

La Fuerza



EDITOR'S NOTE

In the effort to keep day and night together.
It seems just possible that a poem might happen
To a very young man : but a poem is not poetry --
That is a life.

War is not a life : it is a situation ;
One which may neither be ignored nor accepted,
A problem to be met with ambush and stratagem,
Enveloped or scattered.

—From T.S. Eliot's "A Note on War Poetry"

My suitemate is taking a class on Tolstoy and has been coming in to my room just to read quotes, at length, from *War & Peace*. When we're not calmly wrestling with big words like determinism or ontology, we fight loud battles in *Smash Bros.* or *Mario Kart Wii*.

It could be the Tolstoy, it could be my story as a last semester senior at Yale, but I can't help but read *War or Peace* into things these days.

Whether it's looking back on the election year and rereading opinion pieces only to see battle lines drawn in red and blue, fighting for the right to marry in my home state, or the Yale culture war over gender-neutral housing, it seems that there is contention in every corner. This issue of *La Fuerza* attempts to bring about as many possible meanings of *War & Peace* for Latin@s in New Haven, Yale, and beyond. The cover, *Indagación filosófica de la Guerra*, by Urpi Pariona DC '11 expresses this beautifully as this issue does not look to provide answers so much as try to find different ways of thinking about the ideas of *War & Peace* so that we may calm the pieces at war within us.

In the Opinions section, Jennifer Urgilez decries the decision of the Young Members' Committee of the Yale Club of New York City to advertise its February 20th celebration as the Batista Ball. (The name of the event

was later changed to "A Night in Havana", but the cultural/historic theme remained the same.) For one side, it was a peaceful and simple dance, for another, an insensitive dismissing of a history of dictatorship. On a more personal level, Rubén Gaytán Lemus shares an editorial mingling his early childhood in Mexico with the present Mexican Drug War.

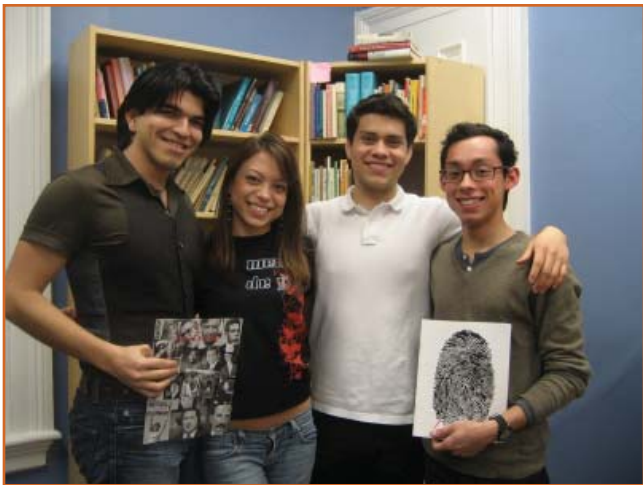
The Feature section brings us Mike Amezcua '10 interviewing the DIY Punk/Hardcore band Sin Orden in "Razacore Riot!" as they attempt to complicate the concept of Latino music, punk aesthetics, and language. These musicians keep their music closer to their city and personal lives as their ways of dealing with global peace or racism on a larger scale. This personal inspection of life through music is also what drives Edgar Díaz-Machado's *Campus* piece that observes the peaceful schisms of Latin@ religious life and identity on and off campus.

On the lighter side of this ideological brawl, there is the Burrito Fight! Article on the new capitalism of burrito carts as well as the Arts section featuring a series of drawings that also sets the tone for the issue: "The Death of the Matador" by Santi Correa BR '12. The answer to the question of this fight depends on the perspective of the Bull or Man.

It's been a stressful honor wielding the Editorship of *La Fuerza*. Yet I can't say I've learned how to fight my own battles if they're not papers or poems. I can see the hell of my past, maybe a utopia of our future, but can't help feeling the purgatory that is the present of a lingering senior project. These inner heavens and hells have made my life philosophy as such: We have to save the world and destroy ourselves. Or hope that someone else will be the martyr and Kitty Genovese syndrome won't tip the balance of *Peace & War* in a darker light.

But having culled these pieces together and worked with an amazing staff at *La Fuerza* and *La Casa*, I have hope. And that seems to be the secret and overlooked middle-child between *War & Peace*. Yet I have hope:

Yale's well that ends well.

La Fuerza Board: Benjamin González, Jennifer Angarita, Hugo Martínez Bernardino, José Meza

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La Fuerza discourages anonymous letters and/or submissions, and reserves the right to edit for length or clarity. Unpublished submissions will not be returned. Poetry, short fiction, and/or photos are welcome. Drop off submissions at La Casa Cultural, 301 Crown St., or e-mail them to benjamin.gonzalez@yale.edu. Online submissions preferred.

BATISTA BALL: ALLITERATIVE INSENSITIVITY

by Jennifer Urgilez

In hosting an all-Ivy “Batista Ball” on February 20th, the Yale Club of New York’s Young Members’ Committee commemorates Cuba under the Batista regime with a night of Caribbean dancing amongst long, flowing dresses and 1950s-style hats. Yet, this historical fantasy under the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista implicitly galvanizes a Cuba marked by bloodshed and repression.

Why are there no parties celebrating and sanitizing European dictators—Franco Fiestas or Mussolini Mixers? By hosting a “Batista Ball,” the Young Members’ Committee has committed an equally abhorrent act of historical amnesia, brazenly sanitizing the authoritarian regime of Batista. In appropriating one of the most ferocious Cuban dictators as an impetus for “flowers in hair” and dancing with mojitos in hand, they exploit the Cuban community’s pain and suffering—an insult to Cuban history as grave, for some in the exile community, as celebrating Fidel Castro. The great-nephew of Carlos Bastidas, the last journalist assassinated by the Batista police force is one of our own, a Yale undergraduate. The committee displayed a self-serving forgetfulness about Batista’s dictatorship that sterilizes his greatest crimes: the censoring, jailing, torturing, and killing of

countless university students, journalists, intellectuals, and political activists. The Yale Club makes light of history by distorting Batista’s role in terminating democracy in Cuba.

The elite education of Yale University graduates creates a reasonable expectation for cultural sensitivity. The “Batista Ball: One Night in Havana” was announced in the Yale alumni newsletter and remained as the title of the event in numerous Ivy League websites, bolstering Yale’s perceived endorsement of the committee’s acts. While initial, behind-the-scenes criticism prompted the committee to change the name to “One Night in Havana” on the Yale Club’s website, in admitting to choosing the title for its “alliterative” scheme, the committee’s cultural indifference and ignorance, not malice, becomes apparent. However, their lack of shame and unapologetic nature in not addressing the problem is perhaps the biggest predicament of all. In hosting a party in honor of an implacable dictator, Yale widens the disconnect between the undergraduate population and the Yale Club, effectively reinforcing its stereotype as an elite, egocentric social club. Neither status, knowledge, nor education grants Yale graduates the right to exploit others’ pain. Their blatant cultural insensitivity is emblematic of larger, enduring attitudes toward Latin American societies that excuse and underplay the United States’ former support of oppressive right-wing dictatorships. Attaching Yale’s name to this event strengthens the resilience of these attitudes toward Latin America. This apathy is an insult to the Latin American community at Yale. Given that they chose to use Batista’s name, the Young Members’ Committee should not only acknowledge their ignorance but also the history behind this callous dictator.



The original flyer for the event hosted by The Young Members’ Committee at the Yale Club of NYC.

Jennifer Urgilez, a junior in Saybrook College, is the president of CAUSA, the Cuban-American Undergraduate Student Association.

CHINESE STUDENTS ASK: TELL US ABOUT AMERICAN DIVERSITY?

by Krystal Flores

I was supposed to be concentrating on the bilateral relationship between Americans and the Chinese. I was supposed to be focusing on establishing a connection with Chinese students. I was supposed to be emphasizing the benefits of progressive democracy. Unfortunately, on that warm Thursday morning, I had trouble concentrating on the purposes of the Summit—something had shifted my focus and I could not let it go: How did I as a Latina fit in among this group?

The first Ivy-China Summit commenced on May 26, 2008. The group consisted of Ivy League Student Body Presidents and the Executive Board of The Ivy Council (www.ivycouncil.org). One half of the delegation was of both Caucasian and Jewish descent. The other half consisted of Chinese-Americans. As the only Latina, I was more than just a minority—I was a novelty to most Chinese people.

As a lighter skinned Latina, most people I met assumed I was white. However, my coarse, eccentric swag of curly hair fascinated them. They would get closer, compliment it, and then ask questions about it. I would respond, “I got it from mi mamá,” and would then launch into a discussion about Mexicans—a topic most of them had never even thought about. Several times throughout our trip, Chinese students and the adult leaders of the All-China Student Federation had asked questions about ethnicity and race within America. Everyone in our delegation had a different perspective. Nevertheless, I felt that certain groups were shafted in our responses.

A prominent Shanghai University was the last stop on a productively enlightening trip. Meeting with top government officials, financial directors, and university student leaders had opened my eyes to the wonder that was Chinese culture. American media often focuses on the negative aspects of China. While I no-

ticed this during my trip, I feel that the beauty of Chinese culture far overshadowed any negativity I may have experienced. Rather than focusing on criticism of this country, I was able to learn something from it. During our group discussion later that day, one of the students posited this question: “America is such a diverse country. What do you think is the general attitude of Americans about the different groups that make up America? Can you also tell us about how civil rights were achieved and all members incorporated into American society?”

“As the only Latina, I was more than just a minority—I was a novelty to most Chinese people.”

What a beautiful question. The Chinese students we met with seriously wanted to learn about our society. They were enthralled by the idea that we were a diverse nation, where blacks, whites, mixed, and others could all coexist in a peaceful realm. They wanted to know how the dream of diversity functioned. We attempted to answer.

A member of my group responded, “Well, as you know the Civil Rights movement in the 60’s secured rights for blacks.” Another stated, “The relationships between black and white Americans is constantly improving.” A third contested, “Yes, some discrimination still exists but we hope to resolve it in the following ways.” A last member interjected, “We also have a sizeable Asian population that is having a more and more forceful impact within American society day by day.” To my delegation, Americans consisted of people of white, black and Asian descent. The important issues, according to them, completely left out two major entities within American

society. What about the Latinos and Native Americans? Were they not important factions of American society? Did they not contribute to many of the sociopolitical questions that polarized the nation and led these Chinese students to question American diversity? As the conversation continued, my delegation completely skipped over these issues. Fuming, I attempted to interject. We had already spent 45 minutes discussing everything else. We were just about to move onto a new subject, when I stood up and stated that I had to make a point that I feel was necessary to properly answer the question that the Chinese students had asked.

“There are two very important subsets of American society that the delegation has failed to mention,” I began as I received glaring stares from the moderator, who happened to be one of the members of my delegation. “Latinos and Native Americans both make up vital portions of American society. As a Latina, I feel I can add to this conversation by talking about the implications of the Latin-American population within the United States.”

I received more onerous looks as I tried to give a one-minute spiel and make the Chinese students aware that Latinos are the largest minority within the United States. I attempted to suggest that immigration policy was a big topic in American politics. I tried explicating the influences of Latin culture in the public domain. Nevertheless, I was shut down after my one minute. I could not do my cause adequate justice.

Still unnerved by the lack of consideration within my group, I took out my notepad and wrote one of my largest journal entries of the trip. When I was done, my friend who was sitting beside me nudged me. She wanted to read it. Looking at her, I realized that she had a unique perspective to offer. She was part of the Ivy League delegation because she attended an American university; however, she was the only member of our delegation that was also a Chinese national. I passed my coffee-colored notebook to the right. She took it and read quietly.

While I was still immersed in my thoughts, she passed back my notebook with a comment, which, because it was so insightful on her part, I feel obliged to include here. It read:

"It's a shame that this delegation is mostly composed of white people and Asians, but I think it's good for you to jump in although some of them are pissed. It's crucial to at least let them know they cannot disregard this issue... Everybody needs to know [about] this issue."

I had to look up and her and smile. The least Americanized of my group, somewhat of an outsider to the convoluted melting pot conundrum, she had understood. She recognized the importance of including all subsets of American society within this conversation. She knew that it was essential to the Chinese students perception and

ing—every group must have had a voice. What does this statement demonstrate about American public opinion now? It emphasizes that there are still kinks that need to be worked out. There is more work to be done. Sadly, it is unfortunate to think that some of America's best and brightest students—our future—fail to notice this. It is my hope that we can work more diligently to reduce underrepresentation and be prideful of all that American culture entails. We are a melting pot, though not entirely liquid yet. We offer the best of the world because we encompass the world. Why should we not be proud of all of it, every difference, a mix of culture, every uniqueness that makes us America?

