. The melding of the old world virtues with those of the new world, the dying off of the young Indian, Spanish and Portuguese women, all contributed to the weakening of whatever power the women may have executed in their society. If, on top of threatening physical and emotional conditions we add a conquered—conqueror/victim-victor mentality, then we can surely understand the outcome. For, if we agree with Frantz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth* that the negative aspects of “machismo” emerged as a reaction to limited options available to colonized people, i.e. men, and serve only as a way for the oppressed to protect their women, children and homes from the conqueror, then we can surely conceptualize what happened in Indian society with the arrival of the Spanish and Portuguese. We can talk about Puerto Rico in particular and the arrival of fifty women from Spain who came on their own accord. They began to teach Christianity to the Indians and forced their own family style or mold onto the local people. A religious fervor which served to preserve innocence, virginity, purity, etc., in the women prevailed. Even though tropical conditions proved physically unbearable for many women newly arrived, they still insisted on covering their bodies from top to bottom with heavy, starched clothing. However, the old world women stayed indoors much of the time while the Indian women continued to do the harsher outdoor labor. As the Indians began to die, Africans were brought over to replace them. Families began to disintegrate due to an imbalance of men and women. The mixture of the races at first led to an increased isolation for all, but soon a trend towards coupling and miscegenation took hold. Women had no legal rights, and their illegitimate offspring were equally unprotected. Thus, even then, there were many female headed, single parent families.

To get another historic perspective, jumping a bit in time and space, the Colonial period to the Revolution in Mexican history is quite revealing in reference to its women. Much of the Colonial period in Mexico was a replication of life in Spain at that time. The same moral and gender codes of Spain were superimposed on Mexican society. During these turbulent times in Mexico, women had two choices—the convent or marriage. The Islamic-Moorish tradition of protecting women from hardship survived the crossing of the sea. Of course, this meant that upperclass women were protected from hardship, while lower class, Indians in particular, struggled alongside their husbands to survive. This is a socio-economic pattern still prevalent in Mexican and Andean cultures. With the Independence Movement in Mexico, the church and the convents were nationalized, thus further limiting women’s options. Yet, the reform movement on its own did begin to provide more education and a chance for women to work outside the home. Professional schools began to admit women for the first time in Mexico during this period, and the number of girls in primary schools increased. The Mexican

Civil Code of 1864 allowed single women the same rights as single men, but continued to treat married women as children. During the Mexican Revolution, women fought side by side with their men, enjoying increased rank and respect. War can be a great equalizer. The Revolution in Mexico did affect women's rights, though the changes appear to have been more legal and political than emotional in nature. The Revolutionary state began to absorb many of the family's functions, the socialization of children, the protection of one's health, etc. In fact, the family's rule became subordinate to the state's power. Thus, women's roles were minimized in light of existing conditions.

Parallel to the changes taking place in Mexico at this time, Puerto Rico was also suffering many transitions. In the 17th century, the convent in Puerto Rico offered one of the few exits for white women. The 18th-century brought about a struggle for all Puerto Ricans when the island's economic life was destroyed. Certainly for women who were trying to feed and maintain family life, the challenge was enormous. Women continued to be very religious and still modeled themselves after the old world types. In fact, in the middle of the 18th-century, Spain seemed to rediscover Puerto Rico. The 19th-century in Puerto Rico as well as in Mexico and other Latin American nations saw an expansion of women's opportunities. Schools for girls were organized, though most of what was taught was seen as feminine endeavor: Christian Doctrine, sacred history and embroidery, for example. But, reading and writing were stressed. Women's activity in the public sector became more visible. In Puerto Rico, several important men spoke out in favor of women's rights. Eugene Maria de Hostos condemned what he saw as a situation of women's inferiority. Alejandro Tap'a y Rivera expressed the view that it was not a sin to educate women. ³

In general, things were changing and evolving for both men and women due to the very nature of history and progress. As the 20th-century approached, certain patterns began to emerge. Many of the differences that exist among Latin American females are based on class differences. Just as a country woman's life in the central mountains of Puerto Rico differs from that of a wealthy Puerto Rican in San Juan, so does the struggle of a Peruvian Indian woman differ from that of an educated woman from the capital. In Bronstein's *The Triple Struggle*, the theme of lives of endless work with little compensation spins through the book. It matters little if the author is writing of Peruvian women of the Andes or women of Ecuador. Their work is arduous and relentless. In *Las Mujeres: Conversations from a Hispanic Community* by Nan Elsasser, Kyle MacKenzie and Yvonne Tixier y Vigil, the struggle of Mexican American—Chicana women of the Southwest United States is similar. The oldest Hispanic women remember a tradition of hard work and very harsh physical conditions, a life of constant family and community responsibility. These Hispanic women had little formal education, but education always loomed important to them. In this enriching look at Hispanic women, one begins to see changes occur in the subsequent generations as the women begin to work outside the home and make advances in education. As these women become more bilingual, they integrate themselves more into the Anglo world. Though they make great advances in this often alien Anglo world, they never abandon family or community. The youngest women expressed just how different their lives were from those of their grandmothers. The youngest generation lives in a very Anglo dominated society, yet still yearns for the Spanish language and cultural traditions of its past. The thread of Hispanic culture runs deep in them. The Chicano women of today appear to be very involved in the struggle against their triple oppression, that of racism, sexism and poverty. Chicano women see white women as fighting against white men, while they see themselves as fighting alongside their male partners, against the traditions of the church and its more romantic concepts of marriage and childbearing.

