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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.
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CONTENTS

Performance Studies

- Calderonian Engines of Change: Performance,
Design and Hibridity in Lewis Spratlan's Opera,
Life is a Dream
Corey A. Reed 9
- Bourdieu, Boswell and the Baroque Body: Cultural
Choreography in *Fuenteovejuna*
Laura L. Vidler 38
- Notes on the Staging of Jacinto Cordeiro's *El
juramento ante Dios, y lealtad contra el amor*
Jaime Cruz-Ortiz 65
- From the Town with More Theaters Than Taxis:
Calderón, Lope and Tirso at the 2008 Almagro
Festival (*Second of two parts*)
Duncan Wheeler 102
- De Fuente Ovejuna a Ciudad Juárez* o Lope según
el teatro del oprimido
Sergio Adillo Rufo 143
- Dramatizing Dorotea: Cervantes's Plucky Heroine
in the RSC's *Cardenio*
Maryrica Ortiz Lottman 162

Interviews

Interview with Laurence Boswell <i>Kathleen Jeffs</i>	189
----------------------------------------------------------	-----

<i>Cardenio</i> , or Cervantes and Shakespeare Re- Imagined: An Interview with Gregory Doran <i>Maryrica Ortiz Lottman</i>	199
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

<i>Theater Reviews</i>	228
------------------------	-----

<i>Book Reviews</i>	288
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Performance Studies

CALDERONIAN ENGINES OF CHANGE: PERFORMANCE, DESIGN, AND HYBRIDITY IN LEWIS SPRATLAN'S OPERA, *LIFE IS A DREAM*

CORY A. REED

The University of Texas at Austin

In the summer of 2010, Lewis Spratlan's Pulitzer Prize-winning opera, *Life Is a Dream*, a close adaptation of Calderón's *La vida es sueño*, enjoyed its world premiere at the Santa Fe Opera.¹ While the successful integration of Calderón's drama into the operatic repertoire is itself notable, the performance of this work and its high-concept design in particular, not only breaks important new ground in opera but also demonstrates the breadth of creative possibilities for the theatrical representation of Calderonian themes in the twenty-first-century. The opera breathes vigorous new life into Calderón's drama. In many surprising ways, the operatic medium enhances our understanding of Calderón, realizing the performance potential not typically achieved by scaled-down theatrical productions of the *comedia*. In particular, the seamless

collaboration among music, voice, libretto, scenery, and costumes creates a universe of its own, in which characters find themselves caught among changing eras, epistemes, technologies, and political regimes, foregrounding themes of hybridity and liminality that are as much a part of our own cultural discourse as they were in early modern Spain.

Operatic and *comedia* performance are inherently different, as generically distinct as Spratlan's composition is from Calderón's dramaturgy. Yet, operatic and theatrical discourses share the heterogeneity and dynamism of live performance, which combines spatial and temporal codes in a work of art that, as Keir Elam writes, by definition remains in progress and is ephemeral (Elam 46). Both opera and theatre exhibit the polysemic complexity of theatrical systems, including the space of the stage, the corporality of actors, movements and gesture, costumes, lighting, and scenery. In opera, however, music is a foregrounded, essential mode of communication that conveys emotion and feeling through the complex interaction of musical tonalities, intervals, phrases, and modes of articulation that include both vocal and instrumental expression. As Sandra Corse explains, opera is a heterogeneous and inherently contradictory, hybridized genre that comprises not only music and theatre, but also semi-narrative and dramatic codes (Corse 42). Because of this performative hybridity, opera becomes an especially effective venue for the representation of a drama like *La vida es sueño*,

which is itself about hybridity, becoming, and liminality.

A further distinction between opera and theatrical performance can be made regarding space and related considerations of design. Whereas the practical necessities of *comedia* performance in the *corrales* (both during the seventeenth century and in today's theatrical festivals) presume a sparseness of scenic design and require the audience to configure space and time in their imaginations, opera—particularly at the turn of the twenty-first century—is known for its bigness. Yet the sumptuous staging, scenery, costumes, and exceptionally high production values that characterize twenty-first-century operatic production are well suited to Calderón's play, which explores universal themes of mythic importance, as experienced on a personal level by conflicted subjects. Watching the performance of Spratlan's opera is akin to seeing Calderón's play for the first time, with a fresh critical eye, free of the expectations conditioned by decades of literary-critical interpretation and conventional theatrical performance. In particular, director Kevin Newbury and scenic designer David Korins have created a production that emphasizes spatial, temporal, and thematic hybridity through a coherent system of scenery and staging that complements the same themes internalized by Calderón's enigmatic and self-conscious characters.

The ingenious use of space in this production to convey epochal and political tensions under-

scores the fact that Calderón, like Spratlan's contemporary audience, lived during a time of change, a liminal period between eras whose inherent conflicts permeated nearly all forms of cultural activity. This production relies heavily on machines and technology as signifiers of societal and epistemic change. Creating a visually stimulating and constantly moving system of cogs and wheels, pistons, steel girders, and neon lights, juxtaposed to ever-present images of telescopes, planets, and stars, the literally timeless and highly technical design of the Santa Fe production evokes change through scenic and mechanical movement that underscores the political, ideological, and epistemic instability of the world inhabited by Calderón's protagonists and links them to our own cultural associations between technology and change at the dawn of the third millennium. Even the opera's ending, which reconfigures Segismundo's motivation for conversion and ambivalently leaves open tragic possibilities, causes us to rethink Calderón by opposition. Ultimately, Calderón's play is very suitable to the grandness of the operatic medium, which recasts the drama's central conflicts in mythic, universal terms that effectively realize the play's theatrical potential.

The adaptation of Calderonian drama to the operatic medium should not surprise us; what is remarkable is that it took nearly four centuries. Why no great classical, romantic, or *verismo* setting of this play exists is surprising, given the appropriateness—and sheer performativity—of the original

material for the operatic stage. Calderón's drama is inherently musical. While Calderón's lyricism is well recognized by scholars, at least in a poetic sense related to his baroque development of polymetric verse, scholarship on early modern drama often neglects the importance Calderón gave music in his dramaturgy. Miguel Querol proposes that "Calderón es el dramaturgo español que más importancia y mayor cabida ha dado en la música en su teatro," documenting musical content in approximately 84% of his dramas (1155). Calderón apparently believed that music was a particularly effective language for the expression of harmonious moral actions on the stage, writing in *Los dos amantes del cielo*: "No es música solamente/ la de la voz que entonada/ se escucha: música es/ cuanto hace de consonancias" (Querol 1156). The musicality of Calderonian drama extends beyond the mere incorporation of music into performance. It appears likely that Calderón was familiar with the emergent genre of opera and modeled many of his dramas on Italian operatic antecedents. Louise K. Stein contends that Calderón borrowed extensively from Italian opera to create what she characterizes as a "hybrid genre of semi-opera" (168). It is somehow fitting that Calderón's best-known and most popular work would itself be translated into the operatic medium for performance, if only in our own time.² The play is highly lyrical in its expression of social, political, and psychological harmony and dissonance, and might even be considered proto-operatic

in terms of its treatment of grand themes and motifs, including the pomp and circumstance of court life, battles and usurpation, the universal concepts of destiny and will, the conflict between humans and divine providence, the education of a prince, the illusory aspect of existence, and other dramatic expressions of larger than life ideas. Indeed, it might be said that Calderón's work has been waiting for a full-scale treatment of these themes not possible in his own time, which is realized by Spratlan's opera.



Segismundo (Roger Honeywell) climbs the telescoping cylinders of his prison tower, which is crowned with a futuristic, steampunk throne (Photo by Ken Howard).

The path to the production of Spratlan's opera is as much a *confuso laberinto* as the Calderonian world depicted therein. In 1975, New Haven Opera Theatre commissioned Spratlan to compose an opera based on *La vida es sueño*. Spratlan turned to his Hispanist colleague at Amherst College, James Maraniss, to write the libretto in English. The pair collaborated for nearly three years, until the opera company closed in 1977 before the nearly completed opera could be performed. For the next two decades, the opera was shelved while Spratlan unsuccessfully tried to find another company interested in producing the piece. When a fellow composer encouraged him in the 1990s to stage the opera, Spratlan returned to his unfinished work, "sanding down" a few vocal parts (Spratlan's own term) to render them less jumpy and more performable. Ultimately he was satisfied that his composition used the musical language he wanted to express Calderón's story, without requiring major rewriting or revision (Maraniss, Newbury, and Spratlan). Spratlan produced two concert performances of the opera's second act in 2000. A recording merging these two concerts won the Pulitzer Prize for Music that year, placing Spratlan alongside Aaron Copland, Gian Carlo Menotti, Samuel Barber, and Wynton Marsalis, among others, on a short list of distinguished American composers to have received the award (to which would be added John Corigliano and John Adams in the years following Spratlan's award). Another ten

years passed before Santa Fe Opera proposed a full-scale production of the complete opera for its 2010 season. The semi-outdoor setting of Santa Fe's open-air opera house, nestled among the foothills of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, was cited as an ideal venue for an opera that takes place in a literal and metaphorical wilderness; the possibility that *La vida es sueño* itself may have been performed historically in Santa Fe, a Spanish city at the time Calderón composed his play, also added to the local appeal (Belcher 40-41).

The Santa Fe production creates a timeless setting for the story that feels simultaneously like past, present, and future, emphasizing the universality of Calderón's metaphysical and political themes. During a panel discussion of the production, director Newbury explained, "we made up a world," and characterized the design concept, which juxtaposes Renaissance and baroque period costumes with cold, modern, industrial sets, as "Caravaggio meets steampunk" (Maraniss, Newbury, and Spratlan).³ The sets include an intricate system of steel girders with fluorescent lights, reminiscent of cathode-ray tubes, adorned with metal cogs and wheels, which move and rotate outward from sleek metal-finished walls to create multiple effects from scene to scene. During the court scenes the girders are at orderly, right angles, for example, and they transform into a labyrinthine jumble of acute angles to designate Segismundo's wilderness or the maze of rocks behind which Clarín hides during the climactic battle.

This ingenious set, which constantly changes its appearance, underscores the ever-shifting and illusory nature of earthly appearances presented in Calderón's play and reminds us of the complicated relationship between chaos and order in the work. The images of cogs and wheels further decorate nearly every corner of the stage, adorning windows and doors, reminding the audience of the tension between "science and God's law" (Maraniss, *Life* 12) that creates the basic thematic conflict of the opera, and establishing the importance of machines as emblems of both mechanization in the modern world and the machinations of political expediency.



Segismundo (Roger Honeywell), in princely garb, meets Estrella (Carin Gilfry), whose crown stylistically represents rays of light radiating from her head (Photo by Ken Howard).

Within this industrial labyrinth move the principal singers and chorus, attired in elaborate, impeccably designed period costumes with playful accessories. Especially notable is Estrella, who emerges with stylized beams of light that literally radiate from her head. This, of course, is her crown, but also clearly represents her as a star, a literalization of her name that evokes images of royalty as well as Basilio's reliance on astrology and the early modern era's burgeoning consciousness of modern cosmology.⁴ This last aspect is further underscored by the continual onstage presence of telescopes and other mechanical instruments that reflect the epochal conflict of astrology and astronomy and the respective roles of stars and planets in both the medieval and modern traditions.⁵ Anthony J. Cascardi has described Basilio as a scientist caught between medieval and Renaissance conceptions of scientific method (Cascardi 13-15). Spratlan's opera characterizes Basilio in the same way, and Santa Fe's production emphasizes this scientific liminality by placing a large telescope downstage, which he frequently consults both for viewing the stars (in order to cast Segismundo's horoscope) and for spotting the rebel army (revealing the modern technology's more practical, material uses for tactical, military advantage). These scenic design elements, stark, cold, and industrial, always in motion, evoke the tension between the Copernican revolution, with its emphasis on the motion of celestial bodies, and Basilio's consultation of astrological

prophecy. Christopher Soufas has read *La vida es sueño* as representing a central discursive conflict between pre-Cartesian and Cartesian systems of thought (Soufas 288). The performance of Spratlan's opera further emphasizes this epistemic change, visually depicting a conflicted Basilio (played by bass-baritone John Cheek) pulled in opposite directions by medieval and modern systems of knowledge, and reminding the audience of metaphysical consequences of the emergence of the modern episteme during the time of Calderón.

The cold rigidity of the industrial, metallic set also contrasts with the warm, soft, and earthy palette of Segismundo (tenor Roger Honeywell) dressed in animal skins. The motion of the set provides a visual reminder of the development of Segismundo's character in the process of becoming, in contrast with the stasis of court life, represented in the opera as overtly stylized, artificial, and self-conscious. In this production, the court is the more dreamlike world, in contrast with Segismundo's tower; everyone on stage is playing a role and is conscious of his/her own role-playing. The artificiality of the court is further emphasized by Spratlan's music, which combines in this scene Renaissance madrigals, masques, a Polonaise (the opera's only implicit reference to Poland, the setting of Calderón's original), and modern tonalities and dissonances that draw attention to the falseness of the court world. In Newbury's staging, Estrella (played by mezzo-soprano Carin Gilfry) and

Astolfo (baritone Craig Verm) emerge as fakes. Astolfo is cynical, manipulative, and self-centered, reading his rehearsed marriage proposal to Estrella from a note card. She is the ultimate airhead, telling Astolfo she needs time to think over his marriage proposal and then, after a mere second of dramatic pause, giving a dizzy response played broadly for comic effect: "I would now accept the monarchy/solely that I might make it yours!" (Maraniss, *Life* 9). Her vacuousness and his political manouvering lead us to conclude that an Astolfo-Estrella merger would be the crowning achievement in a cycle of political decadence that had only begun with Basilio. The audience is left wanting an alternative.

