



# Apuntes

Newsletter of the  
Department of Spanish and Portuguese

University of Wisconsin  
- Milwaukee

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## NEW M.A. IN SPANISH BEING IMPLEMENTED THIS SEMESTER!

### Ernesto Cardenal's Poetry at UWM

Nicaraguan poet Ernesto Cardenal read selections of his poetry at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's Golda Meir Library Special Collections hall on Tuesday, September 16th, 2008.

The renowned writer, Jesuit priest, and defender of liberation theology spent a few days in Southeastern Wisconsin. His visit to the UWM campus was welcomed by a room of spectators at full capacity.

Prof. César Ferreira read the poems in their English translation, which were followed by Cardenal's readings in Spanish. The sample of poems came from his different anthologies, from *El evangelio en Solentiname* to *Versos del pluriverso*.

A large portion of the selection consisted of poems that celebrated the universe and the ever-evolving

facets of people in a metaphysical perspective, alongside the evolution of poetry itself. Father Cardenal read some political poems, as it seemed that the audience was awaiting those with special interest.

Some of Cardenal's poetic works are: *La hora cero* (1960), *Epigramas* (1961); *Vida en el amor* (1995), and *Telescopio en la noche oscura* (1993).

It was an honor to have Ernesto Cardenal visit our campus. His poetry reading at UWM was sponsored by Sigma Delta Pi and the Center for Latin American Studies.



### 1st Student Colloquium of Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Studies

On October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2008, The Department of Spanish and Portuguese hosted the First Student Colloquium of Hispanic and Luso Brazilian Studies, which was organized by Prof. María del Pilar Melgarejo Acosta. The purpose of the colloquium is to provide a forum for graduate and advanced students to present their research papers.

The keynote speaker was Professor Ksenija Bilbija from UW-Madison. Her presentation was entitled *Tortured by Fashion: Making Memory Through Advertising*. The students who presented were: Erika Almenara and Laura Jara from UWM, and Heidi Backes, a doctoral student in Madison. Almenara presented about José Asunción Silva, Jara about

Heriberto Frías, and Backes about Ana María Matute.

The event was also sponsored by the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies. Special thanks to Prof. Melgarejo Acosta for coordinating this event.

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From left to right in this photo are the presenters: Laura Jara, Erika Almenara, and Heidi Backes.

## Junot Díaz and Oscar Wao

By Nancy Bird-Soto

This year's Hispanic Heritage Month Keynote Speaker was Dominican-American writer Junot Díaz. He read a couple of excerpts from his novel *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* at the UWM Union Ballroom to a delighted audience.

Mr. Díaz confessed how he is known to be "notorious" for reading brief fragments since he prefers engaging question and answer sessions versus long readings.

Among the highlights of his responses to questions

from the audience were his views on footnotes, the role of disease in a narrative, and the advantages of drawing from a mythical curse to propel a story.

Junot Díaz noted that footnotes are a way to "authorize" oneself and to show-off knowledge; an appraisal he presented with humor. In terms of the topic of cancer, which was in relation to the first fragment he read, he underscored how it can lead to seclusion and a very profound personal silence. As for the issue of using a myth

or a curse as a basis for a narrative, Mr. Díaz pointed how it may very well serve as a way to speak about a community, a family or a nation.

His visit was sponsored by the Roberto Hernández Center, Sociocultural Programming, the English Department and its Creative Writing Program, CLACS, Cultures and Communities, the office of Equity and Diversity, and Urban Studies.



*"It is the defense of the uniformity of language that justifies the vehemence of Bello's criticism of the 'multitude of irregular, licentious, barbaric dialects' (Gramática 12), given that he perceives these as representing the greatest dangers facing the unification of Spanish America.."*

*-from Prof. Melgarejo-Acosta's presentation*

## Symposium: The Battle Over Spanish in Contemporary Latin America

*The Battle Over Spanish in Contemporary Latin America* was held on October 27th, 2008 in Lubar Hall. The presenters were: Luis Gabriel-Stheeman from the College of New Jersey, María del Pilar Melgarejo Acosta from UWM, and Barry Velleman from Marquette University.

