Like Water for Chocolate

A Recipe for Resistance

by Shannan H. Butler
J. Micheal Hogan Version

The Pennsylvania State University

Paper presented to the Gender Studies division
of the Southern States Communication Association,
New Orleans, LA, 2000.

Like Water for Chocolate
A Recipe for Resistance

> Don't cry. One day we'll manage to say ourselves. And what we say will be even lovelier than our tears. Wholly fluent.
> --*Luce Irigaray*

In the early years Mexico had been a strong, respected exporter of quality films and now after a long period of mediocrity there were hopes for a renaissance in the Mexican cinema. With the 1992 release of *Like Water for Chocolate*, *El Mariachi*, and *Tie Me Up, Tie Me Down*, Mexican cinema was once again gaining international acclaim. In this essay I will explore in detail the curious Mexican film, *Like Water for Chocolate (Como Agua Para Chocolate)*. *Like Water for Chocolate,* upon first viewing, is likely to create a certain feeling of uneasiness in the viewer. Yet, it is doubtful that the viewer in this initial experience will notice the complex of relationships I describe herein. The analysis I describe is one arrived at after repeated viewings, analysis, and research.

Like Water for Chocolate does not lend itself well to linear analysis. To subject the film to a traditional, western analysis, or even to a strict close reading, would likely provide little insight. *Like Water for Chocolate* is not a linear film, it is more configural--narrative in structure. A close analysis only brings one back to larger overarching structures. On close inspection it appears quite ephemeral, it seems to dissolve away. It is only by standing back and looking at the completed craftwork that one sees the patterns. It is overtly simple. The metaphors are stock. It is merely a love story with a magical penchant. But concealed at its heart is a revolution, a breaking of oppression, a liberation of the spirit. *Like Water for Chocolate* is a tenuous nexus of narrative structures, sensuality, and metaphor. These shifting, seemingly insubstantial components, when

combined, create a work of substantial subversive strength.

The film *Like Water for Chocolate* is based on the book *Como Agua Para Chocolate* by screenwriter Laura Esquivel. The original 1989 novel was a bestseller in Mexico for two years before being released in the U.S. in 1992. The English version was translated by Carol Christensen and Thomas Christensen. That same year the film version was released, with screenplay by Esquivel, and direction by her husband, Alfonso Arau. The film was distributed by Miramax, and is currently available from Touchstone Home Video. Despite being a foreign film, *Like Water for Chocolate* opened to very favorable reviews in the U.S.

In this section I will survey the critical reviews of the film. The first category of reviews are blurbs--and they are just that, extremely short notices about the film. These carry very little information and appear in almost every publication including *New Republic, Maclean's, New York, Playboy,* and *Variety*. Only the notice in *New Republic* gave *Like Water for Chocolate* a poor review. Overall, when there has been a poor review it was based primarily on supposedly poor direction by Arau.

The second category of reviews are journalistic, containing articles from: *Hispanic, Nation, People Weekly, Americas, The Village Voice, The New Statesman in Society, The Times Literary Supplement, Films in Review, Review of Contemporary Fiction, Sight and Sound, The Spectator*, and *Time*. Moreover, each of these articles mentions the writer, Laura Esquivel and her husband, director Alfonso Arau, and alludes to the original format of the book--with recipes and romance--and its translation into the visual medium of film. A brief plot synopsis is given, which prompts many to compare it to the genre of magic realism and its champion Gabriel Garcia Marquez. The reviews tend

to be positive overall, and much is made of the fact that it is the most popular foreign language film in U.S. history. *Nation* expresses an interest in a possible Mexican cinematic revival. *Hispanic* sees a film that can be enjoyed on many levels: "Its female characters are symbols of women struggling against a male-oriented, tradition-bound society. The mother and sisters represent different generations of women who accept and reject the roles society has decreed for them." Although *The Village Voice* likes the movie, it is concerned with the feminism it portrays. "*Like Water for Chocolate* seems to give women tremendous power, but in the end their options are limited to following their libidos, making them hostages to their hormones as much as they might once have been to their husbands. What kind of power is that?" And lastly in this category, is a review with a genuine distaste for the film. *The New Statesman in Society* boldly states, "Maybe Mexican food doesn't agree with me, or maybe it just doesn't agree with cinema. Certainly there's something cloying and over-spiced about the dishes Tita prepared--they're drenched in metaphoric sauce."