In Puerto Rico today, there is a major concern for education for its women. Though Latin American women from the continent share a lot of the same sex role values with their Puerto Rican sisters, the unique and often schizoid position of Puerto Rico has produced a special problem for the females. As mentioned before, Puerto

Rican females have their social and sexual identity roles more heavily reinforced. They recognize the confines of their roles and work within them more easily than do the males. The women adapt more readily than do their male counterparts. The Puerto Rican female has encountered restrictions early on about her dress, demeanor and sexual conduct. She has been bombarded with subtle and not so subtle reminders of the importance of preserving her virginity and family honor in her culture. Thus the task of growing up for her is simplified. She has few choices. Due to the ambiguity and lassitude in the male roles in Puerto Rican culture, the males tend to flounder and fall into more self-destructive modes of behavior. The males seem to inherit their “machismo”—sexual conquest, physical encounters and drinking—in part due to fewer restrictions placed on them. Ironically, the Anglo’s view of the Latin American woman has been one of a child-like, pampered and irresponsible woman. Yet, the “woman in Puerto Rico appears strong, persevering, achieving, ambitious, determined and active.” ⁴

The common factors that unite most Latin American women remain the same today. They include the cult of protecting virginity, the fight against “machismo,” the superimposed roles of maintaining innocence and purity in a world of double standards, and a need to fulfill certain personal goals. Unfortunately some of these factors are at odds with one another. The phenomenon of “machismo” and its counterpart of “marianismo” is fascinating. “Marianismo is the cult of feminine and spiritual superiority, teaching that women are semi-divine, morally superior to and stronger than men.” ⁵ Surely this phenomenon has created in its wake the idea of “machismo,” the inferior spirituality that allows men to carouse, have many women and patronize women in often violent ways. It is difficult to break out of these molds, but the sooner women make it out, the sooner men can struggle with their self-image. Though education seems to be the answer for women, the answer may need to be the same for men. This would, of necessity, propel men into new ways of thinking, both of themselves and of their female partners. It is important to remember that the struggles may be different for men and women, as they are tangibly different for Hispanics and Anglos, yet the goal is the same, that of a quality life of dignity and equality with the recognition that the differences don’t make us better or worse, but rather worthy of respect.

LESSONS

The following three biographical sketches and writings by Latin American women provide a sample of and insight into the extraordinary lives and minds of Latin American women. Their struggle to go beyond what it has traditionally meant to be female in a Latin setting is reflected not only through the retelling of their lives, but even more through the strength and beauty of their written work. Of course, their life work, be it in the poetry that Julia de Burgos wrote, or in the very pointed political statements of Eva Perón, is important in the very personal need to express their ideas and in the whirlpool effect their views and public expression of such ideas wrought.

The sketches are followed in two cases, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and Eva Perón, by samples of their work. Julia de Burgos’ poetry is referred to through a bibliography of her work. All are followed with exercises and activities based on the biographies (geared for the students) and the women’s written work. Another sample based on early examples of feminist press in Brazil is also provided. All can be copied and given to the student to read and discuss.

Lesson I

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1648-1695)

Sor Juana was born at a time in Mexico that still held tightly onto much of what the old world (Spain) perceived of women. In the world of Sor Juana, women had two choices for their lives, marriage or the convent. Sor Juana was an extremely precocious child who learned to read at age three by convincing the teacher that she should be taught. At the age of six, she begged to be allowed to attend the University of Mexico. By the tender age of eight, she was writing poetry. She had such a great desire to learn that as a young girl she would punish herself by cutting her hair whenever she failed to learn something. She stopped eating cheese because it was said to interfere with learning and memory. Her grandfather's library was her favorite place.

After working as a Lady to the Marquesa de Mancera, Juana joined the convent. She instinctively knew that marriage, the other option open to her, would not allow her the freedom to study. Married women were not encouraged to learn. She knew that despite the mundane tasks of the convent, she would have greater access to books, and more time and space to study within the walls of the convent than within the confines of a marriage. Even as she performed menial tasks in the convent kitchen, she would experiment with eggs, flour and spoons, all to prove some fact that she had in her head. Few opportunities for enriching her mind were abandoned. Unfortunately, however, even in the convent, she had to justify her quest for knowledge. She was criticized by the Bishop of Puebla for her neglect of religious literature in favor of secular reading. She publicly refuted the question in the writing provided below. Her rebuttal to this criticism shows most clearly the struggle she always felt, the internal and external battle she fought continuously, always to be more of a learned person. At the end of her life, she sold all of her beloved books and continued to punish herself, perhaps for betraying her true self. She died at forty-three, an anomaly within her culture and generation. ⁶

The following is excerpted from Sor Juana's "Carte atenagórica. Respuesta a Sor Filotea," reprinted with permission from the editors. Exercises will follow the readings. Sor Juana tries to justify her thirst for learning.

1. I was not yet three years old when my mother sent an older sister of mine to be taught to read at a school of the kind called Amigas. Moved by affection and by a mischievous spirit, I followed her; and seeing her receive instruction, such a strong desire to learn to read burned in me that I tried to deceive the teacher, telling her that my mother wanted her to give me lessons. She did not believe me, since it was incredible; but to humor me she acquiesced. I continued to come and she to teach me, but no longer in jest as experience had shown her I was in earnest; and I learned to read so quickly that I already knew how by-the time my mother learned anything about it from the teacher, who had kept it secret in order to break the pleasant news to her and receive her reward all at once. I had concealed it from my mother for fear that I would be whipped for doing what I did without permission. The lady who taught me still lives—God keep her—and can testify to this.

