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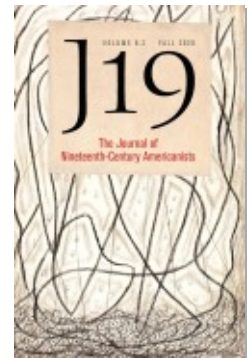
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Voicing a Transnational Latina Poetics:
The Dedication Poems of Amelia Denis
and Carlota Gutierrez

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Cuando llegue á tu ventana	When at your window comes,
El murmurio de la brisa	The murmur of a breeze,
Pregúntale, poetisa,	Inquire, poetess,
Quién por tí le preguntó.	Who was asking about you. ¹

Rumors of a breeze beckon at the window of a distant *poetisa*. A zephyr across time and space, it begs to be overheard. This poetic breeze forms the concluding stanza, the tender goodbye, of a dedication poem between nineteenth-century Latina poets, one from Central America and the other from California. The pages that follow examine these verses as themselves a window on an encounter that is as political and social as it is intimate and creative. Physically speaking, the poems are transported across oceans and lands by means of Spanish-language newspapers. Although it is yet to be discovered how the writer of the above verse, the Central American poet Amelia Denis, became familiar with the work of the San Francisco poet Carlota Gutierrez, the circulation of Spanish-language newspapers across the hemisphere played a crucial part.² On September 22, 1875, Denis prompted their brief exchange by dedicating these verses with the title “A la Señorita Carlota S. Gutierrez” in the San Salvador newspaper *La America Central*. Seven months later, on April 1, 1876, Denis’s poem was reprinted in Los Angeles by the editor of *La Crónica*. Issues containing this reprint must have reached San Francisco, Carlota Gutierrez’s home, where the poem was well received. One month later, the Mexican American poet,

Gutierrez, responded to Denis, titling a poem “A la inspirada poetisa colombiana Amelia Denis,” which was printed in *La Crónica* on May 17, 1876. Although it is possible that their relationship took on some other form beyond these published poems, perhaps a correspondence of personal letters outside the public eye, from what can be gleaned from the surviving Spanish-language newspapers of California during this time, these two poems constitute the scope of their exchange.

This article explores the dedication as a poetic form, reframing it as a means to better understand the gendered workings of verse produced by nineteenth-century Latinas. Taking into account visual and textual close reading, biographical research, and diverse theoretical perspectives, I seek to render visible a poetic practice that was socially performative and literary in a culturally specific Latinx context. As Jesse Alemán reminds us, the Americas “shared revolutionary histories, the Spanish language, and, more recently, rapidly changing population demographics,” and yet “American literature tends to uphold an English-only mentality, extending the laws of the land to the layout of literary history.”³ This study seeks to dig more deeply into the broader context of American literature that Alemán defines not only in terms of Spanish-language texts but also the gender bias that deems “conventional” poetic forms often practiced by women, such as the dedication, as commonplace, derivative, unworthy of sustained critical attention. As Jennifer Putzi and Alexandra Socarides point out, the fact that women poets engaged in traditions steeped in convention did not “always result in either complete capitulation or the articulation of a wholly subversive agenda or poetics. In fact, a deep and sustained engagement with these conventions often produced the very visibility—and, by extension, viability—that these women sought for their poems.”⁴ Denis’s and Gutierrez’s engagement with the convention of the poetic dedication was an effective means for these women to gain both visibility and viability as *poetisas* in a hemispheric public space.

In the oscillation between expressions of intimacy and self-conscious cultural and social positioning, these women poets placed themselves in gendered geopolitical relation with larger spheres of political influence. This is especially striking in consideration of the prevalent republican and nationalist social norms among Latinx in the nineteenth-century American West and Latin America, which often went part and parcel with objectifying and neutralizing women in the public realm by type-casting them as mothers, martyrs, or auxiliary, voiceless figures. Denis

and Gutierrez not only position themselves outside of typical feminine roles by asserting their identities as *poetisas*, but they do so in a transnational exchange. As Meredith McGill has pointed out in the transatlantic context, approaching literary history and nineteenth-century poetry through transnational approaches is a first step toward not only countering bias and exclusion but also making sure that “women poets are not the exception—marginal figures who need solicitously to be brought back into national canons—but figures who make legible the extranational origins of national myths and make it possible to track the shifting currents of cultural exchange.”⁵ I explore the poems of Denis and Gutierrez with this purpose in mind, placing the dedication as the social and poetic gesture at the center of their feminine transnational exchange. Augmented by the circulation and increasingly industrialized production of newspaper media, I contend that it is the unique form of the poem dedication that made possible not only their precarious and gendered performance of Latin American solidarity, *panlatinidad*, but also set the stage for the articulation of a collaborative *ars poetica* in which these women contemplate their creative process and assert their identities as *poetisas*.

Poetisa Friendship and the Creative Process

The exchange between Denis and Gutierrez continued a long tradition of friendship poems in both Spanish and Anglophone verse.⁶ Looking at Anglophone friendship poetry, Paula Backscheider traces the growing public acceptance of women poets in eighteenth-century Europe as friendship poetry became a typical genre practiced by women. Common themes of such poems included “the image of the special harmony between the souls of ideal friends, those that present friendship as a serious rival to marriage, and those that are poems of separation.”⁷ Although there is no mention of marriage in Denis’s and Gutierrez’s verses, the other two themes permeate their exchange. For these women, the hurdle of absence is bridged not only by their connection through art’s creative process, but also by sensual metaphoric language focusing on sound and resonance.

Both poets understand the harmony between their kindred souls to be based in a spiritual connection. For them, it is this very connectedness that informs the creative process by which their poems are conceived. Their poetic production is made possible through a wave of imagination that speaks directly to the soul, what Denis describes as

“la sublime inspiracion” (the sublime inspiration)—and then elaborates in her eighth stanza:

Cierra tus ojos i mira	Close your eyes and look at
Bellísimas creaciones,	The most beautiful creations,
El alma tiene ilusiones	The soul has illusions
En otro mundo inmortal.	In another, immortal world. ⁸

In a seemingly oxymoronic directive to her interlocutor, Denis insists that the eyes need to be closed to look upon “bellísimas creaciones” (the most beautiful creations), which constitute illusions of the soul springing from an immortal world. In these verses, Denis plays upon the tension between visual seeing and visionary imagining. For her, the soul is the organ of visionary inspiration, and the eyes are superfluous. Accordingly, the soul is capable of glimpsing a futurity, presumably in the service of crafting an enduring art that speaks across time to “otro mundo inmortal” (another, immortal world). Akin to the way that Denis describes this visionary imagining, Gutierrez contemplates the creative process. Mirroring the organization of Denis in terms of content, her thoughts on creativity also appear in the eighth stanza of her poem:

Mas solo plugo al Éterno,	But it only pleased the Eternal,
En fausto ó fatal momento,	In a fortunate or fatal moment,
Darme un vasto pensamiento	To give me a grand thought
Y una alma ⁹ para soñar	And a soul to dream. ¹⁰

Gutierrez acknowledges that “vasto pensamiento” (grand thought) is a momentous privilege handed down from not simply heaven but the “Eternal.” The last two lines of Gutierrez’s eighth stanza reveal that inspiration is factored in as only part of the equation. Inspiration is nothing without “una alma para soñar” (a soul to dream) to complete the creative process. Just as, for Denis, the soul is an organ of visionary imagining, Gutierrez suggests that the soul receives inspiration in dreams.