Regardless, this is not just a reflection on "others." It also begs the question of why is it this way? Yes, it in part of the ideals of American society. But

within our specific communities. For example, here at Yale, many Latinos are incredibly active in the La Casa community and other minority related groups on campus. Unfortunately, there is an underrepresentation of Latinos in most other student organizations. Where are the Latinos in student government? Where are the Latinos in theatre? Where are the Latinos in sports? Where are the Latinos in the YDN? Often times, many of the Latinos who take part in these extra-curriculars are absent from the La Casa community. There is lack of overlap between those who adamantly work towards Latino rights and those Latinos who immerse themselves within general American society. One may ask, what is the better method of fostering equality? Personally, I believe that when activist Latinos become immersed institutions such as government, media, journalism, and others not just as Latinos but also emphasizing their American heritage, we will achieve integration, equality, and understanding at a much faster pace. It is not a "them" versus "us" mentality. We are a vital contribution to American society. We are Americans too!

Being in China not only taught me about two very different societies—it also highlighted the differences within America and how we can work towards fulfillment of the American promise one step, however slowly we proceed, at a time.



Krystal with Chinese students from Hubei Province in Wuhan.

understanding of American diversity. It was refreshing to know that international sources understood this.

Nevertheless, I do not feel that this is just a statement about American public opinion. Despite our efforts to increase awareness about key Latino issues, they are still largely underrepresented. For example, the 2008 election itself largely skirted around the immigration issue. If we were going to claim diversity as an essential American at this Summit, we needed to have been all-encompass-

ing—how can Latinos find themselves more incorporated into the system? How can we make sure in international discussion, we are accounted for and thought to be an important asset, necessary to foreign understanding of the way America works?

This perhaps, then, may be a further call to action on the parts of Latinos. Though we too have come a long way since the Civil Rights movement, King, and Chavez, we have so much more to still accomplish. We are very active

Krystal Flores is a junior in Ezra Stiles College.

MEXICO'S WAR ON DRUGS

by Rubén Gaytán Lemus

In March of 1995, my parents made a decision to leave Mexico. We lived in Moroleón, a town of 90,000 people located in Guanajuato. Moroleón for years was well known and recognized nationally for its major textile industry. A year after the 1994 collapse of the economy, however, the inhabitants of Moroleón found themselves struggling to find employment to support their families. Consequently, many people in Moroleón, and across Mexico, turned to what had for years been a safety valve, immigrating to the United States.

Coming to America represented a tough moment in my life. Behind me, I left everything I had grown up with: my extended family, my friends, and my home. In Mexico my father worked as a bread vendor and my mother ran a small convenience store—both earning low wages. The decision to immigrate meant many sacrifices, but faced with a desperate financial situation my parents had no other alternative.

Life in America proved difficult. We lived in garages and run-down trailer homes. We faced challenges in learning a new language while also adapting to a new culture. I felt out of place in my new surroundings. I yearned for returning to the days when I could walk down the street to play fútbol with my friends, where I could visit the colonial churches with my grandparents, and where life felt more comfortable. Forced to grow

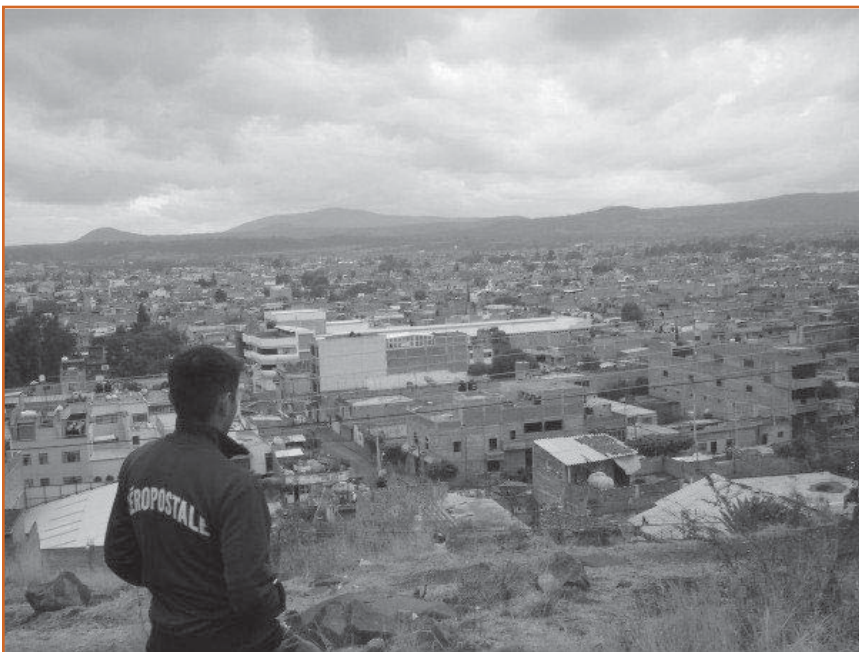
up as a Mexican abroad, I told myself I would not forget about my past life and about Mexico.

As a child in elementary school, my visions of Mexico were idealistic and I longed for returning. Economic hardships and immigration, although I had experienced both, still remained incomprehensible concepts. It was not until my high school years when I began to take a more mature look at life and to inform myself about the realities of issues facing Mexico and the world. Now as a college student, my image of Mexico is one of disillusionment. The sentimental value still remains the same, but over the past few years I have grown disheartened at how the immigration situation with Mexico has not improved. But most of all, I have grown dismayed at how much Mexico has suffered at the hands of drug cartels.

Although the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are far away, south of the border another war is being fought. In 2006, PAN candidate Felipe Calderón assumed the Presidency promising to take the initiative to curb Mexico's drug issue. Nevertheless, President Calderón's decision to declare war against the drug lords has come at a costly human price. A Los Angeles Times report announced that since January of 2007, the death toll from the Drug War had reached 7,337 with the greatest amount of violence occurring in northern states such as Chihuahua, Sinaloa, and Baja California.

Mexico faces powerful opponents and has gone to extremes to combat the drug cartels. In 2006, as stated by the Council on Foreign Relations, Felipe Calderón ordered that 36,000 military troops be sent to nine Mexican states including the Golden Triangle, which consists of Sinaloa, Chihuahua, and Durango. The decision to use the military, although drastic, proved necessary because of the prevalence of corruption among law enforcement officials and their ties to the drug cartels.

Moreover, the drug cartels have proven forces to reckon with because of their highly militarized nature. One of President Calderón's greatest issues has been stemming the flow of weapons. According to the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, over 90% of the weapons found at the crime scenes, which included semi-automatic rifles, were traced back to the United States.



The author on a hill overlooking Moroleón during his last visit.

Every week the headlines from Mexican newspapers such as *La Jornada*, *Reforma*, and *Economista* announce more deaths at the hands of the drug cartels. Drug related crimes have evolved in complexity into what is now labeled by news agencies and politicians as “narcoterrorism” and it is common to read reports of individuals who were tortured to death, burnt alive, or even beheaded. Grotesque crimes have even surfaced such as those of Santiago Meza, a man nicknamed “El Pozolero” for his role in dissolving the remains of victims with acidic compounds in exchange for money from drug lords. Altogether, these crimes constitute narco-messages, threats to the Mexican government warning it not to interfere in the plans of the drug cartels.

The dramatic loss of life has prompted many to propose solutions. The Mexican government has received assistance from the United States through the Merida Initiative, a \$1.5 billion plan to combat drug trafficking in Mexico and in Central America for the next three years. As described by the report from the Council of Foreign Relations on the Mexican Drug War, the assistance from the Merida Initiative is mainly directed at providing the Mexican army with more equipment to

*“Forced to grow up as a Mexican abroad,
I told myself I would not forget about my
past life and about Mexico.”*

combat the cartels, provide advanced telecommunication technologies for law enforcement officials, and improve current police forces.

Today, the fight for peace in Mexico continues to rage with current reports from the *Los Angeles Times* stating that now 45,000 federal troops have been deployed alongside with 5,000 other police officers in 18 states. The surge in troop levels comes as a result of the increased number of targeted victims. Whereas at first most deaths pertained to drug cartel members, now politicians, journalists, police officers, and even civilians are prime targets. Most famous of all was the May 2008 assassination of Mexico’s National Police Chief Edgar Eusebio Millán Gómez, a major leader in Calderón’s war against drugs. With rampant crimes and murders, recent comments by the U.S. Joint Forces in the same *Los Angeles Times* Report indicate that they view Mexico as nearing the point of a “failed state” because of its unstable internal conditions and the weakness of its institutions to assert control. As a Mexican living abroad, I have grown saddened at how drug lords have hijacked and torn apart my mother country and its

people. With family members still living in Mexico, their safety is still a legitimate concern and with worsening conditions, my parents remain hesitant about planning future visits. Other Mexican immigrants too share similar feelings. “It is a sad sight seeing how Mexico is falling,” says Pedro a resident of New Haven originally from Salamanca, Guanajuato. Having lived in the United States for 11 years and being far away from Mexico he worries about the war: “We don’t know how things really are in Mexico; sure we call it home, but we don’t really understand.” For Pedro, his main concern is his family. As the father of two children, he is afraid that his children will be lured into narco-trafficking.

Adan, another New Haven resident, originally from Quintana Roo, also worries about how ugly the situation has become. “Mexico is no longer what it was and because of the economic crisis, many unemployed people are taking to the drug business as the only way to make a living,” he said. Like Pedro, Adan too fears what effect the war might have on his family. Working at a local restaurant in order to finance his son’s education back in Quintana Roo, he worries about the possibility of his son getting involved with the drug cartels because he is separated from him. “I have seen many people go down that path and I don’t want my son to follow them,” he said.

Things have changed in Mexico and gone is the lifestyle of the past. The last time I visited Morelón in 2006, I witnessed the poverty I had left behind and saw how the exodus of Mexicans to the United States had changed my hometown. But now, contemplating another visit, I am afraid of how this drug warfare has affected Morelón. Already, Guanajuato has suffered 101 drug war related deaths, while our the neighboring state Michoacán—a 20 minute drive away from Morelón—has suffered 454 deaths according to a report by the *Los Angeles Times*.

Talking with my grandmother on the phone she tells me that everyone is doing well and that things are okay. But I am left wondering about what the future holds in store for Mexico. For how long will things be all right?

*Rubén Gaytán Lemus is a freshman in
Trumbull College.*

LA CASA CULTURAL

STUDENT GROUP BRIEFS

Alianza

The couches and tables are full in La Casa; music is playing from speakers; and the aroma of delicious food emanates from the kitchen—all signs of another successful Alianza event this semester. This scene from the first Alianza La Casa Café is symbolic of the many achievements for Alianza since the beginning of the Fall semester. While carrying on valued traditions such as Calentura, one of the most outstanding dance parties of the semester due to collaboration with DSA and Y-WISO, Alianza has also continued hosting relatively new events like “Cena y Cine,” where we have screened *City of Men* and shared many laughs while watching online videos at our “YouTube Night”. Meetings have taken on new activities like Latino Taboo and discussions about our members’ backgrounds, bringing more fun and depth to the group. Through these activities, Alianza continues its commitment to fostering support for the Pan-Latino community on campus. However, the term of the 2008 Executive Board is coming to a close and we look forward to new members taking up leadership positions and carrying on the legacy of Alianza, especially when we celebrate our 5-year Anniversary as an organization at La Casa in the Spring. Good luck to the new E-board and the future successes of Alianza!

Amigas is a mentoring program in which Yale Latinas mentor Latina students at Wilbur Cross High School. Every Friday a group of Yalies dedicates an afternoon to meet with the high school girls during their last class period of the day. Like the Yale mujeres, the Cross girls are of various ethnicities and ages. This year, the mentors decided to split up the time with the girls between educational goals and personal talks. In the educational aspect of the program, mentors serve as role models for striving for higher education and placing school as a top priority. Mentors have spoken to the girls about standardized testing and college. They have even taken the girls to the computer lab to help the seniors fill out college applications and to have the underclassmen start researching colleges. Mentors also feel it is imperative to have a continuous rapport with the Cross girls as a means to offer helpful advice or simply serve as confidants. Personal talks have included important issues in the girls’ lives such as dealing with friends, family, relationships and their Latina identity. In addition to facilitating these conversations, mentors commence each session with what has become a new Amigas tradition, a check-in in which everyone takes a turn saying how her past week has been. Mentors greatly enjoy working with the girls and feel that the program has been very productive this semester.

Ballet Folklórico Mexicano de Yale / BFMdY is a dance company dedicated to the preservation and performance of traditional dances from Mexico. Students and local residents from all backgrounds are welcomed to join, no previous experience is needed. BFMdY has an extensive repertoire spanning several regions and states of Mexico including: Chihuahua, Jalisco, Chiapas, and Distrito Federal. BFMdY began the 2008-2009 season with several performances throughout the New Haven area. BFMdY has had the honor of being invited to perform at events such as the Cultural Connection Talent Show, El Desfile Hispanoamericano de New Jersey 2008, and Fair Haven Middle School’s Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration. The group continues to grow in excitement and numbers, in the Spring of 2009 BFMdY will hold a 10th Anniversary show. BFMdY is a member group of the Alliance for Dance at Yale (ADAY) and is officially recognized by the Yale College Dean’s Office. For further information please contact BFMdY’s artistic director, Alejandro Bustillos at alejandrobustillos@yale.edu or 402.709.2497.

