Editor’s Message:
Curators of the Canon and the Classroom

Sheri Spaine Long

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Besides the informative articles and reviews in this volume of Hispania—A journal devoted to the teaching of Spanish and Portuguese, you will also find a special section titled “Dissertations in Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Languages and Literatures” that is compiled annually by Associate Editor David Knutson. We publish this list yearly in the September volume of our journal. Beyond being a useful compilation, the record provides evidence of directions in research and teaching in our discipline—clues to “the canon” of our discipline. Without a doubt, dissertations influence what we teach in Spanish and Portuguese classes.

Furthermore, as editors, authors, and peer reviewers, we play a significant curatorial role in publishing original research and educational materials. Participating in the publication process, we select and nurture subject matter. Today we incubate, edit, and revise content that influences instruction at all levels of Spanish and Portuguese in the future. Because of this, we take the editorial process seriously. In our own right, we are gatekeepers and canon creators.

I invite you to read the guest editorial column on the following pages that was penned by fellow AATSP member Joan L. Brown. She presents an argument for our participation in the professed literary canon and its formation. Brown offers us food for thought regarding our role in canon construction and suggests a process that can be applied beyond literary and cultural studies to areas such as pedagogy and linguistics.

Joan L. Brown is the Elias Ahuja Professor of Spanish at the University of Delaware. Her scholarly works have explored canon formation, the literature of Spanish author Carmen Martín Gaite, fiction by women, the contemporary Spanish novel in its cultural context, and language and literature pedagogy. She has published Secrets from the Back Room: The Fiction of Carmen Martín Gaite, Women Writers of Contemporary Spain: Exiles in the Homeland (editor), and the textbook Conversaciones creadoras: Mastering Spanish Conversation, co-authored with Carmen Martín Gaite. In her recently published Confronting Our Canons: Spanish and Latin American Studies in the 21st Century (Bucknell UP, 2010), Brown examines past and present canons and urges the field of Hispanic studies to take the lead in pedagogical canon construction for the future.

Sheri Spaine Long
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