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Korean and Hispanic-American Post-Colonial Female Voices: The Poems of Moon Chung-Hee, Juana de Ibarbourou, Gabriela Mistral, and Alfonsina Storni

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Abstract

This article compares selected poems of the Korean poet Moon Chung-Hee with those of women poets of Latin America's modernist and post-modernist era in terms similar themes and intentions. The idea is to show that contemporary post-colonial female voices of such ostensibly dissimilar places as Latin America and South Korea have much in common. They explore universal questions and have come to their work, in large part, because of the changes in culture and gender roles that have taken place in their respective countries in recent decades. The temporal beginning of Latin American post-colonialism extends throughout the 19th century, while in South Korea it takes place in the 20th. This article is a translation of the forthcoming Spanish version published in *Cuaderno internacional de estudios humanísticos y literatura* of the University of Puerto Rico in Humacao (CIEHL: 2016, Vol. 23).

The poet Moon Chung-Hee (1945-) is one of South Korea's most celebrated contemporary writers and represents a new generation of authors. Her work has garnered prestigious international prizes and has been translated into various languages, both Eastern and Western. In her poetry collection *Women on the Terrace* (2007), Moon states that in the course of life, people use more words than they do fire, water, or money; therefore, they should use them correctly, since they constitute our most valuable possession. With those ideas in mind, she writes her poems to "throw them" at her society, a sort of "songs of arrow" and, in the process, gives voice through her verbal constructions to feelings harbored by today's South Korean women.

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Bearing in mind her idea of words being as clear as they are meaningful, I propose to look further into Moon's poems by comparing them with those of certain female modernist and post-modernist poets of Latin America, particularly Juana de Ibarbourou (1892-1979), Gabriela Mistral (1889-1957), and Alfonsina Storni (1892-1938). However, the problem remains—how to compare the works of a contemporary South Korean poet to verses written by those above Latin American artists in a way that yields insights useful for both literary and postcolonial studies.

While recognizing that the task at hand takes us on an unorthodox path even for a study of comparative literature, I will limit this study to certain historical antecedents that serve as marks of reference. Next, I will demonstrate points of convergence that link the Korean and Latin American poems, especially the themes of love, death, and personal freedom, together with the intentions that inform their usage. The essay concludes with a reflection on the post-colonial process and the transnational emergence of female voices. This essay forms the second part of a work published in this same venue the previous year (see Bibliography) in which I analyze certain of Moon's poems found in the same collection discussed here. Upon re-reading them, I could not avoid a sense of *Deja vú* on seeing the way she expressed her ideas—something in those verses constantly called to mind the works of Latin America's modernist and post-modernist female poets. It was precisely that sensation of reading something so inexplicably familiar that awakened the idea of a comparative study.

A word about languages is in order. I first encountered Moon's poems in English translation. Although the perseverance and patience necessary to obtain permission for Spanish translations are not in themselves intimidating, the poetic abilities necessary for translating them extend beyond my area of expertise. Moreover, the spatial limitations of article format make an examination of numerous works impossible, and, for that reason, I only present one or two poems from each author, works selected by their theme or intention; a deeper comparative study remains a project for the future. Finally, it is important to state that the translation of Juana de Ibarbourou's "Rebel" and Gabriela Mistral's "The Sonnets of the Dead" come from the outstanding renderings by academic and poet Catherine Chandler, while Eleanor March did the translation of Alfonsina Storni's "Little little man" (see Bibliography).

Pre- and post-colonial Korea and Latin America present challenges for the scholar. In trying to understand the magnitude of the changes and the common (or in some cases, divergent) characteristics of these societies, I can point to three central features. First, one has to consider the cultural models those countries followed during their colonial period and, correlatively, the new norms that emerged once they had separated from the mother country (or, in the case of Korea, from Japanese domination). In Latin America, three centuries of Spanish hegemony gave way to independence wars and the subsequent search for cultural liberation. In their eagerness to find new and distinctly non-Spanish cultural models (i.e., literary approaches), the young Latin American nations turned to France and even to places far removed from the romance languages, including Germany, Great Britain, and the United States. Nearly a century and a half later, Korea suddenly found itself free from forty years of an often brutal Japanese colonialism that attempted to erase the peninsula's culture and even its very language. As the Cold War ground to a close, South Korea emerged phoenix-like from its prostration and rose to become what it is today—the thirteenth-largest economy on earth. Together with Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore, it forms one of "the four Asian tigers" and occupies a place among the G-20 nations for its immense commercial and social influence.