CAUSA / the Cuban American Undergraduate Students Association, was established in 2005 to serve the needs of both Cuban and Cuban American students by providing an open forum wherein to share and promote our common heritage. CAUSA also seeks to foster dialogue and raise public awareness about the social, political, and cultural issues affecting the Cuban diaspora in the United States and abroad. This semester, we screened *Fresa y Chocolate*, an Oscar nominated film that explores the production of culture, literature, and religion while testing the boundaries of age, sexual orientation, and politics under Castro’s regime. CAUSA has also arranged for a Cuban dessert cooking class to be hosted by Professor Guerra in early December. It is our hope that the linkage between Cuban culture and food relate important aspects about Cuban history. We hope to make these events open to the entire Yale community in order to increase awareness about issues pertaining to Cuba.

Despierta Boricua is the Puerto Rican Undergraduate Student Organization at Yale University. Founded in 1972, the main objective of the organization is to foster a sense of community among Puerto Rican undergraduates at Yale. DB strives to meet this objective by coordinating cultural, educational, and social events.

Last year saw Despierta Boricua flourish with renewed energy and fresh ideas, hosting several movie nights, co-sponsoring a well-attended Caribbean-themed Holiday Dinner, and sharing the accomplishments of notable Boricuas, including

NY Times writer David Gonzalez and NY civil rights attorney Elizabeth Yeampierre, through Master's Teas. This year, DB has focused on fostering community between Puerto Rican undergraduates over meals, first the DB Welcome Dinner and then biweekly dinner meetings. We've held a successful DB Social, collaborated with DSA on a Dominoes and Caribbean Food Study Break, and sponsored "Noche de Salsa" at Alisa's House of Salsa, a local salsa dance studio. This semester, we look forward to hosting a Master's Tea with a scholar from Hunter College's Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños, taking a trip to Fair Haven for food and pastries, and redecorating the DB Room at La Casa Cultural. Additionally, we are excited about becoming more involved with the New Haven Latino community through ties with Casa Otoñal's independent living center for elderly Latinos, where we kicked off our volunteering at their Valentine's Day Celebration this February. We can't wait to meet all of our incredible alums this April at the Latino Alumni Reunion, especially those that started it all!

Dominican Student Association: Quisqueyalies / DSA was founded in 2005 to spread awareness about the Dominican experience and culture to the Yale community. We aim to unify Dominican students, and those interested in the Dominican Republic, around the issues that affect our community. We strive to meet these goals by sponsoring informative and social events. We concentrate on the recruitment and retention of Dominican students through the development of support networks for undergraduate and graduate students. Our efforts include: connecting with Dominican professionals and alumni, working in Dominican communities through community service, and obtaining information about the D.R. that can serve as resources for Yale students and faculty.

To this effect, DSA has introduced contemporary Dominican scholars to the Yale community through lectures, spearheaded the First National Dominican Student Conference, and undertaken fundraising events aimed at hurricane relief in the Caribbean. This academic year, DSA enjoyed a spoken word poetry performance by a Dominican from New York called Oveous Maximus. The group also co-sponsored a Master's Tea with the playwright of the musical "In the Heights," and held a film screening with the up-and-coming Dominican filmmaker Freddy Vargas. Future DSA projects include community outreach events within New Haven, the creation of a Dominican alumni network, the construction of a DSA archival record, and the formation of an association among Dominican students in the greater Connecticut area.

The ***HSF Yale Chapter*** is part of a network of twenty-two chapters nation-wide that work toward the advancement of higher education for minority students. The Hispanic Scholarship Fund provides scholarships for college students and, as one of its chapters, we are dedicated to both outreach and

on-campus activities. Our outreach program at Wilbur Cross High School is a two-fold effort. Firstly, through Amigos/Amigas, we mentor children at Wilbur Cross High on a weekly basis. Secondly, through outreach events we aim to show these families that college is an attainable goal. These activities include workshops, student panels, and college nights. Our HSF chapter also works with Yale students. Our campus events include LSAT prep workshops and alumni panels. The latter serve as an excellent resource for students to learn more about life after Yale, be that in professional schools or as part of the work force. Our goal is to provide Yale undergraduates with guidance and resources, in the shape of mentors and networking, to aid in all our future endeavors. If you are interested in taking part in any of these activities or would like to learn more about the HSF Yale Chapter, feel free to email jessica.galvez@yale.edu.

Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Áztlan / MEChA de Yale seeks to promote political, social, and cultural awareness on our campus and through the New Haven community. We are comprised of politically conscious students from diverse ethnic backgrounds who live in or sympathize with the struggles of underrepresented communities. United through a passion for social justice, MEChistas seek change through political activism and educational empowerment. We are a part of national M.E.Ch.A., whose purpose is to unify and support all M.E.Ch.A chapters across the country. In our efforts to continue creating a strong political and cultural presence at Yale, we are hosting events to honor Cesar Chávez and Dolores Huerta. We are also organizing Semana Chicana, a week-long conference entitled "Education and the Dream." With a focus on Dream Act advocacy, Semana Chicana will address contemporary and historical educational disparities in the United States. As part of our community involvement, we have continued our Amigas mentoring at Wilbur Cross High School and plan to participate in the New Haven May Day Rally. Finally, we are excited to celebrate our 40th anniversary in 2009.

Sabrosura

Latino Dance at Yale wishes to bring together students interested in Latino/Latin American dance for the purpose of creating solidarity amongst the various cultures of Latin America, as well as exhibiting these nuances through music and dance. With this in mind, Sabrosura hopes to share with both the Yale and New Haven communities the cultural products of our various members. In so doing, we hope to create a space in which students can use the medium of dance to teach and learn about one another's culture. The last and most important aim of Sabrosura is to culminate the year in a show that manifests the above stated goals to enhance cultural relations amongst the Yale community.

Teatro!, Yale's first Latino/Latin-American theater ensemble, is committed to the continuation and evolution of Latino/Latin-American theatre on Yale's campus and the New Haven community. We aim to bring the rich voices of Latino and Latin-American dramatists to fruition, while creating a unique atmosphere wherein students and supporters of Latino/Latin-American theatre can network, learn, and come together. Teatro! was founded in 2008 by a group of students committed to promoting Latin-American and Spanish theater.

Last spring, Teatro! put together its first performance, *Giving up the Ghost* and other Monologues. The show dealt with the struggles and issues facing Latinos, specifically Chicanos or Mexican immigrants, in the United States. It touched upon themes of identity, belonging, assimilation, sexuality, gender, and politics. We have chosen *Bodas de Sangre* (Blood Wedding) by Federico García Lorca as our spring '09 production. *Bodas de Sangre* is a popular Spanish play written in 1932 by Federico García Lorca. The themes embodied in *Blood Wedding* are relevant to Teatro's mission statement, and this production will succeed in promoting Spanish theater and themes pertinent to Latin American texts.

García Lorca is a symbolic poet and dramatist of "La Generación del '27" (the "Generation of '27"), and is therefore revered in Spanish Literature. In true Garcia Lorca spirit, this play deals with death, the struggle of an individual vs. society, and the role of women. *Bodas de Sangre* is the first in a trilogy (including *Yerma* and *La Casa de Bernarda Alba*) that García Lorca wrote in the early 1930s. By presenting a historical and classic play, we aim to entertain Yale students, as well as make them aware of the history and development of Spanish and Latin American theater.

The Yale Mexican Student Organization / YMSO

is an undergraduate and graduate student organization composed of Mexican students whose main goal is to promote Mexico in Yale and Yale in Mexico. We actively seek ways to share Mexican ideas and beliefs with different groups at Yale and look for ways to get more Mexican students to come and study at Yale.

¡Oye! is a writing and spoken-word group for Latino students on campus. We aim to provide a forum to discuss our personal thoughts and experiences, and to express the diversity of the Latino experience as a whole. There are 2-hour writing workshops every week at La Casa Cultural, and one spring show. We also occasionally do smaller performances and workshops with WORD and Jook Songs. Contact luis.medina@yale.edu or sebastian.perez@yale.edu for more information or to get involved.

LASO / Latin American Student Organization

"LASO Dinner: Thursday's in the Branford Fellows Lounge- Some Food, Some Friends, Some Spanish (and Portuguese)." Is our slogan for weekly gatherings where all international students from Latin America come together to share stories about their towers of work, crazy weekend plans and just life in general. These gatherings as well as most other LASO events have one thing in common: Fun! LASO holds a tradition of hosting lighthearted inviting events for everyone who wishes to get a glimpse of a microcosmic Latin American society. LASO strives hard to host events with other Latino groups on campus by hosting joint events with them. During the fall we hosted a LASO & Alianza Tailgate and a mixer is in the works with the Latino Business Coalition. As well as forming strong relations with groups under La Casa, LASO holds strong ties with the International Student's Organization at Yale. We readily participate in international cultural shows that let us mingle with other international blocks. Our most recent event was a joint mixer with the Hellenic Society. It proved to be tremendous success. Hosting joint events with diverse international blocks on campus lets us create a "culture laboratory" in which we test how compatible societies are with each other. In this case, the Hellenic society and LASO were a perfect match. Concurrently with our strong social standing on campus LASO is cultivating its cultural presence. Our most recent event was a Master's Tea with Natasha Wimmer, translator of the works of Roberto Bolaño and Mario Vargas Llosa. The event had a marvelous outcome. Our goal of for the remainder of the year is to continue to make Yale's view of Latin America one filled with success, positive energy and fun.



Check the next issue of La Fuerza for a brief from one of the newest La Casa resident groups: PorColombia.

RAZACORE RIOT!

Chicago's Sin Orden remaps the Latino Landscape of DIY Punk/Hardcore in the U.S.

by Mike Amezcua

After the sonic curtain of razor sharp riffs and snare blasts come to a near halt, the sweat-drenched members of Sin Orden almost immediately begin packing away their equipment as routinely as night shift garbage collectors behind schedule. It is not so much that they're in a hurry to be at the next city on their tour itinerary, it's that they haven't yet come down from the fast-paced intensity of their set and their adrenaline levels are still too high to just sit back and relax. As they gradually cool off by breaking down the drum kit or carrying an amp back to their van, show attendees surround and greet them: "You guys ripped!" - "Do you have any records left?" - "¿Que chido carnales, cuando regresan?"

It seems like the whole of New York City's Latino punk scene is in attendance. Immigrant and U.S.-born youth with roots in Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Perú, Colombia, Costa Rica, and México hover around Sin Orden on a late May night in Lower East Side Manhattan outside ABC No Rio. Sin Orden are one of the more exciting DIY (Do It Yourself) hardcore bands around today, maturing over the last nine years to become ambassadors of Latino punk and politics to Latino youth and others in cities across the United States. This isn't the result of major availability of their music but rather their unfaltering work of DIY touring, putting out records, organizing shows in their neighborhoods for visiting bands, and ultimately their message of empowerment that has people listening in every city they play. Like the Bad Brains of old with their P.M.A. (Positive Mental Attitude), Sin Orden too has a message of positivity that resonates with Latino youth in cities from coast to coast. At the forefront of their music is the Latino/a experience in the U.S. These four young Mexican Americans from Chicago's southside neighborhoods are bringing new conversations, new experiences to DIY punk and hardcore where topics of race, ethnicity, class, gender, and im-

migration are personalized and shape their take on punk. Not unlike the city of Chicago, whose intricate network of rail lines once connected the country's two coasts, Sin Orden's touring and approach to punk have remapped a new landscape for burgeoning DIY punk and hardcore scenes -connecting Latino youth across different cities.

Mike: It has been about nine years since Martin Sorrondeguy's film *Mas Alla De Los Gritos* (a documentary about Chicano/Latino punk and hardcore culture) came out, in which Sin Orden makes an appearance right towards the end when you are shown practicing in your garage. You must have been about 16 or 17 years old at the time. The placing of a young Sin Orden in the film - as the documentary comes to an end - seems to communicate the rise of a new generation of U.S. Latino punk or at the very least to demonstrate the continuous presence of Chicanos and Latinos in punk and hardcore in the U.S. What does your presence in this film mean to you? Do you see yourself as part of a larger legacy of Latino punk bands? And how has Sin Orden changed since that documentary first appeared in 1999?

Gordo: I don't necessarily think we thought we were the future or the next punk band but. I guess it just happens that way. Sometimes it just unfolds that way.

Carlos: In the beginning, we were talking more on the level of being teenagers and just speaking about our experiences as young people. Nowadays, I mean, even if we tackle issues like racism and what not, we bring a perspective of what is going on in our lives, but even some of the issues stay the same as we get older. To think when we started the band that we were going to be continuing a movement or legacy of Latino punk, I don't think we thought that at all, we were just kids trying to play

music and express ourselves. As for what it is now, it's more about continuing Latino punk and being passionate about it and wanting it to grow. Mando: I think we try to keep a lot of what we talk about based on personal experience more than on general things. Instead of talking about global peace or racism on a larger scale, we try to keep things closer to what's going on in front of us, whether it is in our city or in our personal lives. During the filming of that documentary we were a lot younger so maybe that factored into us being different also, of speaking about things that are going on with high school-aged youth, since that is who we were.