2. I remember that in those days, although I had the healthy appetite of most children of that age, I would not eat cheese because I heard that it made one dull-witted, and the desire to learn was stronger in me than the desire to eat, so powerful in children. Later, at the age of six or seven, when I already knew how to read and write, as well as to sew and do other women's tasks, I heard that in Mexico City there were a university and schools in which the sciences were taught. No sooner had I heard this than I began to plague my mother with insistent and inopportune pleas that she let me put on men's clothing and go to Mexico City and live with some relatives there and attend the university. She would not do it, and quite rightly, too, but I satisfied my desire by reading many different kinds of books that belonged to my grandfather, and neither punishments

nor rebukes could stop me. Hence when I came to Mexico City men wondered not so much at my intelligence as at my memory and knowledge, at an age when it seemed I scarcely had time to learn to talk correctly.

3. I began to study Latin, in which I had barely twenty lessons; and so intense was my application that although women (especially in the flower of their youth) cherish the natural adornment of their hair, I would cut off four or six fingers' length of mine, making a rule that if I had not mastered a certain subject by the time it grew back, I would cut it off again...for it did not seem right to me that a head so empty of knowledge, which is the most desirable adornment of all, should be crowned with hair. I became a nun, for although I knew that the religious state imposed obligations (I speak of incidentals and not of the fundamentals) most repugnant to my temperament, nevertheless, in view of my total disinclination to marriage, it was the least unbecoming and the most proper condition that I could choose to ensure my salvation. To achieve this (which is the most important goal) I had to repress my wayward spirit, which wished to live alone, without any obligatory occupation that might interfere with the freedom of my studies or any conventional bustle that might disturb the restful quiet of my books. That made me waver somewhat in my decision, until, having been told by learned persons that it was temptation, with divine favor I conquered and I entered the state which I so unworthily occupy. I thought that I had fled from myself, but—wretched me!—I brought myself with me and so brought my greatest enemy, that thirst for learning which Heaven gave me, I know not whether as a favor or as a chastisement, for repress it as I might with all the exercise that religion offers, it would burst forth like gunpowder; and it was verified in me that *privatio est causa appetitus* [deprivation is the cause of appetite].

4. This habit is so strong in me that I see nothing without reflecting upon it. I noticed two little girls playing with a top and had hardly seen the movement and the object when I began, with this madness of mine, to consider the easy motion of the spherical form and how the impulse, once given, continued independently of its cause, for the top danced at a distance from the girl's hand which was the motive cause. Not content with this, I had some flour brought and strewn on the floor, in order to learn whether the top's motion on it described perfect circles or not; and I discovered that they were only spiral lines that gradually lost their circular character as the impulse diminished. Other children were playing at pins (which is the most infantile game known to children). I began to study the figures they formed, and seeing that three pins formed a triangle, I set about joining one to the other, remembering that this is said to have been the figure of the mysterious ring of Solomon, in which were depicted some shadowy hints and representations of the most Sacred Trinity, by virtue of which it worked many miracles; it is said that David's harp had the same figure and that for this reason its sound healed Saul; the harps we use today have almost the same shape.

5. But what could I tell you, my lady, of the secrets of nature that I discovered while cooking? I observe that an egg binds and fries in butter or oil but breaks up in sugar syrup; that to keep sugar fluid it is sufficient to pour on it a bit of water containing a quince or some other sour fruit; that the yolk and white of the same egg are so opposed that each one separately will mix with sugar, but not both together. I shall not weary you further with such trifles, which I mention only to give you an adequate notion of my character and which, I am sure, will make you laugh; but, my lady, what can we women know except kitchen philosophy? Lupericio Leonardo aptly said: "It is possible to philosophize while preparing dinner." And I often say, observing these trifles: "If Aristotle had been a cook, he would have written much more." . . . ⁷

To the Teacher: Read the biographical sketch and “Carte atenagórica” from the section on Sor Juana above. Have copies available for students to read. To provide background on the Mexico of Sor Juana’s lifetime, a general review of a historic nature may be required. However, you may prefer to have students research that period of Mexico’s history for a project. Use the following questions for thought provoking discussion.

Part I—Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz—Her Life

1. Where was Sor Juana born? What was Mexico like at that time? What country did many of Mexico’s traditions come from during that period?
2. Sor Juana was a very precocious child. What were some of the curious things she did that prove that? Would she be considered precocious if she were born today?
3. What was Sor Juana’s favorite place, and how do you think that inspired her?
4. What was Sor Juana’s first job?
5. What were the two options open to women in Mexico in the 17th-century? What were Sor Juana’s reasons for joining the convent? How sound would her reasoning be today for becoming a nun?
6. Using what you know or imagine about women and life in Mexico of the 17th-century, how would you describe or picture a woman’s life? Would it seem easier to be in the convent than to be married? Would it make a difference in a woman’s lot in life if she were born into a rich or poor family during that time in Mexico?
7. How did Sor Juana continue learning while living in the convent?
8. Why was Sor Juana criticized by the Bishop of Puebla?
9. Even though Sor Juana published a rebuttal to the Bishop of Puebla’s criticism, her life ended with the selling of her beloved library. Do you think this ended Sor Juana’s intellectual life? Why do you think she chose to punish herself in that way?
10. Why is it important to remember the time span, (1648-1695), and the place of Sor Juana’s life when considering her works?
11. Do you think Sor Juana was considerably different from other Mexican women of her day? How would you perceive of these differences? Do you think Sor Juana suffered for being different?

