

Research Interests and Experience

It was doing research in Spanish literature that convinced me to change my undergraduate major, originally in mathematics, to Hispanic language and literatures and to pursue graduate school in Spanish and Portuguese. Classes in which I was challenged to extract my own interpretation from a text via close reading, and then to support or challenge other critical analyses through investigation of secondary materials, made me more committed to literature classes than to any other at the university. My early seminar papers often dealt with narrative technique, a topic which still interests me academically to this day, as in the lyrical voice Lorca's "Burla de don Pedro a caballo" or Benito Pérez Galdós' *novelas contemporáneas*.

There is no reason why young students should shy away from serious investigative work, and the archival research that I did as an undergraduate continues to motivate me today. I began to work with Professor Alan Smith on the project of publishing a critical edition of the personal letters of Benito Pérez Galdós in 2008, and was able to use programming skills I had learned as a math major to set up a database framework to keep track of the nearly 1,200 letters that we retrieved. In the years I have spent transcribing letters from manuscripts, combing bibliographies to locate previously published correspondence, and now researching the life of Galdós to annotate letters, I have come to appreciate the intimate familiarity with text and language that one achieves through detailed investigation that goes to an author's own papers. This project encouraged me to work with the Langston Hughes papers at the Beinecke Library in New Haven, and my project on the revisions of Hughes' translation of *Romancero gitano* was cited by Christopher Maurer in his introduction to a recent translation of the *Romancero*. This work in manuscripts and archives taught me the value of rigor and detail necessary for the success of any investigative project.

For my doctoral dissertation, I study a theme that also takes a perspective of closeness: walking, which implies the proximity of personal and local space. In this area I have found that the best way to approach a topic as broad and universal as walking is to map it onto culturally-specific discourses. This methodology makes texts more accessible to students, undergraduate and graduate alike, and gives them a basis upon which to launch their own philosophical inquiry and critical analysis. In my lectures for the humanities-division course called "Walking in Literature," I found that discussing materials related to the history of the Camino de Santiago, anecdotes from pilgrims' diaries, personal stories, and clips from recent films about pilgrimage helped to engage students in the exploration of the mystical connotations of walking.

In the future I look forward to continuing research on mobility, migration, and urban studies as it relates to Spanish and Latin American literature. I believe that literature is one of the arts that most benefits from a multicultural and multidisciplinary perspective, and for this reason that I am also interested in comparative work between literature and art, architecture, and film. I have explore somewhat in my dissertation as well as in a recent article submitted for publication on the use of popular music in novels from the Spanish transition to democracy.

I have begun to study Hebrew, too, to prepare myself to begin a study of wandering in Jewish literature and especially the permanence of Jewish culture in Spain and Latin America today. In Hebrew, the root of the word to walk (lalekhet, ללכת) also gives the work for rule/law (halakha, הלכה) and process (tahalikh, תהליך). I am curious to see how these etymological connections embellish a tradition of exile, diaspora, and migration in the Jewish imagination that has great significance for the identity of millions of people in Spain and Latin America. At the 2012 NECLAS conference I presented on Jewish theater in Buenos Aires and the ethics of narration in Edgardo Kozarinsky's *El rufián moldavo*, and the positive feedback I received has encouraged me to pursue further research in this field.

By studying critical topics that reach across subjects, I hope to remain an active contributor to the field of Spanish literary studies as well as an inspiring pedagogue that deepens students' commitment to the humanities.