The title of Luis Gabriel Stheeman's presentation was "The Rhetorics of Rigor: Linguistic Reasoning, Legitimacy and the Battle over Spanish," in which he highlighted the role of the language

academy and how the defense of the language plays out from scholars to daily usage.

Prof. Melgarejo Acosta's presentation was entitled: "Language and Power: Nation-Building in Colombia." She highlighted how the scholarly use of language was envisioned in order to radiate from the elites onto the population. Writer and *hombre de letras* Andrés Bello was one of the main figures in 19th century Colombia to defend language uniformity.

Prof. Velleman presented "The Language Battle in Argentina: Nation, Identity, and the 'Art of the Insult'," underscoring the peculiarities of Argentinean Spanish versus Castilian, and the attitudes of writers like Borges in regards to developing a "truly" Argentinean language.

The symposium was sponsored by the Dept. of Spanish and Portuguese and CLACS. Special thanks to Prof. Gabriel Rei-Doval for organizing the event.



Photo courtesy of Prof. César Ferreira.

**Featured Photo:  
Summer 2008 Program in Lima**

## Faculty and Teaching Staff News

**Nancy Bird-Soto** has a new article entitled: "Simply María or the American Dream: Lessons in Gender" (*Identidades*, número 6, UPR-Cayey). She participated at the NCCLA Conference at UW-Whitewater and at the SCMLA in San Antonio, where she presented: "A Driving Agent: The Spectator in Eliseo Subiela's *Él camión*." She also presented at the MMLA in Minneapolis and at the Recovery project in Houston her paper: "If Only I had an Education: The Outsider and the Outcast in Jesús Colón's 'Dalmau'." This past October she was invited by the UWM Union's Sociocultural Programming to the "F-word Forum" to speak about feminism in Puerto Rico.

**César Ferreira** has the following recent publications: Article: "La palabra de Bryce Echenique." *Letras-Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos*. 113-114 (2007): 75-88; plus the book reviews: Alfredo Bryce Echenique. "Las obras infames de Pancho Marambio." *World Literature Today*. Vol. 82 No. 4 (July-August 2008): 62; and Sandro Chiri. "Poemas de

*Filadelphia/Philadelphia Poems.*" *Chasqui* Vol. 37 No. 1 (mayo 2008): 151-154. This past summer, he was Co-Director, "Peru Past and Present: Art, Literature and Culture" Study Abroad Program, Overseas Programs and Partnerships, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (Summer 2008). Prof. Ferreira was invited to the seminar: "La obra narrativa de Edgardo Rivera Martínez," Centro de Estudios Literarios Antonio Cornejo Polar, Lima, Peru (August 2008).

**María del Pilar Melgarejo Acosta** has two new publications: "Entre una poética y una política del deseo: canibalismo en la obra de Andrés Caicedo." *Revista Iberoamericana. Instituto Internacional de Literatura Iberoamericana* (2009); "Afterword" (co-author). *Urban Cultural Production in Latin America*. David William Foster (ed.). Minnesota: University of Minnesota, 2008.

**Jeffrey Oxford** has published: "Lo más difícil de un libro es hacer humor del horror": Jorge Martínez Reverte's *Gudari Gálvez. The South Caro-*

*lina Modern Language Review* 7.1 (2008). <<http://web.fmarion.edu/scmlr/V7/reverte.htm>>; "Blasco Ibáñez and Animal Portrayals: An Attempt at Societal Reformation." *Hipertexto*. 8 (2008): 99-104. <<http://www.utpa.edu/dept/modlang/hipertexto/docs/Hiper8Oxford.pdf>>; and presented "Facing Solitude and Death: Miguel Delibes' *La hoja roja*" at the SCMLA Annual Meeting (San Antonio, TX – November)

**Ester Suárez-Felipe, Kathy Wheatley and Magaly Zeise** completed a lesson study on the learning of object pronouns, and the results of this UWM-System Lesson Study Project are available online at: <<http://www.cfkeep.org/html/snapshot.php?id=74634926463137>>.

The three of them also presented their findings at the WAFLT Conference in November, at a presentation entitled "Assessing and Improving Learning in the Language Classroom."