Part II—Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz—Her Work

“Carte atenagórica” (excerpt)

1. In paragraph 1, Sor Juana writes of how she first learned to read. How does her experience compare with yours when you first learned to read? Which of her own words explicitly express how strong her desire to learn was?
2. Sor Juana is writing as an adult how she lived and felt as a child. How might she have written about her experiences if she were still a child? Do you sense from paragraph 2 that her family understood her longing to learn? What explains their reactions? What kind of reaction do you suppose Sor Juana caused when she arrived in Mexico City so young and yet so learned?
3. In paragraph 3, Sor Juana talks of self-punishment for not learning. Why did she feel so guilty? What was more important to Sor Juana than looking beautiful?
4. In paragraph 3, Sor Juana begins to explain her reasons for becoming a nun. How did these reasons differ from others who chose the convent, in your opinion? How do you suppose Sor Juana compromised to become a part of the religious order? How does she feel about the thirst for knowledge that is always with her? Is it always easy to quench?
5. In paragraph 4, how does Sor Juana take simple moments of play and turn them into lessons?
6. What are some of the observations that Sor Juana makes in the kitchen? How can one translate what Sor Juana made of simple events into a system of learning? Could you create some similar lessons based on everyday phenomena?
7. How does Sor Juana justify her need to learn in this letter? Does the letter convince you? Why or why not?
8. Do you feel that Sor Juana's life was an easy one? Was it tranquil? Above all, learning was the most important goal for her. Do you think she achieved that goal? Could she have chosen an easier path?

Further Research Projects on Sor Juana

1. Compare what marriage was like in 17th-century Mexico to what it is like today. How would marriage differ from 17th-century Mexico to 20th-century Mexico? How would marriage differ from 17th-century U.S. to 20th-century U.S.? Has the religious life for a woman changed from the 17th-century to today? Talk about other options available for women today either here in the U.S. or in Mexico.
2. Describe Mexico and the life there in the 17th-century. Try to picture Sor Juana's life in those conditions. Describe the struggle she felt during her lifetime.
3. What was the role of women in 17th-century Mexico? How would you compare that role with the role of Mexican women today? How would the role of 17th-century women in the U.S. compare to the role of women in 17th-century Mexico? How would you compare the role of women in the U.S. today to women's role in Mexico today? What are the cultural, historical and

sociological factors at play in these differences?

Lesson II

Eva Perón (1919-1952)

Often touted as the most influential woman in Latin America, Eva's life and works were often misread by her public. There were no grey areas for Eva; she was either reviled or revered. No one remained indifferent to her. She was born into obscurity in the provinces of Argentina. Due to her illegitimate birth, she was often reminded of her background as she began her ascent to power. Her humble background was never forgotten by Eva herself, thus creating in her a compassionate attitude towards those on the underside of life. She migrated towards the capital city of Buenos Aires to try her luck at the theater, but ended up working in cabarets and on the radio. During this time she met Juan Domingo Perón, an army officer, and began a liaison that would escalate into marriage and a very powerful political alliance.

Eva was more than an equal partner to Perón. She was a very capable political helpmate who achieved and maintained a power base with the labor force of Argentina, her questionable background now serving as an asset in drawing the lower classes to Perón. Eva made one try for political office by seeking the vice-presidency, but hostility to having a woman in such a high post made her withdraw her attempt. One can understand why her powerful position in Argentina caused such discomfort among the Latin males at that time. Though she alone never achieved a political position, her power and influence was filtered to her country through her husband and his position. But, one can hardly call Eva a shadow of Perón. Her ideas on the status of women and the needs of women were truly her own. She appeared to many as a fighter for social causes, for the benefit of humanity. To others she was a woman seeking power and glory at the expense of her people. Eva, known as Evita most often, was a woman who combined views and feelings about women that might seem conflictive to some. True to the struggle of many women today, she wanted it all. She insisted that she was fighting for women to have the rights of men, yet was not interested in women who wanted to be more like men. Her own personal air was attractive and sexual, yet she felt that was not diametrically opposed to being a champion of women's rights. As her writing below reveals she was enraged and stupified by the lack of females in important places of power. She proposes a salary for housework, an idea often claimed to be the precursor of our times.

Evita was guided by her feelings as witnessed in her writings. "I have discovered a fundamental feeling in my heart which completely governs my spirit, and my life. That feeling is my indignation when confronted with injustice. ⁸ She is devastated and moved to do her most important work when she discovers the fact that rich and poor exist not by chance but due to imperfections in the system. Her writings are a mixture of anticipation of the feminist movement and of struggling with traditional roles. While she advocates money and respect for women as homemakers, she also makes it clear that women are born to make these homes, and that these homes are the base of a happy, healthy society. Yet, again, she laments the absence of women in spheres outside the home where they can do other important work. She tried very hard to reconcile what she believed to be a woman's need to fulfill herself as wife and mother, while also feeling like a totally and worthy human being. Eva's influence on the Argentinian people and on its women specifically helped keep Perón powerful. One may argue for or against Perón's politics, but Eva always had great meaning for her country and for Latin American society in general. Her death, at thirty-three, spearheaded some reversals in women's rights. Her

life, however, was a move ahead for women in many ways. ⁹

The following is Eva's plea for a salary for housewives, an idea much ahead of its time and place.

Part I

To me it seems very simple, and I do not know if it is not too simple and, perhaps, impracticable; although I have often noticed how things we consider too simple are often the key to success, the secret of victory.

I think one should commence by fixing a small monthly allowance for every woman who gets married, from the day of her marriage.

A salary paid to the mothers by all the nation and which comes out of all the earnings of all the workers in the country, including the women.