When considering the multifaceted allusions that these poets construct, what emerges is something akin to an *ars poetica*. Yet instead of focusing on principles related to poetic decorum or value, both Denis and Gutierrez concentrate on the very fodder of thought from which poetry is conceived. For both these women, their perception of poetic inspiration draws from both romantic and transcendental thought. It is an intense experience marked by spontaneity and divine intervention, touching the

soul and stimulating the mind. This eureka moment is an encounter that enlivens the mind, an event they wish to capture and share with one another through their verses.

In the nineteenth century, the figure of the creative genius was intensely gendered. According to Victoria Olwell, who has studied the gendered connections between genius, transcendentalism, and the soul, women were often thought to lack the same capacity for genius as men; furthermore, the genius was regarded as someone “both highly distinct and completely representative.”¹¹ Such a paradox created an almost impossible barrier of entry for women, because as marked subjects, women could not transcend their markedness to manifest a truth that rang universal. Denis and Gutierrez faced additional barriers in terms of universal creative recognition: not only were they women, but they were Latinas writing in Spanish. Although they lived in metropolitan centers, they were subjects marked by coloniality and living on the periphery in terms of Western civilization’s reach.

Perhaps for this reason, Denis and Gutierrez make a performance of lauding and recognizing one another’s talent, and in so doing they give insight into what they consider to be the qualities of a worthy *poetisa*. For them, a good *poetisa* is a songstress who can make music of the written word. Thus, they incorporate the imagery of aves, singers, and instruments to describe themselves and one another. Though this rhetoric was certainly intended to be flattering, by characterizing one another as songbirds and instruments, Denis and Gutierrez in some ways undercut the possibility of their own writerly genius. Examining the relationships between Edgar Allan Poe and his Anglophone poetess contemporaries, Eliza Richards writes, “an inhabiting force or an innate quality, genius hinges on the question of possession.” While men who were considered poetic geniuses, such as Poe, were in full possession of their literary acuity and mental faculty, “women poets were portrayed as fonts of unmediated emotion, nightingales or creatures with harp-like hearts who could not help but sing.”¹² Like the poetesses Richards refers to, Denis and Gutierrez similarly place stock in the idea that their verses ring from them as sound does from a bird or instrument. Furthermore, they imply that such singing was natural to them as women poets.

For example, in her call to Gutierrez, Denis does not mention how she came to know of the California poet’s work, describing Gutierrez’s “song” and never referencing the printed verse. Denis compares Gutierrez to an “avecilla lastimera” (sorrowful little bird) and “privilejiada cantora” (privileged lady singer). Gutierrez replies in kind by asking

Denis “¿A qué avecilla has robado / La dulzura de tu acento” (From what bird did you steal / The sweetness of your accent) and comparing Denis’s poetic craft to playing a lyre. In the third stanza, Gutierrez focuses even more intently on her interlocutor’s sonic presence, directing urgent questions first toward Denis then more inwardly toward herself:

¿Quién eres, dí, que has sabido	Who are you, tell me, who has learned
Comprender el alma mía?	To understand my soul?
¿Por qué el eco me extasía	Why does the echo of your angelic voice
De tu voz angelical?	Make me ecstatic? ¹³

Gutierrez urges Denis not to write to her but to *talk* to her. She emphasizes her fellow *poetisa*’s “echo” and “voz angelical” (angelic voice), rather than mentioning having seen or read Denis’s poem in a newspaper. Considering these metaphors together, one idea becomes clear: both women express an imaginative connection to the voice of the other, as though through reading each could perceive the sonic and sensuous aspect of the other’s vocal presence.

Although on some level this plays into the problematic, gendered casting that Richards describes, it also invites other questions when it comes to sound, voice, and possession of mind. In the context of Latin American verse, Gwen Kirkpatrick situates poetry as “part of the common sound space” and emphasizes how the “realm of poetry and its sounds did not just represent the inner soul of the poet; nor was it always meant to be read silently.”¹⁴ Though the nonexistent relationship of the two women on a physical level makes it nearly impossible that they would have known the sound of one another’s speech in a literal sense, their poems express a textual “sound space” in that they articulate the desire to both be read aloud and heard. This suggests that the vocal and sonic metaphoric elements they choose to incorporate are an essential aspect of their *ars poetica*. They do not posture poetry as merely sound and song that rings passively or automatically from the heart, but rather, they construct a logic whereby sound plays a crucial role in the creative process. Expressed in the context of dedication, these musical calls from one woman to another take on an even more sensuous and social aspect.

Offering a helpful theoretical framework, Mladen Dolar argues that voice is something beyond the binary relationship of form and function—which is to say, it is more than a sound to be experienced

aesthetically or a vessel that conveys meaning. Rather, voice can be theorized as the very “lever of thought.”¹⁵ Such a perspective resonates strongly with Denis’s stanza:

Cuando se tiene una lira	When you have a lyre
De Dios hermoso presente,	A beautiful present from God,
Se lleva un mundo en la mente	It carries with it a world in the mind
I un Cielo en el corazón	And a Heaven in the heart. ¹⁶

The “lira” (lyre) is not only a musical instrument but also a vessel that contains and unlocks a “mundo en la mente” (world in the mind) and “cielo en el corazón” (heaven in the heart). In this way, sound and music are theorized poetically beyond either a purely communicative or purely aesthetic expression. In addition to its conceptualization as an instrument, or “lever” of thought, the lyre is also connected to the divine, it is “De Dios hermoso presente” (present, beautiful God). According to Karmen MacKendrick the “non-origin” of voice is not an echo that imitates and is merely physiological. Rather, it can be conceptualized as *resonance*: a prolongation of the movement of sound through reverberation.¹⁷ Conceptualizing voice in terms of resonance is helpful in understanding how Gutierrez and Denis construct the sensation of presence to one another in their poetics. The sense of presence is intertwined with solidarity, informing their creative process and pushing them to write, to call out to one another, in the first place. These women know each other only through poetry that has been exchanged across lands and oceans. They do not know one another on a physical and personal level, yet they share social connections based on their gender, language, identities as *poetisas*, and sense of *panlatinidad*. Through their dedication poems, these women address one another by social markers and by name, but this very naming is a leap of faith.