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Thanks to a prospering economy, South Koreans have adopted social values from other world powers, the majority of those influences being Occidental. Political alliances have given the United States a particularly strong influence – indeed, almost making it an ideal to be followed. As a result of the aforementioned cultural and economic changes, South Korea has in a very short time gone from an agrarian society that was both austere and tradition-minded to an urban, consumerist, and cosmopolitan nation.

A second point concerns the type of themes that women poets approach in the literary corpus of both Korea and Latin America. The latter group certainly wrote and published since the early days of the colonies, but their work typically dealt with religious matters—natural enough, since religion constituted the society’s spinal column. It was not until the nineteenth century that feminine voices began to speak on behalf of marginalized groups like Indians or slaves or to express openly their sense of self. South Korea offers an analogous picture. After hundreds of years without avenues to express themselves in written form, contemporary women suddenly found the opportunity to distance themselves from the Confucian yoke, from a deeply stratified and male-dominated society, and suddenly found themselves in a world that is pluralistic and open to diversity. It was a fundamentally new experience, perhaps the only exception being the famous *haenyeo*, or women divers of Jeju Island, who from the nineteenth century onward began to dive, without benefit of oxygen tanks, into the waters around their tiny homeland in search of food and other resources, and who, in some cases, traveled as far as the coasts of China and Russia in order to support their families. In the course of their work they produced songs that accompanied their activities, songs about how their terribly demanding profession affected their lives as women and how they dove every day of the year, even shortly before and after giving birth. Those voices transmitted information for pre-literate peoples, very much in the fashion of medieval Spain’s epic balladeering known as the *mester de juglaría*, or of the *quipus*, knotted cords that the Incas of the Andes used to keep records of tribute and population. When Japan annexed Korea, it attempted to erase both its language and culture; as a result, many of the songs of these women divers were lost. One of the most traditional songs that has survived is called “Haenyeo Rowing Song” (*leodosana*), and it comes to us thanks to those women’s participation in the anti-Japanese movement and the struggle to defend their cultural patrimony. The British musicologist John Levy recorded some of these songs in the 1960s and, partly thanks to his recordings and the efforts of the contemporary Korean government, these unique cultural offerings have not only survived, but now reach a wider audience.

A third and final point of consideration involves the roles of race and literacy. In Latin American countries, ethnic diversity was and continues to be enormous. National boundaries contain indigenous peoples, Europeans, Africans, Middle Easterners, Asians, and *mestizos* (individuals of mixed ancestry). During the three centuries of Spanish colonialism, the colonizers and their descendants enjoyed the greatest access to education. Conversely, in most instances, other peoples lacked formal instruction and found few mediums for expressing their opinions and sentiments. This condition persisted well into the 20th century and, in almost all cases, proved more difficult to surmount for women than for men. Korea, famously, if somewhat misleadingly known as the “hermit kingdom,” was reluctant to allow outsiders to marry Koreans or even to reside in its territory, a fact that resulted in a supposed racial homogeneity. However, the Japanese left an undeniable genetic imprint, a fact often swept under the rug. In the mid-20th century, Japanese control crumbled, and the Korean population quickly achieved an advanced level of literacy in its native language. As a result of this

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change, contemporary men and women are able to express themselves with ease. Indeed, illiteracy is virtually unknown in Korea today.

As shown in the preceding historical sketch, both Latin American and Korean female poets have traversed an enormous distance in the struggle to establish their voice, and it has been precisely the period *after* imperial rule when they consummated this achievement. It is precisely the coinciding of those two facts – self-realization and the post-colonial moment – that most intrinsically links the two groups of writers.

Passing to themes of comparison, I found an initial parallel in the poems “Skirt” and “Girl Urinating” by Moon and in Uruguayan poet Juana de Ibarbourou’s “Rebel.” “Skirt” evinces a feminine theme and title that immediately capture the reader’s attention and provokes an almost prurient curiosity as to its content.

