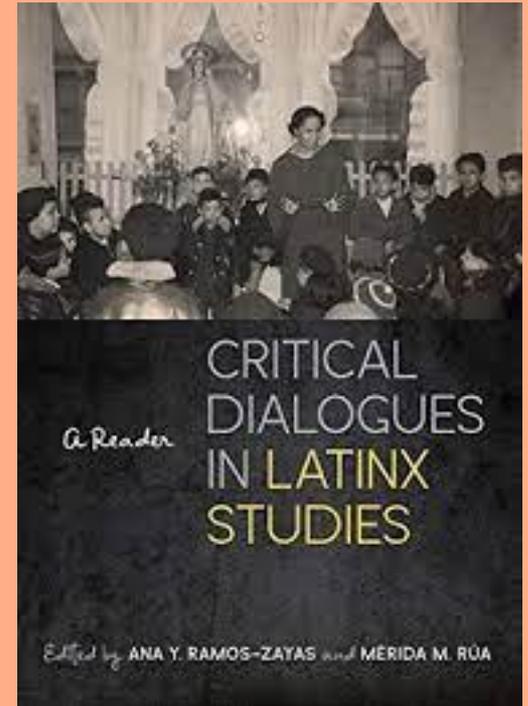


COIL, Week 3

- Department of World Languages and Cultures, Salem State University
- Department of English, French and German Philology, Universidad de Oviedo
- February 22, 2021, 1:40-2:55 (ET)



Universidad de Oviedo
Universidá d'Uviéu
University of Oviedo

- To reflect on the:
- Connections between *The Poet X* and the essays

“Now why do you want to know about that?” Heteronormativity, Sexism and Racism in the Sexual (Mis)Education of Latina Youth by Lorena Garcia

“Blackness, Latinidad and Minority Linked Fate” by Jennifer A. Jones

Remarks/Discussion

1st and 2nd generation: Tradition and Modernity.

Triple discrimination/exclusion: race, ethnicity and class.

Sorority

Does the heroine in the text find ways to construct her identity in context, and what sort of cultural, social, and institutional arrangements facilitate, on the one hand, and hinder, on the other, her capacity to do so?

Tension between freedom and determination and the interplay of choice and constraint in the construction of identity.

"Culture" is not monolithic, homogeneous, and static, but contested, fluid, and in a continual process of reinterpretation.

Agenda

- **Assigned topics**
- Answer assigned questions in small groups (25 min.)
- Populate slides with main points in each group
- Present to the class
- -----
- **Discussion**
- Populate whole group slide with significant cultural statements (25 min.)

Instructions for the group:

- Choose a facilitator, time manager and note taker
- Talk about the topics and answer the questions assigned to your group on your group's slide. Add a slide if you need more space.
- Add any other group comments in the blank/added slides
- If you are not the note taker, individually take notes on things that stand out to you or surprise you to talk about in the bigger group

Group 1. Names:

1. ““Now why do you want to know about that?” ...

1. Does Xiomara deal with similar sexual-orientation issues as those analyzed in the article?

While Xiomara herself does not question her sexuality, we do get to see what the attitudes and reactions to non-normative sexualities through her brother. Anything outside cisheterosexuality is not spoken of, and stereotypes brought onto women only are those within a heteronormative relationship. this allows little to no exploration of her sexuality.

2. Being a Dominican New Yorker, does Xiomara face the same social and sexual prejudices and expectations as the Latin (Puerto Rican) teenage girls that are referred to in the article?

She definitely faces similar social and sexual pressures as stated in the article. with a lack of proper education and space to explore/experiment with her own sexuality, Xiomara is faced with shame and negative serotypes about women and sex. As described in the article, Xiomara deals with the “good girl and bad girl” heteronormative ideals of society. She has been taught that interactions with boys are okay, but only to a certain level/limit. These sexual and romantic interactions are also implied to only be with the opposite sex.

3. In Xiomara’s social context, are the expectations created for boys and girls, as regards social conduct, the same or different? What does the article say in that respect?

There is definitely a gender double-standard that is shown in the novel through, for instance, the way Xiomara’s mother regulates her sexuality and controls and punish her behaviour vs. how she acts with her brother.

4. What are Xiomara’s feelings and attitude regarding sexuality? In that respect, does she feel a Dominican or a New Yorker?

She feels a curiosity and desire that she is not allowed to express in many contexts.

5. What are Xiomara’s feelings about religion, in relation to what is expected from her in that sense?

Xiomara isn't necessarily against religion, but the way that her mother introduced her to it caused her to be cautious about

Group 2 Names:

1. ““Now why do you want to know about that?”...