Resonance plays a role not only in how Denis and Gutierrez conceptualize transmission of sound but also in their own poetic work, in terms of unknowable audiences across time and space. Through the content of their verses, they hint at the musical, vocal quality of poetic conversation which only they can *hear* through reading. This intimate relationship seems to leave out the bystander, the reader to whom the poem is not explicitly dedicated. And yet the transmission of the newspaper as a mass media makes such readers implicitly present. Beyond reading, the audience is coaxed to listen, to overhear. The concluding sections of this article will explore how larger readerships surrounding

the intimate conversation between Denis and Gutierrez, some of which these women were keenly aware of, might have overheard their poems within the context of nationality and republicanism among Latinx in the United States and Latin America. But, before attending to this large-scale transnational stage, it is important to take a closer look at the women behind the poems, Amelia Denis and Carlota Gutierrez.

Textual Callers: Amelia Denis and Carlota Gutierrez

The dedication poems insist upon meaning informed by social contextual particularity. Although I have yet to uncover anything explaining how these women encountered one another or why Denis chose to dedicate a poem to Gutierrez, there is some limited biographical information available on both women that might provide more contextual insight to their poetic exchange. Perhaps the best place to begin is in the pages of *La Crónica*: Denis's name appears in a byline at the end of her poem dedicated to Gutierrez, which also includes her nationality and presumably when and where the poem was written: "AMELIA DENIS, Colombiana. / Acajutla, Setiembre 8 de 1875."¹⁸ Although she was born in Panama City, Denis is identified as a "Colombiana," because this region was part of the nation of Colombia from 1822 through 1903. During the nineteenth century, borders were shifting from the vast Gran Colombia—which included the territories of modern Ecuador, Venezuela, and Panama—to, by 1903, its current territory with a northern Panama-Colombia border dividing Central America from South America.¹⁹ In the mid-1870s, during the time Denis dedicated her poem to Gutierrez, Panama was still considered part of the United States of Colombia.

According to historian Cristina Ramos Cobano, Denis's full name is Amelia Denis de Icaza, born May 1, 1836. Her father, Saturnino, was a newspaper publisher of French heritage, and it is likely that he nurtured her interest in literature from an early age. Although her educational opportunities were limited, when she was twenty years old, Denis began to publish in the poetry section, *La floresta istmeña* (The Isthmian grove), of the local newspaper, *El Panameño*. Her poems were melancholy to the point that the editor of the newspaper, José María Alemán, encouraged her to cheer up in the introduction he wrote for her poetry. Little is known of her personal life, beyond that she was widowed twice and had five children. The precise dates of her marriages to Antonio Ramírez and José María Icaza are unknown. She had four children with Ramírez and then another child, Mercedes, with Icaza.²⁰

During her life, Denis circulated throughout Central America, seemingly pulled in different directions by members of her family. Icaza brought her to Guatemala, and Denis spent almost two decades there. During this time, she contributed to various newspapers, particularly *El Bien Público*, where she wrote both under the penname Elena and her own name. It was her youngest daughter, Mercedes, who would push Denis to make another major move. Mercedes married a Nicaraguan man and immigrated from Guatemala to León, Nicaragua, to be with him. Icaza accompanied Mercedes, then died not long after the young couple married. In 1894, Denis went to León to mourn her husband and be with her daughter, and she stayed in Nicaragua for the rest of her life. In these later years, she continued to publish poems in several newspapers. Although she saw her name in print many times, Denis did not live to see a book of her works published. She died in Managua on July 16, 1911. Sixteen years after her death, in 1927, a collection of her works was published under the name *Hojas secas*, or *Dry Leaves*.²¹

If information about Denis seems scant and imprecise, her biography is a colorful and detailed portrait compared to the nearly invisible traces left of Gutierrez's life story. I have uncovered only vague clues as to who Gutierrez was and how she came to be appreciated as a poet in California's Spanish-language press. Thus far, I have recovered six of Gutierrez's poems, all printed in *La Crónica* of Los Angeles from 1876 through 1878, including "A la inspirada poetisa colombiana Amelia Denis," published in May 1876; "A Los Angeles," published in August 1877; "Hidalgo," published in September 1877; "La flor y el destello," published in November 1877; and, "Invocacion nocturna" and "Mi rizo," both published in May 1878.²² *La Crónica's* editor, Pastor De Célis, also mentioned both Gutierrez and her sister, Guadalupe, in a handful of editorials from around the same period. For example, in May 1877, responding to another editorial from San Francisco's *La Sociedad* also referring to the Gutierrez sisters, he mentions that they performed *brindis*, or toasts, at a birthday party in honor of Pío de Jesús Pico, the last governor of Alta California while it was still a territory of Mexico. Though De Célis's tone in the editorial is patronizing, he expresses admiration for the Gutierrez sisters. Their invitation to speak at such a distinguished event shows that these women had carved out reputations for themselves as active and visible member of the Latinx community.

Of course, what appears in the newspaper conveys only a partial story of Gutierrez's biography. One of the most telling public records

I have gathered related to her family life is the 1870 US Census report in which Gutierrez is listed under the name Charlotte. According to the census, she was fourteen years old and attending school. She lived under the roof of a forty-four-year-old woman named Rosa Gutierrez who was probably her mother or a close family member. Rosa listed \$400 as the value of her personal estate. There were seven members of the household, all said to have been born in Mexico to parents of foreign birth. From this record, we learn that Gutierrez's sister Guadalupe was eighteen at the time, four years older than Gutierrez.²³ Two young boys, probably brothers of Guadalupe and Gutierrez, were also listed: Frank, who was twelve years old, and Willie, who was ten. In addition to the Gutierrez family, a twenty-four-year-old seamstress, Rosa Cuevas, with a seven-year-old daughter, Winna, also lived in the house.²⁴ Of interest in this record is the fact that there were no adult men living in the Gutierrez household.²⁵ It is possible that the lack of a patriarchal figure at home contributed to Gutierrez's and Guadalupe's independent streaks financially and creatively, as they would both pursue ambitions in the workplace as well as the literary realm.

Other public records related to employment listings of Gutierrez and her family appeared with relative frequency in *The San Francisco Directory* beginning in 1868 and continuing through 1880. In the earliest directory listing, from 1868, Gutierrez would have been around twelve years old, so unsurprisingly she is not mentioned, nor are her younger brothers. "Miss" Guadalupe Gutierrez, however, is described as a "domestic," along with Rosario Gutierrez—probably the same Rosa from the census record; both these women were employed as servants.²⁶ Guadalupe and Gutierrez turn up five years later in the 1873 directory. Although an occupation was not listed for Gutierrez, Guadalupe had advanced professionally. No longer a "domestic," she was listed as a Spanish teacher.²⁷ Guadalupe continued to be listed as either "teacher [of] Spanish" or "teacher [of] languages" through the year 1880, when directory records of the Gutierrez family disappeared in San Francisco.