6

Segismundo's tower, in contrast, literally aspires to ascend toward real illumination, if not toward the light represented by Estrella. Center stage, out of a hidden trap door, arises a telescoping tower, piston-like, constructed from concentric, metallic cylinders, which thrusts upward and rotates to show both the interior and exterior of Segismundo's prison. A chair atop the tower doubles as Basilio's throne when the base of the tower is concealed within the trap door. The design and operation of the telescoping tower alone, according to Newbury, consumed 140 hours of drafting time (Maraniss, Newbury, and Spratlan), and the result is a scenic device that focuses the audience's attention on the opera's multiple levels of reality. John J. Allen has written that *La vida es sueño* puts special emphasis

on staging, and that “the two settings in which the action unfolds, Basilio’s palace and Segismundo’s tower, represent the opposing forces of ‘civilización y barbarie’” (Allen 27). In the *corrales*, Allen argues, transitions between palace and tower, and the shifting vantage point from exterior (Acts One and Two) to interior (Act Three) would require the use of opposing lateral platforms representing the *monte* and the tower, respectively, stage right and left (Allen 35). This arrangement necessarily relegates the tower to the side of the stage. In the opera, Korins’s set places the tower center stage, giving it maximum importance in the performance space, and allowing it to rotate to reveal an open, cut-away segment used for interior scenes. In its telescoping movement upward and its circular rotation, the tower contrasts with the harsh angles representing the palace and visually underscores Segismundo’s potential to rise above both personal and public obstacles. The fact that the tower doubles as Basilio’s throne subtly reminds the audience of the political dimension of Segismundo’s aspirations. Javier S. Herrero sees the emblem of the prison tower as a *tenebrista* representation of a diabolic city of darkness, suggesting that the characters in Calderón’s play must choose between descending towards moral and spiritual depths or ascending towards the sky (Herrero 214). For Frederick de Armas, the tower likewise has negative connotations, not only for the confined protagonist, but also for artists and critics, who are often “imprisoned in the tower of the past”

(de Armas, Critical 7). In Spratlan's opera, however, Segismundo's tower is a tower of the future that strives for illumination, representing simultaneously Segismundo's aspirations and, through its visual reiteration of the image of the telescope so ubiquitous on this stage, the dawn of a new scientific era in which modern cosmology will replace the growing irrelevance of astrology.

Hybridity has long been acknowledged as an essential aspect of Calderón's play. From the opening image of the hippogriff to Segismundo's characterization as a man-beast and *vivo cadáver*, to Rosaura's appearances as both man and woman, the characters of Calderón's drama and the settings in which they find themselves create a monstrous, liminal world in which identities and spaces not only are caught between conflicting extremes, but also are revealed to us in an evolving process of becoming. The metaphorical and metaphysical dualities of life/dream, palace/prison, father/son, prince/monster, illusion/reality, and so many others that run through the play, repeatedly reinforce hybridity as an exceptionally important aspect of the drama reflected on all levels of thematic exposition and character development. By staging Calderón in liminal time and space, a figurative nowhere caught between eras and depicted by sets that move and change, the Santa Fe production of Spratlan's opera seizes on Calderonian hybridity and transforms it into a high-tech concept. If, as argued above, opera itself is a hybrid genre (Corse) and Calderonian

dramas are semi-operatic hybrids (Stein) then the operatic treatment of Calderón's play would seem to be a particularly appropriate performative expression of the thematic hybridity that characterizes *La vida es sueño*. All of the main set components denote multiple dramatic spaces: the steel girders shift from wilderness to court to battlefield, and the tower literally turns from the prison that confines Segismundo into the throne that awaits him as he emerges from confinement. The audience witnesses the mechanical movements that transform the theatrical space, which, like the characters, is always in a process of becoming.⁷



Clotaldo (James Maddalena) contemplates the confused labyrinth of his world as the illuminated steel girders of the set transform the stage from Segismundo's wilderness to the court scene. To his right is Basilio's throne, with the king's telescope to his left (Photo by Ken Howard).

The eclectic design mix of past, present, and future chronologies, and the juxtaposition of period costumes with industrial, mechanized sets complements and underscores a similar hybridity in Spratlan's music. "Eclectic" is the word Spratlan himself uses to describe his composition, in the same way that Mozart, say, is eclectic in borrowing from multiple sources and traditions and employing a wide variety of techniques of musical expression within one piece to individualize each operatic character (Maraniss, Newbury, and Spratlan). The opera was originally composed for a small orchestra (one trumpet, a trombone, two French horns, and a small string section), due to the practical limits imposed by the New Haven commission. Spratlan began by composing Segismundo's first act aria, setting to music the protagonist's soliloquy on freedom, likewise a focal point of the first act of Calderón's play. He then continued with Basilio's first-act soliloquy by opposition, casting Basilio as a Zarastro-like *basso* against Segismundo's heroic, Siegfried-like *heldentenor*. Spratlan assigned these characters very different musical identities, writing Basilio's part within the conventional twelve-tone conception of musical composition (reflecting Basilio's entrapment within the deterministic system of astrology) while creating a more improvisational style based on swiftly rising and falling intervals for Segismundo (denoting his conflictive psyche and frustrated attempts to free himself from constraints). Clarín's part naturally evoked trumpet

music, which introduces nearly all of the character's entrances, and the role was assigned the quality of a "high, squeaky tenor" (Maraniss, Newbury, and Spratlan).⁸

If Spratlan's eclectic music quite literally underscores the thematic hybridity of the work, Maraniss's libretto also focuses on conflictive moments that emphasize internal struggles, dual identities, and monstrosity. Maraniss follows Calderón very closely, down to individual lines and phrases, cast in a very poetic free verse in modern English. Almost speech for speech, the libretto reproduces each scene in Calderón's drama, necessarily reducing and condensing dialogue in order to set it appropriately to Spratlan's expressive and eclectic music. The opera is, in essence, an operatic setting of Calderón, not merely a new work based loosely on or derived from its predecessor, and the libretto has been carefully crafted in order to maximize effective performance potential. Working together early in the process of composition, Spratlan and Maraniss decided it was essential to preserve the poetic feel of the drama, not by attempting to rewrite the play in rhymed verse, but by combining sound, rhythm, and meter. "Poetry is, the gunpowder for a composer; it's not just the plot or character. Poetry is, for me, what generates the music," Spratlan writes in the opera's program notes (*Santa Fe* 68-69). Maraniss's language is natural, lyrical, and succinct, avoiding the wordiness of, for example, Roy Campbell's free verse translation (1959)

or William Colford's overworked iambic pentameter (1958), both current at the time of Maraniss's composition. The libretto, then, is not a literary transposition of Calderón but is truly an operatic libretto, an artistic work in its own right that exists as a function of the musical collaboration with Spratlan. The libretto preserves the passages from Calderón's speeches that are most emotional and best suited to convey internal and external conflict musically and reconfigures them as a blueprint for operatic performance.

Maraniss and Spratlan maintain the three-act structure of the *comedia*, which lends itself well to sustaining dramatic tension throughout the opera. In performance, an intermission separates Acts One and Two, while more continuity is allowed between Acts Two and Three, which are separated only by a moment of darkness onstage. Segismundo's soliloquy on freedom forms the center of Act One, beginning with his plaintive cry "Oh, God, why this torment, why this misery?" (Maraniss, *Life* 2) which accompanies Spratlan's soaring, jumping musical expression of physical torment and spiritual anguish. The act continues to adapt Calderón closely with Basilio's speech on astrology, here cast as an aria that juxtaposes "science and God's law" (Maraniss, *Life* 12), and concludes with Clotaldo's musical evocation of the confused labyrinth "where reason finds no clue" (Maraniss, *Life* 15). The second act likewise follows Calderón, almost scene for scene, with the notable change of reserving

Segismundo's famous soliloquy for the opening of Act Three. It might be argued that here Spratlan and Maraniss missed an opportunity to close the second act dramatically, but their choice to end the act on a more subdued tone works. In performance, there is no intermission between Acts Two and Three, which places Segismundo's famous soliloquy (now near the opening of Act Three) as a bridge between the dreamlike world of the court and the protagonist's confusing return to the harsh reality of imprisonment. Segismundo's soliloquy is followed in performance by lights out; when the stage is again illuminated, the soldiers arrive to free him and the opera continues with a condensed version of Calderón's remaining plot.

From the opening moments of the opera, Santa Fe's production emphasizes tragic aspects of Calderón's story, leading toward an ending that recasts Segismundo's victory ironically and emphasizes his sacrifice of personal fulfillment (pursuing his passionate feelings for Rosaura) for the benefit of an established social and political order that is presented as sterile, static, and corrupt. Rosaura (soprano Ellie Dehn) first articulates the opera's tragic ambivalence with her initial reaction to Segismundo's aria on freedom: "His words move me to fear and pity" (Maraniss, *Life* 4). This line translates Calderón's original ("Temor y piedad en mí/ sus razones ha causado," lines 173-174) and evokes Aristotelian fear and pity in order to prefigure an ending that leaves open the possibility of a

tragic interpretation. Segismundo, at the end of the opera, is a changed man, but the moral value of that transformation is left ambiguous. Significantly, Rosaura responds to Segismundo's conversion in the final scene (noting "How changed you are") rather than Astolfo ("¡Qué condición tan mudada! [line 3303]). This comment, which is played to allow an ambivalent appraisal of Segismundo's transformation, replaces her expression of "¡Qué discreto y qué prudente!" (line 3304) in the original; any moral judgment of prudence is thus avoided. Segismundo's acts are instead presented as politically necessary, which requires him to forsake passions that we associate with his very humanity. In the performance of the opera's ending, Segismundo literally loses his musical voice and is reduced to mere spoken words, in effect stripped of his musical humanity, as he embraces a political structure out of political necessity, sacrificing the realization of his desires and true potential for the sake of maintaining his social role as Prince. As he tentatively places his father's crown on his own head, Segismundo speaks in a hollow voice about the transitory nature of human happiness, suggesting that his future rule as king is yet another illusory trial that will pass like a dream.⁹ The effect of Segismundo's spoken words juxtaposed to the music that continues around him in the orchestra and other characters is quite jarring and adds a defeatist tone to what traditionally is set as a moral triumph. Spratlan writes that he and Maraniss made a deliberate decision to suppress a

triumphal treatment of Segismundo's conversion, commenting that

There's something genuine about him that is very attractive, and to see this spirit suppressed in the interest of good order just felt phony to us. What we decided to do was to keep exactly what happens in Calderón, but to set it in a way which renders it tragic rather than triumphant. (*Santa Fe* 69)

The central question remaining for the audience to consider at the conclusion of the opera, then, is whether the sacrifice of human passions for the sake of order is a restoration of order or a concession with tragic implications.

An important key to understanding the opera's ending may be found in the performative choices involving the character of Rosaura. Spratlan has said that in this reading of Calderón, Rosaura plays a pivotal role as the object of Segismundo's passion and, perhaps, love (Maraniss, Newbury, and Spratlan). While Segismundo's passion is played onstage as an attempted rape of Rosaura in Act Two, their encounter in Act Three becomes a tender love scene, performed with a series of touches, embraces, and kisses, in which Segismundo's violent passions turn to what the audience may perceive as love, at the very moment he realizes that he must forego his true feelings in order to preserve her honor. Moving Segismundo's "Life is a dream"

speech to the third act likewise leaves the second act with Rosaura alone onstage, contemplating Segismundo, replacing the Calderonian scene in which she confronts Astolfo (which never occurs in the opera) with a brief soliloquy on love:

Alone, and sad, and in disorder,
Segismundo will awake:
The victim of his life itself,
With too much life within to die,
With too much pain within to live—
So hard to bear, so hard to know the truth,
Or what it is to love. (Maraniss, *Life* 30)

Ironically, these words of sympathy for Segismundo are her first after his attempted rape of her. In performance, ending the act this way foregrounds love (and its eventual loss) as an important thematic counterpoint to Segismundo's violent passion, and further supports the tragic potential of the opera's ending by characterizing him as a conflicted victim of life's cruel realities.