Men instinctively know
there’s something special there.
There’s surely something special beneath a skirt.
It swirls like a fierce tornado,
hides the waxing and waning Moon,
the temple between two pale pillars.
Maybe God lives there.
Men, eternal tourists, loiter
near that forbidden sanctuary
hoping to find the secret of life.
If God’s not there, then maybe one of his kin.
That’s why men, desperate to continue
their bloodline, breed their successors there
Perhaps it obscures a hidden sea
with an amazingly beautiful tideland
where clams dream.
It is a cave—
a cave where once entered,
you’re doomed to die?
The surprising thing is,
it’s more powerful when removed (“Skirt” 1-21)

On further examination, we notice that despite the title and the ideas expressed in the first four lines, the real theme consists in a glorification of what lies beneath the skirt and not in the skirt itself. Moon does not attempt to segment the feminine body or to present it as an object, but rather borrows from the discourse that classic Western poetry (produced largely by male authors) uses to describe women. In this case, however, she plays with the conceit, since the objectification of women in the work of male poets all too often consists of attributing magical, fetish-like powers to the more sexualized parts of the anatomy. Teitler elaborates on the fact that poetry often positions the female body as a jewel in a particularly baroque setting; in said approach, emphasis typically falls on the erotic parts, with a corresponding undervaluation of the woman herself as autonomous being (184). Moon employs a certain mock-objectification of the woman by means of metaphors that summon a seemingly fragmented feminine body, one that “hides the waxing and waning Moon, / the temple between two pale pillars” (5-6), goes on to become a “temple,” a “forbidden sanctuary” (9), and eventually becomes “a cave” (17).

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In the lines “Perhaps it obscures a hidden sea, / with an amazingly beautiful tideland, / where clams dream” (14-16), Moon herself appears to employ another highly creative device much favored by the Latin American modernists: to speak of landscapes through metaphors of the feminine body. However, in this case, she reverses the approach to create *body-scapes*, explorations of the woman’s body conveyed by use of maritime metaphors (Teitler 189). In reality, the human body as landscape comes from a long tradition in the western world, with the female anatomy enjoying preference over its male counterpart. Lines 17-19 (“It is a cave--/ where once entered, you’re doomed to die?”) remind us of the all too common poetic association of female sexuality with cruelty and death, a connection sometimes described as a sort of mortal trap: Eros and Thanatos together. I need to focus on Eros for a moment since the reflection that follows holds the key to understanding Moon’s message. Dörr Zergers astutely points out that the interpretation presented in the dialogue on love in Plato’s *Symposium* – one of Western culture’s seminal works -- is critical in the understanding of the theme. Surrounded by friends in the famous banquet scene, Socrates offers the following statement:

Love is not mere desire – the predominant idea of the other speeches – but rather a path to transcendence and, beyond that, the human form of seeking immortality. Moreover, this holds true for the body as well as the soul. Immortality comes through the children we procreate, but also through the teachings, virtues, and metamorphosis that our spirit inspires in the person loved (Dörr Zergers 194).

Moon incorporates this desire for transcendence in her poem and thereby escapes the tendency to mere objectification of the female body: “That’s why men, desperate to continue / Their bloodline, breed their successors there” (12-13), beautifully culminating with the lines “The surprising thing is, / It’s more powerful when removed” (20-21), since the love that seeks that transcendence actually strengthens men.

For Moon, as well as for contemporary Latin American counterparts, the act of poetic creation dissolves the conventional lines between what has traditionally been considered worthy of poetic enshrinement and what has not. In this regard, she explores scenes scarcely imaginable in verse a few decades earlier in Korea (or in Latin America, for that matter). In Moon’s “Girl Urinating” it is possible to recognize her enthusiasm for new themes:

Oh daughter, refrain from indiscreetly crouching to pee,
Do it gracefully, squatting beneath a green tree.
Listen to the gentle sound of water permeating earth—
the warm river running from your exquisite body—
dancing to nature’s flowing rhythms.
Listen to the sound of the green grass frowning,
to the harmony of you and the nature becoming one.

Occasionally, you may want to pee
against a rock to express your disdain—
but wait—like a ritual, gently lift your skirt
and let your full Moonflower gently brush the earth,
listen to the sound of you and earth merging
as the warm river in your body seeps into the dirt.
Tune into the nature’s rhythmical melody
be privy to the applause of all verdant life.