Nobody will say that it is not just for us to pay for the work which, even if it is not seen, demands the efforts of millions and millions of women whose time, whose lives, are spent on this monotonous but heavy task of cleaning the house, looking after clothes, laying the table, bringing up children, etc.

That allowance could be, for a start, half the average national salary, and thus the woman, housekeeper, mistress of the home, would have an income of her own apart from what the man wishes to give her.

Later increases for each child could be added to this basic salary, an increase in case of widowhood, lost if she joins the ranks of the workers—in a word, in all the ways likely to be of most help so that the original purpose shall not be lost sight of. ¹⁰

Perhaps her strongest and most convincing argument for the placing of women in positions of power follows.

Part II—The Great Absence

I think the feminist movement organized as a vital force in each country and in all the world should and would do great good to all humanity.

I do not know where I once read that in this world of ours the great need is for love.

I would modify this a bit and say that rather does the world today suffer from a great absence: that of woman.

Everything, absolutely everything in this contemporary world, has been made according to man's measure.

We are absent from governments.

We are absent from parliaments.

From international organizations.

We are in neither the Vatican nor the Kremlin.

Nor in the high commands of the imperialists.

Nor in the commissions of atomic energy.

Nor in the great business combines.

Nor in Freemasonry, nor in other secret societies.

We are absent from all the great centers constituting a power in the world.

And yet we have always been present in the time of suffering, and in all humanity's bitter hours.

It would seem as though our calling were not substantially that of creating, but rather that of sacrifice.

Haven't we, by any chance, a common destiny with man? Shouldn't we perhaps share in creating the happiness of the family?

Perhaps man has failed in his attempts thus far to make mankind happy, precisely because he has not invited us to join his great social organizations.

To solve the serious problems of the world, man has created an almost unlimited series of doctrines.

He has created a doctrine for each century.

And after this has been tried and has failed, he has tried another, and so on.

He has been inspired by each doctrine as though it were a definite solution. The doctrine has been more important to him than man or humanity.

And the reason is this: man has no personal stake in humanity, as women have.

To man humanity is a social, economic and political problem.

Eva's argument in favor of women and their calling for peace is found below, and surely reflects some very modern thoughts. This finishes her piece, "The Great Absence."

Part III

That is why we, the women of all the earth, have, in addition to our creative calling, another and allied calling, that of instinctive preservation; in other words, the sublime calling of peace.

By this I do not mean to say that we should prefer "peace at any price."

No. We know there are more important motives than peace, but they are less important to us than they are to man.

We do not understand waging war for imperialism, and still less for economic superiority; we do not understand war as a means of conquest.

Although we do know that there are wars of justice, we think that, up to the present, men have fought very little for that justice.

When man gives us a place in his supreme decisions, the hour will have come to assert our opinion, less from the head perhaps than from the heart.

But is it not our hearts that have to suffer the consequences of the errors of the “brains” of men?

I do not despise man or his intelligence, but if in many parts of the world we have created happy homes together, why cannot we create a happy humanity together?

That ought to be our objective.

Nothing more than to win the right to create—together with man—something better than we now have.

Part I—Eva Perón—Her life

Answer the following questions.

1. Where and when was Eva Perón born?
2. What were the circumstances surrounding her birth and how did these circumstances influence her politics?
3. What were Eva’s original career plans? Did she succeed as planned?
4. Discuss Eva’s relationship with Perón. Would he have been as powerful without her? Would she have become a public figure without him?
5. What was the public reaction to Eva? Why do you think she provoked such controversy?
6. According to Eva, what guided her the most?
7. What appears to be the hardest conflict for Eva to resolve concerning womanhood?

Part II—Her Work

Discuss Eva’s writings above, touching on the following points and questions.

1. Eva advocates a salary for housewives. Was this a revolutionary idea for Eva’s time and place? How does she explain the need to pay women for their housework? How would the salary operate?
2. In your opinion, would a salary for housewives change the nature of the relationship of marriage? How do you feel about paying housewives a salary?
3. What is Eva’s basic contention in “The Great Absence?” Explain.
4. According to Eva, how do men view humanity? What is the woman’s view? Do you feel that men and women view life and humanity differently?
5. How do women regard war, imperialism and peace, according to Eva?
6. How does Eva see men and women working together? To what end?

Special Projects

1. Research Perón's Argentina. With what you have read about Eva and Perón, show how their political views intertwine. How do they differ?
2. Compare Eva's views on women and women's rights with those of the U.S. during Eva's time. Which country was making more advances in the women's movement? Discuss the social and historical setting of Argentina and the U.S. at that time.
3. Discuss the popular folklore surrounding Eva. How does the play "Evita" depict Eva? Do you feel this is a true picture of her?

Lesson III

Julia de Burgos (1914-1953)

Julia de Burgos, often considered to be one of the greatest women poets in Latin America, was a Puerto Rican who arrived in New York, already an acknowledged literary figure, yet died, alone and anonymous, her body unclaimed for several days. Julia was born in Carolina, Puerto Rico, into a loving environment. Of humble origins, Julia was nurtured by a supportive home and a lush physical countryside. This natural setting of wildflowers, native birds and the river Lo'za would leave a profound mark on her lifetime and her poetry. The river, water and its flow would forever be the most constant symbol in her verses.