Mike: If you are part of a new generation of Chicano/Latino punk bands have you found that you are singing about similar things a previous generation sang about or do you speak to different or new experiences?

Carlos: Well, yeah, I think there might be some similarities between the older bands and the newer bands but we're really just more concerned about singing about things that get us amped up, things that affect us on the daily, and some of those things may be different from other bands. For us it's about empowering kids that come to our shows, not letting mainstream American culture take away from who you are and who your family is, where you come from and the language you speak and so songs like "Nuestra Historia" ("Our History") is about growing up and being taught to assimilate and you're suppose to forget about everything and you're forced to learn about what pilgrims did or Europeans did, this is a way of maybe helping out kids realize that we went through this and they're going through this and were pissed too, but we've realized that we need to take it upon ourselves to reeducate ourselves about who we are and be proud of who we are and that is what "Nuestra Historia" is about. Latino history is usually given

a month or a single week of attention in the school year, if that, and we want to promote self education and that you can take as long as you want to learn and educate yourself about who you are and that it's a life-long project and there is no time limit on it. In "Somos La Mayoria" ("We Are The Majority"), we grow up hearing minority, you are a minority on TV, in school, on the news, on application forms, and we know that we are not a minority, we are a growing majority in many cities across this country and yet we are still marginalized. So this song is about rejecting the term "minority" and its many connotations when referring to us and reminding ourselves and others that we are actually a majority in many cities and there's power in recognizing that. The song "Puños En El Aire" ("Fists In The Air") refers to how we're usually looked at as we're not gonna make it, we're not gonna finish school, we're gonna end up doing some low-end job and so it's about rejecting what American society has destined for Latinos.

Mando: One of the songs that I really like that I'm really proud of is "Quiero Ser Pobre" ("I Want To Be Poor") and it's about people who see our neighborhoods (Little Village, Pilsen, Southside Chicago, and others) as "cool" places to live and gentrify. A lot of hardcore kids view poverty like a choice that you make, and a lot of them feel like they have to live like they're poor to feel more a part of what's going on. A lot of these kids come from parents who have nice big houses in the suburbs but they want to move into the inner city because it's cool or chic, especially now with the hipsters in the scene, so these kids move into our neighborhoods because they feel like there's "so much culture" here. They like how our buildings look, and want to feel like they're living out these fantasies by moving into our neighborhoods, they love our art murals on the walls, the "cute" little grocery stores where you can get cheap Mexican bread. Our communities look the way they do and are shaped the way they are because of legacies of racism and segregation and lack of resources, and what they see is what our people have added on to these spaces. Our communities are not museums for white tourists from the suburbs, but it suddenly feels that way. This is the way we are, this is the way we live. If our parents had a choice we wouldn't have lived here

or grown up here. My family didn't choose to live here. They didn't say "let me pass up that nice house in the nice and safe neighborhood and let's live here instead." That wasn't a choice.

Mike: What does Latino punk mean as oppose to just punk? And what about the utility of the word "punk" itself as a meaningful word today? Should there be another name for what you guys do? For the politics of doing things independently, releasing records independently, booking shows independently, playing independent venues? Should there be a different name for that? Is punk still a valid term or has it been watered down, has it lost its edge, or can it still be useful?

Gordo: I mean in a sense it's lost its edge, because you turn on the TV and it's everywhere and everyone wants to be punk, or was punk or is now post-punk or whatever. But if you think about punk in the traditional way, its roots have been DIY, to do things yourself. I guess were just trying to keep it original or go back to its roots in that sense.

Carlos: When saying "Latino punk" you are identifying yourself to a culture and identity, the two words together are powerful. Both terms and identities have, at one point or another, carried negative connotations, but they have also been terms of empowerment and so they have that connection together. And for us "Latino" comes before "punk," at least in our lives. We try to introduce the word *razacore*, through our music and at our shows, to create a new word for "Latino punk," a word that can empower Chicanos and La-

tinians in the punk community that says this is our own music and our own histories and our own stories. That if we are able to unite and get along and build community that we can be a strong force against whatever challenges lie within and outside of the punk scene.

Mike: I think it is pretty powerful to introduce new terminology or introduce new ways of thinking or being in the world, it's quite ambitious. Could you elaborate more on the term *razacore*? How do you respond to people that might, maybe because they're not Latino or for other reasons, feel excluded from that or may not feel like they're part of that *razacore*? Do you still reach out to them?

Carlos: We definitely want to reach out to them. This is for anyone but particularly any person of color, because those are the kids that go to our shows, who connect to the experiences we talk about in our songs and at our shows. We want to reach out to them. And hopefully they can adopt *razacore* in their scene or maybe create their own word, but basically it's more of a word to empower or carve out a space to empower, it's not meant to exclude anybody. We want people to walk away taking that and create something for themselves or at least learn something from us, as we are learning from them and from all the different people we meet at shows everywhere we play.

Mando: Some people may see it as excluding, because you are really only targeting a certain group of people whether it's punks of color or Latinos in our case, but you're just trying to help them you're



not trying to put anybody else down, you're not taking away from anybody you're just trying to help your own people and then, I mean, from where we come from that's not there all the time.

Carlos: The experiences we have had of feeling somehow like we have to suppress who we are because everything around us, our schools and institutions, make us feel ashamed of ourselves and make us feel constantly like foreigners, we are rejecting that, pushing away what we have learned and washing that off from the years and years that they've been shoving it down our face and this is an outlet and were taking back who we are and our identity and culture. And we just hope that our music helps other kids be able to realize that this shit is not right and that we shouldn't be ashamed of who we are.

"It's about empowerment, sometimes it's about anger, and that's what we call RAZACORE."

Mike: Getting back to this question of the usefulness of the word "punk." In the 1950s, the jazz artist Charles Mingus decided to reject the word "jazz" to describe his music, he thought the word was too commercialized, that it had lost its meaning, he didn't want to apply it to his music, thinking along those lines, can the same be said about punk? How would you guys like your music to be described or labeled? Is it hardcore/punk? Is it something else?

Carlos: It is razacore. It's fast, it's loud, it's got hooks and breakdowns and we put all that together with our stories, our roots, our culture. It's about empowerment, sometimes it's about tragedy, sometimes it's about anger, and that's what we call razacore.

Mando: I see it as like a musical interpretation of our lives, we try to make it personal, 'cause I think you could only speak, you could only feel, you could only project certain emotions if you really feel them, and if you can't really identify with what you're talking about, I don't feel that you can put your whole heart into it, you know, and if you're not playing what you want to play you can't put your whole heart into it. Part of the reason why our music is fast or thrashy or whatever is because that's the limit of our emotion into it, we can't sing about what were singing about and just

be relaxed back there while playing, you know what I mean? That's that emotion coming out and it has to be, or in our case the way we feel about it, it's at that level, it's at that pace.

Mike: While your songs are challenging the power of American culture that pacifies and assimilates people, the medium with which you've chosen to tell these stories has been...well, you are using an art form that can arguably be seen as a very American cultural product.

Carlos: I don't think punk is American culture, punk has become worldwide, international, and we are using the ideas of punk to express ourselves and I feel shows are the classrooms that we would've loved

to be in because we've probably learned more about the world through punk than we have ever learned in any school environment we have been in. From being on tour, bands coming to Chicago from other cities and other countries and telling us first hand of what they've experienced in their cities and countries, we've learned a lot. It's a great way to learn and we're using punk as this worldwide movement to tell our stories and learn from everyone else and so in that sense I don't think punk is American or North American. Punk is more international to me.

Mike: What would you say, as young artists trying to engage with other people through ideas and music and just as the creative people that you are, what is exciting for you right now, what's happening in the world that is driving Sin Orden today?

Carlos: For me it's a very local thing. I get excited seeing the youth centers popping up in the Mexican neighborhoods of Chicago. For the first time, I'm hearing kids calling themselves "Chicanos," a term I never heard being used in Chicago. The immigrant rights movement right now is really motivating: to see people coming out fighting for what they believe in is amazing, especially to see all the immigrants speaking out for themselves. What else?

I mean all the Latino punk kids coming up and starting bands and saying amazing things about their stories and just learning from them.

Mando: I see a lot of more "punk"-looking kids around schools here, a lot of kids wearing things like skinny black jeans, converse, spike jackets, a lot more than I remember even six or seven years ago from being in high school that it seems like it's cool now. Or maybe it's a trendy thing but even though it might be mainstream I think it's still a step closer to learning about DIY punk and hardcore. Because I mean, you're not born into it, you know, you just don't stumble across DIY hardcore here in our neighborhoods. You need to meet people and stuff. If you're not even remotely into it, you're never going to find it.

Mike: What do you think is the reason for there being more "punk" looking

kids in the kinds of high schools you came out of?

Mando: I think there is just more of a punk influence in the mainstream, like emo is real big now. It's all over MTV. Bands like Fall Out Boy are on MTV cribs. It's everywhere now. It's more accepted. Before, you had to, you were outcasted. Now it's more acceptable and so it's easier for them to be a part of. They no longer have to fight to be punk, they think "I could just wear this and it'll be cool." Although I think it's sometimes good to have to fight to be a punk.

Mike: You mentioned the immigrant rights marches that took place in April and May of 2006 – that were enormous nation wide, certainly enormous in Chicago – as an exciting moment and inspiration for you. Can you say more about that? How were the marches inspirational?

Gordo: It's inspirational to see so many young people involved. Some of those kids marching are immigrants themselves or have parents that are immigrants. They go through the same things, so it's inspiring for us to see that. I think overall it's exciting because there are so many Latinos in Chicago. There are many Mexican-American kids that have parents that are immigrants and they see their parents struggling and

being targeted by immigration officers like on 26th Street checking for micas ("green cards") and shit like that, so these kids feel like "man, they're targeting my family, maybe I'm not an immigrant but I can say something against that and speak out." I think it's inspiring in that sense, so many kids come marching alongside their cousins or uncles or parents that to this day still might not have papers (legal residency documents) and are struggling. It's very inspirational to see like six or seven year old kids coming out to these marches, they may or may not have an idea of what their marching about but later on in life they're going to realize that it was for their parents and for themselves. You have a lot more kids becoming aware of these rights that are getting stripped away from their parents, my parents or my aunts and uncles or what not and people are fed up and want to say something about that and that's inspiring you know and the whole city feels it, they might not like it, people might not like it, that all these brown people are marching down their street but they can't take that away from us. It's pretty inspiring when you see a bunch of grammar school kids going to these marches and cheering on their parents for something that they may have not gone through or directly experienced, like crossing the border, but realize that because of who they are they also get treated like immigrants. I think it's pretty exciting to be a part of that and especially in cities like Chicago, LA, and other large immigrant cities where people are turning out huge numbers.

Carlos: Especially when hearing that they organized walkouts in high schools and grammar schools, that's the kind of stuff you read about going on the 1960s. I mean this is history in the making, this is what people are gonna be reading about in twenty years and for these kids to be a part of history is amazing and it's very inspiring.

Mando: I think what the marches do too is they open up people's eyes to the realization that not all Latinos are immigrants because a lot of people are still close minded about that. A lot of people just have this ignorance that Mexicans have only been around in the last five years or something. I mean my family has been here over fifty years but people still act like I just fuckin' swam across the river like last week.

It makes things like that more aware, a lot of these families are walking around saying, "hey man, this is our country, we've been here too, it's not like we just walked over here, you know?"

Mike: You mentioned you've been inspired by local things happening in Chicago. What about local music? There seems to be an explosion of Latino punk bands in Chicago, where are all these bands coming from?

Gordo: From all over. I mean you have Latinos that are from the northside of Chicago and you have Latinos that are coming from the southside. I just think that it's the excitement of everything in Chicago with the marches and the school walkouts and all that, there's a rise in youth activism and it's not totally disconnected from music either. It exists within the Latino punk scene as well and it's really about wanting to feel a part of something bigger you know, the fact that punk allows for that, it's whatever you want to make it, it's kind of like an open forum for these kids where they otherwise wouldn't have something like that, to express themselves and feel like they're being heard. For example, new bands like Intifada that are just awesome young kids, are very inspiring to see. I remember when I was their age and I was so excited to see a band like Tras De Nada [another Chicago band] and be inspired by the fact that they were there and in your face and proud to be Mexican. I felt so empowered by that.

Carlos: To hear these new bands, to hear the things that they talk about because I get jaded a lot with punk, I get in my moments, so when I hear a new band letting it all out and putting out records and telling their stories it inspires me to be able to help that band out and have their music, to be able to keep it and read it and document it, because all these stories might never be heard by the public, by the mainstream, but kids in the hardcore scene might be able to get exposed to it. Also to recognize that kids are not just punks, they're graffiti writers, they're artists, they're involved in other music scenes, they are activists, that are accomplishing things that they want to do. That inspires me to keep trying to accomplish the things I want out of life.

Mike: In what ways has all this excitement and energy manifested itself?