As for Gutierrez, she began her working life at about the age of eighteen, and in 1874 she is listed as a telegraph operator.²⁸ According to the historian Thomas C. Jepsen, women telegraph operators had a great deal of independence and possessed advanced technical skills: "The role of the telegrapher in the mid-nineteenth century was similar to that of the contemporary software programmer/analyst . . . To be a telegrapher, one had to be extremely literate and a good speller, be capable of

learning Morse code, and have some knowledge of electricity and telegraphy.”²⁹ Gutierrez would be publishing poetry in *La Crónica* only three years after holding this position as a telegraph operator. So, in addition to being among the few published Latina poets of her community, she was also in a field that did “not fit neatly into either of the predominant stereotypes of nineteenth-century women: the devoted wife and mother, secure in her domestic sphere, or the exploited factory operative, forced to work long hours to earn a subsistence living.”³⁰ Although it is uncertain just how long she kept up the post, it could not have failed to expand her literacy and possibly even her poetics.

Gutierrez’s stint as a telegraph operator would not be a lifetime career, however. In 1878, she is listed as a Spanish teacher and as a “languages” teacher the following years, 1879 and 1880.³¹ This means that Gutierrez followed in her sister’s footsteps, taking up language instruction as her primary occupation. Further archival study indicates that Gutierrez treated teaching as a business, and she made serious investments in her business by periodically taking out classified advertisements in the *San Francisco Chronicle* from 1879 through 1880.³² These advertisements included her address and sometimes referred to her as C. S. Gutierrez, Señorita Gutierrez, or a “Spanish” lady. It seems that Gutierrez was in a transitional period between the time of her employment as a telegraph operator and the point at which she struck out on her own as a Spanish teacher. Two pictures begin to crystalize of Gutierrez during the period between 1874 and 1878. Listings in city directories and ads in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, published in English and geared toward Anglo-American readerships, portray Gutierrez as a working woman with demanding jobs in terms of education, skill, and self-direction. Editorials, society reporting, and poetry published in Spanish-language newspapers paint a very different portrait: in the Latinx community, Gutierrez was a socialite, traveler, and rising poet.

Still, the multiple roles in the Gutierrez sister’s lives were, as Mary Loeffelholz puts it, “complementary” rather than at odds or unusual: “Within the emergent domestic-tutelary complex of early nineteenth-century American women’s poetry, the all-but inevitable complementary figure to the poetess as student and child prodigy is the poet as schoolmistress.”³³ For both Gutierrez and her sister, their roles as specialized teachers, Spanish-language instructors, may have been an additional arena in which they could share, express, and contemplate their cultural place within San Francisco society.

Though work and career is a topic seemingly absent from their writing, social life and literary invention was explicitly and fundamentally linked in the literary works of both Gutierrez sisters. In fact, during the summer and autumn of 1877, around the same time that Gutierrez's poetry was appearing in the press, Guadalupe was publishing a serialized novel, *Espinas y rosas*, in the San Francisco newspaper *La Sociedad*. A review of the novel by the aforementioned editor of *La Crónica*, De Célis, on July 11, 1877, reveals that Guadalupe's work was a roman à clef in which the key to the real identities of the characters was known to the friends and acquaintances of the Gutierrez sisters in Los Angeles.³⁴ From what little remains of the novel, it is clear that just as the dedication poems of Denis and Gutierrez are informed by social connections, so too does Guadalupe's novel have social implications, commentaries, and intended interlocutors.³⁵ Thus, her writing carries a sensibility that she shared with her sister in terms of self-consciously mixing the literary with both lived and symbolic relationships.

This socio-literary quality is strikingly apparent in a dedication poem that Gutierrez addressed to her social circle in Los Angeles published in *La Crónica* on August 18, 1877. Like her sister's roman à clef, Gutierrez's poem coyly directs itself toward intended interlocutors who are not properly named or identified. The poem's title, "A Los Angeles" (To Los Angeles), hints at the social connections that Gutierrez had in Southern California without making them public to the entirety of *La Crónica's* readership. The speaker reflects positively on her experiences in Los Angeles, describing the beauty of the gardens, hillsides, lakes, and foliage. The dedication poem was clearly a means of sending warm regards to those whom Gutierrez met on a recent trip to the city. She begins the poem with the inscription "cariñosamente dedicada á las apreciables personas con quienes tuve el placer de relacionarme durante mi permanencia en esa ciudad" (affectionately dedicated to the worthy people with whom I had the pleasure of associating during my stay in that city).³⁶

Aside from this dedication, the content of the verses cements the idea that the structure of the poem is fashioned for an intended person or persons. For example, after the tenth stanza of "A Los Angeles," which describes the purity of the Angeleno air and song of the morning birds, there is a break in which three horizontal lines composed of extended ellipses interrupt the text. The last two stanzas following the break are more retrospective; their tone is as though the speaker had been abruptly awoken from a pleasurable daydream or happy memory:

.....

 Pero ¡ay! nunca tal vez, ciudad querida.
 Volveré á disfrutar con tus encantos,
 Aunque uniéronme á tí los lazos santos
 De amistad y cariño á mi partida.

Mas no olvides, remedo de la gloria,
 Que á donde quiera que me lleve el hado,
 Tu recuerdo dichoso, dibujado
 Llevaré para siempre en mi memoria.

.....

 But alas! Perhaps never again, dear city.
 Will I return to enjoy your charms,
 Though we were bounded with holy ties
 Of friendship and affection at my departure.

But do not forget, image of glory,
 That wherever fate takes me,
 Your happy remembrance sketched
 In my memory, I will take with me forever.³⁷

In this way, the speaker rather fatalistically implies uncertainty as to whether she will ever be able to return to Los Angeles to rekindle her cherished connections. Though Gutierrez could have intended to include the lines of ellipses, it is also possible the newspaper editor inserted them (perhaps in place of verses that were cut for space). Either way, for readers, the ellipses could represent a visual absence connoting a geographical and bodily separation.

Gutierrez's dedication poem "A Los Angeles" can be read in relation to "A la inspirada poetisa colombiana Amelia Denis," published three months earlier. In addition to sharing a comparable sensibility as dedication poems, they are also structured in quatrains with rhyming couplets in the second and third lines. "A la inspirada poetisa colombiana Amelia Denis" closely imitates the rhyme scheme of Denis's original in the opening two stanzas, then goes on to keep only the couplets in the second and third lines. Similarly, "A Los Angeles" employs melodious enclosed quatrains through an ABBA structure. In keeping with Denis's original rhyme scheme, Gutierrez nods to the craft of her distant interlocutor. Her shift in rhyme to a more enclosed style in "A Los Angeles" implies that these choices in rhyme were conceived in a personal way for intended readers. The next section will explore more deeply this idea of crafting dedication poems as a social gesture for intended interlocutors, focusing especially on how the dedication poem operated in postcolonial Latinx society and in newspaper media.

The Social and Literary Matrix of the Newspaper Dedication Poem

The cultural, social, and journalistic dynamics that set the stage for Denis's and Gutierrez's exchange of dedication poems are as crucial to their meaning as the formal and aesthetic aspects of their poetics. In examining the social intricacies of the dedication poems in tandem with the literary qualities of the verse, I follow the lead of critics such as Yopie Prins, Michael Cohen, and Meredith McGill in the methodological turn toward historical poetics in nineteenth-century literary studies. Cohen stresses that "poems facilitated actions, like reading, writing, reciting, copying, inscribing, scissoring, exchanging, or circulating, that positioned people within densely complex webs of relation."³⁸ Considering the gendered, linguistic, and cultural practices and conventions specific to the *poetisa* is the first step to unpacking the dense and complex webs of social relation that Cohen describes.