Education was always of extreme importance for Julia. Her family moved to R'ó Grande, Puerto Rico, near the river Lo'za so that Julia could continue her schooling. Julia's family often made sacrifices so that Julia could get an education. During Julia's college education at the University of Puerto Rico at R'ó Piedras, Julia became involved in politics. Her sensitivity and passion for people and social causes spilled over into her poems and they began to take on a patriotic tone. Julia began a teaching career in Naranj'to, a small town, and continued to write poetry reflective of the verdant setting she loved so much. A private edition of *Poemas exactos a m' misma* was enthusiastically received in 1934. By 1938 her first officially published book of poetry, *Poema en veinte surcos*, propelled her to fame in the Latin American literary scene. During these years Julia was winning prizes and critical acclaim for her work. Though lauded in her own world, she felt moved to discover new audiences for her verses. This, coupled with a serious love relationship, led her to spend extensive time outside of her beloved Puerto Rico. She went to Cuba where she continued to study, write and move in intellectually stimulating circles. With the end of her love relationship at hand, she moved to New York. Because of her sensitive nature, the state of the times, and the disparity between Julia's inner world and the hard core reality of New York, life for her became a constant struggle for sobriety and sanity. Little of her best works were written in New York. The theme of love lost over and over again haunted her. She died at 37, betrayed by a world insensitive to someone like Julia. Like Sor Juana, Julia de Burgos was reduced by a world that doubted the wisdom of so much learning and creativity in a woman.

Much of Julia's writing was political in nature including "Espa-a, no Caerás" (Spain, Thou Shalt Not Fall), which served as inspiration for many exiles of the Spanish Civil War. Her verses are also very personal, reflecting a masculinity in their strength and direction, and a femininity in their fluidity and sensitivity. Having gathered emotional strength from the river Lo'za, Julia depicts contained waters such as lakes and rivers as pure, safe yet passionate forces. The theme of the sea as wild, unchanneled and contaminated plays a contrasting

theme in her poetry. Yet, it is always the river that inspires, moves her and loves. “R’o Grande de Lo’za...my source, my river,...and my whole childhood all was a poem in the river.” ¹³ Julia was returned to Puerto Rico and found peace once more beside her immortalized river Loiza. ¹⁴

Read Julia de Burgos’ biography above and discuss the following questions.

1. What were the most influential elements of Julia’s childhood? How are they reflected in her poetry?
2. Was education important to Julia and her family? How do you know?
3. Julia began to achieve success at a young age. What happened to her success as she tried to expand her audience?
4. Why would life in New York be such a shock for Julia?
5. Did Julia’s life end happily? What were some of the major conflicts in her life?
6. What are the reoccurring themes in Julia’s poetry? What does the river symbolize to her?

Locate the following poems of Julia de Burgos available in *The Puerto Rican Poets : Los Poetas Puertorriqueños* edited by Alfredo Matilla and Ivan Silén, Bantam Books, New York, 1972, pp. 60-77:

“A Julia de Burgos”

“Desde el puente Martin Pena”

“Poema pare mi muerte”

“El rival de mi r’o”

“El encuentro del hombre y del r’o”

“R’o Grande de Lo’za”

Use the above poems to discuss the themes of the river, nature and men and women’s relationship. How is Julia’s view of woman and her role revealed in her poetry? What is the tone of much of her poetry?

Lesson IV

The following was published in Brazil in 1890 in the newspaper called “O Quinze de Novembro do Sexo Feminino” edited by feminist and journalist Francisca Senhorinha da Motta Diniz. Diniz was an outspoken champion of women’s rights and founder of the newspaper “The Feminine Sex” which represents the early feminist press in Brazil.

EQUALITY OF RIGHTS

- We believe, with the strong faith noble causes inspire, that an ideal state will soon be here, when educated women free from traditional prejudices and superstitions will banish from their education the oppression and false beliefs besetting them and will fully develop their physical, moral, and intellectual attributes. Then, linked arm and arm with virtuous, honest, and just
1. men in the garden of spiritual civilization women will climb the steps of light to have their ephemeral physical beauty crowned with the immortal diadem of true beauty, of science and creativity. In the full light of the new era of redemption we shall battle for the restoration of equal rights and our cause—the Emancipation of Women. . . .
 2. We women do not wish to play the role of ornaments in the palaces of the stronger sex. Nor do we wish to continue in the semislavery in which we languish, mutilated in our personalities through laws decreed by men. This is no different from the old days of slave labor when the enslaved could not protest their enslavement.
 3. We are not daunted by such hypocrisy as men's treating us like queens only to give us the scepter of the kitchen, or the procreation machine, etc. We are considered nothing but objects of indispensable necessity! We are cactus flowers and nothing more.
 4. Women's emancipation through education is the bright torch which can dispel the darkness and bring us to the august temple of science and to a proper life in a civilized society. . . .
 5. In short, we want women to be fully aware of their own worth and of what they can achieve with their bodies as well as through their moral beauty and the force of their intellects. We want the lords of the stronger sex to know that although under their laws they can execute us for our political ideas, as they did such ill-fated women as Charlotte Corday and many others, they owe us the justice of equal rights. And that includes the right to vote and to be elected to office.
 6. By right we should not be denied expression in parliament. We should not continue to be mutilated in our moral and mental personality. The right to vote is an attribute of humanity for it stems from the power of speech. Women are human beings too.
 7. We Brazilian, Italian, French, and other women of diverse nationalities do not request the vote under the restrictions currently imposed on Englishwomen, but with the full rights of republican citizens. We live in a generous and marvelous country recognized as a world leader in liberal ideas and in the ability to throw off old prejudices.
 8. What we ask is a right never demanded before and, therefore, ignored. But it was never deleted from natural law.
 9. Women must publicly plead their cause, which is the cause of right, justice, and humanity. No one should forget that women as mothers represent the sanctity of infinite love. As daughters they represent angelic tenderness. As wives, immortal fidelity. As sisters, the purest dedication and friendship. Moreover, these qualities the Supreme Creator bestowed on them prove their superiority, not their inferiority, and show that equality of action should be put into practice by those men who proclaim the principle of equality. . . .
 10. Our ideas are not utopian, but instead great and noble, and they will induce humanity to advance toward justice.

