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Part I: Analyzing the Dramatic Text

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PART I

ANALYZING THE DRAMATIC TEXT

—THE READER—

There is no Frigate like a
Book To take us Lands
away.
—EMILY DICKINSON (1830–1886)
(*The Poems of Emily Dickinson* 1999)

*****

Ni tengo qué acotar en el margen, ni qué anotar en el fin . . .
porque naturalmente soy poltrón y perezoso
de andarme buscando autores
que digan lo que yo me sé decir sin ellos.
—MIGUEL DE CERVANTES (1547–1616)
(*Don Quijote I*, 1605, Prólogo)

Calderón's *El médico de su honra*: A Cubist Reading

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ABSTRACT
Calderón de la Barca's *El médico de su honra* is a fractured play that, in Stanley Fish's famous locution, has always remained "recalcitrant to interpretation." While Gutierre may be the tortured protagonist of a wife-murder play that pits his love for his wife against the demands of his honor, *El médico* is not Gutierre's play. *El médico* is the king's play. This monarch, however, is himself a fractured character, a dramatic and an historical figure known both as "Peter the Cruel" and as "Peter the Just." But the king we see strutting through the palace, a king who tilts with street ruffians, imprisons miscreants, and brings the Andalusian nobility to heel, is a far cry from the king we see in *the world of the play*, an impotent king who is aware that he is projecting power he may not have. Given that *the play as text* and the *world of the play* offer two different perspectives of monarchy that can neither be reconciled nor rationalized into a coherent whole, perhaps it is time to subject *El médico* to a Cubist reading, one that will bring these two distinct and often contradictory frames of reference to the foreground and allow them to exist independently of each other on the same interpretive plane. Perhaps it is time to think of *El médico* neither as poetry nor as drama but as what the Cubist critic Guillaume Apollinaire has called an "art of conception" that appeals not to the eye but to the intellect, an "art of conception" that renders an understanding of royal authority as fractured as the play itself.

KEYWORDS
Calderón de la Barca, *El médico de su honra*, Cubism, New Historicism, world of the play, play as text

RESUMEN
El médico de su honra de Calderón de la Barca es una obra fracturada que, en la famosa locución de Stanley Fish, siempre ha permanecido "recalcitrant to interpretation." Mientras que Gutierre puede ser el protagonista torturado de un drama de honor que enfrenta su amor por su esposa contra las demandas de su honor, *El médico* no es la obra de Gutierre. *El médico* es la obra del rey. Este

monarca, sin embargo, es en si un personaje fracturado, una figura dramática e histórica conocida como "Pedro el Cruel" y como "Pedro el Justiciero." Pero el rey que vemos paseándose por el palacio, un rey que entabla combate con los rufianes de la calle, encarcela a los malhechores y logra controlar a la nobleza andaluza, está muy lejos del rey que vemos en *el mundo de la obra dramática*, un rey impotente que es consciente de estar proyectando el poder que puede que no tenga. Dado que *la obra dramática como texto* y *el mundo de la obra dramática* ofrecen dos perspectivas diferentes de la monarquía que no pueden reconciliarse ni racionalizarse en un todo coherente, quizá sea hora de someter a *El médico* a una lectura cubista, una que llevará estos dos marcos de referencia distintos y a menudo contradictorios al primer plano y les permitirá existir independientemente uno del otro en el mismo plano interpretativo. Tal vez sea hora de pensar en *El médico* ni como poesía ni como drama sino como lo que el crítico cubista Guillaume Apollinaire ha llamado un "art of conception" que apela no al ojo sino al intelecto, an "art of conception" que hace que una comprensión de la autoridad real sea tan fracturada como la propia obra.

PALABRAS CLAVES
Calderón de la Barca, *El médico de su honra*, el cubismo, el nuevo historicismo, el mundo de la obra dramática, la obra dramática como texto

Calderón de la Barca's *El médico de su honra* is a play that has always overflowed its bounds, primarily and paradoxically because it has proven to be fundamentally incomplete. Succeeding generations of scholars armed with the newest methodological approaches, including the nineteenth-century moralists, the twentieth-century New Critics, and the turn of the century New Historicists, have all looked beyond the world of the play to resolve the inconsistencies and incongruities they have found within the *comedia* only to find other frictions, fissures, or fractures.

For all the critical attention the play has garnered, Calderón's great wife-murder play remains stubbornly recalcitrant to interpretation, if "recalcitrant to interpretation" (Fish 1980, 325) refers to the ways in which the *comedia* resists critical attempts to resolve dramatic tension into a seamless whole. Instead of trying to elide incongruities, however, it may be time to bring them to the surface in what I will call a Cubist reading, one that tries not to efface the fractures in the play but allows them to interact with each other on the same interpretive plane. Perhaps it is time to understand fracture as a constitutive feature of a play in which performance, text, and spectator have distinct points of view that cannot be reconciled because they exist as distinct planes of a fractured whole.

Critical History

The New Critics of the British School of Hispanic criticism sought to reclaim the integrity of Calderón's honor dramas from nineteenth-century scholars, whose moral approach to the study of the *comedia* exposed the tension that exists between the "moral cristiana" that takes seriously the biblical demand that "Thou shalt not kill" and the "moral social" (Menéndez y Pelayo 1884, 279) of an honor code that demands that a husband avenge his lost honor with a blood sacrifice. Bruce W. Wardropper (1958), for example, finds the resolution to the seemingly irreducible gap between the "moral cristiana" and the "moral social" in the person of the king, who serves if not as God's representative then certainly God's echo on Earth: "Inasmuch as the King supervises affairs of honor in his realm," says Wardropper, we see "reminders of divine surveillance over the action through the King's mediation" (9). Wardropper's attempt to encode the moral universe within the dramatic poetry—that is, his attempt to bridge the ontological gap between the "moral cristiana" and the "moral social" of the honor code, thereby reducing the reach of the *comedia* to the world of the play itself—introduces a political question: If the king has the responsibility of mediating between the human and the divine, who is this king and is he worthy of the role?

A monarch who carries out his ontological responsibility to mediate between heaven and earth should at the very least be a moral prince. Such was the foundational principle of a theocratic understanding of kingship that demanded that a monarch rule in accordance with divine and natural law. While in theory the ideal Christian prince need not be a virtuous man in order to be an effective ruler, a distinction that served as the foundation of Machiavelli's modern, more pragmatically ruthless approach to political philosophy, Margaret Greer (1991) has argued that in practice "the moral conduct of the monarch was not viewed as a trivial question but as a matter of importance to the state" (90).[1] The question of whether King Pedro of *El médico* is a just prince capable of functioning as the mediator between heaven and earth is complicated by an historical record that exists outside what the New Critics thought of as the closed world of the text: the legacy inherited from King Pedro's historical forebear, the 14th-century King Peter I of Castile, known alternately as Peter the Cruel or Peter the Just.[2] Scholars have had to contend with the conflicting nature of a king equally capable of great cruelty and great generosity. If a critic like A. I. Watson (1963) construes Pedro

[1] Dian Fox agrees, arguing that "Spanish political commentators of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries vociferously demanded of their *príncipe politico-cristiano* an absolute morality" (Fox, 1982, 28). See Hamilton (1963) for a more detailed discussion of this theocratic understanding of monarchy.

[2] For the sake of clarity, I will refer to the characters within the play in the original Spanish and their historical analogues in English.

as a just but sober monarch whose "stern manner belies his true character" (345), those who see Pedro as an essentially cruel king have had the more difficult task of reconciling the sovereign's ontological function as God's representative on Earth with a monarch who is not worthy of the role. The solution to this conundrum is to argue that the spectator must view the events of the play through the lens of the king's cruelty; while the world of the play may present a unitary vision, the spectator must read against the text in order to understand the play's significance. Alexander A. Parker (1959) for example, argues that Pedro's cruelty in threatening to pull out all of the *gracioso* Coquín's teeth if the jester fails to make Pedro laugh in the course of a month is the lens through which the audience or the reader should interpret the play. To the charge that Calderón condoned wife-murder because King Pedro does, Parker argues to the contrary, saying, "[S]ince Calderón has presented the king as inhuman and cruel, he wishes us thereby to see that the justice which honor claims to extract is an inhuman and cruel one" (42). For Parker, the world of the play is consistent: a cruel king upholds a cruel honor code that demands the death of an innocent wife. Meaning, however, no longer resides in the world of the play but in the spectator's ability to interpret that world view properly.

More recent approaches to the play have only extended this tendency to see beyond the text to resolve the ambiguities and inconsistencies critics have identified in the *comedia*. Dian Fox (1982) for example, finds a proper model for royal authority not in the play itself but in the historical record. Pedro is a flawed human being who presides over a flawed government. For Fox "There is no such thing as equal justice in Pedro's domain" (30). It is his half-brother Enrique who will eventually establish justice in the realm thanks to the advice offered him by his *privado* Arias, who, Fox argues, functions as a "synecdoche for the citizenry" (36). The ontological function of the king no longer obtains. Enrique will succeed where Pedro fails not because he is God's representative on Earth but because history suggests that he "will learn to listen to the voice of the people" (Fox 1982, 32). But the historical moment to which the *El médico* refers is also an historical record. The regicide of King Peter at the hands of his illegitimate half-brother Henry comes down to us as a set of conflicting narratives used to support different factions in the civil war between the brothers. It is not surprising, then, that in a later version of the same essay, Fox (1996) comes to espouse the New Historicist view that history is never objectively true; because history is itself a text subject to interpretation, we must take into account "the reader's position in the critical / political act of interpretation" (Blue 1999, 415). The irreducible gap between the divine and the human—between *"*la moral cristiana*"* and "la moral social"—that Menéndez y Pelayo describes in the nineteenth century finds its secular counterpart in the equally irreducible gap between history as event—what Fredric Jameson (1981) calls history as an "absent cause" (35)—and history as text,

which introduces history into a cultural sphere, revealing it to be a cultural product imbued with its own conventions and embedded within a system comprised of other cultural practices with which it must contend.

Stephen Greenblatt (2005b), however, claims that the New Historicist project is not just about the textualization of the past; it is also about the recovery of the real:

> We wanted to recover in our literary criticism a confident conviction of reality, without giving up the power of literature to sidestep or evade the quotidian and without giving up a minimally sophisticated understanding that any text depends upon the absence of the bodies and voices that it represents. We wanted the touch of the real in the way that in an earlier period people wanted the touch of the transcendent. (37)

On the one hand, Greenblatt acknowledges the absence at the heart of any textual representation of the real; the text always remains at some ontological remove from the bodies and voices it seeks to reclaim. On the other hand, he still thinks it possible to achieve a "touch of the real" if not the real itself through a rigorous cultural analysis that acknowledges that "texts are not merely cultural by virtue of reference to the world beyond themselves; they are cultural by virtue of social values and contexts that they have themselves successfully absorbed" (Greenblatt, 2005a, 12). History, then, does not serve merely as a backdrop for the literary work, nor does the literary work ever achieve independence from the cultural world that produces it because "[t]he written word is self-consciously embedded in specific communities, life situations, structures of power" (Greenblatt 1980, 7). Although Greenblatt focuses most of his critical attention on sixteenth-century England, his synthetic approach is less like that of the Renaissance masters of linear perspective, whose figures related to each other in size, color and clarity within the illusion of a three-dimensional space designed to be viewed from a single vantage point, and more like the early twentieth-century Cubists, whose renderings "assume a 'distorted,' non-perspectival form as a result of multiple perceptions from discrete points of view, accumulated and then expressed in a single composite shape" (Fry 1966, 37).[3] Cubism sought to reveal what linear perspective could conceal. Whereas the space created by linear perspective teemed with blind spots, the "stubborn invisibility" Michel Foucault (1973) finds on the reverse side of the canvas that dominates the left side of Velázquez's *Las Meninas* (5), the fractured planes of Cubist compositions "established the artist's right to look at things from several view-points simultaneously" (Cooper 1971,

[3] The scholarship on Cubism is vast, and there are those who take issue with the "multiple viewpoint theory" of Cubism. See, for example, John Adkins Richardson (1995), who argues that this understanding of Cubist practices "is itself an invention of critics rather than artists" (133a).

264). In Greenblatt's reading, history and literature no longer enter into a functional relationship designed to project the illusion of depth. There is no foreground. There is no background. There is no privileged point of view. Because history and literature exist simultaneously as products of a single cultural context, they relate to each other not like the figures in Da Vinci's *Last Supper* or Velázquez's *Las Meninas*, but like the shapes and spaces in Pablo Picasso's *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* or Georges Braques' *Pitcher and Violin*—shapes and spaces that "lack spatial integrity and merge with those around them" (Cooper 1995, 8). Like the Cubists, who called attention to the two-dimensional nature of their paintings by juxtaposing multiple perspectives on a single plane, not as an act of mimesis but what Guillaume Apollinaire (1970) has called "an art of conception" (17), Greenblatt's New Historicism renders a "touch of the real" that is similarly conceptual and not mimetic through the simultaneous presentation of the multiple facets of history and literature that lays bare the system of relations that gives rise to both.

If the "touch of the real" that Greenblatt proposes requires the critic to perform an act of conception in order to gain indirect access to a shared culture that gives rise to a structure of power, then instead of concerning ourselves with the morality of *El médico de su honra*—that is, instead of concerning ourselves with the character of King Pedro either as a dramatic persona or an historical figure—we should turn our attention to the power dynamics operant both inside and outside the play. Rather than asking ourselves whether the king is cruel or just, we should ask ourselves to what extent the king is powerful. To read the play in the light of history or to read history in the light of the play—that is, to foreground one at the expense of the other—risks incorporating the kind of "stubborn invisibility" (Foucault 1973, 5) characteristic of linear perspective into our understanding of both play and history. *El médico* demands a fragmented reading—a Cubist reading—that allows for the simultaneous presentation of multiple understandings of kingship that melt into each other on the same interpretive plane

A Cubist approach is particularly appropriate to the study of theatre, an embodied artform in which the relationship between the literary text and the dramatic performance has always been fraught. The tension between the literary critic for whom the play is the text and the theatre artist for whom the play is the performance speaks to the radical gap between the two (Orgel 1988, 219).[4] "A play is not a flat work of literature, not a description in poetry of another world," explains renowned dramaturg and dramatic critic Elinor Fuchs (2004), "but is in itself another world passing before you in time and space" (6). The "other world" Fuchs describes is what theatre artists call the world of the play, a world with its

[4] For a discussion of the tension between the text and performance of the comedia see Stroud (1989), Benabu (1993), García Lorenzo (1986), and Mascarell (2021).

own independent existence that the director James Thomas (1992) defines as "the closed system, the distinctive universe created by the collective given circumstances" (72). Language plays a part in this world, but only a part, for although the playwright creates the world of the play through dialogue, Fuchs argues that "[t]hose who think too exclusively in terms of language find it hard to read plays," adding, "When you 'see' this other world, when you experience its space-time dynamics, its architectonics, then you can figure out the role of language in it" (6).

The problem with *El médico de su honra*, however, is that the world of the play and the language that informs the dialogue within that world are often at odds with each other. The powerful King who struts about the stage brawling with ruffians, threatening servants, and imprisoning nobles is not at all the vanquished monarch who will lose his life in the absent fourth act on an historical stage the street musicians call the "teatros de mil tragedias / las montañas de Montiel" (3.2636–37).[5] A Cubist reading of the play, however, does not seek to reconcile or rationalize these two kings; they exist as two distinct and often contradictory points of view that are coextensive with each other, thereby offering the spectator a more complicated but also a more realistic understanding of the dynamics of royal power.

But who might this spectator be? *El médico* was performed in the Salón de Palacio on 10 June 10 1635 (Shergold and Varey 1961, 281). Although we do not know if the Habsburg King Philip IV was present at the performance, the fact that it was performed in the palace means that a royal audience was possible if not likely, especially given Philip's penchant for the theatre (Brown and Elliott 1980, 31–54). If the juxtaposition of the poetic language and the world of the play allows the audience—in this case King Philip—to view the simultaneous presentation of successful, multiple facets of Calderón's King Pedro, then modern critics of the play must engage in a Cubist act of "constructive discipline" (Apollinaire 1970, 17) by taking the circumstances of the play's initial reception into account in order to arrive at an understanding of it not through the eye—that is, not through what we see either on the page or on the stage—but through the intellect. A Cubist approach to *El médico* allows Calderón's enigmatic play to reveal itself neither as poetry nor as performance but as a critical act of creation that understands the world of the play, the poetic language of the play, and the reception of the play as three distinct frames of reference on the same interpretive plane, which brings to the surface the danger the self-conscious theatrical assertion of royal prerogatives poses for the exercise of royal authority.

[5] All references to *El médico de su honra*, unless otherwise indicated, are to the edition by D. W. Cruickshank (1987).

The World of the Play

An appreciation for the world of the play must begin with the given circumstances that appear on the stage before the audience, which "spring from the time and place of the play along with the conventions, attitudes, and manners behind and around it" (Thomas 1992, 43). For Fuchs (2004), seeing the world of the play in the mind's eye requires that theater artists begin by considering the space and time, tone and mood. The first scene of *El médico*, for example, takes place on the open road as the king and his entourage make their way to Sevilla; but space becomes increasingly more cramped as the action moves from the countryside into the city and from outdoors into the interior spaces of noble houses and royal palaces. The central action of the play—the death of Mencía—takes place in the most intimate of places, the boudoir of a private home, whose grilled windows and bolted doors call to mind a prison, an invisible yet portentous space that inhabits both the physical and the metaphorical world of the *comedia*. Mood follows the trajectory of space, becoming correspondingly more menacing and claustrophobic as the action moves inside out of public view only to open up again, spilling out into the public city streets, where the king finally exerts his royal prerogatives and restores order. He compels Gutierre to offer his hand in marriage to Leonor, a gesture that confirms the sovereign's authority by condemning Gutierre to the prison house of marriage.

The world of the play is also a social world with implicit rules that govern the characters' behavior. Although it is a commonplace to say that the hierarchical and aristocratic world of Calderón's wife-murder plays operates according to an unwritten code of honor that regulates all social relationships, Fuchs (2004) reminds us that "[t]he stage world never obeys the same rules as ours, because in its world, nothing else is possible but what is there" (6). What is important, then, is not that honor influences all social relationships, but how honor binds the characters together into certain configurations within the specific and unique world of this play. "In what kinds of patterns do the figures on this planet arrange themselves?" Fuchs (6–7) asks, adding: "Are you seeing (and feeling) the tension of interlocking triangles?" "Who has the power on this planet?" and "How is it achieved? Over whom is it exercised? To what end is it exercised?" These are questions Fuchs would ask of any play. What is of special importance for our understanding of the unique world of *El médico*, however, is how pattern and power relate to each other. Power has its own pattern in this play, one that, in mirroring the interlocking love-*cum*-honor triangles of the principal characters, imprisons Gutierre in a structure of relationships from which there is no escape.

When in the first act an injured Enrique arrives unexpectedly at the home of Mencía after having fallen from his horse, he draws her into a love triangle that pits her husband Gutierre, a man who loves his wife but jealously guards his

honor, against her erstwhile lover the prince, whose unrestrained desire threatens to subject Mencía to honor's grisly demands. But this is not the only love triangle in the play. Gutierre has a past as well, having jilted the forlorn Leonor before marrying Mencía, who suspects that Leonor is never far from Gutierre's thoughts. Because each of these love triangles implicates King Pedro, however, each puts to the test the efficacy of royal power. Leonor will ask the king to redress the wrong done to her by Gutierre, and Gutierre will present the king with evidence that his brother the prince has defiled Gutierre's marriage bed and dishonored his good name. To the two love-*cum*-honor triangles of Mencía-Gutierre-Enrique and Mencía-Gutierre-Leonor, then, we must add two power triangles of Leonor-King Pedro-Gutierre and Enrique-King Pedro-Gutierre, for within the world of the play aggrieved parties look to the king's judicious exercise of royal authority to ensure the integrity of all social relationships. To answer Fuch's question, it is the conflict between the honor triangles and the power triangles that structure the world of this *comedia*. Gutierre may be the central figure of this *drama de honor*, play, but the king has all the power.[6]

As the only character with a role to play in each of these triangles, Gutierre always finds himself in the middle of the action, even when not on stage. Although he does not appear until well into the first act, Gutierre's presence as an "hombre honrado" is palpable from the moment Diego and Arias carry the injured Enrique into Mencía's house. Hushing Arias with a curt, "Silencio, / que importa mucho, Arias" (1. vv. 106–107), Mencía goes on to explain to the startled *privado*, "Va mi honor en ello" (1. v. 108), a sentiment she reiterates to Enrique later that day, admonishing the prince for having stolen into her house while her husband is away "sin temer / que así a una mujer destruye / y que así ofende un vasallo / tan generoso y ilustre" (1. vv. 1087–90). Gutierre's presence as an "hombre honrado" looms more menacing still in Act 3 when Mencía awakens from a swoon to find a note written in Gutierre's hand advising her to save her soul, for her life is already lost: "'El amor te adora, el honor te aborrece; y así el uno te mata, y el otro te avisa: dos horas tienes de vida; cristiana eres, salva el alma, que la vida es imposible'" (ff. 3. v. 2495).

Honor is equally important to Gutierre when he is on stage. His fawning treatment of the prince when he first sees Enrique in his home in Act 1 quickly turns to foreboding in Act 2, when he finds the dagger Enrique has inadvertently left behind in Mencia's bedroom. This apprehension turns to certainty at the end of Act 2, when, having transformed himself into the vengeful "médico de su honra," the overwrought husband confirms his suspicion that his wife has betrayed him. "Mi venganza a mi agravio corresponda!" (2. v. 1948), he mutters, in an anguished aside as Mencía reveals that she has known all along that it was

[6] Feminist scholars have argued that Mencía is the real protagonist of the play; see, for example, Heil (2016). Benabu (1994) makes the fervent case for Gutierre.

Enrique who had been in the house the night before. As the moment comes to commit the murder, Gutierre is present by his absence, hovering nearby as the surgeon Ludovico administers the fatal bloodletting. Lurking when he is not on stage, and in turns obsequious, suspicious, and vicious when he is, Gutierre affects the thoughts and actions of every other character, from the humblest servant to the king himself.

While Gutierre may be the central figure, he is rarely in control. The two times he decides to exercise power he believes is rightfully his, he does so in defense of his honor and to disastrous effect. He first abandons Leonor before their wedding day in the mistaken belief that she has entertained another man in her home, and then repeats the error, murdering Mencía in the mistaken belief that she has entertained the prince in hers. Gutierre never learns. Caught between the love he feels and the honor he reveres, Gutierre will always choose honor, however painful that choice may be. He does not want to kill Mencía and searches desperately for a way to exonerate her after finding Enrique's dagger in her bedroom. "Pero vengamos al caso," he says to himself, as he tries to make sense of the preceding events; "quizá hallaremos respuesta" (2. vv. 1611–12). When that effort fails, however, Gutierre sheds a tear but ultimately submits himself to the demands of honor: "Quién vio en tantos enojos / matar las manos y llorar los ojos" (3. vv. 2456–57).

Sacrificing love for honor does not free Gutierre to do as he pleases; on the contrary, it further subjects him to the will of the king. The prerogatives Gutierre enjoys as "el médico de su honra" do not threaten the prince, who, as a member of the royal family, remains beyond the reach of a lesser nobleman. Gutierre acknowledges that he cannot recover his honor on his own and that he is dependent on the king to restore his lost integrity, telling Pedro, "La vida de vos espero / de mi honra" (3. vv. 2089–90). Gutierre's act of subservience is not just an acknowledgement of Pedro's authority; it is also an implicit threat: In accepting that he has no right to take vengeance on the prince, Gutierre intimates that his dishonor has become a stain on the royal house. Pedro's very legitimacy rests on his ability to curb his brother's aggression.

That Gutierre's warning is not unfounded manifests itself within the world of the play in the form of the dagger that circulates among the characters, making its way from Enrique to Gutierre to Pedro and back to Enrique in a series of transactions that transforms an article of royal finery into an instrument of lèse majesté. The dagger, which initially appears as an ordinary part of Enrique's princely garb, acquires importance only when it becomes separated from its rightful owner; that is, it acquires importance only when the dagger as piece of stage property becomes a visible metaphor, a trope that, as Jacques Derrida (1974, 8–9) reminds us, is a turning away from proper meaning. In losing possession of the blade, Enrique also loses the ability to determine its significance. For Gutierre,

the dagger left behind in Mencía's bedchamber represents the unseen danger lurking in his house that will lead to his death: "que esta daga que hallé, ¡cielos! / con sospechas y recelos / previene mi muerte en sí (1. vv. 1362–64). Gutierre does not fear bodily harm in this moment; the dagger properly understood as a weapon poses no threat to his physical safety because it is now in his possession. Once put in circulation, however, this stage prop loses its proper meaning, becoming a metaphor for the sexual aggression that threatens Gutierre's honor. When Gutierre then presents the same dagger to the king as evidence of the dishonor Enrique has brought to his house, Gutierre invests the blade with greater significance. Asking the king to exact justice on his brother the prince, Gutierre admits that were he to lose all hope for the life of his honor, "con la sangre le lavara, / con la tierra le cubriera" (3. vv. 2097–98). But he quickly cautions:

> Nos turbéis; con sangre digo
> solamente de mi pecho.
> Enrique, está satisfecho
> que está seguro conmigo. (3. vv. 2099–2102)

Gutierre performs an act of sanguinary legerdemain here: Enrique's dagger, a sexual metaphor reified within the world of the play as a blade capable of exacting the blood sacrifice honor requires, now rests in the hands of the king.

Although Pedro understands the meaning Gutierre has invested in the dagger and takes seriously his responsibilities to safeguard the honor of his vassals, his concern for blood extends far beyond Gutierre's demand for justice. Confronting Enrique with Gutierre's accusations, Pedro reminds his brother that even royal blood remains subject to the king's justice:

> donde el alma de un vasallo
> con la ley soberana vive,
> podrá ser de mi justicia
> aun mi sangre no se libre. (3. vv. 2203–6)

Pedro attempts to exert control over Enrique by linking blood to kinship, telling the prince that he is king first and brother second. Unaware that Pedro knows about his pursuit of Mencía, Enrique is at first surprised by the accusation Pedro hurls at him; but when he tries to justify his behavior, Pedro puts an end to the matter by entering into evidence Enrique's own dagger. "Tomad su acero," demands Pedro, adding "y en él / os mirad: veréis, Enrique, vuestros defetos" (3. 2261–63). The dagger Enrique has left behind in Mencía's boudoir returns to him as shiny steel, a mirror of sins that have multiplied as the blade has passed from hand to hand. Enrique's sexual aggression and assault on Gutierre's honor now

threaten the very integrity of the royal house.

What for Enrique is merely a mislaid piece of property ("sin ella [la daga] a palacio vine / una noche" (3. vv. 2246–47) is for Pedro "Geroglífico. . . que dice / vuestro delito" (3. vv. 2258–59). Enrique does not control the dagger's meaning. Pedro does. When Enrique draws the king's blood as the blade makes its way back to its proper owner, what for Enrique is a terrible accident ("de mí no imagines / que puedo verter tu sangre" [3. vv. 2280–81]) is for the king an act of treason. Calling Enrique a "traidor" (3. v. 2266), the king accuses his brother of attempted murder:

> ¿Desta manera
> tu acero en mi sangre tiñes?
> Tú la daga que te di
> hoy contra mi pecho esgrimes?
> ¿Tú me quieres dar la muerte? (3. vv. 2268–71)

Enrique rightly fears the wrath of a brother who jealously guards his prerogatives as king. Known as a fierce warrior who "corta los cuellos de uno y otro moro" (1. v. 616), Pedro does not hesitate to deal equally harshly with foes at court. When Gutierre and Arias take up arms against each other in the presence of the king, for example, Pedro consigns them both to prison for their grievous offense:

> Presos los llevad al punto;
> en dos torres los tened;
> y agradeced que no os pongo
> las cabezas a los pies. (1. vv. 989–92)

A king who professes to show temperance by telling Gutierre and Arias to be thankful to be alive—that is, to be thankful that a king who "corta los cuellos" has chosen not to sever theirs—might very well carry out the threat in the case of a miscreant who has put the king's life in danger. Enrique therefore makes the prudent decision to abandon the court rather than test the patience of the King. He will never appear on stage again.

The king is the most powerful person within the world of the play. His subjects think of him as a "Júpiter español" (1. v. 612) who, like his mythological forebear, serves as the guardian of the state. A king must be more than a Jupiter, however; he must also be an Argus, the panoptic giant of Greek mythology whose myriad eyes kept watch even when asleep. As Diego explains to an exhausted Pedro just back from a night roaming the streets of Sevilla in an effort to "informar[s]e / de todo, para saber / lo que convenga" (2. vv. 1412–14), "el Rey debe ser un Argos / en su reino, vigilante" (2. vv. 1415–16). The King prides

himself on his ability to stay abreast of what is happening in the realm, even as he understands that what he hears in open court may only be a partial truth. Although Pedro feels the weight of Leonor's complaint against Gutierre and pledges to right whatever wrongs have been done to her, for example, he nevertheless insists on listening to the other side of the story:

> Oigamos a la otra parte
> disculpas suyas; que es bien
> guardar el segundo oído
> para quien llega después. (1. vv. 685–88)

Pedro understands that he must seek to discern the truth in order to govern well. But knowing and ruling are not the same thing. Ruling is the public performance of authority that happens in the light of day, while the truth often reveals itself only in the shadows. Nowhere is this more evident than in the final scenes of the play, when the King discovers the truth about Mencía's death from the bloodletter Ludovico while making his pre-dawn rounds through the city. The darkness of the hour matches the darkness of the tale the frightened surgeon tells. Having just attended the death of an unknown woman who pleads her innocence as she dies, Ludovico tells the king that he has stained the houses with the woman's blood in the hope that what has been done in the dark of night will be revealed by the light of day. As the dawn breaks ("el día / entre dorados celajes / asoma" (3. vv. 2716–16), Pedro has a chance encounter with Coquín, who tells the king that Gutierre has dismissed the other servants and locked Mencía in her bedroom after having found the letter she was writing asking Enrique not to abandon the court. Responding to Coquín's plea for help, the King decides to take advantage of the early-morning light to slip into Gutierre's house with the excuse that he needs to conceal his identity so that he can see for himself what has transpired. Only then will he be able to discharge his responsibilities as king. When he arrives and sees Ludovico's bloody mark on the door, the King realizes that he has arrived too late. It is not in his power to save Mencía. She is the woman who died moaning "Inocente muero" (3. v. 2688) as Ludovico looked on helplessly; hers is the blood that now marks Gutierre's door. When Pedro finally hears Gutierre describe the death of his beloved wife as a tragic accident, the victim of a bloodletting prescribed by a physician, Pedro can only gaze in amazement at what Gutierre has wrought. Although Gutierre continues to represent to the king that Mencía is as virtuous as she is beautiful ("mi amada esposa, / tan hermosa como casta, / virtuosa como bella" [3. vv. 2826–28]), the King now knows the truth: Gutierre "tomó notable venganza" (3. v. 2875).

Mencía's death may be a tragedy, but it also an opportunity. Now that Gutierre is free to marry, the King can at last fulfill the promise he has made to

Leonor to restore her honor. But when the King exercises his royal prerogative and demands that Gutierre offer his hand in marriage to the woman he has wronged, Gutierre begs for time to mourn his recent loss. Unpersuaded, the King dismisses Gutierre's pleadings with a curt "Esto ha de ser, y basta" (3. v. 2895). When Gutierre protests further, Pedro remains resolute, quickly putting Gutierre in his place by reminding the nobleman that "vuestro Rey lo manda" (3. v. 2899). And when Gutierre continues to demur, protesting that he does not want to remarry only to find his honor impugned once again, the King replies that there is a solution for everything, including a solution of Gutierre's own making: "Sangrarla" (3. v. 2929). Royal authority alone is not enough to force Gutierre to the altar. Only when the King makes it clear that he knows the truth about Mencía's untimely death does Gutierre finally acquiesce and offer his bloody hand in marriage to Leonor.

El médico comes to a close as the king deploys the knowledge he has gained under the cover of night in the service of the power he wields in the light of day. The sun rises with the dawning of an "español Apolo" (3. v. 2053), a sun king very different from the monarch who steps onto the stage in the opening scene of the play. Gone is the tentative and insecure king afraid of what Enrique's fall from his horse portends for the monarchy ("Si las torres de Sevilla / saluda de esa manera, / ¡nunca a Sevilla viniera, / nunca dejara a Castilla!" [1. vv. 5–8]); the Pedro who forces Gutierre's hand in the final scene now wears the crown with a bearing befitting his station. The world of *El médico* revolves around Gutierre. He is the figure at the center of the action, the figure who intersects with every other character in the play. His final submission to royal authority, however, has a larger political dimension. It demonstrates that. in the course of the play, the King has consolidated his power and extended his reach over the Andalusian nobility. Gutierre may be the protagonist, but *El médico de su honra* is the King's play, for in the conflict between honor and power, power wins.

Play as Text

The world of the play organizes itself as a set of interlocking triangles with Gutierre imprisoned in the middle. Caught between Mencía and Leonor on the one hand, and Mencía and Enrique on the other, Gutierre finds himself as a man at the center of the action who lacks the ability to control the events, submitting himself first to the dictates of an honor code that compels him to kill and then to the demands of a king who forces him to marry. But Gutierre is not the only person constrained by circumstances. The specter of prison looms large over the world of *El médico.* If, in the first act the king tries to impose order in the court by sending miscreants to his high dungeon, an invisible space that "appears" on stage only as a bit of dialogue when the king sends Arias and Gutierre away to "dos

torres" (1. v. 990) for having threatened the monarch with their drawn swords, he soon learns that marriage is a more effective form of social control. Whereas Gutierre finds a way to slip out of the king's prison with the help of a friendly jailer, Mencía is not as fortunate. Having married Gutierre at the behest of a father who "atropella / la libertad que hubo en mí: (1. vv. 569–70), Mencía finds herself at the beginning of the play caught between the love she feels for the prince and the duty she owes her husband:

> ¡O quién pudiera dar voces,
> Y romper con el silencio
> cárceles de nieve, donde
> está aprisionado el fuego. (1. vv. 125–28)

Mencía's metaphorical prison becomes all too real as she lies on her deathbed, the locked doors and grilled windows of her bedroom a visible reminder of what her marriage has always been: a jail cell from which there is no escape. After Mencía dies at the hands of an unforgiving warden who turns her bedchamber into a death chamber, the King describes the bloody scene as "símbolo de la desgracia" (3. v. 2879) that, nevertheless, serves as an example for a monarch seeking to consolidate his power. When, in the final scene Pedro seeks to restore order to the monarchy after Mencía's gruesome death, he chooses not to consign Gutierre to the tower from which he would no doubt escape but shackles him with the bonds of marriage, a prison from which the only release is death.

If within the world of the play the prison presents itself as a word, thing, or metaphor used to demonstrate dominance or submission, it takes on a different guise and is used to different effect within the formal structures of the dramatic text. Thomas (1992) reminds us that within the world of the play "the plot is always advancing," adding:

> The feeling of forward motion comes from the dramatist's method of always making the next event more interesting and significant than the last. We are uncomfortable when our interest in the play flags or if there is a feeling of too much repetition. We are not even satisfied to maintain the same level of interest. Forward motion is a fundamental necessity of plot. (133)

The formal, more literary, aspects of a dramatic text, however, need not obey the dictum to move the action forward, even while remaining embedded in a plot that does. Nowhere is this more evident than in *El médico*, where the same scenes that, when played sequentially onstage lead to Gutierre's remarriage and the king's ascendancy, yield different results when related to each other through a pattern of

repetition that leaves the king, not Gutierre, caught within a structural prison that calls into question his ability to govern.

As written, *El médico* is a three-act drama that implicates the king in the domestic life of a vassal. It is not surprising, then, that the action takes place in three different kinds of settings: the formal spaces within the royal palace, the more intimate spaces in and around Mencía and Gutierre's private homes, and the more neutral public spaces of the country road or the city street. The play opens on a public thoroughfare as the royal travelling party makes its way from Castilla to Andalucía and closes on the streets of Sevilla as the king does his pre–dawn rounds through the city. Both the road and the street are communal spaces where events remain subject to public scrutiny and comment. Enrique's fall from his horse in Act 1, for example, is an event witnessed from afar by Mencía, who in turn describes the incident to her maid Jacinta. In Act 3, it is through the traffic of life in the public square, and not through formal inquiries made at court, that the king learns the truth about Mencía's death. It is also in these public spaces where the King forcefully exerts his will, announcing his desire to press on to Sevilla despite his brother's fall, and demanding that Gutierre marry Leonor despite the nobleman's reluctance.

The synergy of knowledge and power the king enjoys in the public square stands in stark contrast to the bearing he has at court in scenes that play out at the end of Act 1 and the beginning of Act 3. Although citizens have the right to come to court to petition the king, the palace's royal spaces are governed by royal protocol. In the space where his authority is most on display, however, he is least able to render decisions. When in Act 1 Leonor asks the king to redress her grievances against Gutierre, for example, Pedro, caught, discreetly balks, saying that he must first listen to Gutierre's side of the story before making a decision. And when Gutierre returns to court on Act 3 with evidence that the prince has pursued his wife, Pedro demurs again, choosing to confront his brother with what he knows rather than condemn him immediately for his actions. Although in both instances blades are drawn in the presence of the King, Pedro responds to these events in very different ways. When in Act 1 Arias and Gutierre draw swords not against the person of the king but against each other, Pedro has them thrown into prison for endangering the life of the monarch. When in Act 3 Enrique cuts his brother's hand with the dagger he had once left in Mencía's bedchamber, the King recognizes the physical threat to his life but does nothing to check Enrique's aggression. Not only does he not imprison Enrique for the more serious offense of drawing the King's blood, but he allows his brother to abandon the court to avoid further confrontation. The Pedro who presides at court is a diminished king, who theatrically projects power when his life is not in immediate danger and fails to act when physically threatened. Tentative and uncertain, the King quickly loses control over the court proceedings, demanding that his brother remain silent, only

to have Enrique assert himself, saying, "Pues, yo, señor, he de hablar" (3. v. 2235). The confrontation with Enrique leaves the King in a weakened state:

> Bañado me vi en mi sangre;
> muerto estuve. ¿Qué infelice
> imaginación me cerca,
> que con espantos horribles
> y con helados temores
> el pecho y el alma oprime? (3. vv. 2285–90)

The Pedro who feels free and in control on the open road finds himself besieged in court by the "espantos horribles" and the "helados temores" that occupy his thoughts and weigh on his soul. His certainty turns to dread as the dagger that serves as proof of Enrique's guilt becomes a harbinger of Pedro's own death. A prisoner of his doubt and fear, Pedro is powerless to impose his will on Enrique. Pedro may be King of Castile, but he is no longer certain of his ability to govern his own house.

