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4. Avoid minute descriptions of action, costume, lighting or sets. Avoid constructions such as, "And then Don Lope comes out and says..." Instead, comment on the efficacy of the blocking of particular scenes or the effect caused by costume and decor. Do not describe details of the performance unless you are going to comment on them.
5. Avoid structures such as "This reviewer thinks..." Reviews are by definition subjective.
6. One reviewer may not publish more than two reviews in a single issue.

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Performance Studies

WOMEN ON STAGE IN TIRSO'S OLD TESTAMENT PLAYS

DAWN L. SMITH
Trent University, Canada

The *Comedia nueva* brought about many changes in Spanish theater, not only in the structure and content of the plays that were performed, but also in the way in which they were performed. The introduction of new types of plot, reflecting more closely the life and manners of contemporary Spain, provided actors with new characters in a range of different *genres*. Female actors also found new opportunities on stage. As Melveena McKendrick aptly observes, Spanish seventeenth-century theater gave women a voice and a means of communicating with the public previously unavailable to them (2004, 13-40). Not only were there many more female characters portrayed in the plays, they were also acted by women. In McKendrick's words: "This close fit between presentation and representation must have affected the audience's perception of the relation between the cultural practice and the

imaginary world, lending added force to the burden of the words" (17).

Over the past forty years the publication and study of documents and other evidence pertaining to the administration and staging of Golden Age theater have provided detailed and fascinating information about the women actors of the period. Contemporary writers such as Juan de Zabaleta (in *El día de fiesta por la mañana y por la tarde*) and Agustín de Rojas (in *El viaje entretenido*) were first-hand witnesses of their acting skills. Moreover, the chorus of strident disapproval on the part of moralists and the clergy (focusing chiefly on these women's use of suggestive movements ["meneos"] and tone of voice, as well as on the impropriety of their costumes) is further testament to their effectiveness on stage and to their popularity with the public.

Sir Richard Wyn, who accompanied the Prince of Wales on his surprise visit to Madrid in 1623, described a performance that he saw in the royal palace: "The Men are indifferent Actors, but the Women are very good and become themselves far better that any that I saw act those Parts, and far handsomer than any Women I saw. To say the truth, they are the only cause their Players are so much frequented" (Shergold 266). This comment is particularly interesting in view of the fact that women were not permitted on the public stage in England until the Restoration (almost forty years later).

It is not surprising that the dramatists themselves were eager to take advantage of this source of theatrical talent (although we do not know for sure which came first: the plays with strong roles for women, or the women actors to perform them). Either way, the two elements evidently fused into a potent symbiosis.

Tirso de Molina was foremost in creating leading roles for women in his plays. In recent years we have come to appreciate how remarkable some of those female roles are, as we see them brought to life on the stage in Madrid, Almagro, Chamizal, New York, or wherever Golden Age theater is re-born. That Tirso was aware of the importance of choosing the right actor for a part is evident from the passage in *Los cigarrales de Toledo* in which Don Melchor sets out three reasons why a play may fail to please an audience: after first blaming the poet for careless wording in the text, which may provoke ridicule, he declares "La segunda causa ... de perderse una comedia es por lo mal que le entalla el papel al representante". He cites as an example the disastrous effect of an actress engaged to play the part of "una dama hermosa, muchacha, y con tan gallardo talle que, vestida de hombre, persuada y enamore la más melindrosa dama de la corte," who turns out to be a "figura [...] del infierno, con más carnes que un antruejo, más años que un solar de la Montaña, y más arrugas que una carga de repollos...."(451).¹

This essay looks at two of Tirso's Old Testament plays, *La mujer que manda en casa* and *La venganza de Tamar*, from the perspective of a seventeenth-century audience and focuses on three key questions. How did the performance of the women actors affect the audience (especially the women in the *cazuela*)? How did acting styles and audience expectations shape reception in the *corral*? Was the homiletic discourse implicit in the playtexts reinforced or subverted in performance?

Both plays have strong dramatic potential, interesting plot development and characters who transcend the original biblical source. As well, they are dominated by female figures whose importance is directly reflected in the titles: the idolatrous queen Jezebel in *La mujer que manda en casa*; King David's daughter Tamar in *La venganza de Tamar*. While these women are very different, both in character and in dramatic function, they share a common thematic link: both form part of the lineage which, despite its circuitous and apparently haphazard path, will eventually lead to the birth of the Messiah.²

La mujer que manda en casa

La mujer que manda en casa is a prime example of why it is essential to study Spanish seventeenth-century *Comedia* as performance, not just as text. As I concluded in an earlier study, the play's

structural and thematic unity is only apparent if it is considered within the context of performance, with the stagecraft elaborating and clarifying a series of conceptual images (Smith 1979). It is replete with stage effects: the prophet Elías levitates to escape King Acab's attempt to strike him (1887+);³ two ravens descend to snatch the food from the royal table (1238+) and later bring it to Elías in the desert (1392+); an angel 'flies' down to comfort Elías (990+); the peasants climb down steep rocks ("*unas peñas muy altas*" 919+); Nabot is confronted with three emblematic platters representing the choices offered him by Jezabel; his death by stoning is staged as an *apariencia* in the *vestuario* (2482+); Jezabel is thrown from the tower to her death (3084+) (Ruano & Allen 552-556).⁴

The seventeenth-century audience would have recognized the figure of Jezabel as a long-established symbol of vice and moral turpitude. Her story is told in the Book of Kings and she became a favorite subject of sixteenth and seventeenth-century exemplary literature, especially emblem books, as well as in the theater (including sixteenth-century Jesuit drama) (Smith 1984 16-20). Yet the audience's curiosity may well have been aroused by the more contemporary ring of Tirso's title, which echoes a popular proverb: "La mujer debe gobernar la casa y el marido el arca (or "la caja") (Smith 1984 23-24).

What was new and surprising for the audience was the material Tirso added to the original story. The Bible describes how King Acab covets the vineyard of Nabot, the Jezreelite. When Nabot refuses to give it up, Jezabel arranges to have him accused of blasphemy and stoned to death (I Kings 21). Tirso adds drama and intrigue to the story by having Jezabel try to seduce Nabot. He also adds a jealous wife, Raquel, as well as a subplot with peasants, which serves to underscore the main action in a lighter mode.

The opening scene calls for Jezabel to enter in a procession that we must imagine as moving from the front of the theater through the *patio* to the stage:

Música de todos géneros, y por una parte suben al tablado (habiendo venido a caballo al son de un clarín) en hábito de caza, Jezabel, Raquel, Criselia y cazadores con perros, ballestas y venablos...

Jezabel immediately dominates the play. Although no evidence exists of an actual performance, the role calls for an actress with a strong stage presence and it is possible that Tirso had a specific actress in mind when he wrote the play. An eighteenth-century *refundición* contains a *reparto* identifying Francisca Vallejo with the role. This actress, known as La Palomina, is described by Casiano Pellicer as “un excelente modelo en el carácter de entereza y de ira” (Smith 1995 335).

Difficult as it is to find descriptions of seventeenth-century acting styles, we know from contemporary documents, as well as from records of performance practice in England during the same period, that actors spoke with more passion and used more emphatic gestures than we are used to seeing on the modern stage. To an extent, both speech and gestures conformed to a set of conventions that would have been instantly recognized by audiences. The overall effect was probably closer to our experience of opera today with performers belonging to specific categories, e.g. *1^a dama*, *galán*, *barbas*, *gracioso*, which may be compared to singers who perform the roles corresponding to the range of their voices: soprano, tenor, contralto, baritone, etc. (Smith 1996 85; Dixon 109-111). As well, the polymetric text of the *Comedia* provided a code that was also familiar to the audience and signalled different kinds of discourse, as Lope de Vega indicates in his *Arte nuevo de hacer Comedias* (Williamson 33-47).

In addition to the special stage effects stipulated in *La mujer que manda en casa*, there are specific indications for the actors. In the first scene Jezabel refuses to give her hand to her husband Acab, an act of emotional blackmail designed to persuade him to proclaim the pagan cult of Baal in Israel; she also pretends to weep in order to get her way (and, of course, she succeeds). Later, she demands that Nabot kiss her hand, a gesture charged

with erotic significance that infuriates Nabot's wife Raquel, who is watching the scene from an upper window.

Costumes were also important signifiers for the Spanish seventeenth-century public. Jezabel first appears dressed for hunting ("*en hábito de caza*"), a detail which could be counted on to evoke images of amazon women, as well as of the warrior queen Semiramis, who is mentioned in the opening lines of the play (12). In Act III Jezabel is dressed "*de viuda bizarra*" (signifying her contempt for her dead husband) and a whole scene shows her carefully choosing a suitable dress which she hopes will help her charm (even seduce) her victorious enemy Jehú (2819-3002).

How did the *corral* audience react to what they saw? Did they boo Jezabel as English audiences booed the villains of Victorian melodramas, or perhaps even throw fruit at her from the *patio*? Did they cheer at her final downfall? We know that Spanish audiences were noisy and unruly and that *alguaciles* were present in the theater to keep order (Shergold 391). How did the *vulgo* react to Jezabel's scene with Nabot in the garden when she pretends to be asleep as part of her plan to seduce him? Even if the *mosqueteros* were boisterous and inattentive to the dialogue, their attention was more easily held by stage business, such as Jezabel's initial entry on horseback, or her testing of Nabot by making him choose one of the three symbolic dishes

which will determine his fate. The play is structured around a series of stage effects, including the *coups de théâtre* described earlier. Some men in the audience may secretly have admired the *primera dama* for her physical attractions. Jezabel was a villain but a seductive one (although some may have found her shrewish nature as unacceptable as her idolatrous practices). The women in the *cazuela* would be more censorious, but perhaps also smiled in recognition of her manipulative wiles – not necessarily because they themselves made use of them, but because they dreamed of doing so. Despite her wickedness, Jezabel is still the woman who “rules the roost” in a man’s world, right up to the closing moments of the play when she receives her just deserts. Not the least of Tirso’s achievements is to create a character who transcends the limitations of time and place. A skilful actor could do much with the role and, no doubt, justify some of the moralists’ worst fears.

La venganza de Tamar

If *La mujer que manda en casa* revolves round Jezabel’s attempts to subjugate four men (Acab, who submits to her; Nabot, who defies her; Elías, who escapes her and Jehú who defeats her), Tamar in *La venganza de Tamar* is also involved with four men (her half-brother Amón, who rapes and rejects her; King David who fails her as a father; her lover,

Joab, who is powerless to save her, and her brother Absalón, who avenges her for his own political purposes). While Jezabel is the warrior queen and an example of what McKendrick calls “la bella cazadora” (1974, 188), Tamar is the victim of her circumstances, unable even to avenge herself. Yet Tirso chose to put her name in the play’s title, rather than focus on one of the male characters in the play (as Calderón does in *Los cabellos de Absalón*). Whereas in the biblical account Tamar disappears from the story after the rape occurs and Absalom vows to act for her in avenging her honor, Tirso makes her complicit in Amón’s murder. Furthermore, he creates two memorable scenes for her with Amón before the rape: their meeting in the palace garden and the playacting scene when Tamar pretends to be the Ammonite princess whom Amón claims to love. For Tirso and his contemporaries, David was ultimately the tragic protagonist. The rape of Tamar and her subsequent revenge is the motor that drives the play and underlines its message: since David ignores his duty as king to punish his son, Tamar enlists Absalón to avenge her. The king’s decision to choose love and mercy over justice and punishment brings its own terrible price.⁵

The role of Tamar calls for the talents of a young and attractive *primera dama* (similar to many other roles in Tirso’s plays). In her first scene (293-554) she is alone with her confidante Dina in the garden of the King’s palace. Her opening words set

the scene: it is a hot night and, seated beside a fountain, they are talking about love – Tamar speaks of her lover and sings a ballad in which her thoughts fly like a bird to her “querido ausente.” The sensual language and the allusion to the heat of the night explicitly parallel the image of “[el] fuego del amor”. It is easy to imagine that the actress was dressed in a light, filmy garment – almost certainly one that would have incurred the wrath of critics like P. Juan de Mariana, who explicitly condemned what he considered nudity on the stage: “....salen vestidas de vestiduras muy delgadas, con las cuales se figuran todos los miembros y casi se ponen delante de los ojos...” (Cotarelo 431).

The moralists’ view of the theaters as dangerous because, among other things, they provoked “lascivos pensamientos” (Cotarelo 348), is confirmed by Juan de Zabaleta’s account of the “oyente” who allows himself to be distracted by the women on stage so that his eyes wander and “pone la atención [...] donde no la ha de poner” (314).⁶

With Amón’s precipitate arrival the erotic tension rises as he seizes Tamar’s hand and kisses it, an action that, like Jezabel’s demand that Nabot kiss her hand in *La mujer que manda en casa*, would have suggested a dangerous intimacy between the protagonists to a seventeenth-century audience.

The intimacy increases in Act II when the love-sick Amón sends for Tamar and persuades her to act the part of the Ammonite princess whom he claims

to be pining for (when, of course, Tamar is the real object of his passion). This scene may have shocked the contemporary audience with its undertones of incestuous desire, except that Tamar initially treats Amón's request as a joke: "Donosa aventura/ comienzo a hacer mi figura/ no haré poco en no reírme" (II, 754-756), later adding, "Donosas bur-las" (803). It is likely she changed her voice to make it sound affected (Evangeline Rodríguez Cuadros notes that this so-called *vocis inflexio* was used specifically to denote the playing of a role within a role, usually to indicate parody [464]). On the other hand, it is doubtful whether the actor playing Amón would also have changed his voice since Amón was not playacting but wooing Tamar in earnest. If indeed the actors made use of this technical convention at this point, it would have had the effect of unequivocally emphasizing the difference between Amón and Tamar and their attitudes to each other. What we usually take to be a dramatic scene, charged with erotic tension, was almost certainly played as comedy in the seventeenth century, and the audience was expected to respond by laughing at Amón's lovesick mooning.⁷

However, by the end of Act II the mood changes abruptly when Amón dismisses his servants and forces himself on his sister. The opening scene in Act III when, after raping her, Amón throws Tamar out of his room in disgust, requires both actors to draw on the full range of their dramatic abili-

ties in both tone and gesture. This included speaking "altamente" i.e. "explicá[ndo]se con animosidad [...] denotando enojo o mucha razón para lo que se dice" (Rodríguez Cuadros 465), accompanying their discourse with appropriate gestures as prescribed by convention. For example, to quote El Pinciano, "si está indignada, la [mano] mouerá más desordenadamente"; "suplicamos [...] con las manos juntas y alçadas"; "quando abominamos de alguna cosa, ponemos en la palma de la mano siniestra la parte contraria [...] de la diestra, y las apartamos con desdén" (Rodríguez Cuadros 361).

After the rape, the character of Tamar undergoes a profound change: the innocent, high-spirited girl who humors Amón and even flirts him, now becomes his enemy, bent on his destruction ("Presto, villano, has de ver/ la venganza de Tamar" III, 94-95). First she turns to her father to demand justice which, of course, he cannot bring himself to carry out against his beloved son. The stage direction requires Tamar to enter "*descabellada y de luto*" (III, 175+) – a classic image of desperation based on the biblical text.⁸ The actress would have used emphatic gestures, including wringing her hands, clutching her brow, or tearing her hair (Rodríguez Cuadros 360). At some point she falls to her knees, since David's first words in response are "Alzad, Infanta, del suelo" (III, 382). With her lengthy speech, delivered in verses of *romance*,⁹ she would have been challenged to hold the audi-

ence's attention, for contemporary records show that "una larga arenga" was likely to be greeted with booing and whistling (Rodríguez Cuadros 465). Doubtless, this would be another occasion, as we saw with Jezabel's speeches in *La mujer que manda en casa*, for the actress to speak "altamente" or, as defined by the *Diccionario de autoridades*, "hablar el alma", i.e. "decir a alguno lo que conviene, desnudamente y sin contemplación" (Rodríguez Cuadros 465).

The advent of the proscenium arch, with its effect of creating a fourth wall between the stage and the audience, would later rob the theater of the intimacy created by the thrust stage in both Golden Age and Elizabethan theaters. This favored a rapport between actors and spectators and explains how such verbal devices as soliloquies and "*apartes*" evolved as a means of bridging the gap between them. It is even probable that the actors addressed most of their words directly to the audience, rather than to the other actors on stage (Rodríguez Cuadros 506-507).¹⁰ This would have changed the way an audience viewed a character such as Tamar as she shared her thoughts with them from a stage that allowed for close physical contact between actor and spectator.

The *corral* audience would not have found the change in Tamar's behavior in Act III disconcerting or unrealistic as today's audiences often do.¹¹ They were accustomed to the idea that crimes against

honor demand punishment and the women, in particular, would have been able to sympathize with Tamar when her calls for justice turn to plans for revenge in the face of her father's reluctance to act. Audiences would also have understood David's terrible dilemma and its consequences: if he chooses justice, he will satisfy his daughter at the price of losing his favorite son; yet, ironically, by choosing mercy and forgiveness, he will still lose Amón. When he abdicates his responsibility as king and father, Absalón and Tamar take the law into their own hands. Nevertheless, Tamar's vengeance does not leave her with any prospect of happiness or fulfillment (and Absalón pays the price of his ambition when he is hanged by his own hair). Nor is the audience left with a clear conclusion, except that, unlike the play's characters, they are aware of the overarching divine scheme which looks ahead to the miraculous birth of Christ in the New Testament (Paterson 22-23). On the one hand, the characters are helpless pawns in a larger game. At the same time, as human beings, they face dilemmas that remind the audience of the paradoxical nature of life and of the fact that there are no easy solutions to these dilemmas, whether in the theater or in life.

We may argue that as biblical stories these plays were remote from the everyday experiences of their audiences. But while Tirso intended to convey serious moral lessons, he also believed in entertaining the audience and he had a deep understanding of

how to write for the theater. I have argued that he knew how to make use of the exceptional talents of the female actors who worked in the acting companies active in Madrid at the time. Given some of the powerful scenes that Tirso wrote for women, and with the evidence from contemporary sources that the female actors often gave strong performances, we can assume that audiences were drawn into the mood and action of the play, much as audiences fall under the spell of strong performances on the stage today. What seventeenth-century theatergoers saw, presumably, was not just a despotic queen or an unfortunate princess from an ancient past, but actors who were likely well known to them, performing the roles of Jezabel and Tamar and displaying recognizable emotions and reactions in circumstances that they could also identify with. We know from our own experience how effectively we can be drawn into a strong performance of a classical masterpiece such as *Hamlet* or *King Lear* and identify with characters who belong to a different world and time than our own.

Tamar, then, would have been seen as a victim of the wider interplay of family ambition and politics. And, for the women in the audience, this was a male, patriarchal world. No doubt they felt some sympathy for Tamar, not least because they could identify with her as a woman and a victim of sexual abuse. Indeed, it may be supposed that the women reacted differently than the men in the *corral* (some

of whom may have surreptitiously shared Amón's fantasies, while others, perhaps, condemned Tamar for what they saw as her wanton behavior in encouraging his amorous advances).

In conclusion, it can be argued with some certainty that seventeenth-century audiences were as likely to be influenced by what they saw on the stage as we are in the theater today. It is also probable, as Melveena McKendrick has cogently argued, that women members of the audience were particularly affected by the theatrical experience and felt empowered by it. Catherine Connor suggests that the endings of Golden Age comedies opened up a range of new meanings for women spectators by investing the conventional "happy endings" with subversive possibilities (2000, 23-46). Tirso's Old Testament plays differ from the comedies in that the lives of both Jezabel and Tamar ultimately end in tragedy, yet their stories are powerful and presented in strong, human terms that make them accessible in spite of their biblical setting and the elevated social status of their protagonists. For the female spectators, bound as they were by the constraints of society, the theater was a place where their thoughts were free to indulge in fantasy, particularly at the expense of the male-dominated world in which they lived. As well, for these women (especially those seated in the *cazuela*) the female actors represented a way of life and a freedom they could never ex-

perience themselves in real life. As McKendrick puts it:

The *comedia* took them out of their ghetto, put them on a public stage, gave them stories to tell and allowed them to speak, not merely from within the constraints of patriarchy but often against them. It was a profoundly radical initiative (28).

It is more difficult to assess what effect performance had on the homiletic message that Tirso intended to convey through his plays. However, we must assume that he had confidence in what he was doing and that he was also successful. If not, why would he continue writing plays, instead of putting forth his ideas in narrative prose?

I believe that Tirso found the stage to be an effective pulpit precisely because he presented the audience with plays about themselves (whether male or female). By combining the spoken word with visual effects and the multi-dimensional elements of staging, he found a powerful way of instructing and entertaining that left a more lasting impression on those who experienced it. He would have known the risk he was taking by challenging the moral authorities who opposed the presence of women on the stage and what they saw as their noxious influence, but he appears not to have been deterred. Such boldness suggests that he felt protected, perhaps by the Mercedarian Order which he served. As well, the overall popularity of the *Comedia* and

its support by influential patrons (particularly the *Cofradías* which benefited financially from sponsoring the *corrales* [Shergold 177-185]) undoubtedly encouraged Tirso and his fellow playwrights to continue producing what pleased the public and filled the theaters.

If he was aware of the potentially subversive effect that his plays might have on his audience, he evidently judged that this effect would only enhance the overall impact of the message. The spectacle of reprehensible behavior punished in a figure like Jezabel is more dramatically effective than that of the reward of virtue in a character like Rut in *La mejor espigadera*. The moral lesson to be drawn from the first (representing “*escarmiento*”) is arguably stronger than the one offered by the second (representing “*ejemplaridad*”).

We know that Tirso's plays were popular with audiences and that for a time he enjoyed great success as a playwright. We do not know with any certainty what caused his fall from official favor in 1625, when the Junta de Reformatión ordered him to stop writing plays “que hace profanas y de malos incentivos y exemplos.” Was it really prompted by moral concerns, or because he caused offence in high places for political reasons, or because his success in the theater provoked the jealousy of other playwrights in Madrid, most particularly of the Fénix himself?¹²

NOTES

¹ The reference is apparently to a performance by Jerónima de Burgos in the leading role of *Don Gil de las calzas verdes* (Tirso, 452, note 1050).

² The third play in Tirso's Old Testament trilogy, *La mejor espigadera*, tells the story of the Moabite princess Rut, her devotion to her mother-in-law, Nohemí, and her union with the Israelite Bohoz, which will lead to the eventual birth of the Messiah. I have omitted it from this study because of its uneven and somewhat formulaic treatment of the biblical material. The writing is often lyrical and there are some lively scenes, particularly in Act III, yet the play lacks the dramatic drive that characterizes the other two plays. Rut, the principal character, has her moments as a typical "dama de comedias", but ultimately she succumbs to the banality of the plot and the wholesomeness of the role. Despite its lack of staging appeal today, both the character and the play may have resonated differently with a seventeenth-century audience.

³ I have used the spelling of names in both plays as they appear in the Spanish text, rather than the English biblical equivalents.

⁴ Verse references for *La mujer que manda en casa* are from my edition of the play. References to the text of *La venganza de Tamar* are from A.K.G. Paterson's edition.

⁵ Alan Paterson argues that, in Christian terms, the play is about "the ultimate tragedy of the law" as King David is brought to realise that justice and the appeal of mercy are irreconcilable"(22). The question of who is the play's chief protagonist was debated by the group that attended the AHCT Symposium held in Stratford-Upon-Avon, U.K., in July, 2004 in conjunction with the Royal Shakespeare Company's season of Golden Age plays.

⁶ “Los movimientos deshonestos de los farsantes y los meneos y voces tiernas y quebradas con las cuales imitan y ponen delante de los ojos las mujeres deshonestas sus meneos y melindres ¿de qué otra cosa sirven sino de encender en lujuria a los hombres?” P. Juan de Mariana, *Tratado contra los juegos públicos* (1609) (quoted in Cotarelo, 430).

⁷ A comic element can also be read into Amón’s earlier appearance in the play, e.g. in the scene with his servants at the beginning of Act II, as well as in Act I when he first encounters Tamar in the garden and is afflicted with love ‘madness’. Paul Whitworth emphasized this aspect of the play in his outstanding English version of the play which he directed at the Shakespeare Santa Cruz Festival in 1994.

⁸ “Y Thamar tomó ceniza y esparcióla sobre su cabeza, y rompió la ropa de colores de que estaba vestida; y puestas sus manos sobre su cabeza fuese gritando” (II Kings 13. 19, in Casiodoro de Reina’s 1569 translation, quoted in Paterson, 148).

⁹ Lope de Vega recommends that *romance* be used for “relaciones”.

¹⁰ Rodríguez Cuadros quotes from a document by a Jesuit commentator on the theater, showing how far this practice had become the accepted norm by 1727. See also Beckerman (128—129) for references to similar practices on the English stage.

¹¹ For comments on the reactions of English-speaking audiences to the play in the U.S. and Britain, see Smith 1997, 38-39).

¹² An earlier version of this essay was presented as a paper at the AHCT Conference at Georgetown University, Washington D.C. in October, 2006.

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EL USO DEL ESPACIO Y SUS SIGNIFICADOS EN LA REPRESENTACIÓN DE *EL GRAN TEATRO DEL MUNDO*

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Tradicionalmente se ha estudiado el teatro del Siglo de Oro básicamente como texto literario, olvidándonos como las obras fueron dadas a la imprenta después de su representación, que es precisamente el fin último del texto. Bajo esta perspectiva conviene recordar que el dramaturgo al escribir tenía como primer propósito dirigirse no a un público lector, sino al director escénico y a los actores de la compañía, quienes obviamente tenían que leer y estudiar el texto, es decir descodificarlo para poder llevar a cabo su puesta en escena. La abundancia de obras teatrales que se conservan de dicho periodo contrasta con la escasez de sus representaciones en nuestros días, lo cual dificulta el estudio del teatro como lo que es: texto puesto en escena. Se nos había olvidado que el texto, como señala Isaac Benabu, no es nada más que un manual para su representación, en el cual se codifica un imaginado acto de teatro que precisa ser completamente descodifi-

cado en el proceso que lleva a su representación. Por consiguiente: “many factors in a written text remain silent until the text is tapped” (1). Es en la representación donde la obra puede alcanzar un significado propio, pues es allí donde el texto se devela y se da a conocer a través del director, quien trata de mostrar su contenido por medio de la puesta en escena.

El estudio del texto constituye el primer paso de un camino que debe desembocar en las tablas, donde el público lo juzgará. El éxito dependerá, en gran medida, de la habilidad con que se identifiquen aquellos factores y se les dé vida en el escenario. El texto solo no es teatro hasta que no lo visualizamos, ya sea en el escenario o en nuestra mente. Calderón, consciente de ello, señalaba en el prólogo a sus *autos* publicados en 1677 que:

Parecen tibios algunos trozos; respecto de que el papel no puede dar de sí ni lo sonoro de la música, ni lo aparatoso de las tramoyas, y si ya no es que el que lea haga en su imaginación composición de lugares. . . (Citado por Kurtz 167)

La “composición de lugares”, como indica Barbara Kurtz, es una metáfora para la re-creación imaginativa que cada lector de un texto dramático debe llevar a cabo (167). Cualquiera que lea el texto, ya sea el director, los actores o el discreto lector, precisa descodificarlo y “hacer hablar” a esos facto-

res, que mencionaba Benabu, ocultos y silenciosos en la escritura.

Cada puesta en escena plantea un reto al director escénico, quien además de descodificar los posibles significados del texto tiene que “re-crearlo” para una audiencia moderna, la cual probablemente no comparte el mismo código de valores y de expectativas que tenía el público del siglo XVII al que, indirectamente, el dramaturgo se dirigía. Este reto es más evidente cuando se desea llevar al escenario un *auto sacramental*, por tratarse de obras que contienen dogmas de la Iglesia Católica, además porque estaban concebidos para ser representados en las celebraciones de la Fiesta del Corpus dentro de un fuerte ambiente religioso. Si por un lado los *autos* pretendían amenizar la Festividad, por otro encerraban un propósito docente con el que trataba de instruir, al público que asistía al espectáculo, sobre dogmas y misterios de Fe de la Iglesia. Calderón en la *loa* al auto *La segunda esposa*, los identifica en boca del personaje Labradora como:

Sermones
Puestos en verso, en idea
Representables cuestiones
De la Sacra Teología,
Que no alcanzan mis razones
A explicar ni comprender (469)

Son, por tanto, conceptos teológicos de difícil comprensión y arduos de explicar, por lo que Calderón

recurre al uso de la alegoría. El empleo de sermones y alegorías fue una práctica común en la España del Siglo de Oro, siendo utilizados principalmente en actividades de carácter religioso a las que el pueblo estaba acostumbrado. Cabía esperar, por tanto, que el público asistente a la Festividad estuviera familiarizado con el uso del sermón y de la alegoría, que fuera capaz también de captar el mensaje religioso. La alegoría es precisamente el núcleo del *auto sacramental*, y ésta: “has always been regarded by the classical rhetoricians as a trope containing a doctrinal truth and has come to be known traditionally for its oratory and prosaic qualities”(Dietz 26). Los elementos doctrinales contenidos en el *auto* son difíciles de plasmar en el texto, por lo que entre el dramaturgo que escribe el *auto* y su público existe un espacio vacío que media entre la obscura alegoría y a veces la tortuosa interpretación del espectador (Kurtz 166). También hay que tener en cuenta que el dramaturgo, al escribir el *auto*, tenía en mente el aparato escenográfico con el que se iba a realizar la representación. Los históricos carros procesionales estaban dotados de dispositivos mecánicos que permitían hacer aparecer y desaparecer a personajes y escenas. La utilización de estos ingeniosos artilugios hacía posible delimitar espacios de actuación para los personajes en los que sus acciones adquirirían un significado, disponiendo cada personaje o grupo de personajes un espacio físicamente bien delimitado. No hay carros hoy día, sino escenario;

los globos que se abrían y cerraban mostrando a los personajes y marcando espacios, son recuerdo del pasado. En cambio el director dispone de otros medios modernos, como son los focos de luces de diversos colores e intensidades. Para la puesta en escena de un *auto* es preciso recordar varios elementos, como son: la descodificación correcta del texto, el mensaje teológico que éste contiene, y la adecuada sustitución de los antiguos carros y otros elementos antiguamente utilizados, por los elementos escenográficos actualmente en uso.

En la ciudad de El Paso, Texas, hace años que se viene realizando un Festival de Teatro Clásico de los Siglos XVI y XVII. Las actuaciones de las diversas compañías de actores, tanto profesionales como aficionados, quedan grabadas y a disposición de quienes deseen estudiar el teatro como representación. Algunas obras han sido puestas en escena varias veces, con lo que es posible hacer un estudio de dichas representaciones, tratando de ver cómo cada director escénico ha descodificado el texto, dándole vida en las tablas para un público actual. Entre las varias representaciones del Festival *El gran teatro del mundo* de Calderón ha sido escenificado varias veces. He escogido dos actuaciones de dicho *auto* a fin de analizar el uso que del espacio escénico ha hecho cada uno de los directores. Una de las representaciones escogidas fue realizada en el año 1980, por el “Grupo de teatro del centro de seguridad para el bienestar familiar”, de Chihuahua,

México, dirigido por Fernando Chávez Anaya; mientras que la otra versión es más reciente, del año 2001, y fue puesta en escena por el grupo artístico “Teatro Corsario” de Valladolid, España. Los directores de ambas compañías son plenamente conscientes de que el tema que Calderón deseaba mostrar en el *auto* es la Eucaristía.

Ambas compañías actuaron en el mismo escenario y contaron con los mismos elementos técnicos, aunque los utilizaron de manera diversa. No disponían de los dos carros: el del Mundo y el de la Gloria, utilizados en época de Calderón para la representación del *auto*, que Shergold detalla en: “*El gran teatro del mundo* y sus problemas escenográficos”. En la representación del siglo XVII se utilizó, además de los dos carros, un escenario de 54 pies de largo por 19 pies de ancho, que servía de “espacio neutro” entre el carro del Mundo, situado a la izquierda, y el carro de Gloria, situado a la derecha. En este espacio neutro, vacío y en penumbra, primero aparecía el personaje Autor, luego Mundo y después los Humanos, a quienes Autor entregaba los papeles que debían representar y Mundo los atributos. Una vez efectuado esto todos desaparecían de ese escenario, comenzaba la música y se abrían a un tiempo los globos que estaban en cada carro. En el de la derecha aparecía un trono y Autor sentado en él; en el de la izquierda había dos puertas: en una pintada una cuna, que simboliza nacimiento, en la otra un ataúd, o fin de la vida en este mundo. Los

espacios de Mundo con los Humanos, y el de Dios/Autor, estaban precisados adecuadamente.

Además de estos espacios físicos que tienen que aparecer en la representación hay también otros espacios imaginarios. En el texto literario Autor dice que tiene una idea en su mente que desea materializar, también Mundo se define a sí mismo como teatro con tres jornadas que acogen tres espacios. El primero es descrito como un bello jardín en el que impera la Ley Natural, donde habitaba el ser humano antes de la tentación y caída. Por medio de evocaciones sensibles a la vista, gusto, oído, tacto, este espacio es proyectado a la imaginación del público.