The critical debate over Rosaura's role in Calderón's play has a long history dating at least to William M. Whitby's 1965 study, which proposes that Rosaura is in fact the catalyst for Segismundo's transformation and therefore a significant character involved in the main plot. Maraniss himself participated in this scholarly discussion in the 1970s, precisely when he was writing the opera's libretto. Calling Calderón's dramatic corpus "a sober cele-

bration of order triumphant," he emphasizes the playwright's thematic focus on restraint and discipline as reasonable solutions for dramatic actions involving choice (Maraniss, *On Calderón* 1, 2, 13). Like Edwin Honig, also writing at the time, Maraniss sees little to applaud in Segismundo's decision to forsake Rosaura in order to preserve a corrupt political order, disagreeing with most scholarly appraisals of Segismundo's conversion. Maraniss proposes that *La vida es sueño* presents a dialectic between freedom and restraint, moving from *confuso laberinto* to *desengaño*, and focuses on Rosaura as the agent of Segismundo's conversion. For Maraniss,

Freedom and order, earthly joy and divine reward, revolt and repression, dreaming and reality—all are absolutes to Calderón. They can be kept in an uneasy equilibrium within a personality, a polity, a stage action, an entire play, or a single speech; but they cannot be reconciled. One must choose, and Calderón's characters choose in favor of control (Maraniss, *On Calderón* 30).

Segismundo's forsaking Rosaura for the sake of political order, despite his passionate attraction to her, must therefore be performed as the play's defining moment and is the key to understanding a tragic or melancholic reading of the play's ending. Essential to this reading is an audience response that wishes

for a marriage between Segismundo and Rosaura.¹⁰ Maraniss acknowledges a certain Calderonian ambiguity about the ending, writing that Calderón “seems to imply that there is something between Segismundo and Rosaura that is more real and enduring than the spectacle around them, but he can take that implication no further” (Maraniss, *On Calderón* 40). In his libretto, however, Maraniss can, indeed take that implication further and instills the opera’s ending with irony that reveals the inadequacy of the social order and suggests that Segismundo’s sacrificial conversion may prove inadequate in truly resolving the underlying chaos.

Calderón’s drama, as Maraniss has commented, is ultimately about human choices, depicting characters who face internal struggles that have public, political consequences, set in the turmoil of changing times. Spratlan’s opera augments these Calderonian themes, effectively employing the myriad artistic possibilities inherent in the operatic medium, itself a hybrid genre. Santa Fe Opera’s technically masterful production accentuates hybridity and liminality in performance and design by developing what might be called an aesthetic of instrumentality: using machines as metaphors of change and movement that underscore the characters’ evolving processes of becoming. In our material world, machines are associated with progress, efficiency, improvement, and motion. The Santa Fe production of Spratlan’s *Life Is a Dream* utilizes this horizon of audience expectations for maximum

effect: to develop and foreground the universal themes that made Calderón's play important in its time and to reveal that they are still relevant in our own.

NOTES

¹ The opera premiered on July 24, 2010 and closed on August 19, with a five-performance run in repertoire with Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*, Mozart's *Magic Flute*, Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffmann*, and Britten's *Albert Herring*. Leonard Slatkin conducted. Kevin Newbury was the director, David Korins the scenic designer, Jessica Jahn the costume designer, and Japhy Weideman the lighting designer.

² Multiple recent performances of *La vida es sueño* suggest that the work is still a popular one for theatrical production even at a time when critical scholarship has turned away from the play towards other neglected Calderonian texts. Performance reviews and director interviews published in *Comedia Performance* alone document at least five professional and university productions of the play (or adaptations thereof) in New York, London, Chicago, and other venues during the past decade (De Armas, Gascón, Lauer, Mujica, Ortiz Lottman, Weimer).

³ Karen Berman also drew on steampunk as a design aesthetic for her 2009 production of *Sueño*, José Rivera's adaptation of Calderón. In an interview with Barbara Mujica, Berman describes steampunk as "a Jules Verne style Victorian era mixed with science fiction that incorporates elements of the industrial age, such as futuristic gears that look like wheels of fate" (Mujica 203).

⁴ The most detailed study on the imagery of astral myths in Calderón remains Frederick A. de Armas's *The Return of Astraea: An Astral-Imperial Myth in Calderón*. The play-

wright's continual evocation of planets, stars, and astronomy in the context of portents of the return of a lost Golden Age inspires similar themes in the opera, although, notably, Rosaura does not go by the name Astrea in Act Two.

⁵ The use of the telescope onstage to represent modern astronomy in conflict with Basilio's astrology recalls Jonathan Munby's recent production of Calderón's play in London which used an astrolabe, suspended above the audience as a kind of chandelier, for similar effect (Ortiz Lottman, *Calderón's Dream* 206).

⁶ A video clip of the court scene, in which Basilio (John Cheek) informs Astolfo (Craig Verm) and Estrella (Carin Gilfry) of Segismundo's existence, may be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?NR=1&v=BgGV6jyzB9o>

⁷ In his interview with Maryrica Ortiz Lottman, Jonathan Munby (also an operatic director) describes hybridity as the unifying concept for his 2009 English production of Calderón's play in London. (Ortiz Lottman, *Calderón's Dream* 213-215).

⁸ Clarín, Calderón's *gracioso*, is played for comic effect throughout the opera as a court jester of sorts. A video clip of Clarín (Keith Jameson) informing Clotaldo (James Maddalena) that Rosaura has posed as a lady in waiting to Estrella may be viewed at:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?NR=1&v=dls_ZiYF-A8

⁹ A video clip of Segismundo (Roger Honeywell) losing his musical voice as he puts on his father's crown may be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V6iBDZwtUmo>

¹⁰ Both Karen Berman (director of the 2009 *Sueño*) and Munby (director of the 2010 London production) likewise discuss the modern audience's difficulty with Segismundo's marriage to Estrella and their desire to see him marry Rosaura, a concept also familiar to those of us who teach this text in the twenty-first century classroom (Mujica 205; Ortiz Lottman, *Calderón's Dream* 218).

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**BOURDIEU, BOSWELL AND THE BAROQUE
BODY: CULTURAL CHOREOGRAPHY IN
*FUENTEOVEJUNA***

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As Laurence Boswell explained in his plenary address at the 2010 symposium of the Association for Hispanic Classical Theater, the provocative title of his presentation, “Suck, Squeeze, Bang, Blow!” referred, not to activities of the *boudoir*, but rather to the physical forces which a play has in common with a combustion engine. A play, he said, is “a mechanism that moves through time and space”(Boswell, Plenary Address). That Boswell characterizes dramatic staging in terms of space and movement makes it no surprise that he has taken a professional interest in the Spanish *comedia*, since, as I have argued elsewhere, the Spanish *comedia* appropriates and manipulates culturally embedded notions of space and movement to create dramatic meaning (Vidler, “Towards a Model”). These spatial organizations are, as in Pierre Bourdieu’s notion of *habitus*, both structured and structuring. Bourdieu defines *habitus* as:

...[the] system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. (53)

In this way, Bourdieu emphasizes the need to take into account, not only the structures of culture, but also the human capacity to manipulate those structures, whether consciously or unconsciously, for both individual and group expression.

A wedding ceremony, for example, whether Catholic, Jewish, Same-Sex, Baptist, Indian, or Drive-Thru, is not, according to Bourdieu, a simple variant, but “a strategy which takes on its meaning within the space of possible strategies”(16). That is, the *habitus* of the ceremony manipulates a variety of possible social structures and practices (e.g. a space, an authority, a gesture, a dress code, an exchange), and combines them strategically towards, in the words of Bourdieu, “the maximizing of material and symbolic profit”(16). In an Orthodox Ashkenazi Jewish wedding ceremony, for example, the bride circles the groom seven times, physically embodying the symbolic notion that the bride’s world now revolves around her husband’s. Reform Judaism strategically rejects this tradition in order to ar-

ticulate gender equality: both the bride and the groom circle each other. That is, a Reform Jewish wedding performs a *habitus* that is structured by one “individual and collective practice,” and strategically structures another (54).

The relationship between the current circumstances that motivate the practice, and the historical *milieu* in which that *habitus* developed is realized, in Bourdieu’s own words, through its performance. This relationship is analogous to Pavis’s definition of *mise-en-scène*: the interrelationship of dramatic text and performance text (18). Bourdieu states that:

...practices cannot be deduced either from the present conditions which may seem to have provoked them [*performance text*] or from the past conditions which have produced the *habitus*, the durable principle of their production [*dramatic text*]. They can therefore only be accounted for by relating the social conditions in which the *habitus* that generated them was constituted [*dramatic text*], to the social conditions in which it is implemented [*performance text*], that is, through the scientific work of performing [*staging*] the interrelationship of these two states of the social world that the *habitus* performs, while concealing it, in and through practice.” (Bourdieu 56, *my emphasis*)

It is not enough, however, simply to deduce individual structures through historical, objectivist means, nor to analyze them solely through subjectivist, phenomenological interpretation. As I will show in this essay, a *habitus* of the *corral* stage may be articulated through an analysis of a performance of this interrelationship. The analysis of the *habitus* of performance is both broader and deeper than that of theater semiotics in that it does not merely interpret sign/signifier relationships of dramatic and/or performance texts, but rather re-utters the structuring and organizing strategies of all aspects of dramatic work, past and present.

The structures of *habitus* function differently on the stage, however, than they do in the world, although they do so in a way analogous to the function of stage properties. A stage property functions on two levels: its meaning unto itself as an inanimate object, and its meaning in context, which is altered or emphasized by the actor's use of that object. Playwrights and directors actively manipulate what Frances Teague calls the "dislocated function" of a stage property towards a specific dramatic end. A box of matches is a matchbox, but "if an actor wishes to call a matchbox a gun, he may do so"(17). *Habitus*, as we shall see, may be similarly "dislocated" for dramatic purposes.

A classically trained British director and playwright, Laurence Boswell has risen to the most prestigious levels of British drama, having directed

at the Royal Shakespeare Company, The Gate Theatre and the West End. Among his impressive body of work is a growing number of productions and translations of *comedias*—twelve to date; a number which is about to rise to fifteen following the recent announcement of his upcoming *comedia* season in Bath in 2012. In “discovering the suck, squeeze, bang and blow” of Lope’s *Fuenteovejuna* for the 2008 season of the Stratford Shakespeare Festival in Stratford, Ontario, Boswell dislocates the *habitus* of the Spanish Baroque body, juxtaposing culturally-embedded notions of space and movement in order to highlight theme, characterization and conflict.

Fuenteovejuna was the very first *comedia* ever performed at the 55 year-old Stratford Shakespeare Festival, and still stands as only the second Spanish play ever produced there (after Federico García Lorca’s *Yerma* in 1979) (Stratford Shakespeare Festival). Highly conscious of its 21st-century North American space-time in a context that overtly privileges the work of a single British literary phenomenon, the “collective orchestration” of Boswell’s *Fuenteovejuna* projects and juxtaposes structures of movement and spatial composition that are particular to Early Modern Spain (Bourdieu 53). As a director and dramaturge, Boswell speaks of the theatrical act in terms of movement through space-time. In his words, a play is a “dance of unresolvable conflicts.” Actors “embody” the “residue of the [playwright’s] experience.” A director’s job is “getting [actors] on and off [stage] and finding them a

fancy place to stand”(Boswell, Plenary Address). Boswell combines Constantin Stanislavski’s “super objectives” and Michael Chekhov’s “psychological gestures” to create what he calls “a dance of impulses of character” (Boswell, Plenary Address). In order to choreograph that “dance” for the Stratford *Fuenteovejuna*, Boswell looks to the *habitus* of the Spanish Baroque body—the essential corporeal structures and vocabulary that make a *comedia* body Spanish. This essay focuses on two categories of corporeal choreography in Boswell’s production: individual bodies in space, and bodies in relation to other bodies.

Choreographic considerations began in pre-production for the Stratford *Fuenteovejuna*. Actors participated in special sessions dedicated to Spanish dance, not, as we shall see, in order to learn to dance, but rather to help the actors “translate” their body carriage, as it were, from their Shakespearean comfort zone to the *comedia corral*. Actresses Sara Topham and Severn Thompson explain the process in a Stratford Shakespeare Festival Webcast.

TOPHAM: One of the things we did as a company was we watched these amazing—I cannot remember the name of the filmmaker but they were made in the seventies—these flamenco films, and one of them is *Blood Wedding*, which is not Lope de Vega, but you know it has that feeling. And we watched the way they move and their car-

riage and so that all kind of starts to come in from underneath, we hope...

THOMPSON: Yeah, just in how you hold yourself. You know, holding yourself like this [*straightens up*]*—*you look at the world differently when you're up here. [Fig. 1] (stratfordfestival)



Fig. 1 Severn Thompson as Pascuala (right) demonstrates the upright body carriage rehearsed for Fuenteovejuna.

Elsewhere, I have discussed how a performance text may transpose a dramatic text from one linguistic/cultural space-time to the audience of another, regardless of whether a dramatic text is performed in the original language or in translation (Vidler, "Coming to America").¹ Boswell's preproduction work, however, reveals a step in the process rarely considered by critics—the transposition of a dramatic text from one linguistic/cultural space-time to the *actors* of another. Instead of, as Marta Mateo

states, “making what is alien to a culture come into contact with what is peculiar to it” (99), in the case of *Fuenteovejuna*, Boswell takes deliberate steps to help actors *differentiate* between Spanish and Anglo body carriage.

Although Carlos Saura’s flamenco films, including *Blood Wedding*, to which Topham refers, are clearly anachronistic from the perspective of *comedia* staging reconstruction, they carry within them corporeal structures, most notably a still and upright body carriage, which dance historians have shown to be unique to Spain in Baroque European dance (Brooks 83). Lynn Matluck Brooks notes that “the stance and comportment of the Spanish gentleman...would have permitted himself less freedom of torso action—strutting, swaggering, *épaulement*—[than]... his counterparts in other nearby lands” (90). Brooks highlights Juan de Esquivel Navarro’s 1642 treatise on dance, *Discursos sobre el arte del danzado*, in which Esquivel puts heightened emphasis on an upright and calm body carriage.