Pedro's inability to rein in Enrique's reckless behavior becomes Gutierre's problem in the matching garden scenes that frame Act 2. Enrique's return to Mencía's house under cover of night to pursue his former beloved is an abuse of Gutierre's prerogatives as a husband. When Gutierre returns home unexpectantly, Enrique hides in Mencía's bedchamber and waits for an opportune moment to leave. Mencía frantically announces that there is a man in her room while, at the same, time extinguishing the light to allow Enrique to slip away in the darkness. When Jacinta asks why she has been so bold as to tell the truth, Mencía explains that she has done so in self-defense:

> si yo no se lo dijera
> y Gutierre lo sintiera
> la presunción era clara,
> pues no se desenganara
> de que yo cómplice era;
> y no fue dificultad
> en ocasión tan cruel,
> hacienda del ladrón fiel,
> engañar con la verdad. (2. vv. 1346–54)

Mencía uses truth in the service of deception. In revealing to Gutierre that there is a man in the house, Mencía attempts to immunize herself against the baseless charge that she is to blame for his transgression. Her dissembling is not a falsehood; it is, rather, a lie of omission, a void that fractures the integrity of truth

itself by driving a wedge between truth and knowledge. Gutierre now knows that someone has been in his house, but he does not know who. He will in time fill the gap left by Mencía's silence, but he will never be able to repair the breach: however much Gutierre may glean in his search for knowledge, he will never arrive at the truth of Mencía's innocence.

Once unmoored from truth, knowledge becomes fragmented, partial, and equivocal, subject to misinterpretation and misuse. When, in the last scene of Act 2, Gutierre returns home under cover of darkness to replay the events of the night before to ascertain Mencía's complicity in Enrique's transgression, Mencía once again awakens from her sleep to find a man in her garden. When she asks who it is, Gutierre responds, saying, "Yo soy, mi bien. ¿No me conoces?" to which Mencía replies, "Sí, señor; que no fuera / otro tan atrevido" (2. vv. 1916–18). The misunderstanding that ensues stems from an equivocation based on the meaning of the word "yo," a pronoun whose meaning depends on the identity of the person speaking. Whereas Gutierre uses "yo" to refer to himself, Mencía mistakes Gutierre's "yo" for Enrique's and then proceeds to confirm Gutierre's worst fears:

> El venir no ha extrañado
> el Infante, ni dél se ha recatado
> sino sólo ha sentido
> que en ocasión se ponga, ¡estoy perdido!,
> De que otra vez se esconda.
> ¡Mi venganza a mi agravio corresponda! (2. vv. 1943–48)

Wittingly or unwittingly, both Mencía and Gutierre deceive with the truth but to opposite effect. Gutierre's equivocal use of the word "yo" reveals what Mencía's lie of omission would seek to hide: Mencía is fully aware that Enrique was the man hiding in her bedchamber. Blinded by his certainty, Gutierre will eventually tailor his vengeance to fit the offense. But certainty is no substitute for truth. Gutierre gathers the pertinent facts only to draw the wrong conclusions. Mencía may be complicit in the deception, but she has not dishonored her husband. And therein lies the tragedy.

If the linear movement within the world of the play leads to the consolidation of power and knowledge in the person of the King, the symmetrical arrangement of the paired scenes calls into question the King's ability to rule. The power Pedro wields in open space diminishes as the action moves inside within the walls of the palace, where the King becomes wary and indecisive, unsure how to satisfy Leonor's demands and unable to curb his brother's sexual aggression. Although Pedro disappears completely in the domestic scenes as the action moves from the public life of the court to the private lives of Gutierre and Mencía, what happens within the garden walls has important implications for a King who thinks of

himself as a god, "un Atlante en que descansa / todo el peso de la ley" (1. vv. 675–76). This is the King to whom Leonor has sought redress against Gutierre; but as she stands before the sovereign, her plea extends to a higher realm:

> de parte de mi honor vengo a pediros
> con voces que se anegan en suspiros,
> con suspiros que en lágrimas se anegan,
> justicia: para vos y Dios apelo. (1. vv. 596–99)

Leonor not only appeals to the King; she also appeals to God, but hers is the Christian God, the God whom Pedro represents on Earth. The Pedro who rules Castile is but a pale reflection of the omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent God above. Absent from the domestic scenes that frame Act 2, Pedro remains ignorant of Enrique's sexual aggression toward Mencía, rendering him powerless to safeguard Gutierre's honor. Neither omnipotent nor omniscient, Pedro is an empty shell of the God he purports to represent.

The symmetrical arrangement of the paired scenes (road-palace-garden-garden-palace-road) functions as a kind of vise that presses in on the middle from both ends, thereby funneling our attention toward the very center of the play, where the King appears in a kind of structural prison as he makes his only appearance of Act 2. Here, in the central verses of the play (Cruz 2001, 224), the *gracioso* Coquín tells Pedro a joke intended to elicit the King's laughter:

> Yo vi ayer
> un capón con bigotera.
> ¿No te ríes de pensarle
> curándose sobre sano
> con tan vagamundo parche?
> A esto un epigrama hice:
> . . . . . .
> 'Floro, casa muy desierta
> la tuya debe de ser,
> porque esto nos da a entender
> la cédula de la Puerta:
> donde no hay carta, ¿hay cubierta?
> ¿cáscara sin fruta? No,
> no pierdas tiempo; que yo,
> esperando los provechos,
> he visto labrar barbechos,
> mas barbideshechos no.' (2. vv. 1463–68; vv. 1674–84)

Numerous critics have noted that Coquín's story makes salient the question of impotence. Floro's attempt to compensate for his lack of sexual potency by wearing a "bigotera" serves only to call attention to the lack he seeks to hide (Cruz 2001; Arellano 1992). But who is the target of Coquín's gibe? Who is the "capón"? Who is impotent? On this the critics disagree. To those who would understand Coquín's joke as a projection of his master, Gutierre (Lottman 2003; Bryans 1982), Angel M. García Gómez (1983) would respond that in the course of the play Coquín "se desliga físicamente de su amo" (1026), becoming first a "hombre de burlas" as court jester to the King before finally emerging as an "hombre de veras," a messenger who tries to warn Pedro about Gutierre's plan to kill Mencía, only to arrive too late to avert her death (Soufas 1982, 207). From the point of view of the play as text, however, the Coquín who tells the joke is both "hombre de burlas" and "hombre de veras," a *gracioso* who uses the story to elicit a laugh while telling the King a hard truth. As Anne J. Cruz (2001) explains in her Lacanian analysis:

> By voicing the signifier *capón* or eunuch, Coquín's joke functions as the mirror of the mirror stage, reflecting the image of the eunuch onto the king, metaphorically castrating him and supplanting the phallus (here the symbol of royal power) with the *bigotera* as signifier. The joke's truth lies in its ironic revelation of the *king's* loss, which the king refuses to hear. (226)

Cruz is right to identify the King as the target of the *gracioso*'s barb. It is the King, not Gutierre, who is present on stage with Coquín. It is the King, not Gutierre, who listens to the joke of the *gracioso*, a joke that calls into question the very virility the King has just put on display by tilting with street ruffians during his evening rounds. What we see in the center of the play, then, is a King who, like the *capón*, projects power he may not have. Pedro quickly reasserts his control over the cheeky *gracioso* with an implicit threat that reminds Coquín of the dangerous bargain he has struck with the King: Coquín will lose all his teeth and probably his life (Lottmann 2003, 90) if he does not make Pedro laugh in the space of a month. And Pedro is not amused, dismissing Coquín's joke with a gruff "Que frialdad" (2. v. 1485), to which Coquín responds, "Pues adios, dientes" (2. v. 1485). Whereas within the world of the play, the King will again regain his footing and assert his royal prerogatives in the final scene, ominous signs that the King lacks the ability to govern begin to loom over the play as text.

The given circumstances of the world of the play and the metaphorical significance of the play as text intersect in the central scene of the *comedia*, where a King who finds himself caught in a structural prison that has stripped him of his power refuses to take seriously the political implications of the *gracioso*'s

seemingly trivial joke about impotence. The Pedro Coquín limns in his story is not the Pedro who struts across the stage. This eunuch-King is a diminished sovereign, who does not belong to the world of the play. He exists only as a bit of dialogue, as a kind of "text as play"—that is, as a joke—that is then inscribed at the heart of the larger play as text. The world of the play and the play as text are different and independent frames of reference. One frame does not subsume the other, nor do they relate to each other as foreground and background; rather, they offer two contradictory perspectives of the King, which, while they cannot be reconciled, nevertheless coexist on the same interpretive plane in the center of the *comedia*. If the Pedro of the world of the play is a fully externalized man of action for whom knowledge is power, as he brings Gutierre to heel in the final scene of *El médico*, the eunuch who stands in for Pedro in the play as text, a man who thinks of himself as something less than a man, reveals a kind of inwardness that the Pedro of the world of the play lacks. Unlike the Pedro of the world of the play, the eunuch is aware that he is projecting power he does not have, that is, he is aware of himself as a fragmented being with knowledge of his own impotence. As a purely textual character, however, this eunuch is doubly impotent, because he is powerless to affect the action on the stage. Unable to affect the course of events and aware of his own fecklessness, Coquín's eunuch offers up an image of kingship that Pedro dare not see.[7]

Reception

Coquín's joke is not the only moment in the play that calls into question the King's power. Pedro is not unaware that his confrontation with Enrique may have political consequences. When Diego informs the King that the prince has left the court, Pedro fears that Enrique has gone to Consuegra to join their brother in a plot against him. Despite Diego's assurances that the brothers pose no threat ("Tus hermanos son, / y es forzoso que te amen / como a hermano, y como a Rey /

[7] The inherent tension between the King Pedro within the world of the play and the King Pedro within the play as text complicates the characterization of the king on the contemporary stage. In her analysis of Adolfo Marsillach's 1986 mounting of *El médico* with the Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico, for example, Susan L. Fischer (2009) notes the discrepancy between Calderón's play and Marsillach's playscript. Where Calderón's text projects strength, Marsillach's play script attenuates the strength found in Calderón's text in order to present a more consistent characterization of King Pedro: "The king's inability to exert authority in his realm was rendered transparent, initially, when the two noblemen Arias and Gutierre illegally and irreverently unsheathed their swords in his presence. Pedro exclaimed, not '¿No tembláis de ver / mi semblante?' (1. 986-87), as in the original, but '¿Es que mi poder / no es bastante a deteneros?'" This was, Fischer comments, "one of the few instances where Calderón's verses were altered, perhaps to depersonalize if not politicize the monarch's weakness, but maybe only to render the text less opaque" (16–17).

te adoren; dos naturales / obediencias son" [3. vv. 2518–22]), the local musicians suggest otherwise:

> Para Consuegra camina
> donde piensa que han de ser
> teatros de mil tragedias
> las montañas de Montiel. (3. vv. 2634–37)

History confirms what the street musicians imply and what Pedro's confrontation with Enrique at court portends: Pedro will die at the hands of his brother in 1369 shortly after they meet on the battlefield of Montiel. Coquín has been right all along: Pedro/Peter is an impotent King whose reign is cut short by a civil war that will leave Pedro/Peter slashed to death in Enrique's quarters and Enrique/Henry King of Castile (López de Córdoba 1997, 294–301; Suárez Fernández 1985, 79).

From the point of view of the world of the play, however, this historical event lies in the future. The Pedro on the stage, the powerful King who confronts his brother and forces Gutierre to marry against his will, has no knowledge of what lies ahead. Such knowledge belongs to another king, one who is himself obliquely evoked in the play in such a way that links him to King Pedro, one who is in a position to recognize the full import of the musician's verses: the seventeenth-century Habsburg King Philip IV.

Although the early performance history of *El médico de su honra* remains somewhat murky, its publication history is not: *El médico* appears in the *Segunda parte de las comedias de Don Pedro Calderón de la Barca* published in 1637, which means that the play had to have been composed sometime before that date. Drawing on the work of G. Cruzada Villaamil, who published a number of documents related to the performance of plays at the early seventeenth-century Habsburg court, J. E. Varey and N. D. Shergold (1961) give a brief account of the early performance history of a play entitled *El médico de su honra.* The documents Cruzada Villaamil brings to light "were, for the most part, extracts from the accounts of the secretary of the Royal Chamber. . . and the plays concerned had all been performed before the King and Queen as private entertainments" (274). Varey and Shergold's analysis of these records reveals that there were two performances of a play entitled *El médico de su honra,* the first taking place on 8 October 1629 and the second occurring six years later on 10 June 1635, although it cannot "be stated definitively that the 1635 performance was of the play by Calderón" since the first could have been a play attributed to Lope de Vega, of which Calderón's version was a *refundición* (281). In the introduction to his edition of the play, D.W. Cruickshank (1987) cautiously suggests that that second performance "podría haber sido la versión de Calderón" (11), while C. A. Jones (1961) is more definitive, averring that "Calderón's *El*

médico de su honra was first presented at the Royal Palace by the company of José Martínez de los Ríos on 26 August 1635" (ix). Given the documentary evidence, we can say that it is possible if not probable that Calderón's *El médico de su honra* was put on at court in the summer of 1635, and that King Philip IV and his wife Queen Elizabeth were in attendance. But even if this conjecture were to prove incorrect, we do know that by the mid–1630s Calderón enjoyed such success at court that the king had begun the process of initiating him into the Order of Santiago in 1637 (Cruickshank 10). Even if his *El médico de su honra* had not been presented at court, and even if the king and queen had not seen it, Calderón could have at least anticipated that this play, like so many others of his works, would have found royal favor.

There is some textual evidence to suggest that Calderón was writing *El médico* with Philip in mind. When Leonor appears before the King to seek redress for the wrong Gutierre has done to her, for example, she addresses the monarch, saying, "Pedro, a quien llama el mundo Justiciero, / planeta soberano de Castilla" (1. vv. 609–610). Both of the epithets Leonor uses have historical resonance. To Peter's traditional epithet as "Justiciero," Leonor adds "planeta soberano," which serves to identify Pedro with King Philip IV. Known as "el rey planeta," Philip was the "Sun King," the sun being the fourth planet in the traditional Ptolemaic system, "whose very presence was sufficient to restore light and harmony to a world of darkness and confusion" (Elliott 1986, 177). In her address to King Pedro, then, Leonor establishes a link between the King-on-stage and the king-in-the-audience, whose point of view constitutes yet another frame of reference from which to understand the play, one that exists independently of but on the same interpretive plane as the world of the play and the play as text.

Philip's point of view would have been conditioned as much by his own circumstances as by his historical knowledge of the medieval King Peter. As J. H. Elliott and Jonathan Brown (1980) explain, *El rey planeta* is both Philip's identity and a projection of that identity onto the world stage. Such a king needed a palace befitting his exalted station. And so he built one. Between 1629 and 1635 his *privado* Olivares oversaw the construction of the Palacio del Buen Retiro, complete with the Salón de Reinos or Hall of Realms, that housed the coat of arms of all 24 of the Monarchy's realms, portraits of the king and his family, canvases depicting triumphant battle scenes, and a series of paintings of Hercules, the mythical forebear of the Habsburg kings. It was a room where the greatness of the Monarchy was on full display (Brown and Elliott 31–54).

Philip's projection of power was just that: a projection. Although historians may disagree about the extent to which the seventeenth-century Spanish Monarchy was in complete decline, it is clear, at least for some, that, as Diego says at the beginning of *El médico,* "nada nos está bien" (1. vv. 35). Ongoing conflicts with the Dutch and the French, coupled with military loses on land and

sea, marked the beginning of the end of Spain as a European power. Things were no better on the home front. Not only did rebellions in Catalonia and Portugal threaten the political unity of the peninsula (Kamen 2003, 381–437), but conflict in Europe led to financial crises at home as the periodic shipments of gold and silver from Peru and Mexico eventually made their way into northern Europe by way of the foreign bankers (Kamen 293) who extended the credit Spain used to finance its wars and carry on its trade. The bullion disappeared almost before it arrived. "As the precious metals and colonial produce made their way to the peninsula, they became prey to systemic fraud. Since those who really controlled the economy were outsiders, it was to them that the bullion and profits went rather than to Spain" (Kamen 296). The bullionism that financed the Monarchy's global reach did not and could not lead to the kind of capital investment necessary for significant economic growth, with the result that by "the end of the seventeenth century, after two hundred years of imperialism, in nominal control of the human and natural resources of dominions in America and the western Pacific, Spain, like its imperial neighbor Portugal was an underdeveloped, stagnant area of western Europe" (Stein and Stein 2003, 3).

The credit needed to keep the Monarchy afloat was in many ways psychologically and epistemologically destabilizing. The profligate use of credit did more than allow the king to spend now and pay later. It undermined the foundation of sovereignty itself. Elvira Vilches (2010) for example, has argued that the "minting of coins was both a symbol and the real source of the monarch's sovereignty. The golden *ducados* (and, after 1537, *escudos*) embodied the affirmation of such power, which confirmed that there was an undeniable link between royal authority, purchasing power, and metallic substance. Gold represented immanent and everlasting value, as well as truth" (227). Once minted and stamped with the *escudo* or coat of arms of the monarchy, gold and silver became a medium of exchange that simultaneously represented the king as the guarantor of value. Credit, however, ceded control of the economy to foreign creditors, thus undermining the power and authority of the king and placing value on unstable footing. This new economy, argues Vilches, "created the most advantageous opportunities for profit and the swift accumulation of wealth. It also created keen anxiety, because people confronted a wave of conceptual and social change that they perceived as confusing, threatening, and unrelenting" (Vilches 31). What Vilches calls anxiety, Antonio Maravall (1975) calls "un estado de inquietud," a state of disquiet "que en muchos casos cabe calificar como angustiada—y, por lo tanto de inestabilidad" (96). It was an "estado de inquietud" that was as much psychological as it was political, social, or economic.

The tension between the *rey planeta*'s public projection of the wealth and power of the Spanish Crown, and the underlying sense of decadence and decline within the Monarchy, was not lost on everyone. The *arbitristas,* those often-

maligned proponents of economic and social reform, tried to offer solutions to what they saw as the weaknesses of the imperial project. *Arbitristas* like González de Cellorigo and Pedro Fernández de Navarrete "took on the guise of curing a sick patient, advising on the appropriate action to take to ensure a full recovery" (Rawlings 2012, 34). As early as 1625, for example, Fernández de Navarrete (1792) identifies an abundance of wealth poorly disbursed and unwisely distributed as the cause of the kingdom's economic ills:

> toca á los próvidos consejeros el tomarle el pulso, el conocer las enfermedades, el exâminar y averiguar las causas de las que se originâron, para aplicar los remedios contrarios, proporcionándolos con las fuerzas y robustez del enfermo, como en esta occasion lo hizo el real consejo de Castilla, que habiendo con particular atencion mirado y conocido los accidentes de que va enfermando el reyno, ha propuesto al enfermo que mire por sí, porque la enfermedad es gravísima, pero no incurable, como el doliente se reduzca a dieta: porque como la mayor parte de las enfermedades de los reynos ha tenido origen de la abundancia y de las riquizas mal gastadas, y peor disipadas, es forzoso que habiéndose de curar con sus contrarios, se les recete la templanza y frugalidad. (408–9)

Fernández de Navarrete's prescription for the economy found some sympathetic ears at court, at least in the early years of Philip IV's reign. The impulse to reform was strong in the 1620s. Olivares in particular sought "to bring some order to the royal finances—a task made all the more necessary by the sharp increase in military and naval expenditure that followed on the resumption of the war with the Dutch. Financial austerity was now the order of the day" (Brown and Elliott 1980, 17). But the fiscal restraint that Olivares sought to implement would also have implications for his desire to put the power and the wealth of the Spanish Monarchy on public display. As Elliott (1986) explains, "The need for economy, which was generally recognized, ran directly counter to the traditional conception that liberality was an integral part of kingship. . . . Could economy and austerity be made compatible with majesty? It was a dilemma that Olivares would never succeed in resolving" (113). Nor would Philip.

We can hear a distant echo of Fernández de Navarrete's words in *El médico de su honra*, for if the *arbitrista* advocates for a diet of temperance and frugality to cure his patient, Gutierre recommends a diet of silence to cure his. "Yo os he de curar, honor" (2. vv. 1665), says Gutierre in his soliloquy, adding, "y así os receta y ordena / el médico de su honra / primeramente la dieta / del silencio" (2. vv. 1672–75). Gutierre, however, does not relish his role as physician of his honor. He would prefer to be the loving husband to a wife he considers his sun. To Mencía's accusation that Gutierre still harbors feeling for Leonor, for example,

Gutierre defends himself, saying:

> Ayer, como al sol no vía,
> hermosa me parecía
> la luna; mas hoy, que adoro
> al sol, ni dudo ni ignoro
> lo que hay de la noche al día. (1. vv. 520–23)

Yes, Gutierre tells Mencía, he once loved Leonor; but she was merely a moon who could not compete with the beauty of Mencía's sun, a trite metaphor that returns in Gutierre's soliloquy as the nobleman rehearses in his own mind the events leading up to his discovery of Enrique's dagger in Mencía's bedchamber. Having found evidence of Mencía's innocence, Gutierre puts an end to his ruminations, finally concluding that "Mencía es quien es, / y soy quien soy; no hay quien pueda / borrar de tanto esplendor / la hermosura y la pureza" (2. vv. 1649–52). But Gutierre's joy quickly turns to alarm as his metaphorical reasoning takes an ominous turn away from proper meaning that leads him to draw the opposite and wrong conclusion: "Pero sí puede, mal digo: / que al sol una nube negra / si no le mancha, le turba, / si no le eclipsa, le hiela (2. vv. 1653–56). The sun is no longer the guarantor of truth or value for Gutierre. It, too, can be besmirched.

If Philip IV had attended a court performance of Calderón's *El médico de su honra* in the summer of 1635, he would have seen a king on stage projecting power the play as text suggests he does not have. Because Philip knew what would befall the historical King Peter, however, he had knowledge those within the world of the play could not have had. This was a dramatic irony that would have afforded the royal audience the opportunity to draw the conclusion that King Pedro's reign within *El médico* had no future. It was nothing more than a hollow shell, or, as Coquín in his joke puts it, a "casa. . . desierta" (2. v. 1475), a "cáscara sin fruta" (2. v. 1480). But it could also not have escaped Philip's attention that Leonor's invocation of King Pedro both as "Justiciero" and as "planeta soberano" linked his monarchy to that of his medieval forebear, which would leave Philip—and us—to wonder if the Habsburg king was going to share Peter's fate. Political and financial storm clouds were threatening to besmirch the splendor that *el rey planeta* sought to project onto the world stage. By 1635, Spain had suffered one crisis after another: it was constantly in debt; it was losing its position as a European power; and it was facing political unrest in Catalonia and Portugal. Meanwhile, plans for the construction, decoration, and furnishing of the Buen Retiro Palace, a royal residence designed to promote Philip's reputation at home and abroad, proceeded apace. What Philip would have seen as he watched *El médico de su honra* on the stage was the hubris of a preening but impotent

medieval Castilian king theatrically projecting power he might not have. What he would have seen was an image of himself.

*

A Cubist reading that allows multiple perspectives of *El médico de su honra* to exist simultaneously on the same interpretive plane seeks not to elide the inconsistencies and incongruities within the play but to make them visible. *El médico* is not an act of mimesis. It is not a mirror. It does not reflect a unitary vision of kingship. It is, rather, a fractured play in which the world of the play and the play as text, two frames of reference with equal claims to truth, reveal themselves as the central antagonists of the *comedia*. The tension between these two frames does not have a resolution. King Pedro is at once powerful and powerless; he seeks the truth and refuses to listen. The spectator, be that spectator the seventeenth-century King Philip IV or the twenty-first-century critic, must understand the play as what the Cubist critic Apollinaire (1970) calls an "art of conception"(17), through which "the artwork. . . becomes the equivalent of the concrete object, not its imitation" (Genova 2003, 56). The spectator must understand *El médico* as the aesthetic equivalent of royal authority, the "touch of the real" to which Greenblatt's New Historicism aspired. But because this "touch of the real" is itself a critical act of creation available neither to the page nor to the stage—not to the eye but to the intellect—*El médico* requires a Cubist reading, one that will bring to the surface an understanding of royal authority as fractured as the play itself.

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PART II

PERFORMING THE DRAMATIC TEXT

—THE DIRECTOR—

There is a great temptation for a director
to prepare [his] staging before the first day of rehearsal. . . .
One needs to do the preparation in order to discard it, to build in order to demolish.

—PETER BROOK

(*There Are No Secrets: Thoughts on Acting and Theatre,* 1993)

—THE ACTOR—

It is not enough to speak, but to speak true.

—WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564–1616)

(*A Midsummer Night's Dream* 5.1.121)

*****

An actor has to burn inside with an outer ease.

—MICHAEL CHEKHOV (1891–1955)

(Moscow Art Theatre)

To Take Up the Bodies: Staging Possible Worlds in Ana Caro's *The Courage to Right a Woman's Wrongs*

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ABSTRACT
Focused on Skidmore College's Fall 2023 production of Ana Caro's *The Courage to Right a Woman's Wrongs (Valor, agravio y mujer),* this article examines recuperative historical theory and practice in relation to queer lives and racial identity. The article also examines the challenges of staging both the main character's central act of forgiveness and the play's final heterosexual matrimonial unions with a contemporary audience and student cast.

KEYWORDS
Ana Caro Mallén de Soto; *Valor, agravio y mujer*; UCLA Diversifying the Classics; historiography; theatre production; *The Courage to Right a Woman's Wrongs*; Seville; queer lives

RESUMEN
Centrado en la producción de otoño de 2023 de Skidmore College de *The Courage to Right a Woman's Wrongs* (Valor, agravio y mujer) de Ana Caro, este artículo examina la teoría y la práctica histórica de recuperación en relación con las vidas queer y la identidad racial. El artículo también examina los desafíos de poner en escena el acto central de perdonar de parte del personaje principal tanto como las uniones matrimoniales heterosexuales al final de la obra, dados el público de hoy y un elenco estudiantil.

PALABRAS CLAVE
Ana Caro Mallén de Soto; *Valor, agravio y mujer*; UCLA Diversifying the Classics; historiografía; la producción teatral; *The Courage to Right a Woman's Wrongs*; Sevilla; las vidas quee

Forgiveness. Can you imagine?
—Lin-Manuel Miranda*, Hamilton*

In Ana Caro Mallén de Soto's *The Courage to Right a Woman's Wrongs* (*Valor, agravio y mujer*, 1630–1640?), the lead character of Leonor chooses forgiveness. In Leonor and in her author's moment, the choice might be characterized as merely a part of Christian doctrine. Yet, I contend that the choice is profoundly radical: Leonor's choice to forgive breaks the very vertebrae of Caro's early seventeenth-century societal structures of masculine honor and patriarchal culture. For a moment, before the final pages of the play, an *other* world is made possible. As we rehearsed the play in the fall of 2023, the world around us moved us to feel that *forgiveness*, as an act, might be increasingly unfathomable, and yet we embodied it all the same.

As director of the production of Caro's play, I found that *forgiveness*—its difficulties and unimaginable-ness—came to be a crucial gathering site for our work as a cast and production team as we labored with the play text on our own, with each other, with its histories, and with our audiences. The stakes of forgiveness guided us through the unique historiographical and theatrical work we undertook as part of the production concept. As director, I was intent not only on preserving the difficulties of the text, however anathema to the edicts of some contemporary feminist sensibilities and cancel culture alike, but also on recuperating—through actor imagination and embodiment—of both early modern queer history and the ethnic, racial, and religious diversity of seventeenth-century Sevillan presents and pasts, historical and mythological, including the storied *convivencia* of Muslims, Christians, and Jews in *al-Andalus*. These recuperative acts, informed by Daniel Banks (2013) and Saidiya Hartman (2020), guided my engagement with the play from my first reading. My production preparation began in Fall 2022. As we moved into rehearsals in September 2023, and public performance in November and December of the same year, these two areas of inquiry—limned with the (im)possibility of forgiveness—grew ever more complex and high stakes for the company as we grappled with continuing assaults on female, queer, and trans bodies alongside the 7 October Hamas attacks in Israel and Israel's subsequent invasion of Palestine.

The Theater Department at Skidmore College produced *The Courage to Right a Woman's Wrongs* in Fall 2023 as our mainstage production. We used the translation created by the UCLA Diversifying the Classics Project (Caro 2019). The recent introduction to the play, Caro, themes of honor, and the *comedia* as a form, as provided by Marta Albalá Pelegrín and Rafael Jaime (2019) and included

with the translation, spoke to my directorial concept; as such, in this piece, I will not discourse at length on the themes and the extant criticism of the play. Rather, I will focus on two aspects of my directing, in terms of both directorial point of view (interpretation or concept) and its realization in rehearsal and production: "staging forgiveness" and—to borrow from Herbert Blau (1982)—the "taking up of bodies."[1] I will end by sharing my program note in the hopes of offering an invitation to us all to continue to imagine.

Staging Forgiveness

In Caro's play, *Valor, agravio y mujer,* the character of Leonor has been wronged. Don Juan (a character informed by the Don Juan of the play attributed to Tirso de Molina, *El burlador de Sevilla*, yet re-formed in Caro 's play) promised to marry Leonor. They consummated their relationship. He then fled Seville without a goodbye, leaving Leonor dishonored. In the play, Leonor dons male clothing and, as Leonardo, follows Juan to Brussels, intent on killing him in order to restore her honor. The play is a rousing romp that follows Leonor's quest. One cannot but root for Leonor from her first appearance on stage. Though Juan is not the rapacious and amoral man of *El burlador*, neither he nor any male character in the play is ever as clever as Leonor. Through thrilling sword play and witful wrangling of text and context, Leonor—aching from heartbreak and more than a little blinded by rage—drives Juan nearly mad. Ready to take revenge, she suddenly pivots. She doffs her male garb, returns to the stage as Leonor, recounts her adventure, and hails Juan as her husband. The play's other three female characters, Flora, Estela, and Lisarda—all genre/gender breaking in their own right for their independence, strength, and formidable intellects—also pair off into neat cisgender, hetero-patriarchal matrimonial couples. Ostensibly (and formally and historically), this pairing is what an entire two-hour play of female intellect, strength, friendship, and vengeance drives toward. As such, it is not hard to imagine that my students, cast, audience, and professional collaborators alike found the marriage a hard pill to swallow.

As a director, I contend that the play's action does not (or does not have to) drive to the marriages. Rather, I argue that the play drives toward the moment when Leonor decides not to take vengeance—not to claim her rightful prize of

[1] The cast, stage management team, dramaturg, props designer, sound designer, fight captain, and assistant director were all undergraduate students at Skidmore College. Skidmore faculty designers included Sam Garwood, Gary Wilson, and Jared Klein. Dennis Schebetta, Skidmore faculty, served as intimacy coordinator and assistant fight director. Diego Villada, faculty at St. Mary's College, served as Guest Artist Fight Director, funded by the Miranda Family Fellowships at Skidmore College. This essay is dedicated to the memory of my mentor, Herbert Blau (1926-2013), inspiring scholar and artist.

murdering Juan. The rest of the play, written in but a few pages, is a neat packaging, a response to the theatrical conventions and the political and social imperatives of Caro's time.

In their final confrontation, Leonor (as Leonardo) and Juan agree to fight to the death. They are interrupted by Ribete (Leonor's servant), who sends Fernando (Leonor's brother) and Prince Ludovico to intercede. Fernando demands an explanation. The whole story of revenge tumbles out of Leonardo/Leonor who ultimately concludes:

> You see, I must avenge this wrong.
> Noble as I am, I seek only honor.
> It is mine now, *as is Leonor*. (Caro 2019, 3. vv. 2606–08)

The final phrase's emphasis here is my own. When her speech begins, Leonor's initial intention may have been to justify (and enact) the murder of Juan, yet, by the end of her speech she has reclaimed herself for herself, a fact of which she alone is aware as she is surrounded by men who know her only as Leonardo. Fernando, exasperated and unable to decipher how to restore his sister's lost honor (as it appears, from the presence of Leonardo—who proclaims himself Leonor's lover—that she is involved with not one but two men), decides that they must all kill each other since he sees no other solution. I quote the following text, noting our staging in parenthesis.

> FERNANDO. That's it. We must all kill each other. I can see no other way out.
> LUDOVICO. By God, / *¡Por Dios*! neither do I!
> And that would be so barbaric and violent.
>
> (*All four men draw their rapiers and prepare to advance. Leonardo raises his hand to halt the action. He steps forward, putting Juan on point with his rapier, the tip of the sword pointed straight at Juan's heart. Juan remains en garde, as do Ludovico and Fernando*).
>
> LEONOR. So had Leonor not broken
> the ties between you,
> had she not accepted my
> love, would you still love
> her?
>
> (*Leonardo keeps his sword pointed at Juan's heart. Juan releases his en garde, drops his sword to his side, opens his arms, and steps forward until*

Leonardo's sword point is touching his breast. He drops to his knees, offering his life to Leonardo.)

JUAN. I would adore her.

(*Leonardo breathes and slowly lowers his sword away from Juan's breast. Ludovico and Fernando relax.)*

LEONOR. Well, you'll see Leonor soon enough,
And perhaps you'll get your just desserts.

(*Juan offers his sword up to Leonardo. They had exchanged swords in the fight. Hence, he is giving the sword back but also de-arming himself as Leonardo stands for a moment with both his and Juan's rapiers.)*

JUAN. Where is she?
LEONOR. In Brussels.

(*Leonardo lays Juan's rapier in Juan's hands*.)

JUAN. What?
(*Leonardo sheathes his rapier*.)

LEONOR. Wait here a moment. (Caro 2019, 3. vv. 2634–48)

(*Leonardo exits. Ludovico and Fernando sheath their rapiers. Juan remains on his knees*.)

As I hope is clear from this extended description, I was interested in making Leonor's choice to *not* take Juan's life as crystal clear as possible. By rights, in her world, she should kill Juan—and, indeed, given his remorse and torment, such an act would free him as well. Yet, she does not. In this moment, I believe, we can see a world that is not honor-bound, that is not hung upon patriarchal authority, a world that is both much freer and much more difficult.

In their thorough and thoughtful introduction to the translation, Albalá Pelegrín and Jaime (2019) write:

> As Leonardo [Leonor] exposes a woman's experience of the male conception of honor. She also shows up the version of manhood embodied by Prince Ludovico and Don Juan, whose values are reduced to inconsistency, egotism, and cowardice. As Robert Bayliss has noted,

> Leonor's solidarity with Estela, her rival for the love of Don Juan, whom she needs to "defeat" in order to save her own honor, makes her not only "the best man in the play" [Bayliss, 320] but also a "better (hu)man" [Soufas, 89] when compared with the men she has managed to outwit. (14–15)

I suggest that the moment of Leonor choosing to forgive is yet more, still. As a scholar I work with decolonial thinkers. Maria Lugones (2007, 201) charges us to include gender oppression as a central tenet of the oppressions wrought by the modern/colonial system. Walter Mignolo (2011), taking from Anibal Quijano (2000), holds that changing the conversation is not enough for lasting change. One must change the very terms. Caro attempts and partially enacts exactly that in *Courage*, for a moment. When Leonor chooses to forgive, she steps out of the roles society would demand she play and, in doing so, liberates Juan, Fernando, and Ludovico as well. From that moment until the final marriages, none of the characters are on firm footing. Indeed, they continue to question what has happened. We are in a no-where space in the play, in which the very foundations of world are exploded, and the possibility of restructuring is tangible.

Through the staging and pacing of Leonor's choice to forgive, I amplified its power. Yet, how to stave off its foreclosing, wrought by the final marriages of the play? The answer, I believe, came from our historiographical, recuperative work.

When she returns to the stage, shed of Leonardo, Leonor hails by relationship the three male characters. Her first words, "Brother, Prince, husband" (Caro 2019, 3. vv. 2676), spoken aloud to the entire cast (i.e., estate) put people in their proper place—Fernando as her brother, Ludovico as her Prince, and Juan as her husband—through promises spoken.[2] In the next verses, four hurried cis-het marriages take place. But, what if they did not? Or, did not entirely? That is, we did not change the ending. But, through an additional layer of mimesis, we left uncertain its veracity, and thus legitimacy, allowing the cracking engendered by Leonor's act of forgiveness to continue its small, yet persistent fissuring.

Taking up the Bodies (of the Past in the Present . . . for the Future)

Blau (1982) writes that in the theatre, each performance *takes up the bodies*. He means this in a number of ways. Thinking with Blau, Marvin Carlson (2003), and Thomas Postlewait (2009) permit me to summarize this idea as I tend to it as a director. An actor stepping into Hamlet carries all previous Hamlets, just as the

[2] Though not formalized by the church, a union of spoken vows was often considered and treated as marriage in seventeenth-century Spain. Within the bonds of promised church-sanctioned marriage, sexual relations did not harm honor, and indeed marriages and relations such as these were respected by family and community alike.

actor also carries the original world of the play and its writing: histories and memories of human creation and culture. Due to the ephemerality of theatre, and its always already incomplete archive, the body is central. The body bears a kind of witness to lives past. Diana Taylor (2003) pushes the concept in a different way, tracking the relationship between the archive (the material past) and the repertoire (the embodied, the oral, the past that lives behind, between, and beyond the archive). These thinkers are key to my work as a scholar, a director, and a teacher of theatre history.