**Ester Suárez-Felipe** has been promoted to Indefinite Status.

Errata:

In the May 08 *Apuntes*, it should have been noted that Estrella Sotomayor was promoted to Indefinite Status (she was already a Senior Lecturer).

## Popular Culture in Latin America: Drama on Stage, Court and Track

Another insightful symposium took place on October 30th, 2008, when scholars: David Sheinin (Trent University, Canada) and Luis Peirano (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Perú) presented about popular culture in Latin America. Prof. Sheinin have a talk about sports and the dictatorship in Argentina. On his part, Prof. Peirano presented

*The Tradition of the Auto Sacramental in Peru.*

The event was sponsored by Spanish and Portuguese, History, Sigma Delta Pi, and the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies. Special thanks to Prof. César Ferrera for organizing the event.

### Blended and Online Teaching

The Department has begun offering introductory Spanish language courses in a blended format, combining online and face-to-face classroom time. This new format is part of UWM's Blending Life & Learning initiative, which is supported by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. One of the goals of this initiative is to offer more flexible class schedules to students who otherwise might not be able to attend UWM. This fall, one section of first-semester Spanish was offered in a blended format, and these offerings will be extended one semester at a time through fourth-semester Spanish. Ester Suárez-Felipe is designing and teaching these courses, and Kathy Wheatley is working with Ester to assess students' experience and learning in this new format.

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## Apuntes

### **Congratulations to our new Sigma Delta Pi-Epsilon Iota Chapter members:**

Daniel Carney  
Dana Gilbertson  
Sarah Henes  
Harpreet Kauer  
Kelsey Krueger  
Laura Jara  
Laura Eyenín Mansilla  
Angie Mohns  
Allison Reeve  
Edgar Jason Rincón,  
Laura Schultz  
Lisa Severance

—  
Faculty Advisor:

Dr. César Ferreira  
President:  
Erika Almenara

Dear Alumni and/or Friend of the Department:

### **GOOD NEWS!**

First: The M.A. in Spanish is now official! The new degree became operational this semester (fall 2008), and we are simply thrilled about such. This will go a long way in making our alumni's degrees more valuable/respected as well.

Second: Thanks to you, the alumni and friends of the Department, we have recently been able to establish a separate budgetary account dedicated solely to student scholarships; this account, in fact, has been set up with restrictions such that it can not be "raided" by anyone else for any other purpose. In short, any money that YOU donate will go automatically to assisting a student achieve her/his goal of obtaining a degree in the Department. By adding together each and every dollar donated for the scholarship fund by our alumni and friends, this endeavor will grow into something much larger than any of us can imagine at the moment—surprising us all with the financial largesse you are able to achieve as goodwill ambassadors of/to the community. Let me assure you that NO gift is too small; every nickel, dime, and quarter is extremely appreciated! In these hard, economic times, I am sure that you are acutely aware of the financial need that so many people face, and YOU should feel proud that your generosity has helped us all in making this scholarship account possible.

If you would like to increase even further the reach of your donation by issuing a "matching challenge," I'd be delighted to speak to you about such and publish that information in a subsequent departmental newsletter this coming spring. Of course, larger, long-term gifts are deeply appreciated as well, and I would welcome the opportunity to speak with you concerning such.

Additionally, another personal goal of mine is to include in future newsletters a section focusing on our alumni; if you would like to send me information, I'll make sure that gets passed along to professor Bird-Soto, our newsletter editor. In short, we would love to hear from you and certainly hope that you will stay involved with our department and learn about our news and activities by visiting our web site and reading our future on-line newsletters at <[www.uwm.edu/Dept/Spanish](http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/Spanish)>.

If you would like to participate in increasing our scholarships, you can do so either online at <<http://www4.uwm.edu/alumni/foundation/epay.cfm>>, by calling the UWM Foundation at 1-800-654-0434 or 414-906-4640, or by sending a check or money order payable to "The UWM Foundation" at 3230 E. Kenwood Blvd., Milwaukee, WI 53211. Please *indicate your support for Spanish and Portuguese*. Your tax-deductible donation can be even more valuable if your employer matches your gift. Thank you very much!

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Oxford  
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