In the context of the colonial Spanish Empire in the Americas, or New Spain, dedications were a means for women writers to navigate a literary world dominated by men. Carlos M. Collantes Sánchez and Ignacio García Aguilar have traced how dedications to and by women in Latin America from the mid-seventeenth century to the mid-eighteenth century were constitutive of shifting attitudes toward women's authorial status and rising importance as agents of influence in the public sphere. Among the most telling but singular examples they cite is a poem by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz dedicated to Countess María Luisa Gonzaga Manrique de Lara in 1689: "entre la poeta y la virreina encontraron el modo de establecer una relación literaria que redundó en la fijación, difusión y también en la validación de la escritura poética de la monja mejicana" (between the poet and the viceroy they found a means to establish a literary relationship resulting in fascination, diffusion and also in the validation of the Mexican nun's poetic writing).³⁹ Despite the imbalance of power in terms of wealth and lineage between Sor Juana and the countess, a kind of common bond emerges at the level of gender. Through their correspondence, not only is Sor Juana able to transcend her social sphere and draw attention to her intellectual and poetic contributions, but the countess's status and influence are also bolstered. In comparing this seventeenth-century relationship to the one between Gutierrez and Denis, important continuities and differences emerge. While their correspondence contains a comparable gendered social element, the relationship between Gutierrez and Denis was not one-sided in terms of wealth and power. Rather, these women sought to encourage and praise one another as fel-

low *poetisas* and equals. Their correspondence might have been brief, but it exemplified shifting power relations between women and men in the literary world during the nineteenth century.

In the relationship between Denis and Gutierrez, Denis made the first move. Writing to Alvaro Contreras, editor of the San Salvador newspaper *La America Central*, she reached out to Gutierrez by submitting her dedication poem for publication. In her dispatch to the newspaper, she enclosed other dedication poems, including one addressed to a Salvadoran general, which appears alongside the poem to Gutierrez. As a contextual frame to these dedication poems, her letter to Contreras was printed before them. The social web beginning with Denis and extending to Gutierrez, Contreras, and the general can be read for the gendered workings at play. Certainly, Denis did not have control over how her poems and letter would be arranged on the page, which poems would be printed, or whether any of her writing would be published at all. All this power was in the hands of the male editor. Using the self-effacing rhetoric typical of women writers of the nineteenth century, she notes at the outset of her letter, “Sin tener el honor de conocerlo mas que al traves de sus escritos; me tomo la libertad de enviarle dos pobres composiciones hijas de mi corazon, i que someto antes que todo el juicio de su inteliencia” (Without having the honor of knowing you, except through your writings; I take the liberty of sending you two poor compositions, daughters of my heart, and I submit them before all the judgment of your intelligence).⁴⁰ In a style approaching the melodramatic, she continues, downplaying her own craft and intelligence while successfully appealing to Contreras’s ego.

Contreras is not the only powerful male interlocutor that Denis engages; she also dedicates a poem to General Santiago González, the acting president of El Salvador. General González had come to power only four years earlier in 1871. After overthrowing the more conservative administration of Francisco Dueñas, he revived liberal and anticlerical programs in El Salvador.⁴¹ Perhaps Denis’s sympathy for General González indicates that she had similar liberal leanings, although it is also possible that she chose to dedicate the poem to him simply because he was the national leader. In the first stanza she writes, “No sé de Centro-América la historia, / No conozco los timbres de su gloria; / Pero es libre tambien i lo soi yo” (I do not know Central America’s history, / I do not know the timbres of its glory; / But it’s also free, as am I).⁴² From the outset, she insists that she knows nothing of the history or implicitly the political climate of El Salvador—thus, she is blameless when it comes to

particulars—but she does appreciate that the country is a free republic as well as her own freedom. The finale of the poem drives this sense of *panlatinidad* home: “Porque tambien soi libre americana, / Porque tambien nací republicana, / I mi cuna entre libres se mecio” (Because I too am a free American, / Because I too was born a republican, / And my cradle was rocked among free people).⁴³ For the speaker of the poem, it is freedom that joins them and perhaps also what separates residents of the republics of Central America from the displaced Gutierrez, who Denis describes as “flor de mejicano suelo” (flower of Mexican soil).

While no direct references are made to freedom or republicanism in the poem dedicated to Gutierrez, the poem to General González is filled with such references. It is meant as a celebratory ode to the September 15, 1821, independence of Central America, which under Spanish rule had been known as the Kingdom of Guatemala and included the present-day states of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica.⁴⁴ Denis not only celebrates the liberation of Central America, but also retells the conquest of the Americas in her own terms, repeating the flower imagery that she used for Gutierrez:

¿Que era entonces la América encantada,	What was, then, the enchanted America,
Qué era esta hermosa vírjen recostada	What was this beautiful virgin reclined
Sobre un lecho de flores i de amor?	On a bed of flowers and love?
Esos hombres de España la encontraron	These men of Spain found her
I entre viles cadenas la aherrajaron	And among vile chains she was imprisoned
Llenandola de oprobio i de dolor,	Filled with opprobrium and pain,

The speaker plays on flower metaphors by imagining the pre-Columbian virgin on a bed of “flores i de amor” (flowers and love). The American continent is feminized and anthropomorphized as an imprisoned, deflowered virgin.⁴⁵ The explorers who plucked America’s petals with “bárbara crueldad” (barbarous cruelty) are implicated in a rape scene of this feminized landscape that Denis constructs. With this imagery in mind, Denis’s metonymic description of Gutierrez as a “flor de mejicano suelo” might also imply that her fellow *poetisa* is in similarly precarious and violable circumstances.

name: while “Dedicado á S. E. el Jeneral” is made up of bold, thick letters, and “Santiago Gonzalez” is in all caps in the standard font, by contrast, Gutierrez’s name is printed in a willowy lettering with curved wisps extending from and emphasizing the letters *C*, *R*, *S*, and *G*. This font is used in only one other place on the page: an advertisement in the far-right column for flour uses the font in a subtitle to accentuate the words “Fresca I Barata” (Fresh and Inexpensive).⁴⁶ Whether it was an intentional choice by the editor or not, the selective use of the font visually links Gutierrez’s name with flour, a product associated with the kitchen and domestic sphere.