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Oh my dear girl! (“Girl Urinating” 1-16)

From the title of this poem and its arresting first line, it is easy for the female audience to identify with it since it repeats an admonition that girls all over the world have heard countless times from the mouths of mothers, grandmothers, and aunts. No academic theme, no philosophy, and nothing from the myths of classical antiquity here. Nevertheless, by focusing attention on the quotidian act of urinating, the poem quickly evolves into an almost contemplative description. It is the feminine perspective of her nature and the decisions about her body that ultimately separate the work from the mere representation of the woman-object. From among the ideas expressed in “Girl Urinating,” we encounter the particularly arresting line “and let your full Moonflower gently brush the earth” (11) – arresting because it depicts the woman as a singularly white flower, the classic symbol of feminine chastity. However, Moon unreservedly uses the same symbol “full Moonflower” (*ipomoea alba*) to impart suggestions about control of one’s body and, by extension, of the sensory pleasure it can offer. The idea of pleasure as something natural, but which the woman at the same time controls, finds reinforcement in such expressions as “nature’s flowing rhythms” (5), “to the harmony of you and the nature becoming one” (7), “like a ritual” (10), and “Tune into the nature’s rhythmical melody” (14). When contemplating this poem and its themes, it is easy to appreciate why Moon has received such international acclaim as an artist. Her pen is intelligent and direct, but, at the same time, elegant. When approaching the female nature, for example, she avoids anatomical or epidermal descriptions that carry the risk of objectification; rather, from the very first lines she refers to “your exquisite body” (4). This approach does not restrict her message, but instead sublimates it in an atmosphere of her creation, one that very much approaches the motif of *beatius ille* (approximately, “the ideal world”). I might also add that the title, much like that of her poem “Skirt,” does not treat the stated subject verbatim; in both cases, the titles form points of entry for her to reflect insightfully, playfully, and tenderly about the ideas involved.

Poems such as “Skirt” and “Girl Urinating,” much like Ibarbourou’s “Rebel” reproduced below, carry with them the idea of feminine defiance, the subversion of motives used by male poets; but I must underscore the fact that they do so without psychological anguish or anxiety.

Charon: I’ll be a scandal in your barque.
Those other souls may pray, lament or cry
beneath your evil patriarchal eye,
while timid spirits murmur in the dark.

Not I. I’ll be the lark that flits and sings.
I’ll flaunt my savage musk, and I will beam
my bright blue lantern on the bleak black stream,
sailing above the crossing on my wings.

You may not like it; and although you glare
at me with baleful eyes, I just don’t care.
Charon, in your barque I’ll be a scandal.

Then, when I’m cold and weak and fight no more,
your arms will drop me on the other shore—
vanquished—like the captive of a Vandal.

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(“Rebel” 1-14)

Teitler comments that, during the period of Latin American modernism, “the *modernista* poets were associated with Western forms of ‘high’ culture both past and present: the classics of antiquity and the more recent cultural traditions in Europe” (172). The presence of these cultural references situated their poems among those writings considered erudite, and academic circles consequently promoted them as an ideal model of poetry to be appreciated by readers with the highest levels of formal education. Like their male counterparts, female poets such as Ibarbourou employ classical references, but they do so with the intention of inverting the conventions that by tradition had been assigned to women—fragile, virginal beings subject to male domination. In this case, Ibarbourou begins her poem with a warning to Charon, the boatman of Hades, who ferried across souls to the realm of the dead: “Charon: I’ll be a scandal in your barque. / Those other souls may pray, lament or cry / beneath your evil patriarchal eye, / while timid spirits murmur in the dark.” (1-4). She, the poetic voice, will be both provocative and insubordinate. In his book *Lenguas de diamante* (“Diamond Tongues”), Peri Rossi makes a similar point: “starting with its title, this poem surprises me by its conception of a feminine identity that is ridiculing, defiant, proud, and nothing conventional” (61). To obtain that effect, the poetic voice lays out a plan of action that involves attacking the insensitive Charon by means of the senses: “Not I. I’ll be the lark that flits and sings [the senses of hearing]./ I’ll flaunt my savage musk [the sense of smell], and I will beam/ my bright blue lantern on the bleak black stream [the sense of touch], / sailing above the crossing on my wings [the sense of sight]” (5-8). The words of this verse possess a seductive value and, at the same time, subvert the traditional feminine role by changing from a passive object to an active subject, speaking to the dour Charon directly and with the informal *tú* mode.