Ha de ir el cuerpo danzando *bien derecho* sin artificio, con mucho descuido...ni doblarle por mirarse a los pies, ni por otro accidente. Porque la afectación y presunción es cosa con que se deslucе todo cuanto se obra bien. (ff. 20-21v, *my emphasis*)

Brooks also finds that international observers note the “austerity of Spanish etiquette and movement in general, reflected in dancing style” (90). She notes that in 1715, Italian poet and librettist Jacopo Martello distinguished Spain’s austere dancing style from both that of France and Italy. According to Martello, Spanish dance was “...withdrawn within itself, and even in light movements of the waist maintains a sense of decorous dignity inseparable from the gravity of the nation” (Brooks 90).

As sister arts, Spanish court dance and Early Modern Spanish swordplay share this upright body carriage. Don Luis Pacheco de Narváez’s 1600 treatise *Libro de las grandezas de la espada* provides detailed guidelines for the standards of body carriage and physical appearance for maximum success in self-defense. He notes that good swordsmen “han de tener primeramente, *la cabeza derecha*, los ojos vivos, despiertos, la voz gruessa, *el pecho alto...*” (f. 6v, *my emphasis*). The upright head and high chest emphasized by Narváez are a direct result of the principles of Euclidean geometry used to develop the Spanish combat style. Narváez concluded that the most effective thrust was accomplished with the sword at a right angle to the body as the radius drawn by such an angle has the farthest reach relative to the opponent’s position (Narváez f. 40r) [Fig. 2]



Fig. 2 Proper posture and sword position as shown in *Libro de las grandezas de la espada* (f. 40r) Universitat de València, Biblioteca Histórica.

Narváez and Esquivel also place strong emphasis on good foot position. Both writers stress the *planta natural* as the starting point for all balanced movement, and as the source of the proper upright body posture described above. In Fig. 3, Narváez compares the *planta natural* to the foundation of a building, as that which makes the structure “perfecto, firme y durable” (f. 36r). Esquivel’s diagram of the foot position in two *reverencias* is the only illustration in an entire volume that describes more than twenty specific dance steps [Fig. 4]. Notice, also, that the swordsman in Fig. 2 prepares to thrust from the *planta natural* position. Diego Velázquez rep-



Fig. 5 Diego Velázquez, *Philip IV*, (1624), Image copyright © The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image source: Art Resource, NY

Although most of these documents have been previously considered in light of performance historiography, they also demonstrate a clear, intimate connection between physicality, culture and class. Both the *Discursos sobre el arte del danzado* and the *Libro de las grandezas de la espada* are addressed expressly to the noble gentleman. He must learn both arts: to dance with “*galán*” and to fight with “*destreza*” in order to establish himself as a worthy courtier. Character, in addition to geometry and balance, makes the swordsman. He should be “...en estatura mediano, en el andar compuesto, *de provincia templada, codiciosos de honra y hazienda* (f. 6v, *my emphasis*). It is this *habitus* of the Span-

ish noble body that Boswell appropriates for his 2008 *Fuenteovejuna*.

Photographs from the Stratford production, as well as those from the archived “costume bible,” reveal conscious physical postures that both recall and reject the *planta natural*, thus distinguishing between the noble and lower classes. In Fig. 6, Scott Wentworth as the *Comendador* strikes the very pose described above, with his weight balanced over the *planta natural*, his body erect and chest held high. This posture is mocked by a town peasant in the wedding dumb show [Fig. 7]. This posture distinction is also evident in images of Seana McKenna as Isabel de Castilla and Sara Topham as Laurencia [Figs. 8, 9]. By juxtaposing the staid posture of the nobility with the swirling dancing of peasants, Boswell establishes a natural order, which will, of course, be compromised later in the play.²



Fig. 6 Scott Wentworth as the Comendador



Fig. 7 Dan Chameroy as a peasant of Fuenteovejuna



Fig. 8 Seana McKenna as Isabel de Castilla



Fig. 9 Sara Topham as Laurencia

The staging of bodies in relation to other bodies in this work, however, is even more compelling than the development and staging of individual body posture. Boswell's blocking and lighting appropriate and manipulate the *habitus* of Spanish Renaissance and Baroque spatial composition, highlighting the various conflicts in Lope's play. We have seen how Boswell contrasts the individual corporeal *habitus* of characters to differentiate between noble and peasant. Similarly, Boswell juxtaposes cultural structures of Spanish Renaissance and Baroque art to highlight conflict. As we shall see, tension between the *habitus* of these aesthetics reflects the tension in Lope's text between the pastoral, peace-loving inhabitants of Fuenteovejuna,

and the disorderly, transgressive behavior of the Comendador.

The wedding scene exemplifies this cultural choreography, not because there is actual dancing that takes place, but rather because the circles, triangles and repetition of forms in the scene's blocking are cultural shapes of a Spanish Renaissance *habitus* whose strategic structuring reflects a nostalgic pastoral order which is, of course, eventually undone by the crimes of the Comendador. The choreography that opens the scene (which does *not* indulge Anglo stereotypes of Spain and avoids overt references to flamenco) establishes this order through repetition and balance between male and female dancers. The prompt script seen in Fig. 10 describes Nicola Pantin's choreography in which the women and men physically echo each other's movements in a call-and-response style (Boswell, Prompt Script 55r). The women line up, the men line up; the women turn, then the men turn. The women stomp, the men stomp followed by everyone stomping together. The balanced, communal and folkloric choreography reflects a stable, orderly collective. The group dance is then followed by the first dance of the bride and groom which, with a lift of the bride, highlights the potential fulfillment of the Catholic sacrament—a legitimized sexual relationship in which the husband supports and protects the wife [Fig. 11].

QILX 11, 12-07 A good life and a long life
 Side Dances She's gonna make a good wife
 Vivan, muchos años
 Bar 39-42 (1st 6): Women in position
 Bar 43-46 (2nd 6): Women scarf turns [45- Men in position]
 Bar 47-50 (3rd 6): Line up. Men turns.
 Bar 51-54 (4th 6): Women turns [Add EJ Scott and S. Roth]
 Bar 55-58 (5th 6): Women in line CS / Men lunge
 Bar 59: Women stomp / 60: Men stomp / 61: women/men / 62: Both
 Bar 63-66 (1st 6): Laurencia and Frondoso into position [cast clear to sides]
 Bar 67-70 (2nd 6):
 Bar 71-74 (3rd 6):
 Bar 75-78 (4th 6): Elbows linked
 Bar 79-82 (5th 6): Elbows linked / stretch [bar 82 – start of arpeggios]
 Bar 83-86 (6th 6): Scarf around shoulders. Bar 86 – Lift
 Bar 87-90 (7th 6): Slowly lower Laurencia

Fig. 10 Prompt script from Act II wedding dance



Fig. 11 Sara Topham as Laurencia and Jonathan Goad as Frondoso

The blocking of the wedding also reflects the balanced visual composition of Spanish Renaissance art. As we see in the blocking notes, the townspeople encircle the perimeter of the thrust stage, with the bride (“L”), groom (“F”) and their

rors both the desire for stability in the town, and Fuenteovejuna's loyalty to the monarchs themselves.



Fig. 13 Brad Rudy as Juan Rojo, Jonathan Goad as Frondoso, Robert Persichini as Mengo, Sara Topham as Laurencia and James Blendick as Esteban, Wedding scene.



Fig. 14 *La Virgen de los Reyes Católicos*, Anónimo, Museo del Prado

Transgressions against this order are blocked in the deep, multi-dimensional compositions common to Spanish Baroque painting [Fig. 15]. Velázquez's *Las meninas* is, of course, our best example of this as the painting usurps the third dimension of the viewer's space that is reflected in a mirror on the rear wall.



Fig. 15 *Las meninas*, Velázquez, Museo del Prado

Boswell takes advantage of the deeply thrust stage of the Tom Patterson theater to stage the Comendador's first attempt to rape Laurencia with similarly dynamic multi-dimensionality [Fig. 16]. As Frondoso recovers the Comendador's crossbow from deep upstage center, the audience immediately becomes drawn into the rescue attempt. Blocking in this way locates every audience member directly in

the surrounding woods. We become not only witnesses to the crime, but also in imminent danger of any Frondoso misfire. The staging of this Spanish Baroque spatial *habitus* heightens suspense, and places the scene in direct contrast to the stable, balanced compositions of the pastoral town scenes.



Fig. 16 Scott Wentworth as the Comendador attacks Sara Topham as Laurencia. Jonathan Goad as Frondoso sneaks up from behind.

Perhaps the most moving appropriation of Spanish Baroque spatial *habitus* happens in Act I when Frondoso proposes to the standoffish Laurencia. She chastises Frondoso in private for being too forward with her in public [Fig. 17]. Sick with love and diagonally backlit from upstageright, the cloaked Frondoso crawls towards Laurencia. The resulting spatial composition immediately recalls that of Spanish tenebrist portraits and still-lives, especially Francisco de Zurbarán's *San Francisco en meditación* in which the diagonal lighting

schemes and resulting *chiaroscuro* heighten emotion. [Fig. 18]



Fig. 17 Jonathan Goad as Frondoso proposes to Sara Topham as Laurencia



Fig. 18 *Saint Francis in Meditation*, 1635-9. © National Gallery, London / Art Resource, NY

It is interesting to note that Boswell resists calling his dramatic text a “translation,” preferring “adaptation,” (which appeared in the program) or “new version” (which appears on the cover of the prompt script and in Stratford webcasts). Nick Hern Books (although it remains unclear under whose authority) discarded both of these terms upon publication of the dramatic text in 2009 in favor of the more conventional “translated by” (Prompt Script). Regardless of which term anyone prefers, this production was successful, not because, in the words of Mateo, it approximates “the interests and cultural assumptions of the receiving system” (99), but rather because dramatic text, performance text and audience share the underlying *habitus* of Western Civilization. We have seen how Boswell appropriates and incorporates Spanish cultural structures to communicate characterization, theme and conflict. However, this is not simply a Spanish play in English, or even an English play with Spanish “flavor.” Boswell has woven cultural structures together, drawing the Anglo and the Spanish back to their shared human history.

The printed “version” of the dramatic text, directed at readers, highlights the importance and effectiveness of the staging of spatial *habitus*. Absent the visual spatial cues of the performance text, the dramatic text adds additional stage directions, absent from both Lope’s text and Boswell’s prompt script, which specify locale at the beginning of each

scene. “*A wooded glade on the side of a mountain, outside Fuente Ovejuna*” (34), “*Outside the home of Esteban*” (63), and “*In the street, outside Laurencia’s front door, Fuente Ovejuna*” (111) are just a few examples. Without the contribution of Boswell’s cultural choreography, these explicit, decidedly Elizabethan didascalia, must bridge the divide between 17th c. Spain and the 21st c. reader. Which, regarding the performance, brings to mind a pithy, if colloquial, saying: I guess you had to be there.

NOTES

¹ In the case of this production, the director is also the translator. Clearly, this leads to interesting questions on the potential interplay of staging/translation choices, which are, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this article.

² Fascinatingly, an analysis of body posture in photographs from the production’s costume bible also reveals playful insights that actors may have of their characters. While costume bible photographs are not the same thing as production photographs, they are performance texts in and of themselves. Some actors take the opportunity to pose in character, some pose completely out of character, and others pose as if parodying their character. Since the poses are not for any audience in particular, depending on the mood of the actor, the photo shoot can be playful, a serious exploration of character, a professional drudgery, or a rare opportunity to be themselves. Unfortunately, these images may only be viewed while physically in the Stratford Archive and are not publishable here. However, I have found that actors, perhaps with the understanding that the photographs will never be published, fre-

quently strike poses that capture the essence of a character—an exaggerated “psychological gesture,” as it were. In his costume bible photo, Robert Persichini, the *gracioso* Mengo in this production, playfully gestures towards the “*rueda de salmon*” of his beaten behind. Krista Leis, in the role of a townspeople, strikes the combative pose of a boxer for her costume bible photo—embodying in her posture the violent rebellion of the town in general, and the strength and power of the women in particular.