Las flores, mal despuntadas
De sus rosados capullos,
Saldrán la primera vez
A ver el Alba confuso.
Los árboles estarán
Llenos de sabrosos frutos,
Si ya el áspid de la envidia
No da veneno en alguno (109-116).

El espacio de la segunda jornada, también imaginario, corresponde al Éxodo de Egipto de los israelitas, con la entrega por Dios de las Tablas de la Ley a Moisés. Este espacio está regido por la Ley Escrita.

En la tercera jornada Dios, para remediar los pecados y sufrimientos de los humanos, hace el gran portento de enviar a su hijo al Mundo para ins-

tituir la Eucaristía y con ella la Ley de Gracia. Es aquí, en esta jornada, donde cada uno de los siete Humanos escogidos por Autor van a representar sus papeles, y son invitados a realizarlo en la mitad del Globo del Mundo que cae en el escenario. Estos tres espacios quedan definidos por medio de la declamación, por el poder evocador de la palabra.

Ley de Gracia tiene también su espacio y no precisamente imaginario, puesto que como personaje se mueve por el escenario. En un principio aparecerá junto a Autor para después desplazarse al espacio de Mundo, donde los Humanos se disponen a representar la "Comedia de la Vida". El texto indica que Ley de Gracia, aunque está en el espacio escénico de Mundo, se situará en un plano más elevado portando un papel en la mano. Se supone es el texto literario puesto que Ley de Gracia está para asistir a los Humanos, a quienes constantemente les recuerda: "Obrar bien, que Dios es Dios". Sin el auxilio de Ley de Gracia y el desplazamiento de ésta al espacio de Mundo, donde estará cerca de los Humanos, éstos últimos no llegarían a escuchar sus indicaciones, aumentando las posibilidades de errar en sus actuaciones, con lo que decrece la posibilidad, al final del *auto*, de pasar al espacio de Gloria donde se encuentra Autor. Las palabras de Ley de Gracia, aunque aparecen en el texto escrito, no pueden tener efecto en esta representación del año 1980 sobre los Humanos, de los cuales está alejada. Ocurre que al llevar al escenario una obra, la representación se

convierte en el texto final, quedando así el texto escrito supeditado al texto de la representación:

... un problema que podemos fácilmente constatar como espectadores de nuestro teatro clásico es la subordinación de la palabra, del texto literario, a los signos escénicos no verbales, el texto de la representación (García Lorenzo).

El espectador que conozca los dogmas de la Iglesia sabe que todo mortal precisa de la asistencia y proximidad de Ley de Gracia para poder salvarse. En el Siglo de Oro existía uniformidad religiosa y cabía esperar que el público, por medio de sermones y alegorías a los que estaba acostumbrado, fuese consciente, aunque no los entendiera, de los principios teológicos de la Iglesia. Hoy día no cabe esperar una uniformidad religiosa en una sociedad en la que existe libertad de culto. Se plantea entonces la cuestión de ¿cómo ambos directores escénicos han utilizado el espacio del escenario, si han sido conscientes de la fuerte carga teológica que encierra el *auto* y si han logrado representar adecuadamente estos misterios de Fe? Aunque ambos dispusieron del mismo escenario y medios técnicos, los utilizaron sin embargo de manera diferente para configurar espacios, los cuales adquieren significados distintos en la representación.

En la puesta en escena del año 1980 el director ha situado a Autor y Ley de Gracia en un podio alto, en la parte central y un poco al fondo del escenario.

Siete figuras sin movimiento, ataviadas con leotardos blancos, forman una punta de flecha con el podio. En medio hay un desordenado montón de papeles de periódico, de donde saldrá Mundo. Autor bajará del podio y llamará a Mundo. Después creará a los Mortales, quienes se mueven como si fueran simios o títeres sin voluntad propia. Los Humanos se retiran a un lado del escenario y Mundo pasa a ocupar el centro, mientras Autor y Ley están en lo alto del podio. Los Mortales se acercan uno a uno hasta Mundo para recibir los atributos con que representar sus papeles. Autor y Ley están en medio del escenario, pero situados en un nivel obviamente superior, inaccesibles ambos para los Humanos. Se han creado dos espacios utilizando un nivel inferior (el escenario) y otro superior (el podio con Autor y Ley), pero esta división queda cuestionada por el uso que se hace de la iluminación, ya que durante la representación el escenario es iluminado por igual creando una sola zona luminosa. A veces se oscurece quedando a media luz, otras está plenamente iluminado, limitando con ello la ubicación de los diversos espacios en el escenario.

La representación del año 2001 por “Teatro Corsario” hizo un uso muy diferente de los efectos luminosos. Al igual que en la de 1980, utiliza la oscuridad y penumbra para señalar la nada y el caos, pero recurre constantemente a focos de luz con los cuales va marcando los espacios de los Mortales, Mundo y Autor. Por medio de la proyección de los

focos se ha dividido el escenario en diversos espacios, en los cuales se ubican cada uno de los personajes. Al Autor se le sitúa a la derecha, en un podio unas pulgadas más elevado que la tarima del escenario. En el lado izquierdo está Mundo, enmarcado por un aro luminoso que se ampliará después para dar cabida a las puertas de la cuna y la sepultura.

Entre ambos lados del escenario, donde se encuentran Mundo y Autor, que se corresponde con los carros de Mundo y de Gloria en la representación del siglo XVII, se encuentra esa zona neutra que el director va a utilizar para que los mortales representen. A este espacio se acerca Autor para entregarles los papeles, regresando después al podio iluminado. También Mundo aparece en dicho espacio neutro para entregar los atributos y se queda, porque se supone que la representación se efectúa en el Carro del Mundo, por lo que el espacio de la izquierda, previamente utilizado por Mundo, pierde el foco de luz que lo enmarcaba.

También es llamativa la disposición del espacio de Ley de Gracia, que en un principio estaba al lado de Autor. Ahora deja este lugar para trasladarse al espacio de los Mortales, subiendo a un lugar más elevado que el escenario donde actúan los Humanos y se encuentra Mundo. La presencia casi obsesiva de Dios en la representación del año 1980 desaparece en esta otra representación. Autor está a un lado, observando todo, pero sin que su presencia sea tan agobiante, ya que la iluminación de su espacio se

reduce quedando su figura en la penumbra. Dios sigue presente pero, debido a la intensificación de la luz en el espacio donde actúan los Mortales, el foco de atención y la mirada del público se desplaza precisamente a este espacio, mientras que Autor permanece siempre presente, pero en la penumbra.

Acabada la actuación de los Mortales, éstos tienen que salir por la puerta del sepulcro, la cual está iluminada por un foco de luz. Una vez traspasada la puerta desaparecen en la penumbra del escenario. Vemos ahora que Autor ha dejado el podio de la derecha y aparece en lo alto, en medio del escenario, con Ley de Gracia a su lado. Uno a uno va llamando a los Mortales para ser juzgados por su representación. Religión y Pobre son inmediatamente invitados a tomar parte del banquete eucarístico en el espacio de Gloria; Rey, Hermosura y Labrador, son enviados al purgatorio. Niño, quien no recibió ningún papel, es enviado al limbo, mientras que Rico es condenado al infierno. Esta decisión de Autor plantea la existencia de espacios que antes no existían en el escenario: purgatorio, limbo, e infierno. El problema es resuelto utilizando nuevos focos de luz y agrupando a los personajes que comparten un mismo espacio, así queda claro al público que ha habido un juicio y que los personajes han sido premiados o castigados, según se encuentren bajo un área u otra de los haces de luz. Todos siguen en el escenario, pero los espacios quedan nítidamente de-

finidos, adquiriendo el juicio de Dios un significado más pleno y evidente.

En la representación de 1980 no existen las puertas de la cuna y la sepultura, por lo que los mortales se sitúan a ambos lado del podio central donde siempre ha estado situado Autor y Ley de Gracia. Estas almas sin cuerpo, que son ahora los Humanos, se mueven como autómatas sin voluntad propia cuando Mundo hace su aparición para ir recogiendo los atributos prestados para la representación. Después baja Autor al escenario portando un cáliz en sus manos, juzga la actuación de los Mortales premiándoles o castigándoles. Pero dentro del grupo de los castigados es imposible diferenciar a qué lugar (purgatorio, limbo, infierno) son enviados, ya que todos ellos han vuelto a vestir los leotardos blancos con que aparecieron al comienzo. Están indiferenciados y mezclados en el escenario, excepto los que han sido premiados con la Gloria, que permanecen cerca de Autor. Sharon Dahlgren señala, indirectamente, la ausencia de espacios que definan el lugar a que han sido enviados los Mortales después de realizar sus papeles en el espacio de Mundo. Discreción y Pobre permanecen al pie de la escalera, cuando el texto literario indica que deberían subir por la escala. En su análisis de la escena de Juicio Dahlgren llega a la conclusión de que en la representación de 1980 se ha puesto más énfasis en el castigo que en el premio (88). Debido a la disposición o demarcación de espacios que el director ha

realizado, o más bien debido a la ausencia de áreas apropiadas de identificación, no queda muy claro quienes son castigados, pues los Humanos permanecen todos en el mismo nivel del escenario, el cual está uniformemente iluminado. Tan sólo la proximidad de Discreción y Pobre a Autor indica un premio, pero el resto de personajes queda en un espacio difícil de diferenciar. A pesar de que Alexander Parker considera *El gran teatro del mundo* como: "... the one that is simplest in its diction and most straightforward in its execution," (114) si el director no es plenamente consciente de los mensajes teológicos que el auto encierra cometerá errores en la representación. Por ser este auto una alegoría religiosa destinada a ser representada en un ambiente de fuerte religiosidad, cada elemento es simultáneamente un símbolo teatral y religioso, hasta el punto que: "...in *El gran teatro del mundo*, no detail is gratuitous. Every indication regarding costume, props, movement, and positioning are absolutely essential to the message" (Mujica 219).

El propósito de ambas representaciones del auto fue mostrar el triunfo de la Eucaristía y cómo los Humanos reciben un premio o un castigo según hagan bien o mal el papel asignado en la "comedia de la vida". Para mostrar esto ambos directores contaron con decorados, vestuario, gestos de los actores, música, declamación. Nosotros nos hemos fijado en la disposición que del espacio escénico hicieron ambas compañías y cómo su mejor o peor uso

afectó el significado final de la obra. En ambas representaciones abundan los símbolos eucarísticos. En la representación de 1980, Autor aparece vestido como un sacerdote; los papeles que entrega a los Mortales son espigas de trigo, símbolo del pan; incluso en la escena final desciende de su atalaya portando un cáliz y una hostia. Y sin embargo olvidó cosas básicas de la doctrina católica sin las cuales el propósito de la Eucaristía es cuestionable. Al presentar a los Humanos como si fueran títeres da la sensación de que les está privando del libre albedrío. Por otro lado la disposición del espacio de Dios, en medio del escenario, de una manera tan obsesiva, bien puede ser percibida por el público como una coacción a la libertad de los mortales para representar sus papeles con libertad; y si esta libertad parece limitada queda cuestionado el libre albedrío de los personajes.

El tratamiento del espacio en que ha situado a Ley de Gracia es más preocupante, pues al no moverse ésta del espacio asignado a Dios y no acercarse al espacio de los Mortales, los efectos de Gracia difícilmente los pueden sentir los Humanos, con lo que el efecto de la Eucaristía se torna altamente cuestionable.

En cambio en la representación del año 2001 el director cuidó que en el momento en que los Mortales van a comenzar a dar vida a sus papeles, Ley de Gracia se aparte del Autor, ande por el espacio de los Mortales y se sitúe por encima de ellos, a un ni-

vel superior, pero dentro del espacio luminoso donde éstos representan. El público pudo percibir de esta manera que Gracia ha podido asistir a los Mortales y los efectos espirituales de Eucaristía se mantienen en toda su fuerza.

La asignación de un espacio propio, en el que cada grupo de personajes actúe, posibilita que la representación del *auto El gran teatro del mundo* pueda adquirir otro significado, como ha ocurrido en estas dos representaciones. Para ello no es preciso contar con la complicada maquinaria teatral de la época de Calderón, pero no se puede olvidar lo indicado por Benabu sobre el texto literario, ni las observaciones de Mujica sobre la dificultad que entraña representar un auto, pues todos los detalles conllevan un significado ideológico y a la vez teatral. Si el director tiene todo esto en cuenta, la maquinaria teatral de antaño puede ser sustituida, de manera simple y eficaz, por los nuevos medios escenográficos disponibles.

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**PLAY TEXT AND DIRECTORIAL
DECISIONS IN CALDERÓN'S CÉFALO Y
POCRIS: A CASE STUDY IN TEXTUAL
ANALYSIS FOR PRODUCTION**

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In the Spring of 2006, the Compañía La Puerta de Melía brought their production of Calderón's *Céfalo y Pocris*, directed by Emma Dib, to the Chamizal National Memorial Siglo de Oro Drama Festival in El Paso, Texas.¹ The piece is a *comedia burlesca*, a name indicative of the highly comic nature of a work typically presented during the topsyturvy Carnival period. Unfortunately, the production was hard pressed to rouse a chuckle from the audience, not to mention the raucous laughter one would expect from a play with the label *burlesca*. While there were several factors that contributed to the lack of comedy in the production, the overarching problem that continuously impeded its success was the director's failure to make use of the clues to playing style within the text itself. The most

obvious of these are the stage directions sprinkled throughout the play, but there are many others that Calderón included for his *auctor* within the dialog. All of these clues can (and should) be combined to create a world of the play specific and unique to each production. This paper will examine the requirements of the *comedia burlesca* as found in Calderón's *Céfalo y Pocris*. We will see how Calderón fully utilized the possibilities offered by this highly codified genre. With this we hope to offer basic guidelines to future directors who may wish to successfully stage a *comedia burlesca*, or any other *comedia*.²

Though not often studied by *comediantes*, perhaps due to a perception that this subgenre is "unworthy" of serious critical attention, the *comedia burlesca* was popular during the Siglo de Oro.³ García Lorenzo reminds us that the genre enjoyed multiple names that appear in seventeenth-century editions of the works, including *comedia de chanza*, *de chistes*, and *de disparates* ("Diccionario" 51). In the *Diccionario de la comedia del Siglo de Oro*, Ignacio Arellano offers the following definition: "comedia burlesca o de disparates: quiebra de toda lógica, parodia constante, desarticulación grotesca, mundo al revés" ("Comedia" 51). The definition reminds us of the temporal aspects of the play's performance and as the editors of *Céfalo y Pocris* note in their introduction: "la mayoría de las comedias burlescas conocidas...parecen corresponder a los

años del reinado de Felipe IV, y se suelen representar en Carnestolendas y en el palacio real: son parte de las fiestas cortesanas de Carnaval o San Juan” (10-11). They develop the definition further by saying “...la estructura se basa en la incoherencia cómica...aunque se mantiene un tenue hilo de intriga capaz de enhebrar las situaciones jocosas, hilo que consiste fundamentalmente en la condición paródica...” (12). Typically, burlesque is a highly metatheatrical form which holds up to ridicule the cultural practices and productions of a particular society in a particular time period, through a pastiche of parody, literary and cultural reference, topical humor, “song and dance,” slapstick comedy, *et cetera*. Anything goes.⁴ The creation of this topsy-turvy world requires a production to go “over-the-top” – exaggerated physicality, overstated costumes, inflated emotions. The cues for this can be found in the script and the director’s choices should complement or even exaggerate these natural elements for a production.

Calderón’s *comedia burlesca* begins with the arrival of Céfaló and Rosicler at the palace in which the King is guarding his two daughters, Filis and Pocris. Aura, the daughter of the King’s *privado*, Antistes, is also with them. The two men meet Aura as she flees the palace and asks for their pity. Shortly thereafter the King’s army Captain captures the group. Céfaló escapes but the others are blindfolded and brought before the King. Aura’s identity

is soon revealed and her love affair with the King's son exposed. After the King finds out about the death of his son, Polidoro, Antistes attempts to throw Aura off a cliff. At the beginning of the third act the King forces Céfalo to choose one of his daughters to marry. He selects Pocris, who does not care for him until after he has been seduced away by the returning Aura. She then seduces Céfalo into killing Pocris. The play ends as the King celebrates his daughter's death with a *mojiganga*.⁵

A director approaching the production of any play will read the script numerous times searching for information on what William Ball, in his fundamental text *A Sense of Direction*, calls the "world of the play" (30).⁶ These read-throughs will uncover most of the script's production possibilities as well as most of the problems. As a first step, the director may determine the action of the play, which is to say, the major plot elements and major relationships between characters. At the same time, s/he may begin to determine in what tradition or genre the piece was originally written. Correct identification of the genre aids in recognition and creation of the tone of the production, informs set design, and helps determine movement and playing style.

Although this piece is subtitled "comedia burlesca," it is clear from the description director Emma Dib gave to the Mexican press in 2005 and 2006 that she does not understand the genre of the comedia burlesca. She seems to have placed the

work on the more comical side of the *comedia nueva*, since she makes references to both the *comedia* and the *tragedia* in the song that opens her production. She did, however, notice the satire in the play. In May of 2005 she notes that Calderón “ofrece una sátira a él mismo y a otros dramaturgos de su época,” and describes the play as a piece that “juega con los convencionalismos para romperlos” (León np). While it is true that the piece does satirize both *comedia* conventions and Calderón’s own works, Dib missed, or possibly ignored, the clues provided by Calderón as to the playing style and the world of the play.

Repeated and careful readthroughs of a play can aid a director to correctly identify the elements of a *burlesca*, even if s/he has never come across the genre before. On each readthrough, the director will be as interested in asking questions about the play as in finding answers. As John W. Kirk and Ralph A. Bellas say:

A director is concerned with the particular happening that is the particular play, the way the opening moment moves into and impinges upon the next moment and so on throughout the play...He is looking for the structural essence of the play so that he can bring it to life in time and space efficiently and powerfully...A director should find the solution to the mystery of the play inside the play (147-48).

Therefore, through each reading, the director will reserve judgment and decisions about theme, playing style, design and other issues until internal evidence brings about in the director's mind a complete "world of the play." Among many things, this must be a world in which all the events of the action as described by the playwright, either in stage directions or within the dialog, are possible and can occur without appearing to be out of place. In a *comedia de capa y espada*, for example, at a very basic level, the director must create a world in which swords are not anachronistic, or in which the audience can allow itself to believe that a chosen substitute *behaves* as a sword, which in its cutting and thrusting nature and its spatial and athletic requirements, has very different properties from those of a gun, for instance, which is explosive, and can distance the victim from his killer. In one of the early readthroughs, then, a director might look at what the script requires of the set and properties, if anything. For instance, in *La dama duende*, the script requires an *alacena*, a cupboard or closet through which Doña Ana and her *criada* Isabel can secretly enter and leave the room. This may be a door, a china closet, or as Ruano de la Haza has suggested, simply a curtain that can be drawn or pulled depending upon which apartment the characters are in during the scene (401-03). The presence of the *alacena* is pivotal to the action of the play. No matter how a director chooses to handle it, even if in some man-

ner through lighting, the *alacena* must be present on stage. Without it, the play cannot go forward.

Let us look now at the script of *Céfalo y Pocris*, approaching it the way a director might, to see what clues s/he might find to lead to a correct identification of the genre, and thus *mise en scène* and playing style. We begin with looking at set and property requirements, since these often provide strong clues to movement and action, as well as to style. The majority of the requirements are described in stage directions. Though the directions are not as lengthy or prolific as in many nineteenth- and twentieth-century scripts, the information contained within provides a surprising amount of information.

The first example in the play, however, is found within Calderón's dialog. In Act I, Céfalo describes, "Un palacio se descubre / tan grande como una casa" (231-32).⁷ His *gracioso* Pastel continues the description, "Torres son sus chimeneas" and Rosicler's *gracioso* Tobacco continues the metaphor with a play on words about the smoke coming from the chimneys (233-36).⁸ Céfalo's curiosity is piqued and he suggests: "Andemos hacia él [el palacio], pues él / hacia nosotros no anda" (237-38). The words "se descubre" seem to indicate that a small version of a palace is revealed at this point in the action. The description suggests that it is comically constructed with exaggerated towers. Even though it is an interesting description, a director would not know at this point whether it would be necessary or

desirable to put such a palace onstage during the production.

The next set indication occurs in verse 487 when Céfalo escapes imprisonment by the Captain and his soldiers by climbing through a trap door, as clearly indicated in the stage direction: “Húndese por un escotillón.”⁹ Céfalo has already broken away from the Captain’s men and is in effect daring the Captain to stop his escape as he descends using the *escotillón*. The Captain’s reaction is a surprised, “¿Qué diablos se hizo dél? / Hombre, mira que te matas” (488-89), indicating both that Céfalo has disappeared unexpectedly and is doing something that could be dangerous. His escape is necessary, as without it the play cannot continue. Whether he must exit through a trap door or can utilize some other method remains to be determined, but the Captain’s reactions make clear that it is a sudden exit, originally dependent upon stage machinery.

Another important indication as to the play’s set occurs in Act II, where Calderón pokes fun at the theatrical conventions of the honor code. Aura has already survived a fake poisoning given to her by her father, Antistes, when the King announces his son’s death to all present. He is promptly congratulated by everyone except Aura, who responds with tears and a fainting spell. This annoys her father, who then attempts to throw her off a cliff. The stage directions read, “Hace que la arroja, y vuela Aura” (1163). Immediately thereafter, Antistes re-

sponds affirmatively to the King's question: "¿Hasla despeñado ya?" (1164). A director must interpret the stage direction in light of its surrounding dialog, replete with double entendres. It is of course possible that the stage direction is meant to be taken metaphorically, in which case Aura would throw herself off the cliff (i.e. "flying" away). The other option is the literal meaning, and the character would fly offstage with the use of machinery. Comediantes know that *tramoyas*, including flying machinery, were often employed in the court dramas, but a director coming recently to the field may not. In either case, the director should reserve judgment, letting the play continue to give clues that will ultimately inform staging decisions and set design.

A stage direction included within the dialog at the end of Act II gives us the clue we need to interpret the stage directions discussed above. The King sentences Céfalo to death and Rosicler steps in and offers his aid. The King wants to know how Rosicler is involved and Rosicler begins what could be a long peroration about his family background. Céfalo cuts him off with:

Pues con ese archilaúd
entonado por natura,
cantando por cefaút,
mueran éstos... (1599-1602).

The King reacts as though Céfaló had a gun: “¡Jesús, Jesús! / ¡Qué bobería!, matadlos” (1603-04) and the others on stage concur, shouting “Mueran los dos” (1605), as they carry the two off the stage as indicated by the stage direction, “Llévanlos” (1605). It is possible that Céfaló is pretending to see an *archilaúd*, but the reaction of the other characters on stage indicates that they see it too; therefore, it is most likely to be real. Where might it come from, the musicians? Does Céfaló simply point at an instrument that is sitting on stage? Would that be likely to cause so large a reaction from the King? Probably not. Does he go over to the musicians who are playing the accompaniment and grab the instrument from the lutist’s hands? What does the lutist do? Does s/he react and enter the playing space? However these questions are answered, it seems clear that the world of this play is one in which a large, delicate, stringed instrument is used as a literal weapon, and not just as musical instrument.

This physical absurdity at the end of Act II foreshadows those of Act III. These begin with a fight between Filis and Pocris in which they pull out each other’s hairpieces and then trade them back as prisoners of war (1744-62). But the first major and undeniable physical sign of the burlesque genre is what we call the “Big Shoe Scene.” In this, Rosicler tells Céfaló how he fell in love with Filis. At the sight of her shoe, Cupid blinded him. After his de-

scription of the event, the stage direction reads: "Saca un zapato muy grande" (1828). Rosicler then goes on to romantically glorify this huge shoe, comparing it to the shell covering a pearl, and fantasizing about its scent. Even if one were not yet conversant with the burlesque as a genre, this very plain stage direction, which cannot be mistaken as a metaphor, should give one pause. The stage direction specifies "un zapato *muy grande*" (emphasis ours) for a reason—this instructs the actors (and the director) to "play large," or "go over-the-top." Perhaps Rosicler pulls a huge folded shoe out of his doublet, or it's possible that an enormous shoe is hidden someplace on stage. The third act is filled with instructions to exaggerate and overplay. Aura returns in a parody of the *mujer tapada* to seduce Céfaló away from Pocris. A chorus of voices reinforces this by telling him on two separate occasions to "Deja, deja el regazo / de tu consorte [Pocris]" (2093-94; 2115-16). The stage directions state, "Vase con Aura, y si pareciere, vuelen" (2118). With this, it appears that Calderón himself gives the *auctor* some latitude to make an artistic or possibly a practical decision as to whether the two should literally fly off the stage. This should indicate to a modern director, even one who was not familiar with Golden Age staging practices, that flying machinery was available. Such a discovery informs the dilemma regarding the stage direction in Act II, "y vuela Aura." Now we have internal (textual) evi-

dence to support a literal interpretation of the stage direction—she flies; and now we know that in the world of this play, women can change into goddesses and fly.

Just a few scenes later, Aura instructs Céfalo to kill the beast using a *ballesta de bodoques*, a cross-bow-like weapon that shoots mudballs (2194-99). Soon after, Céfalo hears a “gran ruido” and subsequently shoots Pocris. She ends her stage life splattered in mud. At this point we’ve reached the climax of the physical comedy and of the play itself. The denouement throws the spectator deeper into the carnivalesque world when the King asks for the guitar that is hanging in a willow tree, in order to celebrate his daughter’s death with a *mojiganga* (2304-11). He also claims that his guitar playing will give him an instant youthful appearance. Finally, should the director still question the magical and topsy-turvy elements of the script, the penultimate major stage directions physicalize the King’s metaphor: “Empieza a cantar, y por un arambre le quitan las barbas y cabellera cana al Rey” (2320).¹⁰ The play ends with a “torneo en forma de matachines” (2338). Once again the directions are to go “over-the-top” by combining the conventional dance form of the *torneo* with the ridiculousness contained within the *matachines*.¹¹

Act III brings up as many questions as it answers: the *ballesta de bodoques* is clearly a weapon that is too large to pull out of a pocket. Where does

it come from, then? Does Aura, Diana-like, carry it over her shoulder? Is it hanging on something? It could be; the guitar is. As for the guitar, just exactly how long have the spectators been looking at it hanging in the tree? Throughout the entire play, or just through the act? These are questions the director and set designer must answer. What is of importance, however, is that in the world of this play, a character “dying” by mudball is the climax of the action. It must not seem out of place. The entire production, not just the third act, must be conceived in order to build to that moment, and beyond. Thus the big shoe, the *archilaúd*, Céfalo’s escape through the *escotillón* all build to this final moment. Given all this, the director and designer might elect to physicalize the “palacio...tan grande como una casa” in Act I, paying careful attention to the description given by the characters. This is the first moment of purely visual comedy. If it is merely described, the visual effect is lost, and it becomes a simple scenic description. Bringing a little palace on stage prepares the audience for the next step in building the topsy-turvy carnival world that explodes in Act III.

Up to this point, we have focused on the questions raised during initial readings with respect to the physical requirements of a production. On further readings, the director must begin the more detailed process of unraveling the intricacies of the text through close readings. Terry McCabe encour-

ages the director to “cloister yourself off from the world and observe and digest the play itself” (102). However, he continues, “Just because a play creates a complete world doesn’t mean you can understand that world completely without help. Some things about the world of the play you will need to look up” (102). This point arrives more quickly with the textual difficulties presented in a *comedia burlesca*, than with *comedias* of other genres, not to mention more modern plays. A well-done critical edition, and ideally a *comedia* specialist acting as dramaturg, are essential for the director to fully understand the complicated levels of humor. It is only after a director understands this humor that s/he will be able to identify character objectives.¹² With *Céfalo y Pocris* some of the humor may be immediately apparent with the first reading, but a general understanding is not enough to help the director realize what will play and what might have to be cut or changed for an actual production.

As previously mentioned, the performance by Compañía La Puerta de Melía was not very funny. This was made clear through the audience’s lack of laughter at the majority of the jokes found in the script, and their notable failure to return after the intermission. Did the actors or director not understand the jokes? Did the audience simply miss them? Is it even possible to take a genre whose very essence encapsulates a specific time period and culture and have it play for a twenty-first-century audi-

ence? To answer these questions, we must turn to the text.

From the opening scene to the closing *moji-ganga* the reader/spectator will find examples of puns, word games, double-entendres, sexual and scatological humor, parody, metatheatrical discourse, carnival themes, slap-stick and simple illogical "logic." To analyze all of the humor in a play such as *Céfalo y Pocris* would be a separate endeavor. However, one may begin to see the possibilities the humor offers with a few examples. We will begin with the scatological and sexual humor, since this type of humor tends to transfer across Western European cultures. Most of this humor could be played without any adaptation as the actor will be able to physically convey any meaning that may be lost to cultural and linguistic changes. For example, when Céfalo and Rosicler, who should be behaving in stately fashion as would befit a king and a prince, encounter the giant guarding the palace, the two react like children:

GIGANTE	Siendo yo fuego, ¿quién llama a esta puerta?
CÉFALO	Aqué.
ROSICLER	Aqué.
CÉFALO	¡Mama, coco!
ROSICLER	¡Coco, taita! (278-80).

The giant tries to calm their fear by explaining that the worst thing that could possibly happen is that

he'll hit them with his *maza*. Upon hearing this, Céfalo's fear is so great that he has a "natural" reaction:

Necesarias fueron
en todo tiempo mis calzas,
pero después que ti vi
son dos veces necesarias (283-86).

Will everyone understand the word game with *necesarias*? The question is really immaterial since Céfalo's body language could surely illustrate this scatological joke. The scene would easily play today exactly as Calderón wrote it in the seventeenth century. Indeed the Compañía La Puerta actor did play the scene in this fashion.

Nevertheless, there are examples of scatological humor that are more concealed within the language and a director may decide to adapt the language to ensure that the joke plays. At the beginning of the second act, the King addresses his concerns to his *privado* about Aura's sudden appearance:

REY	¡Grande mal hay aquí, Antistes! En un tris Aura está puesta.
ANTISTES	Pues el médico en un tras de cámara a verte venga. (916-19).

The word play between *tris* and *tras* resonates and there is obviously some sort of humor within the

exchange, but a director may not fully appreciate the scatological reference. Where did the doctor come from? This is the type of situation that requires a close reading. The editors of the play anticipated such a question and their footnote reads as follows: “*tras*: onomatopeya, que juega paronomásticamente con *tris*. Alude además al trasero: por eso la ha de ver el médico de cámara, ‘médico del rey’ y ‘médico para la diarrea’, que se llamaba *cámara*” (358). A specialist may choose to consult Covarrubias, whose thirteenth definition of *cámara* would also aid in decryption: “se dice el excremento del hombre, y hacer cámara, proveerse, por su propio nombre cacare. Pienso yo, que por ser cosa que se hace en lo escondido y retirado, se llamó cámara, como el lugar común de purgar el vientre se llama privada y letrina, por hacerse privada y escondidamente” (243). Even the current edition of the Real Academia Española’s online dictionary defines *cámara* as “excremento humano” (15th entry) or “diarrea” (20th entry). Regardless of where the director looks, s/he should be able to decipher the word play within this exchange. The more difficult task, though, is to decide what to do with this instance of humor. Can an actor physicalize the word play between the King’s doctor and the diarrhea doctor? Probably not. This leads to the next dilemma: should this bit be played as is, with the hope that the actors’ understanding of the joke will be conveyed to the audience; do you change the text to

make it more obvious (a challenging task with verse); or should it simply be cut? These are the types of questions that the director and dramaturg must answer throughout the piece.

After making decisions concerning the more direct humor contained within scatological jokes and sexual innuendos, a director must confront the parody within the script. Given the fact that most Millennials spend much more time with electronic devices than with actual texts, literary allusions may be obscure in any production. What do you do then, with literary references to genres from the seventeenth century? This question becomes especially difficult to answer when you examine the omnipresent references to *romances* that are liberally sprinkled throughout the play. While these familiar verses would have resonated for a *Siglo de Oro* audience, there is no context for today's audiences – well versed in literature or not. A director could consider cutting the lines since any humor contained within them might not be missed in a production that is already “over-the-top.” Nevertheless, cuts could be dangerous since there are times when the intertextuality advances the plot at the same time it playfully calls attention to the wit of the characters, and of the author. For example, Calderón uses this technique at the end of the third act when Aura tempts Céfalo away from his new wife to encourage him to kill her. Within these scenes Calderón parodies verses from the “Romance del

marqués de Mantua.” Céfaló invokes the opening of the *romance* to describe his upcoming hunt: “a caza sale el Marqués / Danés Urgel, el leal” (2183-84). The second inclusion also references the hunt when Pocris comments “allá va a buscar la caza / a las orillas del mar” (2193-94). If a director cuts these verses then all allusions to the fact that Céfaló is supposed to be hunting are also cut. The only indication of the hunt not enclosed within the *romance* comes when Aura instructs him to “Pues dadla sin más ni más / muerte a esa fiera” (2196-97). However, if the verses are left in they may confuse the audience since they would not understand why Céfaló has suddenly mentioned a *marqués*. Or is it possible that by the end of the third act the audience will be fully immersed in this carnival world and an unfamiliar reference would not pull them out of the world of the play? In any event, the impact of hearing well-known references will be lost on the audience, and one of the layers of humor will not be captured. It might be possible to re-capture the humor by replacing this instance of intertextuality with a contemporary reference. To do this, though, the dramaturg would need to find one that can replace at least eight separate instances where Calderón includes this *romance*, a demanding undertaking.¹³

Nevertheless, there are instances where Calderón’s parody of other literary conventions or genres will play for a contemporary audience. For in-

stance, Pocris's death scene abounds in humorous dialog. At first the couple banters back and forth and Pocris dares Céfaló to shoot her:

POCRIS	¿Qué haces?
CÉFALO	Tirar.
POCRIS	¿Tirar? ¿A qué?
CÉFALO	A dar.
POCRIS	Tira, y mira no me yerres.
CÉFALO	Yo procuraré acertar (2231-34).