In my mind, these thinkers resonate still further with the work of Saidiya Hartman and Daniel Banks. For this project of Caro's (2019) *Courage*, I was thinking in particular of Hartman's (2020) *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiment,* in which, with deep and rigorous historical information, she imagines the lives of Black women and queer Black women at the turn of the twentieth century in the United States. These women existed, yet their lives are not documented in the archive. Hartman takes up their bodies in her writing and gives them living, breathing, loving, struggling pasts—prove-able? Perhaps not. Plausible, even probable? Yes. Finally, I return to Banks' (2013) article, "The Welcome Table: Casting for an Integrated Society," again and again as both director and teacher, in which the author calls out our limited historical imagination in terms of race. Banks is not advocating for color-blind casting but rather for more capacious thinking about the possibility of racial diversity in any given moment (which may not be archived), while simultaneously urging theatre practitioners to attend to history. Matthieu Chapman (2022), in "A Stained Glass Menagerie," makes another, resonant move. Recalling a 2012 production of that play in which a Black actor played Jim, Chapman speaks to how his excitement at the prospect turned to anger and despair when it became clear that the production had not grappled with what it would be like for a Black man to court a white woman in 1930s Missouri.

I spill out the theorists and ideas above so as to share them in a way that most closely matches how they were part of our production work. As a director, I do not analyze a text closely with theoretical passages. Rather, I move theory into practice. As such, these thinkers and practitioners lived alongside me, informing my approach and our work on the play.

For *Courage,* I grappled with how to make the recuperative work of queer lives and racial diversity—as well as the real exigencies under which Caro wrote in the seventeenth century—legible to our audience. Working in May 2023 with Reyn Ricafort, a third-year Theater major, I toyed with the idea of creating a company. That is, what if each actor I cast in the play created an additional role as a member of a 1608 production company in Seville, premiering Caro's play, and led by the actor playing Leonor, as *autora* (director/manager of the company)? As we continued to explore this idea, we became increasingly enamored of it. Not

only would it involve the actors directly in recuperative work (in the world of the play and the world in which it was written) in an imaginative and embodied way, but it would also allow us to surface relationships (and worlds) *other than* those with which the play ends. I like to think that our choice honors some of what may have been in Caro's mind and heart, if not in her text. Or, if not Caro's, a woman like her.

Thus, our production of *Courage* opened with the *autora*'s company preparing to premier Caro's play. The company would/could have been, we decided, led by the actor who plays Leonor/Leonardo; she could have been both *autora* and lead *comediante*. They would have employed regular company members and acting apprentices (to round out the company, complete on stage business, and understudy roles) and production personnel, akin to our production crew, as well as—possibly—fencing masters, costume designers, dance masters, wardrobe supervisors, and others. We decided to imagine that the *autora* had purchased Caro's *Valor, agravio, y mujer* to perform in a major corral in Seville. The company was well known and many of the actors, if not from Seville, may have felt Seville as a home. For others in the company, newly hired, this was their first season in a major theatrical city.

Ricafort served as my research assistant and research and production dramaturg. He unlocked, for the actors and the production team, two key sites: the divine justice of the play (amply written about by scholars, feminist and other) and queer lives and desire in seventeenth-century Spain. The research on the latter ranged across topics: catalogues and categories of sex toys for homosexual pleasure; long term and colloquially recognized female-female relationships; *la mujer varonil* as a literary trope; and primary sources that detailed how extreme or extraordinary experiences—be they physiological or intellectual—could change a person's gender. This work proved exciting, as we brought the actors along to understand the fluidity of gender, sex, and sexuality as well as the real existence of queer lives in the historical record. It also proved heartbreaking, as much of Reyn's source material relied upon inquisitorial records. This work informed the actors' creation of their fictional, yet historically informed, counterpart of the past.

As we conceptualized our fictional company, we drew inspiration from Rojas Villandrando's (1972) *El viaje entretenido* (1608), as well as from *Genealogía, origen y noticias de los comediantes de España* (Shergold and Varey, eds. 1985), the robust catalogue of theatre practitioners dating from the late seventeenth-century forward.[3] Although the artists of the *Geneología* lived and worked later than our fictional company, which we conceptualize as contemporary with Caro herself, the vast details and sheer number of theatre artisans and workers reflects a

[3] We explored the friendships, celebrity, and social and business relationships among theatre workers, as well (see Jackson-Schebetta 2023).

continuation of growth of the theatre. We also were inspired and informed by the *Diccionario biográfico de actores del teatro clásico español (*Ferrer Valles et al. 2008*)*. The details of the artists and artisans contained within these two works formed the basis of the actors' work creating their actor-character. This work was also directly contoured by the research and analysis of one of the actors in the production, Nina Renkert, a third-year Theater major. Nina researched and translated, for the company, many records of actors' lives. She was especially taken with the very real threats actors and theatre practitioners faced from the Inquisition. Alongside Nina's work, I shared histories of Seville as a port city, its documented racial diversity, particularly as detailed in the work of Nicholas R. Jones (2019) and Noémie Ndiaye (2022), and its pasts including those of *al-Andalus*. As we traversed the storied *convivencia*, the stakes of our journey shifted radically on 7 October 2023 and continued to shift through November and December. Simultaneously, the history/archive of two figures served as touchstones for us: Juan de Pareja, his manumition and rise as an artist in his own right, and that of Caro herself, possibly having been born as an enslaved person (see Pullins and Valdés 2023; and Escabias 2012).

We created a prologue, in which the company worked with historically informed storm-making devices—a wind machine, a thunder sheet, rain sticks—and ran through choreography, finished buttoning costumes, reviewed lines. The company actors embodied relationships they had created. For example, the actor who would play Leonor, and who was the *autora* of the company, moved about the stage checking in on each of her company members and sharing an intimate moment with her female lover. Within the backstage of this 1608 *compañía*, relationships queer and straight flourished: sexual and gender identities could be fluid while members of the company looked out for one another's well-being, protecting religious and racial identities, and histories. This *compañía*, inspired by histories of Seville and actors of the time, was multi-racial and multi-ethnic. Informed by research, students decided that some of the actors of this company hailed from Muslim and Jewish histories within this Catholic nation of Spain. The prologue gave way to the first moments of the play: the historically informed storm machines began their work and were taken over by the sound and light design; the *compañía* hurried off stage for places; and we plunged into the tempest of the first pages of Caro's play.

We also created an epilogue. In the final moments of the play, after the text's marriages, the world of the play broke apart to give way, again, to the world of the *compañía*. The pacing slowed, movement became dreamlike, the music of the *compañía* came up, and flower petals fell from the rafters. The characters of the play were physically dropped by the actors, as the actors of the *compañía* hugged and congratulated one another. Friends and lovers paired off across lines of gender, sexuality, and race. An *other* world.

In the theatre we represent a play, and we also rehearse possible worlds. In *Latinx Theater in the Times of Neo-Liberalism*, Patty Ybarra (2017) makes the case that theatre is uniquely situated for this enterprise. By wresting the impossible into flesh and blood staging (as Blau [1982] would say, the blooded thought that is theatre), we quite materially make the impossible into a possible. By experiencing as actor or audience a possible embodied, that world becomes more viable. The difficulties and contradictions of Caro's play, borne of her historical moment, challenge us to ask difficult questions, to flex the muscle of our curiosity, and to consider the ways in which contradiction and difficulty in a playtext invites the recuperation of lives un-archived and archived alike. In taking up the bodies of the past, we refract and reflect our present even as we imagine (and embody) more just, more equitable, more beautiful futures.

To end I share my director's note (Jackson-Schebetta 2023), which appeared in our program for audience members to read. It repeats some of the ideas mentioned above but in a particular form. It functioned (and functions here, I hope) as an invitation into Caro's world and into worlds otherwise.

Director's Note

When I first read this play in its new translation, I was delighted.

Yet, I also asked myself about the ending. How can we, in this moment, capture and communicate the radical nature of Caro's work, despite what appears to us, as contemporary spectators, a staid, conventional ending that neatly pairs everyone up into cis-gender heterosexual matrimony?

Caro's Leonor is seeking justice—not only for being spurned by a lover. She is seeking to right the wrongs, I believe, that cis-het-patriarchal society commits against humanity. In this play, Leonor (through Caro) declares war against the society in which she lives, a society that delimits possibilities, instills hierarchies, and exploits body, heart, mind, and soul.

Contradictions abound. Leonor also loves. She forgives. She revels in heterosexual union.

We can hold opposing thoughts in our minds, I believe, and perhaps we sometimes must. (And perhaps comedy is best suited to help us do so.) Caro's Spain is that wrought by los Reyes Católicos*, her king ruling with the divine right and allyship of Rome. At the same time, let us consider that Caro was likely born into slavery, and quite plausibly born Muslim. She may have become a* converso *upon her adoption by a Christian family. Though the Inquisition, with its murderous practices, is alive and well by the time Caro writes, Spain is far from the homogenous,*

pure-blood, and wholly Catholic site Ferdinand and Isabel may have envisioned. On the one hand, Caro lives in a patriarchal society and must play by appropriate rules. On the other, she is breaking all manner of expectations, in her life and her play—just as theatre in Spain did. Women not only played on stage: they ran companies. Race as experienced in 1600s Spain is not the same as we understand race today. Gender and sexuality were not as stable as we might suppose.

The play opens with the very elements in disarray. The world is amok, not unlike the un-natural acts described in Macbeth*, after Duncan's murder. Something dreadfully wrong is afoot, so much so that the world itself is in upheaval. This wrong is not just Leonor's tarnished honor, but the very system that enables such strictures to exist. Leonor has more than earthly vengeance on her side. She has a justice beyond mortal worlds to enact for the liberation of all humans—if they are worthy of it. And she will decide.*

All the women marry men at the end. And one gets sold. In the world of 1600s Spain, in the public theatre (site of transgression under the watchful eye of the Church), heterosexual union enacts a rightness of the world. And we hardly need to be reminded, I hope, that the early modern world, in its ever-developing capitalist structures, was quite keen on the commodification of bodies. Of course, we also well know that marriage was a trope used to end comedies across Europe. Yet, perhaps, too, the final moments of the play excused all the heresy of its previous minutes, thereby ensuring the safety of Caro, and any company that performed it, from scrutiny or worse.

How, in 2023, to honor the text and the stakes of its (and its author's and players') contexts while also cracking the world open, as Leonor (and Caro) might have wanted? A more just, more loving world beyond the cis-het patriarchy? The stakes of that seem very high: to see what it is and has been, and also to imagine (and rehearse) its breaking.

Our concept, thus, became that the company of Skidmore actors would research and construct characters that are all members of a 1600s Spanish theatre company, performing in Seville, set to premiere Caro's play. Thus, Gigi Brown plays a Spanish autora *who is preparing to perform Leonor, with her company.*

Through this device, we break open the play as we believe Caro was breaking open her world, as the world breaks open for, and through, Leonor. We are able to mine rich historical spaces, recuperating queer histories as well as racial, religious, and ethnic histories. We attempt to hold the past and the present, in its terror and wonder, even as we imagine, and rehearse, futures. (November 2023)

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Helena Pimenta y la creación de una poética posmoderna entorno a los clásicos

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RESUMEN
El presente artículo traza un recorrido por las distintas obras que Helena Pimenta montó durante su paso por la Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico (CNTC), primero como artista invitada y, más adelante, como directora de dicha institución (2011–2019). Si tenemos en cuenta toda la obra que produjo a lo largo de este periodo, podemos distinguir la creación de una poética en torno a la puesta en escena de los clásicos. El trabajo en equipo—concebido como un laboratorio artístico, la transposición justificada a épocas modernas, la dimensión monumental de sus producciones, la profundización estética en ciertos conceptos, y la exposición del mensaje social—logran acercar la comedia a una poética posmoderna única. Como resultado de este *savoir-faire* escénico, Pimenta se ha consolidado como una de las mejores directoras de teatro clásico de España.

PALABRAS CLAVES
Helena Pimenta, teatro del Siglo de Oro, poética, puesta en escena, posmodernidad, Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico (CNTC)

ABSTRACT
This article provides a comprehensive overview of the various productions directed by Helena Pimenta during her tenure at the Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico (CNTC), first as a guest artist and later as the director from 2011 to 2019. Examining the plays she directed during this period reveals her distinctive style in bringing early modern Spanish theatre to contemporary audiences. Her approach treated her team as an artistic laboratory, involving the justified transposition of classical plays to modern settings, the monumental scale of her productions, and a deep exploration of certain concepts. She also highlighted the social messages of these works in a manner resonant with modern sensibilities, establishing her as one of the most prominent directors of classical theatre in Spain.

KEYWORDS
Helena Pimenta, Golden Age, poetics of the stage, performance, postmodernity, Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico (CNTC)

Nuestro público actual . . . no quierenuna identificación, quiere descubrir una poética que está en el sonido, en la emoción, en las imágenesy esa ha sido la fortuna de mi momento con el Clásico, y todos los de dentro lo hemos entendido muy bien.

—Helena Pimenta, "Entrevista"

Hablar de Helena Pimenta (Salamanca, 1955) y de su labor con el teatro clásico español es adentrarse en un sugerente imaginario, en un estado mental, podríamos decir. Con más de treinta años de experiencia dedicados al mundo de la escena, Pimenta se ha convertido en una de las directoras de mayor prestigio en España y en una de las pocas especialistas en Shakespeare de nuestro país. Desde que empezó a escenificar las obras del bardo con UR Teatro hasta su paso como directora de la Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico (CNTC), cuya sede se encuentra en Madrid, Pimenta ha conseguido crear un universo propio a partir de la comedia del Siglo de Oro, al que imprime una visión estética y una proyección social que merece examinarse como una auténtica poética de la escena.

Aunque sus trabajos suelen tener una difusión mediática considerable, hasta la fecha no se ha realizado un repaso global de su trayectoria como directora, especialmente en los ocho años que estuvo al frente de la CNTC. Durante ese periodo, e incluso en algunos montajes anteriores que dirigió para esta misma compañía como artista invitada, Pimenta ha desarrollado una máquina de sueños con sus propias señas de identidad. El presente artículo tiene la misión de conducir a los lectores por una serie de pautas que delinean esta visión de conjunto de la directora. Su estética conceptual y a la vez monumental y su compromiso social se transforman en poderosos instrumentos que convierten la comedia en clásicos posmodernos, trabajados desde una lente crítica y reflexiva.

La búsqueda de un lenguaje propio

Pimenta se licenció en Filología Inglesa y Francesa en la Universidad de Salamanca, y su vocación teatral surgió precisamente de la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras cuando ejerció como profesora en el instituto Koldo Mitxelena de Rentería, en Guipúzcoa. En 1978 fundó la compañía Atelier, y fue allí donde dio sus primeros pasos como directora de manera semiprofesional con obras como El *avaro* de Molière (1980), *La cantante calva* y *La lección* de Eugène Ionesco (1981) o *Esperando a Godot* de Samuel Beckett (1982). También escribió y dirigió *Cándido* (1983), *Dantería* (1984), *Procesados* (1986) y *Xespir* (1987).

A raíz de estas experiencias, crea diez en 1987, en San Sebastián, UR Teatro y se adentra principalmente en la obra de Shakespeare. Este variado y atípico recorrido la prepara para su nombramiento como directora de la Compañía

Nacional de Teatro Clásico (CNTC) en 2011, un puesto que ocupó hasta 2019, siendo, además, la primera mujer en liderar dicha institución.

Su tratamiento experimental de los clásicos, tanto isabelinos como del Siglo de Oro, se cuece a fuego lento durante todos estos años, pero su origen se proyecta en una serie de producciones en los setenta y ochenta que dejaron en ella una profunda huella. La puesta en escena de *Quejío* (1973) dirigida por Salvador Távora, *Cándido* (1976) producido por el Teatro Experimental Independiente (TEI) y *Mahabarata* (1985) de Peter Brook fueron modelos de los que Pimenta bebió para recrear una poética propia a lo largo de los años. Por una parte, *Quejío* fue para ella un potente ejemplo de *performance* social que denunciaba la opresión del proletariado andaluz y el desgarrador grito de los más débiles.

Por otra parte, la propuesta experimental del *Cándido* de Voltaire evidenciaba el espíritu colaborativo en el hecho teatral y un esfuerzo por despertar un espíritu crítico en el público, algo que Pimenta implementará como parte de su *savoir-faire* (Lisowska 2015, 420). Finalmente, la directora bebió de *Mahabarata* (1985) las dimensiones monumentales de un proyecto que aglutinaba la milenaria cultura de la India en un enfrentamiento épico entre el bien y el mal.

Además de estos tres montajes, su trayectoria en Atelier y en UR Teatro ya anticipaba una poética posmoderna en relación con los clásicos. Pimenta parte de la palabra como la principal vía, a la que va sumando otros lenguajes como el gestual, el vocal, el musical y el visual, ampliando en su imaginario artístico el significado de estas obras de arte en movimiento.

Si bien nunca evitó el riesgo que suponía la modernización de los clásicos, y apostó por propuestas comprometidas desde sus primeras adaptaciones de Shakespeare, su objetivo era el conectar con el espectador medio y reflexionar sobre la intolerancia, la injusticia y la violencia, especialmente en medio de una época compleja en el País Vasco. Desde entonces, nunca abandonó esta llamada crítica y esperanzadora a la vez, de la mano de los clásicos. Como ella misma ha afirmado:

> Llegué a Rentería en el setenta y ocho. Había muerto Franco y todos estábamos convencidos de que se podía construir un mundo mejor En aquel momento era una necesidad vital para comprender el mundo que me estaba rodeando. Hasta para comprender el clima. Me gustaba decir que yo veía el sol dentro de la sala, cuando se encendían los focos. (Pimenta y Hernández Nieto 2024)

España nunca ha sido un país con una larga tradición en la puesta en escena de las obras de Shakespeare. La falta de buenas traducciones había mantenido el teatro del bardo rezagado en comparación con otros países europeos.

Pimenta y su equipo de UR Teatro se convirtieron en unos de los primeros en

adaptar a Shakespeare sin complejos y desde un calculado desparpajo, lo que significó, una revolución escénica sin precedentes en nuestro país. Sin embargo, el espíritu de superación la llevó a distanciarse de la comodidad de su éxito con el drama isabelino y a abrirse un nuevo camino artístico en el teatro del Siglo de Oro, llevando consigo su experiencia y su método de trabajo.

Pimenta es una fiel creyente en la colaboración artística. Siempre que puede, tiende a trabajar con un grupo de profesionales estable con el que forja lazos de confianza. Durante su paso por la CNTC, los nombres de los creativos (escenógrafo, iluminador, figurinista, coreógrafa, adaptador, diseñador sonoro) suelen ser los mismos en cada montaje. Los recursos de la CNTC le permitieron, en ocasiones, recurrir a especialistas que aportaban características necesarias para una determinada producción. Un ejemplo sería la inclusión del acordeonista Vadzim Yukhnevich en el montaje de *Donde hay agravio no hay celos*, cuyas habilidades musicales con el acordeón resultaban imprescindibles para recrear una atmósfera urbana y, a la vez la cercanía de las emociones (Zubieta 2014, 33).[1]

Para la selección de actores, Pimenta siguió una política similar. Aunque la directora tendía a trabajar con un equipo actoral estable, en algunos montajes decidió incluir a personalidades de renombre que matizaran aspectos específicos de un personaje y abrieran puentes de diálogo y aprendizaje con el resto del elenco. Así mismo lo expresó la directora en una entrevista con Javier Huerta Calvo (2012): "Hay que aprovechar los esfuerzos de las jóvenes generaciones, que vienen muy preparadas, pero al mismo tiempo mirar hacia atrás, a quienes nos ha precedido, a esos grandes actores y actrices, ya veteranos y con mucha experiencia en la interpretación de los clásicos, y a los que me gustaría invitar" (135).

Este fue el caso de Carmelo Gómez que protagonizó *El alcalde de Zalamea* (2015) o de Blanca Portillo que interpretó el papel de Segismundo en *La vida es sueño* (2012). Respecto a Portillo, es interesante destacar que Pimenta recurrió a ella para subrayar las cualidades del protagonista de Calderón como un ser capaz de traspasar las fronteras de género a la hora de encarnar a ese Ser Humano en el sentido más amplio e inclusivo de la palabra.

Este equilibrio entre una atmósfera de repertorio y una disposición abierta a nuevas posibilidades se ve también en la activa política de coproducciones de la CNTC. Durante el mandato de Pimenta, este esfuerzo colaborativo se enriqueció aún más con nuevas propuestas como *La voz de nuestros clásicos*. Dicha iniciativa, llevada a cabo en colaboración con los centros europeos del Instituto Cervantes, planteaba un sencillo montaje alrededor de una lectura dramatizada por actores habituales de la CNTC de una serie de escenas famosas de distintas comedias. A estos encuentros se sumaban la asistencia de otras compañías y la

[1] Para las fechas de estreno y las fichas de producción correspondiente a cada uno de los montajes mencionados en este artículo refiero al lector al Apéndice al final del estudio.

presencia de alumnos, profesores e investigadores locales que daban lugar a un constructivo diálogo en torno al legado del barroco español, abierto a nuevas perspectivas y reflexiones comparativas.

Ahora bien, aunque la compañía fue un genuino espacio de encuentro intelectual y creativo, los montajes dirigidos por Pimenta están marcados por una serie de líneas estéticas y conceptuales que llevan el sello de la directora. Es como si ella tejiera sus montajes a través de un lenguaje escénico común, surgido de la estrecha colaboración con su equipo de creativos que van dando forma y textura a la teatralidad de estas obras teniendo siempre en mente el impulso de acercarlas al espectador actual.

La infinitud de los clásicos

En una reciente entrevista, Pimenta hablaba de la infinitud de los clásicos (Pimenta y Hernández Nieto, 2024), un concepto que bien podría estar en la base de su poética. A nivel personal, la directora se ha definido como una mujer dividida entre la tradición y la modernidad: "Soy de Salamanca. Es mi origen, mi lugar de referencia cuando estoy alegre y cuando estoy triste. Esta tendencia mía por el teatro clásico tiene que ver con esas calles que yo atravesaba desde niña. Salamanca es para mí la tradición. . . . Cuando después voy al País Vasco se desarrolla la modernidad" (Pimenta y Amestoy 2011, 58).

Estos puentes innatos con el pasado han creado un continuum cultural hasta el presente, desde el cual nuestra directora articula su visión del teatro clásico. No basta con que sean obras maestras; el arte y, hasta cierto punto, la responsabilidad del director está en transmitir esta grandiosidad al espectador, y más aún, tratándose de una compañía pública al servicio del ciudadano, como la CNTC. Así lo expresaba el propio Adolfo Marsillach (1989) en su declaración de principios al fundar esta compañía: "Plantearse—respetuosamente, desde luego—qué podrían decir los clásicos al espectador de hoy, más allá de la admiración cultural" (167).

Una parte central de la misión artística de Pimenta es recrear la monumentalidad de los clásicos, pero hacerlo de un modo que estos resulten accesibles, cercanos al público y capaces de convivir con este en el mismo espacio con la mayor naturalidad. Para lograr este objetivo, Pimenta parte de alguna pista visual, la mayoría de las veces un cuadro o una fotografía que le haya impactado. Es a partir de este primer acercamiento que la directora involucra al resto de los creativos para ir dando forma a la obra y, en cierto modo, ampliando incluso su significado original.

La pista visual que Pimenta propone como punto de partida para la elaboración del resto del montaje suele apuntar hacia una época posterior al siglo XVII, con la que el espectador de hoy en día puede tener referentes concretos en relación a expresiones culturales más modernas provenientes del cine, de la

cultura popular y del clima sociopolítico de épocas más recientes.

Una de las franjas históricas favoritas de Pimenta es el principio del siglo XX, en particular, las décadas que van de 1910 a 1930. Esta transposición histórica, con la que ya había experimentado en el pasado con UR Teatro en montajes de Shakespeare, no es una caprichosa licencia artística; al contrario, son décadas convulsivas en la historia de España por la crisis social y una nobleza en decadencia con claras similitudes con el Siglo de Oro.

Los años veinte, por ejemplo, época en la que Pimenta ambienta su adaptación de *La dama boba*, montaje que además marcó su primer contacto con la CNTC como directora invitada, dialoga con la sensación vertiginosa de locura pasajera, de movimiento migratorio del campo hacia las grandes ciudades, de aperturismo en relación a la situación de la mujer. La directora utiliza esta época para matizar el largo camino que quedaba por recorrer en los derechos de la mujer, más allá del sufragio femenino o la brecha entre generaciones aún difícil de superar.

El espectador del siglo XXI tiene referentes de la cultura cinematográfica con los que es capaz de orientarse con facilidad y entender el peso de un pasado lo suficientemente lejano y a la vez cercano, que le hace sentirse identificado y reflexionar, no ya sobre uno, sino sobre dos periodos históricos paralelos de nuestra historia (Pimenta 2002, 26). Esta modernización de los clásicos por la que apuesta Pimenta es más una manera de adentrar al público en una reflexión sobre la estructura cíclica de la historia que una estrategia para simplificar la comedia del Siglo de Oro.

En su versión de *La verdad sospechosa*, los años veinte vuelven a envolver el contexto histórico del montaje para recalcar la historia de un Madrid que experimentaba una modernización urbanística radical. A nivel moral, la España de la época arrastraba una serie de valores erróneos propios de una aristocracia venida a menos que tenía que lidiar con un momento de transformación para el cual no estaba preparada (Andújar 2013, 64).

De la mano de Pimenta y de su equipo, los clásicos encuentran un continuismo natural en épocas modernas. El arte de nuestra directora radica precisamente en encontrar el momento óptimo de nuestra era desde donde estas obras pueden renovarse y, al mismo tiempo, mantener su esencia original. En este sentido, son significativas las palabras de Juan Mayorga (2001), uno de los adaptadores y dramaturgos con los que ha trabajado la directora, quien considera la tarea de versionar como si fuera traducir los textos "dentro de un mismo lenguaje," pero "entre dos tiempos" (61).

Una vez establecido ese periodo clave, cuya esencia Pimenta suele buscar en una imagen, el resto de los creativos inician un delicado arte de cirugía artística que también implica un riguroso proceso de investigación. Este proceso se extiende desde la adaptación textual hasta el diseño sonoro, pasando por toda una serie de capas visuales como la escenografía, el vestuario y la iluminación, que

terminan engranándose a la perfección como si se tratara de una maquinaria de reloj.

Aunque en las escenografías de Pimenta prima lo pragmático, no podemos dejar de recalcar su simbolismo de espacios exteriorizados y abiertos, que dejan ver el horizonte como si fuera un símbolo esperanzador ante los mundos cerrados que viven los protagonistas en su interior, sujetos a la tiranía del honor y de las convenciones sociales. Si bien es obvio que el elemento pragmático está en la base del diseño de estos decorados (De Uña 2002, 29), resulta imposible separarlos de estas evocaciones conceptuales.

La escenografía de *La dama boba*, por ejemplo, está construida a base de módulos que recuerdan a una gran valla de madera. Estos paneles se mueven creando distintos espacios simbólicos, lo que nos remite a la mente de las dos protagonistas y a lo que pueden estar pensando. En este sentido, esta estructura lineal y abierta del escenario funciona también como un gran libro abierto donde el público puede ir escribiendo la historia de las dos protagonistas desde su interpretación personal.[2]

Para el resto de los montajes en los que Pimenta asume el rol de directora, Pimenta vuelve a rodearse de un equipo estable de escenógrafos e iluminadores que se ponen al servicio del diseño de un tipo de espacios conceptuales muy distintos para contener la acción. Dejando a un lado la escenografía de *El alcalde de Zalamea* a cargo de Max Glaenzel, todas las demás producciones siguen un diseño de un espacio interior relativamente más cerrado o contenido. Concretamente, *La vida es sueño*, *El perro del hortelano*, *El castigo sin venganza* nos remiten a ambientes palaciegos de distintas épocas que van, desde el siglo XVII (*La vida*) a principios del siglo XX (*El perro*, *El castigo sin venganza*).

De manera complementaria, *Donde hay agravios no hay celos* y *La dama duende* representan viviendas y espacios madrileños, también contenidos en estructuras visualmente impactantes y de muy distinta índole. En *Donde hay agravios*, la escenógrafa, Esmeralda Díaz, propone una estructura octogonal de una casa del Madrid del siglo XVII que representa un viejo teatro de madera como el Globe, en forma de una gran cuba en la que se juntan Apolo y Dionisio. Las ranuras entre las maderas por las que se infiltra la luz "dan la idea de que nada es estanco […] simbolizando que existe un mundo menos coartado y más apasionado que este por el que están transitando los personajes" (Zubieta 2014, 32).

En *La verdad sospechosa* y *La dama duende*, Pimenta traslada la acción a principios del siglo XX y a espacios que comparten una esencia de inquietante fantasía: una estructura de un prisma inclinado remachado con azulejos verdes en *La verdad* y una casa de la alta burguesía en *La dama*. Ambos ambientes están

[2] Me limito a citar solo algunas de las producciones para ilustrar los argumentos que presento, por razones de espacio.

marcados por esa sensación de lo *unheimlich*, un fenómeno con el que Freud describió lo que nos resulta conocido y desconocido y que, simultáneamente, nos atrae y nos repele. Al respecto, Pimenta (2013) explica en relación con la configuración y significado de la escenografía de *La verdad*:

> Colocamos en el escenario solo una de seis esquinas. Es cierto que es un elemento un poco agresivo y además el suelo está en pendiente; son todos elementos que producen inquietud en el espectador, dan la sensación de que no estamos pisando terreno firme y, en fin, eso es lo que la obra cuenta. Como es un cubo incompleto y el espectador por intuición tiende a completar las formas, es como si le hubiéramos dado la vuelta al escenario y junto a la pendiente se crea una perspectiva que sugiere inestabilidad, características relacionadas con el juego de la mentira. (53–54)

No obstante, si hay algo que todos estos espacios tienen en común son toda una infinidad de grietas, ventanas, puertas, lucernarios, y techos acristalados por los que se filtra una luz que puede provenir del exterior o de otros mundos que aporta nuevas posibilidades y sugerentes dualidades barrocas, como el interior y el exterior, la realidad y el sueño, las luces y las sombras de nuestro inconsciente *El alcalde de Zalamea* es la obra que más se aparta del esquema al que acabamos de aludir. Al ser una tragedia rural, la que las fuerzas exteriores y el mal parecen estar latentes desde el inicio y son capaces de arrasar con la intimidad de la familia de Pedro Crespo y dejarla literalmente a la intemperie a nivel físico y moral.

Pimenta elige representar precisamente este paisaje anímico con una pared de fondo propia del juego de pelota, que remite no solo a la cultura vasca, sino también a una época ancestral, inspirada en las texturas abstractas y las dimensiones abiertas de artistas como Eduardo Chillida y Antoni Tàpies. Según avanza la obra, esta superficie se va manchando gradualmente a través de pintadas y juegos de luces y sombras, hasta finalmente resquebrajarse, una vez que la existencia de la familia de Pedro Crespo queda mancillada sin remedio. Esta evolución orgánica de la escenografía ocurre en el montaje de *La vida es sueño*. En este caso, se trata de un palacio europeo de estilo barroco y decadente que se destruye como consecuencia de la irrupción de la guerra en el desenlace de la obra.

La utilería es minimalista para no romper con la atmósfera general. Los muebles y objetos que completan la escenografía son altamente simbólicos, como las lanzas en *El alcalde de Zalamea*, que atraviesan literalmente el espacio civil y metafóricamente el cuerpo de Isabel (Glaenzel 2015, 87). De manera similar, el espejo que aparece en *El castigo sin venganza* viene a reflejar, literalmente, la relación sexual entre Casandra y Federico que Aurora sólo atina a expresar por

medio de medias palabras pero que desencadena la tragedia final.[3]

En aquellos montajes que sugieren atmósferas urbanas dotadas de cierta esencia inquietante, como en *La verdad sospechosa* o *La dama duende*, los muebles aparecen y desaparecen en escena por arte de magia, lo que contribuye a subrayar un umbral entre lo onírico y lo realidad vivida que se refleja, incluso, en el vestuario de las actrices. Los trajes de época tienen un toque de fantasía y exuberancia que caracteriza a las protagonistas como entes de cuento o seres recién salidos de un cuadro, a medio camino entre lo real y lo maravilloso. Un ejemplo sería el vestuario de las heroínas de *La verdad sospechosa*, inspiradas en las pinturas de Ramón Casas y José Solana, que parecen etéreas, salidas del imaginario mediterráneo en su eterna añoranza por el mar dentro de ese Madrid asfixiante y lleno de decepciones (Pimenta 2013, 54). La capa roja que luce doña Ángela en *La dama duende* cuando sale a la calle de incógnito y rompe con la existencia confinada impuesta por sus hermanos, también la convierten en un individuo maravilloso, un duende rebelde que recorre las calles de Madrid en busca de su libertad.

Igualmente, los figurines de *Donde hay agravios no hay celos* siguieron un diseño con rasgos de cuento. Así lo explica Tatiana Hernández (2014), la diseñadora de vestuario: "Hemos trabajado para hacer que la comedia fuera un poco como un cuento que relata la historia de una familia concreta y como esa familia se va abriendo al amor, a los colores, a las relaciones, a todos esos elementos que permiten que la comicidad salga a flote" (73).

Si tenemos en cuenta todo lo dicho hasta ahora sobre la espectacularidad orgánica de las puestas en escenas de Pimenta, sobresale en todas ellas un umbral entre lo desgarradamente humano y un universo lleno de matices maravillosos que eleva estas comedias hacia un plano casi mítico.

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Aunque en un tono muy distinto, en *El castigo sin venganza* un coro de seres

[3] Para un riguroso análisis de este montaje y, específicamente, de la función del espejo en la obra, véase Fischer (2020).

vestidos de negro y con bombín, con claras reminiscencias al montaje de *El médico de su honra* que dirigió Marsillach para la CNTC en 1986, revolotea alrededor de los protagonistas, anticipando la tragedia hasta convertirse en cómplices silenciosos de la venganza del Duque de Ferrara.[4] El diseño sonoro en la mayoría de las mencionadas producciones incluye música en directo para profundizar en la creación de ambientes y sellar estos mundos autosuficientes creados desde la escena. Los músicos se integran en muchas ocasiones en la trama y, de cierta manera, pasan a convertirse en vehículos que proyectan la ficción al patio de butacas.[5]

La reconstrucción de la mujer en escena

Resulta incompleto realizar una semblanza artística de Helena Pimenta como la que hemos intentado hacer a lo largo de este artículo sin tener en cuenta el bagaje social, que transmiten muchos de sus montajes. Creemos que se puede afirmar con cierta seguridad que la directora siente profundamente la cuestión femenina en su propia piel, tanto a nivel personal como artístico. Su trabajo está marcado por una óptica a caballo entre lo femenino y lo feminista. Sin embargo, sus obras no caen en el activismo ni resultan reivindicativas. Pimenta se limita a abrirnos caminos para la reflexión y a despertar en el público una mirada crítica y constructiva hacia un pasado que sigue pesando sobre nuestro presente.

A nivel profesional, sus inicios no fueron fáciles, ya que tuvo que pelear para hacerse un hueco en los escenarios en una época en la que las directoras teatrales eran una *rara avis*, debido a que la figura todopoderosa del "hombre de teatro" todavía dominaba. Ariane Mnouchkine y Nuria Espert fueron sus "espejos,"como a ella le gusta denominarlas, para hacerse un lugar propio en las tablas (Huerta Calvo 2012, 130). La defensa de la mujer, en su sentido más amplio y global, es algo que Pimenta reclama de manera restaurativa en todas sus obras, al recalcar su voz y rescatar su centralidad en las tramas y en una Historia que ha tendido a borrarlas.

En algunos casos, como el de Isabel de *El alcalde de Zalamea*, son protagonistas que solo pretenden ser escuchadas (García Fernández 2020, 223). En otras ocasiones, estas heroínas aspiran a liberarse de las constricciones

[4] En esta obra, la espectral presencia de la actriz italiana Isabella Andreini, mencionada al principio del primer acto, cobra una vida espectral al cantar en directo y encarnar la atormentada consciencia del Duque (véase Fischer 2020).

[5] El trabajo de verso, a cargo del renombrado especialista Vicente Fuentes, también resulta indispensable para unir todas las demás artes implicadas en la puesta en escena: "Es un trabajo conjunto de *cocinar* el texto por parte de todo el equipo, porque una sola palabra que Vicente pone en relieve, también lo hará el iluminador o el coreógrafo. Tenemos que hablar mucho todo el tiempo para conseguir crear juntos un espectáculo que llegue por muchos sentidos al público, y que consiga que el espectador se haga una idea global de él" (Pimenta y Vila 2016).

impuestas a su género y a su rango social, en los que se ven atrapadas por la tiranía del honor, eje del sistema patriarcal en el que viven.

Estos patrones de conductas rebeldes tan presentes en la comedia del Siglo de Oro adquieren matices más profundos y reflexivos de la mano de Pimenta. Además de la liberación, estas mujeres buscan reconstruirse a sí mismas. No es, por lo tanto, una mera coincidencia que las actrices que nuestra directora escoge para encarnar a tales protagonistas, como Nuria Gallardo, Marta Póveda o Blanca Portillo, por citar solo algunas de ellas, inundan a sus alter egos con una fortaleza que subraya la lucha por reivindicar sus derechos al precio de arriesgar su reputación y su vida. Este sería el caso de doña Ángela en *La dama duende*, de Diana en *El perro del hortelano* o de Casandra en *El castigo sin venganza*.

En otras obras, como en *La dama boba*, las heroínas eligen auto marginarse de la sociedad y emprender una lucha psicológica contra el sistema. Finea, sin ir más lejos, renuncia conscientemente a madurar y se cristaliza en el arquetipo de la *puella aeterna*. Mientras tanto, su hermana Nise bloquea su crecimiento sentimental refugiándose en el intelecto, lo que automáticamente la margina socialmente, como reconoce su propio padre, en esos versos: "Si me casara agora (y no te espante / esta opinión, que alguno lo autoriza), / de dos extremos: boba o bachillera, / de la boba elección, sin duda hiciera" (Lope de Vega 2006, vv. 213–16, Primera jornada).