The third category of reviews contains primarily sources that are academic/journalistic hybrids. The first in this category is found on the Internet, from Central Queensland University in Australia. The article posits:

> The central image of the recipe used within the novel is crucial for understanding its central theme: the relation between appetite and satiation. Within the notion of the recipe lies the suggestion of a ritual performance combined with a certain freedom of expression; that is a freedom in performing the rituals of women who have gone before--reinscribing their gestures of survival, of food preparation, of love--as well

> as a freedom in making one's own slight modifications based on one's own experience of the recipe and its preparations. (North 1)

The focus here is on the interplay of ritual and recipe. Suzanne Ruta, in her essay "In Grandmother's Kitchen" for *The Women's Review of Books,* views *Like Water for Chocolate* as a subversive feminist plot set in a traditional setting. She also suggests a Jungian reading of the food "as a symbol operating between the inner and outer world, and between the inner and spiritual world."

Finally, the only article which counts as a truly academic endeavor is Maria de Valdes' essay "Verbal and Visual Representations of Women" which is published in *World Literature Today.* In this article de Valdes sees *Like Water for Chocolate* as a parody of the nineteenth-century Mexican genre of "women's fiction published in monthly installments together with recipes, home remedies, dressmaking patterns, short poems, moral exhortations, ideas on home decoration, and the calendar for church observations." She sees it as "creat[ing] a unique space for a segment of the population." Tita's act of cooking is seen as an act of transubstantiation for her love. De Valdes asserts that "men of any culture, but especially Mexican men and Latin American men, have the greatest deficiency in experiencing this film and therefore have the most to learn." And lastly, she states "The maturity of the feminist criticism has moved beyond the need to go headhunting among the misogynist hordes of patriarchy; the challenge today is to celebrate women's creativity in the full domain of the human adventure, from the so-called decorative arts to the fine arts and science." De Valdes is right in her assertion that *Like Water for Chocolate* opens up a space, a space for resistance

in a rather Foucaultian way, but this space is far more complexly structured than just as a
parody the genre of periodical fiction. It is my intent to analyze the tenuous way in which this space is created.

Generically, *Like Water for Chocolate* has two heritages--the turn of the century periodical romance (with recipes, romances, and home remedies), and magical realism. Both are particularly feminine genres. Yet, with Tita's strong characters these literatures become formidable feminist forces. Many of the events that occur in *Like Water for Chocolate* are indeed magical or fantastic but do not seem to throw the narrative off course. Amaryll Beatrice Chanady explains in *Magical Realism and the Fantastic*, "In contrast to the fantastic, the supernatural in magical realism does not disconcert the reader, and this is the fundamental difference between the two modes. The same phenomena that are portrayed as problematical by the author of a fantastic narrative are presented in a matter-of-fact manner by the magical realist" (24). She goes on to suggest that "this is what produces the ambiguous nature of magical realism. While the implied author is educated according to our conventional norms of reason and logic, and can therefore recognize the supernatural as contrary to the laws of nature, he tries to accept the world view of a culture in order to describe it" (25). Maria-Elana Angulo similarly asserts in *Magic Realism: Social Context and Discourse*, that "magicorealist fiction stems, on a thematic level, from the conflict between two pictures of the world, but the roots of magical realism must be searched in the linguistic medium which is the writer's way to express theme" (7). Angulo draws the cultural context tighter stating, "There is also an inquiry into the nature of reality and a continuous call

for the participation of the reader. The relationship between narrator, narratee and cultural context is essential. Complex Latin American realities are presented through the juxtaposition of real and marvelous semantic categories . . ." (34). This formal quality also comes to bear later on the structure of the narrative itself.

Karla J. Sanders in *Healing Narratives: Negotiating Cultural Subjectivities in Louise Erdrich's Magic Realism* suggests:

> The most salient characteristics of Magic Realism . . . include: the incorporation of myths, ancient beliefs, or stories from a dominated culture and the valorization of localized knowledge and power; a clash of culture breeding contradictory identities within characters; the promotion of an individual's community connection; the use of a matter-of-fact tone showing the familiarity of the magic; magical eruptions uncovering the hidden or repressed; the subversion of the dominant belief system through magical occurrences; and the acceptance of the metaphysical (13).