After he shoots her with the mudballs, the scene becomes a parody of tragic death scenes:

POCRIS	¡Ay, infeliz, que me has muerto!
CÉFALO	Como ella diga verdad y no se queje de vicio, sin duda que la hice mal. ¡Pocris, señora, mi bien!...
POCRIS	¡Céfaló, señor, mi mal!... (2235-40).

The course of love never does run smooth, and the two begin to squabble until Pocris's death a few moments later. Does a spectator need literary knowledge to appreciate the parody? The humor is still there with or without the literary allusion, but a spectator unfamiliar with literature would still "get" the metatheatrical reference since our contemporary culture also contains these scenes. In 1996, Baz Luhrman produced a film of *Romeo and Juliet* set in a fictional, culturally eclectic "Vernona Beach," and the popular TV series *Grey's Anatomy* constructed

much of its second season around a love affair between a mortally ill patient, Denny (Jeffrey Morgan), and the intern, Izzie (Katherine Heigl). Most of their scenes revolved around his impending death and their love, and the season ended with the tragic and emotionally packed scene of his death and her breakdown. The metatheatrical intertextuality is still there, it still plays, the only difference is that the source of the parody has changed.

Céfalo y Pocris contains many marvelous metatheatrical moments in which Calderón parodies the staging conventions of the epoch. One example occurs when the actress playing Aura's role "forgets" her stage name (v. 415) and uses her real name to introduce herself. Other characters follow suit and it becomes a running joke throughout the play. Since twenty-first-century audiences are accustomed to actors breaking the fourth wall, and sometimes breaking character, to speak directly to them, it should be easy for a contemporary company to include this metatheatrical device in their production.¹⁴

Calderón also uses metatheatre to offer parodies of popular motifs found in the *comedias*, including his own.¹⁵ These parodies begin in the opening scene, when Prince Polidoro enters the stage from a *gruta*. Céfalo then enters the scene due to a shipwreck. However, his ship is described as both *bergantín* and *bergante*, from the "deep sea" of the Manzanares, rather than a large ship sailing

upon the sea. Finally, Rosicler enters (presumably from the opposite side of the stage) as he is thrown from his *pollino*. Thus, in the very first scene Calderón offers parodies of three common *comedia* openings, two of which he used in *La vida es sueño*. The references to this play continue when Basilio's famous monologue is evoked during the King's monologue in Act II, in which he explains his daughters' birth and horoscope.¹⁶ To illustrate his profound wisdom and ability to interpret the horoscope, he details his course of studies:

Ya sabéis que yo inclinado
fui desde mi juventud
a las letras, estudiando
todo el ban, ben, bin, bon, bun,
hasta el arte de Nebrija
y las tablas del Talmud,
sin dejar astro con quien
no anduviese a tú por tú (1470-77).

A twenty-first-century audience might not know who Nebrija was or what the Talmud is, but the nonsense words will clearly illustrate the meaning of the monologue. In each of the cases above, it might also be possible to change these topical references to ones whose meaning would resonate today. While many people would again lose Calderón's parody of his own work, this lack of knowledge would not eliminate the humor that is contained within the word-play, which in turn should feed the

physical movements, pacing, and staging of these scenes.

When making fun of the typical dramatic conventions, Calderón does not ignore the ever-present topos of the honor theme. We see this when Antistes questions Aura about her relationship with the Prince:

ANTISTES	¿Y tú en qué diste?
AURA	En amarle.
ANTISTES	¡Tómate ésa!
AURA	Hame dado una palabra.
ANTISTES	¿Qué te ha quitado por ella?
AURA	Sólo el honor.
ANTISTES	¿No más? (1010-14).

Just as the King will be congratulated on his son's death, and will later celebrate that of his daughter's with a *mojiganga*, this Golden Age father is completely unconcerned about his daughter's honor. Of course, since this is Carnival period and we are in a topsy-turvy world this is to be expected. But whereas the callous reaction to death would read as clearly upside-down for most audiences, some might argue that the concept of honor has been lost in today's society, making this scene confusing to a twenty-first-century audience. However, the theme of an overprotective father, especially one concerned about his daughter's sexual activity, remains.

We are beginning to build a world of this play then, that includes metatheatrical references to both

literature and other plays, as well as to staging conventions and the convention of theatre itself. It is a world in which kings and princes behave like children, and women are killed and turn into goddesses who fly away; a world in which actors can grab musical instruments from musicians, and musical instruments hang from trees; a world in which the *segundo galán* romanticizes a big shoe, fathers celebrate the death of their children, and the heroine of the piece dies by mudball.

The analyses we have performed are only the first steps in the work a director must take in preparing for production of a Golden Age *comedia burlesca*—or any other *comedia*. What happens when the director fails to find the world of the play in this manner? In Compañía La Puerta de Melía's production, director Emma Dib eliminated all scenic elements, and made little attempt to follow the stage directions. Thus, the actors described the little palace, turning the visual joke into a simple statement. At his escape from the Captain and his men, Céfaló simply ran off stage at the appropriate moment. No move was made by anyone to stop him, and although the Captain's lines referring to the *escotillón* were said, they made no sense. Aura was physically pushed off the stage by Antistes at the point at which the stage directions say she should fly. Thus, in stage terms, she actually died. When she reappeared in Act III, the effect was not of a goddess returning to amuse herself with a mortal, but of a

ghost returning for purposes that were unclear. The staging of the scene reinforced this concept, including the use of blue light, and an eerie tone for the singers' refrain. Instead of using an *archilaúd*, Céfaló pulled out a small weapon resembling a stiletto though the line was neither changed nor cut. Rosicler romanced a shoe of normal proportions that Filis had taken off her own foot moments before. Aura handed Céfaló a slingshot with which to shoot Pocris, and of course there were no mudballs. Finally, Dib cut entirely the reference to the guitar hanging in the tree (one of the few line cuts she made) while leaving in the reference to the King becoming young again through playing, turning it into a metaphor. Much of the play's humor, however, and major indicators of the energy and acting style needed from the actors comes from the physical improbabilities of the world of the play, and a director eliminates these at the peril of the production. Dib's other decisions are more problematic to analyze since it is not easy to separate the director's decisions from the actors' performances. What is clear is the fact that she made very few changes or cuts to Calderón's dialog.

It is possible the physical changes were initiated by budgetary restrictions (after all, flying machinery is costly and difficult to travel with); or Dib may have been attempting to build an ensemble based in the tradition of Jacques Copeau and more recently, Eugenio Barba and Peter Brook. But a di-

rector who recognizes how embedded within the nature of the play these *tramoyas* and stage tricks are, could find a way to build the physical absurdity the play calls for, while remaining within budget and giving the appearance of these styles. For instance, a climbing rope could be swung out from the wings at just the right moment for Céfalo's escape, or a rolling platform could be brought out—perhaps the same one on which the little palace might appear earlier in the act, beginning what might become a running joke. Aura could unfold wings from her sleeves, or flap two fans as wings as she leaves the stage. What matters is not the method by which a director decides to carry out or change the stage directions, but that staging decisions are based on a careful analysis of the world of the play. The performance of a *comedia burlesca* as a museum piece or “sacred text” will almost always fall flat for a twenty-first-century audience, given the high level of literary and cultural references of the genre. However, since physical comedy transfers across time and cultures, we would recommend that plays of this nature be presented in adaptation relying on physical action. This would help ensure that the work plays and will deliver an enjoyable night of theater for the audience – the goal of any comic piece.

NOTES

¹ *Céfalo y Pocris* was first published in 1691 in the *Novena Parte de Comedias*. Hartzenbusch suggested 1662 as a possible date for the play's performance (Arellano "Comedias burlescas" 30). Calderón's authorship has been questioned with Vera Tasis attributed the play to Calderón de la Barca and Hartzenbusch later refuting this attribution. The latter bases his argument on the fact that Calderón did not include the work in the list of *comedias* he created (González 4). The debate is fully explored in the introduction of *Céfalo y Pocris* (Arellano "Comedias burlescas" 29-31).

² In addition to examining *Céfalo y Pocris*, we also draw upon Ms. Braxton's more than fifteen years of directorial and dramaturgical experience.

³ Even though there has not been a great deal of work done on the *comedia burlesca*, GRISO is currently editing the extant collection of these plays. In 1999 Espasa Calpe published an edition of four pieces from the GRISO team containing *El Hamete de Toledo* (Tres ingenios) *El caballero de Olmedo* (de Monteses); *Darlo todo y no dar nada* (Lanini); and *Céfalo y Pocris* (Calderón de la Barca). While the editors claim that the edition is only a preliminary offering, the critical apparatus already indicates their thorough investigation. Moreover, they have included both a bibliography of modern editions of *comedias burlescas* and a bibliography of critical endeavors focusing on the genre. Those interested in further investigation of the genre might begin with Holgueras's article, which outlines the history of the critical study of the *comedia burlesca*. Also of interest are Arellano's *Historia del teatro español del siglo XVII* (641-59) and García Lorenzo's publications, all of which are included in the works cited for the reader. For the play itself, both Welles and Pinillos offer excellent overviews and analysis of *Céfalo y Pocris* in their work. Marcia Welles dedicates an entire chapter to the study of the play in her book. For a discussion on the exclusion of the carnivalesque from

official discourse see Bakhtin's introduction to *Rabelais and His World* (15-17; 33-34).

⁴ The genre, of course, did exist outside of the *comedia* tradition and outside of Spain; however, this discussion is beyond the scope of the present investigation.

⁵ Comediantes may recognize this plot summary's similarities with Calderón's *Celos, aun del aire, matan* and *Auristela y Lisidante*. The Cephalus and Procris source myth can be found in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Book VII or Book III of *Ars Amandi*. See Di Pinto for a comparison of all three works.

⁶ For additional information about this process, see Kirk and Bellas (144-49).

⁷ This and all subsequent references to Calderón's text are taken from the edition included in the anthology *Comedias burlescas del Siglo de Oro*.

⁸ The editors attribute the lines to a third *gracioso*, Pasquín, but Pasquín has already left the stage with his *galán*, Polidoro, in verse 46. There are no stage directions or other dialog indicating that the *gracioso* returns without Polidoro during this scene. Therefore, it is more likely that the line is said by Pastel.

⁹ The verse indication for this stage direction lists the verse immediately preceding the stage direction. All other references will be given in this format.

¹⁰ Welles reminds us that this action reinforces the carnivalesque theme of re-birth, since the "old man must be removed; for not death, but life, is celebrated at carnival time..." (124).

¹¹ In a footnote in the edition, the editors describe the *matachines* as "bailes de disfraces ridículos" (421). They then cite Bances Candamo's description: "los danzantes se topan, se reconocen, bailan juntos, se vuelven a enojar, riñen con espadas de palo dando golpes al compás de la música..." (421).

¹² For a discussion of character objectives see Ball (70-92). Although the term "character objectives" dates from

Stanislavski, it would be a mistake to think that it relates only to what has come to be called “Method” acting, often understood to mean a reliance upon heavily emotional motivation. All characters have “wants” they need to fulfill, either from other characters onstage, from the audience, or based on basic human needs such as food. It is these wants that comprise the action of a scene and a play. Carlo Mazzoni-Clementi, in describing how to begin working on a *commedia dell’arte* character, discusses the simple action of moving “from-to” – from where one is to a target on the floor. He provides an imaginary condition—“you are in the dark” (62). Upon this simple action an entire scene could be built. Further analysis of Ms. Dibs’ production would reveal that in fact she and her actors often attempted to “motivate” their characters’ actions using emotional motivation, rather than relying on the action or objective Calderón wrote into the scene.

¹³ For further information on Calderón’s use of *romances* and songs in the play, see Borrego Gutiérrez and Wilson/Sage.

¹⁴ Examples of direct address include the films *Alfie*, *Annie Hall*, *Ferris Bueller’s Day Off* (which in turn is referenced by imitation in the cartoon *The Simpsons Movie*), and *The Blair Witch Project*. In addition, large numbers of television commercials, and occasional episodes of television shows such as *Scrubs* use direct address, as well as performance art and theatre.

¹⁵ In his article “Carnival On the Stage,” Eloy González offers both a plot summary of *Celos aun del aire matan* and a study of the parody contained within the two works (3-5). Rafael Sánchez Martínez also elaborates on parody within the work, outlining five major categories that come from Calderón’s own opus (1131-38).

¹⁶ Hormigón includes the King from *Céfalo y Pocris* in his study of the “personaje del Rey mitificado por el Barroco” (158). With this, Hormigón offers the thesis that the play subverts the value system inherent within Baroque theater, creat-

ing a play specifically designed to satirize the small group of elite persons who would be viewing the production in the Salón Real de Palacio (175-80).

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WOMEN TO WOMEN: PERFORMING RELATIONSHIPS IN TWO STAGINGS OF FRIENDSHIP BETRAYED¹

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Although the women writers of early modern Spain appeared to be, for the most part, unappreciated during their time, the critical landscape has changed, and nowadays many have found their way into the canon. María de Zayas, however, proves to be an exception because she received acclaim from both her contemporaries and modern-day scholars.² In fact, her literary production has yielded a profound corpus of research and continues to motivate critics to examine her work from new perspectives. While many continue to concentrate on her *novelas*, Zayas's one extant *comedia*, *La traición en la amistad*, has also attracted critical attention. Although it is uncertain if the play was ever staged in the seventeenth century, recent productions suggest that her drama has merit. In its analysis of two recent stagings of *La traición en la amistad*, this article explores how two distinct manifestations of female friendship emerge from the same dramatic text, as performance addresses cultural codes and

issues of the past and transforms them for a contemporary public.

The two performances took place three years apart: the first was staged on March 1, 2003, at the Chamizal National Memorial in El Paso, Texas, with David Pasto directing a cast from the Department of Speech, Arts, and Theater at Oklahoma City University;³ the second, presented on October 5, 2006, at Georgetown University's Devine Theater, was directed by Karen Berman and performed by the Washington Women in Theatre.⁴ In both cases, the scripts were based on *Friendship Betrayed*, Valerie Hegstrom's 1999 edition of *La traición en la amistad*, which Catherine Larson translated into English.⁵ The two performances convey contrasting concepts of the play: the Chamizal production highlights the solidarity resulting from homosocial female friendships, and the Georgetown production underlines the sexual nature of female relationships.

An approach focusing on performance theory can allow us to see with different eyes the hegemonic relationship that exists between the performance text and the written text. Although in the past some critics expressed concern regarding the potential changes to the original text that are associated with performance, thinking has shifted greatly with regard to the Spanish *comedia* and other world theater. Indeed, only fifteen years ago, Jonathan Miller pointed out that some scholars believed that Shake-

speare should no longer be performed at all. To this Miller argued that because Shakespeare permitted his own plays to be performed, "... there must have been something in his mind which saw [performance] as a preferred state of his work" (31). The performed work is, of course, the product of mutation and change. Miller affirms that it is in the act of "going through the risks of ravaging and depredation that the immortality [of a play] is guaranteed" (36).

If one is overly concerned with faithfulness to the text, the value of the performance may be lost. Miller's comments on Shakespeare and on the theater in general also apply to the *comedia* as the adaptation, translation, and evaluation of the plays serve to indicate an ever increasing interest in early modern Spanish theater.⁶ There is, literally, an infinite potential for reproducing these works within a modern context. Some of the newer theoretical approaches to performance explore the variety of attitudes regarding the evaluation of a dramatic production.

In his 2006 study, *Teoría del teatro*, Santiago Trancón defines performance as a complex process that relies upon individual as well as collective creativity, and, I would add, public reception. Performance is, by nature, a privileged space for the creation, transformation, and combination of codes and signs of all types, all of which constitute theater (Trancón 248). Referring to Pedro Calderón de la

Barca's works, Manuel Delgado eloquently describes the relationship between the performance and message as body and soul respectively, to demonstrate how performance embodies the intended message of the playwright (18-19), and, in a more modern context, that of the director. These critics remind us that while writing—or adapting—a performance piece, it is important to consider the influence of the potential receivers of the performed text, as well as the various phases that it goes through before being presented to the audience. The public's role in the dramatic spectacle is more than that of spectators; they are also active participants. Marvin Carlson affirms in *Performance: A Critical Introduction* that “[p]erformance is always performance for someone ... that recognizes and validates it as performance” (7). In any theatrical piece, therefore, the generation of meaning is complex due to the number of participants in the exchange.

La traición en la amistad dramatizes its subject matter in a way that tends to differ from male treatments of the same—or similar—issue: an exploration of not merely male-female relationships but of the female-female ones. The play highlights the emotions and develops the distinct characters of the female leads, granting the public *entrée* into another social context, that is, the feminine world described from a woman's perspective. In “María de Zayas and Ana Caro: The Space of Woman's Solidarity in the Spanish Golden Age,” Mercedes Maroto Cami-

no examines the issue, asserting that the status quo normally reserved for male-female relationships is extended in *La traición en la amistad* to the female-female dynamic, a homosocial context (5). In general, the patriarchal society of Western Europe ignored—and when it did not ignore, it disdained—the idea (and ideal) of feminine friendship; it was a common opinion that women were incapable of maintaining strong social relationships.⁷ In her play, Zayas goes against this grain and portrays tight female bonds that are reinforced by strong alliances. Her female characters take advantage of their solidarity to achieve mutual goals and to protect themselves from common adversaries. Such positive values are personified in Marcia, whom Zayas contrasts with Fenisa, a woman who rejects homosocial friendship and whose behavior clearly is judged unacceptable by the other women in the play. Indeed, female friendship takes center stage in *La traición en la amistad*, although Zayas returns to the male-female dynamic in the form of numerous marriages at the end, which, Constance Wilkins states, makes the play more acceptable to the early modern public (112-13).⁸

Hispanists continue to approach the topic of female relationships in early modern Spanish literature from numerous perspectives.⁹ Most recently, Lisa Vollendorf's 2005 "The Value of Female Friendship in Seventeenth-Century Spain" discusses how women writers of the time expressed the con-

cept of female friendship through self-representation. Although female relationships were often subsumed by the marriage plot, Vollendorf notes that these interactions served as the backbone of many of Zayas's novellas (428). We can therefore conclude that, as a best-selling author of her time, Zayas understood what appealed to the tastes of her public. Vollendorf's insights with regard to female relationships are also applicable to modern stagings of *La traición en la amistad*. While we cannot know for certain how the public would have reacted to the play's performance in seventeenth-century Spain, we do have evidence concerning twenty-first-century productions of the text, which speak to both the context of the early modern age and to the perspectives of the present.

An examination of recent critical reactions to *comedia* performance exemplifies the dynamic nature of drama and demonstrates that need to approach adaptation with an open mind.¹⁰ In his video lecture for the AHCT's *Understanding the Comedia* Series, "Restaging the *Comedia*: The Case of Calderón de la Barca's *El galán fantasma*," Charles Ganelin comments on the challenges that a director faces when adapting classical texts for modern audiences. The process of adaptation is evaluative—both of the original text and of the evolving horizons of expectations of the audience, the director, and the acting company. Since the past and present must be reconciled, Ganelin suggests that the ulti-

mate goals of an adaptation should be both to convey a sense of the original text and to entertain, resulting in a recognizable and enlightened manifestation of the play. As adaptations that appeal to modern tastes and expectations are created, an artistic shift occurs, which transfers the authority and responsibility from the playwright to the director. In the case of Pasto's and Berman's productions of *La traición en la amistad*, the directors successfully linked the past and present precisely by focusing on the nature of female friendship. The two productions do, however, concentrate on different aspects of the interactions shared by the women in the play, emphasizing the complexities of female relationships.

Although both productions are based on Larson's translation of the play, through performance the public is presented with entirely different visions—and versions—of the nature of female friendship. According to Barbara López-Mayhew, the Chamizal production was a “two hour performance [that] followed the text of the 17th century play with minor alterations” (“Review” 267). Pasto focuses on the solidarity that comes from close female friendships, as evidenced in the union of all of the other women characters to defeat the one who threatens them. The Georgetown adaptation is modern and sexy, loosely inspired by the (mis)behavior of current female pop icons (Mujica, “Interview” 219). This version, too, emphasizes strong female

bonds, but it also presents a different vision of female friendship by adding a sexually charged element to the relationships. A comparison of specific scenes that focus on the interrelationship of the female characters illustrates how performances based on the same dramatic text can yield very different results.

At the beginning of Act 1, Marcia's and Fenisa's competing interest in Liseo ends with Marcia storming off stage after an argument between the two. In Pasto's production, one notices from the very start a physical and emotional distance between the two women. There is virtually no physical contact between them, except for when they briefly comb one another's hair. The actresses are constantly moving, especially Fenisa, who crosses the stage while contemplating the dilemma of her newly found feelings for Liseo; she then returns to Marcia's side. This blocking reveals not only the anxiety of the two women who literally are not able to sit still, but also the figurative distance between them: Fenisa appears willing to sacrifice her friendship with Marcia in exchange for a relationship with Liseo. Fenisa's body language and gestures are similarly revealing. She continually rolls her eyes and turns her back to Marcia, suggesting a lack of interest in her friend's well-being. Indeed, the incongruity between Fenisa's body language and her kind words reveals to the audience clues about her insincerity and self-absorption.

In stark contrast to the Chamizal production, Berman's version of the scene is characterized by the close proximity of the two women in what might be described as a homoerotic interaction. The production opens with the two women exchanging pleasantries while enveloped in each other's arms. As Marcia embraces Fenisa, the two admire a portrait of Liseo, forming a figurative *ménage-a-trois* that hints at the problems that will arise from the love triangle that is developing. Later, Fenisa's refusal to return the portrait leads to a spat that reveals that physical passion drives her actions. The actresses' exaggerated gestures and screamed insults further elevate the tension that permeates the theater. Yet, after the tussle, the two curiously share another friendly moment—more a conventional pleasantry than anything—that reiterates Fenisa's treacherous nature. Clearly, staging such false affection reveals the complexities of their relationship, which is characterized by the potential for betrayal and the false security that words often promise.

Performance challenges the public to generate meaning. In "Framing, Decoding, and Interpretation: On the Spectator's Vital Role in Creating Theatrical Meaning," Eli Rozik examines the spectator's role in the dramatic process, arguing that interpretation is a creative progression that generates meaning through the spectator's reception of a work: reception is a set of mental operations of specific rules performed by an addressee on a text (26).

Rozik notes that generation of meaning starts with the most basic step of framing a situation, then by decoding the text, and finally arriving at interpretation, when the spectators reach beyond decoding signs and provide associations that originate in their cultural knowledge of contextualized domains that complement decoding (11-15). The scene described above, interpreted differently by both of the directors, leads the audience to decode and thus interpret the text (slightly) differently in each case. Both versions of the scene underline Fenisa's unsavory character. It is in the Georgetown production, however, that Fenisa's dubious moral fiber is magnified because of the false intimacy that she shares with Marcia, manifested in the physical contact that they share. Besides revealing the deceitful nature of Fenisa, this intimacy further suggests an erotic element that ultimately affects the audience interpretation and response.

The second act opens with the encounter between the love-struck Marcia and the lovelorn Laura. Once again, the performance of the scene reveals a different perspective on female friendship in each production. In El Paso, the women still maintain a distance, coming together briefly at times to demonstrate affection or solidarity. Their affected greetings seem to poke fun at the formalized behavior of the upper class, possibly hinting at its often insincere nature, and although at first they maintain their composure because of noble proto-

col, the asides paired with their trembling bodies betray their actual sense of insecurity. Furthermore, Marcia, Laura, and Belisa share some light-hearted joking mixed with words of encouragement. As a smirking Belisa admires Laura's beauty, she states, "If I were a man, I would put my faith in your love" (89).¹¹ While these words most certainly suggest same-sex desire, their performance in the Chamizal productions reveals something different. Belisa's praise of Laura's beauty is not erotic in any way; rather, the lines are delivered in a sisterly and supportive manner. Later in the scene, after learning about Laura's misfortunes, Marcia goes to the newcomer to comfort her; the tension turns to tenderness and all doubts about the loyalty that the new friends share for one another are quickly dispelled. The two also come together physically by joining hands, visibly solidifying their alliance for revenge. Unlike in the first scene of Act 1, this time the body language is congruent to the spoken words of the play text. Clearly, the director's reading of the drama reinforces the importance of solidarity between the female principals and among women in general. Interestingly, the first encounter between two women, Act 1's opening scene with Marcia and Fenisa, contains a great deal of conflict because of the women's common amorous interest in Liseo. This second encounter focuses on the well-being of and solidarity towards the other female character, which is notable since they just met. Mujica notes

that “Zayas provides the example of a female group in which an outsider is accepted simply because she is a woman in need (“Hollywood”). The fact that Marcia and Laura exit the stage holding hands underscores the new bond they share. Clearly, the gradual reduction of distance between the characters reflects the evolution of their friendship: as strangers, they greet each other from a distance, but the space eventually closes as the pact is made to take revenge on Liseo.

The same scene in the Georgetown production adds to the overtly sexual component of the play. Both Marcia and Belisa mention how Laura’s beauty has caused them to tremble, but their confident demeanors onstage do not reveal the insecurity suggested by their words. The tension that arises from this scene is clearly sexual, as the two women share a passionate kiss after Marcia declares “you are beautiful” and Laura replies “Let me kiss your hands, señora” (89). This mouth-to-mouth kiss is intense, exceeding the homosocial expression of friendship and bordering on the homoerotic, thus reinforcing the erotic tone of the play. While perhaps unexpected, the kiss fits perfectly within the modern-day pop diva context that Berman has constructed on the stage; it is immediately reminiscent kisses shared by Madonna, Britney Spears, and Christina Aguilera at the 2003 MTV Video Music Awards. Where the Chamizal production posits the first encounter in Act 2 as an exercise in noble pro-

TOCOL tinged with nervous tension, the Georgetown production heads down a different path and insinuates sexual tension between Marcia and Laura. The complicity shared by the two women who have been wronged by the same man is overshadowed by the passion that arises between them. This close physical contact is a directorial decision, in fact, in a recent email exchange, Berman commented, “[w]e planned several physical signs of affection between women throughout the play, I’m pleased you caught this intention.”

Consistent with the rest of the adaptation, Berman also highlights the sexual aspect of Belisa. Unlike in the Chamizal production, Belisa’s admiration of Laura’s beauty blatantly emphasizes homosexual desire as she gives Laura a very manly once-over look. The brief Sapphic moment comes to an abrupt halt as Belisa then promises her fidelity to Laura: “At your service, and I promise that from this moment on, you can count on my good will.” Of course, the momentary ogling is intentional, adding to the sexual tension permeating the play, but it is fleeting, perhaps playing with the degree to which such desires might be realized. The eroticism conveyed on stage most certainly appeared to appeal to the modern day public’s taste.¹² Mujica states, “[f]or Berman, today’s attitudes toward sex provided the cultural link between Zayas’s world and our own” (“Hollywood”).

The two stagings demonstrate two different perspectives on female relationships, which span homosocial and homosexual contexts. María José Delgado intuited such ambivalent interpretations in “Lesbiagrafisis: exposición y expansión del deseo femenino en *La traición en la amistad* de María de Zayas y Sotomayor” (538), pointing out that the script alone allows for different interpretations, but through the performance of the text and the materialized adaptation of the script. The public is compelled to make further conclusions. Furthermore, the text and its numerous staged manifestations demonstrate the complexity of female relationships, both in early modern Spain and the twenty-first century.

At the end of the play, the differences in staging the physical fight between Belisa and Fenisa further demonstrate the distinct visions that the directors have for the play and the dynamics of female relationships. Pasto’s production underscores the importance of remaining faithful to one’s friends, adding depth to the play’s message in a way that might not be as apparent via a reading of the dramatic text alone. In “Love, Friendship and Deceit in *La traición en la amistad*, by María de Zayas,” Matthew Stroud complains of the play’s “hollow” moral lesson (544), an astute commentary based on a close reading of the text, but I would suggest that the play in performance actually expands the power of the written text. Both rage and desperation are

deftly expressed on stage during Fenisa's and Belisa's swordfight, one of Pasto's alterations to the text.¹³ Marcia, too, becomes involved in the melee, which ends in her disarming Fenisa—both literally and figuratively. Marcia never drops her sword; both she and Belisa point their weapons at Fenisa as they scold her for her despicable behavior. I would contend, therefore, that Fenisa's radical actions and Marcia's dominant stance emphasize the serious nature of the play and its message. This was the intention of Pasto, who states in an email exchange, "I also wanted to emphasize that the women had to band together to catch Liseo and defeat Fenisa, so it took both Belisa and Marcia working together to defeat Fenisa." The female characters in the play, especially Marcia, project a sense of strength as they dominate the dramatic space. Their actions emphasize the potential power of women, especially when they are brought together by friendship or when their friendship is threatened.

In the Berman production, Belisa and Fenisa's cat fight, which includes hissing, hair pulling, clawing, etc., is overshadowed by—and arguably even adds to—the sensuality oozing from the stage. Marcia breaks up the fight and then scolds Fenisa for her behavior, reminding her adversary—and the public—of how her inappropriate behavior has ultimately condemned her to a life without male or female companionship. The message appears to remain intact, but it is eclipsed by the carnal energy

released during the melee. Berman's conclusion therefore offers a positive contradiction, an ambiguity of interpretation in that it simultaneously celebrates sexuality while moralizing about it.

The scenes analyzed above physically manifest the complexities of female relationships in ways that lead to different types of analytical responses from the audience. Amalia Gladhart observes that in theater, the audience plays a dual role: "[w]hen performance as event is emphasized, the observer of the event becomes not only an objective recorder of data but the necessary shaper of the data observed" (19). The onstage performances ultimately serve as metaphors for offstage realities to which a spectator can relate—or can at least understand and assign meaning. Fenisa's rejection of female solidarity offers a counterexample to the other relationships in the play. Interestingly, her situation produced laughter in the audience in both performances. This reaction reminds us of the complicit and social nature of laughter among the theater-going public, as Henri Bergson describes: laughter is a social phenomenon that often occurs when an audience judges those who are resistant to following the norms of society (7-9).

The sets and costumes augment the different aspects of female friendship elaborated in each production.¹⁴ The Chamizal set, described as "minimalist" by Voros and "simple" by López-Mayhew ("Review" 268), served as a neutral backdrop for

the play. The latter takes issue with the central platform, which she views as “distracting,” although she does recognize that the actors’ lines were given added emphasis when spoken from the elevated space on the stage (“Review” 268). This observation actually points to how the set design complements the performance in the delivery of the message to the audience. The consequence of the actors taking center stage is that all attention is focused on them and their lines. The Georgetown set corresponds to the sexual elements that the performance provides. Mujica notes that the set was “simple” yet “provocative” because of the animal skins draped on the furniture (“Interview” 222). The luxurious animal skins, in concert with the decadent furnishings on stage, might even suggest a bordello or a bachelor’s pad, though Berman has not stated that this was her intention. The space, nonetheless, harmonizes with the sexuality of the women as it is developed in the play.

Costuming also plays a key role in developing the distinct visions of the directors through their adaptations of Zayas’s play. Both directors dress Fenisa in pants, which contrasts with the dresses of the other female characters, further demonstrating the distance between her and the other women in the play; her clothing—and her actions—are more typically masculine. The corsets worn by the women in the Georgetown production paradoxically demonstrate both the freedom of sexual expression

and the constraints imposed by the garment itself and by society (Mujica, "Interview" 224). This perpetual state of undress for the female characters, nonetheless, added to the erotic character of the play, especially when contrasted with the fully dressed men. The audience was invited to not only experience the inner sexuality of the women as represented in the performance but also to focus on their physical beauty.

Clearly, the Chamizal and Georgetown productions demonstrate two distinct possibilities for the production of Zayas's *La traición en la amistad*. Pasto's version of the play highlights the importance of solidarity between women and the strong ties implied by female relationships; Berman's adaptation, too, interrogates and celebrates the homosocial bonding of women in crisis, but adds a sexual component to the text in performance. Homosexual desire therefore emerges as another issue that can further complicate the already complex dynamic of female relationships. Though the scripts were based on the same edition and the same translation, the distinct results illustrate how the performance of a work takes the script from page to stage, transforming it, and highlighting the messages embedded in the text and interpreted by directors and their casts and crews. The director, who is responsible for the adaptation and execution of the performance text for the modern audience, and the actors, who bring

the play to life, join the audience in interpreting the dramatic spectacle.

