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IN MEMORIAM  
ANTONY HIGGINS, 1964-2001

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*Menos solicitó veloz saeta  
destinada señal, que mordió aguda,  
agonal carro en la arena muda,  
no coronó con más silencio meta,  
que presurosa corre, que secreta  
a su fin nuestra edad. A quien lo duda  
fiera que sea de razón desnuda,  
cada sol repetido es un cometa.  
Confiésalo Cártago, ¿y tú lo ignoras?  
Peligro corres, Licio, si porfías  
en seguir sombras y abrazar engaños.  
Mal te perdonarán a ti las horas,  
las horas que limando están los días,  
los días que royendo están los años.*

Luis de Góngora y Argote

Those of us who read and teach Spanish poetry may have read Góngora's sonnet countless times, but in confronting the death of Antony Higgins, we are all Licios, caught unprepared for the swift, cruel bite of his loss. For his colleagues at Duke, his presence was too much like a comet—not Góngora's ominous omen, but a brief flare of light gone before we fully saw it, before we came to value its luminosity; perhaps before we really looked. *Fieras de razón desnudas*, we protest the injustice of life, that his should be cut off in his prime, just when he might have enjoyed well-deserved rewards for his good work, a home of his own, the pleasure of a non-commuting marriage.

To say that Tony's work was good is a flat understatement. He was a rising scholar of the first order, a dedicated teacher and a generous colleague. His first visit to Duke as a job candidate was a good introduction to his intellect and to his character as well. His lecture, on his reading of a *criollo* sublime in the *Rusticatio mexicana* of Rafael Landívar, showed him to have theoretical sophistication and cultural acumen equal to his erudite facility with the Latin of that text. When his concept of the sublime was challenged by tough questions following the lecture, Tony met them with critical dexterity and with the courage of his intellectual convictions.

He displayed his generosity as a colleague even before he arrived at Duke. I was serving as Acting Chair for a year in which too many faculty were on leave; given Tony's experience as a professor at the University of New Mexico from 1994-1999, I asked him if he would consider taking on the position of Associate Director of Undergraduate Studies his very first year. He agreed, and fulfilled the job so conscientiously that we were delighted to have him as Director of Undergraduate Studies the following year.

A month or two after he arrived, I also saw dramatic evidence of his dedication as a teacher. An undergraduate student came to ask me to sign an application for a Rotary Fellowship to work in one of the Andean countries. She had a hazy idea for a project and a looming deadline. I suggested that she ask Tony for some advice on strengthening her proposal before I signed it. She had never met him, but went off to make an appointment. Rather than quick advice, Tony must have given her a short course in Andean history, for she returned a few days later with a beautifully detailed and well-documented proposal that was all but guaranteed to win the fellowship she sought. Although Tony only taught at Duke two years, the courses he taught and his mentoring enriched the intellectual experience of students at every level. Students who took his graduate seminar on "Epistemology and Representation: Luis de Góngora and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz" were so impressed with his dedication to improving their knowledge and critical skills that they wrote a special letter to the chair, to be sure that his outstanding teaching would be recognized. They praised his positive, constructive manner of commenting on their work, including page-long critiques on their final essays, with detailed suggestions for improving arguments and additional bibliography they might use to expand their ideas. Beyond that, Tony always made himself available outside the classroom, both to discuss their work and to advise them on how best to negotiate larger issues involved in an academic career. He richly deserved the sabbatical leave he had just begun when the *veloz saeta* of cancer struck him down.

Tony was a transatlantic scholar in more than one sense, linking Europe and America in his education and his scholarship. A native of Glasgow, he always considered himself a Scot, despite having lived much of his youth in Liverpool, where his father, James Higgins, was and is a Professor at Latin American Literature. Tony did his B.A. in Modern Languages at Oxford (1987), then moved to Canada for his M.A. degree in Spanish at Queen's University, completing it in 1989 with a thesis on "El lenguaje proteico en las narrativas de José Donoso." He finished his PhD (1995) at the University of Pittsburgh, writing his dissertation on "Discourses of Criollo Knowledge and Identity in Juan

José Eguiara y Eguren's *Bibliotheca Mexicana* and Rafael Landívar's *Rusticatio Mexicana*," directed by John Beverley. He continued to develop that topic for his book, *Constructing the Criollo Archive: Subjects of Knowledge in the 'Bibliotheca Mexicana' and the 'Rusticatio Mexicana'*, published by Purdue UP (2000).

*Constructing the Criollo Archive* won quick recognition of its importance; the Southeastern Council of Latin American Studies named him winner of the A.B. Thomas Award for excellence in publication of a scholarly book. When we complimented Tony on the award, however, he replied graciously but with refreshing lack of vanity, "It's only a little prize." But the book and the intellectual project it represented are going on to make a major mark and to establish a new path for studying the emergence of *criollo* subjectivity in the eighteenth century, outside the prevailing dichotomies of the Baroque and anti-Baroque, colonial resistance and proto-nationalism. Instead, paying close attention to the specificities of eighteenth-century New Spain and Guatemala, Tony traces the emergence of a *criollo* ideology independent from Spanish imperial authority, as *criollos* like Eguiara y Eguren and Landívar used knowledge production as an arena for establishing an autonomy and an authority closed off to them by centralizing Bourbon reforms. At the 2002 convention of the Modern Language Association in New York, the Division on Colonial Latin American Literatures dedicated a session to his work: "Subjects of Knowledge in Colonial Spanish America: In Memory of Antony Higgins," and the Latin American Studies Association to be held in Dallas in March will devote another session to Tony's work and life.

Because Tony chose to conduct his struggle with his illness privately, with the support of his wonderful wife Winifred Griffin and other family members, his students and colleagues have often expressed regret that we did not find a way to tell him just how much we appreciated him and his role in our lives. But the scholarly work he set out is continuing; and if we in our own careers would avoid being "Licios" who chase shadows and embrace false values, we can follow his model of serious scholarship and dedicated teaching carried out with fairness, respect for all, and a saving sense of humor.

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