Carolyn Turgeon carries this important thought further in her dissertation *Magic Realism's Heterogeneous Real: Representing the Margins*, by asserting that:

> Magic realism, then, makes available a discourse that relies on the incorporation of difference by extending the limit of the real--of the languages/discourses we call "real"--to make available this difference. . . . At base ideological, literary texts either subvert, reinforce, or both subvert and reinforce dominant and excluding ideologies. I argue that magic realism is in its basic formulations subversive. In order to respond to magic realist texts the reader must have mobile responses, be able to slip

> between various positionings into the multiplicity this mode seeks to express. The reader must continually adopt the viewpoint of the other, and also ride the borders marked out and overcome in magic realist texts. In this way, magic realism has the power to place the reader in the margins of the Real, where the silenced other begins to speak (81).

By incorporating the mundaneness of the periodical romance and the fantastic character of magical realism, Esquivel creates a new space for the exploration of the assumed "natural" binaries.

A brief synopsis of *Like Water for Chocolate* suggests that it is the story of Tita, third daughter of Mama Elena, and therefore consigned by tradition never to marry. Tita must care for her mother until her death. Tita and Pedro fall in love, and he asks for her hand in marriage, but it is forbidden by Mama Elena. Instead he marries Tita's sister, Rosaura, so that he can be close to Tita. Tita is schooled in the arts of cooking by Nacha, the elderly house cook. Throughout the film, Tita's emotions are communicated through her cooking skills mingled with a dash of magic--for example her tears cause Rosaura's wedding cake to makes her guests ill, as they long for their lost loves. Nacha dies while longing for her true love. When Rosaura and Pedro's son, whom Tita has nurtured, dies, she loses touch with reality and refuses to speak. Mama Elena sends her to live with Dr. John Brown who falls in love with her. Although Tita respects John, her love remains with Pedro. She eventually returns home after her mother's death, and nurtures Rosaura's second child, Esperanza (Hope). Eventually, Pedro and Tita consummate their love physically, and after Rosaura has died they unite in fiery bliss. The story is related through the narration of Tita's great niece (Esperanza's daughter),

heir of Tita's cookbook.

Like Water for Chocolate exists between borders--borders between nations (U.S./Mexico or domestic/foreign), between genders (man/woman), between races (Hispanics/Caucasians), between modes of expression (fantastic/mundane), between centuries (the turn of the 20th/the turn of the 21st), between metaphors (food/sex or hunger/feast), between traditions (oral/written), between social structures (Matriarchy/Patriarchy), and between family tradition and personal freedom. *Like Water for Chocolate* is a negotiation of these binaries through the eyes of Tita, and her great niece.

Although the title of the film is a simile for being at the point of losing control, *Like Water for Chocolate* is primarily a study in metaphor. Sonja Foss suggests that any worthy study of metaphor will look at the two aspects of metaphor, tenor and vehicle. These terms were proposed by I. A. Richard and used in the study of rhetoric by Edwin Black (190). Tenor refers to idea being expressed and the vehicle is the image by which this idea is conveyed (Holman, 298). A very interesting quality of *Like Water for Chocolate* is that almost every tone expressed throughout the film is sexual in nature. The sexual images created range from longing to intercourse. Unlike the tenor of the film, the vehicle varies from bedspreads to breasts, from food to fire. Magical realism allows for an interesting shift at points in the film, and that is that the distinction between tenor and vehicle becomes indistinguishable. At these points, the tenor and vehicle literally transubstantiate for each other. In the scene I will analyze later, Quail in Rose Petal Sauce, food becomes sex, and sex is nourishment.

After Pedro agrees to marry her, Rosaura sets out to make elaborate, traditional

sheets for the wedding night. The novel describes what we see visually as Chencha and Gertrudis, "embroidering a delicate pattern in the center of it. This opening was designed to reveal only the bride's essential parts while allowing marital intimacy. How lucky they had been to obtain French silk at that time of political instability" (Esquivel, 32). Upon that wedding night, the sheets would, however, remain unused and Rosaura a virgin. That same night, we see Tita begin working on her crocheted bedspread. She is cold and alone and hopes the bedspread will give her warmth, which it will not. After several months Pedro eventually gave in and consummated the marriage with Rosaura, but they always used the nuptial sheet.