This is our political program.¹⁵

Brazil's Feminist Press

Read carefully Diniz's "Equality of Rights" from the Brazilian newspaper. Discuss the following points and questions.

1. What is the author's goal in paragraph 1? Is it a goal that will only better women?
2. How does the author describe a woman's role in paragraphs 2 and 3? Has this image changed since 1890?
3. How can women be emancipated, according to the author? Reading paragraphs 4-7, what are the rights women can hope to achieve through.
4. How does the author bring into play the traditional roles of women as mother, daughter, etc.? Why does she do this? Does she view these roles as positive or negative?

Special Projects

1. Rewrite the "Equality of Rights" from a 1980's point of view. Has much changed in your opinion?
2. Research the Feminist Press in Brazil and find other samples of writings. What do these samples tell us about a woman's life in Brazil? Compare to U.S. women's press. What are the differences and similarities?

Other Activities

1. Compare the lives and work of Sor Juana, Julia de Burgos and Eva Perón. Discuss the environment into which they were born and how it influenced their lives.
2. Expand the picture and research other Latin American and Hispanic women—historic and contemporary figures. Below find a list of some Latin American women to begin your studies. It's only a start.

Puerto Rico

Mar'a Bibiana Ben'tez

Carmen Hernandez Araujo

Curriculum Unit 84.03.07

Lola Rodríguez de Tío

Mariana Bracetti

Estela Manguel de Cestero

María Cadilla de Martínez

Felisa Rincón de Gautier

Argentina

Victoria Ocampo

Alfonsina Storni

Cuba

Alicia Alonso

Chile

María Luisa Bombal

Gabriela Mistral

Mexico

Frida Kahlo

Zelia Nuttall

Elena Poniatowska

Elena Garro

3. Find Hispanic women in your neighborhood or school whom you admire. Interview them and discuss what it means to them to be a Hispanic woman. What are the barriers and breakthroughs?

Notes

1. Alma Gómez et al., *Cuentos: Stories by Latinas* (New York: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, 1983), p. viii.

2. Ann M. Pescatello, *Power and Pawn: The Female in Iberian Families, Societies and Cultures* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1976), D. 140.
3. Federico Ribes Tovar, *La Mujer Puertorriquena: Su vida y evolution através de la historia* (New York: Plus Ultra Educational Publishers, Inc., 1972), pp. 112-113.
4. Edward W. Christensen, "The Puerto Rican Woman: A Profile," *The Puerto Rican Woman*, editor Edna Acosta-Belen (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1979), p. 52.
5. Ann M. Pescatello, *Female and Male in Latin America* (London: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973), p. 91.
6. June E. Hahner, editor, *Women in Latin American History: Their Lives and Views* (Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center Publications, 1976), pp. 21-22. See also Gerald Flynn, *Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz* (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1971), pp. 11-25.
7. Hahner, pp. 22-23, 26. Reprinted by permission © 1976 by the Regents of the University of California.
8. As cited by Hahner, p. 93.
9. Hahner, pp. 90-110.
10. Ibid. p. 104. Reprinted by permission © 1976 by the Regents of the University of California.
11. Ibid. pp. 105-106. Reprinted by permission © 1976 by the Regents of the University of California.
12. Ibid. p. 107. Reprinted by permission © 1976 by the Regents of the University of California.
13. Julia de Burgos, "R'o Grande de Lo'za," *Borinquen: An Anthology of Puerto Rican Literature*, edited by Mar'a T. Bab'n and Stan Steiner (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), p. 280.
14. Tovar, pp. 217-224, See also Gary Wohl and Carmen Cadilla Ruibal, editors, *Hispanic Personalities: Celebrities of the Spanish-Speaking World* (New York: Regents Publishing Co., Inc., 1978), pp. 35-39.
15. Hahner, pp. 46-47. Reprinted by permission © 1976 by the Regents of the University of California.

Student Reading List

1. Elsasser, Nan; MacKenzie, Kyle; and Tixier y Vigil, Yvonne (eds.). *Las Mujeres: Conversations from a Hispanic Community*. New York: The Feminist Press—McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1980.

A rich collection of personal recitations by Hispanic women in the Southwest U.S. (Mexican-American Chicana Women) representing several generations. Simple and sensitive reading appropriate for students that captures a certain way of life.

2. Gómez, Alma; Moraga, Cherr'e; Romo-Carmona, Mariana (eds.). *Cuentos; Stories by Latinas*. New York: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press., Inc., 1983.

This is a striking and eloquent collection of stories by Latin women whose desired audience is the Latin woman in the U.S. There is an ever-present mix of English, Spanish, "Spanglish," and "Tex-Mex," as the writers feel bilingualism and bi-culturalism are crucial issues to their community.

3. Hahner, June E. (ed.). *Women in Latin American History: Their Lives and Views*. Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center Publications, 1980.

I recommend this book as a basic text for this unit. It is a wonderful compendium of poems, journal entries and essays by Latin American women from colonial times to the present. The readings are easily understandable and timely for reflection on the present.

