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Arsova, Jasmina

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Introduction

The key question posed by this Special Issue in Mester's thirty-sixth year is what role do memory and history play in the critical study of literary, linguistic, and visual cultures across the Luso-Hispanic worlds. What especially interested us was to explore that which has been ignored, buried, stripped of its own identity, yet strives to remain alive despite the effects of political and physical time. We invited submissions that analyse the ways in which the various forms of memory, such as remembering, forgetting, and forgiving, shape the anatomy of the personal and the political. We were curious to examine the effects of amnesia, melancholia, and nostalgia as ethics of survival and/or repression on cultural production and individual memory. We asked who and what inform the different narratives of cultural commemoration? How do authorities construct and re-construct history? Is memory a human right? Who is allowed to remember? While thinking through these and other similar questions, we wanted to investigate the role played by literary and artistic contributions in such rich processes. The following twelve articles you are about to read contemplate these issues from a variety of perspectives. After reading them, we hope that you will feel compelled to continue discussing the multiplicity of answers given by our astute contributors and raise some of your own questions. In this way our Special Issue will have fulfilled its main purpose of creating new openings for further intellectual expatriation.

I am particularly pleased to present a broad representation of different genres and areas of focus, which include studies about works from the Southern Cone, the Caribbean, Brasil, Mexico, and Spain. Missing are submissions researching Central American and Portuguese themes, which we hope to see in the future. The essays also vary in the expressive media they analyse and there should be something for those interested not only in literary but also in critical theory, cultural, gender, and visual studies. Choosing these particular twelve among the nearly seventy submitted articles was not an easy task and we would like to acknowledge the contributions by those who did not enter this collection and whose articles you might read in another journal instead. The members of the Editorial Board did an excellent job of carefully reading through all of the numerous essays and then overseeing various revisions of those that were recommended for publication. It was a

privilege to work with and learn from the dedicated colleagues who joined me this year. I am thankful for their assistance and respect for my efforts to keep everything moving forward and put it all together despite the usual challenges.

Needless to say, very special gratitude goes to our wonderful Faculty Advisors: Adriana Bergero, John Dagenais, Roberta Johnson, Anna More, and Alessandra Santos. Among them, Professor Roberta Johnson went far and beyond her responsibility to generously offer her expertise and time with consistent encouragement and invaluable input. Our deepest thanks also go to the UCLA Department of Spanish and Portuguese, the Del Amo Foundation, and the UCLA Graduate Students Association for their continuous and much needed financial sponsorship. Last but not least, without the skill of our loyal friend and layout person, William Morosi, who has witnessed *Mester* go through several transformations, you would not be enjoying the professional appearance of our journal.

From generation to generation of different Editors-in-Chief and their visions, what remains is the desire to survive and to be remembered as an inspiration by other graduate students elsewhere embarking on a similar journey. Though the academic road is often uncertain and discouraging at times, to see the fruits of your labor materialize into something creative and meaningful, makes it worthwhile at the end.

On that note, with profound reverence we dedicate *Mester* XXXVI to two of our dear Professors Guillermo E. Hernández and Carroll B. Johnson, who have unexpectedly passed away during the course of crafting this issue. We thank very much Professor C. Brian Morris for kindly offering his translations of two sonnets by Francisco de Quevedo in memory of his colleagues. Professor G. E. Hernández and Professor C. B. Johnson will never cease to live through the rich legacy they leave behind—all of their students, colleagues, family, and friends, as well as their exceptional research and writing, which many of us will continue to treasure in the years to come.

Jasmina Arsova
Editor-in-Chief 2006–2007
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