Tita continues to work on the patchwork bedspread throughout the film, using whatever yarn is available. In one of the most memorable scenes, she leaves the ranch with Dr. John Brown, and her bedspread train flows behind the carriage-- never-ending. At the end of the film, after Pedro has succumbed to a rapturous death in ecstasy with Tita, she covers their nude bodies with the bedspread, and it becomes engulfed in flames. Here, the wedding sheets and bedspread metaphorically represent longing. The unconsummated sheets are striking when we cut to Tita crocheting the bedspread. The needle and yarn rhythmically combine to form the union expected of the marriage couple. Rosaura's sheets may be traditional and exquisite, but it is Tita's bedspread that is made of true devotion and love. The patchwork bedspread made of various yarns may also represent the narrative of the film itself as a long yarn.

Acting as intermediary between the metaphors and the narrative, is the world of the senses, which are interestingly gendered within the film. Sound is the most powerful of the senses in *Like Water for Chocolate*. Speaking is gendered as masculine

and hearing as feminine. Sight comes in a close second with seeing or gazing as masculine and presentation as feminine. Touching is seen as masculine and to be touched feminine. Smell and taste are somewhat more difficult to explore. They are only used in the film by women but may be equally experienced by either gender. Sight and touch exist within the same plane, they are spatial. The masculine is seen as exploring the space and the feminine is seen as the space itself. M. Merleau-Ponty in his phenomenological work privileges the visual while Luce Irigaray suggests rather it is touch that is primary. In either case they are both part of the same spatial system (Grosz, 99). What is interesting about the work of Merleau-Ponty and Irigaray is that they primarily focus on sight, touch, and hearing. There is very little written in either about smell and taste is avoided altogether. In works that attempt to pursue the experience of the body these two senses, the senses that Tita utilizes, are virtually ignored. If society privileges sight, hearing, and touch in that order then as Tita is the oppressed "other," it seems appropriate that her voice resides within the discourse of the "other," taste and smell. Although the film primarily follows gendered lines, it is not necessary to use the terminology of masculine and feminine, but rather powerful and powerless, or oppressor and oppressed would work just as well. Another suppression of these senses is the inability of the audience to directly participate in them--one cannot taste or smell a film. We must rely on memory or imagination to construct these sensations. We are visually cued into them by the sumptuous display of the food and the expressions of those that taste it.

Exploring the senses, throughout the film, Mama Elena and Rosaura are seen as unable to breast feed their children. It is metaphorically assumed because as mothers

they hold their children to damaging traditions and are therefore not healthy or nurturing mothers. When Tita is born she is nurtured by Nacha who feeds her tea and introduces her to the smells of the kitchen. When Rosaura and Pedro's son is born and Rosaura cannot nourish him, the duty falls upon Tita. One day as Tita is bent over milling corn into meal, Pedro catches a glimpse of her breasts and holds his gaze upon them. Mysteriously, the virgin Tita is able to then breast feed Pedro's son. Here the masculine act of the gaze, through the genre of magic realism, changes Tita's body and allows her to produce milk. Tita and Nacha are seen as nurturing, particularly through the giving of nourishment.

Another instance of the power of the masculine act of looking is when Chencha and Gertrudis are walking through town, and they see some of Pancho Villa's men. Chencha admonishes Gertrudis not to meet their virile gaze as even eye contact can make a woman pregnant. Also, it is the women's bodies that are presented, particularly nude, as Tita, Chencha, Gertrudis, and Mama Elena are presented nude, or at least partially nude. Again, speech is a contested sight belonging to those in power. One of the profound insights into resistance is when Tita finally finds her voice.