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**NOTES ON THE STAGING OF JACINTO
CORDEIRO'S *EL JURAMENTO ANTE DIOS,
Y LEALTAD CONTRA EL AMOR***

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There are no historical accounts of an actual performance of Jacinto Cordeiro's¹ *El juramento ante Dios, y lealtad contra el amor*, but evidence does show that its popularity lasted several centuries. Bio-bibliographies explain that this *comedia*, penned by a Portuguese imitator of Lope de Vega, was well received by both Lusitanian and Spanish theatergoers.² Although it was written sometime in the 1620s,³ the proliferation of editions a hundred years later tells us that *Juramento* reached the height of its popularity in the mid eighteenth century. Extant *suektas* bear witness to performances in Barcelona, Madrid, Salamanca, Seville, and Valencia. A total of 21 unique editions document its dissemination.⁴ These date from 1652 to 1822. Still, it appears that all but three were published in the eighteenth century.⁵ Additionally, Andioc and

Coulon's *Cartelera teatral madrileña del siglo XVIII (1708-1808)* records a performance on May 25th, 1746, in Madrid's *Teatro del Príncipe*. The *suelta* sold after this performance, published by Antonio Sanz, also survives.⁶

In addition to evidence of its widespread dissemination, *Juramento's* inclusion in Tomás Pinto Brandão's *Comedia de comedias* further testifies to its success. The humor of Pinto Brandão's peculiar play is based on its integration of some 135 *comedia* titles into the dialogue. Of course, for the jokes to work, the public has to recognize the plays cited. In other words, *Comedia de comedias* presents the modern critic with a list of the most popular plays in Lisbon in the 1720s. Pinto Brandão alludes to the work of only two Lusitanian playwrights: Juan Matos Frago and the author of *El juramento ante Dios*, which appears in verse 429, apparently still alive in the mind of the Portuguese public a century after its premiere.

Few seventeenth-century Portuguese *comedia* dramatists garnered the notoriety achieved by *Juramento's* author. A *segundón* by Spanish standards, Cordeiro was one of Lisbon's most prolific and lauded playwrights. Many of his countrymen experimented in passing with the *comedia*, but most of these would-be dramatists abandoned the form after having written only one or two plays.⁷ Nevertheless, Cordeiro thrived in Lisbon's literary scene at a time when Castilian threatened to replace

Portuguese as the language of literature and plays written by their neighbors to the east dominated Lusitanian stages. Cordeiro's repertoire of 16 extant *comedias* is comparable in number to that of Andrés de Claramonte y Corroy (d. 1626), Luis de Belmonte Bermúdez (1587-1650), and Antonio Hurtado de Mendoza (1586-1644). Still, compared to his Portuguese contemporaries, Cordeiro's output is only rivaled by Rodrigo Pacheco,⁸ Antonio Henríquez Gómez,⁹ José da Mota y Silva,¹⁰ and Juan Matos Fragoso.

Although we know a lot about when and where Cordeiro's most successful play was staged, we know very little about how. *Juramento* has not seen a stage in some 200 years. Consequently, critics do not have the benefit of modern performances as a point of reference. A contemporary production would demonstrate one approach to staging, blocking, costumes, acting, and props while suggesting the possibility of others. In the absence of both historical records of performances and modern productions, we can read *Juramento*, but not hear and see it, as it was intended to be experienced.

Additionally, reconstructing elements of a long-forgotten seventeenth-century performance is a task beset with obstacles. Although we know it was a common practice to write a *comedia* with a particular playhouse in mind, "the date of composition of most plays is uncertain, and it is only rarely that we can say that a particular play was written for

performance in a specific theatre in a definite year," as Varey notes ("Staging and Stage Directions" 148). Even if we know for which *corral* a play was written, these were not static structures. Renovations were often made with particular plays in mind (149). Moreover, the printed text is hardly a faithful indicator of authorial intent. Between the pen and the stage, a number of interested parties may have altered, amended, or edited the original piece. Perhaps the largest barrier to reconstructing performances is the handiwork of typesetters, who, for the sake of precious page space, condensed or simply excised many stage directions. And finally, the few stage notes that do survive "are often just *post facto* descriptions of what took place in a particular staging and thus do not necessarily reveal the dramatist's original vision of how the play should be staged" (Larson 183). Even during the century in which these plays were written, this lack of explicit and reliable stage directions led to widely varied and arbitrary stagings (Rennert 88-89).

The play itself offers further obstacles. For one, we cannot be sure for which *corral* it was written. One can assume that Cordeiro intended it for Lisbon's *Pátio das Arcas*, but it is not clear if this play opened there or somewhere else. The manuscript of another *comedia*, *El favor en la sentencia*, seems to place Cordeiro in Madrid around the time that *Juramento* was written. It is dated 1626 and dedicated to Bartolomé Romero, "a celebrated actor

and *autor de comedias*” who spent most of his career between Seville and Madrid (Rennert 582). He did travel to Lisbon on several occasions, but Rennert tells us that Romero took his troupe there only from 1638 to 1639 and from 1640 to 1641, long after Cordeiro wrote *El favor en la sentencia*. It seems likely, then, that Cordeiro befriended and collaborated with Romero during a stay in Madrid, which ended sometime before the early 1630s, when his first *partes* edition was published in Lisbon. A reference to the war between Denmark and Bohemia in *Juramento*’s first act indicates that Cordeiro penned it sometime between 1625 and 1626, roughly around the same time that the extant manuscript places him in Madrid. In other words, evidence suggests that he was in Madrid when he wrote this piece. Still, there is no way to be sure for which Castilian *corral* he intended *Juramento*, or if he planned to take it back to Lisbon to have it staged there.

To make matters worse, no autograph manuscript for *Juramento* exists, nor does any edition published during Cordeiro’s own lifetime. This means that authorial intent is, at this point, irretrievable. And for the reasons given above, it is equally impossible to reconstruct the details of any one performance. And yet, despite these roadblocks, the play itself offers both direct and indirect guidance as to how it appeared onstage. Therefore, this study aims to describe only how the textual tradition asks

that this play be staged. By textual tradition, I mean the corpus of extant versions, copies, and witnesses listed in the bibliography. I limit my analysis to those aspects of performance, blocking, and costume required by the stage notes (*didascalia explicita*) and those to which the play alludes indirectly (*didascalia implicita*). For performances to exclude them, they would have to edit, rewrite, or disregard the dialogue itself. This is, in other words, a deductive approach to the recovery of staging based on textual clues, a comparison of the *acotaciones* that appear in the many versions of this play,¹¹ and our knowledge of the playhouse features common to both Castilian *corrales* and Lusitanian *pátios*.¹² This serves several purposes: first, it details how a popular seventeenth-century *comedia* may have been performed throughout its two-century staging history, and, secondly, it is suggestive of how it might be staged in a contemporary performance.

Juramento requires an acting troupe of about 15 people. The cast list provides the names of ten characters:

El Rey de Dinamarca, *viejo*
El Conde Victorino
La Duquesa Rosaura, *su hermana*
Beatriz, *criada*
Perilo, *gracioso*
La Infanta, Lenia

Elvira, *dama*
Felino, Príncipe de Albania
Silvio y Lepido, *criados* [Fol. A]

This list omits at least two more roles: a singing servant called Fabio, and a silent Christ statue that intervenes at the opening of the third act. Additionally, the play calls for an unnumbered group of *músicos*, *soldados*, and members of the public who shout from offstage in act three. Of course, these roles may overlap. A smaller troupe can easily perform this *comedia* by reducing the roles of Silvio, Lepido, and Fabio down to two servants. In fact, 13 of the 21 surviving versions attribute Silvio's lines to Lepido, indicating that this type of conflation was common in *Juramento's* performance history. Moreover, two actors can serve as the musicians, soldiers, and public in act three since none of these groups are needed at the same time. One of these actors could also be the *Santo Cristo*, whose appearances are brief.

These roles are based on the six character types used in *comedias*:¹³ the Duchess Rosaura and Princess Lenia are the play's two *damas*, beautiful women of noble lineage who prove to be faithful and daring lovers. Count Victorino and Prince Felino are *galanes*, brave nobles and handsome lovers whose relationships with the *damas* drive the play's action. As the powerful father of one of the *dama*-protagonists, the King serves as both the

poderoso and the *viejo*. Perilo is the Count's sidekick and the play's *gracioso*. Beatriz, Elvira, Silvio, Lepido, and Fabio are all *criados*, or servants of the noble class. At least two of them, Beatriz and Fabio, must be portrayed by actors that can also sing.

The action recounts two intertwined love affairs. The first involves Count Victorino, whose victories on the battlefield are only rivaled by his misfortunes in love. Victorino has had a long-standing secret relationship with Princess Lenia, which is disrupted when her father, the King of Denmark, decides to marry her to Felino, the Prince of Albania. At night, Victorino speaks to his love from the street underneath her balcony. In desperation, she offers to forfeit her honor and escape with him to Spain. Fearful of betraying the King, Victorino turns down her offer. She decries his cowardice and he criticizes her fickleness. The second relationship involves Lenia's future husband and the Duchess Rosaura, who also happens to be Victorino's sister. Rosaura serves as hostess to the Prince, who makes an unplanned stop in her dukedom on his way to Denmark. Mindful of her honor, Rosaura refuses the Prince's advances until, through bribery, Felino gains access to the Duchess's chamber. An entrance from her garden leads to the room where she prays while her servants sleep. When Rosaura finds the Prince there, she grabs his pistol and threatens to kill him. At gunpoint, the Prince continues to woo her. She eventually concedes, but

only after forcing Felino to sign a contract proving their marriage and swear before a crucifix that he is her husband. Later, the Prince discovers a letter to Rosaura's brother. Convinced that the Duchess was writing to another lover, Felino renounces his commitment and continues his trip to meet Lenia. Dressed in mourning, Rosaura kneels before an altar and begs for divine intervention. Exhausted, she falls asleep. Her brother happens upon this scene and overhears her slumbering confession. He resolves to kill her, but is startled by the suddenly animated Christ statue. Later, Lenia's father asks her to step out onto their balcony and watch her husband in a race, part of the wedding celebrations. Offstage exclamations inform us that the Prince suffers a near fatal fall from his horse. Two servants drag him onto the stage area. Revived, Felino recounts a terrible vision: he was judged guilty for his sins by a divine tribunal. He repents and averts a duel by agreeing to marry Rosaura. Lenia then confesses her love for Victorino and the two are happily paired.

An organizing principle guides the many staging decisions that appear throughout *Juramento*. In terms of costume, the texts highlight only those that signal separation from the norm. In terms of blocking, they emphasize the thresholds between on and off-stage. In terms of setting, they use middle spaces whose main function is to show characters transitioning into and out of other locations. In

terms of acting, they employ semi-asides that mix public discourse with the private. In other words, these texts evoke stagings that call attention to the dislocated, transitional, and uncertain states of being experienced by *Juramento*'s protagonists, making costume, blocking, setting, and acting all functions of theme. A closer look at these elements will help elucidate this point.

The action of the play occurs in five settings with minimal scenic demands. The first of these provides the norm from which subsequent settings will deviate. It is the Danish Royal Court, or King's palace. *Juramento* begins with this setting in verses 1 to 160 and returns to it once in each subsequent act: verses 1036 to 1837 in act two, and 2178 to 2735 in act three. 1,520 of the play's 2,735 verses are recited here. These constitute 55.6% of the dialogue, well over half of the play. Furthermore, the *comedia* begins and ends in this space, making it *Juramento*'s most frequent and important setting.

Considering that over half of the play occurs here, it is surprising that there are no explicit references to the details of this set. Instead, dialogue, costume, and music inform the audience about where the characters are. For example, as the Count rambles, Perilo advises his master to maintain decorum by reminding him where he is: "Señor, que estás en Palacio" (23). Soldiers in formal attire, dressed in "galas" (3) and "plumas" (4), arrange themselves in formation: "un alarde de soldados"

(1). And a variety of musical instruments signal the Count's arrival: *chirimías*, *cajas*, and, possibly, "trompetas" (2). All of these details establish the formal setting without requiring specific alterations to the set. In essence, these sights and sounds serve a synecdochical function, signally the existence of a larger, more lavish court setting which was probably not reproduced onstage.

Within this setting, the expression of the transitory, uncertain, and in-between mentioned above rest solely on the shoulders of the actors. Victorino, for instance, embodies a common *comedia* theme, the tension between decorum and inner desires, through hybrid speech that blends inner and outer realities in a series of partial confessions. These semi-asides allow the private to seep into public discourse. They serve as a discursive middle ground between dialogue (in which two or more characters speak to each other and the audience is left in the position of voyeur listening in on the conversation) and the aside (in which the character addresses the audience in a confessional speech). The semi-aside mixes these two conventions and directs itself partially to another character in the play and partially to the audience. The texts ask that the actor playing this role adeptly move between these three registers. For example, during the opening of the first act, Victorino's response to the praise that he is receiving for his military exploits is part public address and part confession:

CONDE. No toquen sonoras cajas,
ni belisonas trompetas.
Quitaos, soldados, las galas,
las plumas y la braveza.
¿Para qué con alegrías
me reciben, y con fiestas,
ya que murió mi esperanza
a manos de ingrata ausencia?
(*Ap*: ¿¡Casada Lenia!? ¡Mal haya
el que confía en firmeza
de mujer, si ésta es la paga,
y al fin su mudanza es ésta!
¡Ingrata Infanta!, a Dios ruego
que en rigor, dolor y pena
te abrases como me abraso,
para que mis ansias sientas.)
Laurel ingrato, bajad.
No coronéis mi cabeza,
que si os merecí por armas,
por desdicha os desmerezca.
Bastón, buscad otro dueño
de más ventura, que os tenga,
que no es bien que un desdichado
vuestras victorias posea.

PERILO. (*al CONDE*: Señor, que estás en palacio,
advierte, que a verte llega
su Majestad y la Infanta;
que te reportes es fuerza.)