Si Pimenta no esconde la lucha que emprenden sus heroínas por alcanzar su dignidad, tampoco suprime el sabor amargo que dejan muchas de estas comedias al incitar al espectador a reconstruir los finales superficialmente felices de manera mucho más reflexiva y consciente. La directora enmarca el desenlace de *La dama boba* en un fin de fiesta donde los personajes, embriagados después de una noche sin dormir, sellan unos matrimonios que no pueden dejar de provocar serias dudas en el espectador de hoy en día.

Es también significativo, a propósito de *La vida es sueño*, la elección de la actriz Blanca Portillo para representar el papel de Segismundo. Con esta decisión, Pimenta no hace más que amplificar la dimensión humana del protagonista y demostrar la porosidad que existe entre los géneros al hablar de conceptos como la injusticia, la dignidad y la libertad.

Pimenta subraya el papel de las protagonistas de la comedia como seres humanos, portavoces de su género, pero también representantes de la condición humana. A partir de sus montajes, entendemos la historia de la mujer en el siglo XVII, pero también los puentes que la unen a nuestro presente en un sentido que transgrede las fronteras del tiempo, del espacio y del género.

*

Pimenta universaliza a los clásicos y, para ello, recurre a los múltiples lenguajes

que le ofrece la escena, como los matices poéticos del verso barroco, la plasticidad de la escenografía, del vestuario y de la iluminación, y la textura sonora de la ambientación musical. Su arte consiste, por lo tanto, en saber imbricar todas estas capas de significado para crear paisajes anímicos y conceptuales que apelan a los sentidos del espectador y son capaces de despertar un pensamiento crítico.

En este sentido, Pimenta sí podría considerarse una directora reivindicativa, pero desde la profundidad reflexiva que encuentra en el arte, la estética y el concepto. Todas las puestas en escena mencionadas a lo largo de este estudio abogan por demostrar la universalidad de nuestros clásicos, al despojarlos de viejos prejuicios y revestirlos de una majestuosa y elegante dignidad. Ante tales espectáculos monumentales a nivel estético e intelectual, el espectador no puede dejar de reverenciar la resiliencia que ha demostrado tener la comedia barroca a través de los siglos. Con estas puestas en escena atemporales, Pimenta consigue que miremos cara a cara a nuestros clásicos y reconozcamos las luces y las sombras de nuestro pasado y, desde una mirada crítica y, a veces, incómoda, aceptemos lo que nos queda por hacer.

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APÉNDICE

Índice de montajes y equipos creativos dirigidos exclusivamente por Helena Pimenta para la Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico (CNTC)

La dama boba **(Lope de Vega). 2002. Teatro de la Comedia (Madrid)**
Versión: Juan Mayorga
Asesor de verso: Vicente Fuentes
Coreografía: Eduardo Ruiz
Escenografía: José Tomé y Susana de Uña
Vestuario: Rosa García Andújar
Iluminación: Miguel Ángel Camacho
Espacio sonoro: Eduardo Vasco

La entretenida **(Cervantes). 2005. Teatro Pavón (Madrid)**
Versión: Yolanda Pallín
Escenografía: José Tomé
Vestuario: Rosa García Andújar
Iluminación: Miguel Ángel Camacho
Espacio sonoro: Eduardo Vasco

La noche de San Juan **(Lope de Vega). 2008. Teatro Pavón (Madrid)**
Versión: Yolanda Pallín
Asesor de verso: Vicente Fuentes
Coreografía: Nuria Castejón
Escenografía: José Tomé y Pedro Galván
Vestuario: José Tomé, Pedro Galván y África García
Iluminación: Miguel Ángel Camacho
Espacio sonoro: Eduardo Vasco

La vida es sueño **(Calderón de la Barca). 2012. Teatro de la Comedia (Madrid)**
Versión: Juan Mayorga
Asesor de verso: Vicente Fuentes
Coreografía: Nuria Castejón
Escenografía: Mónica Teijeiro
Vestuario: Mónica Teijeiro
Iluminación: Juan Gómez Cornejo
Espacio sonoro: Eduardo Vasco

***La verdad sospechosa* (Ruiz de Alarcón). 2013. Teatro de la Comedia (Madrid)**
Versión: Ignacio García May
Asesor de verso: Vicente Fuentes
Coreografía: Nuria Castejón
Escenografía: Alejandro Andújar
Vestuario: Alejandro Andújar/Carmen Mancebo
Iluminación: Juan Gómez Cornejo
Selección y Adaptación musical: Ignacio García

***Donde hay agravios no hay celos* (Rojas Zorrilla). 2014. Teatro de la Comedia (Madrid)**
Versión: Fernando Sansegundo
Asesor de verso: Vicente Fuentes
Coreografía: Nuria Castejón
Maestro de esgrima: Jesús Esperanza
Escenografía: Esmeralda Díaz
Vestuario: Tatiana Hernández
Iluminación: Juan Gómez Cornejo
Selección y Adaptación musical: Ignacio García

***El alcalde de Zalamea* (Calderón de la Barca). 2015. Teatro de la Comedia (Madrid)**
Versión: Álvaro Tato
Asesor de verso: Vicente Fuentes
Coreografía: Nuria Castejón
Maestro de esgrima: Jesús esperanza
Escenografía: Max Glaenze
Vestuario: Pedro Moreno
Iluminación: Juan Gómez Cornejo
Selección y Adaptación musical: Ignacio García

***El perro del hortelano* (Lope de Vega). 2016. Teatro de la Comedia (Madrid).**
Versión: Álvaro Tato
Asesor de verso: Vicente Fuentes
Coreografía: Nuria Castejón
Escenografía: Ricardo Sánchez Cuerda
Vestuario: Pedro Moreno, Rafa Garrigós
Iluminación: Juan Gómez Cornejo
Selección y adaptación musical: Ignacio García
Música en off: Olesya Tutova (piano)

***La dama duende* (Calderón de la Barca). 2017. Teatro de la Comedia (Madrid).**
Versión: Álvaro Tato.
Asesor de verso: Vicente Fuentes
Coreografía: Nuria Castejón
Video Escena: Álvaro Luna
Maestro de armas: Jesús Esperanza
Escenografía: Esmeralda Díaz
Vestuario: Gabriela Salaverri
Iluminación Juan Gómez-Cornejo
Selección y adaptación musical: Ignacio García

***El castigo sin venganza* (Lope de Vega). 2018. Teatro de la Comedia (Madrid).**
Versión: Álvaro Tato
Asesor de verso: Vicente Fuentes
Coreografía: Nuria Castejón
Asesor de Canto: Juan Pablo de Juan
Escenografía: Mónica Teijeiro
Vestuario: Gabriela Salaverri
Iluminación: Juan Gómez Cornejo
Selección y Adaptación musical: Ignacio García

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La verdadera Sara Montiel: Entrevista con Israel Rolón-Barada

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RESUMEN
Sara Montiel fue la actriz española mejor pagada del siglo XX y tuvo una enorme influencia internacional. Aunque fue una estrella de cine consumada, gracias a sus relaciones con el dramaturgo Miguel Mihura (1905–1977) y el poeta León Felipe (1884–1968), tenía conocimientos profundos del arte dramático teatral y, según Felipe, debería haberse dedicado al teatro. Israel Rolón-Barrada, autor de *Sara Montiel: La mujer y la estrella más allá del mito* (Editorial Almuzara, 2023), una nueva biografía de la actriz nos habla de su formación personal y profesional, sus experiencias en España, México y Hollywood y su carrera bajo Francisco Franco cuando, en 1957, volvió a su madre patria.

ABSTRACT
Sara Montiel was the highest paid Spanish actress of the twentieth century and had a huge international influence. Although she was an accomplished film star, thanks to her connection to the playwright Miguel Mihura (1905–1977) and the poet León Felipe (1884–1968), she had a deep knowledge of the theatre arts and, according to Felipe, should have devoted herself to the theatre. Israel Rolón-Barrada, author of *Sara Montiel: La mujer y la estrella más allá del mito* [Sara Montiel: The Woman and the Star Beyond the Myth] (Editorial Almuzara, 2023), a new biography of the actress speaks of her personal and professional training, her experiences in Spain, Mexico, and Hollywood, and her career under Francisco Franco when, in 1957, she returned to her mother country.

Sara Montiel fue una de las actrices más admiradas del siglo XX. María Antonia Abad Fernández—la futura Sara Montiel—nació en 1928 y lanzó su carrera en los años cuarenta. Para aquel entonces, el cine reemplaza el teatro como pasatiempo de las masas. Gracias a su talento y su belleza, Montiel fue un éxito casi inmediato. Alcanzó la fama internacional y fue la estrella mejor pagada de los años sesenta en España. Israel Rolón-Barada, autor de la nueva biografía, *Sara Montiel: La mujer y la estrella más allá del mito* (2023) nos habla de la "verdadera" Sara.

BM. *Israel, ¿por qué decidiste escribir la biografía de Sara Montiel? ¿Qué te motivó?*

IR-B. Decidí escribir esta biografía por el impacto de su fallecimiento inesperado, algo súbito, el 8 de abril de 2013, cuando ya habíamos hecho planes de un nuevo tour por los Estados Unidos. Fue perder a una amiga admirada y querida, a quien había conocido hacía un par de años al entrevistarla para una mesa redonda en la Modern Language Association (MLA, Seattle 2012). Desde entonces había surgido una sincera y profunda amistad con muchos planes por delante. Lo menos que podía haber hecho era escribir este libro.

BM. *Escribes que "Sara Montiel representa una de las figuras más significativas de la cultura popular del siglo XX." Por favor, explícanos por qué.*

IR-B. Sara Montiel representa una de las figuras más significativas de la cultura popular del siglo XX, primero que nada, por su gran legado en el cine y la música popular hispanoamericanos, dejando a sus espaldas un total de unas 50 películas (producidas y filmadas en España, México, Cuba, Brasil, Grecia, y Hollywood), y luego de haber grabado unas 500 canciones en cinco lenguas (español, italiano, francés, gallego, e inglés). Entre sus logros musicales está el hecho de haber recuperado el género musical del cuplé, que pertenecía a los años 20, y haberse convertido en la máxima representante del género musical en la industria cinematográfica en España y en el resto de Europa a partir de 1957, además de su aportación al mundo del espectáculo tanto en televisión como en el teatro. Su legado a la cultura popular trasciende la España franquista a la que pertenecía. Rompió barreras y desafió el franquismo convirtiéndose en una artista universal y, a su vez, en una embajadora cultural de España por Hispanoamérica, Europa y el mundo entero.

BM. *Parece que, desde el principio, la atrajo más el cine que el teatro. ¿Es que no conocía el teatro español? ¿No tenía acceso a teatros? Lorca formó "La Barraca," su teatro "móvil y gratis" para llevar adaptaciones de obras clásicas a los pueblos españoles más remotos precisamente porque muchos españoles no conocían su propia cultura escénica. Sin embargo, muchos de ellos podían ir al cine y sabemos que, a pesar del cataclismo de la Guerra Civil, España produjo grandes guionistas y compositores para películas en este período. ¿Puedes hablarnos de la fascinación de Montiel con el cine en vez de con el teatro?*

IR-B. A pesar de que, desde un principio, desde adolescente, la atrajo más el cine que el teatro, tuvo la suerte de contar con el apoyo y el adiestramiento de un

gran maestro teatral durante su primera etapa cinematográfica. Se trataba de Miguel Mihura y también de su hermano Gerónimo, que hasta hicieron un par de películas especialmente para ella (*Confidencias* y *Vidas confusas*, en 1947). Como "niña de la Guerra," ya que había nacido en 1928, durante su adolescencia en Orihuela solía ir al cine, o con sus hermanas o sola, haciéndose pasar por mayor de la edad mínima para entrar. Como era una chica alta en comparación con el resto de las de su generación, lograba entrar y disfrutar de los nuevos filmes con Imperio Argentina (María Magdalena Nile del Río) o los clásicos que venían desde Hollywood y que eran permitidos por la censura. Sus actrices españolas favoritas, sus ídolos eran Imperio Argentina y Amparo Rivelles, y las europeas y provenientes de Hollywood para entonces, Ingrid Bergman y Rita Hayworth. Se decía a sí misma "algún día tengo que ser como ellas."

BM. *¿Puedes hablarnos un poco sobre la influencia de Mihura? ¿Qué importancia puede tener el hecho de que haya empezado su carrera bajo la dirección de un dramaturgo conocido por sus obras de teatro? Muchos dramaturgos teatrales se interesaban por el cine, por la mezcla de arte y nuevas tecnologías. ¿Quieres comentar?*

IR-B. El teatro y el cine se cruzaban durante las décadas de los años 40 y 50 en España y, en todo caso, le proveía a Mihura otra manera de subsistir. Gracias a esto, Sara Montiel pudo contar con el dramaturgo, ganando su simpatía y su apoyo incondicional como su mentor y su maestro. Entonces, ella hacía cine, pero ungida por el dramaturgo.

BM. *Escribes: "Montiel encontró en el distinguido dramaturgo una figura paternal . . . Su mera presencia le ofrecía una seguridad que nunca había experimentado hasta entonces. Aquella imagen intelectual de Mihura, reflejo de todo lo que producía en el teatro, en el cine y en el mundo editorial, era sin duda el mayor atractivo que arrastraba a la actriz novel."*

IR-B. Al trabajar en el cine español de la mano de Mihura, podemos concluir que se cruzan en su vida y su carrera como actriz el cine y el teatro. Fue Mihura quien la impulsa, le aconseja, quien la adiestra, quien toma la temperatura de su progreso como actriz, y quien finalmente le busca su primer contrato en México al reconocer los límites del cine y el teatro durante la España franquista.

BM. *El cine y el teatro obviamente requieren diferentes técnicas dramáticas. En el cine el actor puede contar con diferentes usos de la iluminación y del ángulo, close-ups, sonidos non-diegéticos, etc. ¿Cuál fue la mayor contribución de Montiel al arte de la representación?*

IR-B. Su mayor contribución al arte de la representación consiste principalmente en la creación de un personaje, un símbolo sexual tirando de los hilos y desafiando los límites de la censura franquista. Sus técnicas dramáticas para mantener a este personaje vivo por unos veinte años fue algo histórico en el cine español del siglo XX. Sus películas fueron únicas, rompieron récord taquillero pese a la censura y a las limitaciones cinematográficas de esa época.

BM. *¿Cuál era su "approach" a la actuación? ¿Su preparación? ¿Su uso de la voz y del cuerpo? Dice en algún momento que Marilyn Monroe es una chica "glamurosa" mientras que ella, Sara, es una actriz. ¿En qué sentido?*

IR-B. Aunque en un principio, durante sus primeras etapas y películas en España, México y Hollywood procuraba destacarse en su carrera como actriz por la actuación dramática, y hasta huía o le molestara ser comparada con Marilyn Monroe, más adelante el destino la llevó del melodrama al musical, y hasta a llegar a representar y personificar un verdadero símbolo sexual en el cine español durante el resto del franquismo. Algo que disfrutó y supo sacarle todo el provecho al máximo.

BM. *En México, Montiel participó en un movimiento cuyo propósito fue "llevar la literatura a la pantalla grande, especialmente para las masas que de otra manera no tendrían acceso a la academia o al mundo literario." ¿Quién más participó en este movimiento? ¿Cuál fue el papel de Sara Montiel?*

IR-B. Sara Montiel llegó a México en el momento preciso, primavera de 1950, cuando todavía existía el Cine de Oro Mexicano. A falta de televisión el cine era la mejor manera de llevar la literatura, la música y la cultura en general a las masas. Aunque en un principio solo fue a participar en una película, contrato en mano como actriz principal al lado de Arturo de Córdoba en *Furia roja* (1951), de esa manera ingresa a ese mundo cinematográfico. Sus próximas tres películas serían con Pedro Infante (en la cumbre de su carrera como actor y cantante en México y en el resto de Hispanoamérica), una trilogía que se convertiría en un clásico, proveyendo a Montiel una plataforma y exposición envidiable como actriz. Para completar su etapa mexicana culminaría compartiendo el escenario cinematográfico con el mismísimo Agustín Lara, llegando a crear una rivalidad (no expresada públicamente) con la mismísima María Félix. En pocas palabras, Sara Montiel llegó a ser parte de esa generación. Como decían en España: "hacer las américas."

BM. *Muchos actores de mediados del siglo XX llevaron a la pantalla grandes obras de teatro—por ejemplo, Dolores del Río protagonizó películas como* Doña Perfecta *y* La malquerida*. Como actriz de cine, Montiel no hizo películas basadas en obras de teatro, ¿no es cierto? pero sí ayudó a llevar la cultura clásica al público moderno. Por ejemplo, una de sus primeras películas fue* Don Quijote*. ¿Nos puedes hablar de esta película?*

IR-B. Aunque un poco a destiempo, muy joven e inexperta, Montiel llegó a participar en algunos clásicos literarios e históricos del cine español, como *Don Quijote o Locura de Amor*, una novela histórica de Julián Castellanos y Velasco, donde comienza a destacarse en papeles dramáticos, aun sin ser la protagonista principal.

BM. *¿Por qué fue Sara Montiel a México con su madre en 1950? ¿Puedes hablar de su recepción en México? Identificas a Mihura como "agente clave en su carrera profesional", que "le impulsó, aun en contra de sus deseos, a dar el salto trasatlántico." Por favor, explica.*

IR-B. Precisamente por no lograr o alcanzar los papeles de primera protagonista en estas películas, a pesar de todo el apoyo de Mihura y su hermano Gerónimo, Sara Montiel, impulsada por el mismo Mihura, se marcha a México acompañada de su madre, como se acostumbraba durante el franquismo (una chica soltera no viajaba sola a ninguna parte sin su madre o una chaperona a su lado). Mihura pasa a ser sin duda alguna figura o agente clave en su carrera profesional.

BM. *En México conoció a León Felipe, el poeta español que en ese momento vivía en México, y llegó a ser su musa ¿no es cierto?*

IR-B. Sí, en su etapa mexicana León Felipe conoció a muchos artistas e intelectuales. De hecho, Felipe creía a Sara hecha para el teatro más que para el cine por su naturaleza de actriz y por su lenguaje corporal. Incluso le exhorta a tomar clases de teatro, además de enseñarle literatura y poesía. Más tarde, fue León Felipe quien la lleva de su mano a sacarse el visado o permiso para acompañar a Agustín Lara de gira por los EEUU.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wwTz1vhsEAo

BM. *Mencionas a otras personas también.*

IR-B. También conoció a gente como Alfonso Reyes (quien la adoptó como si fuera una hija), Octavio Paz, Frida Kahlo, Pablo Neruda y Agustin Lara. Estos fueron sus padrinos, sus grandes maestros, un golpe de suerte tras otro en su

destino y su carrera profesional.

BM. *Era conocida también como cantante. Háblanos un poco de esto y especialmente de su relación con Agustín Lara.*

IR-B. Agustín Lara la lleva consigo como acompañante musical y cantante de sus boleros a las ciudades norteamericanas con una gran población hispana, como Nueva York y Los Ángeles. De gira con Lara se desarrolla en la música, otra de sus pasiones artísticas desde su adolescencia. Lara le brinda una gran oportunidad, incluso haciendo cine con él. Así lo demuestra su film *Porque ya no me quieres* (1954), donde bailan e interpretan a dúo "Madrid." Una vivencia irrepetible en la historia del cine y la música hispanoamericana.

BM. *¿Cómo llegó a Hollywood?*

IR-B. Todo lo logrado y alcanzado en México durante aquellos cuatro años, desde 1950 hasta 1954, se viene al suelo. O más bien toma otro rumbo. Por un lado, llama la atención en la meca del cine, en especial con su film *Piel canela* (1953). Le ofrecen contratos para hacer cine en Hollywood a corto y largo plazo. Así comienza su próxima etapa cinematográfica. *Vera Cruz* (1954) será su primera película, con Gary Cooper y Burt Lancaster. Hollywood le abre las puertas, va a por ella, que es mucho decir. Por otro lado, no puede ser un momento más oportuno para Montiel. Aparte del desarrollo profesional que le ofrecía Hollywood, Sara Montiel necesitaba huir de la relación tóxica y destructiva en que se encontraba al lado de su agente dominante y controlador de quien se había enamorado locamente (aun siendo un hombre casado), Juan Plaza. Al ser un líder comunista, a cargo del mismo Ramón Mercader en el Palacio Negro de Lecumberi, y quien hasta le había presentado a Diego Rivera y a Frida Kahlo, él ya no podría seguirla a Hollywood por la lista negra. Entonces Hollywood viene a ser una escapatoria, una tabla de salvación, o la mejor alternativa para seguir adelante con su carrera profesional.

BM. *Háblanos de su carrera en Hollywood.*

IR-B. Durante la producción de su segunda película, *Serenade* (1955), conoce y se une a su primer marido oficial, el director norteamericano Anthony Mann. A mi juicio, el hombre que más la amó y la respetó como mujer, aunque no necesariamente como actriz. En Hollywood solo pudo interpretar papeles como hispana o india, algo sumamente frustrante para ella como actriz. Tenía solo 25 años de edad y tenía toda su carrera por delante. Sin embargo, Mann, aparte de amarla y ofrecerle y brindarle una posición de señora y un hogar en el Hollywood

de aquella época, no hizo mucho más por su carrera de actriz, aunque tal vez hubiese estado en sus manos por su buena posición y su prestigio como director durante aquellos años. Su relación y su matrimonio con Mann llegan a su fin cuando él decide contratar a Sophia Loren para el papel de Doña Jimena en su film *El Cid* (1961). Tomando en consideración que Montiel le había servido de inspiración y agente para lograr hacer aquel film, podemos comprender su indignación. Ya habían perdido un bebe que no llegó a nacer, y sus vidas iban por rumbos diferentes. Su matrimonio y su relación profesional terminaron a principios de los años 60.

BM. *Sara Montiel no aprendió a leer de niña, ¿no es cierto? ¿Nos puedes hablar de su educación?*

IR-B. Sara Montiel apenas aprendió a hacer algunas labores, a cantar en el coro, y a leer el abecedario y escribir algunas palabras en letra de molde durante los primeros grados primarios—la escasa educación que recibió en plena posguerra en un colegio de monjas en Orihuela. Por otro lado, tuvo grandes maestros durante su trayectoria y periplos por América y de vuelta a España.

BM. *Montiel volvió a España en 1957 "en pleno franquismo." ¿Por qué?*

IR-B. Aunque solo había vuelto a España de vacaciones en 1955 a 1956 con su madre a su lado, para pasar una temporada con su familia y amigos, jamás hubiera imaginado que aquel viaje cambiaría el rumbo de su carrera y el resto de su vida.

BM. *¿En qué sentido representa España "el verdadero éxito" para Sara?*

IR-B. El aceptar, tal vez por compromiso, por gratitud y cariño, la propuesta del director Juan de Orduña fue la oportunidad que tanto había esperado de convertirse en una "super star," en una estrella. Ya con 29 años de edad y el éxito inesperado de la película de bajo, o ningún, presupuesto *El último cuplé* (1957), seguido de *La violetera* (1958), le aseguró una posición única en el cine español, en el resto de Europa y Latinoamérica. Ya no tendría necesidad de volver a Hollywood. De hecho, rompería su contrato para su próximo film, la historia de Billy the Kid con Paul Newman. Finalmente pasaría a ser SARA MONTIEL, y eso ya no se lo quitaba nadie, como solía decir. Aunque tuviera que pagar el precio de volver a "someterse al franquismo," lo haría a su aire y a su manera. Su carrera cinematográfica curiosamente terminaría a la par con la caída del régimen. Su imagen sensual, insinuada pero limitada por la censura, perdería vigencia con la llegada del destape. Entonces tendría que reinventarse, dando paso al mundo del espectáculo hasta el final. Una larga carrera profesional de 70 años trabajando

sin parar, sin tregua, sin bajarse de los escenarios hasta su muerte. Su legado y su escuela de SARA MONTIEL continúan adelante como ejemplo y a la par de cualquier movimiento en pro de la lucha por los derechos de igualdad de género y de la comunidad LGBTQ, tanto en España como en el resto del mundo hispánico.

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Artistic Honesty:
Interview with Theatre Director Santiago Sánchez

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ABSTRACT

Spanish theatre director Santiago Sánchez is founder in of the theatre company L'Om Imprebís, which has produced the great classics, works of humorous creation, and pieces of contemporary dramaturgy since 1983. What is it about Sánchez's work that sets him apart from so many other directors? For one thing, he is a pioneer in his method of using the art of improvisation to create a well structured, clearly definable, entertaining play. For another, what he delivers is pure theatre without any superfluous ornament or element of showing off. The interview is not intended as a didactic exposition of one person's view of how to direct a play. Rather, it is an honest overview of the present state of theatre in Spain, and a simple insight into Sánchez's own background and his thoughts on theatre directing.

RESUMEN

El director de escena Santiago Sánchez es fundador de la compañía de teatro L'Om Imprebís, la que desde 1983 ha representado los grandes clásicos, obras de creación humorística y piezas de dramaturgia contemporánea. ¿En que se distingue la obra de Sánchez entre la de otros muchos directores de escena? Por un lado, es un pionero en su método de utilizar el arte de la improvisación para crear una obra bien estructurada, claramente definible y entretenida. Por otro lado, lo que entrega es puro teatro sin ornamento superfluo ni elemento extravagante. Esta entrevista no pretende ser una exposición didáctica de la visión de un individuo sobre cómo dirigir una obra teatral. Más bien ofrece perspectivas sobre el estado actual del teatro en España y una visión lisa y llana de la formación personal y profesional del propio Sánchez y de la idea de ser director de escena.

I have known the Spanish theatre director Santiago Sánchez for many years, and during that time I have enjoyed several of his productions. There is no one right way to direct theatre, just hundreds of wrong ways to do it. During my fifty-four years living in Spain, I only need five minutes sitting at a show to know whether I am about to witness something entertaining and exceptional, or just a self-indulgent effort to *revolutionize* Shakespeare, Brecht, Cervantes, or whatever other great writer is popular and in vogue in Spain at the time.

Santiago Sánchez has produced and directed all of these authors during his many years presenting theatre in this country and frequently abroad. And he has never disappointed me. So I asked myself: Why? What is it about his work that sets him apart from so many other directors? I have my own opinion on that: his artistic honesty; his intelligent and profound understanding of the content and context of the play; his ability to find actors of spontaneous talent who are dedicated to their art, responsible to their profession, and have a special talent for entertaining with perfect timing and humility. Casting is the key to credibility, and Sánchez never delivers a play to an audience without convincing them that this is real.

He succeeds in suspending our disbelief and draws us in emotionally to the human conflict of the protagonists; we feel with Galileo the burden which a dysfunctional ecclesiastic institution unjustly places on the shoulders of the great scientist; as we laugh at the absurdity of the antics and dialogue of Don Quijote and Sancho, we also listen attentively to the wisdom of their comic interchanges; with the normal family and characters of Berthold Brecht's *Terror and Misery in the Third Reich*, we sense their growing terror as the normality of their simple lives becomes a nightmare.

Therefore, I have an admiration for the work of Sánchez, and for what he has done for theatre in Spain during the past forty years or so, having founded the theatre company L'Om Imprebís in 1983. Over the years, the company has produced the great classics, works of humorous creation, and pieces of contemporary dramaturgy. I went to see a recent production—titled *Hoy no estrenamos* [We Don't Premier Today]—which has little to do with any of the classics. Through it, and in it, I could see the broader reason why his plays have left an impact on me and on many theatregoers both in his native Spain and on his overseas tours. He is a pioneer in his method of using the art of improvisation to turn the chaos that this form implies into a well-structured, clearly definable, entertaining play. The result is pure theatre without any superfluous ornament or element of showing off. He gets to the essence of the story like any good storyteller. And that for me is what theatre is all about: tell the story and make the audience feel that they are a part of it.

As I wanted to hear some views and ideas from Santiago Sánchez himself, I asked if he would do the following interview with me. It is not a long-winded or

didactic exposition of one person's view of how to direct a play. Rather, it is an honest overview of the present state of theatre in Spain, and a simple insight into Sánchez's own background and thoughts on directing. We proceed in Spanish.

DR. *Después de ver tu obra,* Hoy no estrenamos, *la otra noche, me impresionó tu versatilidad como director: consiguiendo lágrimas y sonrisas por parte del público a causa de la sinceridad mostrada por los actores. Con un espacio minimalista y con poco atrezzo hiciste que todo pareciera creíble. ¿Cuál es la clave para lograr esta sinceridad? Y ¿qué influyó en tu forma de hacer teatro?*

SS. Te agradezco la reflexión y me alegra mucho que haya producido ese efecto en ti. Una de las claves son los más de treinta años trabajando de forma conjunta todos los miembros de la compañía. En la base de todo ello está nuestro trabajo de improvisación con Michel Lopez y las muchas representaciones de la compañía L'Om Imprebís por toda España y más de veinte países, teatralizando cada noche las propuestas del público a partir de la simplicidad de una escena vacía. Otra referencia esencial a lo largo de los años ha sido Peter Brook y su capacidad de incorporar la improvisación a su trabajo de puesta en escena de los grandes textos del repertorio universal. Algo que mucha gente desconoce.

DR. *Juegas mucho con los clásicos. Según tú, ¿en qué radica la esencia de las obras de autores tales como Brecht, Chéjov, Cervantes, Shakespeare? ¿Qué tienen en común?*

SS. Todos ellos abordan grandes temas para el ser humano. Cada uno desde su punto de vista, que puede ir desde el compromiso político y social de Brecht a lo esencial del alma humana de Chéjov. Luego está la maestría teatral y narrativa de cada uno de ellos. Como esa sabia combinación de Cervantes o Shakespeare para llevar a escena desde lo sublime a lo más grosero sin apenas transición. Y, sobre todo, su vocación de un teatro popular pensado siempre para llegar al gran público.

DR. *¿Cuál es tu método de trabajo con los actores durante los ensayos? Sé que tienes una larga historia de trabajar con el arte de la improvisación.*

SS. Sí, como decíamos antes, la improvisación—entendida como vivir sincera e intensamente el instante presente—está en la base de todo nuestro trabajo. Pero, a la vez, hay que tener mucho cuidado con la improvisación porque, si solo es un fin en sí misma, puede resultar tóxica. Es lo que creo que está sucediendo con muchos espectáculos, llamados de "impro," que llenan los teatros banalizando el propio concepto de improvisación. Por eso hace ya unos años, junto a Michel

Lopez, Carles Castillo y Carles Montoliu, fuimos abandonando ese registro para aplicar la improvisación como un método de escritura desde el propio escenario. Así los textos de nuestros dos últimos trabajos, *Heredarás la lluvia* (2021) y *Hoy no estrenamos* (2022), las que seguimos representando, han nacido de la improvisación para acabar fijándose como textos dramáticos, recogiendo la herencia de tantos creadores que, en lugar de escribir en un despacho, lo hicieron sobre la propia escena.

DR. *Según tú, ¿cuál es el estado actual del teatro en España? ¿Crees que los jóvenes actores están perdiendo el arte de transmitir convincentemente el texto?*

SS. No me gustan las generalizaciones. . . . Supongo que, como en cada periodo, hay teatro que nos puede interesar más o menos. A veces hecho en falta un diálogo más incisivo con la realidad social y política. Un teatro más comprometido, en suma. La llamada *auto ficción* tiene algo de mirarse el ombligo y evita poner el foco en los problemas comunes… Como alguien dijo, solo puede apreciar la abstracción alguien que no tiene que preocuparse de lo concreto. Desgraciadamente nuestra sociedad ahora tiene cuestiones muy concretas por las que preocuparse. En cuanto a lo que me preguntas sobre los jóvenes, creo que hay jóvenes muy bien preparados. Una de las cosas más positivas del teatro es su capacidad de reunir a artistas de diferentes generaciones, pensamientos, configuraciones físicas… En todo caso, hay algo que no debe olvidarse y es que el oficio es una gran herencia de nuestro arte.

DR. *¿Cuando empezaste a hacer teatro? ¿Qué fue lo que te motivó a hacer teatro?*

SS. Empecé muy joven. Con apenas 17 años actué y dirigí *Muerte accidental de un anarquista* de Dario Fo. Era un inconsciente, pero quizás esa inconsciencia me hizo descubrir el apasionante mundo del teatro desde lo más esencial. Apenas unos años más tarde tuve la suerte de conocer al propio Fo, trabajar con Albert Boadella y hacer mi primer viaje a París dónde conocí a Raymond Cousse, la escuela de Lecoq, la Liga de Improvisación. . . Eran los años ochenta y pensaba en hacer teatro para cambiar el mundo. . . Hoy, quizás, sigo haciendo teatro para que el mundo no me cambie a mí.

DR. *¿Qué factores motivan a los jóvenes actores y a las jóvenes actrices de hoy? ¿Por qué crees que quieren hacer teatro?*

SS. Eso habría que preguntárselo a ellos. Es cierto que, en muchas ocasiones, parece haber hoy en día más jóvenes actores y actrices que solo se interesan por el

triunfo en la televisión, el dinero de las series, esa fama y reconocimiento. Por ello me parece más meritorio todavía cuando un actor o una actriz joven decide arriesgarse y adentrarse en el mundo del teatro que le va a resultar mucho más duro y arriesgado. Hace poco hice unas audiciones para un montaje de *Las Troyanas* para el Instituto Valenciano de Cultura y tuve la ocasión de ver mucho talento joven. Mucha ilusión y compromiso con la profesión. También lo vivimos en la compañía con un joven artista y un alma hermosa como es Víctor Lucas. Cuando se da, habría que tener mucho cuidado con no herir esa ilusión ni matar ese talento joven.

DR. *He visto aquí en España muchas producciones de obras de Shakespeare. ¿Crees que se entiende en España la esencia de lo que se trata este autor? ¿Tanto entre los profesionales del teatro como entre el público?*

SS. Shakespeare son palabras mayores . . . Antes hablábamos de Brook, quizás él, junto a otros como Peter Hall, Trevor Nunn, que abrieron una nueva manera de entenderlo y representarlo. Aunque para mí, ya en los años 90, fue Declan Donnellan quien me hizo descubrir nuevas posibilidades en el teatro de Shakespeare. Recuerdo aquel *Como gustéis* de Cheek by Jowl en el Teatro Español, con un jovencísimo Adrian Lester. Y luego títulos como *Cimbelino*, *Medida por medida* o *Troilo y Crésida*: cada uno de ellos supuso una lección de teatro. Creo que el método de trabajo de Donnellan te acerca como creador a la esencia de cada una de las obras con la que trabajas. Nosotros tuvimos la suerte de contar con sus enseñanzas, a través de Owen Horsley, para montar *Calígula* de Albert Camus. Luego, como espectadores, pienso que a todos nos conmueven los grandes autores cuando están bien representados y podemos aborrecerlos ante una mala puesta en escena.

DR. *¿Por qué no se ha conseguido promocionar en mayor grado los propios clásicos (aúreos) fuera de España?*

SS. Recuerdo una anécdota. Estando de gira en Nicaragua me encontré con un grupo de actores que casi aborrecen el teatro español porque, desde el Centro Cultural de España, les habían enviado a un director que montaba Lope de Vega obligándoles a quitar su acento latinoamericano y forzándoles a respetar escrupulosamente la rima y la retórica "original"—"Vamos a hacerlo 'como Dios manda.'" Es difícil promocionar nada de esa manera. Lo primero sería transmitir amor por lo que hacemos y tender puentes. Por otra parte, quizás deberíamos reflexionar un poco sobre cuáles de nuestros clásicos podrían ser nuestros mejores embajadores en el exterior. A lo mejor llegábamos a la conclusión de que, además de Lope o Calderón, nombres como Cervantes, Quevedo o Gracián—por poner

solo unos ejemplos—podrían ser magníficos a la hora de establecer esos puentes culturales.

DR. *¿Qué impacto tiene la política sobre el trabajo de los profesionales del teatro y sobre el propio mundo del teatro? ¿Crees que los políticos están causando mucho daño? ¿Hay libertad de expresión?*

SS. Creo que la excesiva dependencia—no solo del teatro y de la cultura—sino de la sociedad en general, de la política no es nada buena. Sobre todo, porque no estamos hablando de política en mayúsculas sino de una política partidista dónde cada uno que llega al poder, parece dispuesto a arrasar con todo lo anterior. Y la cultura, el teatro, el arte en general es tradición, oficio, memoria. Todos sabemos que los medios para coartar la libertad de expresión en nuestra sociedad son muy variados, comenzando por la llamada "viabilidad comercial." En su nombre hay tantas obras que ni siquiera ven la luz, mientras se apoyan óperas o espectáculos absolutamente vacíos de contenido y con costes mucho mayores. Creo que este capitalismo exacerbado en el que vivimos nunca pondrá fácil la aparición de expresiones que lo cuestionen. En todo caso hay que estar muy atentos a la llamada "guerra cultural"; parece que la derecha más radical ha entendido la fuerza de la cultura de una forma mucho más profunda que una izquierda perdida en un "progresismo" ñoño y desorientado.

DR. *¿Que consejos tienes para los jóvenes actores y las jóvenes actrices de hoy? ¿Y para los directores y las directoras?*

SS. Que si deciden dedicarse al teatro lo hagan de "cuerpo y alma," con toda su energía. Es un camino difícil pero muy gratificante. Luego, que intenten encontrar verdaderos compañeros de viaje. "Si quieres llegar rápido, camina solo. Si quieres llegar lejos, camina acompañado." No en balde una de las figuras históricamente más reconocidas del teatro es la de la "compañía." Yo he tenido mucha suerte de hacer un viaje de más de cuarenta años al lado de nombres como Carles Castillo, Carles Montoliu, Xus Romero, Víctor Lucas, Sandro Cordero—ellos y ellas en escena. Pero también de creativos como Dino Ibáñez, Rafa Mojas o Félix Garma, Gabriela Salaverri, Michel Lopez, Hassane Kouyaté—y tantos otros y otras. Los encuentros nos hacen y nos deshacen. Como artistas y como personas.

DR. *¿Quieres añadir algo más?*

SS. Agradeceros muy sinceramente vuestro interés en esta entrevista y en nuestro espectáculo. Ojalá esto contribuya a que *Hoy no estrenamos* y el

resto de los espectáculos de L'Om Imprebís lleguen a más gente. Porque, si las palabras están bien, la esencia del hecho teatral reside en el encuentro entre espectadores y artistas en los escenarios. Así que espero que estas palabras animen a mucha más gente a conocer nuestro trabajo en escena.