The pivotal scene (and recipe) in the film illustrates Tita's first conscious use of her culinary power. Herein she boldly denies both her mother and her family's tradition, rather, she follows the inspiration of Nacha, her spiritual mother. When Pedro brings flowers to express his love for Tita, he claims they are a present for Tita's first anniversary as the ranch cook. This offering is played out right in front of his pregnant wife, Mama Elena, and Gertrudis. Tita, delighted, accepts the flowers but after Pedro has left, she is told by Mama Elena to throw them away. Tita steps outside,

alone, and clutches the pink roses to her chest. Here she has the vision of Nacha who inspires her not to throw away the gift, but rather to use it in making Quail and Rose Petal Sauce. The masculine sense of touch is expressed as Tita removes the flowers from her breasts--she is pricked by the rose's thorns. In the next shot, Tita's blood has mingled with the pink roses and turned them deep red. Tita is shown lovingly preparing the Quail with Rose Petal Sauce. The meal is sensually presented, and as Pedro takes in the first bite he is enraptured. The narration confirms that Tita's very essence has permeated the dinner. She has entered Pedro's body "hot, voluptuous, perfumed, totally sensual." Rosaura leaves feeling nauseous. Mama Elena understands what is going on, and proclaims the meal too salty (perhaps referring to the blood), but she can't deny herself the pleasure of the meal. Tita and Pedro had found a new way to communicate--Tita was the transmitter, and Pedro the receiver. Gertrudis fittingly plays out the synthesis of forbidden love, as it is revealed later that Mama Elena had once had an affair with a Mulatto, her life's true love, of which Gertrudis was the offspring. Gertrudis runs out to the bath house to quench the fire burning within her, as she does she emits the strong fragrance of rose petals. The water evaporates upon contact with her nude body, and the bath house begins to blaze. Far off, one of Pancho Villa's men is drawn from his war to the heavenly fragrance by 'higher orders.' Gertrudis runs naked through the brush and joins the soldier on horseback, where the novel explains, "The movement of the horse combined with the movement of their bodies as they made love for the first time, at a gallop and with a great deal of difficulty." Through the metaphors of food and sex, through the channels of touch, taste, and smell, through the conventions of magic realism, Tita has successfully

resisted her mother's tyrannical demand that she remain celibate and serve only her. Not only does this liberate Tita and Pedro but it also compels Gertrudis to leave the household of her overbearing mother.

The metaphors of food and sex are strongly played out in this scene. The first metaphor is that of the rose, long seen as evocative of the vulva. In close relation to the flower is the metaphor of color. After being pricked by Pedro's thorns, Tita bleeds. The blood causes the once unblemished pink roses to turn a sensuous red. In a scene of literal "deflowering," Tita gently peels the petals off of the rose, placing them into a mortar and pestle--an image ripe with sexual overtones. Another possible metaphor at work in this scene for the preparation of the Quail and Rose Petal Sauce is the quail as representative of Tita's plight. These, naturally wild birds, have been captured and caged for consumption. The caged quail look on as Tita kills and plucks the other quail. Once prepared, the naked birds are placed on a baking sheet with their breasts and legs prominently displayed. Their legs are then bound by twine, and they are placed in the oven. It may be a stretch, but I see the quail as illustrative of Tita herself (later in the film Tita is found in the dovecote, naked and covered with feathers). If one takes this leap, then the imprisonment of the wild birds and the binding of the legs have symbolic meaning. Mama Elena has ostensibly done the same to Tita--keeping her captive and celibate. It is no surprise when it is Pedro's knife that cuts the twine and he is allowed to taste the deliciousness of the quail. Here, quite strongly presented, is a sex scene between Pedro and Tita. Tita gives her virginity to her love right in front of her mother. And although Pedro's thorns are seen as penetrating Tita as one might expect from a heterosexual love scene, the scene that is played out for all to see, turns the process

around. Here, Tita is seen as penetrating Pedro's body. This unexpected image is rather empowering for the feminine. Unlike Pedro using the masculine touch to invade Tita, Tita uses senses seen as being less powerful--taste and smell--these, more fluid, more feminine senses allow for Tita's open resistance.

