

Latino Utopias: Junot Diaz, Giannina Braschi, Sandra Cisneros

The magnitude and diversity of Latino literary genius are celebrated in the conference "Latina/o Utopias: Futures, Forms, and the Will of Literature".

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Ignite Imagination and Debate: [Junot Diaz](#), [Giannina Braschi](#), [Sandra Cisneros](#)

"Liberty is not an option; it's a human right," proclaims Giannina Braschi, author of "United States of Banana," a controversial post-9/11 novel that serves as a subject of reflection and debate at the second biennial conference on Latino literary theory.

The magnitude and diversity of Latino literary genius in the United States today are celebrated in the wide-ranging topics of "Latina/o Utopias: Futures, Forms, and the Will of Literature." This biennial conference takes place April 23-25, 2015 at John Jay College of City University of New York and convenes distinguished poets, writers, and scholars from around the country to explore the concept of utopias created by Hispanic American writers.

Panels range from the crossing of illegal borders and imaginative boundaries to the battle for American citizenship and the politics of Latin American exile. There is discussion on the power of the Puerto Rican mainland vote in Florida, the struggle for Puerto Rican independence on the island, and the normalization of Cuban-American relations.



Latina/o Utopias: Literary Theory Conference



Highly anticipated guest speakers include McArthur “Genius” Award winner Sandra Cisneros, author of "The House on Mango Street" and "Carmelo". Cisneros participates in a roundtable discussion with Nelly Rosario, Iris Gomez, Lyn Di Iorio Sandín, and Sonia Saldívar-Hull.

Scholarly highlights include a talk by John Riofrio on “Fractured Dreams: Life and Debt in 'United States of Banana’” based on the revolutionary text by Giannina Braschi who declares, “Banks are the temples of America. This is a holy war. Our economy is our religion.” Professor Riofrio argues that Braschi’s scathing attack of American capitalism connects the dots between 9/11, the suppression of individual liberties, and the fragmentation of individuals and communities in favor of a collective worship of the larger dictates of “the market” and “the economy.”



Braschi, National Endowment for the Arts Fellow

Chad Infante tackles racial politics in his discussion on Black and Indian concordance and dissonance in Junot Diaz’s "The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao", a Pulitzer prize winning novel that the BBC Culture Poll called the best 21st century novel so far.

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Giannina Braschi

The discussions range from illegal borders and imaginative boundaries to citizenship, strangers, and the politics of exile. Kristie Soares discusses “‘Zones of Possibility’: Queer Forms of Lezarian and Anzaldúan Consciousness” and Jennifer Harford Vargas takes on the subject of domestic dictatorships in Julia Alvarez’s “How the García Girls Lost Their Accents” and Loida Martiza Pérez’s “Geographies of Home”.

The over-riding theme of this conference is how Latino identities and subjects are constantly re-envisioned thru the lens of capitalism, neoliberalism, globalization, imperialism, militarism, xenophobia, and sexism. The event presents as the keynote speaker American Studies Professor Laura Lomas of Rutgers University.

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