The idea of the poem’s opening line returns in slightly altered syntax in line eleven: “Charon, in your barque I’ll be a scandal” (11). A stock theater device is to repeat amusing ideas or lines several times to create comic relief; “Rebel” employs this technique to great effect and underscores messages that promote female insubordination or decry the patriarchal system (Teitler 179). The poetic voice not only speaks directly and with familiarity to the dreaded Charon but also confesses how it intends to provoke him. Although in the end, there is a change of tone and the voice acknowledges her ultimate submission to the boatman, it is not without accusing him of being a savage: “your arms will drop me on the other shore— / vanquished—like the captive of a Vandal.” (13-14).

The selection of Charon as the main character is significant in that he is associated with the souls of the dead, a role that contrasts with the playful passion of the poetic voice. Ibarbourou intentionally couches her message in the universal themes of love and death, since for centuries, philosophers, writers, and artists have chosen the Eros-Thanatos duality as a theme of critical reflection. Invoking a Freudian interpretation, Serrano Barquín *et al.* explain why love and death came to be seen as complementary opposites: “Thanatos is the death force [. . .] that opposes Eros, the life force, the source of love, creation, and eroticism” (328).

During the first third of the 20th century, Latin America saw the rise of a group of poets who revolutionized their art by their candor, and by the freedom with which they expressed their emotions. Among these, Gabriela Mistral stands out for her unique energy and universality. Moon’s poetry bears many similarities to Mistral’s, insofar as both explore four key themes: love, maternity (which neither experienced), nature, and religiosity. Regarding maternity, the two writers sublimate the theme by elevating it to the level of universal and

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painful expression, a grief that results from the loss of a loved one. In the works of both women, I find the theme of love in frequent evolution, leaving behind the personal instance directed toward a specific man and instead moving toward a love that is universal and even ecumenical in its focus on both the human and the divine. Another feature common to the two poets is their tendency to incorporate landscapes of unique and intense realism. These landscapes teem with people, things, and questions that dematerialize once stripped of their earthly fears and desires, thereby allowing a greater understanding of themselves, others, and even God. I find examples of the themes of maternity and death in Moon's "Love from the Ground" and in the first sonnet of Mistral's "The Sonnets of the Dead" (1914).

Son, how could I bury you beneath the ground?
Your crystal-clear eyes,
your pearly teeth shinning in the morning sun.
How can I bury my precious treasure?
beneath the frozen earth?
My lovely seven-year-old son, his page already turned?
The sky is falling
The entire world grows cold.
I spread your father's silk coat over you
and cover you with my jacket, which is interwoven
with excruciating pain that even the sickness
that killed you couldn't penetrate.
When your mother and father watched black dirt
tumble down the steep sides of your grave,
the sun and the Moon disappeared.
How could time destroy you? ("Love for the ground" 1-16)

In Moon's poem, as well as in the subsequent selection by Mistral, the theme of Thanatos and Eros (the latter here representing transcendence, not sex or desire) emerges with special force.

I
Men put you in an icy tomb, but I
will lower you to the humble, sunny earth.
they did not understand that, when I die,
we'll share one pillow and one dream in The Sonnets of Dead

I'll lay you gently in the sunlit ground,
as a mother puts her sleeping son to bed,
the soil soft upon your every wound,
a cradle for a child, though he be dead.

Then I will sprinkle rose dust with the loam,
and underneath the moon's blue-tinted glow,
your slight remains shall keep. In joyous tones

I'll sing my sweet revenge as I turn home,
because no other woman's hand shall claw
so deep to wrest from me your meagre bones!
("The Sonnets of Dead" 1-14)

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From expressions of the love-death duality in this essay (i.e., of Moon and Ibarbourou), I discern something even more profound and philosophical regarding the binomial thematic of Eros-Thanatos (the latter of which, unlike Eros, was not actually a god in classic mythology, but simply an inevitable event in the life of humans). Dörr Zergers elaborates on this matter as follows:

The etymological root is *tha*. It is curious that the only Greek word that has the same root should be *thalamon*, from which we derive [the Spanish] word *tálamo*, the *tálamo nupcial* [nuptial chamber]. *Thalamon* is that place in the home inhabited by the wife. It is the central habitation, but also the most interior and the most obscure. Etymologically, then, the word *thanatos* appears to be linked on hand to obscurity and seclusion, and on the other, to the woman and to love (194).