It might seem that the analysis above would work just as well with a strictly metaphoric analysis, but that is far from the case. Without the necessary conventions of the magical realist genre there would be no empowerment in this scene. Without the magical transubstantiation we are left with a Merchant Ivory presentation of unrequited longing, or on a darker tangent, perhaps *The Cook, the Thief, His wife, and Her Lover*. Tita's resistant voice and power exist in the ancient art of cooking which has been passed down for generations. For Tita, at least, this art is a powerful and subversive one. Had the Quail and Rose Petal Sauce scene been merely a study in metaphor, it would be seen as sad and defeated, rather than empowering. Through magical realism, Tita and Pedro are truly joined in union. If the film had explored the fantastic genre then the magical acts of transubstantiation and Gertrudis's fever and captivating aroma would distract from the narrative or become comedic. Within magical realism, the metaphors become part of the reality of the scene, not merely allusion.

The scene also does not hold together well without the emphasis on the senses. The magic is communicated through the senses. By gendering the senses the scene plays out far more powerfully. In the scene Tita uses the senses of taste and smell, Mama Elena uses sound, Pedro uses touch and sound, and Gertrudis uses her body--as sight--to communicate. Evaluating the senses in order of perceived power, sound must be analyzed primary for it is the source of Mama Elena's power. During the scene she

orders Tita to discard the flowers, Tita chooses rather to incorporate them into taste, a sense not highly valued for its power. Mama Elena also pronounces judgment upon Tita's meal proclaiming it too salty. Pedro uses sound in a powerful way by rapturously declaring Tita's meal, "The Nectar of the Gods!" It is Tita's discourse through the taste and fragrance of the meal that truly wields power. This shift mirrors the shift sought by magical realism--that the viewer must take on the view of the other. Taste as undervalued other is exalted to the prime position, even stopping Mama Elena from further censure. Sight is often seen as dominated by the masculine--through the gaze, but the feminine often utilizes visual self-presentation to control the masculine gaze. Gertrudis conveys to the audience her sensual experience by moving her hand to her chest and pulling open her blouse. She is also seen nude, yet it is not her irresistible nude form that draws her admirer from afar, but rather the aroma provided her by Tita. Here, Tita's power resides in devalued senses, but it is the power she marshals in them that will allow her to gain her voice in the end. If *Like Water for Chocolate* is to pay off as a subversive text, the three components I have listed--metaphor, magic realism, and sensuality--must be incorporated together.

Tita represents a strong female lead character who uses her mind and heart to negotiate her family's traditions to pursue her love, Pedro. She exists within a highly structured world, where her role is predetermined, and although she does not try to overthrow this oppressive system, she does use it to her benefit. True, she is never allowed to marry Pedro, but she does unite with him through the experience of the meal, and physically in the end as they both leave the system consumed in flames of passion. Some feminists, particularly those of the earlier wave of feminist theory, may

not view Tita as a "role model," as she respects her family traditions, and in the end sacrifices herself for her love, but others see her use of the family structures as precisely what is needed for advancement in feminism. She is a female character who doesn't forsake her femaleness in favor of masculinity to win the situation, rather she uses the skills and power already within her grasp and remains feminine. Although in the end she dies an ecstatic and fiery death, she does inspire strength in future generations of women by recording her story in her cook book. *Like Water for Chocolate* stirs up feminism by keeping romanticism and sensuality as part of the feminist ingredients for resistance and self-empowerment.

Bibliography:

Angulo, Maria-Elena. *Magic Realism, Social Context and Discourse*. New York: Garland Pub., 1995.

Brown, Georgia. "The Mamas and the Papas." Rev. of *Like Water for Chocolate*, dir. Alfonso Arau. *Village Voice* 23 Feb. 1993: 51.

Buck, Joan Juliet. "Foreign Correspondents." Rev. of *Like Water for Chocolate*, dir. Alfonso Arau. *Vogue* April 1993: 209-212.

Chanady, Amaryll Beatrice. *Magical Realism and the Fantastic, Resolved Versus Unresolved Antimony*. New York: Garland, 1985.

Corliss, Richard. "Kitchen Magician." Rev. of *Like Water for Chocolate*, dir. Alfonso Arau. *Time* 5 April 1993: 61-62.

Dean, Peter. Rev. of *Like Water for Chocolate*, dir. Alfonso Arau. *Sight & Sound* 4.4 (1994): 62.

Denby, David. Rev. of *Like Water for Chocolate*, dir. Alfonso Arau. *New York* 5 April 1993: 61.