Undercutting this feminized styling is the placement of the dedication to Gutierrez between, to the left, the poem to the Salvadoran political figure Gonzalez and, to the right, an article reporting on arms intended for Cuban revolutionary fighters that were intercepted in Haiti, titled “Cuba Libre” (Free Cuba). The article is reprinted from *La Independencia* and sympathizes strongly with the Cuban revolutionaries fighting for independence from Spain, as well as with the people of Haiti, who the article claims also sympathize with the revolutionary cause.⁴⁷ The sentiments of Haiti’s people contrast with the actions of their government, as it appears that the administration of Haitian president Michel Domingue cooperated with the Spanish authorities. Reprinted from the Haitian newspaper *Le Peuple* is a quotation telling of a Cuban man, M. Fernández, who would be exiled from Haiti as a result of the plot to send arms: “No! no puede ser, no sera! Qué! nosotros, negrós i mulatos arrojaríamos de nuestros muros á un hombre que simpatiza con nuestros hermanos que se hallan en la esclavitud? Veamos pues. De dos cosas una. O tenemos sangre en las venas ó no la tenemos!!!” (No! It cannot be, it will not be so! What! we, blacks and mulattoes, would cast out from our defenses a man who sympathizes with our brothers who find themselves enslaved? Let’s see then. It’s one of two things. Either we have blood in our veins or we don’t have any!!!).⁴⁸ The speaker expresses outrage at the Domingue administration’s actions and calls for solidarity in the face of oppression from colonial powers, particularly on the basis of race and opposition to the institution of slavery, which was still ongoing in Cuba. Below the article is a list of cargo intercepted, which according to the text was seized by the Haitian government. Visually, in terms of blank space, the list breaks from the bulk of narrative text in the same way the poems do.

The fact that Denis’s dedication to Gutierrez is buttressed on both sides by these overtly political columns inflects the reading of her

poem: a creation story and celebration of Central American republicanism appears to the poem's left, while to the right, Haitian sympathizers with the Cuban revolutionary cause are embroiled in their own political struggle in support of freedom from slavery and imperialism. Read alone, the dedication to Gutierrez is a personal missive to a fellow *poetisa*, but these news stories locate the poem in the context of global political happenings and social relations that literally surround it.

What links all these fragments are the concepts of *panlatinidad* and transnational solidarity, both gestured toward and sought out in a plurality of gendered ways. Denis's letter to the male gatekeeper, Contre-ras, and her verses to the male republican authority, General González, are packaged alongside her dedication to the distant "flor de mejicano suelo," Gutierrez. Denis's precarious relevance as a woman poet, and thus that of Gutierrez as well, is bolstered not only by means of her addresses to these male figures but also by the newspaper's format and the reading practices supported by such a format. Her work is read alongside manifestations of solidarity between Haitians and Cuban revolutionaries reported with the seriousness of news. It is within this nest of newspaper typesetting that the dedication poem performs a transnational gesture of solidarity between individual women.

A Concluding Dedication a la Nación

A gendered sense of patriotism plays a subtle but fundamental part in the creative process for these *poetisas*. Recall Denis describing Gutierrez's poetry as "flor del mexicano suelo," or "flower of Mexican soil," and Gutierrez writing to Denis:

Colombia, la patria tuya	Colombia, your homeland,
Que cual a México adoro	Which I adore as I do Mexico,
En tí posee un Tesoro	In you possesses a Treasure
De inconcebible valor!	Of inconceivable value! ⁴⁹

In a way, their correspondence through the poem dedication is a performance not only of their own genius as women but also of a conversation about the intersectionality of poetic intellect when it comes to nation and Latinx identity. Even within this brief exchange, these women express awareness of an international stage from which they draw not only inspiration but also a patriotic audience whom they presumably are performing *for*, as representatives *of*. In exploring these references to the *patria* (homeland), Kirsten Silva Gruesz's conceptualization of ambassadorship

is particularly relevant, as she uses the term to describe a specifically Latinx literary sensibility in nineteenth-century newspaper verse. According to Gruesz, in the way this writing “presumes a relationship of substitution, surrogacy, and vicarious claims to authority, it is similar to ambassadorship—and with that comparison, the gaping social divide between the spheres of national versus local influence, of the sanctioned versus the excluded, begins to dissolve.”⁵⁰ The citizen-ambassador sensibility comes across strongly in the dedication poems these women write to one another but in other works as well, such as the dedication Denis writes to General González and Gutierrez’s poem “Hidalgo,” which she performed at a Mexican Independence Day celebration in 1877.⁵¹ The posturing of these *poetisas* creates its own symbolic dedication, as the women subtly address their poetic performances to a particular Latinx republican audience. This is an audience that, in the case of Denis, was eager to subsume the poet’s corpus into an agenda of nation building in Panama and, in the case of Gutierrez, was responsible for either making or breaking her career as a public literary figure.

Although Gutierrez’s legacy in this respect is only beginning to come to light, Denis’s celebrity as a foundational figure in Panamanian literary history has remained strong. In fact, as a result of its nostalgic nationalism and musicality, her most recognized poem, “Al Cerro Ancón” is required reading for Panamanian schoolchildren.⁵² Furthermore, Denis’s name is familiar across Panama City. Encircling her beloved hill, Cerro Ancón, the subject of her poem, is a street named after her, Calle Amelia Denis de Icaza. There is also a primary school, health center, and *corregimiento*, or township, named after Denis in the district of San Miguelito.⁵³ For the residents of the capital city, Denis’s name is a nationalist marker and frequent reminder of her legacy and foundational contribution to Panamanian literary culture.

This is in spite of the complicated relationship that Denis had with her home country, especially in terms of literary claims to ambassadorship. In her poem dedicated to General González, she begins by referring to her Colombian citizenship in tandem with an awareness of her identity as an *americana*: “Yo hé nacido sensible americana / Humilde, oscurecida colombiana” (I was born an American / Humble, obscure Colombian). So, at least in 1875, when she was thirty-nine years old, Denis referred to herself as Colombian but also, in a more expansive sense, as a woman of the Americas. She does not insist on an overtly regionalist attachment to Panamanian identity or align herself with any kind of Panamanian liberation faction, and in fact she does not mention

Panama or Panama City by name. Across her corpus more generally, she expresses diverse interests not directly related to her *patria chica*. In light of this, one might suggest that Denis be reassessed as a transnational literary figure with roots throughout Central America. On another level, to simply correct how her nationality has been read and appropriated is to ignore the fascinating literary, historical, and political constellation that has subsumed any trace of her lived reality.