I might say that when death or Thanatos is considered as part of human existence (an inevitable event), and it shares its etymological origins with the *tálamo*, or the room inhabited by the wife, the same place where love is consummated and life is conceived, then the love-death relationship becomes an inseparable part of the human cycle. In those countries that share in western culture, death has certainly woven itself into our system of beliefs thanks to Christian mysticism. However, non-Christians often have their versions of this form of thought, Buddhism being a prime example. Moon comments that the inspiration for writing “Love from the Ground” (a surge of that maternal sentiment described above) came from learning of the exhumation of the Yun family tomb in Kuynggi province, South Korea, in which the workers discovered the three-hundred-year old mummy of a child carefully wrapped in silk (Moon 89). In the case of Mistral, it is believed that the suicide of her friend and the love of her younger days, Romelio Ureta, might have been one of the factors that inspired her to pen “The Sonnets of the Dead,” and even if this supposition is ultimately mistaken, no one can doubt that Ureta’s untimely end put her in the mood to write a series of elegiac sonnets, or at the very least moved her to contemplate the effects of death on the women survivors. Significantly, both poets speak of a ritual that concludes the burial and initiates a new phase of life for the aggrieved. In “Love from the Ground,” Moon goes so far as to explicitly mention time as an element in the love-death duality: “How could time destroy you?” (16), while Mistral, in the first sonnet of “The Sonnets of the Dead,” warns: “because no other woman’s hand shall claw / so deep to wrest from me your meagre bones!” (13-14).

To complete this reflection over the poems of the essay, I turn once more to Dörr Zergers and his analysis of *Symposium*. Plato acknowledges that all he knows comes from Socrates and that Socrates, in turn, owes the same debt to the priestess Diotima, who taught him that love is not merely carnal desire but also a pathway to immortality. Moreover, “[it was] a woman, the priestess of Mantinea [i.e., Diotima], who taught Socrates the secrets of love.” (194) This passage helps us to understand why unmarried and childless women like Moon and Mistral might have found it so easy to produce verses concerning maternal love.

As a final consideration, I point to parallels in the work of Alfonsia Storni, whose poetry at times veers toward the sarcastic, while at the same time testifies to her role as an independent woman struggling against social prejudices. Storni’s feminism was neither lip-service nor mere political rhetoric, but instead a matter of deeply rooted conviction, a fact that represents a difference in form, though not necessarily of substance, from Moon. Said conviction emerges clearly enough in Moon’s “Letter from the Airport” and Storni’s “Little man,” in which each writer express the same idea, only in different tones.

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Please, leave me for a year, my dear,
I'm on sabbatical from our marriage
We've come a long way since our wedding vows
to stay together for better or for worse
until death do us apart.

We settled at the desert oasis,
rooted deeply and grew branches.
But please, for one year, don't try to follow me.
Soldiers need to take leave.
Workers need a holiday.
As quiet scholars go on sabbatical for renewal,
I now take my well-earned leave.
So please, don't look for me for a year, my dear.
I'll return when I've found myself. ("Letter from the Airport" 1-14)

Generally speaking, Moon's poems exhibit neither rancor nor resentment toward men and "Letter from the Airport" is no exception. However, even with all her gentleness and lyricism, she can express herself directly to the man when stating her need for personal space: "I'll return when I've found myself" (14). Moreover, though speaking with a sense of humor, her voice reveals an assertiveness and the force of solid argumentation: "Soldiers need to take leave. / Workers need a holiday. / As quiet scholars go on sabbatical for renewal, / I now take my well-earned leave." (4-7). Significantly, her arguments invoke jobs normally performed by men; and beyond that, she compares her matrimony to a profession, much like that of academics and to duty, like that borne by soldiers. Finally, I must point out that, at the poem's conclusion, she announces (as opposed to "requests") a well-merited year's leave and even sends the announcement using a letter from the airport. Storni's poem expresses the same need for space and individual liberty, but in this case, the tone differs radically.