Carlos: Well in 2006 Chicago organized the first ever Latino punk festival in the United States and we were able to get bands from all over the U.S. plus a band from the Dominican Republic and two bands from Puerto Rico to come out to one city, to one space, and for everyone to come and meet each other and inspire one another and the kids in Chicago. Bands from different cities, local bands, people who came from out of town to see the bands, we were able to give this space to everyone to express themselves. We even brought older bands like Huasipungo and Los Crudos, and that was a treat to everyone there. Even kids who weren't into punk that were there were excited to see an event like this happen, nothing like that had ever happened before. Were working on another one this year [the second Latino Fest took place in October 2007, be on the lookout for 2008].

Mike: To have an event like that is incredible, could an event like that have happened ten or twenty years ago? What is different now that something like that was able to happen?

Mando: I think maybe people were afraid of calling it a "Latino fest," and afraid of taking a stand and saying "you know what, if you're not Latino we're not gonna let you play," and I think that is something that people might have been afraid of doing before for fear of excluding folks and what not. But I think we've gotten to the point where we realized "you know, were not alone, there's a lot of us out there" and were able to say that "you know what, this is just gonna be for us," a space of our own to come together, from all over the country, from big cities to small towns, and other countries, all with a common goal but all with different ideas, and all with different things to say. And I think before it might have been harder to say "this is just going to be for Latino bands," maybe there was a wall there before that came down somewhere along the line that we said "it's gonna be okay that we're going to do this."

Carlos: And maybe there wasn't that many bands out there for there to be a fest.

Mike: Maybe twenty years ago, but what about ten years ago? Could you say more about this change of going from being uncomfortable to having something called a "Latino Fest," in other words, making that move to say "no, we are gonna have it."

Gordo: It's realizing that punk is ours also, and like you've said before Mike, the whole concept of "hijacking punk" and infusing it with your own politics, that attitude remains true now, I think, with all the bands in all the different cities. There's more of a unified consciousness that might have not been there before and it's like maybe that sense was there back then but I think it might be more exciting now or more people are realizing that this is ours too and we have something to say about it. I think it wasn't that there weren't enough bands to pull something like that off, there were more than enough bands, but it was just maybe people were just nervous to do it, "is it right? Who will we be excluding?" I mean people hold punk fests all the time and more often than not there won't be a single Latino punk band or other band of color on the bill so in true DIY fashion Latino kids in Chicago got organized and did their own. I mean people are going to say whatever they're going to say, but you can't take that away from us.

Mike: How many nights was the first Latino Fest? How many bands played overall?

Carlos: Two nights. Eighteen to twenty bands, something like that.

Mike: What makes it a "Latino" fest beside the obvious being that Latino bands are playing? What made this fest distinguishable in other ways from say, other punk fests?

Carlos: It was the issues, it was the language, you heard more people speaking in Spanish that you wouldn't hear in other punk and hardcore fests in the U.S. It was about the different cultures under what Latino is, and hearing personalized

stories you just aren't going to hear from other bands, because many punk bands can talk about racism and what not, but not many can talk about being targets of racism; they don't have direct ties to it.

Mike: It seems to be an exciting time for DIY Latino punk and hardcore across the nation with things like the fest and the number of active bands around from places like Watsonville and San Jose, California, Chicago, South Texas, New Jersey and New York City. Do you get the feeling that there's more of a unified sense of community amongst the Latino punk bands? Do you feel a close bond to these bands?

Carlos: Certainly, I mean, by touring we've been able to play and meet a lot of

to stay and that we're going to be fed, were going to meet their families and it's probably going to remind us of home and not in a homesick kind of way but more of just being familiar. We are all in it trying to create this larger movement of empowerment and expression.

Mike: Is there some kind of unstated rule that you have to sing in Spanish to be considered a Latino punk band, like you can't sing in English, or you can't be bilingual or introduce your bilingualism or biculturalism into the music? I feel like there are bands out there, for example Piñata Protest from San Antonio, who I think sing in both languages, but in addition bring other elements of being Mexican or being Latino into their music with their blending of punk with conjunto/norteño music and their use of the accordion. They may be, knowingly or not, challenging the notion that Latino punk bands must sing in Spanish to be considered as such. Thoughts?

Carlos: I don't believe that you necessarily have to sing in Spanish, I mean not all our songs are in Spanish but we do try to make the effort to make most of our songs in Spanish. There are many Latino bands that don't sing in Spanish and that's fine too. They're telling their stories and you don't necessarily have to sing in Spanish, because if you were born here most of your life you've probably had to speak in English; if that's all you know who are we to judge? It's not like we are saying that were perfect Spanish speakers. Because

we're not. And the hybrid of two languages I think is awesome. It should be used if that's how you speak and feel comfortable. That's how we speak.

Mike: There are some bands that say well, we sing in Spanish because that's the best language we speak, or I'm an immigrant and I'm most comfortable in Spanish but for those who are not immigrants, for Latinos born or raised in the U.S. why do you sing in Spanish, what is so important about singing in Spanish to you?



these bands, and we consider them our friends. It's a great feeling to be on the road and know that we're gonna play together and hang out at some point. When we get together we feel this sense of familiarity with them as if were back home and we talk and exchange ideas, we trade records, we tell our stories of back home in Chicago, and they tell us about Watsonville, or what is going on in New York City with immigrant rights. We know if we're in this city we can call this person in Los Angeles or San Francisco and we know we can probably count on a place

Carlos: It's still part of our culture. It's what some of us speak at home, so we're also comfortable with it. But even for those of us who are not comfortable with Spanish it's a conscious act of remembering it because, I mean, growing up in this country and going through the educational system here there are systematic ways of making kids forget or deny the languages they speak at home if that language isn't English. Once you are in the school system, you're expected to learn and speak English and being bilingual is just not really welcomed in this country, or it's not welcomed if that second language is Spanish. If you're a bilingual person you are pegged as not being as smart as others, as if knowing one language is better than knowing two. It's a systematic process of forcing you to forget where you come from or who you are, and so that's one of the reasons that we actively write songs and sing in Spanish even though we were born here. It's an act of remembering or relearning what we have been socialized or sometimes forced to forget.

Mando: Plus if you're a Latino band and you have issues that you want to talk about with other Latinos your main audience speak the Spanish language, even in the U.S. if those are the people who you want to speak to then you're better off speaking a language that the majority use and that's Spanish.

Carlos: To target Latinos that way but using it as a positive way as a form to empower instead of trying to put them down, you are Latinos you're not worth nothing you are just going to be a gang banger or all you are good for is to work at McDonalds or you're just another body to send to war. So we use Spanish also to target Latinos in a positive way so that's why it's important for us to do it in Spanish.

Mike: I'm often disappointed with the kind of record reviews Latino hardcore bands get in zines and other forums that review records. When a hardcore band sings in Spanish often the comparison is made to Los Crudos, which strikes me as problematic to only have this one single reference as a point of comparison. Can you say something about what problems those comparisons might have or what it means for Latino hardcore records to

always be compared to a band like Los Crudos, which is such a powerful player in the pantheon of DIY hardcore punk?

Mando: I think it's hard because, well, it shows a couple of things. One of the bad things is if you don't feel like you're comparable to Los Crudos and somebody puts you in that situation that you are, it takes away from what you did and what you feel that you did in accomplishing and making a record. But a lot of the times if somebody reads that and they don't like Los Crudos that doesn't necessarily mean that they're not going to like you but according to that review they might think, "oh it's just another Crudos copy band," you're already in those categories of being Latino and you're from Chicago and it's hardcore punk. It's gotta be the same. And it's not. It's different and it also shows that people who write that stuff are lazy, they can't come up with anything else. Their range of words to describe hardcore and punk in Spanish is limited, either that or it's all one indistinguishable style to them.

Gordo: It's almost as if it's in Spanish and it's fast it has to get compared to Crudos. But just because it's in Spanish and it's punk doesn't necessarily mean it sounds remotely close to Los Crudos, and that's what's unfair to bands like Outraged, Sin Orden, or Tras De Nada. These bands don't write music to sound like Crudos, they're just playing and writing what they feel. White hardcore bands get the benefit of the doubt and are compared to a wide-range of bands and things, a band sings in Spanish and it automatically gets compared to Crudos and I don't know if that's going to change. I mean, don't get us wrong, it's an honor to be compared to Crudos, but at some point it just gets very limiting if that's the only reference people can make when describing the Latino/Chicano punk scene, and it dismisses all the other influences these bands have that may be musical or non-musical, that may be political, that may have to do with lived experience or local issues, etc. And I agree with Mando, it's being lazy, it's a copout and taking the easy way. "They're from Chicago, they sing in Spanish, they're punk, hmmm, conclusion ...they're like Los Crudos," it's unfair if you think about it, not taking anything away from Los Crudos,

hell we grew up to Los Crudos! And I'm sure they themselves would say it's not fair. Sure, there are commonalities but there are differences as well. There's a lot more to these bands than the on-the-surface comparisons suggest.

Mike: When Sin Orden is dead and gone, should it be forgotten or should it be remembered? Why and how?

Mando: I would just like to be thought of as a band that inspired somebody else to do something because a lot of what we do is based on inspiration by others. I would be very happy to know that if somebody got something out of it and they're a band sitting there looking at their first seven-inch and it was because they saw us at a show and thought it would be possible to start a band. I always think that's the greatest thing you could pass on, inspiration to somebody else.

Gordo: It would be nice to be thought of as a band that spoke out on all the issues that we felt needed to be presented to people in the punk scene. That we were always a band that never downplayed anything we always said what we felt. What Carlos wrote was real, it really happened, this band was never bullshitting, was always trying to be legit. Trying to inspire people by us doing what we thought we needed to do and that spoke out or played shows even if there was nothing but gringo bands on the bill and spoke about issues they may not bring up, or know about, or relate to.

Mike: Future plans and projects?

Carlos: We will be touring Japan in October, we're very excited about that. It'll be our first time there [This happened already in Oct. '07, Japan rocked hard]. We also recorded for our first full length CD/LP that should be out in the spring of 2008 as well as a split seven-inch with Condenada.

Sin Orden/P.O. Box 803251
Chicago, IL 60680
www.myspace.com/sinorden

Mike Amezcua is an American Studies PhD student.

La Fuerza thanks the work of all those who helped organize the first National Yale Latino Alumni Reunion!

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DEATH OF THE MATADOR

by Santiago Correa



12" x 9" , crushed nupastel, prismacolor pencil, and conte crayon

Perspective of the Man



Perspective of the Bull

*Santiago Correa is a freshman
in Branford College.*

Una Buseta

by Hugo Martínez Bernardino

Todo-poderosos, os deuses juntaram o último pedaço no quebra-cabeça. O Brasil completa a América do Sul e por sua posição geográfica prossegue a confusão: tão parecido com o espanhol, português é o dado sobressalente no jogo. Agradeça o sucesso dos deuses pela associação! O domínio do espanhol obviamente equivale à fluência na língua alheia. Bem-aventurados na ignorância são aqueles que não hesitam numa oportunidade de usar seu quase perfeitoportunhol.

“Estoy buscando una buseta. ¿Entiendes? U-NA BU-SE-TA,” pergunta o hispanohablante durante um papo com uma mulher e sua criança de cinco anos. Ele continua, buscando as palavras certas no seu vocabulário precário, “Siempre tiene hombres adentro, pero primero tienen que pagar para entrar. A buseta no discrimina contra mujeres. A buseta va por toda la calle recogiendo gente. ¿Entiendes? U-NA BU-SE-TA.” Ele estende a boca num sorriso, orgulhoso que as nuances não impediram a coerência do seu discurso.

O rosto da moça cai em estupefação e o sorriso do hispanohablante desvanece. Fúria espuma da boca dela, “Buceta!?” ela sussurra. Instintivamente, sua mão cobre sua boca, evitando a possibilidade que repita a palavra. Tapando as orelhas da criança entediada, a mãe explode, “Que saciedade ganha por falar assim na frente de minha criança! Devia ter vergonha de dizer essas sujeiras!” Não obstante, o hispanohablante continua sua procura interminável pela “buseta.”

Fronteiras repartem os países, mas os países hispânicos atravessam as divisões geográficas. Os países hispânicos envenenam o Brasil! Embora pareça poderoso, o monopólio da língua espanhola no tabuleiro internacional não existe: os pedaços nem sempre se encaixam. Entreteídos pela brincadeira, os deuses preferem a Babilônia com os avanços modernos. Ônibus e coletivos, obviamente, causam os risos mais vibrantes neste jogo.

*Hugo Martínez Bernardino is a sophomore
in Johnathan Edwards College.*

Weeded Out

by Christina Ruíz

Oh, verdant one,
New to earth,
New to life,
Deep green like the eyes of a lover.

Open to all yet defensive;
Sun encompasses you,
But spikes dissuade predators
From doing the same.

Your journey is one without movement,
But rather one with yourself.
The freeze-frame scenery doesn't haunt you;
It just leaves you more time, more thought.

But just when your leaves are ripe,
Your veins pulsing with living,
With food you proudly made yourself,
You see, with dismay, one brown spot.