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Framing the Action: A Director Constructs the Opening of García Lorca's *Bodas de sangre*

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ABSTRACT
The article begins by examining the complexities of theatrical writing as background to the challenges posed when constructing the staging of Federico García Lorca's play, *Bodas de sangre*. First, plays are composed in a theatrical key, making use of words that fulfil a function similar to that of notation in a musical text. In the score a composer's notes communicate the *limits* of interpretation, both to the musician and to the conductor. In the case of the word in a dramatic text the written sign has to cover more than what its pure lexical identity may communicate. For the simple reason that in theatrical writing the words also have to contain a large part of the information necessary for their performance on stage, since the playwright devises them for that purpose. Words in a dramatic text, and not just stage directions, must convey to the actor expression, both vocal and facial, as well as the physical movements that must accompany them. Secondly, reference is made to the concept of "mood" or the atmosphere created on stage, to point out an analytical parameter that measures the progress of the action as it develops, as well as the effect it produces on a spectator. Elaborating on this idea, it could be said that the tense atmosphere of the opening in *Bodas*, for example, evokes a certain emotion in the spectator that the reader could easily ignore.

KEYWORDS
theatrical writing, characterization, mood, words performed, from the end to the beginning

RESUMEN
El artículo comienza examinando las complejidades de la escritura teatral como trasfondo de los desafíos planteados a la hora de construir la puesta en escena de la obra de Federico García Lorca, *Bodas de sangre*. Primero, las obras se componen en clave teatral, haciendo uso de palabras que cumplen una función similar a la de la notación en un texto musical. En la partitura las notas de un compositor comunican los *límites* de la interpretación, tanto al músico como al

director. En el caso de la palabra en un texto dramático el signo escrito tiene que cubrir más de lo que su pura identidad léxica pueda comunicar. Por la simple razón de que en la escritura teatral las palabras también tienen que contener gran parte de la información necesaria para su representación sobre las tablas, ya que el dramaturgo las idea para tal fin. Las palabras en un texto dramático, y no solo las acotaciones, deben transmitir al actor la expresión, tanto vocal como facial, así como los movimientos físicos que deben acompañarlos. En segundo lugar, se hace referencia al concepto de «estado de ánimo» [mood] o el ambiente creado en el escenario, para señalar un parámetro analítico que mide el progreso de la acción a medida que va desarrollándose, así como el efecto que produce en el espectador. Ampliando esta idea, se podría decir que el ambiente tenso de la apertura en *Bodas*, por ejemplo, evoca una cierta emoción en el espectador que el lector podría fácilmente hacer caso omiso.

PALABRAS CLAVES
escritura teatral, caracterización, estado de ánimo, palabras interpretadas, leer desde el final hasta el principio

I begin with a commonplace: it is essential to approach the dramatic text as a text directed at performance, not, as frequently witnessed in many studies on theatre, as a purely literary text. In other words, when approaching the dramatic text, scholars have often applied strategies elaborated for the study of the novel. To all extents words in a novel are, among other features, the tools given to the reader for unraveling the psychological analysis of the characters. Jonas Barish (1985) has called our attention as to just how theatrical texts differ from literary texts and how the way a dramatic text may be approached differs considerably from, say, the way a literary critic approaches the novel, not least because the novel is addressed to a reader in the privacy of the "confessional" (9).

Since the birth of commercial theatre in the sixteenth century, the written text is principally an aid for the actor to memorize the words uttered on stage. In the first instance, the playtext is addressed to a professional experienced in adapting page to stage, to a director or actor who have the know-how to deconstruct (in its original meaning) the text and give the written word its value when expressed verbally by the actor; marrying the word to the gestures and movements which accompany speech, thus interpreting from the playtext the dramatic action that defines theatre.

When staging a play, a director's role appears to the writer to be that of being the middle person between the playwright and the actor. The obligation falls, therefore, on the director to follow (so long as what is being staged is not a

director's adaptation of another's work) the action traceable through the playtext. I realize that many contemporary directors will object fiercely to this definition of their role.[1] Nevertheless, this is the line pursued here in tracing García Lorca's instructions for the opening of *Bodas de sangre*.

To focus on a central point in this article, the study of character in theatre combines development of character and advancement of plot in one, for both are intricately interwoven: action moulds character and character determines action. The separation between action and character for the purposes of theatrical criticism often proves to be more of a hindrance than a help. When considering characterization,[2] therefore, one must be aware that there is a kind of shorthand operating between playwright and director/actor, based on factors that remain silent in the text: a process of which the printed page may only evidence a final, sometimes polished proof. Thus, when the performed, rather than the written, text is aimed at staging, the actor/director may be left to piece out characterization from a written text addressed primarily to them, not to the audience; by deciphering the many stage-acts, manifest and silent, that present the audience with a consummate impression of character. These thoughts are echoed by John Russell Brown (1996) in relation to Shakespeare's playtexts:

> to quote what the characters say to each other is not sufficient basis for discussion of any issue in these dramas, even though many books of criticism and scholarship seem to assume as much. Every speech has its meaning or effectiveness according to the circumstances in which it is spoken, how it is instigated, how heard or not heard, and whether it satisfies or frustrates the expectations that Shakespeare has raised by the plotting of his story. (126)

It seems plausible, therefore, that theatrical reading in preparation for staging may be, by its very nature, disordered: constructing an opening, for example, necessarily requires an understanding of how a play ends and how that ending is

[1] On this point I refer to a debate organized by Spain's Ministry of Culture, and specifically to the words of Moisés Pérez Coterillo (1985): "Se puede decir que el teatro de los últimos veinte años, y no sólo en España sino también fuera, se caracteriza por el rapto de la autoría teatral, entendida como iniciativa del proceso de creación por parte de los directores de escena y en contra de lo escritores de textos dramáticos. . . . En consecuencia, el escritor teatral, por más que conste su disconformidad, se ha recluido en su laboratorio doméstico" (15–16).

[2] The point that characterization in a playtext is less textually explicit than in, say, the plays of Shakespeare, was expressed by Alexander Parker (1959) in a seminal study in which he outlined, as one of the five principles for approaching Spanish Golden-Age drama, the importance of action over character in *comedia* poetics. The argument seems to be based on evidence drawn from the printed text of the plays only, not from any consideration of the playtext as a manual for performance. For a different view, see Benabu (2003, 34–35; see also Introduction, 1–8).

reached. As has already been suggested, the text of a play is none other than a manual for performance.

At the outset, I allude to some theoretical considerations that point to what is specific to a theatrical approach in the study of character. Through them, André Helbo et al. (1991), for example, have alerted us to what distinguishes the theatrical from the literary character; as well as to a tendency we have to look for psychological clues in preference to questioning what effect the performed text will have on the audience:

> One of the features of the stage-character is to be in some way indeterminate: otherwise s/he could not be impersonated by a potentially unlimited number of actors. Furthermore, the ambiguity of the character's status derives from the fact that a reading habit inculcated mainly at school turns the character into substitute for a real person. . . . And so, the habit is formed of searching the *didascalia* and the dialogue for all the details that enable the student to reconstruct the character's personality and the story of his/her life. (145)

Consequently, the procedure by which stage character is constructed should be exactly the reverse:

> one ought not to be looking, in the dialogue particularly, for a supply of information that will allow one to decipher the character's personality, but rather, given the discourse/actions attributed to the character, with all his/her indeterminacy, look for whatever may elucidate his/her discourse, in other words, *the conditions that govern the character's speech*. (145, emphasis mine)

Studies of Lorca's *Bodas de* sangre, like Cyril Brian Morris' (1980) monograph, have often consisted, among other things, of a search for the play's themes. Consider, too, Gwynne Edwards' (1980) approach that is focused on finding a theme:

> The opening sequence, in its powerful presentation of Madre, announces clearly *a characteristic Lorca theme.* Failing to escape the force of the feelings that oppress her, she anticipates already all the other characters—Novio, Novia, Leonardo—who become progressively the victims of their passions. (133–34, emphasis mine)

However, this type of critical approach, that of looking for a play's meaning by attempting to weed out themes, was discredited many years ago by Richard Levin

(1980):

> [The thematic approach] will tend to operate at a considerable distance from our actual dramatic experience, from what actually affects us. . . in these plays; for surely, when we say that a tragedy is deeply moving, we are referring to the fate of its characters and not to the outcome of some conflict of ideas. . . . We usually find that the more [critics] focus upon the theme, the farther they get from our experience of the play. (54)[3]

And with regard to *Bodas*, Ricardo Doménech (2008) has a pertinent reminder about the relevance of looking for thematic unity in a play or trying to locate the action in a specific Andalusian context:

> *Bodas de sangre* se inspira en un hecho real ocurrido en Almería. Pero ese modelo de la realidad está completamente trascendido, y ninguna de las dos tragedias (*Bodas* y *Yerma*) responde a una localización geográfica precisa. (66)

Concerning Lorca's use of theatrical conventions, Luis Fernández Cifuentes (1986) has drawn attention to the challenge aimed at a spectator's expectations as witnessed by Lorca's own inversion of conventional situations:

> García Lorca traía a la escena palabras, imágenes y episodios que no contaban para casi nada con el modelo de sus predecesores, los maestros. Antes de poder decidir sobre la calidad del nuevo objeto, los espectadores debían aceptar una transgresión que les comprometía y, con el tiempo, les obligó a alterar sus jerarquías, sus previsiones. (11)

Recently, Andrés Pérez Simón (2020) has reminded us of the widely acknowledged influence of Classical Greek Drama on Lorca's dramaturgy, for Lorca's concept of tragedy owes much to the tradition in which the individual is subject to the dictates of a world governed by fate. However, no hostile gods appear in Lorca's tragedies: instead fate is invisible, an external force unseen by the characters until it strikes. Pérez Simón has also drawn attention to the influence of Spanish seventeenth-century drama on Lorca, as much in his work as a director as in the artistic works he composed. Lorca himself admitted that the model for him as a playwright was the theatre of Spain's Golden Age: "La raíz de

[3] Victor Dixon (1994) has also endorsed Levin's view: "It was Richard Levin . . . who would most effectively and amusingly attack, along with the ironical and historical approaches to English Renaissance drama, the thematic approach that interprets a literary work as the representation or expression of some abstract concept which will therefore give the work" (11–12).

mi teatro es calderoniana" (see García Posada 2004, 90).

I read the opening scene of *Bodas* in much the same way as a conductor might read a musical score, into which the composer has inscribed all the necessary instruction for performing a piece through the notation provided. I have used "stage mood" as an analytical parameter to measure the effect of the action upon the spectator.[4] With reference to the action suggested by the play's opening, many critics and early press reviewers have not questioned what mood is created on stage as the curtain rises, probably because no words are uttered. Focus falls on a silent Madre,[5] a silence that creates tension from the very start. A theatrical director might ask what the character is doing in context. Lorca seems to have left it to the individual director: nothing is designated in the opening stage direction. Reading backwards, however, from the opening dialogue between Madre and Novio, it becomes evident that a silent Madre demands actions that create tension.

When tracing the action in the opening to Lorca's *Bodas de sangre*, the following words from the playwright himself when discussing Y*erma*, however vague when cited out of context, should be borne in mind: "[H]ay que volver a la tragedia. Nos obliga a ello la tradición de nuestro teatro dramático" (qtd. in Buero Vallejo 1973, 130). A tragedy, as Aristotle and others have clearly stated, is measured by its impact on the spectator; not by some intellectual abstraction such as tracing a theme, as Levin (1980) remarked in the above quotation. If we are to look for what provides unity in *Bodas*, what creates the desired tragic effect, we should look to the theatrical signifiers which serve to highlight the play's unity: for example, to Novio at the play's opening innocently looking for a knife before going out to the fields; to Madre's mumblings that lead to her outburst at line 12 of Act 1, Sc. 1 at the mention of the knife (García Lorca 1988, 93).[6] The knife, as we learn subsequently in Madre's tirade against knives, has power over men's lives; the knife to which her husband and her eldest son fell victims before the start of the play's action. The threat posed by the knife, whether visible or through mention, runs imperceptibly throughout the action, to culminate in that "cuchillito" alluded to by Madre and Novia in the play's closing verses quoted below, as a force with uncheckable power that governs the characters' progress, only to be contemplated helplessly.

[4] The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines "mood" as: "The pervading atmosphere or tone of a particular place, event, or period; that quality of a work of art or literature which evokes or recalls a certain emotion or state of mind."

[5] See Fernández Cifuentes (1986) on Lorca's direction of *Bodas de sangre* in November 1933 (Madrid) and December 1933 (Barcelona): "el eje de la representación se desplazó entonces de la Novia a la Madre" (144).

[6] All citations to García Lorca's (1988) *Bodas de Sangre* refer to the edition by Allen Josephs and Juan Caballero and are given here and henceforth by page, act, and scene (sc.), as well as by line when appropriate.

Where in *Bodas* do we find the dramatic expression of tragedy as conceived by Lorca? Reading from the end to the beginning, an analytical approach suggested at the outset, we might start with the final incantation delivered by Madre and echoed by Novia at the close of the play where *anagnorisis* is marked:

MADRE. Vecinas, con un cuchillo,
con un cuchillito,
en un día señalado, entre las dos y las tres,
se mataron los dos hombres del amor.
Con un cuchillo,
con un cuchillito
que apenas cabe en la mano,
pero que penetra fino
por las carnes asombradas,
y que se para en el sitio
donde tiembla enmarañada
la oscura raíz del grito.

NOVIA. Y esto es un cuchillo,
un cuchillito
que apenas cabe en la mano;
pez sin escamas ni río,
para que un día señalado, entre las dos y las tres,
con este cuchillo
se queden dos hombres duros
con los labios amarillos. (165–66; Act 3, Sc. 2)

This closing duet expresses a meditation about what it is that makes the plight of Lorca's characters tragic: man, or rather woman, as the victim of the depersonalized knife, symbol of implacable forces that penetrates to "la oscura raíz del grito." This is what Madre and Novia understand as the play ends: the force governing their lives that lies beyond their control.

To return to the play's textual opening, the first challenge confronting the director is its first stage direction: "*Habitación pintada de amarillo*" (93; Act 1, Sc.1). Lorca was a successful artist, and some scholars have tried to read colour symbolism into this stage direction. But what would the relevance be of interpreting yellow as the colour symbolizing envy? In *Bodas,* Lorca is writing as a playwright: is he then prescribing a yellow set? Hardly, since having flats painted yellow would add little significance as background to the action which develops in the opening scene. Following upon my contention that a playtext is addressed in the first instance to theatre professionals, it seems plausible to

suggest that the stage direction quoted above is addressed to the lighting designer, so that it could be interpreted as a room bathed in yellow light in order to convey intensity? heat?[7] An oppressive heat that characterizes the lands in which the action unfolds.

Recognizing parameters such as lighting, a theatrical reading will *tap* the text in order to fathom its theatricality, something which cannot be contained within the narrow margins of a text destined to be printed. Oppressive heat created by lighting, therefore, enhances the mood of the opening dialogue which consists of eleven very short lines. Read mechanically on the page they would do little to indicate the mood in a room painted yellow: read theatrically, taking the cue offered in Act 1, Sc. 1, line 12 by Madre's outburst, the dialogue up to that line must be punctuated by pauses, pauses unmarked in the playtext that measure the growing tension between Madre and Novio.

Reading the playtext closely: Novio announces upon entering that he is off to cut grapes from the vine. The dialogue turns quickly to Novio looking for his knife, a simple enough request and certainly not a loaded one in this instance. The tension builds up as the exchange between Madre and Novio develops, where brief rejoinders broken up by long pauses as suggested above lead to Madre's outburst about the power of knives. By line 12 Novio's innocent remark about his knife rouses Madre from her obsessive thoughts about knives, and confirms that what underlies the tension created by her silence at the very beginning of the scene is her obsessive thoughts: "La navaja, la navaja… Maldita sean todas y el bribón que las inventó" (93; Act 1, Sc. 1).[8]

After line 12 much of the way the first scene is laid out on the page seems to indicate a dialogue between Novio and Madre; however, read theatrically, Madre's speeches look like comprising an uninterrupted monologue running from line 15 to line 26, while Novio's interjections prove to be unsuccessful attempts to check her progress (94; Act 1, Sc. 1). Novio's lines, as Madre's monologue reaches its peak, express first his weariness with "Vamos a otro asunto" and "Bueno," measuring the frustration of one who has heard Madre's complaints all too often; followed by "*(bajando la cabeza).* Calle usted" that marks his growing exasperation, because past experience has shown him that he can have little promise of success. Next, his impatient imploration is equally impotent: "¿Está bueno ya?" Finally, it is only when he shouts her down—"¿Vamos a acabar?"

[7] Although he does not allude to the opening scene specifically, Doménech (2008) has also sensed in the opening stage direction that "el calor desempeña una función de primera orden" (144).

[8] When I directed the play in Jerusalem in 1999, I decided to place Madre dressed in black, in profile, swaying slowly on a rocking-chair stage-center, with her gaze fixed in front of her; so that the voice of Novio awakens her from her abstraction. This, of course, is an individual director's solution.

(Lorca's stage direction here is "*fuerte"*)—by asking her if what she wants is that he should kill his father's and older brother's murderers that he manages to interrupt Madre's monologue effectively. Her tone changes to one of pathos as she recalls the tragic incidents in the past which led to the loss of husband and son, and she is brought to her senses by the fear of losing her only remaining son.

Reading backwards, as I have already proposed, is how dramatic texts open themselves to suggest a playwright's view of how stage action is constructed. If the exchange between Novio and Madre were to be read mechanically, Madre's outburst would seem melodramatic. Those short lines of dialogue, therefore, with necessary pauses that are not indicated textually and with the help of yellow lighting intensifying the mood, designate the way Lorca visualizes the tension underlying the relations between Madre and Novio. This is no innocent exchange between Madre and Novio: instead, it should convey to the audience a forced dialogue that depicts Madre's tormenting thoughts while her son is looking for his knife. As stated earlier, stage tension is broken only when Madre gains some control over her obsession, and Lorca indicates the change of mood by the use of suspension dots at lines 43–44, because Madre realizes that her harangue may drive Novio to an act of revenge that might deprive her of her only remaining son:

> NOVIO. ¿Es que quiere usted que los mate?
>
> MADRE. No… Si hablo es porque… ¿Como no voy a hablar viéndote salir por esa puerta? Es que no me gusta que lleves navaja. Es que… no quisiera que salieras al campo. (95; Act 1, Sc. 1, ll. 42–45)

Tension is allayed for a while by the humor introduced, as Lorca has indicated that Novio should lift Madre in his arms and exclaim: "Vieja, revieja, requetevieja" (95; Act 1, Sc. 1). Relaxing the mood enables Novio to bring up the subject of his marriage: a thought, a director may decide, has been at the back of his mind from his first entrance. And through her replies, Madre should convey that the subject of her son's marriage causes her some anxiety. But she represses her fears by advising him what presents to buy Novia. This is the point at which Lorca first hints at the play's subtext: Madre's fear of the Felix family.

To sum up: in an opening scene read theatrically, Lorca builds a dramatic stage mood in a very short time, in which he convincingly presents Novio's struggle with a mother he cannot check, as well as Madre's obsession with knives and the suffering that the loss of her husband and older son in the past have cost her. And yet the subtext framing this unusual dialogue emerges only later in the opening scene, when Novio shows his hesitation before Madre in bringing up the subject of his marriage to Novia. Knives at the opening, and more graphically at

the end, frame the play's dramatic action by investing knives with the power to assault men's lives. Not the actions of the men who hold the knives but the knives themselves which, in the closing poem, as mentioned earlier, are shown to act of their own accord. Lorca does not supply a cogent narrative with details that a reader may assimilate from the opening: instead, Madre's fears emerge clearly in the exchange between Vecina and Madre once Novio has exited.

By the middle of the first scene, with Vecina's entrance, the mood has relaxed somewhat. We read backwards once more, through Vecina's mention of the Félix family. But now, instead of merely recanting on her fear of knives, Madre explains the circumstances which led to the killing of her husband and son. Through the dialogue between Madre and Vecina, Lorca makes clear to spectators that what underlies Madre's lack of enthusiasm at the forthcoming marriage is mention of the Felixes, the family of murderers and of one of its members in particular: Leonardo. The relevance of such a scene for Lorca lies less in the introduction of a character, Vecina, who makes no further appearances in the play, and more with Madre's anger unleashed when she learns that the girl her son is to marry had a previous attachment with Leonardo, a member of the Félix family. These feelings Madre admits she finds impossible to repress, though she realizes that Leonardo was only eight years old when her husband and elder son were killed by the Félixes. The force of her reaction is punctuated textually by inserting suspension dots and explicated by intermittent stage directions:

> MADRE. Es verdad… Pero oigo eso de Félix y es lo mismo *(entre dientes.)* Félix que llenárseme de cieno la boca *(escupe)* y tengo que escupir, tengo que escupir para no matar. (99; Act 1, Sc. 1)

The sense of tragic inevitability that Lorca has inscribed in the whole of the opening scene is suggested by the irreconcilable conflicts sketched between past and future: Madre takes to heart the advice offered her by Vecina, that she should put the past behind her and accede to her son's request to marry. However, though she recognizes this is what she must do, the dramatic stage direction marking the end of the scene suggests that her fears are only relegated to silence. Madre crosses herself as if to protect herself from the danger she senses: *"La Madre se dirige a la puerta de la izquierda. En medio del camino se detiene y lentamente se santigua"* (100; Act 1, Sc. 1). By the end of this first scene, Lorca provides spectators with a detailed account of the underlying tensions in the relationship between Madre and Novio that create the mood on stage.

In Act 1, Sc. 2 the initial stage direction—*"Habitación pintada de rosa. . . ."* (100)—is addressed once again to the lighting designer; this time to create an intimate mood which exudes warmth. But for all the warmth the lighting may

convey as the baby is lulled to sleep, there is a forceful dislocation between lighting and the words spoken by Suegra and Mujer de Leonardo in the lullaby they recite. No explicit instruction as to how it is to be recited but stage action dictates the tensions that will be transmitted as the lullaby progresses. The dramatic events described cannot possibly be read in a monotone: they require the actors gradually to become absorbed in the narrative contained in the lullaby, having first joined the two characters in reciting the opening refrains. They sing of a horse that is driven to the riverbank but refuses to drink because "el agua era negra / dentro de las ramas" (101). And the horse is eventually reduced to tears:

> SUEGRA. Las patas heridas [from galloping against its will],
> las crines heladas [from fear],
> dentro de los ojos
> un puñal de plata [cold image of the recurring knife].
> (101; Act 1, Sc. 2)

We are not told at first what is causing the horse to gallop furiously and why its legs are injured—refusing to lower its head to drink. And the silver dagger reflected in those dark waters, as the play's closing poem clarifies, can only signify death. The narrative is also interrupted by another shorter and more graphic one: two men scramble down to the riverbank after which blood flows in plentiful quantities. But in the closing lines of the lullaby, the focus returns to the horse with images depicting the dread that overcomes it:

> MUJER. No quiso tocar
> la orilla mojada
> su belfo caliente
> con moscas de plata.
> A los montes duros
> sólo relinchaba
> con el río muerto
> sobre la garganta. (101–2; Act 1, Sc. 2)

As Mujer and Suegra reach the end of the lullaby, Lorca supplies a stage direction that requires the actors to lower their voices: "MUJER (*bajito)*" and "SUEGRA (*Levantándose muy bajito)*" (103), suggesting both their reticence to awaken the slumbering child and their desire to distance themselves from the threat posed by the horse's violent resistance. Instead, as if the horse were in their presence, they order it to go to the valley where the mare awaits:

> SUEGRA. ¡No vengas, no entres!

> Vete a la montaña.
> Por los valles grises
> donde está la jaca. (102–3; Act 1, Sc. 2)

And the refrain recited at the start of the lullaby is repeated, leaving spectators with the image of the horse and its refusal to drink.

Leonardo's entry, following as it does upon the gentler mood created by the fading voices of Suegra and Mujer, cannot but change the stage mood by its brusqueness underlined by his dry initial: "¿Y el niño?" (103; Act 1, Sc. 2). A reading of the scene leaves those charged with staging it in no doubt as to Leonardo's state of mind upon entering; though not expressed directly Leonardo must appear troubled by a thought he does not disclose. His entry produces anxiety in his wife, and Suegra's question on entering a little later only exacerbates matters as she needles Leonardo about having ridden the horse too hard. This detail of the exhausted horse intentionally links Leonardo's horse to the horse in the lullaby.

Suegra, still needling Leonardo, next introduces a subject already sketched for the spectator in Act 1, Sc. 1: the forthcoming marriage between Novia and Novio. The subject causes Leonardo more vexation, and the stage directions indicate the tone Leonardo should adopt in his replies: "*(agrio*)" and "(*serio*)" (104; Act 1, Sc. 2). Furthermore, Leonardo's actions towards his wife when she begins to weep is nothing if not brusque: "¿Vas a llorar ahora?" (104). And then Mujer's reply—"¡Quita! *(Le aparta buscamente las manos de la cara.)*" (105)—as he takes her with him off-stage to see the sleeping child. Suegra observes all of this in silence.

Muchacha's entry at this point serves to reduce the tension after the couple exits. Her excitement about the forthcoming wedding tells of how she saw Madre and Novio buying presents for Novia. Leonardo and Mujer re-enter: he dismisses Muchacha roughly and she exits in tears. Tension resumes when a bewildered Mujer asks what thoughts are troubling him, to which Leonardo's reply is: "(*Agrio*) ¿Te puedes callar?" (106; Act 1, Sc. 2). His retort must be loud for it awakens the sleeping child. Leonardo exits as brusquely as he entered, still the image of a highly troubled individual. The women resume their lullaby as Suegra re-enters with the child in her arms. But the lullaby now introduces a striking variant: the horse that had so violently resisted the act of drinking, now drinks from the dark waters: "El caballo *se pone* a beber" (106, emphasis mine). The implication is clear: for all its forceful resistance the horse is obliged to drink from those threatening, dark waters. The lullaby elaborates an idea which runs right through the play: the individual is powerless to resist the hidden hand of Fate.

The setting for Act 1, Sc. 3 is Andalusian, but a rather stylized setting at that. Nothing of the Andalusian poster here; rather the aspect of Andalusia's barren

landscape as observed by Madre: "Cuatro horas de camino y ni una casa ni un arbol" (108). Lighting and texture in this scene are uppermost in Lorca's mind in the stage direction: the flats are painted white, and the lighting makes their appearance severe: "*las paredes de material blanco y duro"* (108). There is plenty to distract the eye in this setting when compared to the bare instructions of the first two scenes: "*una cruz de grandes flores rosa . . . cortinas de encaje y lazos rosa . . . abanicos redondos, jarros azules y pequeños espejos"* (108). But for all this detail, the overriding color is a harsh white that serves as a background to an unusually tense engagement scene. Madre and Novio are shown into Novia's house by a maid: silence and motionlessness prevail throughout the beginning of the scene as Lorca's direction indicates (108): *"(Quedan madre e hijo sentados, inmóviles como estatuas. Pausa larga.).*"

The mood prevalent at the opening of Act 1, Sc. 3—a tense silence reminiscent of the silence in Act 1, Sc. 1—provides the subtext, making it easier for the spectator to interpret, from information culled from the exchange between Madre and Vecina in the second half of Sc. 1, why Madre feels discomfort at being in Novia's house. Novio, never haunted by the past, is understandably nervous on the occasion of his engagement. Madre's first words in the scene express her desire to leave no sooner has she arrived, as well as her disapproval of the isolated location of Novia's house. Novio tries to explain, "Éstos son los secanos," only to have Madre reply: "Tu padre los hubiera cubierto de árboles" (108; Act 1, Sc. 3). Try as she may, Madre is unable to free herself from the past and its disturbing reminders.

With Padre's entrance (he is, as his behaviour in the scene suggests, a character drawn in the comic mode), Madre and Novio rise and shake his hand, still in silence. And when they do engage in conversation, there are no words of welcome: instead, the talk is about the harshness of Padre's lands and of his efforts to force the land to yield its fruits. Expressing a desire that both Madre and Padre's capitals be merged after the forthcoming marriage, Padre comes through as openly acquisitive whereas Madre remains reserved and aloof. As far as her property is concerned, Novio can do with it as he wishes but only after her death. All in all, the mood is certainly not one of celebration; instead the union is *brokered*. And a non-celebratory tone endures as each parent enumerates the qualities of their offspring, especially Padre's description of his daughter that is reminiscent of the way a horse might be apprized:

MADRE. Mi hijo tiene y puede.
PADRE. Mi hija también.
MADRE. Mi hijo es hermoso. No ha conocido mujer. La honra más limpia que una sábana puesta al sol.
PADRE. Qué te digo de la mía. Hace las migas a las tres. . . . No

> habla nunca; . . . y puede cortar una maroma con los dientes. (111; Act 1, Sc. 3)

A perfunctory blessing puts an end to these negotiations: "MADRE: Dios bendiga su casa. PADRE: Que Dios la bendiga" (111). And arrangements for the wedding are made with Madre agreeing to them drily: "Conformes" (112).

From the moment Novia enters at Act 1, Sc. 3, dramatic focus falls on her, not least because of the seriousness with which she greets her fiancé and her future mother-in-law. Her physical appearance confirms that she is the very antithesis of the happy bride-to-be, as Lorca's stage direction indicates: "(*Aparece la Novia. Trae las manos caídas en actitud modesta y la cabeza baja.*)" (112). This may be read to suggest maidenly shyness, but as soon as she speaks her words convey that she shares the terseness of Madre's speech. When she is asked whether she is happy, her retort is curt: "Estoy contenta. Cuando he dado el sí es porque quiero darlo" (112). No maidenly modesty in those words. Again, when Madre asks Novia if she knows what marriage involves—"Un hombre, unos hijos y una pared de dos varas de ancho para todo lo demás"—Novia replies in a tone that is equally stern: "(*Seria.)* Yo sabré cumplir" (112). And upon receiving the engagement presents, Lorca's text suggests that Novia gives an expressionless "Gracias" (112). Furthermore, her dry rejoinder to Novio's innocent expression of affection shows no tenderness on her part. Rather her reply makes her sound like the experienced, older woman she is not:

> NOVIO. Cuando me voy de tu lado siento un despego grande y así como un nudo en la garganta.
> NOVIA. Cuando seas mi marido ya no lo tendrás.
> (111, Act 1, Sc. 3)

The actor playing Novia should show that, as with other characters already sketched (Madre and Leonardo), the character's scarcity of words throughout the scene suggest repressed feelings that unsettle her and that she struggles to conceal. No sooner do most of the on-stage characters take their leave, and she is left alone with her inquisitive maid, than she gives vent to her pent-up feelings by showing none of the interest her maid does in the gifts she has received. Lorca's direction now points to the frustration raging in Novia: *(*"*mordiéndose la mano con rabia*") (113). Once again, read theatrically from the end to the beginning, it is the end of Act 1, Sc. 3 which provides the explanation for Novia's seriousness: this is marked with a crescendo in the exchange between Novia and her maid as she is forced to admit that it was Leonardo's unexpected appearance on horseback that has unsettled her. Leonardo passes her window a second time (only his horse's hooves are heard off-stage), and with Novia's dramatic admission that it

was Leonardo, "¡Era!" (114), the curtain falls rapidly to mark the end of Act 1, Sc. 3. Lorca's "*Telón rápido*" (114) demonstrates his keen dramatic sense in extending the tension that opens Act 1 right up to its closing moment.

The scene division in Act 1 is theatrically significant and it works effectively when constructing performance. Further examples also demonstrate how a reading of later scenes helps to construct earlier ones.

(i) Act 1 is divided into three scenes that together present three foci of tension that illustrate the central conflict of the play: the influence of a hostile fate on the life of the characters. To recapitulate: Madre's obsessive fear is associated with the fact that in the past she lost a husband and her older son to the power of knives; Leonardo's disquiet is linked to a horse taking him where he does not wish to go; and Novia's lack of enthusiasm about her forthcoming marriage is confirmed by the presentiment she feels when she catches sight of Leonardo's horse pass by her window. Each of the scenes introduces a conflict facing one of these three characters: Madre's explosion about knives; Leonardo, though the reason for his impatient mood is not disclosed at this early stage in the play (it is supplied only in his exchange with Novia in the forest scene in Act 3 as the verses quoted below signify), nevertheless shows all the symptoms of one who, like the horse in the lullaby, is resisting some force against his will. Herein lies the link between Leonardo and the horse in the lullaby, recited before Leonardo's entrance and continuing immediately after he leaves, suggesting the reason for Leonardo's mood. In constructing Act 1, Sc. 2 and delineating the character of Leonardo, directors and actors can rely on information provided in the forest scene in Act 3, where Leonardo explains to Novia that he would get on his horse, and some invisible force acting against his will would drive the horse to her house:

> LEONARDO. Porque yo quise olvidar
> y puse un muro de piedra
> entre tu casa y la mía. . . .
> Pero montaba a caballo
> el caballo iba a tu puerta. (151; Act 3, Sc. 1)

Finally Novia, as yet ignorant of the powerful emotions experienced by Madre and Leonardo, is troubled by the thought of her forthcoming marriage, and she feels the pressure of a force acting against her. She will learn to recognize it in the course of the play's action, particularly in Act 2, Sc. 2, and in Act 3, Sc. 1.

(ii) In addition, Madre's harsh comments in Act 2, Sc. 1 and Sc. 2, explain the lack of enthusiasm she demonstrates in Act 1, Sc. 1 when discussing her son's forthcoming marriage. However, only at the end of Act 2, do her repressed fears

explode with passion when her worst fears are confirmed, as she sees Novia fleeing with Leonardo on the horse. Addressing herself to Padre, she separates the two families with a cry of vengeance, and her words at the end of Act 2 link the two halves of the play's title: the broken union in Act 2 is followed by a cry for blood:

> MADRE. Dos bandos. Aquí hay dos bandos. *(Entran todos.)* Mi familia y la tuya. Salid todos de aquí. . . . ¡Fuera de aquí! Por todos los caminos. Ha llegado otra vez la hora de la sangre. Dos bandos. Tú con el tuyo y yo con el mío. ¡Atrás! ¡Atrás! (140; Act 2, Sc. 2)

(iii) In the closing poem of *Bodas,* as has been previously stated, Madre, seated again but now facing the spectators, resignedly identifies the knife floating in the air as being so small "que apenas cabe en la mano" (166; Act 3, Sc. 2). Herein lies her tragic recognition of its power that has haunted her throughout the action. The spectator, however, only gains a complete understanding of the fateful threat represented by the knife in the verses that close the play.

(Post Script) With regard to the Leonardo-Novia relationship, Doménech (2008) has assumed a romantic liaison that is unsupported by the text: "Leonardo se casó con una prima de la Novia—ésta, en cierta forma, urdió ese matrimonio, pero sigue enamorado de la Novia. La Novia se va a casar con el Novio, pero sigue enamorada de Leonardo" (67). Doménech then calls the relationship between Novia and Leonardo "una pasión *amorosa*" (67, emphasis mine). Although the play may suggest an amorous relationship, as the action develops it becomes clear that there is no love intrigue at all. Just as the title of the play refers to a wedding that is never seen by the spectator (it takes place in the interval between the two scenes of Act 2), so love is not the force underlying the attraction between Leonardo and Novia. It is the highly charged forest scene in Act 3, Sc. 1, the forest to which, as both Novia and Leonardo remark, the horse has taken them involuntarily, that dispels any romantic speculation, expressing as it does in sinister and erotic images that a higher force pre-determines their union: "Clavos de luna nos funden / tus caderas y mi cintura," as Leonardo says (154; Act 3, Sc. 2). As Fernández Cifuentes (1986) reminds us in the citation quoted earlier, once again Lorca reverses the conventional expectations of the audience. There is no choice, no free-will, in Lorca's dramatic vision of a tragic world and no love either: the Moon depicted in Act 3, Sc. 1 is an all-determining supernatural force that binds the characters' destinies.

Doménech (2008) has also attempted to suggest explanations as to why

Leonardo and Novia went their separate ways before the start of the action: "aunque no se diga, deducimos que al padre no le pareció bien Leonardo como yerno por sus limitados recursos económicos" (144). Yet in the forest scene Lorca has made it clear that it is Leonardo who left Novia, not the reverse: LEONARDO. "y puse un muro de piedra / entre tu casa y la mía" (151; Act 3, Sc. 1). Doménech's assumption is useful, however, in that it illustrates an aspect of Lorca's dramaturgy that Fernández Cifuentes (1986) mentions in the citation quoted earlier. It is true that Lorca invites the spectator to speculate about the separation of Novia and Leonardo by imagining conventional reasons for the split. Nevertheless, as stated above, he does so only to highlight the reverse at a later point in the action. It has been widely acknowledged that Lorca used *peripeteia* as a device to involve the spectator in speculation only to reverse expectations in a play containing the word "bodas" in its title; *peripeteia* being as much a dramatic device for Lorca as it was for the Ancient Greek tragedians.[9]

Too much has been made also of the fact that Lorca does not give most of the characters in *Bodas* individual names. For example, in 1962 Calvin Cannon wrote: "They are not heroes but unindividuated parts of ancient folkways" (85). By 1986, Fernández Cifuentes, commenting on reviews of the early performances of *Bodas*, referred to its "unindividuated" characters: "[la obra] carece de individualidades como carece de nombres propios" (139). (Leonardo's is the exception, of course, because of his moodiness throughout Act 1, Sc. 2, and all of Act 2.) Once again, Lorca appears purposefully to have misled his spectators. Appraisals to the contrary arise when literary critics fail to consider that the playtext is nothing more than the document through which the playwright transmits his visualization of stage action to the director/actors. The characters in *Bodas* may be represented as "unindividuated": however, they can *only* be so for the reader. Before spectators, all the characters are represented by flesh and blood actors with individual physical traits. There are no folkloric types in *Bodas de sangre*;[10] on stage there are clearly defined characters with very specific physical traits, and an analysis of the dramatic action brings out their psychological identities.

