

Preface

An invitation to a group of friends from England, Spain, the United States and Latin America to take part in a two-day Symposium on Sex and Sexuality in Hispanic Film and Letters which would take place at the University of Pittsburgh in April of 1991 produced two surprises. The first, which could not have been more agreeable and which perhaps should not have surprised me, given the eternal fascination of the topic I had suggested, was their positive and enthusiastic response. Great efforts were made to fit the Symposium into busy schedules, and several of the contributors were prepared to travel very long distances, some even crossing the Atlantic, in order to be present. The guests of honor, the novelists Manuel Puig and Gustavo Sainz and the film director José Luis Borau, also accepted with alacrity.

The shocking and untimely death of Manuel Puig in July of 1990 came not only as a personal loss but also threatened to cast a pall over the whole event. Ultimately it was felt that the least we could do -indeed, all we could do- was to remember him with great affection, recall his previous visit to Pittsburgh and dedicate the Symposium to his memory. It is with an increasing awareness of how much he meant to me that now, three years after his death, I also dedicate this volume to him and, since it is so relevant to its theme, I have decided to incorporate in it a previously unpublished conversation we had in Rio de Janeiro in the summer of 1987.

My original intention for this volume had been to reproduce verbatim all the papers that were presented at the Symposium, but I have gradually discovered that it is not possible to do so. Many people wished to have the opportunity to revise, elaborate on, or even rehash, their original lectures: examples are Sara CastroKlaren's "What does Cannibalism Speak? Jean de Léry and the Tupinamba" and Gabriela Mora's "Escritura erótica: Cristina Peri Rossi y Tununa Mercado", both of which have been considerably modified since their 1991 presentation. Then, for various reasons, the texts of some of the talks that contributed so much to the success of the occasion could not be used again. For instance, to my great regret, copyright problems prevent the reprinting of the ground-breaking paper, "El carnaval palatino de 'Sera'", given by Lee Fontanella (then of the University of Texas, now of Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Massachusetts), in which he showed and discussed the scabrous watercolors by the Bécquer brothers which form part of a collection he had discovered in the Madrid Biblioteca Nacional. And now, because of the amount of time that has passed

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since the Symposium took place, several of the papers have appeared elsewhere, but the versions in this collection have been amended and revised: these include Sharon Magnarelli's "Staging the Pre-prescription of Gender: Manuel Puig's *La traición de Rita Hayworth*" and Alfred MacAdam's "La retórica de los celos: *Don Casmurro*". Finally, two of the articles –as well as the Puig interview– are entirely new: one is George Yúdice's "La vanguardia a partir de sus exclusiones", which replaces his beguilingly entitled paper, "Tacky Love Scenes", given at the Symposium; the other is my own piece on Unamuno's *San Manuel Bueno, mártir*, in which I consider what Gabriela Mora calls the enigma of female desire.

The other unexpected element of the Symposium was the orientation of the papers. Although I had hoped that these would cover all periods and more than one genre, I suspected that most emphasis would be placed on the openness with regard to sex and the newfound comprehension of sexuality that are manifest in postFranco Spain and postmodern Latin America, and that there would be a strong tendency towards the consideration of contemporary works, authors and filmmakers. In fact, what emerged was evidence of contemporary critical approaches to the work of many different periods, stretching from the Columbus "Carta de Jamaica" (1503) to the most recent and explicit examples of narrative fiction and poetry. If there is any unity in this admittedly disparate collection, it is precisely because of the utilization of new critical visions that have been illuminated by the lifting of taboos and by the loosening of the stranglehold of bienséance.

I should like to record here my sincere gratitude to all those who worked so hard towards the success of the Symposium and the production of this collection of essays. In the first place, the Symposium could not have taken place without generous financial contributions from the University of Pittsburgh Center for International Studies, the Center for Latin American Studies, the University Honors College, the Cultural Studies Program, the Department of Film Studies and, of course, the Department of Hispanic Languages and Literatures. All of these were acknowledged, if not thanked, in the printed program of the event, but only now can the invaluable help of two later contributors also be recorded, the University of Pittsburgh West European Studies Program and the College of Arts and Sciences.

Many other people made invaluable contributions and I should like to thank Connie Tomko, Sandi Mathews and Yolanda Castellano of the Department of Hispanic Languages and Literatures for all their efforts; Andrew McDuffie and Paul Mosey, who recorded and filmed the event; Bill Judson, GERALYN Huxley and Carol Sullivan of the Film and Video Section of The Carnegie Museum who solved all the problems that attended the showing of the José Luis Borau films; Ashley Jackson, of the University of Oregon, who provided a video cassette of Buñuel's *Tristana* when this had seemed to be unobtainable; Marta Pérezpayá of The Arenas Group, Los Angeles, who was so helpful in locating and supplying copies of the Borau movies; and my colleagues Antonio Comejo-Polar, Keith McDuffie and Carmen Rabell of the Department of Hispanic Languages and Literatures, and Patrizia Lombardo, Director of the Cultural Studies Program, who organized and chaired the various sessions. I should also like to acknowledge the willing and cheerful assistance of so many of our graduate students –in particular Michelle Ortuño and Samuel Gordon, who introduced

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the Plenary Lectures- and to reiterate my gratitude to all those who made the journey to Pittsburgh to participate in a memorable two days.

The existence of this book is in no small part due to the efficiency and skill of ErikaBraga and Lillian Seddon Lozano of the *Instituto Internacional de Literatura Iberoamericana*, University of Pittsburgh, and I am deeply indebted to them both. But above all I want to record my appreciation of the calm, generous and unstinting support of Keith McDuffie, former Chair of the Department of Hispanic Languages and Literatures of the University of Pittsburgh, who has the gift of finding solutions for all problems.

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