You try to ignore it,
Convince yourself it will flee,
But no, it only multiplies,
All the time growing larger.

Your once-thriving system
Has slowed, degenerated,
Your stem forced to bow down to everything around you,
And your leaves, those once-green shades of happiness,
Crusty, dying, dead.

You're not ready to go,
To end the life you had finally made yourself a master of.
You can't leave just yet,
For your mind has not found all the answers it yearns for.

But it is too late,
And nothing can be done,
As a dead, brown weed
Silently falls to the ground,
Taking with it a mind
That wasn't done with life.

*Christina Ruíz
is a freshman in Timothy Dwight College.*

Adrian

by Hugo Martínez Bernardino

Borders illustrated on maps by lines that curve, and bend, and twist, and turn, but never break, separate the United States and Mexico. Guns and soldiers, and fences and walls, regulate entry, but the border's most lethal ammunition lies within the mythology of division. Implanting Mexican culture in America, Riverside punctures the US-Mexico border. With two toddlers trotting along, my parents traversed the penetrable US-Mexico border, and settled in Riverside, California in 1988, the year before my birth.

Riverside is the only home I have ever known, but Mexico always remained within reach. Amá's home cooked dinners, always a hearty main dish – gorditas, enchiladas, chiles rellenos – and complementary arroz y frijoles, filled home with the tastes and aromas of ranchos. Seated for a bountiful meal, my father at the head and my mother at the opposite end, my four siblings and I struggled to delineate the boundaries of our territory. Spanish, the unofficial-official language at home, infiltrated every conversation, but my siblings and I employed our English to circulate the neighborhood's most recent chisme, leaving our parents in oblivion's cave. As we indulged in our meal, Jesucristo, watching from his frame, reminded me of his omnipresence. Like Pavlov's well trained dog, I silently broke into a "Padre Nuestro," my favorite of them all. Apá and Amá never got around to building the white picket fence, but they seasoned Riverside with the Mexican zest well enough to call it casa.

With pen in hand, a flick of the wrist scars an unadulterated sheet of paper with a line. The implications of lines are often overlooked. In contrast to angled shapes, the circle reigns supreme because of its geometric perfection and continuity. But the circle's aesthetics cannot create separate entities. Only lines possess the power to illustrate parameters. Only lines create distinct worlds. Only lines devastate.

But lines can be traversed.

Accompanied by her friends, Crystal and Aileen, Ana, the youngest in my family, walked into the clinic. The youngest girls waiting in line, they jumped when the nurse Anglicized the pronunciations, "Ana Karen Martinez."

Ana followed into the office. The directions were simple enough. Pee. Wait. It must have been the easiest biology test she'd ever taken.

Flashing her innocent smile, Ana proudly presented her work.

"Take a seat," the nurse offered. "We'll have to wait a few minutes."

"What's the worst that can happen?" Ana asked herself and then repeated, "Well, at least you can't fail a pregnancy test," over and over.

"It says here you were born in 1991, Ana. That makes you 13. Correct?" the nurse inquired. Absorbed in her own thoughts, Ana replied with a simple "yes." The nurse continued to rustle through paperwork for another three minutes. Then, she picked up the stick and deciphered its message to Ana.

One line. "It's negative. Ana, this means you are not pregnant," the nurse translated. Unaffected by the results, Ana stood up and walked towards the door. Then, as Ana crossed the threshold, fingers still lingering on the knob, the nurse startled her. "Wait," she called. Like a grade schooler sentenced to a dark corner, Ana obediently took her seat.

Two lines. Two treacherous ticks formed a plus. "I'm sorry, Ana," the nurse explained, "I read the test before it was done. It turns out you are pregnant." She pointed at the pregnancy test, to the power of two lines. She offered congratulations. But the nurse brought Ana back to reality when she placed a stack of papers under her nose: they read "ADOPTION" and "TERMINATION." Ana wrestled to grab the meaty stacks all at once and exited. By the time she arrived in the lobby, she had already made her decision. Ana carelessly stuffed her options into her backpack, mixing them among her gel pens and body glitter.

The next day, Ana told Amá of her pregnancy. I don't know what upset Amá more, the scandal that her youngest daughter of only 13 was sexually active and managed to get pregnant, or that Ana had leaped over the line that demarcated "girlhood" from "womanhood" two years premature of her quinceañera. Either way, Amá, clinging to her meticulously cleaned laundry, insisted that Ana not tell anyone until she began showing. Amá's piety did nothing to stop Ana from having sex, but it did stop

her from having an abortion. Instead, Ana aborted her dreams for a quinceañera and began to juggle potential names along with elementary algebra equations. Adrian, she thought.

Although Amá pleaded that Ana remain decent and contain her secret, she spread the news to Sara, my eldest sister. Almost instantaneously, *el chisme* engulfed the women in my family. Although it struggled to consume the less-than-flammable boundary between the men and women, in less than a week's time, *el chisme* torched every tongue within my home, except the patriarch's. The wild fire's intensity grew, but never escaped my immediate family. I was the last to burn in *el chisme*'s rage. When I got word, my brain incinerated.

Working as quickly as they could, the ashes tried to recall every name and every face of every girl that bore a child. I associated a particular *chica* with every year since middle school. Sandy, a student who I tutored as a junior, struck me most. Rumor of Sandy's pregnancy ignited the halls. Sandy never confessed, but her strange demeanor provided kindling. Unconcerned with SoCal's scorching sun, Sandy never shed her fuchsia hoodie. Clenching a notebook, Sandy's crossed arms concealed her small figure. Even as her protruding belly stretched her sweater, Sandy clung to the folder.

Ana's sudden turn from La Virgen to Magdalena unnerved Amá. Unable to find rationale in Ana's misstep, Amá fought back tears during Sunday breakfast and admitted to me, "No entiendo de 'onde consiguen sus ideas." Even in the decade of Juno's success, sitting a table length away from her, I didn't want to overstep my boundaries. As I sat there, crunching on my Kelloggs, I looked at my mother, tortilla in hand, and thought of all my precious work: I had spent my entire life working to distinguish myself from my peers of gangbangers and teenage mothers. Now, confronted with teen pregnancy, I saw the contours I outlined dissolve. Amá, inundated with blasphemy, struggled to keep afloat in "our ideas."

But Amá never lost sight of her own ideas. During the third week of April, I joined my academic team, Envirothon, on a retreat to learn about redwoods. Away for the week, my mother worried if I did not phone daily. We always spoke of what I missed at home, but Amá never failed to maneuver Ana's pregnancy into conversation. On the night of the full moon, which illuminated every corner of my hotel room, Amá explained that she did not let Ana step outside.

Instead, Amá required Ana wear red clothes and embellish her panties with three safety pins. According to Amá, Adrian would be safe from the full moon if Ana took these precautions. I paid little attention to this superstition and continued my ramble about the overwhelming stresses as the team's soil expert. I should have paid a little more attention, rather than push her dirt to the side.

On the penultimate night of the retreat, I called Amá. Typical. She launched into a slew of questions. Expected. We chatted some more and the conversation turned to Ana. Of Course. Before she could utter another word, I interjected and asked if I should contribute more to the bills. "Unnecessary," she retorted. Reaffirming that my studies were far more important, Amá rejected my offer.

I persisted. As a man and potential provider, I knew that with another mouth to feed, I would have to undertake more responsibility, but Amá continued, "Ana está en el hospital."

Respire.

"El doctor dice que abortó espontáneamente durante la madrugada."

Preocupación.

"Afortunadamente, ella está bien. Un poco alterado, pero bien."

Alivio.

On April 10, 2005, Ana walked into the hospital a pregnant teen. A few days later, having miscarried Adrian, she walked out a young woman. Almost five years later, Ana willingly shares her story, providing insight most 17 years should not have. Amá still struggles to speak of the happening. As for the patriarch, Amá unleashed *el chisme* on Apá only on the eve of Ana's miscarriage. Slightly seared, Apá has never spoken of Ana's misstep. Blurring the line between US realities and Mexican traditionalism, two distinct worlds tug on Riverside's Mexican-American identity. Like skillful tightrope walkers, Riversiders dance along the line. Occasionally slipping into one more than the other, they always manage to maintain their balance. Enjoying burritos and burgers, the white picket fence would only obstruct Riverside's view of the California sunset.

Hugo Martínez Bernardino is a sophomore in Johnathan Edwards College.



Untitled, Christina Ruíz

Se encuentran

by Ofelia Canals

Me encuentro sola,
En una selva desértica.
Los troncos, la arena, las amapolas violentas
Se ríen de mí.
De mis lágrimas inútiles,
De mi guerra cobarde y frustrada.

Miro el agua amarilla que corre bajo mis pies,
Miro las alas del pescado malvado,
Que se burla de mis venas congeladas
Por un rostro impenetrable.
Miro el reloj que marca el pasar de mis pasos,
Pasos apasionados, pero débiles.
Pasos que apuñalan mis ojos,
Acercándome a la imagen de una realidad
Que destroza mis sentidos.

Soy la protagonista
De una obra interminable
Que intenta reconstruir la naturaleza
Que intenta convencer al mundo
Que los corazones en desacuerdo
Pueden encontrarse.

*Ofelia Canals is a senior in
Calhoun College.*

POR DIOS, FOR COUNTRY, AND FOR YALE:

Meditating on peaceful schisms of Latino religious life at Yale

by Edgar Díaz-Máchado

The life of a Yale Latin@, like any other Yalie, is full of things to do. There are books to read, papers to write, meetings to attend, and events to plan. There is a side of Yale's Latin@ community, however, that is not often explored: our faiths. Where do Yale's Latin@s go to worship, meditate, and find answers to life's deeper questions? How does religion fit into the lives of Latin@s on campus? At what point does the cultural house yield way to the house of worship?

Our community is vibrant with diversity—be it ethnic, geographic, or cultural. The religious lives of Yale Latin@s, therefore, run against the perception that we are all monolithically of the same faith tradition—the Roman Catholic Church. Nonetheless, stereotypes and assumptions sometimes mask this underlying diversity.

"Well, everybody assumes I'm Catholic because I'm Mexican," says Jocelyn Pérez, BR '11, who has connections with the Pentecostal movement. Pérez continues, "I got the 'no comas carne' on Ash Wednesday when I was about to eat my delicious burger and I often get the 'OK, you're weird' look." The assumption of Roman Catholic background, being as it is so deeply entrenched in Latino culture, can sometimes alienate members of the community. "There are prayers I don't know, in English or Spanish. Songs, lyrics, and ecstasies I never grew up with," laments Benjamín González, BK '09, who was raised as a Jehovah's Witness but now identifies as an atheist. "I definitely feel [like] less of a 'real' Latino whenever I'm confronted with a puzzled look whenever I mention that I was raised by a Jehovah's Witness."

Despite the alienation of lacking common religious background, connections can be made. Eleni Christidis, BR '11, who is half-Greek and half-Colombian, identifies as a Greek Orthodox Christian and points out, "Coming to Yale, I suddenly felt sort of swallowed up by a new culture, and it became really important for me to...assert my ethnic and religious identity." She continues, "In many ways, Orthodoxy is similar to Catholicism, and the Greek and Latino cultures share common values—family-oriented, centered around food and community. Still, there are moments when I feel not 'Latino enough' or not fully Greek."

On the other hand, what of Latin@s who don't particularly have a faith: Yale's Latin@ atheists and agnostics? Saybrook senior Rudy Castillo, who identifies as an agnostic, recalls, "It's always interesting to observe the role that [religion] plays in other people's lives. The Spanish language is filled with religion, Dios mío, Madre santa, gracias a Dios, si Dios quiere, etc. It's really not that fun to go to misa or a posada or anything when you're not [Catholic or a Christian]." For others, the religion around them can be taken on to give an insight

to a life they would not otherwise have known. "Religion is another identity for me to educate myself with, learning from backgrounds that I've never encountered before," continues González, "There is also the performativity of it where I can attend a sermon, a shabbat dinner, or a spiritual celebration." Castillo echoes, "I [feel] like an anthropologist."

For others, coming to Yale proves to be a time when ties to predominantly Latino faith communities are severed. Pérez continues, "My religious life changed completely, I don't have my Latino community and instead have adopted many other communities which are all wonderful because our God is not limited to a certain race. But one of the most important things I've learned while at Yale from friends and God is that these superficial and physical things don't matter at all."

"Yale's Latin@'s of faith are making their presence known. Some of us serve on church boards, as deacons and group leaders. "

For some, however, the connection between culture and faith warrants searching out a similar home while at Yale. Rosie Avila, SM '09, who was raised as a Jehovah's Witness sought out the local Spanish congregation, as opposed to attending the English congregation the handful of Witness Yalies attend. "I didn't feel as if they were as inviting and warm as my local [Spanish] congregation back home," Avila says. "They've actually invited me to gatherings. It's a sense of family I didn't have in English that I found in Spanish. I didn't feel as if it were my church."