1. Does Xiomara deal with similar sexual-orientation issues as those analyzed in the article? Yes, in a way. She's straight so she doesn't experience the same things as her brother, but does experience other things. Shame because of her attraction to men and sexuality.

2. Being a Dominican New Yorker, does Xiomara face the same social and sexual prejudices and expectations as the Latin (Puerto Rican) teenage girls that are referred to in the article?

Yes, she is sexually harrassed by men in her community, but the shame she feels regarding her attraction to guys comes more from her family.

3. In Xiomara's social context, are the expectations created for boys and girls, as regards social conduct, the same or different? What does the article say in that respect?

The expectations are different for boys and girls in Xiomara's social context, especially, considering the expectations that her mother has for her and Twin.

4. What are Xiomara's feelings and attitude regarding sexuality? In that respect, does she feel a Dominican or a New Yorker?

She's curious, not ashamed, only scared of what her mother will do to her. She's both, the ideas imposed onto her are dominican, her choice to ignore them is New Yorker.

5. What are Xiomara's feelings about religion, in relation to what is expected from her in that sense?

She grew away from it, she doesn't care about God's expectations, she has doubts: women's role in it.

Group 3 Names: A1. “Now why do you want to know about that?”...

1. Does Xiomara deal with similar sexual-orientation issues as those analyzed in the article?

We think the issues presented in the article and the book are similar. The article mentioned that the children we often perceived as “adult-like” rather than child like, which is something we see in *The Poet X* with both Xiomara and other girls in her neighborhood through the expectations enforced on them and the sexualization they faced.

2. Being a Dominican New Yorker, does Xiomara face the same social and sexual prejudices and expectations as the Latin (Puerto Rican) teenage girls that are referred to in the article?

Yes, because in the article, it does not bother to separate the different types of races in the Latin community. The article points out how black and latina women are monitored more since they are seen as more sexually precocious than white women. Xiomara was judged due to her bodily development just like how the article describes it.

3. In Xiomara’s social context, are the expectations created for boys and girls, as regards social conduct, the same or different? What does the article say in that respect?

As in the article describes, girls are the ones who are forbidden sex and warned about the potential dangers of being sexually active, whereas boys are not taught sexual education. All the responsibility relies on girls. In the book, Xiomara is not allowed to date boys as a ‘prevention method’, which relates to the belief that they should abstain from sex, whereas her parents expect a different behaviour of her brother. They expect him to be sexually active, in a heterosexual way.

4. What are Xiomara’s feelings and attitude regarding sexuality? In that respect, does she feel a Dominican or a New Yorker?

Xiomara feels curious about sex and relationships despite her mother’s disapproval. She feels a New Yorker teenager. When reading the book, we can notice the generation gap between Xiomara and her parents, who are more conservative and religious.. Xiomara is more open regarding sexuality, whereas her parents forbid her to meet boys because they are afraid she will get pregnant.

5. What are Xiomara’s feelings about religion, in relation to what is expected from her in that sense?

Xiomara tries to pull away from religion throughout the story. Her parents are very religious and their rules with how they raise her are very strict to religion and that pushes her away and makes her very uninterested in religion. She feels like god is someone she

Group 4 Names:

1. “Now why do you want to know about that?’...

1. Does Xiomara deal with similar sexual-orientation issues as those analyzed in the article?

The novel delves into Twin’s sexuality in particular, and how it differs from the “heteronormativity” that is mentioned in the articles. We see through Xiomara’s perspective the problems that Twin’s sexuality could bring to him with regards to her family and the “role” that he is expected to perform in society.

2. Being a Dominican New Yorker, does Xiomara face the same social and sexual prejudices and expectations as the Latin (Puerto Rican) teenage girls that are referred to in the article?

Xiomara faces similar prejudices as the girls in the article. Xiomara’s experiences are clearly enmeshed in the dichotomy god/bad girl. Her experiences with sexuality are marked by the concepts of sin and shame that her religion seems to impose on her. By being a girl she faces certain prejudices and challenges that her brother does not.

3. In Xiomara’s social context, are the expectations created for boys and girls, as regards social conduct, the same or different? What does the article say in that respect?

Xiomara thinks that the social conducts for girls and boys are very different. She talks about the role she has in the house, and how she is responsible for certain things that twin is not. This is just expected from her, but twin gets praised when he does very little to help out. The girls in the article face the same challenges, as they are expected to be ladylike and proper. In regards to boys standards, the boys in the article and twin are expected to be strong and in charge. We can see twin struggle with this as he is more shy with his masculinity.

4. What are Xiomara’s feelings and attitude regarding sexuality? In that respect, does she feel a Dominican or a New Yorker?

She feels objectified and over-sexualized by boys and girls alike; this forces her to retreat and try to go unnoticed. On the other hand, Xiomara is curious from the beginning about exploring her sexuality. She is torn between her own desires, the boys’ attitudes towards her and her mother’s strict rules.