Esquivel, Laura. *Like Water for Chocolate, A Novel in Monthly Installments with Recipes, Romances, and Home Remedies*. Trans. Carol Christensen and Thomas Christensen. New York: Doubleday, 1992.

Foss, Sonja K. *Rhetorical Criticislm: Exploration and Practice*. Prospect Heights, Ilinois: Waveland Press, 1989.

Geist, Kenneth L. Rev. of *Like Water for Chocolate*, dir. Alfonso Arau. *Films in Review* May 1993:191-92.

Grosz, Elizabeth. *Volatile Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism.* Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1994.

Holman, C. Hugh. *A Handbook to Literature.* New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1986.

Januzzi, Marisa. Rev. of *Like Water for Chocolate*, dir. Alfonso Arau. *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 13.2 (1993): 245-246.

Kaufman, Joanne. "Picks and Pans." Rev. of *Like Water for Chocolate*, dir. Alfonso Arau. *People Weekly* 16 Nov. 1992: p. 40-41.

Kauffmann, Stanley. "Midwinter Roundup " Rev. of *Like Water for Chocolate*, dir. Alfonso Arau. *New Republic* 1 Mar. 1993: 24-26.

Kraniauskas, John. Rev. of *Como Agua Para Chocolate (Like Water for Chocolate)*, dir. Alfonso Arau. *Sight & Sound* Oct. 1993: 42-43.

Lenti, Paul. Rev. of *Como Agua Para Chocolate (Like Water for Chocolate)*, dir. Alfonso Arau. *Variety* 27 Apr. 1992: 82.

McGill, Nancy. "Word of Mouth." Rev. of *Like Water for Chocolate*, by Laura Esquivel. *Library Journal* 15 Feb. 1993: 224.

Muchnick, Laurie. Rev. of *Like Water for Chocolate*, by Laura Esquivel. *Village Voice* 10 Nov. 1992: S7-S8.

North American Fiction and Film. Queensland College, Australia. Online. http://www.cqu.edu.au/arts/humanities/litstud/naff/naffch12esquival.html

Radway, Janice. *Reading the Romance*. University of North Carolina Press, 1984.

Rahlmann, Reed. Rev. of *Like Water for Chocolate*, dir. Alfonso Arau. *Playboy* Dec. 1996: 29.

Romney, Jonathan. Rev. of *Like Water for Chocolate*, dir. Alfonso Arau. *New Statesman & Society* 1 Oct. 1993: 33-34.

Ruta, Suzanne. "In Grandmother's Kitchen." Rev. of *Like Water for Chocolate*, dir. Alfonso Arau. *Women's Review of Books* Feb. 1993: 7.

Sanders, Karla. *Healing Narratives, Negotiating Cultural Subjectivities in Louise Erdrich's Magic Realism*. Diss. Pennsylvania State University, 1996.

Stavans, Ilan. "Tita's Feast." Rev. of *Like Water for Chocolate*, dir. Alfonso Arau. *Nation* 14 Jun. 1993: 846-848.

Steyn, Mark. "All woman: Like Water for Chocolate directed by Alfonso Arau." Rev. of *Like Water for Chocolate*, dir. Alfonso Arau. *Spectator* 2 Oct. 1993: 37-38.

Tanitch, Robert. "Food and Sex." Rev. of *Like Water for Chocolate*, dir. Alfonso Arau. *Times Literary Supplement* 15 Oct. 1993: 17

Trull, Armando. Rev. of *Like Water for Chocolate*, dir. Alfonso Arau. *Hispanic* May 1993: 80.

Turgeon, Carolyn. *Magic Realism's Heterogeneous Real, Representing the Margins*. Diss. Pennsylvania State University, 1994.

de Valdes, Maria Elena. "Verbal and Visual Representations of Women: Como Augua Para Chocolate." *World Literature Today* 69.1 (1995): 78-82.

Wendt, Ronald F. "Answers to the Gaze: A Genealogical Poaching of Resistance." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* August 1996: 251-273.

White, Hayden. "The Value of Narration in the Representation of Reality." *On Narration*. ed. W.J.T. Mitchell. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.

Zamora, Lois Parkinson and Wendy B. Faris, eds. *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1995.