The study of *La traición en la amistad* in performance allows the reader/spectator to explore aspects of the text that might not be readily apparent without access to its adaptation and representation on the modern stage. The fact that this play was written by a woman and is about women makes it an especially useful tool for illuminating the unique array of elements of early modern literature and society. In her play, Zayas reflects upon the concerns and desires that affected the women of the time and it is through the performance of her play that we, the theater-going public, move one step closer to an understanding of the prevailing preoccupations of the past and their relation to the present.

NOTES

¹ This study is an expanded version of a paper read on October 6, 2006, at the Asociación de Escritoras Españolas y Americanas and Association for Hispanic Classical Theater Joint Symposium at Georgetown University in Washington D.C.

² In the introduction to her edition, Valerie Hegstrom mentions that Zayas's contemporaries referred to her as the "Décima musa" and the "Sybil of Madrid," and that her admirers included Ana Caro de Mallén, Félix Lope de Vega, Juan Pérez de Montalbán, and Alonso de Castillo Solorzano, to name a few (15).

³ In "From Manuscript to 21st Century Performances: *La traición en la amistad*," Barbara López-Mayhew addresses some of the challenges faced when adapting the play for the modern

stage. She discusses two performances, the one in El Paso, Texas, in 2003 and another in Almagro, Spain, that same year. She also wrote a review of the El Paso performance, previously published in *Comedia Performance* 1.1.

⁴ Barbara Mujica has worked extensively with Berman's adaptation of *La traición en la amistad*. See her interview with Berman for insight about several directorial decisions made when adapting the play. Mujica's forthcoming essay, "María de Zayas's *Friendship Betrayed* à la Hollywood: Translation, Transculturation, and Production," provides a comprehensive analysis of Berman's adaptation of the play.

⁵ The acting in both performances was commendable. It must be noted, however, that the actors in Pasto's production were amateurs and those in Berman were professionals. This factor could be relevant to the directorial decisions made during the adaptation of the play for the modern stage. Presumably, the professional actors are better suited to execute a performance that strays from more traditional conventions of acting.

⁶ See Don Larson's and Susan Paun de García's forthcoming collection of essays, *The Spanish Comedia in English: Translation and Performance*. My special thanks to both of them for allowing me to use two of the essays as references before the book's release. Other recent studies dealing with adapting the *comedia* to the modern stage include Matthew Stroud's "The Director's Cut: Baroque Aesthetics and Modern Stagings of the *Comedia*" and Laura Vidler's "Coming to America: Translating Culture in Two U.S. Productions of the Spanish *Comedia*."

⁷ In the sixteenth century, one only needs to look at the words of French humanist Michel de Montaigne (1533-92), who clearly voices this early modern prejudice:

[T]o tell the truth, the ordinary capacity of women is inadequate for that communion and fellowship which is the nurse of this sacred bond; nor does their soul seem firm

enough to endure the strain of so tight and durable a knot ... this sex in no instance has yet succeeded in attaining it, and by the common agreement of the ancient schools is excluded from it (138).

⁸ Walter Kerr, describing comedy's weddings and happy endings as "polite conventions," notes that they serve as quick and convenient conclusions to the action and are often unrelated to the rest of the work (57).

⁹ See studies by Valerie Hegstrom and Constance Wilkins, who focus on the homosocial aspects of female friendship. María José Delgado explores the homoerotic implications of female friendship in Zayas's work. For other studies of homosexuality in early modern Spanish literature, see *Lesbianism and Homosexuality in Early Modern Spain*, María José Delgado and Alain Saint-Saëns, eds.

¹⁰ Some of the more recent studies dealing with adapting the *comedia* to the modern stage include Matthew Stroud's "The Director's Cut: Baroque Aesthetics and Modern Stagings of the *Comedia*" and Laura Vidler's "Coming to America: Translating Culture in Two U.S. Productions of the Spanish *Comedia*."

¹¹ See Sharon Voros's article "Zayas's Comic Sense: The First Performance in English of *La traición en la amistad*," forthcoming in Larson and Paun de García, for a detailed examination of Belisa's comic role in the Chamizal production.

¹² At the very least, this eroticism provoked a strong reaction, since some theater-goers noted a lack of congruence between Berman's adaptation and the less "in-your-face" stagings typical to Zayas's time.

¹³ The decision about staging a swordfight instead of the implied cat fight was driven by Pasto's interpretation that the women, not the men, determined the resolution of the plot. He therefore had them actually take the swords, obvious visual metaphors for the phallus, from the men and engage in a literal battle.

¹⁴See López-Mayhew, Mujica, and Voros for careful examinations of the paralinguistic dramatic elements of each adaptation.

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**JUEGO DE ESPEJOS, DE ENGAÑOS Y
DESENGAÑOS, EN LA ESCENA DEL
BALCÓN DE *VALOR, AGRAVIO Y MUJER...*
*STRIPPING DON JUAN***

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Al observar la representación de una obra teatral siempre hay escenas que por una u otra razón se quedan grabadas en la memoria de los espectadores. En ocasiones, lo que llama la atención es la fuerza del texto, cuyos versos repetimos hasta la saciedad; otras veces se trata de la interpretación de los actores, con quienes se establece una corriente de empatía; y hay momentos en los que el empleo de ciertas técnicas escénicas consigue dar ese toque especial, ya sea gracias a efectos luminosos, sonoros o de distribución del espacio. Son escenas que permanecen imborrables en la mente, como si pudieran enmarcarse dentro de un cuadro.

En la representación de *Valor, agravio y mujer*, que tuvo lugar en el teatro Gala de Washington en octubre del 2006, la escena del balcón, al final del segundo acto, causó una honda impresión entre los espectadores. Parte del público asistente mantuvo posteriormente un encuentro con los actores y con

el director artístico, Hugo Medrano, quien reconoció que en todo momento quiso dejar constancia del “toque femenino” latente en la obra (*Taller With Actors*). Sin perder de vista la mirada del director, este ensayo analizará la simbología del balcón y el papel que desempeña esta escena en el juego global de engaños y desengaños que la dramaturga Ana Caro puso de relieve al escribir la obra.

Muchos son ya los estudios de género que se han ocupado de analizar la importancia de esta comedia que hasta estos últimos veinte años había permanecido silenciada en los márgenes del canon. Amy Williamsen, que realizó la traducción al inglés para esta representación, valora la marginalidad de la obra como vehículo del cual se sirve Caro para elaborar una teoría flexible sobre el género, independientemente del sexo biológico correspondiente a cada persona: “The work does not present gender as a constant and fixed, but rather suggests that it is subject to individual reformulations” (“Re-writing” 25). Laura Gorfkle, por su parte, interpreta el uso que la protagonista hace del disfraz masculino como una manera de invertir los valores tradicionales en los que se sustentaban las convenciones de género. Beatriz Cortez sigue esta misma brecha y compara a Leonor, personaje principal en *Valor, agravio y mujer*, con Rosaura, de *La vida es sueño*. Para Cortez la posibilidad del travestismo genera una libertad de acción que abre las posibilidades binarias patriarca-

les del género y amplía el concepto creando nuevas categorías.

La mayor parte de estos estudios afrontan la obra en su totalidad, enfocándose en el hábito de hombre que toma la protagonista o en la resolución matrimonial que zanja el argumento. Aquí nos centraremos tan solo en el análisis de una escena, cuya peculiaridad y particular resolución contribuye a una mejor comprensión del producto final. De especial interés para este trabajo resulta el ensayo de Bárbara Mujica "Women Directing Women: Ana Caro's *Valor, agravio y mujer* as Performance Text", donde se plantea la puesta en escena del texto. Tanto Mujica como Gorfkle coinciden al destacar la fuerza del efecto producido por la simultaneidad de los diálogos que se intercambian en el balcón, lo cual constituye un "split-stage effect that characterizes most of Act II" (Mujica 42). Este efecto de partición escénica podría haberse resuelto en el siglo XVII utilizando una pantalla que separase la acción en las tablas:

Perhaps a screen or *aparador*, frequently found in plays after 1635, was used to stage the action of characters who, consciously associated in the mind of the spectator by virtue of their simultaneous presence on the stage and their parallel conversations, are mutually unconscious of one another (Gorfkle 28).

El montaje de Hugo Medrano brindó la posibilidad de dar vida a esta complicada escena, de modo que la estereofonía del texto y el paralelismo de los versos nacidos de la pluma de Ana Caro, resonaron en los oídos del público asistente y se reflejaron como imágenes en un espejo ante los ojos de los espectadores. Fue por eso quizá que el momento del balcón resultó tan aplaudido y se quedó grabado en la memoria de gran parte del auditorio. Pasemos entonces a ver todas las implicaciones que conlleva la idea del balcón.

El tema de la mujer asomada a la ventana para ver y dejarse ver aparece tanto en la literatura como en la pintura. Así como Ana Caro lo emplea en su obra de teatro, Bartolomé Esteban Murillo lo utiliza en uno de sus cuadros: *Two Women at a Window* (1655-1660).

Bartolomé Esteban Murillo. *Two Women at a Window*. National Gallery of Art, 1655-1660.



Murillo pinta a una joven enmarcada, encerrada tras los muros de la casa, buscando con la mirada acceder al mundo exterior que la rodea. No está sola, la acompaña una señora mayor, quizá una nodriza o sirvienta. Existe además una sensación de encubrimiento o disimulo en el velo que tapa parcialmente la cara de la anciana, oculta entre las sombras, al amparo de la contraventana, riéndose de algo que ella sabe y nosotros desconocemos. La pintura permite incluso imaginar una historia donde la joven pasa a ser una prostituta y la criada se convierte en su alcahueta. Cualquier cosa es posible y no debemos fiarnos de los sentidos. La vista nos engaña y nada es lo que parece.

La imagen de la mujer asomada a la ventana es un tópico recurrente no sólo en la pintura, sino también en la cultura popular: cuentos, canciones, poemas y romances recogen este tema:

Cativa estaba, cativa, — la esposa de don Gaitero,
pensando está que la escriba — uno de sus mensajeros.
Aparóse una ventana, — vido venir un caballero

[...]

Por allí pasó un caballero, — cargado de oro y perlería,
al relumbror de las doncellas — el caballo non le camina.
Echó los ojos en alto, — por ver quién había arriba,
Vido a las doncellas a la ventana, — se enamoró de la
más chica.

(*Poesía tradicional* 24 y 94)

Sandra Gilbert y Susan Gubar hacen una relectura de *Blancanieves* desde una perspectiva feminis-

ta, destacando la importancia de los “recintos transparentes” que aparecen en la historia. Este término les sirve para definir aquellos entornos—ventanales, espejos mágicos o ataúdes de cristal—que dejan ver a las mujeres al mismo tiempo que las encierran. Ya desde el principio del cuento aparece la hacendosa madre de Blancanieves en una imagen casera típica del rol tradicional de la mujer: “sentada y cosiendo, *enmarcada por una ventana*” (51, el énfasis es mío). El simbolismo del balcón como espacio adjudicado a la mujer tiene por tanto una larga tradición arraigada en lo que los estudios feministas llaman el patriarcado, donde se limita la libertad de la mujer, acotada a lugares cerrados o espacios que, por su aparente luminosidad, presentan una falsa idea de apertura.

Para Virginia Woolf la ventana no sólo se abre de dentro hacia afuera, sino que se emplea también como puerta de entrada, de fuera hacia dentro; se convierte entonces en una vía de distracción que a veces impide concentrarse a la escritora, dentro de su “habitación propia”:

It would be better to draw the curtains; to shut out distractions; to light the lamp; to narrow the enquiry and to ask the historian, who records not opinions but facts, to describe under what conditions women lived, not throughout the ages, but in England, say in the time of Elizabeth (43, el énfasis es mío).

Sigamos pues el consejo de Woolf y trasladémonos a la Inglaterra isabelina, donde a las mujeres les está prohibido trabajar como actrices y nadie se plantea siquiera la posibilidad de una mujer dramaturga. Es aquí donde Shakespeare inmortaliza el uso del balcón en las artes escénicas. ¿Qué sería, por ejemplo, de *Romeo y Julieta* si faltase la escena del balcón? Sin embargo, lo aparente puede de nuevo llevarnos a engaño ya que, como defiende B. Sprague Allen en su artículo “Tom Coryat and Juliet’s Balcony,” Shakespeare nunca tuvo en mente la idea arquitectónica del balcón veneciano, tal como la concebimos actualmente:

When we bear in mind that in 1611 Coryat was able to remark that the balcony was a novelty “very seldom seen in England” [...] and when we remember that no words existed in English to express precisely the idea of a balcony and a balustrade, it appears that we might have been seriously misreading our Shakespeare. Strictly speaking is there any authority for what we have been in the habit of describing as the “balcony scenes” of *Romeo and Juliet*? [...] There is nothing in the text of the two crucial scenes to suggest that he had. When Romeo is standing in the darkness of Capulet’s garden, Juliet appears merely at a window, as her lover’s exclamation indicates: “But, soft! What light through yonder window breaks?” (946-47)

Fuera ventana, terraza o baranda, lo cierto es que la escena del balcón aparece desde entonces ligada a un espacio híbrido (abierto/cerrado) principalmente femenino, asociado normalmente al ocaso del día y envuelto en un halo de complicidad y misterio idóneo para que se establezcan intercambios de índole amorosa. Todo ello recrea el ambiente perfecto para que Caro desarrolle frente al espectador su particular juego de engaños y desengaños para darnos su propia visión de la sociedad. No olvidemos que, según señala Pilar Alcalá, “podríamos proponer la existencia de una autora consciente del poder de su creación, y de lo que se autoriza mediante la ilusión de la representación” (179).

Muchas son las comedias barrocas que utilizan el espacio del balcón como elemento estético y argumental. Sirvan como ejemplo *El burlador de Sevilla*, de Tirso de Molina, *La verdad sospechosa*, de Juan Ruiz de Alarcón, y *El palacio confuso*, de Mira de Amescua. En la primera de estas obras, el balcón es la vía de escape que sirve como puerta de huida a don Juan después de haber pasado la noche con Isabella: “¿Atreveráste a bajar por ese balcón?” (vv. 105-06). El dormitorio de la doncella, cerrado, se extiende hasta este territorio abierto a la calle que es la terraza. La oscuridad sirve de entrada-salida ilícita al personaje masculino que ha violado el honor de la duquesa haciéndose pasar por otro. Esta ventana al exterior juega en perjuicio de la dama, que ve cómo por ella se escapa su virtud. Balcón y en-

gaño vienen unidos. También Ana Caro juega con el cambio de identidad. Pero aquí Leonor se hace pasar por Estela y es ella quien confunde a don Juan. Incluso en el diálogo simultáneo que se desarrolla entre Estela y Ludovico, que dice ser Leonardo, vemos a la mujer dueña y señora de su territorio detrás de la baranda. Más adelante, al analizar la escenografía creada por Medrano, observaremos cómo, desde la altura, tanto Estela como Leonor dominan la escena.

En *La verdad sospechosa* el balcón se convierte en centro de varias escenas. De día sirve de mirador para reconocer al pretendiente y de noche contribuye a aumentar el enredo argumental basado también en una confusión de identidades. Don García ha quedado prendado de Jacinta, pero piensa que su nombre es Lucrecia. Las dos amigas salen a la ventana donde el galán espera hablar con su amada. La verdadera Lucrecia pide a su compañera que conteste en su lugar: “tú en mi nombre le responde” (v. 1959). Ocultas por la oscuridad, y por la distancia de seguridad que les brinda la terraza, logran con éxito convencer al varón de que solamente está hablando con una de ellas y utilizan sus propias voces como disfraz haciéndose pasar la una por la otra. Esto da lugar a momentos de duda: “DON GARCÍA: ¿Es Lucrecia? JACINTA: ¿Es don García?” (v. 1960), “TRISTÁN: (Al oído) ¿Es ella?” (v. 1980).

Esta misma incógnita asalta a los personajes de *El palacio confuso*, donde también dos mujeres, la reina Matilde y Porcia, cambian intermitentemente sus papeles en el balcón mientras Carlos habla desde abajo y el duque escucha escondido: "CARLOS: ¿Es Porcia? REINA: Sí. REINA ¿Es el rey?" (p. 6). Los hombres están desorientados ya que reconocen la voz de sus damas—"sospecho / que mi voz ha conocido" (p. 7), "sospecho / que no es Porcia, y pienso bien" (p. 8)—pero el cambio constante de una a otra les impide estar seguros. Este tipo de escena se ajusta muy bien a la idea barroca de que los sentidos engañan. Uno no se puede fiar de las apariencias, de la vista, pero tampoco del oído: "¡Yo sí que mal escuché!" (p. 9).

En *Valor, agravio y mujer*, sin embargo, las protagonistas aparecen solas, cada una en su balcón. Leonor no precisa de nadie para urdir su plan. Ella se finge Estela y don Juan no duda ni por un instante que no lo sea: "Esta es, sin duda, Estela" (v. 1626). Toda la escena se construye para debilitar aún más la imagen de don Juan. Este galán no es el conquistador atrevido de Tirso que se escapa saltando por la ventana. Tampoco tiene la agilidad de saber reconocer al punto el tono de voz de quien le habla. Es una figura pasiva que escucha impotente cómo la pretendida condesa le aborrece mientras que la verdadera Estela confiesa a su vez al hablar de don Juan "que no me agrada / para quererle" (vv. 1686-87). Los personajes femeninos de Caro poseen

completa agencialidad en esta escena. Ellas hacen y deshacen, deciden cuándo empezar y cuándo terminar la conversación. Incluso la propia condesa, aun creyendo que habla con otra persona¹, no se deja llevar por su adúlador ni pierde las riendas de la acción. Ella es quien decide el momento de cortar y marcharse, dejando a Ludovico con las ganas de continuar la charla: “LUDOVICO: No os vais, para que envidie vuestros soles. ESTELA: Lisonjas. Vedme luego / y adiós (vase)” (vv. 1802-04). Aunque las mujeres de *La verdad sospechosa* parecen dominar también la escena del balcón, en realidad no son ellas quienes directamente controlan la acción; es el protagonista el que se engaña a sí mismo y se forja su propio desenlace.

La diferencia de esta escena escrita por Ana Caro es que sirve para reforzar la imagen de la protagonista y debilitar a su vez la mítica y varonil figura del don Juan. Elizabeth Ordóñez destaca también este control de Leonor sobre el resto de personajes como signo que diferencia la autoría femenina de la obra: “Leonor of *Valor* is the central motor of the play and manipulates the actions of all characters around her” (10). Muy curiosa es además la metáfora de Ordóñez sobre Leonor como “autor” en el sentido amplio del término (escritor y director). Ella trama, hace y deshace, utiliza distintas técnicas y estilos, emplea diferentes voces y registros, dispone los caminos a seguir para el resto de personajes, se mueve por todos los espacios, se calza las botas del

hombre y, en definitiva, se arma de pluma y tintero para dejar constancia de su labor creativa y creadora (10).

Caro es consciente de su papel de escritora y pretende hacer llegar un mensaje a su público: la mujer es igual al hombre. Confrontando el mito de don Juan, la protagonista, Leonor —actuando como Leonardo— es capaz de luchar, con espadas o con navajas; de enfrentarse al peligro, rescatando a la condesa de sus atacantes; de enamorar con palabras, consiguiendo que Estela se sienta atraída por su persona; y, sobre todo, de defender y recuperar su honor, sometiendo la voluntad de don Juan. Ésta y no otra es la obra que se propuso escribir la dramaturga. Un texto contenido en las convenciones de la comedia barroca pero que como ya hemos visto se diferencia del tratamiento que le dan otros autores e implanta con fuerza su visión femenina en un personaje lleno de valor; un personaje que ejerce una autoría que pone en paralelo a la protagonista con la escritora. Caro firma su obra y deja una impronta que el director escénico quiso reflejar al pasar el verso a las tablas.

Aunque el texto fue escrito en el siglo XVII, Hugo Medrano decidió situar el desarrollo de la acción en torno a 1850, cuando el Tenorio de Zorrilla (1844) se dedicaba a asaltar balcones y conquistar mujeres. El título de la obra sufrió también una variación, añadiéndole una segunda parte: *Stripping Don Juan*. El director declaró que la intención aso-

ciada con estos cambios no era otra que la de “atraer el interés de una audiencia contemporánea” (*Taller With Actors*). Medrano reconoció que uno de los referentes utilizados para enmarcar la escena en esta época fue la imagen que él se había forjado de la autora:

Ana Caro es una escritora educada, elitista, de una poesía más rebuscada que sus contemporáneos. Se la producía muy poco y únicamente en la corte, así que su público estaba más preparado. [...] En definitiva, era una adelantada a su tiempo cuyo personaje principal, Leonor, se corresponde más con una mujer del siglo XIX que con una de dos siglos atrás. (*Taller With Actors*)

Con la idea del romanticismo en mente, Medrano consigue el toque femenino que buscaba desde el principio gracias a la suavidad de los decorados y a la vaporosidad y colorido de los trajes de las actrices. En este nuevo marco temporal, el uso del balcón, ya sea en el teatro, ya en la vida real, no ha perdido su validez. La diferencia con el siglo XVII estriba ahora en que se abre más el espacio: ya no es sólo un territorio femenino, sino que también los hombres tienen acceso a él. Charles Baudelaire, en 1856, escoge este lugar como centro de su poema *Le Balcon*: “From the balcony of poetic contemplation Baudelaire looks out over the city and judges his own heart” (Oxenhandler 62). También Goya, unos años antes, concluye una de sus obras más imi-

tadas: *Majas en el balcón*, donde dos mujeres comparten el espacio con dos hombres que cubren su rostro con sendas capas negras. De nuevo las apariencias pueden llevarnos a interpretar erróneamente la situación: ¿Son las mujeres damas de la clase alta o meras prostitutas? ¿Qué secretos se están contando en el balcón? ¿A quién observan desde la baranda?



Francisco de Goya, *Majas en el balcón*. Metropolitan Museum 1810.

M. Elizabeth Boone, en su artículo “Bullfights and Balconies”, realiza un estudio de diversos cuadros con el tema del balcón para analizar el óleo titulado *On the Balcony*, de la pintora americana decimonónica Mary Cassatt. Directamente inspirado por las obras de Murillo y Goya, la escena presenta dos andaluzas coqueteando en la terraza con un torero. Es la imagen romántica que los viajeros extranjeros venidos a España comenzaron a exportar y que creó los estereotipos que aún definen el país: toros, flamenco, pasión². En este ensayo Boone destaca la peculiaridad del balcón no sólo como espacio híbrido entre lo público y lo privado: “The balcony’s position allowed it to function as the intersection between public and private space, and its elevated placement removed its occupant from the street while offering her an unobstructed view of the world below” (57), sino también como lugar propicio para el coqueteo: “Despite elusiveness flirting could cross the line between acceptable social behavior and immorality” (62).

Asimismo, en la escena del balcón de *Valor, agravio y mujer*, la terraza se usa como parte de la arquitectura teatral que sitúa a Leonor y a la condesa Estela en un nivel superior al de los personajes masculinos y que induce al coqueteo y al inicio del cortejo amoroso. En el plano de la casa o del palacio, la ventana constituye una apertura arquitectóni-

ca y una comunicación con el exterior que permite a las mujeres, encerradas, contactar con los hombres que pasean libres afuera. Mientras que Leandro, don Juan y Ludovico se dirigen al terrero solos o con sus criados, las mujeres permanecen dentro de sus casas al caer el sol. Caro presenta a una joven sola, asomada a la baranda, sin nodriza ni sirvienta que la vigile; es decir, más libre que la muchacha que aparecía en el cuadro de Murillo o la propia Julieta, que debe obedecer a la llamada de su aya³. El disimulo, el disfraz y el engaño, vienen de la mano de los personajes que se hacen pasar por otros: Leonor, desde lo alto, amparada por la oscuridad de la noche y oculta entre las sombras de la ventana pretende hacer creer a don Juan que es Estela. El engaño llega incluso más lejos, cuando Ludovico actúa como Leonardo, el cual no es más que un personaje de ficción, una imagen proveniente del otro lado del espejo; Leonardo no existe en realidad, es una proyección de Leonor para conseguir sus fines como mujer valiéndose del atuendo de un hombre irreal. Hombres y mujeres se reflejan en un mismo cristal de azogue: Leonor engaña a don Juan y Ludovico a Estela.

La duplicidad de la escena constituye uno de los detalles más importantes de la representación, ya que en este caso aparece no sólo un balcón, sino dos. Medrano desarrolla esta duplicidad colocando estructuras que forman parte del decorado a un lado y otro de la escena. A la derecha del espectador si-

túa a Leonor, en primer plano, asomada a una ventana y mirando, desde un nivel superior, a don Juan, que habla de pie junto a la pared. El hueco no se abre directamente hacia el público, sino más bien hacia el centro del escenario. Con ello, y gracias a una iluminación tenue, Leonor queda más resguardada de las miradas. Oculta tras su velo, y haciéndose pasar por la condesa, recuerda las imágenes tapadas que aparecen en los cuadros de Murillo y Goya. A la izquierda, la estructura en la que aparece Estela ocupa mayor espacio y se abre completamente frente al salón de butacas. Ahora no es una ventana propiamente, sino un balcón, con una barandilla, que permite ver al personaje de cuerpo entero. La luz es mucho más directa y aparece también elevada, por encima de Ludovico, el cual se arrima a la pared, buscando las sombras y procurando no ser descubierto.

Los focos de luces iluminan la parte izquierda o la parte derecha del escenario según hablen unos personajes u otros. Con esta doble visión se genera una resonancia estereofónica captada por el oído y un engaño para la vista generado por un juego de espejos. Se trata de una técnica que combina los efectos sonoros con los visuales de manera simultánea. El público observa a un tiempo la imagen real de Estela, a la izquierda, y el reflejo de Leonor intentando personificar a la condesa, a la derecha. El resultado es mucho más llamativo en la representación que en el texto, ya que en la primera ambas

parejas actúan a la vez y en el segundo los diálogos se ofrecen de forma alternativa, creando confusión. Desde la butaca, y gracias al juego escénico desarrollado por el director artístico, el público no necesita esforzarse en saber quién habla, sino solamente mirar y disfrutar el espectáculo. De este modo Medrano da vida a la obra de Caro y nos la ofrece llena de matices.

Los paralelismos actúan como un juego de espejos que reflejan las mismas reacciones en hombres y en mujeres. No son sólo las mujeres las cambiantes, las veletas, sino que también los hombres confiesen sus inconstancias en el amor:

<p>LEONOR: Muy fácil sois, don Juan; pues ¿sin gozarla pudisteis olvidarla?</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>Si os andáis a querer a las más bellas, iréis dejando aquéstras por aquéllas.</p> <p>JUAN: ¡Oíd, por vida vuestra!</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>LEONOR: Decid, don Juan, decid.</p> <p>JUAN: Oíd un poco:</p>	<p>LUDOVICO: ¿Qué decís de don Juan?</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>Pues yo sé que a don Juan se vio obligado vuestro amante cuidado.</p> <p>ESTELA: Negarlo engaño fuera; mas fue... escuchad.</p> <p>LUDOVICO: Decid.</p> <p>ESTELA: De esta manera: (182)</p>
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La protagonista fuerza a don Juan a confesar que amó a Leonor: “Ya lo confieso” (182). Acto seguido don Juan debe explicar su cambio de sentimientos y lo hace con una larga aclaración en la que compara a la primera amante con una estrella y al nuevo amor con el sol. Del mismo modo Estela tiene que aclarar que ya no siente nada por don Juan sino por Leonardo. Para ello recita unos versos de extensión parecida en los que equipara a su antiguo enamorado con la rosa y a su nueva pasión con el jazmín. Los argumentos utilizados para contrarrestar estos discursos son igualmente largos y recurren a las mismas metáforas. Al escucharlos, los espectadores captan esta resonancia.

Ana Caro no pierde el control de la obra en ningún momento. Sabe que está utilizando recursos ingeniosos y así nos lo comunica: “Metáfora curiosa/ ha sido”, “¡Sofístico argumento!”, “Fáciles paradojas” (183). Ella usa estos juegos literarios para su propio fin: no son sólo las mujeres las que engañan a los hombres atrayéndoles con sus miradas y sus afeites⁴, también ellos son engañadores. Don Juan burló el honor de Leonor en Sevilla y luego huyó a Flandes sin cumplir con su obligación para con ella. Del mismo modo, Ludovico maquina la manera de conseguir a Estela, si no enamorándola, engañándola:

LUDOVICO: Aunque tan mal me trata

tu amor, ingrata Estela,
mi engaño o mi cautela,
ya que no el adorarte,
en mis dichas tendrán la mayor parte (184).

Caro nos recuerda un tema muy barroco: no podemos confiar en las apariencias, nuestros sentidos nos engañan y las ropas, los gestos e incluso las palabras que oímos pueden ser fingidas. Por eso no podemos fiarnos ni de nuestra propia imagen en el espejo, ya que nos engañaría la vanidad:

JUAN: Vos sois discreta,
 y sabéis que adoraros
 es fuerza si al cristal queréis miraros.
LEONOR: Desengaños me ofrece, si ambiciosa
 tal vez estuvo en la pasión dudosa,
 la vanidad.
JUAN: Será cristal obscuro. (182)

Leonor es en este momento, situada detrás de la ventana e imaginando su rostro en el espejo, el símbolo de la feminidad, encerrada en esos “espacios transparentes” de los que nos hablaban Gilbert y Gubar. De hecho, la escena del balcón es la única en toda la obra (a excepción del breve momento final) en que la protagonista se muestra con traje de mujer. En el resto de la representación, sus vestimentas, su voz y sus acciones son masculinas. Gabriela Fernández-Coffey, la actriz que representó el papel de Leonor en esta actuación, hablaba de la dificultad que entrañó para ella cambiar su registro de voz

en esta escena. Recordemos que unos momentos antes, interpretando a Leonardo, se ha peleado a navajazos contra don Juan y Ludovico. En cuestión de segundos la actriz debe ponerse un vestido, un velo, recoger su abanico e intentar imitar una voz de mujer que ni siquiera debe ser la suya, sino la de Estela: “Fue un desafío. En los ensayos empecé como Leonor y luego tuve que buscar mi lado masculino, tuve que formar a Leonardo, pero en el proceso perdí a Leonor y eso es un poco lo que le pasa a ella, que se pierde” (*Taller With Actors*).

Caro, al igual que Leonor, ha tenido que utilizar la voz del hombre, su discurso y sus formas, sus vestiduras de comediante para hacerse oír. Su personaje principal, Leonardo, se muestra como hombre en todos los sentidos pero... no nos llevemos a engaño, en su interior, oculta, habita una mujer. También la obra que se presenta en escena sigue el patrón de las comedias de enredo del Siglo de Oro pero con las diferencias intencionalmente marcadas por el punto de vista femenino de su autora. Esta es la lectura que Hugo Medrano tomó a la hora de trasladar el texto a las tablas.

La escena del balcón que tanto gustó en la representación de *Valor, agravio y mujer* encierra mucho más que un simple juego escénico de luces y decorados. Es el momento en el que Leonor encuentra su lado femenino y el momento en el que consigue realmente vengarse de don Juan. Así como ella sufrió en sus carnes el rechazo de su amado, así don

Juan sufrirá también la negativa de su adorada Estela:

LEONOR: Pues perded la esperanza,
 que sólo os he llamado
 por dejaros, don Juan desengañado. (183)

Ana Caro defiende la igualdad de sexos en esta escena del balcón que Medrano interpreta creando un efecto doble: estereofónico y visual. Es un juego de voces y reflejos visuales que lleva al escenario de forma simultánea las imágenes que en el texto se describen de forma alternativa. La similitud en el contenido y longitud de los parlamentos y el cruce de palabras entre unos actores y otros mantiene ese eco retumbando en los oídos del espectador. Al mismo tiempo, la disposición de los decorados uno frente a otro y el juego de luces iluminando acá y allá consigue crear la ilusión óptica de esas imágenes reflejándose en uno y otro lado del escenario.

El resultado ofrece un cuadro en el que se rompen los espacios transparentes que hasta ahora mantenían encerrada a la mujer. Leonor ya no cae en el engaño del espejo, el cual se ha convertido ahora en un “cristal oscuro” (182). Más bien, la protagonista utiliza los símbolos femeninos como son el espejo, las sombras del balcón, o el abanico que cubre su rostro, para triunfar sobre el galán. Ya no hay territorios propiamente femeninos o masculinos. La diferencia entre el cuadro de Murillo y el de Goya es que el espacio del balcón se abre para que el hombre pueda entrar en él. Igual que Baudelaire escribe

su poema utilizando el mito femenino del balcón, Caro se atreve con una comedia reservada hasta el momento a escritores masculinos. Roto el cristal, deshecho el mito, *Valor, agravio y mujer... Strip-ping Don Juan* desnuda no sólo a don Juan, sino a hombres y mujeres por igual para que se miren libres de apariencias y se vean semejantes frente al espejo.