Yale's Latin@s of faith are making their presence known. Some of us serve on church boards, as deacons and group leaders. Some of us meditate with the Buddhist chaplain in Battell while others attend Yale Christian Fellowship Bible studies. Our reach even extends up to the Divinity School, where the Yale Divinity Latino/a Association has recently been reactivated under Nichole Flores, YDS '09, and former La Casa Cultural Graduate Assistant. With the growing Latin@ presence on Yale's campus in general, Yale Latin@s of faith are making their mark on the religious landscape; proving that we are not a uniformly Roman Catholic people, our faith expressions, indeed, vary as much as our cultural expressions.

Edgar Díaz-Máchado is a rising senior in Pierson College majoring in Religious Studies. He is a member of the University Church and an ex-Jehovah's Witness. She doesn't even go here.

MAESTROS: An Interview with Master Stephen Pitti and Associate Master Alicia Cámara

by José Meza

As the newest family members of Ezra Stiles College, Master Stephen Pitti and Associate Master Alicia Camacho sit down with La Fuerza to tell us how they feel being a Latino family living in a residential college.

La Fuerza: What was it like going to college? Was it a huge culture shock?

Stephen Pitti: It was a huge culture shock for me to come to Yale as an undergraduate. I had never been to the northeast until I arrived for Cultural Connections. It was then called PROP (Pre-Registration Orientation Program) and it was a terrific program through which I made many of my best friends during college. It really made me much more comfortable and prepared me for the start of classes.

Alicia Camacho: I really wanted to be in New York. So, going to college was basically going to live in New York to see the city of arts and jazz, and I just wanted to be in a larger world than what I had in Philadelphia. College was a very politicized time, and I had already grown up with a strong political background, but college was a time where we were really fighting for Ethnic Studies, and it was the time that people are now calling the Multi-cultural Wars. At Columbia, there were no Latino faculty to speak of and very little diversity within the faculty, and that's really what we took on. And that's the home of the Western Civilization curriculum, which we tried to abolish [she laughs] but didn't succeed, but it was great fun to be part of a very active community. I shouldn't say we tried to abolish it, we tried to modify it, but it was very exciting. New York was not as prosperous as it is now, or hadn't been through that kind of urban revitalization yet. It was a time in which we were seeing the city trying to address the needs of the homeless. So, there was a lot to be involved with in the city—labor, housing struggles, etc. Now it's a very sanitized Manhattan, so, some of the things that I was used to aren't there anymore. I studied as close to a kind of ethnic study as I could, so I ended up studying a mixture of

anthropology and ethnic studies.

LF: I'm sure you've been asked this before, but how do you feel about becoming the first Mexican-American Master family of a residential college? How momentous is this to your family, Stiles, and to the University community and its history?

AC: You're actually the first person to ask me that. I think that it's an opportunity for us to create a space of community to function in Yale and New Haven differently than if we were simply faculty members. What I feel most grateful for is that Stiles functions like a small neighborhood within itself; to be able to collaborate with that, with the students because we live and work together, is really enriching. If that creates a space within Yale in which Latinos can help shape the culture of Yale, then I'm really gratified for that. I think it's an extraordinary privilege that the resources seem infinite in terms of the people that we get to work with and the incredible range of talent in people that really know New Haven. What I wish is that there was more recognition of how important it is to integrate our sense of our work as scholars and as students into our being in New Haven.

SP: I want to be a good master of a residential college. I'm eager to use this opportunity to do good things for undergraduates, for fellows of the college, for alums, and for the city of New Haven. It's nice to imagine bringing the concerns that many Mexican-American students and other Latino students have into an office like this one, and use this place to bring speakers and establish programs that often times might have a particular resonance with Latino students on campus.

LF: That said, how do you feel about diversity on campus? Why do you think there are so few minority professors in academia?

SP: There are many good people on campus, who are working very hard on issues of diversity, and who've done a lot in this

area for more than a decade. That said, everyone realizes we have a long way to go, and that the diversity in the faculty ranks just like the diversity in the student ranks will only improve with increased work and increased commitment at all levels of the University. The fundamental problem we face is that Latinos, African Americans, Native Americans, and others have such low rates of high-school graduation. That so many of the problems we face are not problems of having too few people receiving their PhD's, but having so few people finishing high school, and then in turn finishing college. And so, we have problems with the pipeline into the professoriate that extend all the way back, much, much earlier in people's educational careers and that reflects deep problems in U.S. society.

LF: Master Camacho, you touched on this before with regard to part of your college years. How do you feel about diversity on campus?

AC: When I was doing my graduate work, my goal was to work in a public institution and teach a diverse student body. What's remarkable to me about Yale is the way in which it has used its resources in the time that I've been here. It's offered me a student body I could not find anywhere else. You know, 60-70% of my classes have first generation college students. If I were to go back to a state school, I wouldn't have that opportunity. And that's really what's kept me here because you can do anything in the classroom with the students I work with. What I don't see at the faculty level is the capacity to retain and build a more representative faculty population, one that reflects the diversity of Yale.

LF: How do you feel about students' demands for minority faculty recruitment?

SP: Students have to demand the education that they want and they have to demand to be supported by the administration, by departments, and by faculty members in a way that they see fit. This

university, like all universities, can do a lot better on faculty diversity questions than it has done to date. And we're only where we are because of student demands. Much of the diversity we have in the faculty ranks is due to the recurring efforts by students year after year to push departments and programs to hire people in areas that have been underrepresented in the curriculum. Students should certainly continue to push on those questions.

LF: Master Camacho, I understand you're working on a second book, "The Carceral Border: Social Violence and Governmentality at the U.S.-Mexican Frontier", which addresses how the expansion of free-market capitalism on a global scale has transformed the mobility of people, culture, and capital to and across the U.S.-Mexican frontier. With a new president, how do you feel the immigration issue will change in the coming years?

AC: The book is about violence and the migrant circuit linking the whole hemisphere, but particularly the southern Mexican border and Central American immigration movement all the way north. It's looking at the effects of criminalizing the movement of poor people for work, and the effects it has both on standing countries and the countries of transit. We're living in an intolerable situation: the fact that immigrants are the fastest growing prison population in this country and immigrants are also subject to incarceration and deportation in impressive numbers. And yet, it's debated on only very limited terms what these immigrants contribute to this country economically. Neither question really addresses the fundamental crises of it all, which to me begins with the profound social inequality in this hemisphere. That's what I'm writing about, and I'm thrilled to think of a new administration that will be guided by more principal concerns for the rights of poor people and that will hopefully be able to counter the anti-immigrant racism of the last decade. But I'm not hopeful yet, because the scale of the problem is huge, and there remains in the U.S. a great fear of a Latino majority. The only thing we can do is to stop the raids and the pace of deportation and aggres-

sive policing. Nevertheless, I don't see us reaching a resolution for the immigration reform issue in the immediate future.

LF: Master Pitti, I understand you're currently working on some big projects. Tell me a little bit about these.

SP: The book I'm working hardest on is the book on Ceasar Chávez, "The World of Ceasar Chávez", which is really a political history of Mexican-Americans and agricultural workers in California over the course of Chavez's lifetime. Primarily through the figure of Chavez himself, who lived from 1927 where he was born in Arizona until 1993 when he died in California, it's a book that tries to take on big questions about immigration, youth culture, WWII, post-WWII politics, Chicano/a movement, and labor activism during the

communities around the country, undocumented immigrants and their families and friends, employers, and neighbors of those residents will continue to be hurt by federal enforcement in the absence of a real pathway to citizenship.

LF: It seems both of you have a lot on your plates these days. How do you find a balance between family life and your careers?

SP: I'm not sure I do. [He laughs] I really enjoy hanging out with my kids, taking them to school and soccer practice, playing with them after school, eating in the dining hall, and messing around with them in the house and the local park. As rich as life is within the college, family life is still the center of our lives and it provides the basic structure and joy that we have everyday.

AC: Given what I work on, given what I do, being a parent is an unbelievable blessing. I'm so grateful for the time I have with my kids, and their world. I think it really grounds me. I also love having them live here and have relationships with my students in a way that brings parenting and work life together. In this sense, I'm not parenting them by myself. It's a very big blessing. This isn't the conflict for me, however, I think the conflict is what everyone else thinks—there's just not enough time to do all the things that you would like to do.



La primera familia de Stiles.

years in which Chavez was alive and arguably one of the most important and most influential members of U.S. society. Like most people on this campus, and most Americans, I look with great hope on the new administration. I have real concerns, like many Latinos, where the immigration issues stand within the priority list for Obama's administration. Few direct promises and few plans seem to have been made to address the state of immigration reform in the near future and these are issues of deep importance to all 50 states, to Latinos in particular, but to all residents in the U.S. These are issues which one hopes the Obama administration takes on very soon because in the absence of real leadership at the national level to resolve the crises facing many

LF: Master Pitti, what do you want to get out of your years as Master of Ezra Stiles?

SP: I want to continue doing many of the things I've been doing: being involved, teaching and mentoring graduate and undergraduate students, writing, being active in New Haven and elsewhere, and through the opportunity of being a College Master, to shape for better the residential college and the lives of undergraduates here who are coming from many different places with many different things to offer but also many different sorts of needs here at Yale.

José Meza is a junior in Ezra Stiles College.

BURRITO FIGHT!

And then there were two: more burrito stands are creating competition for Francisco, the original burrito man.

by Sandra Caballero

The outrage! Competition at its finest has just invaded the corner of Elm and Broadway. So who's to blame? Burritos! Francisco's one time monopoly on the Burrito industry has now transformed into an outright war! Two new burrito stands have invaded Francisco's territory. Figuratively the burrito stand war simulates a *lucha libre* match. The two new carts stand on either side of the original Tijuana Taco Company stand, almost as if working in a tag team to bring down the original burrito king. The only thing keeping it from being an actual match is the absence of physical contact, which is replaced, instead by fiery stares.

At one point Francisco's burrito supremacy was only slightly hindered by Bulldog Burrito, located further up Broadway. But now, there are three equally talented burrito men. Yet, Francisco still manages to keep his loyal cliental base with his flirtatious smile, charming character and of course the delicious burritos. His burrito stand offers what many Latinos at Yale, are in desperate need of—a little piece of home. As you wait for your burrito to be made, Latino music blasts from some hidden speaker. The music mixes with an analogous version of home food, all wrapped up in a joyous Spanish conversation between you and the burrito man. With *arroz*, *frijoles*, (you're choice of meat or portabella mushroom) onion, *guacamole*, cabbage, cheese, and a giant spoonful of memories, Francisco wraps your burrito and sends you back out into Yale. The short reverie of home is enough to keep many Latinos from going crazy; especially when considering that "Mexican burritos" in the dining halls are far from "Mexican" and far from "burritos" instead they are some weird concoction of dry beans and mystery meat. Out of the eight months that Francisco has been here in the United States, he has spent six of them on the corner across Au Bon Pain, wrapping up sweet memories of home in a 3 x 8 inch burrito. Now, new comers challenge his burrito empire by offering the same quality burritos, the same Latino music and the same Spanish conversation. So what is behind the new stands? Why are they trying to invade Francisco's territory?

On a cold and windy afternoon, my friends and I ventured to the burrito stands to try and answer this question. With a mental list of inquiries, we split into two teams and ordered the same burritos from La Carreta cart by Saybrook and the Tijuana Taco Company by Trumbull. I went to the original burrito stand. As I approached Francisco, his muscles tightened as he got ready to make one more of his famous burritos. "Hola, que tipo de burrito quieres?" – he asked eagerly. I ordered a vegan burrito, and quickly switch the conversation over from a simple order to an in-depth interview. When I asked him if I could do an interview on him, he looked at me as if I was crazy. "?Yo? ok." He replied shyly. "What do you think of the new burrito carts." I asked. He paused. I was ready for him to start



cursing out the new burrito carts for stealing his business, but instead he answers with a mere, "No se, no los conosco bien." I couldn't believe him. If I were him I would be outraged. These burrito carts are stealing his business. As much as I tried to probe the subject, he wouldn't budge. I left with more questions than I had actually started off with. My friends, who had interviewed the other Burrito man, Pedro, came back with the information I needed to answer my inventory of questions. The only answer I can come with is that Francisco, the burrito king, is a generous man. What I always considered to be the war of the burrito stands is simply business. Francisco kept a strong hold of the burrito empire because there was no competition. But now, that other businesses have tapped into this spring of wealth, Francisco, has been willing to share. Pedro, and the other burrito man come from similar backgrounds as him.

Pedro, from La Carreta, just began working in the stand for two months, and has only been here for 3 years. Ultimately, the burrito stands are a form of income for these two men. Yes, the new stands take away from Francisco's profit, but his lost profit helps feed the family of Pedro and the other burrito man. So maybe the burrito cart conflict is not a real *lucha libre* glare match between the stands, but rather a friendship formed by their "lucha" for survival.

Sandra Caballero is a freshmen in Morse College.

LABOR RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

by Jennifer Angarita

Sweatshops in modern-day Los Angeles? Human trafficking and involuntary servitude in Long Island? To some, this may sound like the plot for a blast from the past movie on the history channel. But to an unfortunate and voiceless few, this is reality.