In the foregoing analysis of the play's opening, I have attempted to read the words on the page, as well as the stage directions not inscribed textually that are interspersed throughout, as indicators of how Lorca visualized stage action in his play.

[9] As Miguel García-Posada (2004) observes: "La fuerza del instinto (y del destino) lo arrastra todo, como en la tragedia griega, convertido el autor en una suerte de Esquilo redivivo" (10).
[10] Although there are puppets when Lorca creates plays such as *La zapatera prodigiosa*.

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PART III

CRITIQUING THE PERFORMANCE TEXT

—THE SPECTATOR—

**An audience may sit waiting for a performance to begin,
wanting to be interested, hoping to be interested, persuading itself
that it ought to be interested. It will only be irresistibly interested
if the very first words, sounds or action of the performance
release deep within each spectator a first murmur
related to the hidden themes that gradually appear.**

—PETER BROOK (1925–2022)

(*There Are No Secrets: Thoughts on Acting and Theatre,* 1993)

—THE CRITIC—

**To speak of impersonal criticism is as ridiculous as
to speak of impersonal drama, music, painting,
or reaction to alcoholic liquor. There is no such thing.
There is only live criticism and dead criticism.**

—GEORGE JEAN NATHAN (1882–1958)

(*The Theatre Book of the Year*, 1946–1947)

Casting Castaño: Sor Juana and Gender Performativity on Stage

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ABSTRACT
In December 2023, The Station Theatre in Urbana, Illinois staged a production of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz's *Los empeños de una casa*. Directed by Christiana Molldrem Harkulich, this production utilized Catherine Boyle's English translation, titled *House of Desires*. Within the context of a *comedia* that already explores the performance of gender in the guise of Castaño's famous scene of cross-dressing in preparation for impersonating Doña Leonor, Harkulich's production highlighted the full spectrum of gender identity. Indeed, her decision to cast Heraldo Hermosillo (who brought a drag sensibility to the role of Castaño) anchored a production that deliberately "queered" the play's implicit heteronormativity. At a time when LGBTQIA+ communities find themselves increasingly under siege, this essay explores the place of Station Theatre's *House of Desires* within the larger context of gender performativity (both on stage and in the academic literature) and argues that this production represents a welcome addition to the long performance history of Sor Juana's best-known *comedia*.

KEYWORDS
Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Los empeños de una casa*, Catherine Boyle, *House of Desires*, Castaño, cross-dressing, gender performativity, drag, queer theory, Station House Theatre, Christiana Molldrem Harkulich

RESUMEN
En diciembre de 2023, The Station Theatre en Urbana, Illinois montó una producción de *Los empeños de una casa* de Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. Dirigido por Christiana Molldrem Harkulich, este montaje utilizó la traducción al inglés de Catherine Boyle, titulada *House of Desires*. En el contexto de una comedia que ya explora la representación del género en la famosa escena de travestismo que hace Castaño al disfrazarse para personificar a Doña Leonor, el montaje de Harkulich destacó toda la gama de la identidad de género. De hecho, la decisión de Harkulich de elegir a Heraldo Hermosillo (quien aportó una sensibilidad drag al papel de Castaño) centró una producción que, mediante una perspectiva queer, deliberadamente cuestiona la heteronormatividad implícita de la obra. En un momento histórico cuando las comunidades LGBTQIA+ se encuentran cada vez

más asediadas, este ensayo explora el lugar de *House of Desires* del Station Theatre dentro del contexto más amplio de la performatividad de género (tanto en el escenario como en la literatura académica) y sostiene que este montaje representa una muy buena adición a la larga trayectoria de representaciones teatrales de esta conocida comedia de Sor Juana.

PALABRAS CLAVES
Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Los empeños de una casa*, Catherine Boyle, *House of Desires*, Castaño, el travestismo, la performatividad de género, drag, la teoría queer, Station House Theatre, Christiana Molldrem Harkulich

The past seven decades have witnessed a sea change in our understanding of gender and sexuality. These changes, which had already started taking place in the postwar years following World War II, accelerated greatly after the Stonewall uprising in 1969, when the "gay rights" movement took its place alongside second wave feminism, the Civil Rights movement, and other social justice movements of the 1960s and 1970s. But Judith Butler's (1990, 1993) groundbreaking work on "gender performativity" in the early 1990s revolutionized the field. Indeed, by the early 2000s, societal views on gender and sexuality had changed so much—largely due to the pioneering work of Butler and others—that Butler's (2004) book *Undoing Gender* could confidently make the following assertion: "If gender is a kind of a doing, an incessant activity *performed*, in part, without one's knowing and without one's willing, it is not for that reason automatic or mechanical. On the contrary, it is a practice of *improvisation* within a *scene* of constraint" (1, emphasis mine). Given Butler's use of terms like or "improvisation within a scene" or "acting in concert" in *Undoing Gender* (2004, 1), it is not surprising that this recognition that gender is always already performative would eventually come to influence (both artistically and socially) the world of theatre praxis, such that today a professional company like the Steppenwolf Theatre (2024) in Chicago now includes a casting statement on its website that reads:

> Steppenwolf Theatre Company is committed to creating an organization that deeply values and draws strength from the various stories and storytellers that make up our society. The majority of characters currently encountered adhere to the gender binary, using he/him or she/her pronouns. Despite these limitations in descriptions, our casting aims to be as inclusive as possible. We welcome submissions from gender non-conforming, genderqueer, transgender, and non-binary actors for roles that resonate with their identities.

But beyond the world of the professional stage, such approaches to gender-blind, cross-gender, and non-binary casting have also become increasingly important in both academic and community theatre settings.[1] For instance, the University of Massachusetts Amherst's 2009 production of Tirso de Molina's *Marta the Divine* (directed by Gina Kaufmann in a translation by Harley Erdman) expanded its notion of cross-gender casting in order to explore more fully the ramifications of Butler's gender performativity. Says Kaufmann (2015) in a retrospective essay: "[A]s I thought about the upcoming auditions for *Marta*, the question of how I might emphasize both the theme of the interchangeability of people and the rigidity of gender and class roles as just that—roles—led me to explore the idea of strategic cross-gender casting" (156). Kaufmann goes on to say that she "felt that if some of the men were played by women and some of the women played by men, then it would emphasize the fact that everyone is playing an assigned role in this society, and, indeed, any society, and that gender roles themselves are social constructs" (156–57). In this regard, Kaufmann ultimately settled on three roles for her production of *Marta the Divine* that would be assigned using cross-gender casting: the role of Lucía, Marta's sister, would be assigned to a male actor; the role of Don Gómez, Marta and Lucía's father, would be assigned to a female actor; and the role of Don Sancho, the brother of Don Pancho, would be assigned to a female actor. In this way, Kaufmann created a set of three "romantic pairs" that would consist of distinct gender dynamics: Marta and Felipe (female/male), Lucía and the Ensign (male/male), and Pastrana and Inés (female/female) (Kaufmann 157).

UMass Amherst's 2009 production was both highly successful and widely celebrated. It was invited to perform at the 2010 annual Siglo de Oro Drama Festival at the Chamizal National Memorial in El Paso, Texas. And Samuel Bosworth, who played the role of Lucía in the production, is even featured (in a production still) on the cover of Harley Erdman and Susan Paun de García's 2015 volume of essays titled *Remaking the Comedia: Spanish Classical Theater in Adaptation* (within which Kaufmann's [2015] essay on cross-gender casting appears). That said, while the UMass Amherst production went out of its way to draw viewers' attention to its use of non-traditional casting, not all productions need to be so overt when making important statements about gender performativity on stage. Station Theatre's 2023 staging of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz's *House of Desires* was just such a production, and it provides an alternative and complementary example of just how contemporary directors can "queer" the classics.

Station Theatre is a small community-based theatre located in Urbana,

[1] For studies of queer and trans performance on the English stage, see Chess (2019); Kemp (2019); and Lublin (2012).

Illinois,[2] home to the flagship campus of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC). Its 2023-24 season featured eight productions, including Catherine Boyle's English translation of Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz's *Los empeños de una casa* (*House of Desires*), which was directed by Christiana Molldrem Harkulich.[3] Regarding the play's basic plot, Station Theatre's website describes *House of Desires* as follows: "Don Pedro pines for Doña Leonor who is in love with Don Carlos who is desired by Doña Ana who is pursued by Don Juan. This 17th-century romantic farce is a wild tale of confusion and mistaken identities complete with wily servants and witless nobles."[4] Station Theatre's production ran for eight performances in December 2023 and was well-received by the public, with ticket sales for its roughly 65-seat house running in the 94th percentile.

Sor Juana's *Los empeños de una casa* has a long production history that dates back to October 4, 1683, when it was first staged in Mexico City as part of a "festejo" to celebrate the birth of the Viceroy's firstborn son, as well as to welcome the new archbishop Francisco de Aguira y Seijas. Recent stagings include an English-language production at Oklahoma City University in 1995 (directed by David Pasto using his own translation titled *The House of Trials*),[5] which was quickly invited to perform at the Chamizal National Memorial's Siglo de Oro Drama Festival in March 1996; a 2015 English-language production at Gala Hispanic Theatre in Washington, DC (directed by Hugo Medrano and using Boyle's translation); and a 2017 Spanish adaptation co-produced by Novohispunk Teatro and the Carro de Comedias at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), which was directed by Álvaro Cerviño (and also featured Juan Ruiz de Alarcón's *La verdad sospecha* under the umbrella title of *La plaza de Juan y Juana*), and which later traveled to Almagro, Spain to perform at the 2019 Festival Internacional de Teatro Clásico. But perhaps the best-known of the more recent stagings is the Royal Shakespeare Company's 2004 English-language

[2] Built in 1923, its name derives from the fact that the building itself began life as a passenger rail station for the Big Four Railroad, which connected Indianapolis, Indiana to Pekin, Illinois. With the coming of the Interstate Highway system in 1956 during the Eisenhower administration, the train depot was decommissioned, and the building was eventually purchased in 1972 by Rick Orr as the home of his newly founded Celebration Company at Station Theatre.

[3] The production's scenic designer was Robert Peterson, with costume design by Vivian Krishnan, sound design by Logan Dirr, hair and makeup design by Kristin Pitlik, and lighting design by Avery R. Adomaitis. The cast included Carissa Yau as Doña Ana, Ellen Magee as Doña Leonor, Lexie Vogel as Celia, Bryce Bennyhoff as Don Carlos, Heraldo Hermosillo as Castaño, Kyglo Webb as Don Juan, Kevin Paul Wickart as Don Rodrigo, Nicolas Perez-Jandrich as Hernando, Trent Sherman as Don Pedro, and Kristin Pitlik as the production's onstage musician.

[4] See https://stationtheatre.com/season-51. More detailed plot summaries, both in English and Spanish, are easily available through a quick online search.

[5] Among the small handful of other English translations of *Los empeños de una casa* are those of Susana Hernández Araico and Michael McGaha (2007) and of Dakin Matthews (2020).

production, which was featured (under the artistic direction of Laurence Boswell) as part of the RSC's 2004-2005 "Spanish Golden Age Season." This production, which was directed by Nancy Meckler and which premiered Boyle's translation, had a major impact on the worldwide visibility of Sor Juana's play.[6] Indeed, Harkulich indicates that she saw the RSC's *House of Desires* while she was studying in London and "fell in love with it" (Quezada 2023, n.p.), which is partially why she chose Boyle's translation for her own Station Theatre production.

Visually, Station Theatre's production was quite traditional. Unlike the earlier Gala Hispanic Theatre's production, which incorporated "a sense of the vociferous and rhythmic style of the iconic western films of 1940s Mexico" (Cortez 2015, n.p.), or Novohispunk Teatro's production featuring brightly colored costumes that were a mash-up of the baroque, the postmodern, and steampunk, Harkulich and her designers created a visual aesthetic that looked appropriate to early modern Spain.[7] Part of the reason for this aesthetic, says Harkulich, is that as a work of community theatre, her production simply did not have the budget, for instance, to create elaborate costuming that might require something more than borrowing much of it from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Accordingly, Station Theatre's set was also quite traditional and somewhat sparce, featuring a three-sided colonnade and doors that evoked the dark wrought iron of early modern Spain. Station Theatre's sets and costumes thus contributed to a visual aesthetic that worked well for an intended audience whose members probably knew very little about either Sor Juana or her world, and who would not come to the theatre looking for this production to "update" the play (in ways that they might be expecting if they were coming to see *Hamlet*).

That said, this does not mean that Station Theatre's production was staid or regressive in any way. Indeed, Harkulich clearly understands the social, political, and gender dynamics that Sor Juana has put into motion in *Los empeños de una casa*, and Station Theatre's production worked to unpack a number of Sor Juana's ideas. For instance, Harkulich said that she arranged the audience's seating area within the performance space so that audiences would enter the theatre from what was effectively the back of the set and would thus be unable to leave the space without having to walk across the stage again to do so (personal conversation, 9 August 2024). Her intention, she maintained, was to make the audience feel as trapped in the house as the characters themselves. Likewise, Harkulich stated (in that conversation) that she was particularly interested in the ways in which Sor

[6] For more on the RSC's Spanish Golden Age season, see Fischer (2014); and Jeffs (2018).

[7] For images of Gala Hispanic Theatre's production, see Cortez (2015). For images of Novohispunk Teatro's production, see the company's Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/Novohispunk/. And for images of Station Theatre's production, see Quezada (2023).

Juana "plays with veils." Thus, her production emphasized the stifling nature of the veils themselves, coupled with the unintended freedom that such veils allow for both anonymity and duplicity.

As a side note, one of the more enjoyable aspects of this production was Harkulich's treatment of the many—and often lengthy—asides that occur throughout the play. Here, however, rather than playing these asides "straight" (as it were), Harkulich directed her actors to emphasize deliberately what I have elsewhere called hermetically sealed bubbles of "sonic closure" by having two things happen (Burningham 2017, 100). First, any character who was speaking an aside would literally step out of the play's world by jumping forward slightly toward the audience and then would deliver their lines directly to the crowd. Second, while these speakers were delivering their hermetically sealed asides to the audience, the other actors on stage would immediately freeze and would only resume their various activities once the actor speaking the aside had "jumped back into" the world of the play—a solution that, as Susan Fischer (2014) notes, was also adopted by the RSC for its 2004 production (138).[8] A number of critics—for instance, Boyle (1999, 233-34)—have commented on the metatheatre created by Sor Juana's supposed breaking of the "fourth wall." There are, of course, clear moments of metatheatre (as when Castaño attempts to excuse what might be considered an implausible plot device by insisting that the audience should not think he has concocted it himself, since "this is all part of the play" [Boyle 2004, 87]). But I would argue that most of the play's moments of direct address are part and parcel of the still-meaningful vestiges of a medieval Iberian jongleuresque performance tradition that informed the rise of the Spanish *comedia* in the first place. Our modern (and even postmodern) notions of the "fourth wall" only really came into being with the rise of proscenium arches and box sets in the 18th and 19th centuries (Calderón de la Barca's *El gran teatro del mundo* notwithstanding). Therefore, I think we tend to read too much into such moments in *Los empeños de una casa* as indicative of some kind of existential self-awareness on the part of her characters, rather than as examples of the kind jongleuresque dialogue that has always existed between actors and spectators in performance. Thus, what made Station Theatre's production of *House of Desires* all the more enjoyable was precisely its own self-awareness *as a play being performed* in which Harkulich's almost acrobatic asides highlight the extent to which her actors are still part of a

[8] Pasto (2004) also hit upon a similar strategy for his 1995 staging: "Catherine Larson's article, 'Writing the Performance: Stage Directions and the Staging of Sor Juana's *Los empeños de una casa*,' had alerted me to the unusually large number of asides, but until I had to direct the action on the stage, I was not fully aware of the problems raised by the vast volume of asides. . . . The solution I discovered involved having all the other characters freeze while each character spoke directly to the audience. This stop-action technique proved both effective and funny. In fact, the audience was laughing by the fourth aside, having found the obviously theatrical pattern very amusing" (n.p.).

jongleuresque performance tradition. As Trent Sherman (who played Don Pedro) mentions in an interview: "The audience is always in on the direction of the plot and the jokes of the character who addresses them, while the other characters on scene are not" (Quezada 2023, n.p.).

Recent scholarship of Sor Juana's *Los empeños de una casa* generally falls into one of three categories.[9] The first of these categories relates to the way in which the play inscribes what Flor María Pagán (1997) calls Sor Juana's "discurso feminista literario" and thus engages in dialogue more broadly with Sor Juana's larger project (47). For example, specifically comparing *Los empeños de una casa* to works like Sor Juana's famous "Respuesta a Sor Filotea," Emilie Bergmann (1990) cites a particular speech by Leonor in Act 1 of the play,[10] and argues that "Leonor's self-depiction as brilliant scholar could easily be applied to Sor Juana herself," given that "Leonor departs from the female norm for Spanish drama of the time by affirming her exceptional learning and describing the man she loves in a tone and in detail ordinarily reserved for men regarding women" (153). Indeed, in a 2015 *Washington Post* review of Gala Hispanic Theater's production of *House of Desires*, Celia Wren (2015) quotes Rosa Perelmuter—whom Wren had evidently interviewed for the review—as calling the character of Leonor "Sor Juana's alter ego" (n.p.), an argument also advanced by Octavio Paz (1982) when he says, "En *Los empeños de una casa* se pinta a sí misma en el relato que hace doña Leonor" (139).[11] In this way, these critics argue, Sor Juana draws our attention to what Boyle (2015) sees—both in this play as well as in Calderón's *La dama boba* and Cervantes's *El viejo celoso*—as "the duality of insight into deep structures of patriarchy" (156), and what Julie Greer Johnson (2001a) calls the problematic "reflection of gender-designated roles in a patriarchal society of the early modern period" (234).[12]

In this regard, Harkulich's 2023 production explored these elements of Sor

[9] Throughout his monumental study of Sor Juana and her life and works, Octavio Paz (1982) discusses *Los empeños de una casa* (usually looking for textual clues to Sor Juana's biography via the character of Leonor), but he eventually sums up his opinion on the play as follows: "*Los empeños de una casa* es una comedia agradable, que todavía hoy se puede ver con gusto, y nada más" (626). For other more general studies on this play, see also Boyle (2007); Brancatelli (2022); Cañas Murillo (1998); Carullo (1990); Cowling (2023b); Friedman (1991); García Valdés (2011, 2019); González (1999); Hernández Araico (2008); Kenworthy (1982); Larson (1990); López Forcén (2000); Poot Herrera (1993); Sancho Dobles (2015); and Wilkins (1991).

[10] "Inclinéme a los estudios / desde mis primeros años / con tan ardientes desvelos, / con tan ansiosos cuidados, / que reduje a tiempo breve / fatigas de mucho espacio. . . . Era de mi patria toda / el objeto venerado / de aquellas adoraciones / que forma el común aplauso" (Juana Inés de la Cruz 1989, 641).

[11] Georgina Dopico Black (2001) notes this frequent comparison of Leonor to Sor Juana herself, but argues that such a connection is (at the very least) "problematically" made (171).

[12] For other studies related to *Los empeños de una casa* and feminism or gender, see Boyle (2008); Maroto Camino (2002); McErlain (2020); Quispe-Agnoli (2004); and Weimer (1999).

Juana's literary text in two ways. In the first place, the production featured strong women in the characters of both Doña Ana (Carissa Yau) and Doña Leonor (Ellen Magee). Indeed, neither of these characters was portrayed as the kind of demur, shrinking violet that might be considered "appropriate" for young women in early modern Spain; both, in fact, "presented" (to borrow a term from the nomenclature of gender performativity) as twenty-first-century independent women who just happened to find themselves trapped in the patriarchal structures of early modern Spain, where their choices (and futures) were severely delimited by both their fathers and their place in society. (In this way, both Doña Ana and Doña Leonor—while never actually appearing in male clothing during the play—can be read as versions of the *mujer varonil* of the Spanish literary tradition.). In fact, in Act 1, Sc. 5, during a moment of clear frustration when Don Juan (Kyglo Webb) continues to press himself upon Doña Leonor, she exclaims:

> For heaven's sake, as you're a gentleman,
> leave me. I have hardly set
> my unhappy foot in this house,
> whose owner I do not even know,
> so what can I make of your words,
> if the only thing that I understand
> is the amazement they cause me?
> And if, as I suspect,
> you think I am another,
> your passion deceives you.
> Stop. Use your wits.
> I am not your lady. (Boyle 2004, 39)

Even if we merely read this passage as plainly written, the meaning of Doña Leonor's words is very clear. But in Station Theatre's production, as a method for demonstrating the sheer unreasonableness of Don Juan's advances in the age of the #MeToo movement, Magee delivered the final two lines of this speech with full stops between each word: "Stop. Use. Your. Wits. / I. Am. Not. Your. Lady"—and with the final word "lady" she also pantomimed the stereotypical two-handed "hourglass" gesture of Western sexism. Magee's was a Doña Leonor who takes neither abuse nor prisoners.

Likewise, the production's male actors engaged in a broad, almost melodramatic, acting style in order to provide a commentary on the state of toxic masculinity both during the seventeenth century and today. Indeed, one of the running gags that Harkulich inserted into the performance was a recurring Roman "fist salute" over the heart that each of the male characters performed every time someone said the word "honor." This parody of the ritual performance of

masculinity not only tracks early modern Spain's preoccupation with honor, but it also grew out of one of the twenty-first-century cultural intertexts that subtly informed Harkulich's production. Having just seen the 2023 Oscar-nominated film *Barbie*, Harkulich said she realized that the character of Don Juan is essentially Ken (personal conversation, 9 August 2024). And, indeed, the entire cast of male characters in Station Theatre's production came across as if they were a group of petulant fraternity brothers somehow transported back to Golden Age Spain.

The second major category to interest contemporary scholars involves the interrelated issues of ethnicity and hybridity as depicted in the play. Much of this analysis centers on the relationship between *Los empeños de una casa* itself and the various other texts that make up Sor Juana's complete *festejo*. Recall that the full, original performance text included an opening allegorical *loa*, a first allegorical *sainete* placed between acts one and two of the *comedia*, a second comic *sainete* placed between acts two and three, and a concluding "Sarao de cuatro naciones" whose representatives are the "españoles, negros, italianos, y mejicanos" (Juana Inés de la Cruz 1989, 700). The *festejo*'s representation of these four "national ethnicities" obviously engages our twenty-first-century concerns regarding identity and representation, but Susana Hernández Araico (1997) even finds traces of what might be called a "crypto-americanness" subtly embedded in the comedic second *sainete* (in which two spectators of a *comedia* performance in progress attempt to bring it to a halt by heckling it through loud whistles). Says Hernández Araico (1997):

> Certainly the whistling in Sor Juana's *Sainete segundo* mocks to the utmost the musical and rhetorical sophistry in all the ancillary pieces as well as in the lyrical caesura in the second act. As an ironic expression of popular disapproval, also identified with the accent of newly arrived Spaniards in Mexico (*gachupines*, vv. 134–37), the whistling shrilly sounds out Sor Juana's own awareness of the lack of folkloric vitality in such musical elegance whose proven mastery by the nun some Spaniards in Mexico City might nonetheless view condescendingly. (323)[13]

On an even larger scale, Michael Horswell (2006) finds the very existence of the *festejo* itself to be a commentary on an emerging transatlantic identity: "While the celebrated heir of the Spanish viceroyalty, José, is the American-born offspring of an European crossing between Italian and Spanish nobles, Sor Juana's fictional 'newborn' is the precursor of a people eventually to be celebrated as the 'cosmic race,' the mestizo, the Mexican" (65).

[13] On the second *sainete*, see also Burningham (2013); and Poot Herrera (1996).

And nowhere within *Los empeños de una casa* itself is this *mestizaje* better represented than in the figure of the *gracioso* Castaño, who mentions that he has come to Spain from the "Indies," where he was born: "¿Con qué traza / yo a don Rodrigo le diera / aqueste papel, sin que él / ni alguno me conociera? / ¡Quién fuera aquí Garatuza, / de quien en las Indias cuentan / que hacía muchos prodigios! / Que yo, como nací en ellas, / le he sido siempre devoto / como a santo de mi tierra" (Juana Inés de la Cruz 1989, 684). Shortly thereafter, Castaño (whose name literally translates into English as "Chestnut") also makes reference to his dark skin tone: "No hay duda que me esté bien, / porque como soy *morena* / me está del cielo lo azul" (685, emphasis mine). Carmen Rabell (1993) argues that, in this, Castaño represents a kind of "tributo al pueblo mexicano" (18):

> La identificación de esa realidad más terrena del gracioso con un pícaro mexicano identifica a México, al espacio americano, con un lugar donde las conductas se hallan en un estado de relajación, o tal vez, un lugar donde la tendencia al mestizaje y la exogamia anula en parte las raíces mismas del código del honor: la defensa de una "pureza de sangre," la conservación del título de "cristiano viejo." (18)

Castaño is, in short, a symbol of what Horswell (2006) calls the "subversive potential of hybrid, colonial, subaltern" subjectivity (73), which comes into being through what he designates "transatlantic performances of hybridity" (64).[14]

And yet, there is another performance embedded in *Los empeños de una casa* that has also captured the attention of recent critics: Castaño's famous cross-dressing scene in Act 3, which Sandra Messinger Cypess (1993) says makes Sor Juana's *gracioso* a "reflejo distorsionado de Leonor" (182). Driven by Don Carlos's demand that he deliver a letter to Don Rodrigo (one that would explain both Carlos's culpability and his honest intentions), Castaño fears that he might find himself in serious trouble should he get caught up in one of the house's many intrigues. To solve this dilemma, Castaño hits upon the idea of dressing up as the veiled Doña Leonor so that he can move about the house undetected. At this point, he delivers a long speech during which, while putting on the various pieces of Leonor's clothing that he has been carrying around in a sack, he directly addresses the women of audience in order to ask them what they think of his improvised gender performance as a woman.[15] This quasi-soliloquy is, without a

[14] For other studies of the relationship between the Americas and Sor Juana's complete *festejo*, see Cowling (2023a); Díaz Balsera (1994); González-Estévez (2021); and Hernández Araico (2017).

[15] Sor Juana's (1989) original Spanish text reads: "¿Qué les parece, *Señoras*, / este encaje de ballena?" and "Pues atención, mis *Señoras*; / que es paso de la comedia" (685, emphasis mine). In both cases, Boyle (2004) has translated these lines as the more gender-neutral "ladies and gentlemen" (86–87). John Fletcher (2004), who played Castaño in the 1995 Oklahoma City

doubt, the best-known speech of the entire play. But, as Georgina Dopico Black (2001) also argues (with a nod to Judith Butler), "the 'gender trouble' that Castaño's cross-dressing provokes is, quite clearly, central to the plot resolution; it is the turning point of the play" (181).[16]

In her own discussion of this crucial scene, Boyle (2015) argues that what we see on stage is "Sor Juana vandalizing normative understandings of gender, in a process that constructs being-according-to-accepted-codes, that mocks the veiling and unveiling of the self, that shows the use of illusion and trickery, and that reveals the primacy of codes over evidence" (163). Johnson (2001a), for her part, notes that "Cross-dressing was a commonly used technique in early modern theatre, but it usually involved a woman who dressed as a man in order to enable her to move about freely in a man's world," and that Sor Juana's innovation in this play is to reverse "the concept of the *mujer varonil* by having Castaño don Doña Leonor's dress in preparation for reentering the interior of the house which is designated as female space" (243). Indeed, as Mercedes Alcalá Galán (2001) argues: "Esta especie de striptease a la inversa supone una finísima deconstrucción de la idea de lo femenino como mera corporalidad precisamente al poner todo el énfasis en el nuevo cuerpo de mujer recién adoptado por Castaño, lo que lo convertirá inmediatamente en epítome de la seducción femenina" (90). Christopher Weimer (1992) points out that misogyny, "which was so deeply embedded in the dominant ideology of Sor Juana's culture," is the "primary target" of Sor Juana's satire here (92), while Carmen Rabell (1993) insists that "Sor Juana pone, una vez más, en boca de Castaño 'la otra visión,' la de la mujer hostigada sexualmente por el hombre. En este sentido, el personaje de Castaño cumple muy bien su función de ser el 'alter ego' del autor dramático al denunciar lo que tantas veces Sor Juana ha denunciado también en su poesía" (20).[17]

In the recent scholarship on Castaño's cross-dressing scene, one study in particular stands out: that of Sidney Donnell (2008). If this author provides his own insights into many of the issues discussed above, including what he calls Castaño's "racialized ethnicity" (182), he also offers an extremely important take on what he calls Castaño's "drag performance" (180): "I privilege Sor Juana's *Los empeños* and its transvestite subject because it is my contention that cross-dressing in both text and stage performance served as one of the principal means

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University production, indicates that the production's blocking for this scene "involved an extended foray into audience seats (and onto one person's lap)" (n.p.). But he also notes that Castaño's famous cross-dressing scene can lose "something of its shock value when presented to an audience inured to plots like *Tootsie*, *Mrs. Doubtfire*, and *The Birdcage*" (n.p.).

[16] For other studies of Castaño (or *graciosos* more generally), see Ferrer Vals (2005); Hernández Araico (2011); and Johnson (2001b).

[17] For more on Castaño's cross-dressing scene, see Birkenmaier (2002); Domínguez Quintana (2010); Fernández (2004); Hernández Araico (1997); Jung (2011); Merced (1997); Pagán (1997); Pérez Magallón (2005); Valbuena Briones (1997); and Wagner (2015).

of exploring variant signs of identity and of interrogating the dominant discourse that supported the ruling elite in the Baroque" (180). By focusing on Castaño's deliberately gendered line, "No hay duda que me esté bien, / porque como soy morena / me está del cielo lo azul" (Juana Inés de la Cruz 1989, 685), such an approach as Donnell's shines a bright light on one of the more significant aspects of Station Theatre's 2023 production. Due to the largely non-gendered nature of English grammar, Boyle's translation cannot capture the original Spanish's radical subversion of gender identity in the line: "It suits me perfectly– / I'm so dark that blue looks divine on me" (Boyle 2004, 86). For Donnell, however, the gendered Spanish adjective "morena" is crucial because it shows that Castaño does not merely see himself here as a man dressed in women's clothing, but rather, through this very performance, Castaño takes on a new, alternative, female identity. Says Donnell:

> His verses are both declarative ("I am a brown woman" or "my name is Morena") as well as contemplative ("blue looks heavenly on me"), signaling an internal transformation and self-awareness of how this assumed identity goes well with his "true colors." Castaño in drag—whom I will now call Morena—plays up the advantages of "her" recently inscribed identity to a coquette extreme. She begins to refer to herself in the feminine […], indicating an entanglement of psychological and linguistic changes accompanying the change of clothes. (182)

For this reason, Harkulich was extremely fortunate to have cast Heraldo Hermosillo in the role of Castaño. Not only is Hermosillo originally from Mexico and a BFA acting student at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, but he also happens to be a drag performer in his own right. Thus, he was able to bring to the role of Castaño more than just a little bit of Donnell's drag queen, "Morena."

Throughout Station Theatre's *House of Desires* Hermosillo's Castaño participated in the parody of masculinity that was so central to Harkulich's vision for the production. He often delivered his lines in the same "manly" tones as the other male characters, and therefore, other than coming from the servant class, he did not immediately stand out as being in any way different from the other men in the play. Nevertheless, from the start, when he first entered the stage and immediately tried to hide under Doña Ana's skirt, Hermosillo's Castaño was very flirtatious in ways that befit a *gracioso* as well as foreshadow what we would eventually see in Castaño's drag performance in the third act. Such flirtatiousness (often directed at the audience itself) popped into view multiple times throughout the production. For example, in Act 2, when Castaño is deliberately toying with Celia's affections, she says to him, "I have to go. But if this is not a game I'll be

back" (Boyle 2004, 52). Castaño's reply, which the script suggests should be said to Celia herself, was delivered instead to the audience because Celia had already exited the stage. Says Castaño: "Ah, but it is a game, and like all games, it can take many turns" (52). Significantly, when Hermosillo landed on the word "turns," he punctuated the moment with an ironic too-cute-by-half smile and a quick double eye blink. Later, at the very end of Act 2 (where Station Theatre's production placed its intermission), Hermosillo essentially repeated this gesture. As the first half of the performance came to a close, Castaño delivered the final lines: "It's been a long day. I think we need a break" (77). And, as with Castaño's previous comment about games potentially taking many turns, Hermosillo punctuated this announcement of intermission with a coy, sexy wink to the crowd before scampering off to the green room.

These moments of coquettishness continued to build over the course of Act 3 and then culminated, of course, in Castaño's famous cross-dressing scene. But where other actors in this role might emphasize Castaño's transvestism—Matthew Stroud (2007), for instance, notes a 1986 Castaño whose humor was derived "by essentially making himself the butt of the joke, the typical situation of a straight man in a dress" (157)—Hermosillo brought what can only be called a truly "drag sensibility" to the performance.[18] Of all the Castaños I have ever seen on stage, I have never seen one who enjoyed his own drag show as much as did Hermosillo's *gracioso*. In fact, Harkulich indicated that Hermosillo could extend this drag scene for as long as fifteen minutes, and that she had to direct him to keep the scene within the necessary time limits (personal conversation, 9 August 2024). Indeed, while Hermosillo continued to use his "manly" voice throughout this scene, he also occasionally alternated this with an exaggerated line delivery that dripped of drag "fabulousness." Likewise, when he put on Leonor's skirt, he was so excited to see himself—but even more importantly, to *feel* himself—in her clothing that he could not help but spin multiple circles in the flowing skirt and then jump for joy. And if, as per Dopico Black (2001), this cross-dressing scene does indeed represent the "turning point of the play" (181), then Castaño's discovery of the performative possibilities of Leonor's fan is the indisputable high point of Hermosillo's drag performance (and Harkulich, in our personal conversation, mentioned the importance of fans within contemporary drag culture). Coming to the end of his cross-dressing speech, Hermosillo's Castaño picked up the fan and snapped it open. This gesture made such an unexpected and

[18] Weimer (1992) distinguishes between transvestism and drag: "Transvestism, or the serious effort to impersonate the opposite sex, implicitly reinforces the prevailing sociosexual standards, while drag, which is comic in nature, mocks them" (92). Stroud (2007), for his part, defines "camp" as including "irony, incongruity, masquerade, aestheticism, theatricality, humor, exaggeration, and an inversion of the important and the trivial" (152). For an extended discussion of drag, camp, and Castaño, see Stroud (2007, 150–58).

dramatic noise that Castaño himself was pleasantly shocked by it, and we saw on his face the sheer glee of realizing all the potential that this "feminine" object might bring to his performance. Thus, he snapped it open again just for fun. And then he snapped it open again just for good measure, and then again and again and again until his ongoing performance of snapping the fan, as with his earlier moment of donning Leanor's skirt, also made him visibly giddy. It was a dramatic—and clearly drag-informed—gesture that Hermosillo's Castaño would continue to explore as he moved into the final scenes of the play.

But if Hermosillo's drag sensibility makes the most of Castaño's performance of cross-dressing, such a drag sensibility is only part and parcel of a much larger "queer" sensibility that permeated Station Theatre's staging from start to finish. Harkulich indicated that several members of her cast and crew identify as LGBTQIA+ and that this fact had an enormous impact on the development of Station Theatre's production: "What's interesting to me about this play, and how we can think about it queerly, is that it is a commentary about masculinity, a commentary about gender relationships. But the only way you see those things is if you are queering heteronormativity" (personal conversation, 9 August 2024). Thus, in Act 2, Sc. 5, Sor Juana's embedded musical number, "Which is the greatest of all love's sorrows" (Boyle 2004, 59–60),[19] was sung to a sexually ambiguous choreography (by Kristin Pitlik) that looked much more like something we might see on the television show "Dancing with the Stars" than on any early modern stage. Such a queering of heteronormativity in this production even extended to the lighting design in which Avery Adomaitis's lighting plot often made use of a saturated hot pink contrasted with royal blue accents, an aesthetic that Harkulich referred to as moments of "bisexual lighting" (personal conversation), and which was clearly a prominent feature of Castaño's cross-dressing scene. Regarding the characters themselves, Harkulich added (in that personal conversation) that the character of Don Pedro (played by Trent Sherman) was deliberately queered, made "muppety" in this particular instance by having the actor's costume, hair, and makeup match almost perfectly the Jim Henson Muppet known as Lew Zealand (who sports a ruff collar and throws a boomerang fish). Likewise, Hermosillo actually played Castaño as pansexual, while, as Harkulich also said, Lexie Vogel played Celia as a lesbian who only agrees to marry Castaño at the end the play "because he is wearing a dress."

But this brings us to the other significant element of Station Theatre's *House of Desires*. Immediately following Castaño's cross-dressing scene in Sor Juana's original text, Don Pedro enters the stage, where he mistakes Castaño for Doña Leonor, and so he begins to woo forcefully the disguised Castaño. Readers familiar with Sor Juana's play will remember that this wooing ultimately

[19] The first line in the original Spanish is "¿Cuál es la pena más grave / que en las penas de amor cabe?" (Juana Inés de la Cruz 1989, 663).

culminates with Don Pedro proposing marriage to the person he thinks is Doña Leonor, only to later discover that there are actually two Leonors in the house; after which, as happens at the end of nearly all Spanish *comedias de enredo*, the various characters eventually pair off with their proper mates in anticipation of the heterosexual marriages that will bring order to the romantic chaos. In Sor Juana's play, however, Don Pedro ultimately finds himself to be the "odd man out" when it becomes all-too apparent that he has been wooing the cross-dressed Castaño all along. Carl Good (1999) suggests that Castaño's transvestism "brings to the surface a latent tension in the work which the struggle between the two couples tends to obscure: by taking the focus off of their farcical dramatic opposition, he reorients the dramatic attention to the latent rivalry between Ana and Pedro" (37). Pasto (1997), who, again, directed the 1995 production at Oklahoma City University, speaks of the "attractiveness of androgyny" in the play: "The audience watches one man make love to another, fully aware of the irony, and the possibility of a homosexual union is raised" (26). For, as Donnell (2008) rightly points out, "Castaño appears unwilling for their relationship to end so abruptly, acknowledging his drag persona's betrothal to Pedro even after his masculine identity has been revealed" (188). And yet, as Pasto (1997) also points out, "The homosexual union never actually happens, of course, [because] the rigid Catholicism of the period would not permit it" (26). Or, as Donnell succinctly puts it: "Castaño's reiteration of his vow to wed Don Pedro could [only] be taken seriously if patriarchal conventions and law were to permit such an act between men" (188).[20]

Taking advantage of the play's own "queering heternormativity" here, Harkulich's production plays up this moment of homoeroticism: Hermosillo's Castaño, for instance, took full advantage of his fan snapping gesture, and he even seemed to get the "vapors" at one point. Fischer (2014) anticipated this idea and then followed it to its logical conclusion when she says of the RSC's 2004 production:

> Would it be too far-fetched to suggest that the potential for an *unconventional* ménage à trois Pedro-Castaño-Celia might provide a further labyrinthine twist for a latter-day director interested in pushing arbitrary gender boundaries to their logical conclusion and subjecting them to the same sort of interrogation and critique that the rigidities and absurdities of conventional codes of decorum, courtship, and honor would necessarily be subjected? (141, emphasis in original)

That said, even Station Theatre's twenty-first-century production could not allow

[20] On this marriage proposal, see also (Boyle 1999, 235).

its Castaño and Don Pedro to deviate so far from Sor Juana's original script as to show the two men romantically pairing off at the end. Nevertheless, and given the circumstances (which include the existence of legal prohibitions against the altering of Boyle's copyrighted text),[21] Harkulich's queer staging of *House of Desires* play did manage take the idea about as far as it could go.