NOTAS

¹ Elizabeth Ordóñez explica claramente cómo este engaño sufrido por Estela forma parte del plan urdido por Leonor para vencer sobre don Juan:

Leonor displaces don Juan (her fickle lover) as the object of Estela's affections by wooing the "Rival" herself in the guise of the supposed Leonardo. When she plans to be otherwise occupied as the persistent inquisitor of her erstwhile lover, she arranges to have Ludovico pose as her disguised personage, Leonardo, in the wooing of Estela. Thus, as she prods and interrogates the slippery don Juan in the high style of courtroom drama, her gullible rival is being courted by a stand-in for an already counterfeit lover (10).

² Es la época en la que Washington Irvin, viajero inglés publica sus *Cuentos de la Alhambra* (1832), cuando el francés Prosper Mérimé escribe *Carmen* (1845) y cuando Georges Bizet lleva *Carmen* a la ópera de París (1873). Es también ahora cuando Espronceda escribe su *Don Juan Tenorio* (1844). En definitiva es aquí, en el siglo XIX, cuando se expande la visión romántica de España centrada en el tópico andaluz y en el mito del don Juan.

³ En la segunda escena del segundo acto Julieta aparece sola en el balcón, pero su aya la llama desde dentro hasta tres veces:

JULIET: [...] (*Nurse calls within*)

I hear some noise within; dear love, adieu!

Anon, good nurse! Sweet Montague, be true.

Stay but a little, I will come again.

Exit, above

[...]

Re-enter JULIET, above

[...]

NURSE: [Within] Madam!

JULIET: I come, anon.--But if thou mean'st not well,
I do beseech thee--

NURSE: [Within] Madam!

JULIET: By and by, I come:--

To cease thy suit, and leave me to my grief:

To-morrow will I send. (*Escena 2, Acto II*)

⁴ Como ejemplo de esta creencia tan extendida en el siglo XVII podemos leer las palabras de Francisco de Quevedo pone en boca del Desengaño:

¿Viste esa visión, que acostándose fea se hizo esta mañana hermosa ella a sí misma? ¿Y haces extremos grandes? Pues sábete que las mujeres lo primero que se visten en despertando es una cara, una garganta y unas manos, y luego las sayas. Todo cuanto en ella ves es tienda y no natural. (299)

Obras citadas y consultadas

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Interviews

CALDERÓN A RITMO DE CHARLESTÓN. ENTREVISTA CON FRANCISCO GARCÍA VICENTE

SUSAN PAUN DE GARCÍA
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No hay burlas con el amor no se monta con frecuencia. Las producciones de los últimos doce años se pueden contar en los dedos de una mano: la de la Compañía Manuel Canseco (Madrid, 1995), la de la Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico (1998), dirigida por Denis Rafter, una producción sevillana del Teatro de la Fuga (2005) bajo la dirección de José

Manuel Martí y el montaje de 2007 de la Escuela Superior de Arte Dramático de Murcia, dirigido por Francisco García Vicente. Este último fue recibido con entusiasmo en varios festivales de teatro, desde el XXXII Siglo de Oro Drama Festival en El Paso, Texas al Festival de Teatro Clásico de Almagro.

A pesar de sus más de treinta años de experiencia con el teatro clásico español, el público reunido en el Chamizal National Memorial Theater para la función de *No hay burlas con el amor*¹ la noche del 2 de marzo de 2007 comenzó la noche con una sorpresa al sonar un teléfono—de timbre a lo antiguo—en la oscuridad. ¿Un teléfono en una obra de Calderón de la Barca? Esta fue la primera señal de que se iba a ver una representación trasladada a otro mundo distinto al de Calderón y sus contemporáneos. Al subir las luces se veía un escenario que sugería una habitación elegante, con personajes cuyos atuendos, acciones y actitudes indicaban una comedia más de una película de los años 1930 que una comedia de los 1630. El teléfono sirvió como un aviso instantáneo del sistema de valores artísticos que se les esperaba a los espectadores. Los que habían leído las notas del programa estaban preparados para tal cambio:

Siempre resulta emocionante y enriquecedora la aventura de revisar a nuestros clásicos más destacados, para finalmente llegar a la conclusión de que éstos perduran en el tiempo, se adaptan a nuevas formas de escenificación y parecen

escritos para cualquier época. Sin duda se debe a su sólida estructura y a la universalización de sus temas, que nunca pasan de moda.

Prueba de ello es este nuevo espectáculo, producto del Taller de Teatro Clásico de nuestro centro, cuya traslación se centra en la sociedad y la música occidental del primer tercio del siglo XX.

Escrita por Calderón de la Barca hacia 1636 como *La crítica del amor*, y publicada muy poco después con su actual denominación, *No hay burlas con el amor* es una divertidísima comedia de enredo que gira en torno al siempre atractivo tema del amor, contemplado desde distintos puntos de vista. También es un alegato sobre el derecho de la mujer a recibir la misma educación que el hombre, en una sociedad todavía reticente a ello.

En el transcurso de la acción, damas y galanes navegan sobre un impredecible mar de amores, cuyo barco, capitaneado por la autoridad representada en la figura del padre, es tripulado de forma disparatada por los personajes más locos y simpáticos de la comedia: sus criados.

Todo, a ritmo de charlestón.

Aplaudido entusiastamente y comentado con gran interés en la mesa redonda que tuvo lugar a continuación de la función, este montaje fue una realización de Francisco García Vicente, director de la Escuela Superior de Arte Dramático (ESAD)² de Murcia, profesor de Espacio escénico, Taller de tea-

tro clásico y Prácticas de dirección. En una serie de conversaciones telefónicas e intercambios de correo electrónico, pude plantearle algunas preguntas sobre la producción, la compañía, su propia experiencia con el teatro y su acercamiento al teatro clásico en general, y a *No hay burlas* en particular, como se leerá a continuación.

SPG. ¿Cómo te metiste en el mundo del teatro? ¿Cómo comenzó tu interés en el teatro en general y en el teatro clásico en particular?

FGV. Mi relación con el mundo del teatro se remonta prácticamente a la infancia, colaborando como actor en pequeños montajes escolares, leyendo desde niño los grandes textos que caían en mis manos y asistiendo como espectador a todo cuanto podía. En este sentido conviene resaltar la importancia que tiene para un niño o un adolescente contar con uno o varios profesores que amen el teatro y quieran transmitirlo a sus alumnos. Éstos acabarán siendo como mínimo grandes espectadores.

Paralelamente, desde la infancia, fui adquiriendo conocimientos de Música y de Pintura (mis otras grandes pasiones). Curiosamente, cuando finalmente decidí dedicarme profesionalmente al teatro y en concreto a la Dirección escénica, me di cuenta de lo valioso que fue adquirir esos conocimientos y cómo luego he podido integrarlos en el conjunto de las diferentes puestas en escena. Si bien es cierto que empecé a dirigir teatro a los 18 años, la decisión final de querer hacer del teatro mi modo de vida

comenzó cuando acabé los estudios medios y decidí realizar los de grado superior en Arte Dramático. Para ello tuve que trasladarme desde mi pueblo natal, La Unión, a Murcia capital.

SPG. ¿Qué formación profesional tienes? Me interesaría saber qué escuelas, qué profesores y qué directores te formaron.

FGV. Soy licenciado en Artes Escénicas por la Escuela Superior de Arte Dramático de Murcia desde 1987. Además de los estudios reglados, propios de una carrera, fundé la compañía Cambalache Teatro en 1986 con la intención de crear un equipo de investigación con mis propios compañeros de carrera. La experiencia fue muy positiva, ya que además de trabajar sobre textos españoles, también se ahondó muchísimo en autores americanos como Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams o Sam Shepard.

También asistí a cuantos cursos y seminarios resultaran necesarios para complementar mis estudios, en materias de Interpretación, Dirección o Escenografía. Cabría destacar, quizás, los recibidos por Fernando Arrabal, Antonio Fava, Steve Nicholson o el gran escenógrafo Svoboda.

Al terminar mis estudios de Arte Dramático me trasladé a vivir a Madrid, donde trabajé durante varios años como actor en compañías profesionales junto a grandes figuras de la escena española y siempre con textos pertenecientes al teatro clásico español (*El príncipe constante* de Calderón o *Por-*

fiar hasta morir, de Lope, entre otros). También realicé intervenciones en cine y televisión.

En 1989 se me concedió una beca de la Universidad de Murcia y el gobierno regional de Murcia para colaborar en la puesta en escena de *Yerma*, de García Lorca, en la Universidad de Leeds (Gran Bretaña). La experiencia fue tan enriquecedora que solicité más tarde una beca especial al Ministerio de Cultura para realizar allí mismo estudios de Master of Arts en Dirección Escénica y me fue concedida en 1991. Una vez en Leeds, el Departamento de Español y Portugués me contrató como profesor de Teatro Español. También impartí clases en otros centros como el District College de Wakefield.

SPG. ¿Cuáles serían las influencias más importantes en tu modo de ser profesional?

FGV. Muchos han sido los profesores y profesionales dentro y fuera de España que han contribuido en mi formación, como piezas necesarias en la estructura que constituye mi modo de concebir el teatro profesionalmente, pero la rigurosidad en el trabajo y en general la manera de concebir el teatro que se produce en Gran Bretaña (en especial con los clásicos) fue determinante en mi formación. A ello hay que sumar los numerosos viajes a Londres para ver teatro y en especial el contacto, desde sus comienzos, con una compañía llamada Cheek by Jowl. Esta compañía y su director, Declan Donnellan, son hoy día uno de los mejores referentes—ya que realizan su trabajo por todo el mundo—de cómo hacer

llegar al público de nuestros días los grandes clásicos universales. En ese sentido, los objetivos a alcanzar en una puesta en escena y los caminos para conseguirlos son bastante similares.

SPG. Como parte de tu larga experiencia con el teatro clásico habrás tenido que escoger las obras que se vayan a representar. ¿Hay unos textos clásicos que son más fáciles de representar que otros? ¿Cuáles son los que pueden “conectar” con el público moderno?

FGV. Nosotros elegimos siempre textos que puedan llegar con facilidad al público de nuestros días por tratarse de comedias de gran calidad literaria, que no solo diviertan o emocionen, sino que además traten temas que aún siguen preocupando al ser humano, con un claro mensaje positivista y formativo. Nuestros repartos habitualmente no sobrepasan los diez o doce actores. Esto facilita mucho el poder viajar con el montaje y que el proceso creativo y vivencial sea todo lo intenso que debe ser.

SPG. ¿Es siempre necesario alterar el texto literario? ¿Cortar? ¿Añadir? ¿Cómo se puede superar la dificultad lingüística que presenta un texto antiguo?

FGV. Indudablemente, sí. Un texto por el que han pasado los años, por magnífico que sea, fue concebido para una sociedad y con un lenguaje que no encajan del todo en nuestro mundo contemporáneo. Para poder representarlo es necesario sumergirse en un proceso difícil pero apasionado que con-

siste en conocer al autor, su vida, su obra y el texto objeto de estudio, siempre desde el máximo respeto. La intervención sobre el texto consiste en cuatro pasos. Primero, hay que eliminar pasajes repetitivos innecesarios para el público actual. Aunque comprensibles en el público de origen—que necesitaba oír a los personajes decir qué iban a hacer, después ver cómo se hacía y a continuación contar cómo se había hecho—para el público de hoy, con otra formación y sentido del ritmo ante un espectáculo, basta con representar el momento en el que se está haciendo.

Luego hay que sustituir determinadas palabras, absolutamente incomprensibles, por otras con el mismo significado y respetando el número de sílabas y la rima original, para que sean comprendidas por la audiencia.

Cuando la acción se traslada a una época distinta a la original, determinados elementos, especialmente de utilería, deben ser cambiados por otros más contemporáneos. Por ejemplo, en el texto original de *No hay burlas con el amor* la criada tira al suelo un “candelero” para disimular otro ruido. Al trasladar la acción al siglo XX, con la existencia de la luz eléctrica, ya no tenía sentido utilizar dicho elemento, por lo que decidí cambiarlo por “costure-ro.” Dicho recurso también se aprovechó para iniciar la escena con las damas bordando.

Finalmente, en algunos casos es necesario cambiar la estructura de los versos originales para

adaptarlos a una música determinada y convertirlos así en letra de canciones.

SPG. ¿Cuál es tu filosofía de acercamiento a un texto clásico? ¿Cómo preparas a la compañía (actores, escenógrafos, técnicos, etc.)?

FGV. El proceso para llegar a concebir una puesta en escena, en mi caso, ocupa entre seis y nueve meses, antes del ponerme en contacto con todo el equipo. Comienzo con una lectura o relectura de todos aquellos textos clásicos que puedan encajar en el tipo de obra que voy buscando (comedia, pocos personajes, que pueda ser llevada a otra época, etc.). Una vez elegido el texto comienza el trabajo de investigación sobre el mismo, su autor y la lectura de otras de sus obras. Se comienza a idear la puesta en escena de dicho texto, pensando en que todos los elementos estéticos y estilísticos que intervienen en ella (versión, escenografía, vestuario, iluminación, forma de interpretar, etc.) vayan en consonancia. Todo esto culmina en la creación de la versión definitiva, que habitualmente está enfocada hacia su futura puesta en escena, ya predeterminada.

Una vez finalizado el trabajo de investigación y concepción en solitario, se da paso a las audiciones (casting) donde todos aquellos alumnos que lo deseen pueden optar a interpretar un papel. También se eligen a los demás colaboradores que van a intervenir en el espectáculo. Elegido todo el equipo comienzan los trabajos de mesa donde el director intenta transmitir la concepción del espectáculo, es

decir, hacerles partícipes de todo aquel trabajo previo, para que lo asimilen como suyo, se apasionen con él. Así comienzan, por un lado los ensayos y por otro la creación de la escenografía, diseño de iluminación, vestuario, utilería y demás. Esta segunda fase puede tener una duración de tres meses.

SPG. ¿Por qué escogiste *No hay burlas con el amor*? ¿Qué contraste en esta obra que te llegó a convencer que sería bien recibida por el público?

FGV. Los anteriores montajes del Taller fueron *La verdad sospechosa*, de Juan Ruiz de Alarcón (2004) y *Don Gil de las calzas verdes*, de Tirso de Molina (2005). Ambas fueron un gran éxito de público y crítica, con una estética tradicional que nos recordaba al siglo XVII. Al afrontar un nuevo montaje y un nuevo autor, yo buscaba una pieza que me permitiera trasladar la acción al primer tercio del siglo XX, ya que creo que es el último período de nuestra era donde aún estaban muy diferenciadas las clases sociales (antes de la segunda guerra mundial), lo que permitía que no hubiera demasiadas anacronías con un texto clásico. Pero también buscaba un texto que permitiera la presencia de la música que nos recordara las películas musicales del Hollywood de los años treinta y donde los actores pudieran cantar y bailar. Complicado, ¿verdad?

Tras la lectura de una veintena de textos de Lope de Vega, Rojas Zorrilla y Calderón, que no me terminaban de convencer, fue a parar a mis manos este libreto que me pareció mágico desde el primer

momento. Y allí estaba todo lo que yo deseaba encontrar. Ya en la primera lectura mi mente visionaba a los personajes vestidos de frac o portando un bastón en vez de una espada. También me fascinó por la marginación que su personaje femenino principal, Beatriz, padecía simplemente por querer ser culta como los hombres de la época, y era muy atractivo hablar de ello. Pero sobre todo me subyugó la destreza de Calderón para idear divertidísimas situaciones de enredo y cómo finalmente el amor lo puede todo.



SPG. ¿Cómo llegaste a este concepto de la representación? Por ejemplo, lo del teléfono...

FGV. Es imprescindible que un director sepa utilizar los signos adecuados que luego van a ser

lanzados desde el escenario hacia el espectador. Por ejemplo, en el inicio de la obra había que dejar claro al público que la obra se trasladaba a la época del Charlestón y Cole Porter, antes incluso de que el escenario se iluminara. En el texto original el autor no nos dice qué están haciendo los personajes al comienzo de la obra, pero dado el carácter donjuanesco de don Alonso y la situación de torpeza del criado provocada por su enamoramiento, calculé que si en el silencio del comienzo y sobre el oscuro absoluto del escenario se oía el sonido de un teléfono antiguo, algo se iba a remover en el interior del espectador que le situaría en la época que deseábamos. Cuando a continuación suena una música de Charlestón, se ilumina el escenario y vemos al amo hablando por teléfono (probablemente con alguno de sus muchos romances) y al criado vistiéndole con gran torpeza sobre un fondo escenográfico de clara inspiración Art Decó, ya habríamos emitido suficientes datos como para que el público se situara en una época determinada, antes incluso de que los personajes comiencen a hablar. Fascinante, ¿no?

Pues estos principios utilizados al inicio de la pieza sirven de botón de muestra, ya que se han aplicado al resto del montaje, en el intento de que todo o casi todo sea comprendido por el espectador. Es muy interesante cuando después de la representación algunos espectadores quedan contentos con lo visto y comentan que ya nunca podrán imaginar ese texto de Calderón en ninguna otra época, o

aquellos que llegan a dudar si el texto representado está realmente escrito en el siglo XVII. Cuando uno oye estos y otros comentarios parecidos, no puede evitar pensar: ¡Misión cumplida!

SPG. ¿Hubo algún problema que superar? ¿Alguna anécdota?

FGV. La vivencia ha sido de tal magnitud que sería imposible recordar aquí cada uno de los problemas, dudas y anécdotas que se han producido. Pero apuntaré algunas.

Al principio, para algunos actores-alumnos era la primera vez que actuaban en verso, con la dificultad que ello implica. Otros no habían cantado o bailado en su vida y tuvieron muchas dudas sobre si serían capaces de interpretar los papeles con la dignidad que requerían. La confianza en el proyecto y el trabajo diario les hicieron cambiar de opinión y ahora se ríen al recordar aquellos momentos.

Hubo un especialista teatral en el estreno en New York que comentaba lo costosísimo que debía resultar un espectáculo de estas características. Habría que decir, por imposible que parezca, que el coste total de la producción ha sido prácticamente de cero. La escenografía, el vestuario, la utilería, el cartel, etc. han sido cedidos o contruidos por el equipo (actores y técnicos) y sus colaboradores sin que se haya producido lucro personal alguno. Para todo hemos agudizado el ingenio y empleado el poco tiempo extra del que disponíamos.

En muchos lugares hay gente que no cree que en la obra se cante en directo, quizás provocado por la calidad vocal de algunos de sus intérpretes. Y a veces resulta casi imposible convencerles.

Después de conseguir un teléfono auténtico de época, hubo que construir uno idéntico de madera a toda prisa, para poder realizar la gira por América, ya que los componentes electrónicos del original hubieran causado problemas en los controles de seguridad de los aeropuertos.

Al tratarse de un espectáculo que ha superado todas las expectativas, para mí ha resultado entrañable contemplar las reacciones de los alumnos cuando se han emocionado en el saludo, por la respuesta del público y la duración del mismo. También cuando han tenido que firmar autógrafos durante más de media hora. O cuando muchos espectadores han creído que eran actores famosos y totalmente profesionales, como ocurrió en el estreno en Madrid. Y, ¿cómo no?, cuando les han alabado en la forma de decir el verso.

Por último, recordar que hay espectadores que eran auténticos desconocidos y que ven la representación varias veces, desplazándose a los distintos lugares donde actuamos. En ocasiones repiten fragmentos de la obra que se saben de memoria. Esto también nos ocurrió en México, donde una chica y un chico nos siguió a varias ciudades y a veces nos ayudaban en el montaje.



SPG. Desde luego, la reacción del público en el Chamizal fue entusiasta. ¿Se ha recibido igual de bien en España? ¿Notas alguna diferencia entre los públicos diferentes?

FGV. Este montaje ha tenido, en general, muy buena acogida. La reacción de público y crítica nos ha sorprendido muy gratamente. En muy pocos meses hemos actuado en distintos lugares en España y realizado la gira por Estados Unidos y México. En grandes teatros y pequeñas salas, para cerca de tres mil personas y en otros donde no se han rebasado los cincuenta, pequeños pueblos y grandes ciudades. Aunque cada público es distinto, la mayoría suele coincidir en decir que han disfrutado con la historia, la trama, las canciones, los bailes, etc., y se suelen preguntar cómo es posible que un clásico, que su-

puestamente debería ser difícil de comprender, les haya podido llegar a cautivar.

Sin embargo, la reacción del público americano hacia nuestro trabajo nos ha desbordado. Así ha sucedido con los últimos montajes y muy especialmente con *No hay burlas con el amor*. En América, la audiencia es más efusiva a la hora de mostrar sus sentimientos, unido a que los clásicos conservan expresiones que comprenden mejor que el público europeo y están más capacitados para sentarse en una butaca y dejarse atrapar por una historia y emocionarse con ella. Me parece fantástico y siempre estaré agradecido por ello. Es el mejor de los públicos.



SPG. ¿Qué preparas para el año que viene?

FGV. Este año, el texto elegido para el nuevo montaje del Taller de Teatro Clásico es *El desdén, con el desdén*, de Agustín Moreto. Se trata de una divertidísima comedia que transcurre en el jardín de Palacio durante la celebración del Carnaval en Barcelona. El reparto estará compuesto por nueve actores que intentarán deleitar al público con sus enredos amorosos, alternando bailes y canciones en directo. Su estreno será en enero de 2008.

La línea de trabajo va a ser similar a la empleada en el montaje anterior, y para ello volveremos a requerir la colaboración del Conservatorio Superior de Música y el Conservatorio profesional de Danza de Murcia.

SPG. ¿Tienes un “sueño” teatral que te gustaría realizar?

FGV. Siempre existen sueños teatrales por cumplir, a la vez que se van cumpliendo otros. En eso consiste esta maravillosa profesión: en emplear toda la vida en realizar nuevos sueños. En teatro clásico, algunos de ellos son *El desdén, con el desdén*, de Moreto, *El caballero de Olmedo*, de Lope de Vega o *La vida es sueño*, de Calderón.

SPG. ¡Espero que tengamos la ocasión de verlos realizados! Muchas gracias por compartir tus experiencias con los lectores de *Comedia Performance*.

FGV. Ha sido un placer.

NO HAY BURLAS CON EL AMOR de Calderón de la Barca.
REPARTO (por orden de intervención)

Don ALONSO de Luna, galán.....ANTONIO BLAYA
MOSCATEL, criado..... FRANCISCO PARDO
Don JUAN, galán..... RICARDO ARQUEROS
Doña LEONOR, dama..... LUCÍA PADILLA
INÉS, criada.....NEILA DIAZ
Doña BEATRIZ, dama..... JERUSA ARIAS
Don PEDRO, padre de las damas.....MIGUEL CEGARRA
FIGURINES..... ASENSIO SAEZ
VESTUARIO.....MARÍA VICENTE
AHORA TEATRO
PRODUCCIONES SWING
ARREGLOS MUSICALES..... RAFAEL PÁRRAGA
ILUMINACIÓN.....LUISMA SORIANO
FOTOGRAFÍA.....JUAN CARLOS ALBA
ALBERTO FOTÓGRAFO
CARTEL.....DANIEL ZURITA
COREOGRAFÍA.....ANTONIO GONZALVEZ
ASESORÍA VERSO.....ANTONIO DE BÉJAR
ASESORÍA VOCAL.....GLORIA SÁNCHEZ
ASESORÍA MAQUILLAJE.....ANA VIVANCOS
ASESORÍA INDUMENTARIA.....CARMEN ORENES
PRODUCCIÓN.....JUAN ÁNGEL SERRANO MASEGOSO
AYUDANTES DE DIRECCIÓN.....PEDRO ALBALADEJO
VICENTE DOMINGUEZ
JORGE FULLANA
ALEJANDRO SERRA
REGIDURÍA.....PEPA CASTILLO
ESPACIO ESCÉNICO, VERSIÓN
Y DIRECCIÓN.....FRANCISCO GARCÍA VICENTE

NOTES

¹ El reparto de la producción se ofrece al final de la entrevista.

² La Escuela Superior de Arte Dramático de Murcia es uno de los centros oficiales de España más destacados en la formación de actores y directores escénicos, con una antigüedad casi centenaria. Muchas son las producciones teatrales que se han creado a lo largo de su historia, tanto de autores nacionales como extranjeros, clásicos y contemporáneos. ESAD se ha dado a conocer en los últimos años, dentro y fuera de España, por el especial acento puesto en los autores del Siglo de Oro Español, participando en lugares y eventos como el Ciclo de Teatro Clásico de Toledo, el Festival Internacional de Teatro de San Javier, el Festival Internacional de Teatro Clásico de Almagro, el Festival Internacional de Teatro Clásico de Alcántara, el Workshop Theatre de la Universidad de Leeds, el Teatro de Repertorio Español de Nueva York y el Siglo de Oro Drama Festival, de El Paso, con giras por México. Algunas de las producciones más destacadas han sido: *La discreta enamorada*, de Lope de Vega, *Navidad en casa Cupiello*, de Eduardo de Filippo, *Fuenteovejuna*, de Lope de Vega, *La hermosa fea*, de Lope de Vega, *Los carcas*, de Carlo Goldoni, *La verdad sospechosa*, de Ruiz de Alarcón, *Don Gil de las calzas verdes*, de Tirso de Molina y *No hay burlas con el amor*, de Calderón de la Barca.

THE LANDSCAPES OF LOVE IN VALOR, AGRAVIO Y MUJER. AN INTERVIEW WITH HUGO MEDRANO

MARYRICA ORTIZ LOTTMAN
UNC-Charlotte



The primacy of gardens and landscapes is underscored in the opening scene of *Valor, agravio y mujer*, when a maiden lost in the wilderness announces that she is seeking the Count of “Belflor,” the personification of a flower (91).¹ Elsewhere, Ana Caro’s protagonist, the jilted Leonor, negotiates a complex geography that stretches across in-

ternational borders. In the 2006 production of this *comedia* at Washington, D.C.'s GALA Theatre, each element of the staging was aimed at the overarching metaphor of landscape. We know that greenery and vegetation traditionally represent spring, erotic desire, and the renewal of life, as well as the Christian virtue of hope. In Caro's text, gardens repeatedly function as precincts that should be dedicated to peace and romantic union, but they are instead threatened with violent destruction, as when the prince cries, "¡Espadas en el terrero!" (1506).

Director Hugo Medrano worked with the set designer Elizabeth Jenkins McFadden to find a single, stable landscape that could suggest a rich variety of scenes, including the potential for forests, mountains, and bodies of water. Their reproduction of the Romantic painting "Paisaje de la ribera de Manzanares" (1857) by Carlos de Haes,² coincided with Medrano's creative decision to set the work in the 1850s. Haes's image was digitally widened, and figures in the foreground and background were removed. The road and bridge in the painting very appropriately suggested travel, for the cross-dressing Leonor has traversed international borders in order to avenge her jilting at the hands of Don Juan. Medrano also used this landscape as the context for the multiple garden scenes evoked in Caro's verses. Though the garden identified as the *terrero* historically occupied the space in front of the

house,³ Medrano imaginatively placed it at back of the palace.

MOL: Yo quisiera entender mejor los motivos del jardín y paisaje en su producción de *Valor, agravio y mujer*.

HM: Bueno, hay muchas escenas que no están descritas, en términos de la ocasión, en términos de dónde transcurren. Ni hay ninguna ayuda por parte de la escritora, excepto al principio y por allí cuando dice “en el terrero.” Pero hay paisajes, hay escenas donde transcurren siempre afuera. Entonces, tratando de buscar una metáfora para la escenografía, decidimos que efectivamente era el paisaje, era la vegetación, los árboles. Y de alguna manera buscamos algo que incluyera todo acerca de los diferentes ocasiones, para evitar, tú sabes, la escenografía clásica de los arbolitos parados o lo que fuera. Entonces decidimos crear un paisaje estable, con diferentes partes del set que se desprenden para indicar una roca o los balcones.

MOL: Y en esta producción la acción ocurre en el siglo diecinueve.

HM: La obra tiene un romanticismo a pesar de ser del Siglo de Oro. Me seguían, me atraían estas imágenes exteriores, del paisaje, de los personajes hablando entre plantas, en senderos que se pierden, en unas grandes entradas hacia la casa, hacia el palacio. Pero siempre eran imágenes del exterior que me venían por esa obra. Entonces decidimos crear

esa, digamos, metáfora verde, esa metáfora del paisaje total. E inclusive buscamos un buen pintor de la época romántica, y justamente un flamenco que había estudiado en España: Carlos de Haes.

Su cuadro “Paisaje de la ribera de Manzanares” trae un poco ese tipo de paisaje de los Países Bajos. En el escenario, ese paisaje está hecho muy a propósito, con diferentes tonos, para que con ciertas luces fuera mucho más cálido. Y en otros momentos se vuelve más tétrico, como cuando estamos en la parte del terrero en que ocurre el duelo y otras partes del jardín también que requieren cierta atmósfera tétrica, de suspenso. Ana Caro es muy explícita cuando describe el exterior, la montaña, que es la única gran descripción que hace del set. Por el resto no hay descripción, básicamente.



MOL: En la primera escena del texto original, los actores bajan de dos plataformas que represen-

tan montañas o rocas. Pero en la producción del Teatro GALA, hay montañas pintadas en el trasfondo paisajista, y Don Juan salta al escenario desde una plataforma que se extiende desde el trasfondo durante esta primera escena tan impresionante.

HM: Claro. Ese tipo de escenografía tan elaborada que plantea la autora Ana Caro es muy, no inusual, pero sí es para autores que podían ser representados. Seguramente ella tendría mucha influencia en las cortes, con muy buenas amistades para lograr que se hiciera esa escenografía tan sofisticada, supongo. Es lo único que describe tan perfectamente, como dice, “Yo quiero que sea exactamente así.”

MOL: Hay mucha variedad en el fondo paisajista. Son cuatro tableros y cada tablero se aleja un poco más del público para crear una sensación de perspectiva, de distancias. Me parece que poca acción ocurre dentro del palacio.

HM: Es interesante que la obra, por lo menos como lo planteé, tiene nada más que un solo interior. Y que tampoco está indicado en la obra por la autora, sino que nos damos cuenta porque indica, bueno, “Ve por esa habitación.” Además una de las personas dice “Ésta es la habitación de Don Juan.” Y nosotros decimos, “¡Ay, estamos adentro! ¡Qué bueno! ¡Hay que pensar que estamos adentro ahora!” [*Medrano aplaude.*] Entonces tuvimos que hacer esos cambios que has observado en la escenografía. En la pintura del paisaje se abren dos puer-

tas para crear un paisaje hacia el interior, que resultó bastante interesante.

MOL: Me parece que hay varias escenas de jardín y que cada escena ocurre a una hora distinta. Creo que la primera ocurre por una mañana de sol.

HM: En la parte donde se juega al croquet y los arcos, eso es en el afternoon y luego en la misma locación va cambiando el tiempo. Viene ya el atardecer, el anochecer. Pasan muchísimas horas en esta misma escena.

MOL: ¿Podiera Ud. hablarme de los muebles tan curiosos que se usan? Son cubos pintados para representar partes de la tierra, en close-up, con imágenes de hierbas, lodo y unas piedrecitas. Es como si cada uno estuviera envuelto en un trozo sacado del fondo paisajista. ¿Por qué usar muebles pintados de esa manera?

HM: Nosotros, con la diseñadora, notamos que la vegetación y el paisaje irrumpen en las casas también. Traer un mueble auténtico de la época hubiera roto completamente con la atmósfera. Y además pensamos que se habla tanto de verde, tanto de exteriores en la obra, que la gente es de exteriores, es de campo, es de salones muy grandes, abiertos, de terrazas, ¿no? Entonces es como si la vegetación entrara en las casas.

MOL: En una de las escenas de jardín, además de los cubos, hay una mesa gruesa y redonda que está pintada, igual que los cubos, como si fuera de tierra. Hay frutas en un recipiente de cristal y nos

hacen pensar un poco en los productos de la tierra. Hay una jarra (quizás de agua) encima de una bandeja redonda, y todo está encima de esta mesa redonda. Para mí, el conjunto sugiere una fuente o piscina redonda. Y claro, sin el agua no hay jardín. Pero también tenemos el fondo paisajista, que sí contiene mucha agua. Hay un camino, un puente y un riachuelo que se une al río.

HM: Sí. Justamente las partes del paisaje más downstage eran las partes donde más se veían las aguas. El agua estaba más cercana a los personajes. Y un poco la música también tiene ese tipo de juego muy delicado de cantarina.

MOL: En la poesía del Siglo de Oro muchas veces hablan de la música de la fuente.

HM: De alguna manera también los costumes tienen mucho que ver con esa cuestión de exterior. Son muy al aire, excepto al principio y al final. El resto son trajes muy de exterior, de verano, de colores y abiertos.

MOL: A veces los colores del fondo aparecen en los trajes. Por ejemplo, los vestidos.

HM: Sí, muchos de ellos tenían florcillas que parecían sacadas de la escenografía.