Certainly, the idea of sweatshops existing in contemporary America seems outdated and outlandish at best. As the pre-supposed superpower of the world, the United States should have moved well beyond the labor exploitation and abuse that marked 19th century society. As a post-industrial, post-civil rights society, how can such a magnitude of labor rights violations still exist? How can sexual harassment and discrimination in the workplace still be an issue in modern-day America?

While the answer to this question is at best, complex and convoluted, we, as a society, cannot continue to allow a marginalized, but instrumental part of our society to exist in the shadows.

This past summer working at JUNTA, a New Haven non-profit, I saw firsthand the extent of abuse and harassment workers face in jobs across New Haven. Yet, as I soon realized, this issue stems far beyond the boundaries of New Haven. Even in Darien, Connecticut, one of the most affluent towns in New England, Latinas from New York City were shipped off to work in upscale nail salons, which subjected them to abuse and exploitation. Violations ranged from the disquieting to the disturbing. Workers were discriminated based on the color of their skin and treated inhumanely. They were deprived of overtime and back wages and denied proper equipment (e.g. gloves, masks, caps) to protect themselves from the salon's toxic chemical exposures. On occasion, the women were even forced to give massages to nude male clients in the back rooms of the salons. With the support of

JUNTA's worker center and other labor rights groups such as the New York-based Chinese Staff Worker's Association (CSWA), these women were empowered to stand up to their unscrupulous employers and demand their basic human rights.

Yet, the most disconcerting part of this

nail salon case is not the startling degree of exploitation and humiliation these women encountered everyday at their workplace, but rather the commonality of their experiences. Workers across the United States continue to be systematically exploited and abused. They are often at the mercy of employers and have no realization of a way out. Worker centers have sprouted throughout the nation in reaction to these labor rights violations and as places for individuals and communities to come together to strive towards action. However, these centers often lack a broad, structural network of support. Certainly, for this movement to take off, it cannot rest solely on the shoulders of a few motivated organizers and workers; it must be embraced and legitimized by a strong community of allies.

At Yale, where the minimum wage for students is \$10.50 and job options are more than abundant, the issue of workers rights can seem remote and irrelevant. As labor rights organizer, Carolina Delgado, once told me, "Worker rights aren't sexy enough." Delgado, who works for Jobs for Justice, a national coalition of labor unions and community organizations, notes the difficulty in labor rights organizing, but also recognizes the importance of defending and expanding the rights of working people. Delgado explains, "A person's job is at the core of their identity. Without a good job, you have nothing. Worker's rights are so foundational to every other social justice cause, be it health care, union-organizing, immigrant rights or women's rights."

Yet, some critics of the labor movement may argue that the erasure of worker's rights of many immigrants, both documented and undocumented, comes with "part of package" of the migrant experience. To them and others questioning the significance and universality of labor rights, I offer some enlightenment. Under the current labor laws of the United

States, each and every worker, including undocumented ones, are entitled to the protections provided in the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). This means that all individuals, regardless of their immi-

gration status, have the right to overtime, minimum wage and a workplace free of abuse and discrimination.

Thus, labor rights is never just a worker rights issue, it is a human rights issue. Furthermore, it is neither an issue affecting only New Haven or America; it is, at its core, a global issue. As Yalies we are encouraged and even paid to travel abroad and extend our experiences internationally. If we are to truly become "global citizens," as President Levin and many others have urged us, then we must first come to terms with the global problems that plague the lives of so many. Global awareness, thus, does not solely entail a summer abroad in Barcelona or Beijing. It is a commitment to the global cause and to the larger campaign for economic and social justice across political and social borders.

If we are to function as a society that prides itself on values such as freedom and respect, then we cannot accept the systematic abuse and exploitation that colors the lives of so many American workers. If we are able to say that we have really overcome the "racial barrier" and are living in a time free of discrimination and exploitation, then change is still necessary. As students of an elite Ivy League university, we are given the opportunity of a lifetime and failing to realize or choosing to ignore the dire nature of the worker's struggle is a grave mistake on our part.

Certainly, if we as a society are to overcome the problems that have setback generations before us, we must first ensure basic human rights to every human being – regardless of sexuality, gender, religion or immigration status. Only together as a community of allies, can we work to overcome the systematic intimidation and degradation many worker's face. In the words of the Latina nail salon workers chanting to their employers on the wealthy streets of Darien, "Un pueblo unido jamás será vencido." (A village united, will never be defeated.)

Jeniffer Angarita is a junior in Silliman College.

LA(B)TINO: An Interview with Professor Victor Batista

by Leticia Moedano

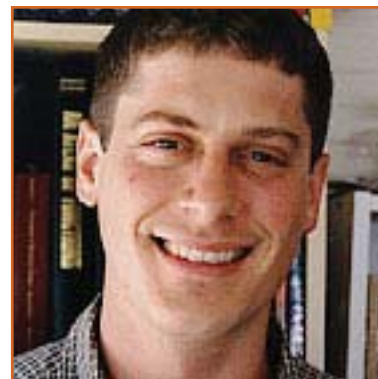
Prof. Victor S. Batista shares the origin of his interest in chemistry and cites determination as key to understanding and success in the field.

How has growing up as a Latino shaped the person you are today?

I grew up in Argentina and I was partially unaware I was a Latino! I always thought I was simply an Argentinean. It was only when I came to the U.S.A. that I learned that people made serious distinctions among ethnic groups. That was contrary to my life experience in a different society where people were simply classified by nationalities. My condition as a Latino immigrant brought me closer to Latin Americans and other underrepresented groups with common values, and also common concerns. It has been a very enjoyable experience.

How did you become interested in the field of chemistry?

I still remember when my first Chemistry teacher in High School (Cartasso) mixed two clear liquids and made solid crystals! I still remember that catastrophic event, with the precipitate solid rapidly falling to the bottom of the test tube. She later filtered the precipitate and we were all convinced it was like sand, like tiny little rocks. (Not like a gel or a very dense and viscous liquid). That was an amazing experiment to me. I had always thought making rocks would require high pressure for millions of years. How could matter behave like that? Could that be the way rocks were made? Could it be that a similar mixing process, although more complicated, would make life and eventually wood? Could it be that analogous mixing processes could make matter think and wonder about itself? So many questions I had! Many of them I still have. And at about that time something else happened. A classmate of mine (Fabian Kane) suggested I should watch "Cosmos: A Personal Voyage." He knew I did not have a TV at home but he was willing to lend me a small portable one he had (of course, black and white). With that wonderful television series by Carl Sagan I initiated my own personal voyage in search of understanding. Later, when I expressed an interest for science I was strongly supported by my parents (both engineers), who always showed high respect for chemists, doctors and scientists in general. One of my sisters (Liliana, who is a Biochemist) also influenced me very much. Liliana, and my mother, helped me to understand how to balance acid-base and redox reactions for the first time, and I later found out I was one of the few students in my high school class who actually understood Chemistry. Later, when I expressed interest in pursuing a scientific career, Liliana also advised me to enroll in Chemistry at the School of Exact and Natural Sciences of the University of Buenos Aires (UBA).



What attracted you to Yale?

I was attracted to Yale by the reputation of my colleagues, the Chemistry faculty, and the possibility to work with bright students. In particular, John Tully had always been an inspiring figure for me and Bill Jorgensen had a very impressive research program in computational chemistry at Yale. It was also quite evident, during my job interview, that excellence in science and the recruitment of members of underrepresented groups in the physical sciences were high priorities at Yale.

What do you like most about your job?

What I enjoy the most about my job is the intellectual freedom offered by the academic environment, and the possibility of exploring new ideas that might transform the way we think and way we live. As an example, think about our research program in catalysis for green renewable energy, the energy crisis, and our responsibility for the environment.

What do you like to do during your spare time?

I have a few hobbies. I jog a few times a week (my jogging partner is Pat Loria, a good friend and colleague; we have been jogging twice a week for seven years already!). I work out at the gym on a regular basis. You should see how many people from the Chemistry Department work out at the Payne Whitney Gymnasium every week! I have a house in a beautiful neighborhood in Spring Glenn where I share my life with my girlfriend (Lea Santos). I enjoy growing plants and flowers during the spring, and also raking the leaves when it is cold and crisp during the weekends of autumn. I enjoy music, I play piano, and I love Tango—although I have not danced in a while. I also enjoy cooking, a legacy of Chemistry. Most chemists are good cooks!

What advice do you have for Latino students interested in a career in chemistry?

A career in Chemistry would be a wonderful journey, and at a particularly suitable time for Latinos and other members of underrepresented groups in the Physical Sciences in the U.S.A. It will give you moments of discovery that will make you appreciate the world at a profound level. However, it will require lots of hard work and sustained dedication over many years. Owing to the very nature of the process of learning, you will always need determination, vision and belief in yourself. Never give up since that will be the moment when you will gain understanding, when the dust will settle, and your path will clear.

Leticia Moedano is a sophomore in Morse College

Quiara Alegría Hudes never considered herself a “writer” but established her reputation as a notable playwright with “In the Heights,” recipient of the 2008 Tony Award for Best Musical, and “Elliot, A Soldier’s Fugue,” finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. Invited by Yale’s Dominican Student Association (DSA) as the guest for Davenport’s “The Artistic Process and Playwriting” Master’s Tea held on October 29, Hudes discussed her process and influences.

After graduating from Yale as a music composition major in 1999, Hudes worked as a successful, but unsatisfied, professional musician. “I started to realize that something had still not fallen into place because I felt a little bored,” she disclosed. In the midst of reevaluating her career, Hudes’ family was losing several elders, including her grandmother. Referring to two musicals Hudes wrote as an undergraduate, her mother challenged her self-imposed title of “musician.” Mrs. Alegría, a native of Arecibo, Puerto Rico, suggested Hudes write about her experiences as a way to preserve the narrative of her family. Hudes realized that her family would lose a part of their history if she did not tell their story. A month later, Hudes applied to graduate school.

Although Hudes had a limited background in theater, she refined her writing skills at Brown. Under the guidance of Paula Vogel, she learned the “bake off” technique, which Hudes still uses today. Boiled down to its simplest form, the bake off consist of producing a play

in forty-eight uninterrupted hours of writing. Inspired by the floods of Arecibo, a coastal town vulnerable to flooding, she researched and started writing. At the end of the bake off, Hudes birthed what she called a “skeletal” version of a play: thirty-five pages with a beginning, middle, and end, which resembled a CliffsNotes version of a “fully realized play.” Hudes expounded on the bake off, which she considers, “a private, and also fun, and even boring, sometimes, but always very personal exercise.” Hudes related the bake off to two periods in her life: her adolescence, during which she frequented Quaker meetings and Native American sweat lodges with her mother, a National Delegate to the Latino and Native American teens for the Quaker contingency in Philadelphia, and her young adulthood at Yale where she tapped into her intellectual curiosity. She claims that the writing, as well as the revising of the bake off, encapsulate the spirituality and intimacy of her religious and social activism along with the acumen gained from Yale academia. Although she missed the bake off for “In the Heights,” brainchild of Lin-Manuel Miranda, who wrote the music and lyrics, Hudes impregnated the collaborative effort with autobiographical narrative. “I have to confess, one of the lead stories

for ‘In the Heights’ is about a girl who goes to college and feels misplaced and her father sells his business. That plot is really just out of my life,” Hudes admitted. Hudes is careful, however, when integrating her family into her literary pieces. “I decided that when I write about my family, I wouldn’t write autobiographically because that would be too self-obsessed,” Hudes clarified.

This is something she considered when writing “Elliot, A Soldier’s

Fugue,” based on the narratives of Elliot, a close cousin who was severely injured and ultimately discharged during his service in Iraq, and his father, George, who had a “miserable time” in Vietnam. The first time Hudes saw Elliot after his injury, something was different: “He was the same guy with the same cheeseburger smile, but something very subtle was different and I noticed it as soon as I saw him.”

She attempted to avoid the interview through postponements, but George insisted. Hudes asked only one question and as she took notes, George continued to talk for another two and a half hours. Elliot’s interview, however, was completely different, for it was much more emotional. “George had time to think about it. Elliot was still in the middle of it, so he was less removed,” Hudes rationalized. “Elliot” was a success with both critics and the muses. “Elliot” demonstrates Hudes’ ultimate goal: to put a story out there that might otherwise be forgotten. “I’m not trying to expose [my family]. It’s not about skeletons in the closet. It’s about honoring and remembering them.” After realizing that a cousin was illiterate and that her sister thirteen years her junior was struggling in school, Hudes felt a growing disparity from her experiences at Yale and the experiences of the people whom she loved the most. In response, Hudes explained that she feels a responsibility to create work that tackles the wide range of experiences in one family but is still relevant and relatable.

Referring back to the pivotal conversation with her mother, Hudes evoked her words, “The written word is the most powerful thing in [the US] culture. It is representation and power. If you don’t have that in a book or some shelf, you are invisible.” But with optimism, she concluded, “Maybe one day there will be something on some shelf and we’ll be that much less invisible.”

Hugo Martínez Bernardino is a sophomore in Johnathan Edwards College.



Quiara posing with students from DSA after a Master's Tea.