CONDE. (*a PERILO*: Y fuerza que amor y celos
al alma den nuevas fuerzas.
¡Sufrid, sufrid, ansias mías!,
ya que el rigor os despierta.)
(1-32)

The indicators of asides and semi-asides provided above are absent from the copy-text used for this study. In other words, they are mine. Although where these semi-asides begin and end is a matter of interpretation, their existence is not. It is obvious, for example, that the soldiers in attendance do not hear all of Victorino's discourse. According to convention, the public disclosure of his love for Lenia should occur in the final scene and not in the first. Still, we know that the entire opening sequence cannot be a complete aside because it solicits a reaction from Perilo, who admonishes his master to control his speech. So, Victorino must be speaking at times only to himself, at times just to Perilo, and at times to everyone. Furthermore, the Count's orders are interspersed with lamentations, making this discourse vacillate between the public and private spheres. In other words, Victorino's speech is part monologue and part dialogue, indicating that he is caught betwixt the two modes of communication, a linguistic symptom of the uncertainty and confusion of a frustrated lover. I have indicated this discursive movement above with stage notes and parentheses,

but an actor would have to do so through gaze, gesture, body language, and movement. We cannot know exactly how a Golden Age performer would achieve this effect, but modern performances of similar plays give us a good idea of how this effect can be achieved. Additionally, we might not know what the actor did, but his cues are embedded in the text, so we have a good idea of when he did it.

Later, the King asks Victorino for an account of his battlefield achievements, but the Count's description continually confuses the martial and the marital, as Victorino cannot conceal the anguish caused by his supposed betrayal at the hands of Lenia. Perilo interrupts his master, saving both the Count and Princess from revealing their hidden romance. The exchange that follows is another semi-confession in which private melancholy overflows onto an otherwise traditional war narration. In the following quote, I have italicized the personalized sections of his speech to visually distinguish them from their formal counterparts:

REY. La victoria contad, Conde.

CONDE. Pasa, Rey, desta manera:
 con tu ejército animoso,
 a vista del de Bohemia
 llegué, señor poderoso,
 cuando dicen las trompetas,

que ya se casa mi ingrata.

PERILO. (*al CONDE: Señor, ¿que te pierdes!*)

CONDE. (*a PERILO: Pierda,
que perdida la esperanza,
ya no hay remedio que tenga.*)

REY. Conde, ¿qué es lo que decís?

PERILO. (*Ap.: Bien estamos, a otra puerta.*)
(*al CONDE: Señor, ¿a su Majestad
no respondes?*)

CONDE. (*a PERILO: Bien quisiera,
pero quien ama olvidado,
¿qué ha de responder?*) Trompetas
dije, señor, que tocaban
al son que cajas alientan
corazones orgullosos,
para empezar la pelea.
Salieron luego los celos.

PERILO: (*Ap.: Otra vez, vuelve a su tema.*)
(*al CONDE: Señor...*)

CONDE. (*a PERILO: Déjame, Perilo,
que su alquitrán en mis venas
exhala fuego, que obliga
a que aquí diga mi pena.*) (55-80)

This passage again characterizes Victorino as a person stuck in between states of being. He is not fully committed to introspection or interaction. Instead, he resides somewhere betwixt the two, pulled into one by his anguish and back into the other by duty. This conflict and uncertainty would have to inform any performance of his role.

In-betweenness is also a common theme in the settings, costume, and performance cues associated with the Duchess. The first setting linked to her, which appears between verses 161 to 265, is her Spanish palace. This is a minor setting that only occupies 105 verses, or 3.8% of the dialogue. This space is where she receives and greets the Prince. Once again, this scene does not demand any particular setup. There are no references to desks, tables, windows, etc. Still, dialogue emphasizes that the Duchess's palace is located in the countryside, removed from the urban milieu to which the Prince is accustomed. He exclaims: "A exageraros no acierto; / que en este bosque encubierto, / ¡se críe tan bella planta!" (172-75). Rosaura responds: "Criéme, señor, aquí / entre estos campos y flores" (181-82). Of course, these references establish a contrast between courtly life and that of the countryside.¹⁴ The *autor*, or director, would have to decide how this contrast would be manifested scenically, if at all. However, this dialogue establishes the Duchess's otherness. She is not of the city and

not of the court. Instead, she has grown, like a plant, from nature.

Implicit in descriptions of this space is its transitional nature and the isolation suffered by its primary resident, the Duchess. We learn from Lenia that Rosaura's dukedom is somewhere in the Iberian Peninsula when she offers to follow the Count on his voyage home: "Llebadme, mi bien, a España/y sea esto, Conde, presto," (446-53). *España* may have been a reference to the Iberian Peninsula in general, or to Spain in particular. In either case, if traveling by sea, it would be the middle point of a voyage from Albania to Denmark. Her home is quite literally betwixt and between the two kingdoms mentioned in the play. Additionally, her separateness becomes apparent visually at the opening of the third act: she finds herself in marital limbo as she has just secretly wedded the Prince, who has since then abandoned her to go on to marry her rival. She steps onstage dressed in mourning, "*Salé la Duquesa con luto*," (1838-9). Beatriz notes this unusual costume and her irregular behavior: "¿Qué tienes, que así te has puesto / con luto, sin ocasión? / ¿De qué tus suspiros son?" (1846-48). In summary, Rosaura's in-betweenness is marked visually as well as geographically.

The second setting linked to the Duchess appears twice in the *comedia*, once between verses 526 and 609, and again in verses 916 to 1035. These occurrences add up to 204 lines, or 7.5% of the

play. This setting is somewhere outside of Rosaura's palace, specifically, outside of a garden with an entrance that leads to her chapel. This is a nondescript space. Dialogue only reveals that it has a wall. The Prince asks Silvio: "¿Diste a la muralla asalto?" (530). Still, there is no need to produce this wall onstage. The main function of this setting is to serve as a transition into and out of the Duchess's oratory. The Prince appears here in the first act right before he sneaks onto her property and in the second act just as he flees. In other words, this setting highlights the fleeting and uncertain nature of their relationship.

Cordeiro contrasts this visually bare setting with a lavish description of Rosaura's garden. Silvio explains in *octavas reales*:

Procuré, gran señor, como mandaste,
ver el palacio todo, y su belleza,
con las más circunstancias que mandaste
para intento fatal de una ardua empresa.
No las de Ciro vencen el engaste,
ni las que nos pintó naturaleza,
émula de dibujos y pinceles,
que por imitación dio mil laureles.

Entre mil peregrinas cuadras bellas,
confusión de la vista y laberinto,
con más frisos que el cielo tiene estrellas,
vi grandezas, señor, que aquí no pinto.

En cuadros de pinturas vi centellas
de amorosas historias. Vi sucinto
un *paraíso alegre* y rutilante,
que su belleza al sol quedó triunfante.

Salen las puertas a un jardín pequeño,
que deleita la vista su hermosura
Sutil Cupido está de airado ceño,
vomitando entre jaspes plata pura.
Convida su hermosura a un *blando sueño*,
que en mil cristales deshacer procura
la espuma, por temer que nazca de ella,
otra Venus allí de agua tan bella.
(538-61, emphasis added)

Of course, Cordeiro likely did not intend for the paintings, friezes, and Cupid fountain described above to be represented onstage. Instead, the character Silvio seems to be describing settings that are too scenically demanding to be reproduced within the performance space (teichoscopia). In any case, Silvio's description evokes a number of elements associated with the uncertain and transitional: confusion, "confusion de la vista y laberinto," (547); sexual ambiguity, in the multitude of depictions of love scenes and in allusions to the pre-sexual Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, "un *paraíso alegre*," (552); and finally to dream-like states as intermediaries between the earthly and the divine, "un *blando sueño*," (558).

Silvio also details the means by which the Prince will gain access to Rosaura's oratory:

A la mano derecha hay una puerta,
que es oratorio, en fin, de la Duquesa,
y a la siniestra mano otra concierto,
en perspectiva igual a esta grandeza.
Ésta que aquí te digo queda abierta,
camarín de aquel cielo de belleza,
donde sale a rezar, ya que acostadas
quedan todas las dueñas y criadas.

Yo tengo prevenido al jardinero
con dádivas, señor, para esconderte
en este paraíso lisonjero,
dichoso si tu amor goza esta suerte.
En él has de quedar. Mira primero
que es noble la Duquesa, y esto advierte:
que si la gozas, mira lo que haces,
porque nacen mil guerras destas paces.

(586-601)

Once again, this setting is not meant to be reproduced onstage. The next scene takes place inside the oratory and not around its exterior. Still, this description establishes that the oratory should have a door. Rosaura reinforces this fact by asking Beatriz if she has locked it in verse 609. Additionally, it reiterates the permeability of Rosaura's palace, a transitional space into which the Prince is able to enter and leave easily.

The oratory is the final setting associated with Rosaura, and it is the most scenically demanding. It appears in the first act, in lines 610 to 915, and in the third, from verse 1838 to 2177. These occurrences add up to 646 lines, or 23.6% of the dialogue. Stage notes in the first act introduce this setting: "*Vanse, y sale la DUQUESA, y traiga BEATRIZ dos velas encendidas en sus bujías, y póngalas en un bufete bajo, en que ha de haber recado de escribir,*" (609-10). This desk was probably situated in the stage's discovery space, where it would be quickly concealed and revealed by the pull of the curtain. A door with a sign flanks it. The Prince refers to them when he observes: "En esta puerta hay escrito/de letra antigua y mosaica/un letrero: ¿qué dirá?" (770-73). Shortly afterwards, he reads its message: "Mira que te mira Dios," (778).

A second discovery space is used in the same scene: "*Corre la DUQUESA una cortina, y descubre un Cristo, y arrodillase el PRÍNCIPE a jurar,*" (898-99). This time the curtain reveals a crucifix and an altar upon which the Prince swears. It becomes evident that the statue is a crucifix in the third act, when the Duchess invokes its "tiara/de espinas" (1915-16), "cinco llagas" (1937), "pies divinos" (1938), and "manos sacras" (1939). Furthermore, she refers to Christ's "Pasión santa" (1945) and swears "por la Cruz" (1936). This is the altar upon which the Duchess later falls asleep: "*Recuéstase la DUQUESA a dormir junto al altar*

del Cristo con un papel en la mano, y sale el CONDE" (1977-78).

Finally, this Christ statue is played by a motionless actor, who in the third act miraculously comes alive to save Rosaura's life. Arellano describes the use of actors hidden in *huecos*:

Las apariencias que se descubren en estos lugares recuerdan en ocasiones a las escenas de retablo, herencia del teatro litúrgico medieval. Podían aparecer en cualquier de los huecos y se componían de lienzos pintados, maniqués o *actores inmóviles que podían romper a moverse*. (79-80, emphasis added)

This actor holds the crucifix stance from verse 1889, "*Corre la cortina del Cristo, y arrodíllase*," until verse 2107, when the stage directions indicate: "*Levántanse los dos, córrese la cortina del Cristo*" (2107-08).

In addition to this "special-effect" being the dramatic centerpiece of the play, the silent Christ-statue is the most compelling example of this play's fascination with the in-between and transitional. It appears to take advantage of the religious symbolism evoked by the rectangular façade of a typical *corral*, divided into nine spaces by tiers and columns. Indeed, Dawn Smith has already noted the similarity between the *corral*'s tiers and an altar:

"There must also have been a striking resemblance to a baroque altarpiece which, typically, also had nine spaces and roughly the same dimensions," (94). An astute *autor* would position the crucifix in the *hueco central*, converting the stage into a life-sized reproduction of a baroque altarpiece, both in dimensions and in content. Of course, this discovery space is physically divided from the rest of the stage by curtains, drawn at the appropriate moment for the reveal. Visually, this area is delineated by darkness. As Varey notes, "It must be remembered that the overhanging balcony and roof over the stage would make the discovery space relatively dark" ("The Use of Levels" 304-05). The resultant visual imagery must have been striking: the crucified Christ hangs motionless in darkness in the center of what appears to be an altar. A woman cries at his feet. Her brother unsheathes his dagger to kill her, and Christ breaks his immobile pose, lowers himself from the altar, transgresses the limits of the darkened *hueco*, and steps out into the light, in between the would-be murderer and his victim. What is unclear is whether Victorino entered the *hueco* to kill his sister, or, conversely, if Christ steps out of it to save her. In any case, the discovery space becomes a limbo, a connection between this world and the next, a place where humans can enter into partial contact with the divine, and through which the divine breaks through to intervene on their behalf.

The use of seemingly animated religious icons has been well-documented by David Freedberg. He calls them “live images,” and notes that they employ a variety of techniques to blur “the distinction between inert signifier and lively signified,” (285). For example, in an eleventh-century manuscript, Christ appears painted within a square frame. His hand reaches out beyond the square, and points to a depiction of the *Destruction of the Evil Man*, as the illustration’s title calls it¹⁵. The frame and its transgression by Christ’s hand have the same effect described above, namely that the representation defies its limits and appears to become animate. Some 35 surviving Christ statues built between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries show us how this effect was achieved by sculptors. The crucifixes have moveable arms and/or heads, some are decorated with natural hair, and others have wounds enabled to bleed. Donatello’s crucifix made for Florence’s Basilica of the Holy Cross is a famous example. As Freedberg explains, many of these statues were used in liturgical dramas of the Easter period (286): they were removed from the cross, ceremoniously wrapped (explaining the need for arms that could be placed at Christ’s sides), and later unwrapped to represent the resurrection. The animated crucifix topos also appears in a number of paintings. Some notable Spanish examples include Bartolomé Esteban Murillo’s *Saint Frances Embracing the Crucified Christ* (1668) and Francisco Ribalta’s

Christ Embracing Saint Bernard (ca. 1620-25). In both cases, Christ, moved by the plight of a supplicant, comes alive. Cordeiro's suddenly moving Christ statue belongs to the same tradition, evoking a powerful, albeit common, convention.