Nothing encapsulates the cosmology of Denis's appropriation by Panama quite like the treatment of her body following her death. Denis's corpse became a theater for both symbolic and literal nation building. On what would have been her one hundredth birthday, November 28, 1936, Denis's remains were exhumed from her grave in Managua, Nicaragua, and brought to Panama. In homage, a bust of the poet was installed in a park in Santa Ana, the neighborhood where she grew up.⁵⁴ It is the Panamanian state that projects meaning onto her body and her texts, inscribing her corpse and her poetic corpus with a symbolic dedication to *Panama*. Here it is important to remember the body's role as a text that can be read with diverse agendas of establishing political legitimacy through ancestor worship: "Among the most important properties of bodies, especially dead ones, is their ambiguity, multivocality, or polysemy."⁵⁵ Returning to the opening verses of Gutierrez's poem to Denis when she portrays her fellow *poetisa* as a treasure of inconceivable value possessed by the nation of Colombia, "En tí posee un Tesoro / De inconcebible valor," a deeper truth with regard to the workings of political legitimacy and nationalism is at play, especially when it comes to the bodies of women. The verses hint at the gendered objectification of women as treasures and vessels to be later inscribed, or dedicated, with symbolic meaning. One only needs to consider the tumultuous symbolic and literal power struggles associated with the remains of Eva Perón to recognize that women's bodies, both living and dead, were routinely objectified in a normative way for the sake of republican nation building in Latin America.⁵⁶

Furthermore, the gesture of the Panamanian state reclaiming Denis's remains is perhaps the most literal erasure of her transnational identity and the suturing shut of what Silva Gruesz would term "errant" wanderings. Drawing on the title of Antonio José de Irisarri's *El Cristiano errante* (*The Errant Christian*), a novel published serially in Bogotá newspapers from 1846 to 1847, Silva Gruesz defines errancy as a means of "questioning the celebration of communal root-setting and successful genealogical reproduction," insisting that "our identity

comes not from where we land but from the way we move.”⁵⁷ It is the physical movement and circulation of errant wanderers, such as Irisarri and Denis, that allow them to see outside of “located identities” and make comparisons between one place and another.⁵⁸ The treatment of Irisarri’s legacy and physical remains has much in common with that of Denis. He was recognized as a founding father and literary figure posthumously in both Chile and Guatemala. Authorities in Guatemala exhumed his remains from their final resting place in Brooklyn, New York, and reburied Irisarri’s body in Guatemala City in 1871.

Instead of celebrating or grappling with the errant migratory movements of Irisarri and Denis, their lifelong wanderings, both physical and textual, were glossed over by contrived nationalist foundational figure narratives. Identities of place and origin were imposed on both of them. In the case of Denis, not only do her biography and eventual burial in Nicaragua reveal that she spent the majority of her life outside of Panama, but her regular use of the dedication poem expresses her interest in forging transnational relationships and networks. For example, a dedication to a Spanish woman writer and poet, “A la Baronesa de Wilson,” and also a more politically minded dedication, “A Chile y Perú,” are both published in *Hojas secas*. Through her dedication poems and other literary pursuits, Denis enjoyed a robust engagement with newspapers, editors, and other poets in Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and beyond. In spite of this, her legacy has been firmly compartmentalized in a Panamanian nationalist context.

What cases like Perón, Irisarri, and Denis demonstrate is that nationalism can be a powerful tide capable of calcifying the multifaceted and intersectional identities of public figures into rigid symbolic objects. In the context of nineteenth-century society in Latin America, and for Latinx of the United States, nationalism was a pervasive part of life; and while the fervor took on an anti-imperialist flavor for Latinx, its practices still mimicked those of Anglo-Americans in the North Atlantic and excluded or exploited marginalized groups, such as Afro-Latinx, women, and others.⁵⁹ The cultural mechanisms of republicanism can be seen in the way Denis and Gutierrez address one another as both national citizens and *poetisas*. They understood patriotism to be intertwined not only with their identities but also with inspiration, imagination, and the creative process. While nationalism can be a dangerously limiting and dehumanizing force of politicized remembrance, it is important to highlight that these women’s investment in republican solidarity was for them another means of gaining visibility and viability

in the public sphere. In the case of Denis's and Gutierrez's dedication poems, their nods toward *panlatinidad* can be thought of as a means to make themselves and their seemingly intimate feminine conversation culturally relevant to a larger male-dominated audience.

Overall, the dedication poem was a textual tool that, beyond its formal and aesthetic use, had social purpose. The fact that Denis's and Gutierrez's poems were published in the newspaper adds another social layer to this dynamic both in reading practices and circulation. The personal correspondences of the *poetisas* were indeed being broadcast in the public sphere to an international audience, but Denis's dedication poem to Gutierrez was printed alongside news of political happenings across Latin America that likely imbued her dedication poem with a different sensibility for nineteenth-century readers. The personal biographies of Denis and Gutierrez also play a role in reading their poems. This is especially relevant to appreciating how Gutierrez balanced her working-class career with her aspirations as a socialite and poet in the California Latinx community, as well as how Denis did not fix herself to her *patria chica*, Panama, but moved throughout Central America. In terms of friendship and social connectedness, Denis's and Gutierrez's dedication poems were a performance that expressed their solidarity as *poetisas* and asserted their intellectual prowess through a collaborative *ars poetica* grounded in metaphoric allusions to the soul and sound. These *poetisas* postured themselves not only as woman poets but as national literary ambassadors—honoring one another in a ritual of acknowledgment whereby they expressed respect for one another as symbolic poet laureates, literary ambassadors, of their respective *tierras*, or national grounds.

Notes

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1. Amelia Denis de Icaza, "A la Señorita Carlota S. Gutierrez," *La America Central*, September 22, 1875. All translations are mine. Original quotations from nineteenth-century sources have not been edited for spelling or grammar.

2. Thus far, I have not been able to learn how Denis came to know of Gutierrez or what poems she might have had access to. Since several of Gutierrez's poems are published in California Spanish-language periodicals, it is likely that her work circulated by way of the newspaper.

3. Jesse Alemán, preface to *The Latino Nineteenth Century*, eds. Rodrigo Lazo and Jesse Alemán (New York: New York University Press, 2016), vii.

4. Jennifer Putzi and Alexandra Socarides, "Making History: Thinking about Nineteenth-Century American Women's Poetry," in *A History of Nineteenth-Century American Women's Poetry*, ed. Jennifer Putzi and Alexandra Socarides (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 10.

5. Meredith L. McGill, ed., *The Traffic in Poems: Nineteenth-Century Poetry and Transatlantic Exchange* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 4.

6. Many well-known American and British women poets exchanged dedication poems, including Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Felicia Dorothea Hemans, Lydia Huntley Sigourney, Frances Sargent Osgood, and others.

7. Paula R. Backscheider, *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets and Their Poetry: Inventing Agency, Inventing Genre* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 176.

8. Denis de Icaza, "A la Señorita Carlota S. Gutierrez."

9. *Alma* ["soul"] is a masculine word in Spanish, and so Gutierrez's grammar is slightly off when she writes "una alma" rather than "un alma." It was perhaps her intention to emphasize the soul as feminine in this context.

10. Carlota S. Gutierrez, "A la inspirada poetisa Colombiana Amelia Denis," *La Crónica*, May 17, 1876.

11. Victoria Olwell, *The Genius of Democracy: Fictions of Gender and Citizenship in the United States, 1860–1945* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 4.

12. Eliza Richards, *Gender and the Poetics of Reception in Poe's Circle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 16–18.

13. Gutierrez, "A la inspirada poetisa Colombiana Amelia Denis."

14. Gwen Kirkpatrick, "The Lyric World in the Nineteenth Century," in *The Cambridge History of Latin American Women's Literature*, eds. Ileana Rodríguez and Mónica Szurmuk (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 149.