MOL: Para Ud., ¿qué representaba el jardín al lado del bosque y el palacio?

HM: Yo a los salones no les di importancia. La autora los utiliza para exponer los conflictos, pero nada más y el desarrollo ocurre en los jardines y en los bosques. El jardín es mucho más social que

el bosque, es menos salvaje, es más cercado, más limitado. Entonces es más formal y para situaciones de amor, situaciones sociales y para resolver conflictos. Y el bosque es para cosas más peligrosas, más audaces, más de vida y muerte. Por eso las escenas en el bosque son generalmente las que tienen que ver con el duelo. Hay dos duelos, uno por mal y el otro que realmente lo hacen de pasión, apasionadamente. Ese otro transcurre en el bosque.

MOL: Para Ud., ¿tienen significado especial los nombres Flora y Tomillo?

HM: Nosotros decíamos, “Son dos nombres vegetarianos.” Son elementos de naturaleza, de exteriores. Son dos personajes muy tierra, de mucha energía, de mucha vitalidad.

MOL: La autora usará estos personajes cómicos para enfatizar el tema de las plantas, quizás, puesto que en la comedia estos tipos pueden resaltar algún motivo.

HM: Flora y Tomillo son los que hablan con doble intención, muy sexuales. Tal vez eso tenga que ver con la fortaleza de la vegetación y la naturaleza.

MOL: Me gustó mucho como Ud. interpretó la obra en cuanto a usar los juegos. Me gustaría que hablara sobre el uso del croquet y el tiro de arco.

HM: Bueno, tiene mucho que ver con el exterior y la naturaleza. El juego del arco ocurre justamente donde tiran a un árbol donde está el target. Están rodeados de la naturaleza. Aunque no se ven

matando animales, pues tampoco lo hacían para matar sino por deporte, pero sí nos trae de ciervos saltando, de animales salvajes. Es toda una imagen romántica que yo creo que ayuda a crear más y más ese romanticismo del amor, del abandono. Tiene mucho que ver también con las heridas de amor de que habla mucho Ana Caro.

MOL: En esa escena la escenografía hace un contraste muy útil entre los hombres y las mujeres. Ellas están sentadas alrededor de una figura proyectada desde arriba, y este motivo se parece mucho a una flor abierta. El centro redondo de ella pudiera ser el blanco del juego de arcos. Pero los hombres tiran sus flechas no hacia las mujeres sino en dirección contraria, y de hecho no tienen éxito amoroso en esta escena. ¡Qué bien funcionan los juegos!

HM: Y el juego de croquet es porque están discutiendo las cosas casi como de negocios. Están mezclando el amor con la conveniencia en esa escena. Entonces el ruido de los golpes ocurre siempre después de una afirmación. Estela se dice, “Sí, pero todavía no sé si voy o no decirle a Don Juan que me gusta.” Luego hace, *¡Pop!* Es una afirmación. No es nada en el aire. Es bien seguro. Y mi impresión es que el amor es como el juego de croquet—trata de quién se acerca, quién puede avanzar, quién no puede avanzar más. Y también ocurre al exterior. Me iba perfectamente los dos, digamos, significados.

MOL: Noté que cada arco o wicket llevaba una cinta verde, la cual me hizo pensar en el listón verde

de *El caballero de Olmedo*, creando una resonancia muy amorosa.

HM: Al principio los teníamos allí tan solitos, los arcos. Y yo dije, “Tiene que ser más enfático. No puede ser tan duro, tan solitario, eso.” Y les pusimos esos ribbons.

MOL: Había una figura proyectada encima del escenario en otros momentos también, por ejemplo, antes del inicio de la obra y también durante las escenas de noche. ¿Pudiera hablar de esas figuras?

HM: Esas figuras lo que figuraban era nada más que una especie de ilustraciones sacadas de un escudo español. Además jugaban para crear una comunicación entre la bóveda de nuestro teatro junto con el piso para unificar todo, para incluir la bóveda que también tiene un ornamento barroco. Generalmente en las otras producciones en GALA, nosotros intentamos de borrarla para hacerla desaparecer en cuanto empieza la obra. Pero esta vez hicimos lo contrario. Es un dibujo bastante barroco allá en el centro del escenario. Y ocurre justamente en los momentos del duelo y de los monólogos del honor de Don Juan. No sé si eso lo ha observado mucha gente porque es un poco medio sofisticado, ¿no?, para buscarlo. [*Medrano se ríe.*]

MOL: Para mí, ese diseño proyectado me hizo pensar en las viñas y hojas. Además, me pintó un enredo, unos engaños.

HM: Sí, sí. Las luces llevan muchas hojas y sombras porque teníamos que jugar con las sombras.

Muchos monólogos (que se suponen que están detrás de un árbol o en lo oscuro) son monólogos largos donde los otros personajes siguen estando en escena. Pues se hacía bastante difícil. Entonces los justificamos con el tipo de las luces así, todas con sombras y hojas que permitían un poco más de convite.

MOL: ¿Qué significa el hecho de que un duelo ocurre en el jardín? Porque el jardín debe ser un espacio de amor.

HM: Es un espacio, digamos, sagrado—sagrado en el sentido de que no puede correr sangre, no pueden levantarse la voz con maldiciones. En este sentido es más puro por ser jardín. Siempre un jardín está cercado de manera que no puede entrar lo demasiado brutalmente terrenal. Sobre todo porque es mucho más romántico, mucho más donde las picardías pueden ocurrir, sin llegar a escenas muy exageradas.

El jardín donde Leonor y Don Juan se van a dar muerte no es el mismo donde hicieron el duelo anterior. El donde se van a matar tiene un nombre muy gracioso, “los jardines de Armindo” (2311). Ese jardín es el último, y es completamente independiente del resto de la obra y es en los alrededores del palacio.

MOL: Allí es donde se juntan los cubos, que antes eran sillas, pero ahora forman bancos, queriendo decir, me imagino, que va a triunfar el amor,

la armonía. ¿Se puede pensar en el jardín como un espacio intermedio, entre el bosque y el palacio?

HM: Sí, por supuesto. Por eso interesa bastante la escena de los dos balcones porque esa misma conversación pudiera haber sido una conversación de salón, puesto que es una declaración de amor.

MOL: En esta escena estamos de noche y nos encontramos dentro de la tradición europea de representar una escena de amor en un jardín. ¿Tiene mucha importancia todo el diálogo entre Estela y Ludovico sobre el jazmín y la rosa? (1715-33; 1759-82; 1798-99).

HM: Sí, sí. La diferencia entre uno y otro y las cualidades con que adorna a cada uno. Son principios muy barrocos. Las flores nunca son independientes porque pertenecen a un paisaje. Es como si sacaran del mundo donde están—una metáfora de los sentimientos humanos—al sacar esas flores del paisaje de la vida.

MOL: Me interesó el traje que lleva Leonor cuando está vestida de mujer en el balcón.

HM: Tiene vestido blanco puro como de novia, pero tiene el velo negro de encaje, como está abandonada.

MOL: El diseño del encaje negro cae sobre esa tela tan blanca y hace un dibujo que nos sugiere las hojas y viñas. Y hacen lo mismo las sombras creadas por este encaje. Entonces el encaje funciona como esos motivos proyectados sobre el escenario y la noche cambia nuestra percepción de la realidad.

HM: La luz hace reconocer las cosas. Nos hace más conscientes, más comprometidos. En la oscuridad no vemos. Entonces nos hace más cómplices, nos hace más cínicos, y, de alguna manera, más libres para jugar las emociones, para enseñarse a uno mismo.

MOL: La noche es como un disfraz.

HM: Sí. Nos permite decir las cosas bajo la ayuda del disfraz.

MOL: Leonor ya lleva disfraz y ahora tiene otro.

HM: ¡El cual utiliza! Ella se hace pasar por Estela. Estela ha citado a Leonardo en el terrero, que es donde dan los dos balcones. Es muy interesante porque el terrero, yo lo imagino un poco como al fondo de la casa. El jardín, yo lo imagino más en el frente de la casa. Son jardines que son casi versallescos, que se van, salen, salen, se expanden y luego están los bosques ya directamente.

El terrero, yo lo imagino como la parte de atrás de la casa, al fondo, donde los personajes están menos expuestos al exterior. Es mucho más íntimo el terrero que un jardín como esos grandes que tienen diferentes diseños.

MOL: Hablamos de los cuadros o parterres.

HM: Y unas partes tienen asientos y algo de intimidad. Hay otras áreas que son mucho más abiertas, de flores, y otras son de estatuas. Aquí detrás de la casa básicamente son jardines plain con los balcones que se ven. Hay como mucho más respec-

to al hablarse en el terrero, más cuidado de no hablar muy fuerte, de no reírse porque pueden ser escuchados por la mucama, o por la ama de compañía de Estela, o por quien puede andar dentro de la casa. Es mucho más cuidadoso el tratamiento de los personajes. Y eso nos permitía de que los personajes pudieran estar cerca como están los balcones. Los personajes no se pueden ver. No saben que los otros están allí. Es bien cuidadoso lo que hemos hecho. Por eso está muy cerrado cada balcón y están muy cerrados los movimientos de los actores. Están bien cortos, bien seleccionados para que no se acerquen entre ellos. Y la oscuridad es lo que los permite esconderse de alguna manera, no verse.

MOL: En la escena de balcón, donde sale Leonor vestida de mujer, Uds. usaron un balcón que tiene forma de torre redonda. ¿Hay algún motivo por diseñar esto?

HM: La autora iba a hacer un rectángulo sólido, pero lo hicimos más bien como torre por el hecho de hacerla inalcanzable. Leonor es inalcanzable, es inalcanzable por Estela, es inalcanzable por Don Juan, es inalcanzable por su hermano también.

MOL: No sé si en el texto habrá una equivalencia entre el hecho de que ella aparece desde un aposento no usado y que también viene desde fuera del país, y además desde un desierto montañoso. Ella está dentro de un aposento desierto y viene del desierto. ¿Hay un paralelismo entre estas situaciones?

HM: Yo noté la cuestión. Además está explícito. Se dice “un aposento no utilizado.” Me parecía muy interesante, la imagen esa. Y por cierto cuando se abre la ventana, se ve que esa parte interior también es paisaje. Lo íbamos a hacer como de un aposento, pero dijimos que no. Si es aposento va a ser como civilizado, pero ella no tiene casa dentro de la obra. Pertenece al paisaje. Por eso el aposento está pintado por dentro también como el mismo paisaje.

NOTES

¹ “Velflor” (the term used in Lola Luna’s edition) is probably a corruption of “Belflor,” as in the noble title of Diana, “contesa de Belflor” in Lope de Vega’s *El perro del hortelano*. This title also appears in other *comedias*. With the exception of this word, all quotations from Ana Caro’s text are found in Lola Luna’s critical edition of *Valor, agravio y mujer* (Castalia, 1993).

² Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, Madrid. Other paintings by Haes are housed in the Prado and major Spanish museums.

³ “[...] a kind of terrace where a gentleman could court a lady in front of her house from street level” (Bárbara Mujica, “Women Directing Women: Ana Caro’s *Valor, agravio y mujer* as Performance Text.” *Engendering the Early Modern Stage: Women Playwrights in the Spanish Empire*. Valerie Hegstrom and Amy R Williamsen, eds. [New Orleans: UP of the South, 1999], pp.19-50. Note appears on p. 39. See also the *Diccionario de Autoridades*.

**AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. KEITH FOWLER
AND GLENN ODOM OF UCI'S
PRODUCTION OF *LA CELESTINA*: 'IF ONLY
WE HAD USED THAT STUPID GIRDLE!'**

BONNIE GASIOR
CSU, Long Beach



Calisto and Melibea

The Department of Drama at the University of California, Irvine recently completed a successful run (November 9-11, 16-18, 2006) of Fernando de Rojas' *La Celestina*, based on the James Mabbe translation of 1631, at the Claire Trevor Theater. I had the fortune of sitting down to talk with both Keith Fowler (director) and Glenn Odom (drama-

turg) in Dr. Fowler's office on the UCI campus a week after attending the play on Saturday, November 10th.

Keith Fowler, a native of San Francisco, studied drama at San Francisco State University and was a graduate student at the Shakespeare Institute in England in 1961. Fowler continued his studies at Yale University, where he earned a doctorate degree in the Fine Arts from the School of Drama. He devoted the first half of his career to professional work as a freelance director and actor. In addition, he worked intermittently as an artistic director of two different professional companies for more than twelve years. As Fowler recounted his *curriculum vitae*, his tone and smile reflected his satisfaction with his position as Head of Directing at UCI, where he began his career many years ago with the intention of staying only one year.

Glenn Odom, the play's "research assistant," graduated from Vanderbilt University in 1998 with a degree in theater. During his tenure there, he gained experience as an actor and as a director. Currently a Ph.D. student in the Department of Comparative Literature at UCI, he now devotes his time to the academic nature of theater. He is nearly finished with his dissertation, which deals with transnational meta-theatricality and political discourse. As a dramaturg, Odom's responsibility was to research background information on other performances, to provide the actors with study material in

terms of movement, to articulate the play's relationship to the *comedia*, and to locate scholarly articles about witchcraft in order to learn more about Celestina's character.

In the playbill, Fowler describes his long-standing fondness for the play and his interpretation of its dualities:

I fell in love with de Rojas' play back in my high school days. Its contrasts are what hooked me, as I have always enjoyed paradox in the theater—the side by side presentation of opposites, especially revelations that humans contain many more facets than we normally suppose. In *La Celestina*, we may see gaps in the manners of nobles and servants and aesthetic fissures between high art, religious devotions, and popular expression. More importantly we see fine and elusive distinctions between romantic love (ever praiseworthy, yes?) and down-and-dirty carnality. Most importantly, we see how de Rojas, who published *La Celestina* in 1499, plays a very modern game with our expectations of comedy. When I first read the play on bus trips home from school, I was drawn into his trickster servants' shenanigans, lulled into his world of love, wit and bustling comedy, never suspecting where he was leading me—along his garden path.

Odom comments on his choice of the text in translation and its relationship to this particular staging. Like Fowler, Odom also highlights the play's contrasts in terms of characterization and theme:

Any production of Mabbe's text has the daunting task of creating anew the simultaneous density and lightness of the text. The experience of reading the text is the experience of being hit by a tidal wave. At moments one is aware of the subtle currents swirling around, but the titanic forces at work pound at the senses and the intellect, as they sweep you into a world of words, of love, and of magic.

For the next hour or so, I engage my interviewees in a lively and enlightening conversation that, once concluded, reminds me of the multi-faceted nature of the world of performance and how a text, once taken to the stage, becomes a living, breathing, dynamic entity that leaves no spectator unaffected.

BG: Why did you choose to stage *La Celestina*, a work that is some 500 years old, in 2006?

KF: I guess it is up to the department to decide that. I put it forward six or eight times over the years. This year they agreed. I had a list of plays that I'm now reaching the end of which goes all the way back to my college and graduate days, and *Celestina* was one of them. I remember reading it on the bus on my way home from school. I think I was encouraged to think of it anew a few years ago in Warsaw in the 1980s. I saw a production in Polish I didn't quite follow, and it was so dull, almost three and a half hours long. I thought, "Someone needs to really do this so I can enjoy it," and, "Well, maybe me!" That motivated me to revisit the play.

GO: I decided to work on this play rather than others put on by the department because of my interest in King James and the politics of interpretation. I've done a lot of work in translation theory, and this particular translation is a very interesting one in terms of its theoretical impact and its relationship to other things being done at the time literally. This work still has "staying power" in its translated form.

KF: In the program I mention I thought it was very "modern," a nice catch phrase. And that's part of the problem with the play. Those who don't go along with the play criticize it for being a tragic comedy, for being non-Aristotelian; it is not limitable, things are not necessary or probable. The improbable is allowed to happen, and I consider that more to be in line with (the modern age). I am surprised that de Rojas sees this in his age, because we tend to see that now, that is, that things aren't part of a grand scheme, that every plan you have, every love affair you start, you don't know what will happen next and disaster can strike at any time, in the midst of life.

BG: One of the issues that always arises when talking about *La Celestina* is its "stage-challenged" nature. For that reason, critics often refer to the play as a "novela dialogada,"¹ a dialogued novel, as opposed to drama, since it does not adhere to the Aristotelian unities of time, place and action. What do you think about this classification, and what dif-

ficulties, if any, did you encounter with staging this play?

KF: A lot! Most importantly, you have to figure out how you're going to do the (Melibea's) fall. You can cheat or use a device,² which I chose ("cheating" would imply the stage goes black and you see her there lying dead at the end). But I think the play leads up to a really spectacular ending and you somehow want to capitalize on that. There were lots of difficulties considering the number of locales, and we saw some of them but not all of them. I had hoped we'd have a design with continuous action, but we couldn't pull that off. We came close to it, but we couldn't just keep people moving in full view of the audience from one scene to the next. We didn't solve many things backstage; it's a tough play to design. The next time I do it, I'll already be aware of a lot of the pitfalls and I'll avoid them. Moving from one room of Pleberio and Melibea's house is a bigger problem than our designer understood; we had to make a lot of changes as we moved along. I guess those are two of the main issues: the number of locales and the need for spectacle.

GO: And figuring how to embody that on stage was challenging.

KF: Part of the challenge was cutting the text, I didn't address that in my first response, but that was a huge issue before putting it on stage. Well, we can't expect a modern audience, unless it's entirely

a scholarly audience, to sit through the five hours it would probably take. I regret a lot of the cuts that had to be made, but I don't regret getting it down to two and a half hours playing time; that was a desired goal. In doing that, a lot had to be sacrificed, (including) all of the repetition (the play spouts maxim after maxim after maxim.) I was talking about this with my first-year graduate (student) directors a month ago, when we were looking at classic and neoclassic theater. I pointed out Pierre Corneille's essay,³ and I said, "This play violates the whole principal, the Corneillean principle, that you just don't spout maxims." That is one form of theater, to lecture didactically, but characters who speak truths, universal truths, is a very difficult concept for the actors to grasp. It's hard for them to understand that there is another level on which you can talk.



Pármeno
and
Areúsa

BG: The costumes and stage design were magnificent. Let's talk a bit about the stage space and how you decided to utilize it the way you did.

KF: Changing all of the sets, "now we're here, now we're there," would surely have slowed everything down. And still there were confusions, design confusions, which are bound to happen in a lengthy play like this. For instance, we did not track, going back to the idea of continuity, if we could have kept the camera running all the time, eliminating the need for blackouts. That way, we wouldn't have needed a ladder go down into the pit, transported across the pit, to come up to the other side to the garden which you could have just stepped on from the stage. We wouldn't have had the windows with all the black magic devices up against Pleberio's wall; we would have put it down against Celestina's house. We wouldn't have had to share the window that in one early scene serves for Elicia upstairs with Crito and then it becomes Pleberio's house from then on. I can understand how these things may have confused some people. You set up certain expectations and then you break them, but the important thing is to then be consistent.

Going back to the staging of the fall, I don't think it worked, but we gave it a very valiant try. I think ultimately I would have gone with something that was mentioned early on by our scene designer, but at that point I wasn't ready for it. Personally, I wanted to see a real fall but couldn't figure out how

to have Melibea plunge twenty feet. Even if she had a trampoline, that would have involved bouncing. We also explored ways of flying her in slow motion, but that was too expensive. So I came up with the idea of the tableaux, which required three Melibea surrogates, including costumes and wigs.

But then we had to deal with all the foot traffic and noise, and decided to integrate vocal sounds from the chorus that both simulated her fall and covered the noise, yet they weren't successful. We got laughs, and the first night I thought "Why are they (the audience) laughing? I should know this. I'm the director. I have to guess why they are doing this." Then the second night, as I watched it, I, too, felt the impulse to laugh. Since I also teach comedy I thought to myself "What is the principle?" I asked people why they laughed but didn't get satisfactory answers. So I came to the conclusion that the audience thought Melibea was just never going to die—based on how we staged the fall—and that is what caused them to laugh. A phrase from the *Scarlet Pimpernel* then ran through my head: "She's here, she's there, she's everywhere!" I didn't change it (the fall) between weeks because when we got to the last static tableau, people were stunned into silence, and that ends up being a microcosm of the play: you laugh, laugh, laugh and then you're shocked.

If I were to do this from scratch, I'd go with the idea of just having a cloth fall. I didn't envision

how to do it initially, but at some point it dawned on me: we could have made more use out of the stupid girdle.⁴ Remember how Fernando de Rojas made Celestina demand that unnecessary talisman, the girdle from the Sibilla Cumana? We could have had a girdle tossed to Celestina from an upper window and had it float down to plant the image in the audience's mind. In the end, at the moment of her death, we could have just dropped a champagne-colored fabric in silence. The fall, as we staged it, focused more on all the effort required to stage an image of falling that wasn't real, and then we went to the effort all over again until we got to the fact, the literal fact, that her body was on the ground.

BG: Can you talk about the specific modifications that were made in order for the play to appeal to a more modern audience?

KF: Shortening and trimming it, adding in a degree of dance and some music. That occurred to me when I saw the Warsaw production, which was so flat-footed. I knew we needed something more lively. I did rearrange and wrote a couple of lines, no more than three, to help with the transitions, in processing the relationship between Centurio and Areusa and how Centurio is brought back later on. We only gave Centurio that one scene, and then we had to write in a couple of lines where Elisia had invited Sosia, and Areusa says, "Let me handle this." Three or four scenes had to be done away with; you solve it with three lines: back-to-back

Areusa and Elicia scenes, first Sosia, cut away to Pleberio, then back to Centurio with the ladies. I thought that added up nicely because I was able to see both the sentimentality and the cunning of the two whores in those almost back-to-back scenes. I think it had more impact than it would have had had it been spread more diffusely.

GO: (addressing Fowler): Would you say that the move toward *comedia* was also a move toward a modern audience?

KF: We talked only tangentially about *comedia*, and it was in the back of my mind. While preparing for this play, at the same time I was reading John Lyly's play, *Mother Bombie*, and it hit me: the notion of trickster servants in both plays and their undeniable cunning. They're both *comedia*-based; they come out of the same Roman comedy roots.

GO: I think that (the *comedia* aspects) made the play more accessible. I brought some non-academic friends to see it, and they loved phrases like, "Fetch me that guitar" and the more stock character moments.



Lucrecia
and
Melibea

BG: Fernando de Rojas's play was written in 1499, on the cusp of the Medieval period and transitioning into the Renaissance. Do you see the play as a microcosm of the period? In several scenes, the initial one, for example, you start with a religious procession juxtaposed to these immediately perceivable carnal townspeople that seems to signal a duality.

GO: I think formally and structurally this play has not moved into the Renaissance. It still seems to be struggling with the same things you hit in earlier Medieval plays, where the need for an occasional comedic element comes into conflict with the plot. My perception is so colored by Mabbe's translation. I think the reason Mabbe brings this play back is precisely because it resonates with the heavy-structured form of the Medieval drama. So, I don't view it as a cusp play. While it has some elements of carnality, some division of plot between the comic and tragic, (and) while it does have a few elements associated with later drama, there is no assertion of humanity, there's not a basic Neoclassicism. The notion of man's place in the world isn't there. There's still a struggle, a tension between the form of the play acting as a kind of god or deity cruising right along in there. And even the words man uses to shape his world aren't his words; they aren't the character's words because they fall into set patterns. So no, I can't put it forward as a Renaissance play, only as Medieval.

KF: I'll go along with that.

BG: Celestina evokes the word "Celestial," and yet she's the quintessential terrestrial being.

KF: Ironic, isn't it? I know that Nylda, when she was cast, developed an interest in the background of Celestina in portraiture, and so she went to Picasso⁵. She ended up doing homage to the Picasso portrait by putting a slash across her eye.

BG: Continuing with the interpretation of Celestina, I was wondering how the audience reacted to the characters referring to Celestina as "Mother." In Spanish, to call someone "Madre" is more culturally plausible, but in English we tend to think in more literal terms. You probably wouldn't call someone your "mother" unless they were literally the person who bore you.

KF: I thought about changing it, but I didn't. She is also called "Aunt" and "Celestina," of course. A study group brought this issue up and asked if this might confuse the audience. I considered looking into it, but I didn't.

GO: I had some people ask me about it, too. It's such a convention of the time, so I just trusted the audience would buy it.

KF: It's a question that demands an answer, because we're considering it and we're not naïve. Now, my wife saw the last performance, and I asked her if she followed it all, and she did. I didn't ask her specifically about "Mother," but she's the type who would bring up and question something

like that had she not understood it. What I was more concerned about was the scene when Areusa complains of “the mother.” We had to make sure the actors framed it in a tone of voice so that the audience would understand it was an ailment, which then confused the actors because they didn’t understand what was going on in the masturbatory scene. All Celestina says is, “Let me help you,” and in fact after we staged it, I was talking to the stage group, and one of the scenes they were looking at was that scene, which for them wasn’t gelling. And I explained, “You see, Areusa is so horny because Centurio has gone off to the war, and she thinks she has this female disorder, but Celestina is smart enough to know what she really needs.” And I glanced at Jennifer (Evans), who played Areusa, and I realized that she just realized that she was playing the wrong thing. She was playing deathly ill until that point. Only after her realization did she assume the “sex kitten” persona.



Pármeno,
Calisto,
Lucrecia,
Melibea,
and
Sempronio

BG: What do you think the message of the play is, if there is one, and do you think your staging delivered a different message than that of de Rojas?

KF: Intentionality is always a tricky thing; he might have “intended” something that he did or didn’t pull off. I can only honestly speak to what is appealing to me without distorting de Rojas in any way, which is the idea that in the midst of life we are in the midst of death. I don’t see it as many in the audience did (as religious instruction). Many people in the audience asked me, “Is this to let youth know they shouldn’t have subterfuge in their affairs?” I’m not sure of that. But I was attracted to the idea of ‘engineering great projects that don’t turn out as you plan,’ because I think that is so human. And whether that is connected to the moral message that de Rojas was committed to or an idea that would sell is rather immaterial to me. I think for a contemporary audience the big challenge is to make them intrigued and interested and amused, then entertained, and then surprised. I won’t give any more emphasis to it than that because that is a key message to living: don’t count your eggs getting hatched.

GO: I think a message might be “don’t climb too high, don’t approach the King.” I think that is a dusty, scholarly reading of the play, and I don’t think this production went in that particular direction, thankfully, because that would have been bor-

ing to watch unfold on stage, but that is where I find the play most political.

KF: Another major point deals with showing characters who are not just on one level. They have sentiment, and they're corporeal. They are "and" characters; they're multi-dimensional. The idea of the artifice of stage characters, always artificial, reminds us of how paradoxical we all are as humans.

BG: Thank you both for taking time out of your busy schedules to talk to me about your experience with *La Celestina*.

KF and GO: You're very welcome. Thank you.

NOTES

¹ Term first used by Buenaventura Carlos Aribau.

² Fowler chose to have Melibea's father stare toward the rooftop while Melibea stood stage right, where the rooftop was staged for her clandestine meetings with Calisto in the previous scenes. It is to be understood that he is looking up at her as the stage assumes the duality. A spotlight shines on Melibea as she delivers a pre-suicide discourse. When she finally falls, we see it in two parts: the stage darkens and Melibea appears raised at center stage to simulate the moments before landing. The stage goes black again, and when the spotlight returns, it shines sadly upon Melibea's corpse.

³ Corneille, Pierre. "First Discourses on the Uses and Elements of Dramatic Poetry." Trans. Beatrice Stewart McClintock. 1660.

⁴ It should be pointed out that Fowler refers to the girdle in question as “stupid” because, after the fact, he realized how useful the garment could have been had he utilized it in the final scene.

⁵ Fowler refers to Picasso’s 1904 rendition of the infamous Spanish *alcahueta*.

Theater Reviews

Life is a Dream. By Pedro Calderón de la Barca.
Translated and Adapted by Nilo Cruz. Directed by
Kate Whoriskey. South Coast Repertory (Costa
Mesa, CA) Run: February 2 through March 11,
2007. In attendance 2/23/07.

BONNIE L. GASIOR
California State University Long Beach

I recently took a group of seventeen students from California State University, Long Beach to see this staging. Several of them had just studied the play in a Golden Age survey course, and I was looking forward to our post-viewing discussion. Rather than bridge the gap between the written text and the stage, this production only gave way to unanswerable questions, shoulder shrugs, and a lot of head shaking once we returned to the classroom. Sean Mitchell of the *Los Angeles Times* recently reviewed this play and succinctly summed up my own viewing experience with his derisive concluding remarks: "Theater historians might discover in such directorial indulgence some academic divertimento, but for many of SCR's patrons the most pressing philosophical question raised by *Life is a*

Dream will be whether to return to their seats at intermission.” This production was stylistically uneven and thematically disjointed; at one point when Clotaldo exclaims, “What confusion!,” I was unsure he was still in character.

The general storylines reflect those of the original, (Segismundo vs. Basilio; Rosaura vs. Asolfo; Rosaura avenged by Segismundo) but the dreamlike aspect of the play transforms into a nightmare before the audience’s eyes. The scenic designer, Walt Spangler, managed to create a hyperbolically neon-colored stage that recalled the hippie counterculture of the 1960s. The jagged mountains that served as the landscape for the majority of the play exhibited an orange-red hue, and the planets that ascended from the rafters, an allusion to the heavens and Segismundo’s “mala estrella,” were a mismatched incandescent blue-green. Even the closed, flamingo-pink umbrella that the *gracioso* Clarin totes during several scenes seemed painfully incongruous. This garish color scheme, in my opinion, had no particular purpose and detracted from the overall aesthetic feel of the stage. While one critic, Joel Beers of the *Orange County Weekly*, described the set design as a “swirling kaleidoscope of colors,” my students and I found the spectacle dizzying and nauseatingly unpalatable.

The overall costume design was also unusual. While Basilio and Segismundo wore appropriate

and what could be considered as more traditional attire, the rest of the cast's clothing could be best described as a mishmash of styles and time periods. In certain scenes, Star Trek-like uniforms were juxtaposed with flapper costumes from the 1920s. In others, the king's men's garments most closely resembled those of snipers and at other times, intergalactic soldiers who would cavort on and off stage and randomly erupt into song. Estrella's incongruent metallic dress stood in contrast to Clarin's aviator's (dunce?) cap, neither of which provided much insight into the characters themselves. The most perplexing scenes were those where many of these continuity-lacking costumes were present on stage simultaneously. The combination of the odd, erratic onstage movements, bizarre apparel, and hybrid quality of the overall performance (part *comedia*, part musical) proved awkward, distracting, and incompatible with the play's intended philosophical underpinnings.

A third puzzling aspect of the play was its failed symbolism. For example, when Segismundo first appears imprisoned and shackled, he is suddenly surrounded by at least four fully-armed soldiers, reminiscent of those seen nowadays during times of governmental turmoil in many Latin American countries, who disparately point their rifles within an inch of his head for what seems like an eternity. When Segismundo is finally liberated, the soldiers prance around free of their armaments,

sing merrily, and are accompanied by several women wearing revealing short skirts whose pattern resembles the United States flag. It was unclear if Whoriskey was making a political statement by equating liberty with the U.S. and even if she did, how that message fit into the scheme of the play. The imagery was too overt to overlook yet too underdeveloped to interpret.

The theme of free will, so central in Calderón's original, is asphyxiated by the multitude of outlandish visuals and props. Even when Segismundo tries his best to convince us of the injustice(s) being committed against him, his sincerity, when contextualized within the production's use of miscellany attire, flagrant color tones, and incoherent characterizations, falls flat for the eyebrow-furrowed audience. The truth is that none of the characters, possibly with the exception of Basilio, played by John DeLancie ("Q" from *Star Trek: The Next Generation*) is the only actor who manages to connect with the audience. Other than his performance no heartstrings were tugged, no questions were pondered, and audience apathy was palpable. In an interview conducted by Ernio Hernández (*Playbill*) in February 2007, the Cuban-American director Cruz stated, "The play is full of questions, and I think Calderón's greatness as a playwright lies in the rich humanity of his characters, and the questions they pose." While Cruz is right on the money with his assessment of Calderón, he and director

Whoriskey, in conjunction with Spangler, are unsuccessful in adapting, translating, and conveying that richness he refers to on their mutually-constructed stage. While adaptations can be successful by infusing the past with a dose of modernization, this one stands to show that achieving coherency is directly proportionate to connecting underlying themes with overlaying issues.

Don Quijote: La última aventura. By Miguel de Cervantes. Adap. by Margarita Galbán and Lina Montalvo. Directed by Margarita Galbán, Bilingual Foundation of the Arts. Los Angeles. 30 October 2005. (Play's run: 30 September-20 November 2005.)

BONNIE L. GASIOR
California State University, Long Beach

If Linda Richman, the female character played by comedian Mike Myers on Saturday Night Live in the early 90s, had seen this play, she might have become *verklemt* and given her audience a topic while she composed herself: "*Don Quijote: La última aventura is neither about Don Quijote nor his last adventure. Discuss.*" Despite its shortcomings, the play is relatively enjoyable, notwithstanding the fact that Don Quijote and Sancho are only present in spirit throughout. Due to its textual departures and indiscernible storyline, the play renders itself more meaningful for viewers who have familiarity with the novel. Only with the original in mind can the spectator compare and contrast and by the same token learn from its good and not-so-good points. Otherwise the play turns into a superficial commentary on various social issues, which is ap-

propriate for the general community in a city like Los Angeles but not advantageous for the academic public that works with literary tradition to determine artistic value of a work in question.