Juramento also uses the discovery space to highlight Lenia's in-betweenness in the third setting of the play, which appears between verses 266 and 525. These constitute 260 lines, or 9.5% of the dialogue. According to the *acotaciones*, the scene occurs at night: "*Vanse y sale de noche el Conde*" (265). This setting again takes advantage of the tiered balconies of the corral façade. Particularly, this balcony may have railings, since the Count addresses them in the following lament:

Rejas, que atentas oís
mis quejas y mis amores,
¿cómo a mi dueño, entre flores,
que salga no le pedís? (296-99)

For the sake of verisimilitude, this balcony should be deep enough to allow the Princess to conceal herself behind Elvira or within a doorframe. Victorino should not be able to see her, as the following exchange demonstrates:

ELVIRA. ¿Ha, cavallero?

CONDE. ¿Quién llama?

ELVIRA. Elvira os llama... ¿Señor?

CONDE. (*Ap.: Sombras locas de mi amor,
mi propia ofensa os defama.*)

INFANTA. (*a ELVIRA*: Dile aqesto de mi parte.)

ELVIRA. Señor Conde, ¿no me habláis?

CONDE. Sola, Elvira, ¿sola estáis?

ELVIRA. La Infanta me manda hablarte.
(334-41)

This concealment is necessary because later Lenia dramatically reveals herself when Victorino resolves to leave:

CONDE. Dile, que el Conde está loco.
La ocasión ella la sabe.
Y dile, que no me acabe
con matarme poco a poco,
que no me engañe atrevida,
con disculpas, con enojos,
y que no verán sus ojos
al Conde en toda su vida.
(Hace el CONDE que se va.)

INFANTA. Conde, Conde, ¿tal rigor

contra un alma que os adora?
(378-87)

In my estimation, the most logical positioning for this partial concealment is the doorframe of the central second tier alcove, which lies behind the railings used in balcony scenes, within plain sight of the audience, but slightly outside of Victorino's vision. His view of Lenia would be obstructed by his upward vantage-point, the railings, and Elvira, who presumably stands between the two. If in fact this is how this scene was stage, it would be another ingenious use of the architectural structure of the *corral*, in this case with the intent of highlighting the uncertainty of the young lover.

As stated earlier, a common theme seems to unite the aspects of setting, acting, blocking, and staging that we can deduce from textual cues in Cordeiro's *Juramento*. Until now, I have described it as the transitional, the uncertain, and the in-between, but I believe that modern criticism offers a variety of theoretical frameworks from which we can understand these types of phenomenon. For example, from the vantage-point of criticism influenced by cultural anthropology, we can describe this use of in-betweenness as a manifestation of the *liminal*. Arnold van Gennep first used the word *limen* (from the Latin, meaning "threshold") in reference to the transitional period in the rites of passage common to highly ritualistic societies.¹⁶ According

to van Gennep, these rituals share three stages: separation, margin, and aggregation. In the first, the ritual subject engages in symbolic behavior that marks his separation from a previous role. The second stage, often called *liminality*, is characterized by uncertainty, humility, sexual ambiguity, and what Victor Turner—who rediscovered and popularized van Gennep's work in the 1960s—has called *comunitas*, an unstructured community in which all of the members are equal.¹⁷ The final stage ends the ritual, as the individual is re-integrated into the broader society in a new role with new expectations and responsibilities. Turner explains that these liminal periods are most clearly seen in initiation rites into social maturity because “they have well-marked and protracted marginal or liminal phases,” (95). Still, modern criticism has expanded upon this vocabulary and applied it to a wide variety of societies and modes of cultural production.¹⁸ *Liminality*, in its current usage, describes the “in-between situations and conditions that are characterized by the dislocation of established structures, the reversal of hierarchies, and uncertainty regarding the continuity of tradition and future outcomes,” (Horvath *et al* 3), or, as the *Dictionary of Anthropology* humorously states, it is ““the ambiguous state of being between states of being,” (288).

In a broad sense, any play that follows a traditional comedic structure in which social order is disrupted and eventually reestablished may in fact

be dramatizing the ritual stages identified by van Gennep: separation, liminality, and aggregation. That middle stage, characterized by upheaval and dislocation, provides the dramatic tension that forms the basis of many *comedias*. In this sense, the *comedia* is a genre characterized by liminality. In fact, if one were to replace one term for the other, the above definition would often still hold true: the *comedia*, as a genre, frequently depicts *in-between situations, the dislocation of established structures, the reversal of hierarchies, and uncertainty about the continuity of tradition*. Its protagonists often find themselves at a threshold (the *limen*), torn between the demands of opposing forces, and beset by the conflicts and confusion produced by their uncertain marital, political, moral, or social status. Indeed, a list of the most famous *comedia* characters reads like a register of people stuck in some type of limbo before their state is resolved and they are re-integrated into the social order. For example, Lope's *dama boba* finds herself on the verge of marriage, but to the wrong man; Calderón's Segismundo vacillates between imprisonment and power; and Claramonte's *Valiente negro en Flandes* rises from slavery and aspires to social integration. These *comedias* and the liminality of their protagonists end as the characters complete their transformations and become re-integrated into society, generally through marriage.

Admittedly, the purpose for which the term *liminality* was conceived and the disciplinary context in which it was created necessitates that its application to the *comedia* be metaphorical and interpretive. Still, in defense of its usage here, I would like to make three points: firstly, that interdisciplinary and cross-contextual applications of the concept have become commonplace; secondly, that dating back to the *Auto de los Reyes Magos*, Spanish theater openly celebrates its origins in the religious, ritualistic, and liturgical; and thirdly, marriage, the most common vehicle of aggregation in the *comedia*, also happens to be the most familiar rite of passage in Western cultures.

From this perspective, the liminal comes to the forefront as an underlying principle in the staging of Jacinto Cordeiro's *El juramento ante Dios, y lealtad contra el amor*. This play employs a variety of techniques to highlight the uncertain states of its protagonists. It signals the Duchess's separation from society (van Gennep's first ritual stage) through costume and location. It dresses her in mourning and places her far from courtly life in the countryside. Additionally, metaphors link her to nature, to plant life, and to the forest. *Juramento* also uses geography to express liminality (van Gennep's second stage) by placing the Duchess's palace at the midpoint between the two kingdoms in question, Albania and Denmark. Furthermore, it represents her palace metaphorically as a labyrinth, evoking

the confusion experienced in liminal spaces, and as the Garden of Eden with images signaling both pre-sexual innocence and arousal, evoking the sexual ambiguity typically found in the liminal. Additionally, settings associated with the Duchess are transitory and fleeting. In particular, *Juramento* takes advantage of the *hueco central*, making it a spatial representative of the liminal. It is where prayers are given and answered, and where the Duchess touches the divine. Blocking expresses Lenia's liminality: she lingers at the threshold of the second tier *hueco*, stuck between on and offstage, between this or that marriage. And finally, Victorino's liminality manifests itself in his speech, which is a confused jumble of registers and discourses. A preference for the semi-aside shows Victorino's melding of the private and the public, of war narratives and lamentations. He is, like the Duchess and like Lenia, a person caught *in the state of being between states of being*.

In closing, I hope that this study has shown how a deductive approach to uncovering latent stagings can give us, at the very least, a broad sketch of how a piece may have appeared onstage. As we have seen with Cordeiro's *Juramento*, this approach at times yields very little, leaving one to grasp at vague references with only small clues as to what actually appeared onstage. In other instances, basic knowledge of the architecture of the *corral* façade combined with a close reading of implicit and explicit stage directions can provide a vivid pic-

ture of aspects of lost performances. Additionally, this study suggests how *El juramento ante Dios*, untouched for centuries, might be performed in the future, and what themes should inform these performances. Finally, I have also suggested how modern criticism can make sense of those parts of the spectacle that we are able to recover. In other words, in the absence of first-hand accounts of a given performance, modern versions as a point of comparison, and manuscripts that might indicate authorial intent, the contemporary critic, using the text as a point of departure, can nonetheless reconstruct how a play asks to be staged, and catch a glimpse of parts of Golden-Age stagecraft that have been otherwise obscured by time.

NOTES

¹ Jacinto Cordeiro (d. 1646) often published work under a Castilianized version of his surname, *Cordero*.

² Barbosa Machado assures us of the success of *Juramento's* author in Castille: "Na Poesia Comica excedio aos principaes cultores della como publicaõ as muitas Comedias, que compoz sendo representadas em Castella com grande aplauzo dos expectadores," (462).

³ In verses 55 through 58 of the play, Cordeiro alludes to a conflict between Bohemia and Denmark. This may indicate that the play was written during the Thirty Years' War, in which Christian IV of Denmark joined the alliance against Bohemia in 1625. The victory that Cordeiro's characters describe never came. Christian IV was defeated by Count Tilly at Lutter in Brunswick on August 27th, 1626. If this *comedia*

does allude to these events, Cordeiro penned it sometime after 1625 and before this 1626 defeat.

⁴ I establish that these 21 *suestras* constitute unique editions and not copies, in my doctoral dissertation: *Jacinto Cordeiro's El juramento ante Dios y lealtad contra el amor: A Critical Edition*.

⁵ This observation is based on my collation of the extant editions. See my dissertation mentioned above.

⁶ A copy of this *suelta* is held by the British Library [11728.h.13(13)].

⁷ For a more detailed discussion of the number of Portuguese *comedia* playwrights and their dramatic production, see "The Spanish *Comedia* in Portugal" in my dissertation.

⁸ Pacheco was, according to Garcia Peres, "Portugués, presbítero, vecino de Granada en los años 1641 y 42. Quizá había salido de su patria por ser partidario de la causa de Castilla. Después de largas navegaciones por África y América se fijó en dicha ciudad y luego en Martos, donde hizo 12 comedias a lo divino dedicadas a varias personas [. . .]," (435-6).

⁹ Antonio (H)enríquez Gómez was, according to Garcia Peres, "Hijo de Diego Henrique de Villegas Villanova, natural de Lisboa, que militó como Capitán de corazas en Castilla, en donde permaneció hasta que se hizo la paz en 1668; nació en Cuenca. . . habiendo salido de España por motivo de sus creencias judáicas, fuera se tuvo y dió siempre como portugués, y como tal fué amigo inseparable del dicho Villa Real y de los que formaban la Corte del Marqués de Niza, Embajador en París, en cuya ciudad ó en el Mediodía de Francia residió, muy considerado, no solo por los hombres que sobresalían en literatura, sino por los mismos Reyes Luis XIII y Luis XIV, de quien fué Consejero y Mayordomo ordinario," (279).

¹⁰ José da Mota y Silva "nació en Aveiro. Era hermano de [Jorge de la Mota y Silva]. Murió el 10 de diciembre de 1663. Estudió en Évora y Coimbra, pero su pasión por la poesía hizo

que no concluyese la carrera, y se dedicó a escribir para el teatro. Murió el 25 de agosto de 1741,” (Garcia Peres 420).

¹¹ It is important to note that these stage notes do not show evidence of any radically different stagings of the play. Instead, they are relatively consistent. The differences between earlier versions and subsequent ones can generally be attributed to reduction and compression.

¹² Piedad Bolaños Donoso and Mercedes de los Reyes Peña’s reconstruction of the *Pátio das Arcas* shows that Lisboan playhouses were built to imitate the Spanish *corrales*, and therefore share its most distinguishing characteristics.

¹³ See Arellano p. 127-129 for a full description of these types.

¹⁴ See Antonio de Guevara’s *Menosprecio de corte y alabanza de aldea* (1539) for further discussion on the contrast between courtly and country life.

¹⁵ This illustration, entitled *The Image of Christ speaking to David and pointing to the Destruction of the Evil Man*, is attributed to Theodore Psalter and appears in a manuscript held by the British Library (MS 19352, Fol. 15).

¹⁶ See Van Gennep’s *The Rites of Passage* (1909).

¹⁷ See Turner’s *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (1978).

¹⁸ See Bjorn Thomassen’s “The Uses and Meanings of Liminality” listed in the bibliography for an account of the term’s dissemination throughout the humanities and social sciences.

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FROM THE TOWN WITH MORE THEATERS THAN TAXIS: CALDERÓN, LOPE AND TIRSO AT THE 2008 ALMAGRO FESTIVAL

(Second of two parts with a complete list of works cited)

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The CNTC Comes of Age? Extending the Canon for a New Generation¹

Since its inception, the CNTC has been inextricably linked with Almagro. José Manuel Garrido asked Adolfo Marsillach if he would like to direct a new national company dedicated to staging classical theater at the 1985 Festival, and the Company has staged at least one production there ever since. In recent years, it has commandeered the vast Hospital San Juan as its holiday home and, in 2008, two plays were performed there for nine and ten-day residencies (the longest for any production in the Festival): Calderón's *Las manos blancas no ofenden* and Guillén de Castro's *El curioso*

impertiente. In addition, the nascent Joven Compañía performed Lope's *La noche de San Juan* in the much smaller Patio de Fúcares from 9 to 13 July.