15. Mladen Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), 11.

16. Denis de Icaza, "A la Señorita Carlota S. Gutierrez."

17. Karmen MacKendrick, *The Matter of Voice: Sensual Soundings* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016), 23–24.

18. Amelia Denis de Icaza, "A la Sta. Carlota S. Gutierrez," *La Crónica*, April 1, 1876.

19. *Merriam-Webster's Geographical Dictionary* (Springfield: Merriam-Webster, 2007), s.v. "Colombia."

20. Cristina Ramos Cobano, "Central American Female Writers: Women Occupying Liberal Public Space," in *Enemies Within: Cultural Hierarchies and Liberal Political Models in the Hispanic World*, ed. María Sierra (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2015), 82–83.

21. *Ibid.*, 85.

22. Other poems by Denis were also published in *La Crónica* in addition to her dedication to Gutierrez. For example, Denis's poems "La poetisa ystmena" and "En las montañas de mi patria" were both published in the newspaper in July of 1876.

23. To distinguish between sisters Carlota S. Gutierrez and Guadalupe Gutierrez, I will refer to Guadalupe by only her first name throughout this article.

24. "United States Census, 1870," *Census Record* (San Francisco: United States Census Bureau, July 26, 1870), FHL microfilm 545,578, National Archives and Records Administration, 231.

25. Since all members of the household were indicated as having been born in Mexico, it is possible that the Gutierrez family was among the wave of Mexican political exiles during the 1860s who resided, some only temporarily, in the United States during the Second French Intervention in Mexico.

26. Henry G. Langley, *The San Francisco Directory for the Year Commencing October, 1868* (San Francisco: Bacon, Excelsior Steam Presses, 1868), 254.

27. Henry G. Langley, *The San Francisco Directory for the Year Commencing October, 1873* (San Francisco: Bacon, Excelsior Steam Presses, 1873), 275.

28. Henry G. Langley, *The San Francisco Directory for the Year Commencing October, 1874* (San Francisco: Bacon, Excelsior Steam Presses, 1874), 294.

29. Thomas C. Jepsen, *My Sisters Telegraphic: Women in the Telegraph Office, 1846–1950* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000), 2.

30. *Ibid.*, 1.

31. D. M. Bishop, *Bishop's Directory of the City and County of San Francisco* (San Francisco: B. C. Vandall, 1878), 400; Henry G. Langley, *The San Francisco Directory for the Year Commencing October, 1879* (San Francisco: Bacon, Excelsior Steam Presses, 1879), 386; Henry G. Langley, *The San Francisco Directory for the Year Commencing October, 1880* (San Francisco: Bacon, Excelsior Steam Presses, 1880), 397.

32. Carlota Gutierrez, "Spanish Lessons," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 1879–1880, sec. Educational (Classified Ads).

33. Mary Loeffelholz, *From School to Salon: Reading Nineteenth-Century American Women's Poetry* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 32.

34. Pastor De Célis, "Se Nos Ha Dicho . . .," *La Crónica*, July 11, 1877.

35. To date, I have recovered only one issue of *La Sociedad* in which Guadalupe Gutierrez's *Espinas y rosas* appears, dated Saturday, October 27, 1877.
36. Carlota Gutierrez, "A Los Angeles," *La Crónica*, August 18, 1877.
37. *Ibid.*
38. Michael C. Cohen, *The Social Lives of Poems in Nineteenth-Century America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 7.
39. Carlos M. Collantes Sánchez and Ignacio García Aguilar, "Dedicatorias femeninas en la poesía impresa del bajo barroco," *Criticón* 125 (January 2015): 50–52.
40. Denis de Icaza, "A la Señorita Carlota S. Gutierrez."
41. Ralph Lee Woodward, *Rafael Carrera and the Emergence of the Republic of Guatemala, 1821–1871* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993), 326.
42. Amelia Denis de Icaza, "El 15 de Setiembre: Dedicado á S. E. Jeneral Santiago Gonzalez," *La America Central*, September 22, 1875.
43. *Ibid.*
44. Oscar G. Peláez Almengor, "Central America, Independence of," *Encyclopedia of Latin American History and Culture* (Detroit: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2008), 246–47.
45. Annette Kolodny has theorized an American colonial fantasy of "land as essentially feminine—that is, not simply the land as mother, but the land as woman." For more, see Annette Kolodny, *The Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 4.
46. Alvaro Contreras, "Cuba Libre," *La America Central*, September 22, 1875.
47. Several newspapers were printed under the name *La Independencia* in the nineteenth century across Latin America, the Caribbean, and Spain. There was also one printed in the 1870s in New York City. It is unclear which of these newspapers the editor is referring to.
48. Contreras, "Cuba Libre."
49. Gutierrez, "A la inspirada poetisa Colombiana Amelia Denis."
50. Kirsten Silva Gruesz, *Ambassadors of Culture: The Transamerican Origins of Latino Writing* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 26–27.
51. Gutierrez's poem "Hidalgo" is an example of writing directed toward a patriotic Mexican listening and reading audience. The patriotic ode dramatizes a scene between the revolutionary leader Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla and the Virgin Mary, whose appearance as a suffering Mexican woman synecdochally symbolizes the Mexican nation under Spanish colonial rule. Carlota S. Gutierrez, "Hidalgo," *La Crónica*, September 26, 1877.
52. Katia Castillo, "La literatura panameña de tema histórico y la enseñanza de la literatura en el nivel superior" (master's thesis, Universidad de Panamá, 2011), 37–40.
53. Route from Calle Amelia Denis de Icaza, to Centro de Salud Amelia Denis de Icaza, to Escuela Amelia Denis de Icaza, to (center of) Corregimiento Amelia Denis de Icaza, Google Maps, 2020, <https://goo.gl/maps/E8KwRvScn962>.
54. Elba D. Birmingham-Pokorny and Luis A. Jiménez, "Patria, mujer, y sociedad en la obra poética de Amelia Denis de Icaza," in *La voz de la mujer en la literatura hispanoamericana fin-de-siglo* (San José: Editorial de la Universidad de Costa Rica, 1999), 90.
55. Katherine Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 28.
56. For more on Eva Perón and the nationalist objectification of her body, see Donna J. Guy, "Life and the Commodification of Death in Argentina: Juan and Eva Perón," in *Death, Disembodiment, and Memory: Body Politics in Latin America*, ed. Lyman L. Johnson (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004).
57. Kirsten Silva Gruesz, "The Errant Latino: Irisarri, Central Americanness, and Migration's Intention," in *The Latino Nineteenth Century*, 37, 40.
58. *Ibid.*, 25.
59. "Nationalism was often anti-imperialist yet mimetic, imitating the presumably white and modern nations of the North Atlantic." Nancy P. Appelbaum, Anne S. Macpherson, and Karin Alejandra Roseblat, eds., "Introduction: Racial Nations," in *Race and Nation in Modern Latin America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 14.