The main plot of *Don Quijote: la última aventura* centers on a thirty-something man, who, inspired by a romanticized version of Don Quijote, envisions becoming the best actor of his time and achieving eternal fame. In order to do so he sets in motion a plan to enlist the opportunistic townspeople and with their help, develop a theatre troupe. He seduces those around him with empty promises, a tactic that recalls the coercion of Sancho and his motivating *ínsula*. From the beginning, despite the play's incompleteness and inaccuracies, the experienced viewer is aware and often reminded of the Don Quijote tradition and all that it stands to uphold and offer.

The play's opening scene drew the audience in as the town vendors gathered and announced their goods for sale while the personified marketplace awoke from its slumber. The multiplicity of voices that emerge in crescendo from what is described as "el estómago de la ciudad" forged a pleasant melody that authentically replicated an early modern town center. The marketplace is a logical place in which to develop the play since in the Early Modern Period, this space was associated with theater spectacle, bohemian life, and laughter, elements all central to the idea of carnival and the play's central and

peripheral themes. Amidst the hustle and bustle, the play's two main characters, León (Jaime Arze) and Alonso (Eleazar del Valle), explain their desire to direct a play there (which recalls *El retablo de las maravillas* and in itself, serves as a way to illustrate the concept of metatheater). The purpose of the staging, according to León, is self-propagandistic: he aspires to become a renowned actor. In order to bring his vision into focus, León assumes the persona of Don Quijote, the embodiment of dream fulfillment. Through the use of archaic language and the invocation of the object of his affection, Dulcinea, León the actor initiates a process of emulation, a decision that subjects him to both the fame and notoriety of the Manchegan. If León is to become a verisimilar Don Quijote, he must act accordingly, even when those actions might not paint him in a favorable light. It is no surprise, then, to see that as a "caballero andante," León does not know how to duel, evinced even before a contest presents itself, as seen when he emerges from off stage with a lightning bolt-shaped sword. Still the combination of the comical weapon, the sudden surfacing of the Yelmo de Mambrino, and a slew of pledges (an *ínsula* to Sancho; fame to the barbero) infuses León with the Quijote spirit or "Quijotessence," which in turn fuels his aspirations.

As Don Quijote, León's first petition is for Sancho/Alonso to deliver a letter to what figures in the play as a non-elusive Dulcinea. Since the note is

plagued with errors (“*ingrata y muy desconocida señora*”) the audience is reminded of Sancho’s inability to read and write. The letter is inspired by the arrival of the beautiful Aldonza de Figuerosa (Ariana Estrada), the niece of the Duke, who Alonso immediately transforms into his beloved Dulcinea. (While Don Quijote transforms a peasant girl into a *dama*, León sees Aldonza for who she truly is. His transformation is not on a physical level.) Aldonza represents the final ingredient in Alonso’s dream recipe and as such the townspeople begin to accept their roles in his acting company. When a group of gypsies arrives on the scene, León intuits his first adventure (the windmill episode) instead of grasping reality (that they are mere gypsies). These colorful, itinerant people open Don Quijote’s eyes through their sensual dancing and singing. Their presence acts a springboard for a series of social commentaries on class relations throughout the rest of the performance(s). One such example is manifest metaphorically in the character of Luis, Aldonza’s implied fiancé, brilliantly portrayed by David Carreño, who figures as León’s adversary and simultaneously the antithesis of the Quijotescan ideal: Luis is handsome, arrogant, and sharp-tongued. He represents every blow Don Quijote has ever received while engaged in battle, every scoff launched at the knight’s antics. He also symbolizes the intangible pragmatism of the privileged upper class, as seen in his relationship with Aldonza: he appears to be with her for the social po-

sition it affords him, not because he sincerely loves her. This is overtly reflected in the way he talks to her (as if she were a child) and treats her (as he would a possession.) As his masculinity and authority are challenged by what he deems a much inferior León, he vows revenge, proving once again that he is more interested in his own reputation than that of Aldonza, who obviously prefers León's ideals and presence to his.

When a noble couple arrives seeking out León, the audience is held briefly in suspense, unaware of the two characters' motives and identities. Only later are they revealed as León's parents, which by association discloses León's noble birth, though he never acknowledges this fact or uses it to his benefit. In a sense, then, they are looking for a León who is lost both literally (physically) and metaphorically (ideologically). The play itself assumes a stance that favors romantic idealism but is nonetheless dragged along by the potency of practicality, as the play's end would seem to demonstrate.

León reiterates his desire to be regarded as the best actor of his generation, and his words fall persuasively on Aldonza's receptive ears and are put to the test as various members of his acting group are shackled by town law enforcers for purported crimes, including tax evasion and theft. Of course, one is again reminded of the novel's influence, particularly in I.XXII when Don Quijote attempts to liberate Ginés de Pasamonte and his chain gang. In

predictable fashion, Alonso orders their collective release, even as his own arrest for also allegedly not paying taxes is pending. While Machuca, a secondary character, blames the turn of events on the gypsies ("los gitanos tienen la culpa de todo"), a statement that reflects but at the same time undercuts the long standing notoriety of gypsy life, Aldonza takes center stage in the form of activist and feminist. Her privileged position as a noble woman allows her to communicate directly to a socially-conscious twenty-first century audience. The invocation of historical facts infuses her discourse with authority: she mentions Isabel's success in uniting Castile and Aragón, a reference that underlines the conciliatory prowess of women. Her critique of class structures and royal financial abuses culminates with León and her symbolically rallying with the subjugated villagers and verbally rebelling against aristocratic establishments.

Don Quijote: La ultima aventura soon afterward initiates its climax as a scorned Luis reappears to execute his vow of vengeance. The proverbial battle between good and evil ensues as Luis refers to León as "el loco disfrazado." Their final joust ends with León, as Don Quijote, defeating Luis and sparing his life, an action that underlines the Quijote notion of fighting for a cause, not for fighting's sake. Despite his victory, León falls to the ground as a result of a sustained, lethal injury previously delivered by Luis. León thus finds himself in the

midst of the ultimate battle of life versus death. Before long, León is unable to remember his own name and now is only able to see himself as Don Quijote. León, like Alonso Quijano, makes his final declaration: just as Quijano renounces Don Quijote at the novel's end, León, now Don Quijote, renounces León the actor and person. This could be perceived as a rejection of all that León's lineage embodies: nobility, wealth, and a bourgeois outlook. Even as León is pronounced deceased, Aldonza proclaims him a martyr for having given his life for a worthwhile cause, one that is comprised of a series of perpetually dueling dualities: rich versus poor (whereby "poorness" is a relative term); good versus bad (low birth and lack of resources opposed to high birth and affluence); idealism versus pragmatism ("idealistic" as an adjective that underscores the true meaning of happiness by stressing volition). So as to not let the audience part on a bittersweet albeit morally strong note, Aldonza enthusiastically announces, as Alonso springs to his feet (a resurrection only possible within the confines of the stage,) that Don Quijote is reborn every night in the play, which reminds us that since he never "truly" dies, we have no need to feel disheartened. The demise of León, a man divided by his noble blood and peasant soul, symbolizes these ongoing struggles mentioned previously. As such, his death is a necessity but as a result and more importantly, hardly a tragedy.

What this play does, as well as what it doesn't do, is what makes it an effective piece of theatrical performance. On one hand its faithfulness to the time period (costumes, language, cultural reflections) will sear verisimilar images in modern viewers' minds. On the other, several of the play's inaccuracies end up fortifying its pedagogical potential. The anachronisms (a "16th century marketplace" and romanticized gypsies, just to name two), as well as more implicit flaws (the decision to name the protagonist "León" instead of Alonso) could very well serve as departures for discussion in the classroom and beyond.

Valor, agravio y mujer...Stripping Don Juan. By Ana Caro Mallén de Soto. Directed by Hugo Medrano. GALA Teatro Hispano, Washington D.C. 6 October, 2006. (Play's run: September 28 – October 28).

ANTHONY J. GRUBBS
Michigan State University

Celebrating the continued interest in the female-authored plays of the Spanish Golden Age, Hugo Medrano and the GALA Teatro Hispano staged an adaptation of Ana Caro's *Valor, agravio y mujer* in Washington D.C. In the Director's Notes, he states that he lifted the play out of the seventeenth century, when women were considered the inferior gender, and placed it in a nineteenth-century context. He wanted to take advantage of an epoch when the sensitive and nurturing qualities of a woman were esteemed and seen as a complement to the rational nature attributed to men. Such a decision was not without its risks and it arguably diminished the force of Caro's message. Medrano did not, however, change where the play takes place, the Netherlands, for two reasons: to maintain the integrity of Caro's original text and to take advantage of the environment afforded by the well-developed

Romantic Movement in Flanders. The other aspects of the play were well executed and resulted in a very satisfying performance of a delightful play.

The versatility of the set meant that it did not need to be changed during the play and only a few minor props were introduced to accentuate the scene. The apron was populated by two main structures; at stage left was a block with the bottom-half opening in a drawer-like fashion. This was flanked by three staggered scenery flats, which gave depth to the stage and allowed for entry and exit at various points of the stage. At stage right was a cylindrical tower that had an elevated removable window. The set was painted to depict the Flemish countryside. Lighting was complex and well executed, with flawless transition between scenes; it clearly delineated the time of day and emphasized the change of locales, for example, a reflection of a Gothic rose window indicated the scenes within the house. For the non-Spanish speaking members of the audience, supertitles, translated by Professor Amy Williamssen, were displayed on a large screen clearly visible throughout the house.

The costuming was typical of the nineteenth century. The women's dresses were cut from sumptuous and colorful materials and they were accented by petticoats and bodices. The men's costuming consisted of either medal-strewn military uniforms or formal country-wear typical of the times. Costume change was frequent and appropriate to the

situation; the attention to detail was meticulous. The stage props, too, reflected the popular pastimes of the era as the characters played croquet, painted landscapes, and practiced archery in the idyllic setting of the garden.

The acting was exceptional. Leonor (Leonardo) gave a convincing performance. Though dressed as a man until the end of the play, one never lost sight of her true sex as she would talk in a normal, higher tone with her servant but would change to a deeper voice when others were present. Her manservant was one of the stars of the show and his comic presence was hilarious but not overbearing. His character was effeminate in gesture and speech, which contrasted nicely with Leonor's feigned masculinity. Don Juan, played by Mel Rocher, fulfilled the expectations of the role. A dashing man, he was able to convey a conflicted man who was self-assured in public but insecure in private; his soliloquy during Act 2 was well delivered and imbued with emotion in his attempt to show that he is not such a bad person. Ludovico's performance was effective in that he portrayed perfectly the mediocre nature of the nobleman. Fernando also was portrayed in an appropriate manner as the over-ambitious and somewhat oafish older brother of Leonor and longtime suitor of Estela.

The actors succeeded in extracting all of the emotion and intrigue from the play text. In Act 1 a less than comfortable Leonor begins her seduction

of Estela, who falls head-over-heels for the newly arrived “gentleman.” This performance conveyed the idea that Leonor was not familiar with the rules of the game but was able to successfully fake them as was necessary as part of the plan to recuperate her lost honor. One of the highlights of the play was the garden scene in act 2 when Ludovico (disguised as Leonardo) woos Estela and Juan courts Leonor (disguised as Estela), while soft music was played in the background, reminding us of the men’s intentions. Besides the clever, parallel dialogue of the couples, the actors execute the scene flawlessly and highlight the comic aspect of the mistaken identities, rousing laughter in the audience, especially as Leonor’s scheme is coming to light. The *fin de fiesta* that concluded the play was a nice touch.

Situating the play in the 19th century put a different spin on the play, with both positive and negative results. In the second act, for example, during the discussion between man servants Tomillo and Ribete about the latest news from Madrid and the popularity of female poets at the time, the original text reads:

RIBETE: Ya es todo muy viejo allá;
 sólo en esto de poetas
 hay notable novedad
 por innumerables, tanto
 que aun quieren poetizar
 las mujeres, y se atreven
 a hacer comedias ya.

TOMILLO: ¡Válgame Dios! Pues, ¿no fuera
mejor coser e hilar?

¡Mujeres poetas!

RIBETE: Sí;
mas no es nuevo, pues están
Argentaria, Safo, Areta,
Blesilla, y más de un millar
de modernas... (ACT II)

Medrano replaces the classical figures with contemporary female writers Emilia Pardo Bazán and Rosalia de Castro, a nice touch that sparked a chuckle in the public. Another consequence of the setting the play was seen in the duels between the men—and women. Swords were replaced by folding pocket knives, an unsatisfactory replacement. While the fights themselves were well choreographed and skillfully executed, the knife fights were not dramatic since the duel was delayed by the need to unfold the knives. Finally, while the intention to empower the female characters by staging the play in the 19th was a good one, it actually took away from their plucky characters and daring actions. As strong women in the 17th century, the public is able empathize with the female characters and admire their courage in the undermining of traditional societal conventions. While such an interrogation of society is still valid in this more modern context, it is not as effective because they are not going against the grain to such a great extreme. So, in essence by attempting to place the women in a context more supportive of their cause, the impact

of the message was reduced as such revolution was expected—and accepted—at the time.

Medrano's version of *Valor, agravio y mujer* impressed the audience. In fact, at the 2007 Association for Hispanic Classical Theater in El Paso, Texas, one session was dedicated to his adaptation of the play, sparking lively debate as to the responsibilities and the liberties that a director has when presenting a play for the twenty-first century public. This in itself underlines the impact of the successful staging and provocative decisions executed by Medrano, factors which will continue to fuel theatrical debate in the future.

Friendship Betrayed. By María de Zayas y Sotomayor. Translated by Catherine Larson. Directed by Karen Berman. Devine Studio Theatre, Georgetown University. 5 October 2006.

BARBARA LÓPEZ-MAYHEW
Plymouth State University

La traición en la amistad (translated as *Friendship Betrayed*), a *comedia* written approximately three hundred and seventy-five years ago by the seventeenth century Spanish author and playwright, María de Zayas y Sotomayor, was recently performed again in our twenty-first century. It was presented by the theatrical group Washington Women in Theatre (WWIT) at Georgetown University's Devine Studio Theatre, October 5, 2006, as part of the joint conference of AHCT (Association for Hispanic Classical Theater) and AEEA (Asociación de escritoras de España y las Américas). Directed by Karen Berman with assistance by co-artistic director, Sidra Rausch, this performance was based on Catherine Larson's translation in English.

The play's plot is about several love triangles within a circle of young people in Madrid. One of the young women, Fenisa, is sexually promiscuous with her friends' boyfriends and other men, and bla-

tantly admits that she simply cannot help herself, she adores all men. She has no remorse of betraying her friends, yet she becomes indignant and desperate when she is betrayed. One of the victims, Laura, is at wit's end on how to resolve her problem: getting her boyfriend, Liseo, away from Fenisa and how to commit him to marry her as he had promised. With the help of two cousins, Marcia and Belisa, a plan is carried out to take vengeance of Fenisa's betrayal and to rectify the chaos and anguish caused by her egotistical and insensitive greed.

Set in a studio theatre with a small area set as the stage in front of seating for approximately one hundred people, the play opened with Christina Aguilera's song *Fighter*:

Well I thought I knew you, thinkin' that you were true
Guess I, I couldn't trust, called your bluff, time is up
Cause I've had enough
You were there by my side, always down for the ride
But your joy ride just came down in flames cause
your greed sold me out in shame
After all of the stealing and cheating you probably
think that I hold resentment for you
But uh uh, oh no, you're wrong
Cause if it wasn't for all that you tried to do, I
wouldn't know
Just how capable I am to pull through
So I just wanna say thank you
Cause it

Makes me that much stronger
Makes me work a little bit harder
It makes me that much wiser
So thanks for making me a fighter
Made me learn a little bit faster
Made my skin a little bit thicker
Makes me that much smarter
So thanks for making me a fighter...

For the audience members not familiar with the play's plot, these lyrics hinted of a future injustice that would be stoically confronted, most probably between girl and boyfriend. Yet, those familiar with Zayas' *comedia* would know that the lyrics of this song would clearly express and foreshadow the efforts of a woman or women and their collaboration to face adversity and to "right any wrong."



As the lights came on, Marcia and Fenisa shared a seat in a bedroom-like setting which was decorated in a wild animal faux skin motif: a zebra settee, a leopard-skin covered tall table, large cheetah, zebra and lion pillows, and two tables covered with faux fur. In contrast and out of place for a 17th century play, there were several bottles of bright-colored nail polish on a table. Both the song and the stage props set the tone: some type of hunt, and a future struggle with an untamed creature, or *una fiera*. Fenisa would be that *fiera*, and would later enter into a “cat fight” with Belisa. The animal motif remained throughout the performance: Belisa and Marcia in later scenes stood alongside the audience masked in leopard and zebra to disguise their identities from Liseo; and Belisa used lion, fox and wolf masks as props while telling a fable about these animals.



Since the actors and actresses followed a script based on Larson's modern prose translation, the lines were primarily in English. However, there were several additional Spanish interjections and asides added throughout the play, particularly by the actress Wendy Nogales, who played Fenisa's maid, Lucía. Many of the actors and actresses supplemented their lines with Spanish comments such as: *para nada, somos amigas, viva el amado, qué tienen tus ojos, se gozan*. This bilingualism enriched the script and the performance, even for those monolingual audience members who did not fully understand the Spanish interjections.

All actors and actresses were equally entertaining and convincing in their roles. They skilfully supplemented their lines with gestures and facial expressions. One of the most impressive actresses was the beautiful Valeka Nichols, who played the headstrong cousin Belisa. She was as feisty as she was flirtatious when she spoke with her love, don Juan. She delivered her lines with controlled emotion, ranging from anger to calmness within the same breath. As fine an actress is Mundy Spears who played the seductive and hedonistic Fenisa. This role was somewhat exaggerated, which reminded a few of us of the treacherous and psychotic female protagonist played by Glenn Close in the film *Fatal Attraction*. At times Fenisa appeared evil and desperate; and when Belisa and Fenisa entered a physical "cat fight" at the end of the play, un-

doubtedly, the audience was hoping that Belisa would claim victory.



The performance ended on a content and satisfactory note. Problems were resolved: Liseo would marry Laura, and the other young women were coupled with their respective partners, except Fenisa, who was left alone, ostracized and bitter for the present time. The lesson was told to the audience: this is what happens to those who betray their friends. As a grand *finale*, the cast members joined in a vibrant song and dance, a rendition of a Spanish *sevillana*. As the clapping and stomping of feet pulsed throughout the small studio theater, the audience became one with the cast, captivated by an unforgettable cultural event.



Permission given by Karen Berman (WWIT) to use photos taken by Paul Accettura

La dama duende / *The Phantom Lady*. By Pedro Calderón de la Barca. Dir. Stephen Fried. The Shakespeare Theater, Washington, D.C. October 15, 2007 (staged reading, one performance only).

BÁRBARA MUJICA
Georgetown University

The 2007 staged reading in English of *La dama duende*—*The Phantom Lady*—by the Shakespeare Theater in Washington, D.C. demonstrated Calderón's power to captivate audiences even without the aid of set, costumes, or elaborate props and lighting. Directed by Stephen Fried, the fast-paced performance was directed toward an audience for the most part unfamiliar with early modern Spanish theater. The reading showcased a witty new translation by Richard Sewell that stuck close to the original, albeit with a few significant modifications.

Like the Pequeño Teatro production, the reading derived its liveliness in large part from the nimbleness and gesticulatory skill of the actor playing Cosme, Hugh Nees. Plump and middle-aged, Nees was all the more engaging because his displays of agility were so unexpected. His body language during Don Manuel's first duel with Don Luis conveyed his character's terror through conventional

signs—crouching, turning away, grimacing—but at other times the actor's antics caught spectators by surprise. Returning to Don Manuel's room teetering and singing about wine, his movements are almost balletic. When Don Manuel's surprises him in the room, his voice changes register dramatically—and comically. Cosme marches, dances, trembles, leaps, and throws himself on the floor in rapid succession, often catching the audience off guard. When Ángela surprises Manuel and Cosme in the dark, the master bounds into the arms of his servant, who catches him like an athlete.

Surprisingly, the female comic lead in this reading was not Isabel, but Doña Beatriz, whose bored demeanor and sardonic comments repeatedly undermined Don Luis's attempts at courtship, much to the audience's delight. Emily Ackerman, who played the role as a hard-edged dame, used her husky voice and impressive stage presence to give Beatriz unusual prominence. In comparison, Ángela and Isabel both paled. Amy Kim Waschke, who played Ángela, failed to capture either the character's anxiety or her hypocrisy, and Naomi Jacobson's Isabel more or less disappeared into the background. Isabel has traditionally been seen as Ángela's alter ego. Throughout the play it is she who advances the action, for as a member of the servant class, she can articulate desires that Doña Ángela dare not. It is she who reveals the secret of the alacena and who guides her mistress into Don

Manuel's room. However, in this reading Beatriz stood out more conspicuously as Doña Ángela's conspirator. Throughout the play Beatriz drips sarcasm. She gives the impression of containing a rage on the verge of exploding. Sometimes her body trembles. Sometimes she whispers when the audience expects a scream. In most productions Beatriz remains a secondary character, but through her exquisite timing, facial expressions, and cutting irony, Ackerman not only brings Beatriz to the forefront, but also helps to delineate the male characters.

The most prominent of these is Don Luis, her would-be suitor. As played by Chris Genebach, Don Luis is a smarmy, shady, and thoroughly despicable character, which makes his wooing of Beatriz seem all the more grotesque. The utter disgust with which she responds to his entreaties highlights his ridiculousness. Genebach's Don Luis oozes hypocrisy. For example, he dissolves into flattery when he learns that Don Manuel is his brother's guest, and he obsesses over his sister's virtue while at the same time attempting to seduce courtesans. Lean and lanky, Genebach seems to transform himself into a shadow that hovers menacingly over Ángela and Beatriz. He lurks in the shadows, behaving like a stalker, then is amazed when they appear repulsed. What is so funny about Genebach's Don Luis is that he seems utterly oblivious to the inappropriateness of his conduct. He turns red with rage when Beatriz rejects him, yet seems unaware that he has no busi-

ness courting her in the first place, since she is his brother's love interest. The Shakespeare reading highlighted Ángela's financial situation, which is explained in the original text but often overlooked: Ángela's dead husband left his books in disarray, and now the family's fortune depends on the decision of the courts regarding his debts. Here, Don Luis's concern for his sister seems motivated as much by his avarice as his honor. Doña Ángela stands to inherit money, which Don Juan will administer, and so both brothers have a vested interest in protecting their sister. Don Luis's avarice, hypocrisy and obtuseness are clear from Genebach's acting, but it is Doña Beatriz's reactions that highlight his nuttiness and send the audience into gales of laughter. In comparison, Don Juan, played by Todd Scofield, came across as a bland character—good-natured and unassuming—which made Beatriz's acceptance of him completely convincing. Rather than as cautious and level-headed, Scott Drummund played Don Manuel as a petulant young braggart who talks up the favors he did for Don Juan during the war in Italy.

Although the translation was quite faithful to the original, Sewell did introduce some modifications. The most radical was the elimination of religious references, such as souls in purgatory, at the end of the first act. Perhaps the translator thought these would be unintelligible to modern spectators. Instead, he introduced references to Descartes into

the text, possibly to fix the period in the spectators' minds, but the end result was to dilute the Catholic context of the original. Sewell also made some changes in the final scene, tying up some of the original's loose ends. For example, the portrait of a woman Doña Ángela finds while rummaging through Don Manuel's clothes remains unexplained in Calderón's play, but Sewell identifies her as Don Manuel's mother. Significantly, at the end of the Sewell version, Manuel does not offer to wed Ángela. Instead, Don Luis forces marriage on him in hopes of increasing his fortune. Since Sewell creates a rather negative portrait of Don Manuel, this ending was more in keeping with his concept of the character. Scholars might take issue with these changes, but in general the translation is accurate and smart. Clever rhymes such as "sherbet" and "curb it" abound, and the fast-paced banter replicates Calderón's nicely.

The number and diversity of productions of *La dama duende* are a tribute to Calderón's genius. In this comedy directors on both sides of the Atlantic have found inspiration for their own theatrical creativity. They have mined the characters and the situations for ideas, and come up with a plethora of interpretations, some of them radically contradictory. And audiences continue to delight in the antics of *la dama duende*.

Life's a Dream [La vida es sueño]. By Pedro Calderón de la Barca. Adapted by Adrian Mitchell and John Barton, with original music by Mark Eliot. Directed by Barry Brunetti, The Theater School at DePaul University. DePaul University's Merle Reskin Theater, Chicago, Illinois. 16 February 2007. (Play's run: February 9th - February 18th, 2007).

JORGE ABRIL SÁNCHEZ
University of Chicago

In the last decades, the Theatre School at DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois, has become one of the most respected national academies for future playwrights, artistic directors, theater actors, and costume, sound and lighting designers. Offering an annual mixed program of four plays, which include dramas, musicals and comedies, the Theatre School opens its doors every year to new students to be trained and educated in a large repertoire of modern and classical works that challenge, entertain and stimulate the imagination of young generations. Recognized with the Children's Theatre Division Award by the Illinois Theatre Association in 1997 and 2003, and with the prestigious Sara Spencer Award by the Children's Theatre Association of

America (now the American Alliance for Theatre and Education) in 1980, the Theatre School has remained faithful to its original principles: to provide a culturally diverse education to the students of the B. F. A. Acting Program at DePaul University, to advocate for social and racial equality, and to produce high-quality performances that reflect the multiethnic cultural life and experience of children of our community in a contemporary environment. Founded in 1925, the Theatre School moved its headquarters to the historical Merle Reskin Theatre in 1988, when DePaul University purchased the 1910 French Renaissance-style building. Since then, the Theatre School has attracted and amazed more than 45,000 people each season.

What the attending audience could not expect on the night of February 16th, 2007, when the Theatre School presented a modern adaptation of Pedro Calderón de la Barca's masterpiece, *La vida es sueño*, was a dark stage almost deprived of scenery. In the center of the stage stood a single piece of metal in the shape of a huge trapezoid. This gigantic sculpture was planned to help imagine the different locations in which the action takes place during the play. With this idea in mind, the trapezoid-like construction had in the middle of its front side a wide round window through which the audience could see the corresponding scenery. In order to recreate the settings of the Tower of Segismundo, the Polish Court of King Basilio and the battlefield of the

Third Act, scenic designer Jack Magaw created two different curtains with a variety of drawings that were dropped and lifted accordingly throughout the performance. The decoration of the curtains consisted of a castle seen from outside in the case of the two royal buildings, and a full moon as a metaphoric representation of a starred sky when portraying the countryside where the two armies were clashing. This technical decision was simple, but effective. The only moment in which the role of the curtains could be called into question was when it was necessary to distinguish between Segismundo's prison and the Polish palace. Since the same curtain was used, lightning designer Nic Jones decided to add a visual effect: to dim the lights that illuminated the stage at the same time that they switched on a few small cannons whose red light would project the infernal atmosphere of the prince's jail.

Magaw and Jones' directing contributions were, without a doubt, more conservative than Christine Conley's (costume designer) original collection of signature clothes. Although Conley kept it simple when she decided to dress King Basilio and Segismundo with the same white gown, in order to show that they belonged to the same noble lineage, her fashion inventions were extremely innovative and sometimes very appropriate. Conley's desire to innovate the play's wardrobe was flawless when she managed to successfully suggest modern associations through Clotaldo and the palace soldiers'

Nazi-style uniforms. These costumes transformed in the audience's mind the absolutist government of King Basilio of Poland into the National Socialist regime of Adolf Hitler. The unjustified abuses and judgment suffered by Segismundo could now be compared with the political and xenophobic persecution of communists and Jews in 20th-century Germany. Based on this vision, Basilio's Poland became Hitler's conquered dominion after its invasion of 1939. This originality, however, did not always work. In this sense, the simple, sober, but traditional, royal characterization that she had granted to father and son did not match either Estrella's fairy godmother's dress nor the gaudy colors (pink and mustard) of the ridiculous, flamboyant clothes that Astolfo wore during the performance.

Other modern additions to this innovative adaptation carried out by Adrian Mitchell and John Barton included, on the one hand, slang, sexual slurs and vulgar gestures to comment on sentimental relationships, and, on the other hand, short original songs on drinking and tomfoolery. These lyrics were normally sung by Clarín or by the former together with Rosaura as a duet. Not only did these hilarious sketches serve to underscore the clownish nature of the witty servant, but they also provided comic relief to violent and dramatic encounters. This audience-oriented modernization of the play continued when Segismundo was brought to his father's palace muzzled and tied in a straightjacket.

He was carried in a stretcher instead of being left in a room of the palace to recover from the symptoms of the sleeping potion with which he had been drugged according to Calderón's original play. And, when he was lifted to face his king, he was kept tied to the bed. This peculiar characterization inevitably conjures up images of psychiatrist and cannibalistic serial killer, Hannibal Lecter, from Jonathan Demme's 1991 movie adaptation of Thomas Harris's *The Secret of the Lambs*. Following this chain of thought, Segismundo, as Hannibal Lecter, or as the monster he has become by being brought up by Clotaldo among the beasts, is an uncivilized cannibal who would slaughter the first person or courtier who contradicts his wishes.

This negative association plays a crucial role at the end of Mitchell and Barton's modern adaptation of *La vida es sueño*. If we remember what is going on in the last act of Calderón's classic, we will know that Segismundo faces his father, King Basilio, for the second time. As the leader of the revolutionary army, he bargains the conditions of the resolution of the military conflict. The final agreement consists of the celebration of two marriages between Rosaura and Astolfo, and Estrella and Segismundo, respectively, which would reconstitute Rosaura's honor and consolidate the monarchical lineage of Basilio. In Mitchell and Barton's adaptation, this balance, however, is not reestablished as Segismundo decides to stay single and return to

his tower after having blessed the marriage of his two cousins. Although he personally punishes the rebellious army for rising in arms against the tyrannous ruler, it is hard to understand how the Polish peoples could accept that their legitimate heir to the throne is kept outside of the royal lineage and deprived of any contact with society. This unprecedented decision creates a lot of other problems: What is Segismundo's future going to be, jailed inside the tower? And most importantly, what is going to happen to Rosaura, who has been left single and dishonored? Is her offence going to be ignored?

For these and so many other reasons explained above, this modern adaptation of *La vida es sueño* does not leave the spectator indifferent. It introduces new generations of students to the art of one of the most important Spanish Early Modern authors at the same time that it questions our understanding of Calderón's masterpiece. Given the many alterations, one is led to believe the purpose of this production could possibly be to (de/re)construct one of the cornerstones of our classical Hispanic theater in order to make it relevant to the theatrical community of Chicago. Whatever Mitchell and Barton's objective could have been, what is certain is that their final product was exemplary and entertaining.

Book reviews

Burningham, Bruce R. *Radical Theatricality. Jongleuresque Performance on the Early Spanish Stage*. Purdue Studies in Romance Literatures Vol. 39. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue UP, 2007. Paper. 260pp.

SUSAN PAUN DE GARCÍA
Dennison University

Strange as it may seem, the idea that performance is at the heart of the development of theater has not been given its due, especially by textual scholars. It is arguably not that surprising at all, given the tenuous nature of performance and the absence of tangible evidence. While texts have been preserved, catalogued, edited, and studied, the same cannot be said for most performances, whether of a single text, company, or actor. Without records to indicate the hierarchy (or even existence) of key performance factors, we are left to speculate which traditions, trends, or individuals held greatest sway, which marked the turning points that led to the creation of a national Spanish theater. Bruce Burningham sets out to do just that in a perceptive and well reasoned consideration of the es-

sence of performance: the relationship—dialogic in principle—that exists between performer and spectator. Rather than a study of the internal dynamics of a playtext, Burningham ponders the evidence and theory of the performance text, even those texts that have no words at all. The hero, in Burningham's opening words, is the actor, in the collective, generic, most basic sense.