Little little man, little little man,
set free your canary that wants to fly.
I am that canary, little little man,
leave me to fly.

I was in your cage, little little man,
little little man who gave me my cage.
I say "little little" because you don't understand me
Nor will you understand.

Nor do I understand you, but meanwhile,
open for me the cage from which I want to escape.
Little little man, I loved you half an hour,
Don't ask me again.
("Little little man" 1-12)

As in Ibarbourou's "Rebel," this poem employs repeated phrases in the manner of comic theater, but also as easily understood metaphors (Marsh 51, 53). For example, in "Little little man," she expresses her disdain for the man in question by stating: "I am that canary" (3) as a way of describing the poetic voice or, "I was in your cage" (5) to describe a claustrophobic and perhaps even demeaning relationship between the man and the female voice. Written in the

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form of a dialogue that the voice maintains with the “little, little man” in question, the poem includes other noteworthy features: “the female gender of the poetic voice, the woman’s search for freedom, and her use of familiar command forms [. . .] to address the man as a means of asserting her voice” (53).

In conclusion, Moon, Ibarbourou, Mistral, and Storni present, with a simplicity of diction and a profound level of thought, a set of values that reach far beyond their respective nationalities. On reading these poems, we can easily imagine them having been written by women poets from Buenos Aires, New York, or Manila. In this essay, the main object has been to call attention to the similarities of both form and substance in post-colonial feminine voices. I believe the enormous relevance of female writing holds for an enhanced understanding post-colonial experience, for when the social fabric of damaged and traumatized subjects is at last restored, the society itself will have changed, leaving emotional scars in the process, as well as interstices where new intellectual currents can emerge and gather strength. Similarly, the postcolonial society creates a forum in which new voices find greater freedom of self-expression.

The consideration of these problems remains a work in process, for it opens a passageway to new studies. How to examine the formal structure or metrics of these poems? How to find yet unknown colonial voices that might somehow have facilitated the post-colonial literary task of the feminine voices? Above all, it remains to analyze the conditions of local communities where these voices arose; for example, to see whether there might have existed a matriarchy in some ways brought about by a situation in which men lacked economic opportunities, or whether the collaboration of male poets perhaps actually encouraged female literary production. In coming to understand these conditions, we will also doubtless learn of how transnational processes have wrought different effects on cultures of dissimilar origins, as happened in America before its contact with Europe and continues in myriad forms five centuries later or in Korea, which has incorporated so much of western culture in the space of only a few decades.

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Biographical Sketch

Dr. Margarita Peraza-Rugeley is an Assistant Professor of Spanish in the Department of English, Foreign Languages and Philosophy at Henderson State University. Her scholarly interests center on colonial Latin-American literature from New Spain, specifically the 17th century. Using the case of the Spanish colonies, she explores the birth of national identities in hybrid cultures. Another scholarly interest is the genre of Latin American colonialist narratives by modern-day female authors who situate their plots in the colonial period. In 2013, she published *Llámenme «el mexicano»: Los almanaques y otras obras de Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora* (Peter Lang,). She also has published short stories. During the summer of 2013, she spent time in Seoul's National University and, in summer 2014, in Kyungpook National University, both in South Korea. <https://www.facebook.com/StringPoet/>

The Best Players in New York Mets History

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Abstract - In this paper, we will look at the players who had the best careers as members of the New York Mets. We will also list the best players who played at least one game for the Mets.

Who was the best fill in the blank of all time? To have any reasonable chance to answer that question, one must have criteria. I almost said "objective" criteria, but that is not necessary. "Best Mets of All Time" could mean "the ones I liked the most regardless of their performance." If that is the criterion, Jerry Grote has a chance to be the starting catcher. If "Best Mets of All Time" means most powerful hitters then Grote will not get into the game without buying a ticket.

For this paper, I will construct two separate rosters with 25 players each. The first list will be "best players as Mets." "Best players" will focus primarily on offensive performance using statistics such as on-base-plus-slugging (OPS) and measures of power, such as home runs (HR) and home run percentage (HR%). The second list will be "best players in major league baseball history who played at least one game for the Mets."

For the first list, I needed to decide how much someone had to play for the Mets to be eligible for my All-Time Mets team. Since the Mets only came into existence in 1962 and had not had