5. What are Xiomara’s feelings about religion, in relation to what is expected from her in that sense?

She is doubtful about religion. She is expected to be devout, but she does not get the sense or the importance of religion because she is not explained about it. Xiomara challenges the basic tenets of the Catholic faith; she takes issue with the secondary role women play within the religion she is taught; women are taught to be invisible, cater to men’s needs, and never to speak up or dare to question the doctrines they come across.

Group 5 Names:

2. “*Blackness, Latinidad and Minority Linked Fate*”

1. Does Xiomara manifest any feelings concerning her skin color?

Xiomara does not manifest any hate towards her skin tone but she knows that race is part of her identity and is aware of it. However, she is neutral on it and does not harbor any negative or positive feelings about it.

2. Does she prefer to be categorized according to her “Latinidad” or according to the color of her skin?

She comes from a Latina family and while she does not note the color of her skin she does acknowledge the importance of her latina culture/how it shapes the way she lives. Her mother very much tries to shape the way Xiomara lives her life at first due to her ideas of how she thinks a good latina should act.

3. In her everyday life, is “Latinidad” a “deracialized” concept, as the article claims?

Due to the way she grew up, being surrounded by various cultural backgrounds, she defines herself based on her culture rather than her race.

4. Does she feel marginalized due to the fact that she is an Afro-Latinx? Explain.

In a way, Xiomara does not feel marginalized but she does not feel like she is fitting the stereotypes assigned to her race which adds to the pressure on her as she is constantly trying to find herself. She does not live up to the hypersexuality that is often spoken about in relation to her race. She also does not live up to the pureness that her mother wants for her.

5. Are her friends African-Americans, Afro-Latinxs, Latinxs or White?

Xiomara grew up in a very culturally rich area where many of her friends such as Caridad are latina but the friends that she makes when she starts do poetry are white. Her boyfriend Aman is black.

6. Do you think it might have anything to do with a possible “Minority Linked Fate”? Why?

Xiomara’s best friend is Caridad, who has a very similar cultural background to her even though the two very different. It could have something to do with the fact that they both share a similar background and therefore do play into the idea of Minority Linked Fate as they befriended each other due to their similarities.

Group 6 Names:

2. “Blackness, Latinidad and Minority Linked Fate”

1. Does Xiomara manifest any feelings concerning her skin color?

No. She is more concerned about body type than the color of her skin. She was annoyed that other people assumed things about her because of her body. Her curvaceous body attracts the eyes of a lot of boys and men, and this bothers her. A big issue is children like Xiomara being sexualized, and not as much skin color.

2. Does she prefer to be categorized according to her “Latinidad” or according to the color of her skin?

Latinidad. Her parents are immigrants from the Dominican Republic. Consequently, her DR background is a big part of her identity. She speaks Spanish with her family members and makes frequent references to DR and religion in DR.

3. In her everyday life, is “Latinidad” a “deracialized” concept, as the article claims?

Yes. Her DR heritage is not focused on race. She does not bring up her skin color when talking about the DR and her cultural background.

4. Does she feel marginalized due to the fact that she is an Afro-Latinx? Explain.

She feels marginalized due to her DR background and religious family, as her mother is very controlling (no dating, going to church, etc), but this has nothing to do with her racial identity.

5. Are her friends African-Americans, Afro-Latinxs, Latinxs or White?

Her friends do not seem to be White. Her and Twin are Afro-Latinx. Caridad is definitely Latinx, and most likely also African American. Isabelle from poetry club is described as being “mixed.” Aman, whose family is from Trinidad, is most likely African American.

6. Do you think it might have anything to do with a possible “Minority Linked Fate”? Why?

No, because the poetry club showed her that no matter who you are, everyone deserves to be heard and loved.

Group 7 Names:

2. *“Blackness, Latinidad and Minority Linked Fate”*

1. Does Xiomara manifest any feelings concerning her skin color?

Xiomara does manifest some feeling regarding her skin type. She feels frustration at not seeing her darker skin represented in the Church. She also sees both separation and similarity between her and the black poet she sees in class. Her relationship with her body may also be connected to her feeling on skin color.

2. Does she prefer to be categorized according to her “Latinidad” or according to the color of her skin? Xiomara would probably prefer to be categorized as Latina due to how much she talks about Dominican culture and its role in her life. She does not bring up skin color often, but it does seem to be something she considers more later on in the book.

3. In her everyday life, is “Latinidad” a “deracialized” concept, as the article claims?

It seems like much of Xiomara’s life has treated Latine identity as insular and separate from the experiences of other people of color in the US. As we go through the book, we see Xio interacting more directly with other racialized people and seeing how the experiences can be similar and how solidarity can be more meaningful..