Burningham builds his case beginning with the pre-Gutenberg world of orality, focusing on the public nature of entertainment. In five clearly and elegantly written chapters that essentially constitute an inquiry into the meaning and tradition of "acting," *Radical Theatricality* seeks to "articulate a theory of performance that can illuminate a wide variety of performance-oriented activities" not only within but also beyond the Iberian Peninsula (4). In the first chapter, "Reinventing Thespis," Burningham challenges some of the central and long-held assumptions of the nature of theater, namely, the Thespis myth and the *quem quaetitis* trope, both of which place *logos* at the center. Instead, Burningham posits that the jongleur should be considered the archetypal actor, and that the essence of theater is the connection and communication between actor and audience. Chapter 2, "Singers of Tales on Simple Stages," focuses on the work of these medieval performers, and makes a convincing case for the existence of a thriving performance tradition outside of the church: "the early Spanish theater did not

simply spring into being without a direct performative connection to the medieval singers of tales and their simple stages," their "registers" and "dialects" functioning as the "medieval vernacular of a larger performance tradition within which the liturgical drama served as the high-cultural Latinate" (88-89). In Chapter 3, "Picaresque Actors and Their Theater," Burningham turns his attention to the acting profession, specifically as an oral tradition passing down not only texts but also performance practices. Burningham cleverly shows how the "essence of theater" intersects with the new literary genre that became the novel, with little to separate the "pícaro" and the "comediante" as each engages his audience, incorporating it into the spectacle and making it his accomplice. This reader found particularly engaging Burningham's discussion of Cervantes's treatment of the Maese Pedro episode in *Don Quijote*, which is most theatrical when the narrator moves front and center, drawing attention to himself "as a performative construct" (131). Chapter 4, "'Corralling' the Jongleuresque," argues that on the early Spanish stage, the techniques of the jongleuresque performance traditions were as important as the literary texts created for the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century stage, and indeed that even canonical playwrights like Lope or Calderón would have taken them into consideration as they penned their plays. At the same time, Burningham examines how the essential "openness" of this street tra-

dition was limited by both physical factors such as theater architecture and scenery as well as the texts themselves. Chapter 5, "Playwrights and the Actorly Text," turns to dramatic theorists of the early Spanish stage and traces the evidence of anxiety towards and a vacillation between "writerly" and "actorly" approaches to dramatic texts. Culminating in an examination of Lope's *Arte nuevo*, Burningham concludes that Lope, a post-Gutenberg literary figure, vacillates between the two extremes, but ultimately privileges "the Player," with whom he identifies, "ceding [...] definitive textual authority to the *corral* actors" (212).

This is a fascinating book, both entertaining and informative. Burningham engages the reader in the application of his theories over a wide range of times, texts, theories, and media. Well-documented and at the same time highly original in the combination and presentation of diverse and disparate materials and authors, the book invites and inspires further exploration and dialogue. One can always quibble and point out sources that might have been included or performance traditions that could have been discussed—the Franciscan idea of theatre or performance comes to mind—but this is a most satisfying exploration and study of the central concept of theater that offers important insights, not only into the origins of Spanish theater but also into the nature of performance.

Gascón, Christopher D. *The Woman Saint in Spanish Golden Age Drama*. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 2006. Hardcover. 203 pp. \$43.50

ROBERT STONE
United States Naval Academy

This book, in applying several theoretical and anthropological models to its subject, bears fruit when pointing us “back to the conflict in the text” (33). It is not, nor does it claim to be, a definitive reading of the dramas analyzed in depth: *Muerte del Apetito*, *Vida y muerte de Santa Teresa de Jesús*, *La margarita del Tajo que dio nombre a Santarén*, *El mágico prodigioso*, *Dicha y desdicha del juego y devoción de la Virgen*, and Tirso’s trilogy *La Santa Juana*. Rather, it succeeds in finding contradictions inherent in texts that would appear to be vehicles of orthodoxy, i.e., “a commemorative rehearsing of foundational myths performed in order to strengthen the common bonds between the members of a community [that] evolved into a mirror of contemporary Tridentine Spain” (29). Each of the book’s main chapters pairs a drama written by a female author (either Sor Marcela de San Félix, illegitimate daughter of Lope de Vega, or Angela de Azevedo)

with one by a male (Lope, Calderón, or Tirso). All Spanish in the book is well translated by the author.

The first work analyzed is not strictly speaking a *comedia*, but an allegorical drama composed for “an audience of fasting nuns” (46). In reading *Muerte del Apetito*, however, Gascón lays the groundwork for the strongest argument to which he will return: that desire is inflamed by imitation. Less convincing, however, are the ritualistic elements explored in these plays. For one, to note this element in each is practically to state the obvious – drama *is* fundamentally ritualistic. Gascón implicitly deals with this by bringing unusual perspectives to bear, but the fit is not always a comfortable one, as when an anthropologist’s observations on matriarchal ritual in a Ghanaian tribe are applied to dramas describing the life of Santa Juana – yes, the woman’s role as mediator is present in both, but surely an instance of this might have been found closer to home.

Because the dramas in question are naturally didactic, the analysis can at times verge on stating the obvious to those familiar with Christian dogma. At other times, the critique seems to overreach itself, as when a jealous God is sexualized without first looking into the many Old Testament examples of petty behavior on the part of the deity. To be fair, the treatment of God as a jilted husband is given some context when the author explicates the poetic parallels between the nun’s convent and the Garden

of Eden. Similarly, the figure of the Virgin in these dramas is amply discussed in Lacanian and Kristevan terms, but not much as a socio-political phenomenon developing parallel to Spanish efforts to elevate Mary's official status within the Church. Much more attention is given to the saintly female figures in these dramas as what Gascón terms desiring subjects, desired objects, or mediators.

Borrowing anthropological notions of ritual from Victor Turner and René Girard and applying them to these plays leads to the thesis that "Just as ritual perpetuates what it seeks to reject, so too does the woman saint's play vindicate the worldliness it would appear to vilify" (18). Clearly, in order for behavior to become saintly, the context of malfeasance or potential transgression is essential: even when preaching to the choir, the choir would like to see a little conflict. Furthermore, "Like ritual, these plays can ultimately make no claim to absolute truth and power: occasional slippages appear to compromise the ability of the works to define virtue absolutely" (25). To some degree such claims have lost their urgency in a world where most literary critics probably accept these positions readily. Today's scholar perhaps wishes for more historical and less theoretical context for these analyses, for example, more detailed discussions of Mariolatry, free will, the Protestant threat and the practical uses of saints, in order to flesh out such provocative statements as, "Rome saw in the legends of the saints an opportu-

nity to counter the Protestant emphasis on predestination by promoting the importance of diligence and virtuous action" (30).

Another broad and highly thought-provoking claim is that imitation or mimesis is the constant motive for all kinds of actions, both good and ill: "sacred and profane are inextricably intertwined, each one dependent on the other for the efficacy of its expression" (19). The most compelling sections of the book are those in which the author demonstrates the workings of mimetic desire, specifically in Azevedo's *La margarita del Tajo que dio nombre a Santarén* and Calderón's well-known *El mágico prodigioso*. Here examples of passion piqued or increased abound when a rival or peer shows interest in pursuing a particular mode of moral or immoral behavior. These situations may be seen easily to apply not only to the *comedias*, but also to many situations in the world at large, making the anthropological approach very effective here. The fact that a good deal of historical as well as critical background is given for these two dramas helps to make this chapter the most successful one in the book. It is also heartening to see the author take on A.A. Parker's reading of the Calderón play, a reading based in the concept of *ignorancia*, "a failure to obtain knowledge one should possess" (110); Gascón skillfully counters with *ignorancia*'s "twin, mimesis," or the imitation of the desires of another. By replacing human passivity that leads to sin with

a pursuit that could lead to either good or bad results, Gascón transcends the confines of a strictly Catholic interpretation for Catholic dramas and offers something more universal: indeed, according to his reading of Lope's hagiographic *Santa Teresa*, only the Virgin Mary finally triumphs over mimetic desire, not to mention the Original Sin that so concerned critics such as Parker.

Like the works it analyzes, which dramatize struggles between the sacred and the profane, this monograph seeks to strike a balance between sublime theory and the more mundane practice of close reading. Both the plays and the book merit further scrutiny as scholars continue the process of placing story and history in their respective, shared contexts. Gascón's bibliography and footnotes are thorough guides to this endeavor, and his unselfish critical perspective encourages scholars to carry it through. Taken as a whole, his book underscores the baroque "tension the dramatist creates by describing ascetic virtue through worldly language" (64). In the case of the famous playwright-priests, these contradictions will come as no surprise, but it is refreshing to see women authors of the era express comparable desires from positions that are literally more cloistered, and equally refreshing to see a male critic contribute to feminist scholarship on the Golden Age.

Juan Pérez de Montalban, *La Monja Alférez*. Ed.
Luzmila Camacho Platero. Hispanic Monographs
Newark, DE.: Juan de la Cuesta, 2007.

RUTH SÁNCHEZ IMIZCOZ
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El estudio crítico de esta edición está dividido en varias secciones para su lectura con una pequeña biografía del autor, en la que resalta las malas relaciones entre Montalbán y Quevedo, en contraste con las buenas relaciones que la familia tenía con Lope de Vega. Sigue con una muy breve biografía de la Catalina de Erauso histórica, como Camacho la llama, en la que se ha de resaltar el cambio de nombre de Catalina a Antonio, en sus últimos años. El siguiente paso presenta los diferentes manuscritos y recopilaciones que han tenido lugar, y de éstos cuáles se mantienen hoy en día y cuáles se han perdido con los consecuentes problemas, como la pérdida del manuscrito original y la incapacidad de fijar la fecha de nacimiento de la Monja Alférez. Camacho recoge y resume los trabajos de Joaquín Ferrer, James Fitzmaurice-Kelly, entre otros, para explicar el estilo de las memorias, ya que éstas tienen elementos tanto de la picaresca, en la persona de Catalina, como de la novela de caballerías. Además se han de

añadir todas las interpolaciones que pueden haber sido producto de la fantasía de la autora o de los copistas. Con todo las memorias son típicas de “los soldados de la época de la Colonia” (15). Esto da entrada para relatar el argumento de la comedia creada por Montalbán y estrenada en el año 1626 en Madrid, resumiendo los tres actos de la comedia y señalando el final abierto de la misma ya que en aquel momento Catalina estaba en Roma en audiencia con el Papa. Lo interesante de este estudio empieza con el análisis que hace de las discrepancias, y similitudes, entre la comedia y las memorias editadas por Ferrer. Camacho indica que lo que Montalbán buscaba no era una traducción directa de las memorias al teatro; lo que realmente buscaba era presentar una adaptación teatral de la biografía en la que se resaltara la “rareza” de Catalina. Y para ello creó una comedia de capa y espada, a la que dio un final relativamente abierto, ya que la historia de Catalina no había terminado todavía cuando la obra se estrenó. Lo que presenta Montalbán es la mujer varonil, bajo del punto de vista del teatro, es decir una mujer que imita al varón, y unas veces lleva ropa de hombre y otras no. Aun así se recrean en esta obra algunas de las situaciones más problemáticas de la biografía, como son la muerte de Miguel de Erauso, su hermano, y la propia reluctancia de Catalina en aceptar su papel de mujer. De esta forma, resalta Camacho, se crea un héroe de comedia que va a gustar al público y a la vez va a resultar honorable.

Totalmente distinta también es la relación entre los dos hermanos Miguel y Catalina que en las memorias ni se reconocen y en la obra sí. Mientras que en las memorias Catalina mata a su hermano en un duelo, en la obra Miguel se recupera de la herida. Montalbán evita así un protagonista fraticida y crea un héroe más atractivo para las tablas.

El siguiente tema en el estudio es la presentación de la crítica literaria a través de los años. Esto lo va a hacer de forma concisa pero clara. Camacho menciona los trabajos de Fitzmaurice-Kelly, Carmen Bravo-Villasante, y Jack Parker, entre otros, que tratan el personaje de Catalina desde un punto de vista moral-educativo. Camacho va a centrar su análisis en los trabajos de género que han publicado Mary Elizabeth Perry, Sara Taddeo, Irma Vélez y Sherry Velasco, todos ellos con una visión totalmente distinta de los artículos anteriores. En estos el protagonista rechaza su parte femenina, creando una dicotomía típica del barroco verdad/mentira, varón/mujer. Esta dicotomía es lo que permite que Montalbán lleve a la escena este personaje, sin resolución al final, y a la vez pueda presentar el amor entre dos mujeres.

Los dos siguientes apartados se titulan: "Travestismo, lesbianismo y la identidad transgénerica." El primero presenta el pensamiento que se tenía en el Siglo de Oro de estos conceptos en general y el segundo se concentra específicamente en Catalina de Erauso. Por ejemplo, en el apartado concerniente

a la Catalina histórica, Camacho sigue el trabajo de Judith Butler (1990) sobre la idea del género unida la de performance, el concepto de género va unido al de la repetición mecánica del comportamiento (41). De esta forma Camacho pasa a explicar lo que llama la “multiplicidad genérica de Catalina” (41) y como ésta sabía adaptarse a las circunstancias y a sus alrededores, y de acuerdo a la combinación de éstos arreglaba su comportamiento: novicia, criado, soldado, novicia, hombre. Camacho reconoce la dificultad de definir la sexualidad de Catalina, sobre todo en relación con la época en la que vivó y usando términos modernos que no existían en aquel entonces.

En sección titulada “Travestismo en el teatro español del Siglo de Oro y en *La Monja Alférez*,” Camacho va de lo general a lo particular partiendo de la idea de que la mujer vestida de hombre no es ni original de la época ni nueva en la literatura. Es a través del travestismo que la mujer varonil alcanza una presencia constante no sólo en las tablas sino en la mente del público, y se convierte en un símbolo de independencia, que nunca llega a desaparecer del todo de la escena española. *La Monja Alférez* es un producto de su tiempo y de la tradición del teatro y aunque el personaje de Guzmán no es del todo típico, el resto de los personajes y situaciones si crean un microcosmo ficticio de siglo XVII (49).

La última sección hace una comparación entre dos escenas: una de *La Monja Alférez* y otra de *El Bur-*

lador de Sevilla de Tirso de Molina. Ambas escenas son similares ya que relatan la violación de sendas mujeres doña Ana por don Diego en *La Monja* y la duquesa Isabela por don Juan, en *El Burlador*. Las dos mujeres se dan cuenta de que están con el hombre equivocado y las dos buscan la restauración de su honor. En el caso de doña Ana, Guzmán hace todo lo que es necesario para que don Diego se case con doña Ana y le devuelva el honor robado. En el caso de Isabela, Camacho comete un error al confundir los personajes de *El Burlador*, ya que, aunque es verdad que El Comendador mata a don Juan para vengar su honor, Isabela no es su hija, y en este caso es el Rey el único que puede devolver el honor a Isabela al casarla con el duque Octavio. De todas formas, el resultado de ambas obras es formulaico, ya que en obras como éstas se esperaba que todo se solucionara con la boda final.

La conclusión resume la habilidad de estas dos Catalinas, real y ficticia, para manipular las normas sociales de su época, lo que las convierte en el “primer transgénero oficialmente reconocido” en la historia y el teatro español (64). Este estudio, sobre todo, es de gran ayuda para aquellos que enseñamos tanto el teatro del Siglo de Oro como la Las memorias de Catalina de Erauso.

Thacker, Jonathan. *A Companion to Golden Age Theatre*. London: Tamesis, 2007. xiii + 222 pp.

DONALD R. LARSON
The Ohio State University

Jonathan Thacker's *Companion to Golden Age Theatre* is a distinguished addition to the shelf of books that survey the development of Spanish drama in the early modern period. Like its most eminent predecessors, it is well-informed, up-to-date, comprehensive, fair-minded, and engagingly written. Where it differs from them most obviously is in the sustained attention that it devotes to questions of performance, both performance in the Golden Age and also performance in our own time. Readers of this journal will surely find this to be a feature of particular interest.

The *Companion* is divided into seven substantial chapters. These, the heart of the book, are preceded by a brief introduction and followed by two appendices, one providing a summary of the characteristics of the various verse forms found in early modern Spanish plays, the other offering a listing of the most easily available translations of some of those plays into English. There is also a final, very useful section containing suggestions for further

reading. Throughout the book, a number of points are repeatedly emphasized. One has to do with the sheer vastness of the corpus of Golden Age drama and the enormous variety of themes, styles, and forms to be found within it. Another concerns the continuously evolving nature of that drama, something which, along with the foregoing, makes it difficult, if not impossible, to arrive at completely satisfactory generalizations. Still another involves the multiplicity of voices heard on early modern stages, some sounding in conformity with the prevailing ideas and values of the time, others in opposition. An important corollary of this last point, of course, and a notion that receives prominent emphasis in the *Companion*, is that this theatre is intimately involved with the social, political, and religious issues of its day.

The approach normally utilized in the four chapters of the *Companion* devoted to the most important authors and their works is both simple and effective. After a brief discussion of the life of the dramatists, the various categories into which their work falls are set out, and then, within each group, several significant works are analyzed, some of them well known, at least to specialists, others less so. Thacker's interpretations, especially of the more familiar plays, necessarily draw upon the work of previous scholars, but all of them are filled at the same time with original and thought-provoking observations.

Chapter one of the book is devoted to the pre-Lopean dramatists, stretching from Juan del Encina, at the beginning of the sixteenth century to Cervantes at the end. The basic theme of the chapter is the gradual emergence over a span of roughly one hundred years of a new form of theatre called the *comedia nueva*. In analyzing that evolution, Thacker gives special consideration to the contributions of Gil Vicente, Bartolomé de Torres Naharro, Lope de Rueda, Juan de la Cueva, and Cristóbal de Virués. He emphasizes that in the work of most of these—Rueda is the obvious exception—both learned and popular elements are to be found, and he relates those elements to a number of different factors, including the influence of school and university drama on sixteenth-century theatre on the one hand, and the inspiration of Italian *commedia dell'arte* on the other.

Chapter two is devoted entirely to Lope de Vega. After an enlightening analysis of the *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias*, it proceeds to a very welcome examination of Lope's often overlooked early plays. This leads in turn to a discussion of the religious plays and those works that Thacker calls the political plays. The major part of the chapter is reserved for extended treatments of the peasant plays, the comedies, and the tragedies. As might be expected, *Peribáñez* is given particular prominence in the first of these segments, *El perro del hortaleño*, in the second, and *El castigo sin venganza* in the

third. In his scrutiny of all three, Thacker is particularly adept at uncovering the subtleties of the play-texts and at disentangling the divergent point of view to be found within them.

Chapter three focuses on what Thacker terms the *comedia nueva*'s first generation, either those dramatists who were roughly contemporaneous with Lope or who were influenced by him. Its first section is devoted to a vigorous defense of the plays of Miguel de Cervantes, notable, in Thacker's opinion, both for their questioning of many of the accepted ideas of the time and for their playful experiments with form. The section that follows concentrates on the plays of Tirso de Molina. Singled out for particular comment here are the plot-heavy comedies and the moral/theological works, of which *El burlador de Sevilla* and *El condenado por desconfiado* are the most prominent examples. Moving on from Tirso, Thacker takes up, briefly, Guillén de Castro, and somewhat more lengthily Antonio Mira de Amescua, Luis Vélez de Guevara, and Juan Ruiz de Alarcón, on whose idiosyncratic works he is especially illuminating. The chapter closes with a nod to the minor dramatists of this generation and a short discussion of the female playwrights.

Chapter Four of the *Companion* is entitled "Calderón and the *Comedia*'s Second Generation," and, as might be expected, the discussion of the plays of Calderón occupies much the greater part of it. Thacker begins that discussion with an examina-

tion of the comedies, stressing their depiction of urban life, their metatheatricality, and their interest in “[asking] questions as well as causing mirth.” The next section takes up the “serious” dramas, and offers insightful analyses of the wife-murder plays (on which Thacker is particularly good), *La vida es sueño*, *El príncipe constante*, and several others. A constant theme in these analyses, as in the following section devoted to the mythological works—plays, operas, and semi-operas—is the attention that the playwright devotes to the creation of meaningful stage pictures. The chapter continues with a helpful summary of the most important aspects of the practice of the second generation of *Comedia* dramatists that set it apart from the first, and closes with a brief consideration of some of the Calderón’s collaborators and imitators, notable among them, Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla and Agustín Moreto.

Chapter five, entitled “Staging and Performance” brings together in a succinct and informative way much of what has been learned in the last several decades about early modern theatres, actors and acting, and performances. A few illustrations here might have added to its usefulness. The chapter that follows sets forth the identifying characteristics of the various sub-types of *Comedia*, as well as those of the shorter forms such as *loas*, *entremeses*, and, of course, *autos sacramentales*. The final chapter surveys concisely the critical reception accorded Golden Age theatre across the centuries, from the

preceptistas of the early modern period to the scholars of recent times. Accorded prominence among the latter is José Antonio Maravall, who, with his notion that the *Comedia* amounted to “una gran campaña de propaganda social,” ignited a still ongoing controversy.

A Companion to Golden Age Theatre is attractively printed and remarkably free of errata. More importantly, it is filled with essential information and stimulating insights. As such it will undoubtedly have great appeal to a wide variety of readers, ranging from beginners in the field to seasoned veterans. It deserves to be warmly welcomed.

Velasco, Sherry. *Male Delivery. Reproduction, Effeminacy, and Pregnant Men in Early Modern Spain*. Tennessee: Vanderbilt University Press, 2006. Paper, 209 pp.

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Aunque hoy día ciertos temas áureos ya estén demasiado trillados, no es éste el caso del reciente libro publicado por Sherry Velasco sobre el parto masculino. Este texto consta de cuatro capítulos, un epílogo y dos apéndices. Ya en su introducción, Velasco nos informa que explorará las relaciones interdependientes entre las tecnologías reproductoras, la política masculina, lo afeminado y la fluida naturaleza que resulta en la asignación del género al igual que el deseo homosexual en la España moderna. Esto se lleva a cabo a partir del análisis de *El parto de Juan Rana* de Lanini Sagredo donde se observa ansiedad en los diálogos sobre el embarazo y la salud en la concepción, el control de la natalidad, y el parto. Igualmente, se analizan ideas relacionadas con la paternidad, el poder, los partos anormales y otras monstruosidades incluyendo hermafroditas, la falta de claridad en la determinación del sexo y la sodomía que estaba relacionada

con la feminidad masculina y la terrible posibilidad de una inminente transmutación de hombre a mujer.

El capítulo primero responde a la intriga formulada que surge al contemplar la imagen del hombre preñado que ha maravillado a tantas culturas a través de tantos siglos. Velasco nos acerca a posibles razones de estos contubernios representados en la mitología, el folklore, en referencias religiosas, literarias, científicas, políticas, filosóficas y psicológicas así como en el teatro, películas y televisión. Las imágenes que analiza dentro de estos medios se encuentran relacionadas con el poder, humor, control patriarcal sobre la procreación y también como medio de entretenimiento, desafío a las nociones generales culturales de la asignación de género, la sexualidad y como defensa del status quo.

Es en el capítulo dos donde nuestra autora se adentra al análisis de la obra de Sagredo, *El parto de Juan Rana* mostrando que esta farsa está relacionada con las ansiedades culturales sobre la comprensión y el control de la sexualidad femenina y la reproducción al igual que las cualidades masculinas no claramente demarcadas que en sí contribuyeron a la creación de legislaciones reguladoras de la sodomía en la España del Siglo de Oro. Otro aspecto, sumamente genial y logrado, que aquí se considera es la función política y didáctica del humor en el entremés.

La salud femenina dentro de la natalidad junto con la fantasía masculina de alcanzar el control so-

bre el parto tal y como se presenta en la obra de Sagredo constituyen la base del tercer capítulo. A través de esta sección leemos reveladores ejemplos donde las sociedades científicas, religiosas y políticas se ocupan de describir el parto como un aspecto monstruoso, incluyendo extensas anécdotas que describen partos extraños de verdaderos monstruos, justificando de esta manera la vigilancia e intervención que fue tomando la comunidad científica sobre la natalidad y de este modo relegando y deshaciendo el control del que antes gozaban las mujeres, en especial las comadres.

La cantidad de documentación discutida y presentada en el último capítulo no deja duda alguna de que la ansiedad expresada sobre la percibida feminidad masculina del español necesitaba fuerte censura legal, moral y económica a fin de reprimir esta trasgresión palpable en la sociedad áurea. Las frecuentes representaciones del hombre afeminado estaban ligadas a prácticas homosexuales, principalmente sodomitas. Como resultado, la sociedad de aquel entonces respondió con estrictas legislaciones condenándolas como perversas y sin función procreadora. En esta época se creía que durante la gestación y después del parto el género podía transformarse de femenino a masculino y vice versa creando así la necesidad de controlar el cambio de hombre a mujer ya que lo opuesto era considerado un honor y privilegio para los implicados. Este capítulo refleja

con amplios ejemplos cómo la sociedad de la época percibía la degeneración tradicional masculina.

Los comentarios finales que hace la doctora Velasco unen las controversias del Siglo de Oro sobre la feminidad masculina con las ideas contemporáneas del metro- sexual que al igual que el español en la España Moderna se ocupa de su belleza física. A despecho de cuanta belleza hayan querido y quieran ostentar y de cuantos ejemplos de hombres preñados se hayan presentado en el pasado como en el presente relegando a la mujer a los márgenes en su función procreadora; -esté donde esté su posición, fuera o dentro de un primer plano- la que ríe al final es ella; pues, en reducidas palabras y haciendo uso del dicho popular actual: “Los hijos de mis hijas, nietos míos serán, los de mis hijos, Dios sabrá.”

Vélez de Guevara, Luis. *El rey en su imaginación*.
Eds. William R. Manson and C. George Peale. Newark, DE: Juan de la Cuesta, 2002. 196 pp.

ANTHONY J. GRUBBS
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As the author of the extremely popular novel *El Diablo cojuelo* and hundreds of *comedias*, Luis Vélez de Guevara was a popular literary figure in early modern Spain. More recently, because of the seemingly inexhaustible efforts of William R. Manson and C. George Peale in their study of his corpus of *comedias*, Vélez de Guevara's dramatic works are more accessible and familiar. This edition, approved by the Modern Languages Association of America, offers an erudite study of the work, buttressed by ample supplementary materials that include an introductory study by Thomas A. O'Connor, a bibliographical study of the play by C. George Peale, an extensive bibliography, and 25 pages of end notes, resulting in a comprehensive examination of the play.

At the beginning of his introduction, O'Connor briefly discusses the concept of *parthenos*, which is taken from Greek mythology and has to do with the psychological and social development of a young

woman, and its relationship to the *comedia*. He notes that, while not the same as its classical predecessor, this period of insecurity is often used in the cloak and dagger plays as a vehicle to interrogate societal norms with respect to arranged marriages, and in a more general sense, love. O'Connor then offers detailed summary of *El rey en su imaginación*, in which he breaks down the play into manageable fragments. More than a simple synopsis of the play, he explains cultural conventions of the time as presented in the play and discusses the specific relevance of each fragment to the work as a whole; the characters are also introduced in detail. This preliminary study is extensive and exceptional, leaving the reader with a solid knowledge of all aspects of the play before reading the work.

In the second introductory essay, Peale breaks down into four parts his discussion of specific bibliographical issues of the play. First, he begins by describing the autographed manuscript, its peculiarities and some of the revisions made due to censorship. In the second section, Peale addresses some of the linguistic anomalies and coincidences found in the work, including the use of *Madrileño* Spanish in the Sicilian Court, the limited meter, and the play's brevity. He also points out the similarities that this *comedia* shares with Lope de Vega's *El poder en el discreto* and two of Mira de Amescua's plays, *Amor, ingenio y mujer* and *No hay reinar como vivir*. The third section describes Vélez's me-

ticulous treatment of language and posits that any peculiarities cannot be coincidental. He concludes this part by describing Vélez's restrained use of *culterana* and *gongorista* conventions as ironic. Finally, Peale closes out his introduction with specific details about the censorship the work faced and the circumstances of its premiere and performance.

El rey en su imaginación is a *comedia siciliana* that centers on the exterior and interior conflicts of Diana, Queen of Sicily. The former struggle is based on her right as woman to rule Sicily, a region always ruled by men; she finds herself defending her sovereignty from the King on Naples, who covets the land. Diana's inner conflict has to do with her love for Carlos, the son of a rich laborer and a man that awakens love in the heart of the queen. He, too, loves the queen but realizes that he can never be King except in his imagination, so he joins the Sicilian army to serve her in whatever way possible. During a respite between battles with Naples, the soldiers role play and Carlos plays the role of King, which he does so with nobility and grace. Problems arise when he takes the role to heart and refuses to leave the imaginary world. The play ends with Carlos marrying Diana, as it turns out he is the actual King of Sicily, who was switched at birth for Diana. The play addresses political, social, and emotional issues prevalent at the time. Manson's and Peale's version is meticulously edited. Changes and corrections of the autographed manuscript and J. Gómez

Ocerín's 1920 edition are noted at the bottom of the page. Ample notes are included at the end of the text, which is a bit cumbersome and distracting, but understandable due to their completeness, making it nearly impossible to include them at the foot of the page. As mentioned in other reviews, the font size could be larger to facilitate reading of the text.

Manson and Peale continue to maintain the highest standard of attention to detail and erudition in their editions of the *comedias* of Luis Vélez de Guevara. Their work has yielded a complete and definitive study of *El rey en su imaginación* that will benefit scholars and students alike in their investigation of early modern Spanish theater.

Vollendorf, Lisa. *The Lives of Women: A New History of Inquisitorial Spain*. Nashville: Vanderbilt UP, 2005. 266 pp.

KATHLEEN COSTALES
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In spite of the remarkable degree of social control imposed on the Spanish populace by the Inquisition and the Counter- Reformation there was a boom of women writers in seventeenth century Spain. This can be attributed to several factors: The promotion of a limited education for women by the Humanists combined with the increase in the construction of convents led to a rise in the number of literate women. Furthermore, beginning with the writings of Teresa of Avila, the written confession became an acceptable means of expression for women. However, her success also legitimized women's participation in a writing culture as such and women both religious and secular began to write, producing Spain's first cohort of women writers.

Historians have long studied the political, economical and social features of this period; however, they have tended to do so at the macrocosmic level. The stories of women during this time are largely

absent, and even much of the research on gender has tended to rely on men's depiction of women. Lisa Vollendorf attempts to remedy this by exploring representations of gender across a range of texts—both archival and literary—written primarily by women. The women represented are single, widows, wives, daughters and mothers from varying social classes and ethnic backgrounds. With their stories, Vollendorf examines the commonalities of their experiences and ways in which they present these experiences to the world.

The book is divided into four sections of two chapters each. Part I studies two Inquisition cases. The first deals with the trial of the Moorish hermaphrodite, Eleno/a de Céspedes, who, interestingly enough, had actually been married twice, first as a woman and then as a man. The second case is that of Bernarda Manuel a *conversa* accused of Judaizing. Both cases delve into the question of how gender and femininity are defined while also calling attention to the anxiety that sexual and gender non-conformity produced.

Part II first conducts a parallel reading of María de Zayas's *Desengaños amorosos* with Mariana de Carvajal's *Navidades de Madrid*. While Carvajal's writing is much less politically charged and lacks Zayas's "racy" homoerotic themes, both authors foreground women's issues and the importance of homosocial relations and in doing so legitimize these concerns as valid topics of discussion. Chapter

four is one of the only sections that deals with theatre. In plays by women, Ángela de Azevedo, María de Zayas and Ana Caro, women are foregrounded throughout and are not relegated to secondary roles. A focus on women's issues challenges a culture that treats women as objects for exchange and highlights the sacrifices demanded of women. Vollendorf notes, however, that even women-authored plays end in marriage and in the reaffirmation of the hierarchy, and so she proposes a model of reading from the middle, thereby focusing on the disorder and social transgression of the second act rather than merely anticipating the marriage at the end. Although insightful, scholars and historians of Spanish life and culture are not, perhaps, the target audience as many of the references are centered in Shakespearean drama. Vollendorf explains that a *comedia* is a play, that theater in Spain, as in England, was accessible to the masses. Lope is "Shakespeare's Spanish counterpart" (74). While discussing female characters in male-authored plays, she references the shrew, Portia and Rosalind, not to Laurencia, Rosaura or Mencia.

Part III looks at life within the convent as reflected through the writings of the religious. The most interesting section examines Sor Marcela de San Félix's *coloquios*, a collection of six one-act allegorical plays that follow a novice as she takes vows and seeks spiritual perfection. These plays were written for an exclusively *intramuros* audi-

ence, so there was little risk of misinterpretation by the outside world. Sor Marcela writes with humor and spontaneity as she jokes and complains of the rigors of convent life while also focusing on devotion and spiritual perfection. Throughout, she advocates for collaboration and solidarity among women, repeating the themes of the importance of homosocial bonding found also in secular women's writing.

Part IV examines first the role of single women within 17th Century Spain. Curiously, while Vollendorf states "some women neither entered the convent nor married" (147), they were nevertheless self-sufficient. However, of the four women studies, two were, in fact, religious. The *beata* María de Orozco was loosely affiliated with a Carmelite convent and Teresa Valle was a nun and the founder of the Benedictine Convento de la Encarnación. This would seem to suggest that the career paths open to women were more restrictive than Vollendorf implies. The final chapter examines women's education and women's roles as advisors, educators, and leaders. The author advocates an approach that considers both formal and informal education and posits that women were more engaged in educational activities and more highly educated than we have previously acknowledged.

By studying the lives of individual women from a variety of backgrounds, Vollendorf offers a fascinating look into the ways in which these

women worked within and around the limited options that were available to them. While much work remains, she offers insight into topics as far ranging as gender construction, domestic abuse, sexuality, ethnicity, and religion and begins to create the story of women in early modern Spain.