Thus, in Station Theatre's production, when Castaño finally reveals that he is not the Leonor that Don Pedro is looking for, Pedro initially faints. But, when Don Pedro comes to, Castaño helps him to his feet by extending a friendly hand, but then immediately pulls Pedro into a romantic embrace while coyly reiterating his willingness to go through with the marriage: "Do not forsake me, my darling" (Boyle 2004, 111), he says in his most "feminine" voice. Hermosillo's Castaño then linked arms with Don Pedro, and his next few lines were delivered as the two men walked arm in arm downstage as if walking down the aisle toward the matrimonial altar. What Hermosillo himself says of the entire ethos of this production is also a wonderful summary of this particular queer moment: "Desire is a completely different concept from love, and this show represents that with wit and boldness. Lines between love and desire are crossed constantly as human beings, and it's wonderful to relate to characters that, amidst the absurdity, experience this universal confusion" (Shelby 2023, n.p.). Even so, the queer potentiality posited by this "walking down the aisle" moment soon dissipates as Doña Leonor pairs off with Don Carlos, Doña Ana pairs off with Don Juan, and Celia pairs off with Castaño, leaving Don Rodrigo (the play's symbol of early modern patriarchal honor) with nothing left to do but accept this final outcome.

Of course, contemporary audiences may find such "conventional" *comedia* endings completely unsatisfying in the early twenty-first century, hoping instead for the kind of alternative, genderqueer plot twists that Fischer (2014) suggests above. This is certainly true for a play like Guillen de Castro's *La fuerza de la costumbre*, which—quite astonishingly—explored the performativity of gender some 350 years before Judith Butler was even born, but which nonetheless resolves its various queered plot complications by acceding to the traditional binary and heteronormative marriage conventions of early modern Spain. Still, as Kaufmann (2015) says of her own experience directing *Marta the Divine*'s cross-gender cast, "Our understanding of Tirso's world can no longer be simply that women naturally behave this way and that men naturally behave this other way, or that the rich naturally behave this way and their servants naturally behave this other way, but rather that these rigid and complex behavioural constraints are culturally constructed and that other ways of behaving are possible" (159). This is

[21] While Sor Juana's original Spanish text is in the public domain, the copyright page of Boyle's English translation stipulates: "No performance may be given unless a license has been obtained, and no alterations may be made in the title or the text of play without the author's [i.e., Boyle's] prior written consent" (Boyle 2004, 10).

a point made abundantly clear by Station Theatre's 2023 production of *House of Desires*, even without the kind of overt cross-gender casting that was so central to Kaufmann's production, because in casting her own particular Castaño, Harkulich said nearly all there was to say.

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Intertheatrical Pursuits: Frecknall's *The House of Bernarda Alba* after Lorca, Adillo Rufo's *Cielo Calderón* o *"La vida es sueño" según Lorca*, Calderón's *La vida es sueño (auto)*

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ABSTRACT
The author undertakes an intertheatrical reading of Federico García Lorca's *La casa de Bernard Alba* in the light of: (1) Rebecca Frecknall's radical production, at The Royal National Theatre of Great Britain in 2023, of Alice Birch's expressionistic adaptation of the play scored to be followed rhythmically; (2) Sergio Adillo Rufo's production, in Spain in 2022, of Lorca's 1932 production of the second version of Calderón's *auto*, *La vida es sueño*, which the director reconstructed with interpolated scenes in prose that spoke to the politics of Lorca's world and, by extension, to ours; (3) the seventeenth-century Calderonian *auto* that, according to tradition, concentrates on the dogma of redemption. Part I offers a critical reading of Frecknall's stage mounting; Part II discusses Adillo's dramaturgical and directorial choices; Part III mediates between Lorca's dramatic text (with a nod to Frecknall's staging) and Calderón's *auto* ([re]interpreted by Adillo, as apposite); and Part IV finishes with mediations between the endings of the dramatic and performance texts—on the page and as translated to the stage—along with some concluding thoughts on intertheatricality as a form of intertextuality. Interwoven perforce is a connection to the sociopolitical context of the birth of *La casa de Bernarda Alba* (1936): the Second Spanish Republic (1931–1939), and Lorca's touring theatre known as La Barraca (1932–1934).

KEYWORDS
Federico García Lorca, *La casa de Bernarda Alba*, Rebecca Frecknall, Sergio Adillo Rufo, *Cielo Calderón*, La Barraca, Calderón de la Barca, *La vida es sueño* (*auto*), intertheatricality, intertextuality

RESUMEN
El autor emprende una lectura interteatral de *La casa de Bernarda Alba* de Federico García Lorca a la luz de: (1) la producción radical de Rebecca Frecknall, en el Royal National Theatre de Gran Bretaña, de la adaptación expresionista de

Alice Birch, compuesta para ser seguida rítmicamente; (2) la producción de Sergio Adillo Rufo, en España en 2022, de la producción de Lorca en 1932 de la segunda versión del auto de Calderón, *La vida es sueño*, reconstruido con escenas interpoladas en prosa que ponían de relieve la política del mundo lorquino y, por ende, el nuestro; (3) el auto calderoniano del siglo XVII que, según la tradición, se concentra en el dogma de la redención. La primera parte ofrece una lectura crítica del montaje de de Frecknall; la segunda parte discute las elecciones dramatúrgicas y de dirección de Adillo; la tercera parte media entre el texto dramático de Lorca (con un guiño a la puesta en escena de Frecknall) y el auto de Calderón ([re]interpretado por Adillo, como apropiado); y la cuarta parte termina con mediaciones entre los finales de los textos dramáticos y los de performance—en la página y según se representaban en las tablas, junto con algunas reflexiones finales sobre la interteatralidad como forma de intertextualidad. También se aborda, desde luego, el contexto sociopolítico del nacimiento de *La casa de Bernarda Alba* (1936): la Segunda República Española (1931–1939), y el teatro itinerante de Lorca conocido como La Barraca (1932–1934).

PALABRAS CLAVES
Federico García Lorca, *La casa de Bernarda Alba*, Rebecca Frecknall, Sergio Adillo Rufo, *Cielo Calderón*, La Barraca, Calderón de la Barca, *La vida es sueño* (auto), interteatralidad, intertextualidad

I would rather these textual scholars spent
more time in the theatre and less in the databank.
—Sir Ian McKellen, quoted in Greg Doran, *My Shakespeare*

Prologue

García Lorca, Frecknall, Adillo, Calderón, and Intertheatricality

Federico García Lorca, as is well known, had a connection to early modern Spanish theatre (see Pérez-Simón 2020). In 1931, he was appointed by the newly elected, left-of-center Second Republic government as artistic director of the Teatro Universitario, a traveling theatre that came to be known as La Barraca (or "The Hut," from the improvised wooden structures that housed the touring puppet shows). Between 1932 and 1934, Lorca directed classical works from the corpus of Lope de Vega, Tirso de Molina, and Calderón de la Barca for rural village

audiences, often altering/adapting them in relation to the political and pedagogical urgencies of the times—the creation of national identity and the diffusion of culture in line with a liberal Republicanism—and incurring the criticism of right-wing groups (see Byrd 1975). In explaining why he returned to the classical repertoire rather than directing "modern" plays, Lorca stated: "Nuestro teatro moderno—moderno y antiguo; es decir eterno, como el mar—es el de Calderón y el de Cervantes, el de Lope y el de Gil Vicente. Mientras tengamos sin representar un *Mágico prodigioso,* y tantas otras maravillas, ¿cómo vamos a hablar de teatro moderno?" (Laffranque 1969, 604; see also Vilches de Frutos 2005, 71). As he recuperated this national patrimony, Lorca was able to add training as a director to his repertoire as poet, playwright, and intellectual. Surely, this experience served him in writing the so-named rural trilogy of *Bodas de sangre* (1933), *Yerma* (1934), and *La casa de Bernarda Alba* (1936), all authored while he was under the anxiety of influence of La Barraca and the Spanish classics (see Arata 2021).

To commemorate the ninetieth anniversary of the creation of La Barraca, the Instituto del Teatro de Madrid de la Universidad Complutense undertook, in 2022, to reconstruct Lorca's 1932 production of Calderón's *auto sacramental*, *La vida es sueño* in its second version of 1673 (published in 1677). The result was *Cielo Calderón* o *"La vida es sueño" según Lorca* (a partir del auto sacramental de Calderón y algunos textos de Lorca), directed by Sergio Adillo Rufo, who also acted as dramaturge. A dialogue between two historical and literary moments (the Counter-Reformation of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the Second Spanish Republic proclaimed on 14 April 1931 and dissolved on 1 April 1939) was deemed apropos of today's (meta/post)modern public, for whom a dialectic between rightist and leftist ideologies would prove familiar. *Cielo Calderón* had its première in July 2022 at Almagro's Festival Internacional del Teatro Clásico and was revived for a performance on 25 October 2022 in the Paraninfo of the Universidad Complutense in Madrid (which this re-viewer[1] attended).

A year later, Rebecca Frecknall's radical production of *The House of Bernarda Alba* in an adaptation by Alice Birch (2023) after Federico García Lorca opened on the proscenium-arch Lyttleton stage (in the complex of the Royal National Theatre) on 16 November 2023 and ran through 6 January 2024. For this re-viewer, there was a kind of subliminal connection—below the threshold of sensation, consciousness, awareness—in the act of seeing Frecknall's re-presentation of *Bernarda Alba* after Lorca, and then of re-viewing in her mind's

[1] The terms *re-view* and *re-viewing* are used in the original French sense of *revoir*, to see again, to indicate a *process* less of scrutinizing, analyzing, criticizing and more of reading, understanding, discerning. The hyphenation is meant to denote that process. The title of my book, *Reading Performance: Spanish Golden-Age Theatre and Shakespeare on the Modern Stage*, speaks as well to that mindset (see Fischer 2009).

eye Adillo's re-shaping of Lorca's reproduction of the *auto sacramental* against the backcloth of the Calderonian construction. This intertheatrical pursuit[2] of mediating between the two mises en scène vis-à-vis Calderón's second version of the original *auto* begins in Part I with a re-viewing of Frecknall's mounting; turns in Part II to a reading of Adillo's dramaturgical and directorial choices; moves in Part III toward mediating between Lorca's dramatic text (with a nod to Frecknall's [re]staging) and Calderón's seventeenth-century *auto* ([re]interpreted by Adillo, as apposite); and finishes in Part IV with mediations between the endings of the dramatic and performance texts, on the page and on the stage, along with some concluding thoughts on intertheatricality as a form of intertextuality.

Intertextuality/intertheatricality here is not understood apropos to dialogue or source, nor defined in intentional, influential, or determinate terms but from the post-structuralist viewpoint of an unbounded, infinite interconnectedness of things, states, ideas. In this sense, Jeanne P. Brownlow and John W. Kronik (1998) reiterate that the pursuit of intertextual mediations—or, in our case, *intertheatrical mediations*—is non-linear, "a wide-ranging instrument of relevance retrieval whose function is the accrual rather than the immediate exchange of knowledge" (12). Intertextuality, as is well known, moved in the postmodern world beyond the initial, ground breaking work of Harold Bloom (1997)—his redefinition of influence an act of "strong misreading," of creative interpretation, a "poetic misprision" (xxiii)—to incorporate the deconstructive work of Jacques Derrida and Roland Barthes. It evolved further through the fine-tunings of, among others, Jonathan Culler, Michel Foucault, Umberto Eco, Linda Hutcheon, who served as interpretants of each others' texts, responding to or mediating between signs and so enabling further theoretical processing.

Relevant to our discussion of intertextuality/intertheatricality as it plays out among the dramatic/performance texts of Lorca-Frecknall/Birch-Calderón-Adillo, Barthes (1971), states:

> Le Texte est pluriel . . . Le Texte n'est pas coexistence de sens, mais passage, traversée; il ne peut donc relever d'une interprétation, même libérale, mais d'une explosion, d'une dissémination. Le pluriel du Texte tient, en effet, non à l'ambiguïté de ses contenus, mais à ce que l'on pourrait appeler la *pluralité stéréophonique* des signifiants qui le tissent

[2] The reference to "intertheatrical pursuits" in the title and elsewhere is beholden to the title of the volume edited by Jeanne P. Brownlow and John W. Kronik (1998), *Intertextual Pursuits: Literary Mediations in Modern Spanish Narrative*. This article is dedicated to the memory of my mentor, John W. Kronik (1931–2006), indefatigable pursuer of intertextual connections and self-consciousness in art (see Fischer 1996).

> (étymologiquement, le texte est un tissu). (228)[3]

And the reader of the text (dramatic or performance) is likened by Barthes to:

> un sujet désœuvré (qui aurait détendu en lui tout imaginaire): ce sujet passablement vide se promène (c'est ce qui est arrivé à l'auteur de ces lignes et c'est là qu'il a pris une idée vive du Texte) au flanc d'une vallée au bas de laquelle coule un *oued* (l'*oued* est mis là pour attester un certain dépaysement); ce qu'il perçoit est multiple, irréductible, provenant de substances et de plans hétérogènes, décrochés: lumières, couleurs, végétations, chaleur, air, explosions ténues de bruits, minces cris d'oiseaux, voix d'enfants de l'autre côté de la vallée, passages, gestes, vêtements d'habitants tout près ou très loin: tous ces *incidents* sont à demi-identifiables: ils proviennent de codes connus, mais leur combinatoire est unique, fonde la promenade en différence qui ne pourra se répéter que comme différence. (228–29)[4]

Barthes' comparison here seeks to apprehend, in more concrete terms, the kind of subliminal connection below the threshold of sensation, consciousness, awareness—"la *pluralité stéréophonique*"—that constituted, for this spectator/critic, the acts of re-viewing, reading—interweaving—the dramatic and performance texts of Lorca-Frecknall/Birch-Calderón-Adillo.

Part I. Frecknall: *The House of Bernarda Alba* after Lorca

When one sees a paper slipped inside a theatre program, it often signals a shift in the cast of actors taking part in a play. This was the case for the matinee performance of Frecknall's production of *The House of Bernarda Alba* after

[3] "The text is plural . . . The Text is not a co-existence of meanings but a passage, an overcrossing; thus it answers not to an interpretation, even a liberal one, but to an explosion, a dissemination. The plural of the Text depends, that is, not on the ambiguity of its contents but on what might be called the *stereographic plurality* of its weave of signifiers (etymologically, the text is a tissue, a woven fabric)" (Barthes 1977b, 159).

[4] "The reader of the Text may be compared to someone at a loose end (someone slackened off from any imaginary); this passably empty subject strolls—it is what happened to the author of these lines, then it was that he had a vivid idea of the Text—on the side of a valley, a *oued* [North African watercourse] flowing down below (*oued* is there to bear witness to a certain feeling of unfamiliarity); what he perceives is multiple, irreducible, coming from a disconnected, heterogeneous variety of substances and perspectives: lights, colours, vegetation, heat, air, slender explosions of noises, scant cries of birds, children's voices from over on the other side, passages, gestures, clothes of inhabitants near or far away. All these *incidents* are half-identifiable: they come from codes which are known but their combination is unique, founds the stroll in a difference repeatable only as difference" (Barthes 1977b, 159).

Lorca on 13 December 2023. Specifically, it meant that the role of the antagonist, Adela, the youngest of Bernarda Alba's five daughters, was to be played not by Isis Hains but by Imogen Mackie Walker, due to the indisposition of the former actress. And then a mere fifteen minutes before the curtain was to rise, the acclaimed Harriet Walter, who was to interpret the leading role of Bernarda, announced her own indisposition, and so her presence, stance, and voice would not loom large; the role would be played by Celia Nelson. Nor would the scheduled filming of the production take place at that time. "The Show Must Go On," however, and the actors acquitted themselves in inimitable British fashion despite the last-minute shifts, perhaps even with greater verve and prerogative.

The subtitle Lorca gave to his play, "Drama de mujeres en los pueblos de España," and the pointed reference to it as a "documental fotográfico" following the list of characters in his manuscript, suggested that, minimally, the play was intended as an elucidation of contemporary Spanish life in the wake of the Spanish Civil War (on 18 July 1936, Francisco Franco initiated a military uprising against Madrid's Republican government, and on 16 August, Lorca was arrested and shot three days later outside the village of Viznar, northeast of Granada, by Nationalist forces).[5] If *La casa de Bernarda Alba* was completed on 19 June 1936, and Lorca read the manuscript to friends a few days later, the play was virtually silenced until 8 March 1945. It received its official première, not in Spain but in Buenos Aires, with the Catalan actress Margarita Xirgu (forced into exile under the Franco regime) in the title role. The text used for this première, and for the published version edited by Guillermo de Torre (1945), was a typed transcript that contained differences, of more or less significance, from the autograph.[6]

[5] Evidence, however much still conjectural, has materialized in the twenty-first century connecting Lorca's murder to family vendettas unfolding from his handling of distant relatives as portrayed in *La casa de Bernarda Alba*. Conjecture has it that people from the Andalusian village of *Asquerosa*—meaning "disgusting, filthy"; renamed *Valderrubio* in 1943, alluding to the "blond" tobacco plantations springing up in the "valley"—where the García family lived from 1905? to 1909 may have had a direct hand in the assassination. Bernarda Alba herself may have sprung from Lorca's recollection of his neighbor and distant cousin, Frasquita Alba Sierra, who dominated tyrannically over her unwedded daughters and dressed only in black. Subsequently, los Roldán, important landowners in the region, may have been offended by Lorca's seeming depiction of their relatives, los Alba (see Delgado 2014, 81). The extent to which Lorca's portrayal was based on real persons, or on figments of his imagination, is apparently unknown.

[6] Subsequent editions of *La casa de Bernarda Alba* followed the unreliable de Torre (1945) text until the publication of the autograph manuscript by Mario Hernández (1981). M.**a** Francisca Vilches de Frutos (2005) bases her edition of the play on the autograph manuscript, conserved in the Fundación Federico García Lorca, and offers a detailed analysis of "el apógrafo y el autógrafo" in her introduction (90–117). Enrico Di Pastena (2019) follows Vilches de Frutos' tenth edition of 2015 for his Spanish-Italian edition and translation, with commentary in Italian; here, this commentary is cited in Italian and linked by page to Richard Sadleir's (2019) English translation

If the play arguably had its origin in Naturalistic realism and real-life events, elements of Symbolism and Expressionalism permeate it though they are less pronounced than in Lorca's earlier *oeuvre*. Lorca purportedly (re)iterated the principle of "reality" and "pure realism" during the reading of the manuscript, exclaiming at the end of each scene, "¡Ni una gota de poesía! ¡Realidad! ¡Realismo!" as recorded by the musician Adolfo Salazar (del Río 1940, 248). That exclamation, however, has been taken to mean that Lorca in effect desired not "un realismo literal" but "un realismo relativo," whereby the play was "depurada y escueta," emptied of "elementos exteriores" (Josephs and Caballero 1989, 74, 75), so as to move beyond a local and particular realism toward a poetic or symbolic realism.

Lorca, in other words, "trasforma tuttavia il dramma rurale: elimina ogni elemento accessorio, spoglia la trama di retoricismo e di colore locale, oppone a un ruralismo convenzionale e di sapore naturalista quella più spigolosa e potente realtà dei campi da lui ben conosciuta" (Di Pastena 2019, 29, cf. Sadleir 2019, 91). Moreover, with regard to language, the playwright does not unimaginatively imitate the rural dialect but "impiega la ricchezza espressiva del parlato popolare (proverbiosità, iperboli, comparazioni) come una base di partenza, impastandone in modo originale gli elementi con costrutti e traslati di radice letteraria" (Di Pastena 30, cf. Sadleir 91; see also Edwards 1998, xxviii–xxxii).

Let us take, by way of a well-worn example, the stage directions preceding each act of *La casa de Bernarda Alba*.[7] On the face of it, the call on the page for a white interior suggests a grounded, real(istic) environment (however much it may be conveyed on stage by bathing the space in a white light, not by simply painting the walls white). In symbolic terms, whiteness indicates an atmosphere of purity, innocence, coldness, emptiness, sterility, silence, if not of death and mourning, especially since the set moves inward toward an evermore enclosed and darkened (nighttime) space, tinged in blue. In this sense the whiteness, along with the blackness of the characters' attire and the dearth of color throughout (except for

within the Di Pastena text. For an (exhaustive) list of the principal editions of *La casa de Bernarda Alba* from 1945 to 2019, see Di Pastena 315–16. Henceforth, references to the Spanish text of *La casa de Bernarda Alba* are to Vilches de Frutos' (2005) edition and will be noted, unless otherwise indicated, by page and act alone. References to Birch's (2023) *Bernarda Alba* after Lorca will be noted by page alone.

[7] (Acto primero): "*Habitación blanquísima del interior de la casa de Bernarda. Muros gruesos. Puertas en arco con cortinas de yute rematadas con madroños y volantes. . . . Es verano. Un gran silencio umbroso se extiende por la escena. Al levantarse el telon está la escena sola. Se oyen doblar las campanas."* (Acto segundo): "*Habitación blanca del interior de la casa de Bernarda. . . .*" (Acto tercero): "*Cuatro paredes blancas ligeramente azuladas del patio interior de la casa de Bernarda. Es de noche. El decorado ha de ser de una perfecta simplicidad. Las puertas iluminadas por la luz de los interiores, dan un tenue fulgor a la escena. . . . Al levantarse el telón hay un gran silencio, interrumpido por el ruido de platos y cubiertos* (139, 189, 241; Acts 1, 2, 3).

Adela's allusive display of a green dress and a red-and-green-floral fan), implies that Lorca has created "una perfecta estilización no realista de Andalucía" (Josephs and Caballero 1989, 75). The important point is that with this "blanco y negro" opposition (75), Lorca transcends the code of rural drama "gracias a la capacidad connotativa del lenguaje simbólico utilizado, mediante el cual conecta con los movimientos de renovación vanguardista de la época" (Vilches de Frutos 2005, 78).

Why this schematic foray into historical, editorial, (meta)literary, and critical contexts that provide a frame of reference for both the dramatic and performance texts of this production, adapted and staged after Lorca? Since one can hardly speak of a stable, reliable text with respect to *La casa de Bernarda Alba* (see note 4 above), this reader/re-viewer would be hard-pressed to countenance puristic objection to—yet another—version of the play, especially if it were an actable adaptation so often wanting in the world of dramatic translations. A reading of this work after Lorca reveals that, in generating her text for performance, Birch respected the spine of Lorca's play, cutting, expanding, juxtaposing, or interpolating dialogue or scenes only to make her expressionistic concept *work on stage*.[8] Her text, Birch says, is "scored and ought to be followed rhythmically," with "overlapping of speech" signaling how it is to be enacted (2). The spacing of the dialogue in the written performance text, the use of upper and lower case letters, and the punctuation are all intended to aid the actors with "the pacing and the weight of their words" (2).

Set (and costume) designer Merle Hensel provided a staggering structure for the play's titular house, opened up in sections: "a vast institutional block that swallows the entirety of the Lyttelton stage. It looks halfway between a hotel and a prison—but not, crucially, a home—with two top floors divided into cell-like bedrooms and the bottom given over to a living room, kitchen, and high metal fences that separate the house from the world" (Lukowski 2023). The design also suggested at once the cross-section of a "doll's house" and a "convent," with the unadorned upper bedrooms resembling "cells of nuns" (Gardner 2023)—thus evoking the servant Poncia's textual reference to the house as a "convento" (210; Act 2).

If the bedrooms were fettered by gates on either side, they were still "tiny defiant spaces of freedom in which everything [was] visible" (Alfree 2023). *Martirio* (Lizzie Annis), aged 24, physically challenged with a twisted foot rather than a hunched back, was pressing at walls or swallowing pills; *Amelia* (Eliot

[8] It should be noted that, presumably, Lorca continued to work on the manuscript once he had returned to Granada on 13 July 1936; he was, however, unable to leave a definitive version by the time he was fatally shot on 19 August 1936 (Josephs and Caballero 1989, 74; Vilches de Frutos 2005, 90–92; Di Pastena 2019, 71, cf. Sadleir 2019, 131).

Salt), aged 27, was swigging wine; *Magdalena* (Pearl Chanda), aged 30, was resting after a fainting spell or whirling around in a dress; *Adela* (understudy Imogen Mackie Walker), aged 20, was parading about in undergarments or donning a then disallowed green dress; *Angustias* (Rosalind Eleazar), aged 39, was applying make-up, flaunting herself in pink, masturbating over a fiancé's picture, or praying; Maria Josefa (Eileen Nicholas), aged 80, was breaking out of a window or hiding from the world under a bed; Bernarda (understudy Celia Nelson), aged 60, was hovering at doors or listening behind walls. From the first, then, we were invited to have the production "[float] free of cultural specifics to foreground the play as a horror show of the mind" (Allfree). The openness of Hensel's set appeared to offset the received idea that space was a function of the dialogue, whereby "las voces, los ruidos, los movimientos revelarán paulatinameante al espectador que el espacio visible es sólo una zona de paso, sin verdadera capacidad de convocatoria" (Fernández Cifuentes 1986, 190).

Though Lorca's own stage directions call first for a "habitación blanquísima, then for a "habitación blanca," and finally for "cuatro paredes blancas ligeramente azuladas"—white inherently symbolizing coldness, sterility, death—Hensen's set whitewashed the house's conventional colorlessness with greenish-blue hues of the tertiary color teal for the walls and furnishings, providing a design choice with multifarious possibilities. Like its counterpart white, teal is a cool color that can resist oppressive heat in high temperatures (literally, summer heat and, figuratively by extension, sexual heat) because of its ability to reflect most of the sun's wavelengths. The psychology of teal, though, points to a color that has the "calming properties of blue and the renewal qualities of green" and is thought to be "revitalizing and rejuvenating" ("Everything" n.d.). Was it meant, therefore, to highlight the life-giving sexuality, always already present within the house however much repressed and suppressed? Teal is also said to symbolize "decency and renovation" as well as "clarity, open communication, and practical thinking" ("Color" n.d.)—notably what Lorca had yearned to signal by exposing the social and moral maladies of the Spain of his time.

Did the teal hues thus bespeak a need for rational and decent behavior on the part of the irrational and oppressive Bernarda? Or, on the part of the spontaneous yet rebellious Adela, whose refusal to be shut away spiraled into a total lack of control and a headstrong irrationality as she pursued Pepe El Romano, despite the realistic reading of sardonic servant Poncia that, if the eldest died in childbirth, the man might then come for the youngest? Or did the green component of the teal color somehow merge with, and intensify, Adela's defiant dancing in the green dress, made to be worn on her birthday and symbolic of a passionate rush for freedom? At the same time, it was hardly possible to ignore the premonitory presence of the "Chekhovian" gun (Akbar 2023) that Bernarda would (mis)fire in the play's final moments: "Chekhovian," in the sense that noticeable details

should be integrated into the narrative or else removed. Framed in inverse relief on a cold and sterile *teal* wall in the main living room, the gun's discharging would catalyze Adela's self-destruction and compromise Bernarda's coveted "Good Appearance of family harmony" (Birch 180).

The production's initial sequence did not foreground Lorca's text: the tedious tolling of church bells and the realistic, pointed dialogue between the long-serving (and long-suffering) Poncia and another Maid, both of whom had returned early from the church service honoring Bernarda's deceased (second) husband to steal food from the pantry and voice their bitter resentment of the matriarch's tyrannical domination over the household. The production opened, not realistically but expressionistically, which is often the trademark of Frecknall's work. In a choreographed prelude, Pepe El Romano (James McHugh), the phantom suitor normally not seen nor heard (he does not figure in Lorca's cast list), actually appeared on stage as a dancer "with the hench physique of a prize bull" (O'Mahony 2023). A muscular, sexy figure bathed in Lee Curran's gold lighting, he moved in the courtyard with "sinuous, almost impossible beauty" (Allfree 2023), while Bernarda's five daughters stood illuminated as silhouettes, freshening themselves with fans darkened in shades of black. The stud exited via one of the two iron gates flanking the yard, to which he would return to woo the eldest and engage in lovemaking with the youngest. Those grilles seemed to take on a life of their own.

Simultaneous conversations were interwoven immediately following the prelude, so that we were watching different storylines unfold in a three-tiered space. We gleaned more from Birch's written performance text than from the whirlwind business on stage, which allowed us to hear but not understand what was being said. On the second level of the "doll's house" stage right, the Maid (Byrony Hannah) struggled—extradramatically—to give Maria Josefa her medicine before singing her a lullaby. Again, on the second level, Amelia sought—extradramatically once more—to make Magdalena join the others below. And, on the first level, conversations meshed among the sisters and the six village woman who had entered to show their respect for the dead. In the latter sequence, dress was the subject of Adela's response to Woman 1 (Charlotte Workman): "I hate black. Be wearing it forfuckingever now," adding—probably out of earshot—"She'll sit on our hearts and she'll take Years to just Watch us Die. And then she'll Smile" (Birch 8). If we were hard-pressed to understand the words spoken, including the use of expletives that at times permeated all the speech (though they jarred some, they did not jar this re-viewer as they seemed naturally placed and executed), we could be challenged to draw on alternative ways of apprehending, even in the light of a distracted, fractured focus. Once the scenes became more unified and conventional, they were quite powerful. Things seemed more balanced when the dialogue veered toward Lorca's traditional opening, with

Poncia and the Maid partaking of the victuals in the cupboard, and Poncia (Thusitha Jayasundera) vowing to "Lock [herself] in a room with her [Bernarda] and Spit at her for a Whole Year" (Birch 18).

Nothing specific can be said about the formidable Harriet Walter's performance, so lauded by the critics, because this re-viewer was not privileged to experience it first hand. If that was a curse, it was also a blessing because it forced focus elsewhere, to wit, the other characters' interpretive choices and the set design. That said, a word or two is in order about some of the choices around how this Bernarda was directed and played, gleaned from the last minute—admirable—understudy performance of Celia Nelson.

This production's Bernarda Alba was meant to "cut an imposing figure, bolt upright, feet planted firmly on the ground" (Crompton 2023). Nelson was vigilant and wary as she entered, listening to the concurrent conversations, if not murmurings, interwoven in Birch's version. If she did not wield the proverbial—phallic—"bastón" of Lorca's text, thus seeming less overtly masculine and threatening, she was policing nonetheless (cf. stage direction for her entry in Act 1; 148). Her initial—(in)famous—pronouncement of "Silence" was almost lost amidst the simultaneous chatter and clatter enveloping the space. Ironic, of course, in that "quizá el acto verbal más famoso de todo el teatro lorquiano sea el '¡Silencio!' con que Bernarda Alba abre y cierra su presencia en la escena" (Dougherty 1986, 104). Was there, at least to start with, some attempt to attenuate immediate association with the historical and cultural silencing of dissent, and to focus more broadly on the tragedy of a woman who refused to *see* what was going on around her, no matter how much she looked and listened? Or was it that Nelson's entrance as Bernarda simply did not read as forcefully as the absent Walters' presence might have?

In his notes to the first major production of the play in Spain, which opened in Madrid on 10 January1964, the director Juan Antonio Bardem stated that Bernarda should be "the very personification of authority, using her stick and her cold smile to assert it," but that she should "raise her voice" only "when her authority is threatened" (Edwards 1998, xlv). This was, more or less, the directorial paradigm followed in Frecknall's mise en scène. Bernarda escalated, physically abusing her daughters at two pivotal points on stage. In the first, she grabbed the cosmetic-enhanced cheeks of Angustias, spit on them, and then held them hard as she wiped, oblivious to cries of pain (see Birch 92). In the second, Bernarda tortured Martirio, also in love with Pepe El Romano, scalding her hand in boiling water for having stolen Angustias' coveted picture of him. In that case stage did not coincide with page, nor with Lorca's text: in Birch's text (144), mother merely(!) hit daughter hard across the face instead of beating her with the proverbial "bastón." In other instances Bernarda conversed quite normally, even motherly, when, for example, Adela queried her about people's reactions to

shooting stars or bolts of lightning (Birch 186)—effectively dispelling blanket interpretations of her character. Stage directions suggest that, at that moment, Bernarda was "softened" by Adela's "curiosity, her joy" (Birch 188). For the present re-viewer the role of Bernarda Alba, as conceived by the director and executed by the actor, was nuanced: "Her rule, her sequestration of her daughters from the world of passion and men, her relentless insistence on their obedience, is flecked by ripples of doubt and care. She thinks she is protecting them from the harsh patriarchal society outside, yet her rigour destroys them" (Crompton 2023). This was, in a sense, her tragedy.

Maria Josefa's presence was enhanced by intermittent banging and intense crying out: we *saw* her trying to open the bedroom door, and we *heard* and *understood* her scream "Fucking Bernarda, Let me out" (Birch 39) Her physicality exteriorized thoughts pulsating inside the minds and bodies of the frustrated daughters: "I Will Not stay in this house and watch these women turn to dust. Raging and seething and longing and dying and fading and collapsing and scratching and rotting and desperate for weddings that will never happen, hoping for life that will never come, pulverising their hearts one by one" (Birch 96). Birch's adaptation of Maria Josefa's language could not but impact as did the visionary insights of Lear's Fool; she said it all, but it fell on deaf ears, heard in Bernarda's iron-fisted rejoinder, "Lock her up" (Birch 96). The seer-like grandmother next appeared (after the interval), not just wearing a white (wedding?) dress and carrying an "oveja" in her arms (as in Act 3 of Lorca's text), but covered in mud with hair disheveled and holding a bloodied lamb to which she sang a lullaby. Her discourse to Martirio, in which she spoke of escaping to the seashore with her lamb/baby boy, and of how Pepe El Romano would devour all the young women in the house, followed—*grosso modo*—Lorca's text except, significantly, in one instance: before saying, "Pepe El Romano is a Giant," she incorporated that Martirio's "Father fucked Everybody, every Woman he could lay his hands on" (Birch 209), thereby explicitly equating the two men. As a frenzied, if prescient, force, Nicholas' Maria Josefa was rival only to Jayasundera's pungent Poncia who, in her pragmatic way, continually saw what others, especially Bernarda, refused to see. Recall Bernarda's false, if blind, sense of security: "I See Everything" (Birch 192).

The staging of the scene preceding the production's interval (the end of Act 2 of Lorca's play) was particularly grueling emotionally. Rich red lighting (with obvious symbolism) signaled a disturbance outside: an unmarried girl, bloody, and almost naked, who had killed her baby and was being dragged through the street by enraged villagers, entered the Alba house and ran into Adela's outstretched arms, followed by men and women moving in slow motion. As Bernarda shouted for the girl to be killed, Adela clutched her own stomach (Birch 168). Was she hallucinating that the crowd was grabbing at her, because she was

already pregnant? Simultaneously, upstairs, Maria Josefa was smashing a window, hands bloodied, to jump out. Tellingly, the performance text (on page and on stage) omitted Bernarda's outraged cry in Lorca's text—"¡Carbón ardiendo en el sitio de su pecado!" (240; Act 2)—which followed upon her calling for the girl to be killed before the guards arrived. Outer and inner worlds merged chillingly in that hothouse atmosphere. Houselights went up to signal the interval, no doubt for a rather rattled audience, but not as rattled as it might have been had Lorca's full text been preserved.

If a trend nowadays is to run a play right through from beginning to end and forego the interval, not just to respect "the two hours traffic of our stage," but also to keep the momentum moving and the tension high, Frecknall's production did not lose force after the break (Act 3 of Lorca's text). While everyone sat at dinner—Bernarda, the only one on stage showing an appetite, and a voracious one at that—the muscular, sexy figure of Pepe El Romano jolted suddenly from under the table and danced provocatively. It could not be missed that, at the same time, a stallion ("el caballo garañón" in Lorca's text [244; Act 3]) was kicking at the stable wall, consumed by heat; and outside, by the gate in the courtyard, there was movement as though *someone were there*. The stallion, symbol of the virility—strength, energy, and sexual prowess—the women desperately craved, merged with Pepe. He became palpably present on stage, thus reifying pent-up desire perennially banging not just in the women's minds but also in their groins (witnessed when we peeped into their private spaces upstairs). Pepe was indeed the someone outside the gate. The interpolated stage directions state: "Adela runs to him. He lifts her up, through the bars of the gate, we see his hands on the back of her hair as they kiss through the gaps in the bars" (Birch 198, 200). Throwing caution to the wind, they continued kissing and started "fucking through the bars of the gate" (Birch 200). Pepe appeared, not in full bodily view but synecdochically, as he passed a hand through the grille and under Adela's dress. This occurred while a bloodied Maria Josefa, bearing her lamb, spoke in prescient madness of how Pepe El Romano, the "Giant," would "Devour" them all (Birch 209). It was all happening then, in the moment, and we were voyeurs along with Martirio, who caught them more explicitly and dramatically *en flagrant délit* than Lorca's text could convey.