4. Does she feel marginalized due to the fact that she is an Afro-Latinx? Explain.

There were points where Xiomara felt marginalized, but she does not name her Afro-Latinx identity as the cause. Instead, this identity is implied to be a factor in the marginalization she experiences, especially in terms of the stereotypes and expectations she has to face.

5. Are her friends African-Americans, Afro-Latinxs, Latinxs or White?

Father Sean is Jamaican, Ms Galiano is Latina, Aman is from Trinidad.

6. Do you think it might have anything to do with a possible “Minority Linked Fate”? Why?

Group 8 Names:

2. *“Blackness, Latinidad and Minority Linked Fate”*

1. Does Xiomara manifest any feelings concerning her skin color?

We specifically did not remember Xiomara commenting on her skin color, but she did comment about her hair appearance and how it looks compared to others.

2. Does she prefer to be categorized according to her “Latinidad” or according to the color of her skin?

Her identity as a Latina seems to be much more important than the color of her skin. She does not comment on her skin color as much throughout the book.

3. In her everyday life, is “Latinidad” a “deracialized” concept, as the article claims?

In her everyday life, ‘Latinidad’ is a deracialized concept, as Xiomara does not specifically mention or comment on her skin color, or her experiences because of her skin color.

4. Does she feel marginalized due to the fact that she is an Afro-Latinx? Explain.

She specifically mentions being marginalized as a Latina in her poems. Although she does not explicitly state her feelings being marginalized as an Afro-Latinx, her skin color and belonging to this group is a part of her identity forces her to be marginalized.

5. Are her friends African-Americans, Afro-Latinxs, Latinxs or White?

Most of her friends described in the book are Latinx or Afro-Latinx, such as Caridad who is from the Dominican Republic.

6. Do you think it might have anything to do with a possible “Minority Linked Fate”? Why?

This most likely is a major factor, as these minority groups face a lot of prejudice and marginalization. They can find commonality in the challenges, struggles, and oppression that they face rather than those that are oppressing them. Common experiences link people together.

The whole class: Salem

Interesting

- Interesting to see the reaction and thoughts beyond heterosexuality, as this is reflected in Xiomara's brother.
- Interesting to see how Xiomara's mother views her daughter as inferior to a man; and how religion plays into her mom's relationship with her daughter.
- Interesting to see how her mother's beliefs affect Xiomara's relationship with herself, and men.
- She is not afraid or ashamed to be Latina, but because of what she faces it seems that she becomes more aware of her race/ethnicity.

Surprising

- Interesting to see how Xiomara's brother is only described as "gay" a few times in the poem; reflects how homosexuality is not spoken of in the home or society.
- Surprising to see how misogyny affects those of a different ethnic or racial group, and not just white people.
- The ideas of traditional sexuality and religion are more closely related to her being Dominican, but most things that break outside of that are more related to her identifying as a New Yorker.
- Interesting to see how her family life is de-racialized; but we do see the exploration of other perspectives from other people's experiences.

Other

- Xiomara's curious about her sexuality, but constantly faces judgement and shame from others.
- She becomes more distant from religion, but her parents still expect her to be religious even though she doesn't feel as connected to it.
- Xiomara wants to feel like a New Yorker, but her Dominican roots cause her to feel more

The whole class: Oviedo

Interesting	<p>Xiomara realizing her brother is gay, but never explicitly using that word to describe his sexual orientation.</p> <p>Hypersexualization of Latina women, thinking they are promiscuous, negative stereotyping.</p> <p>Xiomara's latinidad is the core of her identity, though she slowly becomes more conscious about race as the story progresses. Sill, for her family, it is a "deracialized" concept.</p> <p>Her heritage is still part of her background despite rarely acknowledging it, especially her African heritage, as she identifies more as a DR latina than as Afro-Latina.</p>
Surprising	<p>Their mother imposes gender roles on her children and treats them differently because of their gender (e. g. doing chores while her brother is doing something else).</p> <p>Xiomara feels disconnected from religion, which leads to a lack of understanding between her mother and her.</p>
Other	<p>Xiomara's friends from the poetry club are white, latino, etc, they are more racially diverse than her other friends (Twin and Caridad), who are also Afro-Latinx / Dominican like her.</p> <p>Good girl vs bad girl trope. Women can be sexual/romantic up to some point, when it goes from being desirable/expected to shameful.</p> <p>Getting out of the norm in Latin communities is seemingly much harder than in other communities.</p> <p>Being proud of improving the situation of racialized minority groups despite racism still being present all through the US (most likely micro-aggressions, like locking the car because you believe someone might rob you)</p> <p>Reclaiming heritage to reclaim their roots and power</p>