4. Tovar, Frederico Ribes. *La Mujer Puertorrique-a; Su vida y evolución através de la historia*. New York: Plus Ultra Educational Publisher's, Inc., 1972.

Available in both English and Spanish, an easy to read description of the female's contribution to the development of Puerto Rico. Contains short biographies of four impressive Puerto Rican women and a short collection of Puerto Rican women outstanding in sports.

5. Wohl, Gary; Cadilla Ruibal, Carmen. *Hispanic Personalities Celebrities of the Spanish-speaking World*. New York: Regents Publishing Company, Inc. 1978.

A book especially geared for students of English as a second language to introduce Hispanic personalities in an easily readable form. Each personality's story is followed at the end with questions, vocabulary and exercises to reinforce the lesson. A good form and concept, but unfortunately, out of thirty-six highlighted celebrities, only six are women: Alicia Alonso, Julia de Burgos, Gabriela Mistral, Rita Moreno, Felisa Rincón de Gautier and Lola Rodríguez de T'o.

Bibliography

1. Acosta-Belén, Edna (ed.). *The Puerto Rican Woman* . New York: Praeger Publishers, 1979.

Readable, informative collection of essays about women's concerns in the Puerto Rican community. Chapter 2 on "The History of Women's Struggle for Equality in Puerto Rico" and Chapter 4, "The Puerto Rican Woman: A Profile" proved especially interesting. Other essays concerning special topics such as images of women in literature, black Puerto Rican women and the educational status of Puerto Rican women are included.

2. Bronstein, Audrey. *The Triple Struggle—Latin American Peasant Women* . Boston: South End Press, 1982.

A personal study of peasant women in Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, El Salvador, and Guatemala and their struggle as Indians, women and peasants. Though comparative in nature, one comes away with many similarities as the women strive to overcome poverty through their involvement in cooperatives. They also find a way out of their solitude as they do their backbreaking labor.

3. Elsasser, Nan; MacKenzie, Kyle; and Tixier y Vigil, Yvonne (eds.) *Las Mujeres: Conversations from a Hispanic Community* . New York: The Feminist Press—McGraw Hill, 1980.

(See Student Reading List for notes)

4. Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth* . New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1963.

A superb look at the role violence and other manifestations of frustration due to poverty, racism, colonialization play in history. Angry, but always provoking in its depth.

5. Flynn, Gerald. *Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz* . New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1971.

A small book about Sor Juana that tells of her life and struggles as an intellectual, religious woman in Colonial Mexico. Also included are discussions about her poetry, the alleged mysticism of her writing and religious and secular theater. Helpful mostly for her biography.

6. Giele, Janet Jollinger; Smock, Audrey Chapman. *Women: Roles and Status in Eight Countries* . New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1977.

Chapter 4—"Mexico: The Many Worlds of Women" is the most relevant for this unit.

7. Gómez, Alma; Moraga, Cherr'e; Romo-Carmona, Mariana (editors). *Cuentos: Stories by Latinas* . New York: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, Inc., 1983.

(See Student Reading List for notes)

8. Hahner, June E. (ed.). *Women in Latin American History: Their Lives and Views* . Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center Publications, 1980.

(See Student Reading List for notes)

9. Iglitzin, Lynne B. and Ross, Ruth (eds.). *Women in the World: A Comparative Study* . Santa Barbara: Clio Books, 1976.

Chapter 3 on "Female Political Participation in Latin America" and Chapter 15 on "Women's Changing Roles in Colombia" were the most informative for this study.

10. Latin American and Caribbean Women's Collective. *Slaves of Slaves: The Challenge of Latin-American Women* . London: Zed Press, 1977.

Very political, feminist treatise on the women's movement in Latin America.

11. Latin American Perspectives. *Women in Latin America* . Riverside, California: Latin American Perspectives, 1979.

Very dense, political essays on Latin American women. Chapter 1 by Eleanor Leacock was most applicable in a general sense. The chapter by Apodaca on Chicano women also was relevant.

12. Lavr'n, Asunción. *Latin American Women: Historical Perspectives*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1978.

A much readable historical view of women in various Latin American countries. Chapter 7 on the Feminist Press was quite enlightening as was Chapter 10 on the Feminist Press in Brazil.

13. Pescatello, Ann M. (editor). *Female and Male in Latin America* . London: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973.

Essays on women including female literary archetypes, women in domestic service, politics, etc. Includes chapters on the Dominican woman, the Cuban woman and the Brazilian woman. A most revealing chapter is "Marianismo: The Other Face of Machismo in Latin America."

14. Pescatello, Ann M. *Power and Pawn: The Female in Iberian Families, Societies, and Cultures* . Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1976.

A most fascinating book that traces the development of women's role in the Latin world through the history of women in the Iberian world. Pescatello talks of both the old world and the new world and explains the basis for male and female in Latin settings today.

15. Prescott, William H. *The World of the Aztecs* . New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1974. Pictorial History of the Aztecs. Pages 96-101 talk about domestic life and women in the Aztec world.

16. Randall, Margaret. *Cuban Women Now* . Toronto, Canada: The Women's Press, 1974.

Very interesting and readable book written in interview style about the lives of Cuban women in Cuba today.

17. Tovar, Federico Ribes; *La Mujer Puertorrique-a: Su vida y evolución através de la historia* . New York: Plus Ultra Educational Publishers, Inc., 1972.

(See Student Reading List for notes.)

18. Wohl, Gary; Cadilla Ruibal, Carmen. *Hispanic Personalities; Celebrities of the Spanish-speaking World* . New York: Regents Company, Inc., 1978.

(See Student Reading List for notes.)

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