In the ensuing confrontation between Martirio and Adela, it was as if a dam burst, causing sudden, rapid, and uncontrollable release of emotional energy following years of silence and secrecy that had proved deadly. Martirio did not mince words in ordering Adela to "leave that man," and Adela in turn provoked Martirio into admitting that she "[loved] him too" (Birch 210, 214)—perhaps a bit overdone given Adela's screeching, presumably because of directorial prerogative. We could actually sense Adela's anguish upon seeing Martirio not as her sister but as "merely another Woman standing opposite"; and Martirio's envy

and jealousy, and the unwilled "strength" gained from a heart "full of such hatred" and her "drowning in it" (Birch 214, 216). Adela had pushed Martirio too far with her nervous "laughing" exteriorized on stage but not indicated in Lorca's text, and with her taunting as she again moved toward the door: "Come and watch if you like you seem to like doing that" (Birch 218). The lovesick martyr that was Martirio reacted the only way she knew, by calling on "MOTHER" to control what she could not bear.

This Adela could not seize her mother's tyrannical stick ("vara de la dominadora" in Lorca's text [275; Act 3]) and break it in two, because this Bernarda carried no such stick. Words and body language had to do for this Adela: "This is not my house anymore, not my prison anymore—do not take one more step Mother. No one tells me what to do anymore, but him. Only him. Only Pepe" (Birch 218). Maria Josefa's predictions were fulfilled to (im)perfection before our ears and eyes. Adela's final act of angry rebellion, fueled by hot passion and Martirio's rancorous falsification of Pepe's death following Bernarda's misfired gunshot, climaxed only as it could have for the sister she loved the most: the Death drive overtook the Life drive, Thanatos over Eros. Adela retired to her cell-like bedroom, took the green sash from her dress (merging here with the cold teal coloring of her surroundings?), fixed it to the light fitting, made a noose at the other end, stood on a chair, placed the noose around her neck, stepped off the chair, kicked it away, and dropped sans the "thud" resounding in Lorca's text but with force nonetheless (Birch 223). A crowd gathered outside as Bernarda, still willfully blind and deaf to the erupted tensions still erupting, cared more for guarding her (already tainted) reputation, name, and social standing than for the death of her child. "My daughter has died a virgin. . . . Dress her like a little girl. Like a little girl" (Birch 226) was all she could muster. "*Silence*," reiterated six times, indicated that the house would not forswear such retrogressive silencing but "drown in a sea of mourning," even as Martirio declared, piteously, that Adela was fortunate because "she Knew Love she was Happy" (Birch 226).

A stage curtain dropped suddenly and closed in the bottom half of the tragic house of Bernarda Alba: from walled up (blocked) matriarch to walled in (confined) offspring. The stain on Bernarda's reputation was palpable. Scandal was not so secret as she wished or supposed but seeping out, no matter how much she had denied it to Poncia: "*Were* anything awful to happen it would never get through the walls" (Birch 158, emphasis in original).[9] The auditorium lights went

[9] If Shakespeare "had no patience with walls, real or imaginary, and even in a play consumed with religious and ethnic animosity [*The Merchant of Venice*], he tore them down" (Greenblatt 2017), neither did Lorca. He, too, aimed to tear walls down in a play consumed with silence, repression, unrequited passion, rebellion, blind adherence to religion and tradition.

up, and though the audience gave a standing ovation, many, if not all, appeared to be influenced, at the very least, by the anxiety of silence. *Silence* that might have evoked, in dramatic terms for some, themes and tropes that pervade the early modern *comedia* especially regarding external (public) honor or reputation.[10] Or, silence that might have resurrected, in political terms for others, memories of repression, of being initially walled in for Reason of State after Franco's death (20 November 1975). A "pacto de olvido," also termed a "pacto de *silencio*," was operant during the transition years in Spain in order to stabilize democracy. The idea was to *silence* and *forget*: the atrocities committed during the Francoist dictatorship, the control exercised over the education system and the media (see Delgado 2015, 183–84). Facts, the truth of what had actually happened—for example, the circumstances of Lorca's assassination—would have to seep through the walls of the Amnesty Law of 1977.[11]

Part II. Adillo: *Cielo Calderón* o *"La vida es sueño" según Lorca*

In his adaptation of Calderón's *auto sacramental* according to Lorca*,* Adillo had to contend with three distinct contexts: the Counter-Reformation, Spain's Second Republic, and the secularized spectators of the first decades of the twenty-first century. Striking was Lorca's choice of dramatic material in 1932: first of an *auto*, given the "initial difficulty of the strangeness (in drama) of the subject-matter" (Parker 1943, 202); and second, the choice of *La vida es sueño*, in that it concentrates on "the dogma of the Redemption" (197) and "almost exclusively on the purely theoretical analysis of dogma (without thereby being remote from life)," being "perhaps over-subtle in the sense of over-abstract" (203). As an allegory, though, of Creation, Fall, and Redemption as evoked by the dogmas, it contains Biblical archetypes that form part of the collective unconscious and arguably would have been accessible even to poorly educated or uncultured audiences in remote, rural areas.

Not all that much is known of Lorca's dramaturgy with respect to the *auto*,

[10] Take, for instance, the subtitle of Daniel Rogers' (1965) vintage publication on *El médico de su honra*. Focusing on the protagonist's prescription of an unproductive "dieta / del silencio" (Calderón 1981, 2. vv. 1674–75) in probing his presumed dishonor due to his wife's seemingly suspicious behavior, Rogers states: "Silences heighten the suspense of the play in performance; metaphors of silence illuminate an aspect of the tragic theme; poet and the dramatic craftsman are at one" (274).

[11] The Amnesty Law of 15 October 1977 declared that no individual could be subjected to judicial proceedings for crimes committed during the civil war by parties on either side, Republican or Nationalist. Even before the Spanish constitution proclaiming Spain a "social and democratic state" was endorsed in October 1978, a "deal" was made to "avoid a truth and reconciliation commission, recriminations, and/or judicial procedures relating to the violation of human rights during the period from 1936 to 1975" (Delgado 2015, 184).

though the list of personages suggests that he worked from Calderón's second version of 1673, and from Ángel Valbuena Prat's edition of 1926–1927 (Adillo 2023, 133). With regard to Adillo's dramaturgy, some verses were omitted, redistributed, or transposed so that certain personages intervened to a greater or lesser extent (for example, el Albedrío and el Hombre at times interchanged parts). Obscure passages were simplified: those containing archaisms or syntactical hyperbatons that express complex theological concepts or engage in baroque wordplay indecipherable for most spectators of today. The director allowed the actors freedom to substitute linguistic humor with a comicity of their own making especially in verses with doctrinal content, given that the action of the *auto* was already "teología encarnada"; and considering that many of the ideas could be symbolically transmitted through stage objects or through "*tableaux vivants*" recognizable to a public familiar with Christian iconography: the creation of man, piety, penance in the wilderness, crucifixion, the sacraments of baptism and communion (Adillo 2023, 135–36).

Adillo did not aim to focus on the catechetic conundrum of freedom of the will conveyed, for example, in the anguished laments of Segismundo in the drama ("¿y yo, con más albedrío / tengo menos libertad?"); or of el Hombre in the *auto* ("¿teniendo más alma yo, / tengo menos libertad?") (Calderón 1994, 1. vv. 151–52; cf. Calderón 2012, vv. 670–71; see also Sears 2002). Instead, the intention was to bring "la luz de la cultura a los más desfavorecidos (especialmente a aquellos que viven en el medio rural)," and to underscore the ideal of political freedom and the liberal values of Republicanism: "educar a los ciudadanos y ciudadanas de los pueblos españoles en el ejercicio responsable de la libertad para contribuir al desarrollo de la democracia" (Adillo 2023, 148, 136).

The director framed his staging of the *auto* for Lorca's time and ours with four interpolated scenes in prose, thereby approaching the three-act division of a *comedia* to accommodate today's public: a *Prólogo*; a *Primer Interludio*, fomented by an "apagón" or stage blackout preceding the plot of el Principe de las Tinieblas/Lucero/Pecado and la Sombra/Culpa/Muerte to effect el Hombre's downfall (Adillo 2022, 23; cf. Calderón 2012, v. 798); a *Segundo Interludio*, prompted by another "apagón" after el Hombre's fall into a sin-induced sleep that simulates death and before he is left "como primero, vestido de pieles" (Adillo 2022, 37; cf. Calderón 2012, s.d. v. 1373); and an *Epílogo*. Those metatheatrical interpolations drew on real people and real circumstances of La Barraca to dramatize how the troupe was comprised of players from opposing sides of the political spectrum. For example: Federico himself who, like everyone else, had a part in the inner representation of the *auto*; Isabel García Lorca, sister to Federico; Arturo Sáenz de la Calzada and his partner Enriqueta ("Ketty") Aguado, representatives of the leftist-leaning syndicate of the Unión Federal de Estudiantes Hispanos; Modesto Higueras, who would later be director of the Teatros

Nacionales Franquistas; Eduardo Ródenas, who in 1933 enlisted with the Falange (Adillo 2023, 137). Also incorporated in this dramaturgical "collage" (Adillo 2023, 146) were fragments of speeches and articles from the 1931 period, including some penned by the playwright himself (the Prólogo ended with a pre-show monologue delivered by a passionate Federico, explaining La Barraca's Republican mission, the value of classical Spanish works, and the choice of Calderón's *auto*). Included, too, were some Lorquian passages from *El público* (1930), *La comedia sin título* (c. 1935), and even *La casa de Bernarda Alba* (Adillo 2023, 137).

The themes of the four interpolated scenes resonated with the inequity and repression also running rampant in *La casa de Bernarda Alba*: *social inequality* between big cities and rural areas (lest we forget the disparity between the urban elites who ran the educational project and the rural audiences); *enlightenment*, a move to bring to light culture (intellectual and spiritual) in rural areas darkened by ignorance and religious tradition; greater *freedom and equality for women*. (Feminist demands, spearheaded by Clara Campoamor and Victoria Kent so named on stage [Adillo 2022, 4], culminated in a measure adopted on 1 October 1931 by which women earned the constitutional right to vote). As Ketty asserts in the Segundo Interludio: "Si queremos llevar la cultura a los rincones más recónditos de España, a los pueblos donde nunca han visto teatro, nuestro repertorio tiene que encajar con el ideario democrático de la República" (Adillo 2022, 37).

At the same time, those interpolated scenes dealt head-on with ideological tensions within La Barraca: the double-edged controversy over the choice of Calderón's *auto* to inaugurate its mission. For the (radical) Left, the *auto* would not adequately transmit, to those they wished to convert, the ideological message of their Republican government. As Arturo says: "Desde luego a esas mujeres [las del rosario] no las vamos a convencer de que voten a la izquierda con un auto sacramental, por muy modernos que sean los figurines" (Adillo 2022, 4). Or, as Ketty observes: "[A]l auto le quitas toda la parte de exaltación cristiana o coges otra obra, porque esas señoras que se han traído el rosario no necesitarán más sermones" (Adillo 2022, 37). According to the actors representing the conservative Right, the Left had appropriated Calderón's *auto* which belonged to *their* conservative base alone: "porque encarnaba sus propios valores de la España imperial, monárquica y católica" (Adillo 2023, 141; see Pérez Magallón 2010). By staging *La vida es sueño (auto)*, then, Lorca underscored the major religious problem besetting the Second Republic: though Spain was a secular state according to the Constitution of 1931, the identity of most of its population, especially in rural areas, was as yet constructed around strict adherence to the teachings and rituals of Catholicism. If the choice of this *auto* could be justified in aesthetic terms in recognition of the importance of classical Spanish works, it also

could be construed as a "gesto conciliador hacia la mayoría de la población católica," not to mention its thematic reference to "la libertad" as a gift bestowed upon human beings (Adillo 2023, 147).

Part III. Lorca's *La casa de Bernarda Alba* and Calderón's *La vida es sueño (auto)*: Allegorical Mediations

> *Let there be light; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness.*
>
> —Genesis, 3–4

In theological terms, Calderón's second version of *La vida es sueño* (*auto*) is a dogmatic allegory of [Hu]Man's spiritual trajectory from creation through fall from grace to redemption. Its characters, except for el Hombre, are all abstractions symbolizing the cosmos, the supreme being, and the agencies of good and evil: the four elements (la Tierra, el Aire, el Fuego, el Agua); the trinity of el Poder, la Sabiduría, el Amor; la Sombra (conflated with el Caos); la Luz (conflated with la Gracia); el Príncipe de las Tiniebras (conflated with el Pecado); el Entendimiento; el Albedrío. From a secular standpoint, however, the transformation of theological abstractions into drama—all the while engaging the imagination, the emotions, and the intellect, and fusing "theological, psychological, poetic, structural, dramatic, and narrative elements"—can be said to highlight "philosophical reverberations that go beyond Catholicism" (McKendrick 1989, 255).

Similarly, *La casa de Bernarda Alba* is an allegory of Woman's *[her]story* from her roots through her downfall to her emotional/spiritual/social disintegration and death, with resonance beyond the representative rural Spanish village in which the action takes place. Its characters, whatever the humanity lying beneath the surface, are on *one* level all abstractions denoting the conflict between authority and freedom, morality and instinct, reality and imagination or desire in the stifling prison-world of the play. The women's appellations, laden with meaning, convey character: Bernarda (ursine strength as connoted by her name of Germanic origin); Angustias (an unhappy virgin, anguished by her rapid ageing); Magdalena (pessimistic but caring, as suggested by her Biblical namesake, witness to the crucifixion and the resurrection); Martirio (sexually frustrated, envious and hateful, tearful in her martyrdom); Amelia (inexperienced and naïve, but industrious and striving, as implied by her name of Latin and Hebrew roots); Adela (spirited, spontaneous, headstrong, as connoted when she says, "He tenido fuerza para *adelantarme*" [270; Act 3]); María Josefa (irrational and lucid, and incorporating the names of the progenitors of Christ the Savior).

(1) "Masa confusa" (Calderón), "Muros gruesos" (García Lorca)

Calderón's *auto* begins when the four as yet undifferentiated elements—"masa confusa. . . / *caos* y *nada*" (vv. 29, 31), and in chiastic terms "…contrariamente unidos… / …y unidamente contrarios…" (vv. 56–57)—strive for primacy in the cosmos.[12] Is this perhaps reminiscent, in the secular realm, of the chaotic confusion seething in the house where Bernarda's unmarried daughters live, "potentially capable of receiving individualizing forms but as yet unactualized" (Parker 1943, 204)? Like the warring elements, these women have discrete attributes but still live *en masse* wrangling in an enclosed space. Frecknall's production, we recall, attempted to capture that mass confusion by having simultaneous conversations interwoven at the outset, so that we were watching different storylines unfolding in a three-tiered space. In the *auto*, la Sabiduría has reservations about releasing el Hombre from his imprisoned state of non-being: "sin ser alma y vida, / discurso, elección, ni aviso / en metáfora de cárcel" (vv. 346–48). If la Sabiduría worries about bringing him to light or life ("le sacas a luz" [v. 350]), anticipating that he will create disharmony and death ("que nazcan de sus raíces / el pasmo, el susto, el peligro, / el adulterio, el rencor / el hurto y el homicidio" [vv. 358–61]), el Amor exhorts el Poder to create el Hombre nonetheless. This is, in principle, because el Hombre will have recourse to the "razón y juicio" of el Entendimiento, and so use "un libre albedrío" to distinguish between "el mal o el bien" (vv. 395, 398, 399).

Have we not signified here, too, the discord and dissension between various factions within the "muros gruesos" (139; Act 1) of Bernarda Alba's sealed-in domicile, "tapiado con ladrillos puertas y ventanas" (157; Act 1)? This is where everyone lives enclosed as if in a prison, where the qualities of understanding—perception and judgment, awareness and tolerance, compassion and love—and the freedom of the will are virtually non-existent. Adela and María Josefa, youth and old age, signal repeatedly their frustration at being shut in and shut out without the right to exercise their will. "Yo no quiero estar encerrada. . . ¡Yo quiero salir!" cries Adela angrily (180; Act 1), adding later: "¡Yo hago con mi cuerpo lo que me parece!" (201; Act 2). And María Josefa screams symbolically: "¡Dejame salir, Bernarda! . . . A casarme a la orilla del mar" (187–88; Act 1). Arguably, el Amor's rationally adjudicated intervention in the *auto* highlights a seething subtext in Lorca's play: the need to mitigate against the commanding strength of the likes of Bernarda, whom Poncia delineates forcefully as "mandona," "dominanta," "tirana de todos los que la rodean" (140, 141; Act 1). "Aquí se hace lo que yo mando" (158; Act 1), imposes Bernarda imperiously, validating the

[12] Here and henceforth, references to Calderón's *auto sacramental, La vida es sueño*, *segunda versión* are to the edition by Plata Parga (2012) and will be noted in the text by verse alone.

servant's judgment.

(2) "La Sombra"/"El Príncipe de Las Tinieblas"; "Apagón"; "Un silencio umbroso"

(2a) "La Sombra"/"El Príncipe de Las Tinieblas" (Calderón)

La Sombra and el Príncipe de las Tinieblas, shade and darkness/Satan, form an iniquitous leitmotif throughout the *auto*.[13] La Luz ("imagen de la Gracia," v. 584), connected with "life, order, and *amor*" (Parker 1943, 211), has been designated "esposa" (v. 444) to el Hombre in the newly created universe. La Sombra (*imagen* "de la Culpa," v. 585), linked with "'lifeless life,' disorder, and *odio*" (Parker 211), has been plunged into darkness and associated with "the blindness of non-being" (Parker 212), as la Sabiduría has already intimated: "el ciego / vientre de su obscuro limbo" (vv. 344–45). La Sombra constitutes "the principle of nothingness, privation, disorder, and chaos" (Parker 212): "siendo el áspid yo, / que de la luz huyendo se escondió" (vv. 508–9). Exiled from the world by the creation of la Luz, la Sombra is consigned to the "reino de confusión" (v. 530). This is the "negado auxilio de la luz" (v. 535), dominion of el Príncipe de las Tinieblas, a kingdom that is a "prisión / de infaustos calabozos" (vv. 539–40). The projected creation of el Hombre is represented by a move from the "darkness of imprisonment to the light of freedom," to a positive state of moral awareness (Parker 213).

Once given life and a rational soul ("vida y alma racional" [v. 625]), el Hombre will, in following la Luz/la Gracia's illuminated torch ("un hacha" [s.d. v. 640]), experience enlightenment, self-knowledge of who he *is, will be, and was* ("qué soy, qué seré o qué fui" [v. 651]), and be furnished with freedom of the will: "que eso tú solo podrás / hacer que sea malo o bueno" (vv. 656–57). The point is for el Hombre not to be diverted from the positive path of life and light, from the freedom of action to do good and not evil. Evil, it is said, is tied negatively to a dousing of the light of enlightenment: "la Gracia te lleva a que sepas del bien, / no apagues su Luz y sepas del mal" (vv. 725–26). La Sombra and el Príncipe plot to cast a *shadow* over el Hombre's illumed life with a poison ("tal hechizo o tal veneno" [v. 784]) that will thrust him into a dreamlike state of darkness, death, and moral culpability and so prevent him from playing his part

[13] For a production photograph of García Lorca interpreting the role of la Sombra in his 1932–1933 mounting of *La vida es sueño* (*auto*), see Arata (2021, 67, Figure 5). Significantly, did the jet-black costume design by Benjamín Palencia perhaps prefigure, as a premonitory sign, the black attire traditionally worn by the women-in-mourning in *La casa de Bernarda Alba*? Let us recall, too, that Poncia tells Adela: "¡Sombra tuya he de ser! (205; Act 2; see below).

on the world stage: "sueño que de muerte es / imagen, muerte, después, / que es culpa y culpa que es sombra" (vv. 778–80).

(2b) "Apagón" (Adillo)

The moment of the plot of la Sombra and el Príncipe de las Tinieblas (see above) was also the moment of the carefully integrated insertion, both technically and metaphorically, of the Primer Interludio with its *apagón* or blackout. La Barraca's actors were left in the dark (accidentally on purpose), with penumbral lighting cast only by the stage torch or "antorcha" of la Gracia, played by actor Pilar (Aguado, sister to Ketty) (Adillo 2022, 22). In accordance with the first part of the classic definition of the *auto sacramental* given by a shepherd in the *loa* to *La Segunda Esposa y triunfar muriendo* (1648?)—"sermones / puestos en verso, en idea / representable" (Calderón 1967, 427a)—we have here a spectacular instance not only of dramatic poetry but also of latter-day metatheatrical ingenuity with both auditory and (strained!) visual appeal. We recall the ways in which the dialogue amongst the actors in these interludes captured the aforementioned ideological tensions seething locally in La Barraca and globally in the Second Spanish Republic. Now, however, we focus on the metaphorical and allegorical significance, implicit or explicit, of the life-giving light of enlightenment and the death-driven darkness of moral and spiritual ignorance (cf. above: "la Gracia te lleva a que sepas del bien, / no apagues su Luz y sepas del mal" [vv. 725–26]). "Hay que liberar a la España rural del caciquismo y del oscurantismo que había hecho permanecer al pueblo en la ignorancia," cried right-leaning actor Eduardo (Ródenas), parodying with malicious political intent part of Federico's pre-show monologue on La Barraca's Republican mission (Adillo 2022, 22). And another left-wing actor, Isabel (García Lorca), threw light directly on the *auto* being represented on stage: "Pilar, alumbra con la luz de Gracia, que aquí no se ve nada" (Adillo 2022, 22).

(2c) "Un silencio umbroso" (García Lorca)

We do not have to proceed much further in a reading of Calderón's second version of the *auto*, or of Adillo's *auto* after Lorca, to perceive the force of allegory mediating between *La vida es sueño* and *La casa de Bernarda Alba*. Parker's perusal, along with the poetic verse of the *auto* cited above, provide a plethora of images and tropes that express the symbolic realism permeating Lorca's play. Succinctly put, the given conflict—between a freedom-loving world of natural instinct and passion and an oppressively repressive sphere of mores and tradition—becomes, in allegorical terms, a clash between "life-enhancing and life-denying forces" (Edwards 1998, xxx). However "relucientes las cosas" (141;

Act 1), however shining and luminous the external appearance of things in Bernarda's habitat, they are shrouded in darkness and, moreover, in the "silencio umbroso" (139; Act 1) signaled in the opening stage directions. This is a lifeless space, a "maldito pueblo sin río" where the water is feared to be "envenenada," as Bernarda says (156; Act 1). It is a house with closed doors and shuttered windows, where almost the only respite are the few drops of rain falling from "un nublo negro de tormenta" (192; Act 2); the premonitory tone of this last image permeates the Lorquian universe. Blackness: not just of dress and fans (156; Act 1) but also of the emotional darkness enveloping the characters, inhibited as they are from playing their chosen parts on the (Lorquian) stage.

(3) Life-Enhancing and Life-Denying Forces

(3a) Life-Enhancing Enlightenment and Freedom of the Will (Adela)

This mediation cannot come to final fruition without confronting the imagery of shade and light in *Bernarda Alba*-play in relation to *La vida-auto*. "¡Sombra tuya he de ser!" (205; Act 2), declares Poncia to the irrational, if passionately alive, Adela, after predicting that Pepe el Romano will seek *her* once the narrow-waisted and widely-wasted Angustias has died in childbirth. And then, as if following el Amor's rationality in the *auto*, namely that freedom of the will (el Albedrío) must work together with understanding (el Entendimiento), Poncia counsels Adela to exercise responsible judgment and not commit a negative, immoral act "contra la ley de Dios" (204; Act 2). If Poncia, in trying to persuade the youngest daughter to readjust her reasoning, threatens to bring the potential disgrace to light ("encender luces" [206; Act 2]), Adela also deploys an adjusted light motif to underline the inevitability of the life force impelling her to act energetically and resolutely, freely with a will: "Trae cuatro mil bengalas amarillas y ponlas en las bardas del corral" (207; Act 2). Though el Entendimiento would surely have argued otherwise regarding this use of "el Albedrío," this is not *Cielo Calderón* (sacred verse, "sermones / puestos en verso" [Calderón 1967, 427a]) but *Tierra Lorca* (secular drama, with human characters, not abstractions). In this element, as Adela insists, "Nadie podrá evitar que suceda lo que tiene que suceder" (207; Act 2).[14] Poncia's recourse to the metaphor of "Sombra," a negative force of darkness and death, devoid of life-giving light, cannot but work as a premonition of Adela's decent into eternal darkness through suicide, however much her death is also an act of freedom and resistance, and even though the truth seeps through the walls. Her self-destruction cannot but plunge the household further into "un mar de luto" (280; Act 3), into the abyss of

[14] Compare Leonardo's loaded line in *Bodas de sangre* (1935): "¡Cuando las cosas llegan a los centros no hay quien las arranque!" (García Lorca 1988, 120; Act 2).

obscurantism and ignorance, precisely what Lorca was fighting against by endeavoring to transmit "cultura" to remote or isolated places. "Cultura, porque sólo a través de ella se pueden resolver los problemas en que hoy se debate el pueblo español, lleno de fe, pero falto de luz. Y no olvidéis que lo primero de todo es la luz," proclaimed Federico in his pre-show monologue (Adillo 2022, 7).

(3b) Life-Denying Obscurantism and Oppression (Bernarda Alba)

"La fe católica de España, la fe de la Inquisición y de los santos de nuestra tierra palpita vigorosa y ferviente en cada verso de Calderón, y con nuestra fe católica late el odio a la herejía y al ateísmo laico, odio nacional y de raza que ha sido el alma de nuestro patriotismo español" (Adillo 2022, 52). Had the Calderonian reference been omitted, one could well have imagined that Lorca's Bernarda Alba of 1936 had stepped out of her refashioned (doll)house in Frecknall's production of 2023 and retreated into Adillo's set of 2022. Undoubtedly, she would have felt at home with the religious fanatics who, functioning as an obstreperous inner audience, had broken the fourth wall in the Epílogo of Adillo's *Cielo Calderón* in order to protest the appropriation, by La Barraca, of the drama of redemption that is Calderón's *auto*.

Poncia could not have been more blunt: "Ahora estás ciega" (227; Act 2), referring to Bernarda's misunderstanding of the jealousy eating at Martirio, which made her take Angustias's picture of Pepe el Romano. "Tu no has dejado a tus hijas libres," Poncia contends (228; Act 2). Bernarda is willfully blinded to the truth: "Aquí no pasa nada. . . . Y si pasara algún día, estáte segura que no traspasaría las paredes" (230; Act 2). She holds firmly to the delusion that her daughters respect her and so never have gone against her wishes—"jamás torcieron mi voluntad" (232; Act 2)—a belief that is contradicted by *reality*. She does not *understand* that, as soon as the daughters are set free, "se te subirán al tejado," as Ponica puts it; erroneously, she thinks she will bring them down "tirándoles cantos" (232–33; Act 2). Poncia is on the mark in trying to *will* Bernarda, by the exercise of mental powers, to see "'la cosa tan grande' que aquí pasa" (256; Act 3). The unmindful matriarch remains unconditionally convinced that "[su] vigilancia lo puede todo," despite the servant's discerning forewarning: "Pero ni tú ni nadie puede vigilar por el interior de los pechos" (257; Act 3).

Bernarda's conflict with Poncia on two illuminating occasions can arguably conjure up, in allegorical terms, el Hombre's initial failure to follow the light of Gracia toward self-knowledge. An argument among el Hombre, el Entendimiento, and el Albedrío ensues. El Entendimiento warns el Hombre that unless he is attentive, the "cárcel dura / . . . prisión obscura" (vv. 643–44) in which he finds himself upon wakening from dust will be his grave ("polvo fuiste, polvo eres, / y polvo después serás" [vv. 855–56]). In contrast, el Albedrío stresses el Hombre's

already glorified destiny, attainable through the exercise of freedom of the will ("Si fuiste polvo, ya eres / la más perfecta criatura / que vio del sol la luz pura" (vv. 863–65). El Hombre's preference for el Albedrío reveals his conceit and disrespect: "Más tu despejo [el del Albedrío] me agrada / que aquella severidad [la del Entendimiento]" (vv. 873–74).

Bernarda, like El Hombre, prefers the flawed will power of her vigilance to the practical truths targeted by Poncia, allegorically the voice of el Entendimiento (and la Sabiduría). If el Albedrío gives la Sombra and el Príncipe de las Tiniebras four occasions to poison el Hombre, their efforts are rendered impotent until la Sombra seduces el Hombre with a poisonous apple. He bites and throws over el Entendimiento amidst the latter's protestations: "Atiende, que usas / muy mal de tu Entendimiento, / si atropellado le injurias" (vv. 1192–94). Bernarda, like la Sombra and el Príncipe de las Tiniebras, creates myriad moments to envenom the appetites, desires, and spirits of her five daughters. The "maldito pueblo sin río, pueblo de pozos," where one fears that even the drinking water might be poisoned (156; Act 1), becomes an objective correlative for the domineering matriarch who, in asserting her will, neither sees nor understands that she is as polluted as those whom she pollutes. El Hombre casts el Entendimiento from his midst and vents his wrath: "¡Nadie a mi furia se oponga, / o teman todos mi furia!" (vv. 1207–08). His situation brings to mind, not only Bernarda's strong-willed responses and furious disregard for the guidance of Entendimiento in the person of Poncia, but also Adela's heedlessness—her life-giving *élan vital* notwithstanding—in ignoring that voice of Understanding and biting into the apple, as it were, in freely and willfully pursuing her passion for her elder sister's fiancé.

The "terremoto" that fragments the recently created harmony in El Hombre's world (s.d. v. 1215) cannot but conjure up Bernarda Alba's fragmented universe, underscored when she calls for incarceration, death, and suppression, respectively, at the end of each act: "¡Encerradla!" to lock María Josefa away in Act 1; "¡Matadla!" to punish the sin of la hija de la Librada in Act 2; and "¡Silencio!" to conceal Adela's unchaste, disgraced state in Act 3 (186, 240, 280). These imperatives, which perpetuate the status quo of darkness, call up La Sombra's extinguishing the torch of "la pura / Luz de la gracia" once el Hombre falls and is returned to an enchained, cave existence (vv. 1225–26).

Without overextending the *dénouement* of Calderón's allegorical *auto*, suffice it to say that la Sabiduría, appearing in human form as a "peregrino" and assuming el Hombre's chain and his place in the cave, frees him from the power of la Sombra: "Ya estás libre, que yo solo / quebrantarlas [las cadenas] pude" (vv. 1662–63). As la Sombra and el Príncipe de las Tiniebras attack la Sabiduría, a second "terremoto" (s.d. v. 1729) renders the forces of darkness dead: a representation, in sacramental terms, of Christ's sacrifice for the salvation of

[Hu]mankind. "Victoria y tragedia es" (v. 1758), proclaims la Sabiduría (if resurrection is forthcoming in three days, it is coalesced here into one "representable escena" [v. 1769]). El Hombre's marriage to la Luz de la Gracia can only come about through the combined workings of el Poder ("a la tierra te volví [v. 1910]), la Sabiduría ("Mira lo que a mí me cuestas" [v. 1915]), and el Amor ("Mira lo que yo te amo" [v. 1916]). If El Hombre purports to *understand*—"La enmienda ofrezco a tus plantas" (v. 1924)—he is forewarned, by both el Entendimiento ("Yo, aconsejarle a la enmienda" [v. 1925]) and el Albedrío ("Yo, inclinarle a lo mejor" [v. 1926]), about (re)awakening to a lethal sleep of death (vv. 1917–23).

Unlike el Hombre, neither the traditionally-minded Bernarda nor the free-spirited and rebellious Adela is inculcated with the requisite wisdom and understanding that might ward off waking to that sleep of death, Bernarda figuratively, and Adela literally.

Part IV. Endings: Intertheatrical Mediations

The interpolated Epílogo in Adillo's *Cielo Calderón* o *"La vida es sueño" según Lorca* saw a cause-effect relationship between Lorca's participation in La Barraca, his implicit connection to the Left-wing party, and his assassination—despite the (ironical) protestations of Federico to the contrary regarding politics: "Escuchen. Yo soy amigo de todos y lo único que deseo es que todo el mundo trabaje y coma. . . . Tengan la bondad de escucharme. Aquí me están complicando con la política, de la que no entiendo nada ni quiero saber nada" (Adillo 2022, 52). Speaking next of the sustainability of theatre in the face of the potential loss of subvention and support, Federico appropriated a line from *El público*, Lorca's paean to authentic, visceral (if impossible) theatre that breaks both sexual and social norms, as opposed to conventional theatre "al aire libre": "Tendrán que darme un tiro para inaugurar el verdadero teatro, el teatro bajo la arena" (García Lorca 2001, 119, 123; Adillo 2022, 53).

The theatre suddenly, if fatefully, went dark—"oscuro repentino" (Adillo 2022, 53)—and there followed a reprise of the "Himno de Riego" (originating from Spain's *Trienio Liberal* of 1820–1823, and a popular anthem of the Second Spanish Republic). Lorca cried for the hymn to be silenced, not just because it had been played and replayed during the other "apagones," but also because more was at stake than a retrospective documentary record: "¡Silencio, silencio, he dicho! ¡Silencio!" (Adillo 2022, 53; cf. García Lorca 2005, 280; Act 3). A "disparo" or shot resounded, and the rest was "silencio." Nothing remained, except for the costume of La Sombra/Federico, a "traje de viuda tibetana," lying stage center.

Adillo's *Cielo Calderón* ended dramatically, if shockingly, but probably no less so for audiences than did Frecknall's *La casa de Bernarda Alba*, with the

self-strangulation of Adela and Bernarda's regressive, if fruitless, re-invocation of the trope of silence. At that intertheatrical moment, Bernarda's presence could not but have reverberated throughout, not to mention her closing, weighty words: "We will drown in a sea of mourning" (Birch 2023, 226). For Adillo (2023), the sea of mourning would be for a "nuevo Cristo que se sacrifica involuntariamente y en vano en su intento por redimir a los españoles de la incultura" (149): an appropriation of a future historical moment, the impending assassination of Federico García Lorca on 19 August 1936 by Nationalist forces.[15]

Adillo's appropriation of history flew in the face of the (felicitous) finale of Calderón's *auto sacramental*, whose "argumento*"* or variable theme (Parker 1943, 59) revolves around the history of [Hu]Man's creation, fall, redemption. Succinctly put: "Los cuatro Elementos, con la ayuda de la Gracia, vuelven a favorecer al Hombre, cada uno de ellos con un tributo relacionado con un sacramento salvífico: el Agua proporciona la materia del bautismo; la Tierra el pan y el vino; el Aire las palabras de la transubstanciación y el Fuego la llama del amor del Espíritu" (Plata Parga 2012, 17). Or, put another way: "The bond of love between the Elements and Man [*sic*]—the harmony of the world—is restored in the Sacraments," with the Eucharist (or invariable "asunto") being "the supreme sign and symbol of the unity and harmony of Creation" (Parker 224, 59, 224). If both Calderón's *auto* and Lorca's re-presentation are, finally, a "canto a la libertad," *Cielo Calderón o "La vida es sueño" según Lorca* is disconcerting: "se cierra como una elegía por España, un país que no tiene redención posible" (Adillo 2023, 149).

Turning once more to *La casa de Bernarda Alba,* a play undoubtedly brewing in Lorca's mind while La Barraca produced Calderón's *auto* in 1932, yet unwritten until 1936, and to Frecknall's revival of 2023, the following question arises. To what extent did these dramatic and performance texts end as an elegy, not just for Spain, but for repressed societies beyond; as well as for the death of the author, not just rhetorically as a singular, authoritative figure (Barthes 1977a), but literally as a tragic, indefensible event? One answer lies in the interaction with an audience: the ability of theatre-goers, or of armchair spectators for that matter, to read intertheatrically on the stage and/or on the page.

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[15] Let us recall in this regard another intertheatrical context, especially in the light of Lorca's conscious connection to Calderonian theatre. Calderón (1981), too, used his *dramatist oblige* in *El médico de su honra* (1637) to incorporate subsequent history into a play world (the early reign of King Pedro I of Castille, 1350–1369), also fraught with silence and silencing, by appropriating verses from a well-known ballad tradition that foretells the king's subsequent—extra-dramatic—death at the hands of his exiled half-brother, Enrique of Trastámara, at the Battle of Montiel in 1369: "Para Consuegra camina, / donde piensa que han de ser / teatros de mil tragedias / las montañas de Montiel" (3. vv. 2634–37).

Intertheatricality, the brand of intertextuality we have denominated as focusing on the *reading*—consciously or subliminally—of *theatrical* works in the light of others on the page or on the stage, depends finally, as we have seen, on the response of the audience, "sujet passablement vide" (Barthes 1971, 228). In the case at hand, this blank subject, initially a *tabula rasa*, assumed the interconnected roles of spectator-reader-critic, perceiving multiple and irreducible perspectives emanating across the page-stage spectrum from apparently disconnected and heterogeneous substances but ultimately revealing connectedness in their heterogeneity (cf. Barthes 1971; 1977b, 159). We have essayed in this pluralistic re-viewing to go beneath the surface and read the symbol operant in the play world of Lorca's *La casa de Bernarda Alba*, seen at first in the light of Frecknall's production of Birch's performance text; and then apropos of the second version of Calderón's *auto*, *La vida es sueño* and Adillo's production of Lorca's production of that *auto*. Given the multiple threads interwoven into this in-depth study, we come to chew upon the implications of Oscar Wilde's (1992) provocative caveat about the peril of reading too deeply where a work of art is concerned: "All art is at once surface and symbol. Those who go beneath the surface do so at their peril. Those who read the symbol do so at their peril. It is the spectator and not life, that art really mirrors" (n.p.). If, indeed, it is the *spectator* reading on the page or on the stage that art really mirrors, then we are quite heartened, especially given Wilde's next assertion: "Diversity of opinion about a work shows that the work is new, complex, and vital" (n.p.). The works of both Lorca and Calderón leave no doubt as to their ongoing freshness, complexity, and vitality, above all when resurrected live in the hands of creative theatre practitioners such as those whose performative acts this re-viewer has experienced.

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