The Center for Inclusive Education presents:

RESEARCH CAFÉ
SERIES

Rachel Ellis and Eileen S. Chanza Torres
Ph.D. students in the Department of English

“This is how to read / Spain, backwards, like memory, like Arabic /...the only tense / is the past...”: The New World’s Archive, Reading it Inside-Out

presented by Rachel Ellis

The physical encounter with the Archivo de Indias in Sevilla, Spain, this site of imperial history and only a stone’s throw away from the building where Columbus and various financiers first discussed and planned his voyages to The Indies, will be at the center of this talk. A quintessential example of how translation and art remember the violence of “exchange” between peoples, this structure is also part of a city, or perhaps many cities many ocean miles away. Two contemporary New World poets, one African American the other St. Lucian, Nathaniel Mackey and Derek Walcott have both written seductively sad stanzas on southern Spain in their turns to the great poet, García Lorca, to the staccato sounds of flamenco, the deep cry of historical and nomadic sadness in duende, to the loss of earth when it is one’s home.

This talk will connect with the language of Eileen Chanza’s analysis of the Archive, its focus on history through Nietzsche and Caribbean philosophy and poetics. There is, then, a harmonized relation between the voices in each talk.

Con su permiso, There’s a Horse in Your Archive; Or, Reading Black Bodies in the Captain’s Ledgers

presented by Eileen S. Chanza Torres

I had traveled to the Archivo de Indias in Sevilla with the purpose of beginning an arduous search for traces, scraps as Benjamin would suggest, of female African bodies. This talk is rooted upon questioning the advantages and disadvantages of the Archivo as a representation of Spain’s history of conquest, colonization and eventual genocide of both indigenous peoples and African slaves. What information does the Archivo provide a contemporary Caribbean and/or Latin American scholar? Is visiting the Archivo always an exaltation of Spain’s colonial past? Has the purpose of this archive shifted? Is the Archivo equipped to handle the demands of its former colonies for historical data? Does the history contained in the Archivo profess a danger to its previous colonies? Or is this history in danger from its former colonies and its ardent scholars?

February 25, 2008 at 3:00pm-3:30pm
Center for Inclusive Education—Melville Library E-1340
Hosted by: Dr. Gisselle Medina
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