The CNTC's repertoire may have become increasingly eclectic in recent years with works from other periods playing alongside their traditional Golden Age fare; this widening of horizons has, nevertheless, been counterbalanced by a drastic increase in productivity facilitated by the presence of two permanent troupes. The general ethos of exploration and discovery has also benefited the *comedia* in that Vasco has honored his promise to offer a more eclectic program: "El caso es que hay textos y textos, no todo es *La vida es sueño*" (cited in Martín Bermúdez 101). With a few notable exceptions, the general emphasis has been on works that have rarely, if ever, been staged in recent years and, in terms of performance style, the prevailing aesthetic has been characterized by an unprecedented sobriety. Although it constitutes their first foray into court drama, *Las manos blancas* is fairly representative of the Company's recent output.

I have been unable to uncover any record of this *comedia* being staged in modern times. Based on the popular refrain that white hands are a sign of beauty (Martínez Blasco 84), it is arguably the least-well known and most meta-theatrical play that the Company has ever staged. This was manifest, for example, in the multiple layers of transvestism that functioned as both a catalyst and obstacle for

smooth narrative progression. Vasco, who adapted and directed this production, attributes this complexity to the performance context for which the play was originally written: “Evidentemente, el tono de estas obras es cómico, pero de una comicidad menos gruesa, poblada de guiños al público asistente, un público selecto que se encuentra en un espacio (salones de corte, jardines, etc.) similar al que ambienta la comedia” (CNTC).

Lope may have dispensed with the Aristotelian unities but this lengthy play-text, comprised of over 4,300 verses, is noticeable for not even attempting to emulate the classical precepts. The narrative commences in a conventional mode with Lisarda donning male attire and usurping the identity of César in order to pursue her lover Federico who has left her to court Serafina in Belflor. Nevertheless, the plot and wardrobe soon begin to thicken as the real-life César dons female apparel in order to escape his over-protective mother so as to have the chance to woo Serafina. Whilst female clothes were intended to be a mere temporary diversion to escape the confines of his house, he then becomes trapped in his female identity as the result of a (un)fortunate meeting with the object of desire who adopts him/her as her favorite maid. In the guise of Celia, and in the presence of the false César, he is then cast in a female role in a play. This is the scene of a violent altercation, and he/she later boasts to Serafina of his/her willingness to use an on-stage sword to protect her. This does not have the desired effect on

his/her mistress who, given the context, adopts an ironically rigid approach to the divisions that ostensibly separate men from women, and play from reality:

Repara,
En que ya no es digna acción
el que aquí en tal traje salgas,
que si la Comedia dio
licencia para esas galas
no es bien que en público de ellas
gozas. (vv. 3571-77)

Whilst female to male transvestism was a stock theatrical device, largely as a result of the erotic potential it allowed, it was far less common for men to dress as women. There were, however, in 2008, two opportunities to see this device on display in Almagro with *Las manos blancas* and Sor Juana's *Los empeños de una casa* - itself a parodic re-working of Calderón's *Los empeños de un acaso* - staged in the Corral de las Comedias by the Mexican Compañía Coordinación Nacional de Teatro. In addition to its comic potential, this conceit is likely to appeal to post-modern sensibilities due to its emphasis on the constructed nature of at least some gender roles.²

Hence, for example, César in *Las manos blancas* compares himself to a modern-day yet sadly prosaic version of Achilles. His father died when he was young and he has been tainted by the

austere and isolated environment in which an over-protective mother who did not allow him to go out to hunt and fish has raised him. An absence of “male” tutelage or activity has, we are told, had physical as well as emotional consequences: he has no facial hair. He first encounters a potential mate when he accompanies his mother to visit a friend in Belflor and sees Serafina. She is his social equal and his mother thinks that she would make a good match, but he is intimidated when he hears that she has many suitors for he fears that his masculinity is wanting, and that he will not be able to compete:

Mil veces me hubiera huido
de esta prisión que me guarda,
si presumiera de mí
que yo pudiera agradarla;
más ¿dónde he de ir, si criado
entre meninas y damas,
sé de tocados y flores,
más que de caballos y armas (vv. 1073-79).

The challenge the director and his team faced with this production was how to perform a lengthy, unfamiliar and self-conscious play with multiple themes in a manner that could delight and entertain a modern-day audience in a large theatrical space. Vasco may have actively sought to eschew the spectacular *mise-en-scène* that once characterized the Company but he has a tendency to lavish time, effort and money on ostensibly minor

details. Indicative of this aesthetic is the fact that his costume designer of choice is celebrity designer, Lorenzo Caprile.³

In *Las manos blancas*, Caprile applied his trademark colorful and stylized classicism that was, for example, on display in the recent film version of *La dama boba* (Manuel Iborra, 2006), to eighteenth-century style costumes. The careful use of fabrics and intricate tailoring made the sartorial objects worthy of aesthetic appraisal in their own right; they were nevertheless well integrated into the play and Vasco's mise-en-scène. The period setting was sufficiently antiquated to be recognizably historic whilst being suitably different to the traditional wear of both *comedia* productions and seventeenth-century Castile to suggest the exoticism of the play's courtly origins and the Italian setting.

Furthermore, the costumes worked well in conjunction with a series of songs. Many of these were based on musical scores prepared by José Herrando and Pablo Esteve for an eighteenth-century production that musical director, Alicia Lázaro, chanced upon in the Biblioteca Histórica Municipal de Madrid (Davila). Under Vasco, music has taken on an increasingly important role in the Company and, in this case, a series of songs that summarized the narrative action enabled him to condense one of Calderón's longest plays into a highly entertaining one-hour and forty-five minute performance.

Almost all the cast had worked together previously on *Don Gil de las calzas verdes*, and this

endowed the ensemble with a fine sense of comic timing. The Hospital's large stage was well-suited to both the play and the mood of the production for it allowed a very kinetic performance style that the actors maintained in energetic fashion throughout. One possible objection is that the performance did tend to focus in a rather one-dimensional fashion on the comic elements of the play. César, for example, was a camp caricature at the beginning, where his pink attire provided a marked visual contrast to his mother dressed in black who adopted the physical appearances and gestures often associated with Bernarda Alba. The two biggest laughs arose from his first appearance in drag as Celia and, later on, when he/she tried to convince the other characters of his real identity and gender. He only succeeded when he gathered them around in a circle and dropped his trousers; this hardly supports Vasco's claims for a more refined and cerebral sensibility!

On stage, the play might not exactly perform the role that its director had claimed for it on the page. It also arguably did not tease out all or even many of the dramatic and sexual possibilities latent in the play-text. What it did, however, achieve was the dual feat of making an unfamiliar and convoluted plot involving multiple layers of transvestism intelligible. There are few *comedia* productions in Spain that would be able to achieve such a feat; this process of *deleitar enseñando* is a vital first step if the *comedia* performance is to genuinely take root in Spain.

It is with this goal in mind that, following his appointment, Vasco created the Joven Compañía comprising of actors under the age of thirty. The first cycle has now been completed with the initial intake having performed two Lope plays: *Las bazarrias de Belisa* and *La noche de San Juan*. As Vasco notes in the program to the latter:

Termina así, este grupo de actores que han compuesto la primera promoción de la Joven Compañía Nacional, un periodo de tres temporadas en el que han recibido un intenso periodo formativo, como prólogo a la experiencia profesional directa: ensayos, estrenos, giras, festivales y exhibición en sede de dos espectáculos. El paso siguiente será la incorporación de muchos de estos intérpretes a los proyectos habituales de la CNTC y la convocatoria, ya en marcha, de nuevas audiciones para una nueva promoción de la Joven, que veremos sobre los escenarios hacia el final de la próxima temporada.⁴

It is perhaps ironic that these two plays were, in fact, written near the end of Lope's life. *Las bazarrias* is the last *comedia* he ever composed. *La noche de San Juan* was commissioned by Olivares in 1631, and was performed in residential gardens belonging to the aristocrat's brother-in-law, the Count of Monterrey (Dixon 66). This theatrical location function as a precursor to the Retiro palace, constructed later in the decade at least in part to

provide a suitably grandiose space for the official court theater, of which the younger Calderón would become a privileged exponent. One presumably unintended consequence of Vasco choosing to resurrect these works is that they are likely to reinforce beliefs surrounding Lope and Calderón's role as state lackeys par excellence.⁵

The action takes place over the shortest night of the year whose celebration has its origins in the Pagan summer solstice. References to the festive date of Saint John – in which the normal rules of morality and conduct were relaxed in a carnivalesque release of sensual and sexual pleasure – can be found in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer's Night Dream* alongside several plays by Lope's such as *El último godo* and *Las flores de San Juan* (Stoll 3).⁶ As Lluís Caparrós Esperante notes, *La noche de San Juan* was composed by the author not long before his death, when he was sixty-eight years old, and in just three days yet “[l]a obra, pese a todo lo anterior, es un derroche de ligereza y juventud” (95). It is one of the few Golden Age plays to contain no older characters whilst Lope's verse is overflowing with adolescent revelry. In theory, therefore, this was an inspired choice for the young Company to perform, but the production was sadly lacking any sense of youthful exuberance or debauchery and was noticeably less successful than their earlier production of *Las bazarrias* under Vasco's direction.

In this case, Helena Pimenta, who had worked with the CNTC on previous occasions,

directed a version prepared by Yolanda Pallín that reveres the play-text in some respects, yet also eschews some of its more interesting aspects. Very few changes were made to individual verses, but every attempt was made, presumably in an effort to reduce the running time, to cut lines not essential for narrative comprehensibility. This resulted in an unfortunate middle ground whereby neither the *comedia* specialist nor the neophyte was likely to be satisfied. The production was, for example, promoted as part of the Company's celebration of the centenary of the *Arte Nuevo* and, given this, I do not think that I am playing the role of the academic pedant to object to the replacement of Pedro's concluding lines in the play-text:

Aquí la comedia acaba
de la noche de San Juan,
que si el arte se dilata
a darle por sus preceptos
al poeta, de distancia,
por favor, venticuatro horas,
ésta en menos de diez pasa. (Vega, vv.
3030-36)

with Leonor uttering:

Con que la comedia acaba,
de la noche de San Juan,
que si el arte se dilata
puede no acabar en bodas

noche de aventuras tantas. (Pallín 69).

The fact that a woman uttered the final lines was symptomatic of a re-alignment of gender roles that was, nevertheless, hinted at but never developed in a production that had no clear directorial vision. Edits made to *Las manos* were arguably necessitated by time constraints, but *La noche de San Juan* is lean enough that it could easily have been performed in its entirety. The fact that it was cut so heavily was, however, necessitated by the performance style. Although the actors recited their lines with technical skill and the production begun with an ostensibly uplifting festive song, there was little on-stage chemistry. In spite of a swift ninety-minute running time and the dynamism of Lope's narrative, the energy levels remained stilted throughout. The production was also very unoriginal in terms of stage design. As in *Las bazarrias*, there was a piano on stage whilst late nineteenth-century costumes bore some resemblance to Pimenta's 2002 production of *La dama boba* with the CNTC. There was also a large wooden construction often placed centre-stage and a screen at the rear of the stage projecting clouds and other landscapes; both had been used previously, and to better effect, by the CNTC in *Amar después de la muerte* (2005) and *Romances del Cid* (2008) respectively.

I was not alone in my misgivings and, in the context of a press that now tends to be very supportive of the CNTC (a far cry from the vicious

attacks to which Marsillach was often subjected to in the 1980s), it was not generally well received. Hence, for example, the reviewer from *El País* praised its rhythm and the effort of the actors, before introducing a fatal caveat: “el producto no cuaja y los espectadores no dejan de bostezar y de mirar el reloj durante hora y media [...] Una noche de San Juan sorprendente, por su falta de chispa y de gracia” (Amezúa).

Much of the CNTC’s recent output has been inconsistent in terms of quality with their forays outside the Golden Age often providing their most accomplished productions. There have been exceptions to this general rule as is demonstrated by *Las manos* and the Joven’s debut outing with *Las bazarrias*. Unfortunately, Vasco has been unable to capitalize on individual triumphs; as a result, the Company has been unable to forge a solid identity or consolidate the performance tradition that it set out to create in 1986.

Keeping It Light? Tapping the *Comedia*’s Comic Potential

The CNTC is not alone in focusing on the lighter-hearted aspects of Golden Age drama. This was reflected at Almagro in Calderón’s *Casa con dos puertas mala es de guardar*, Tirso’s *La mujer por fuerza*, Lope’s *La Gatomaquia*, and a re-creation of Lope’s life in *Basta que me escuchen las estrellas*. As I hope will become evident, these productions were both constituted by and

constitutive of wider discourses and perceptions about the playwrights and their public personas.

The Compañía La Ensemble, forged in RESAD (Real Escuela Superior de Arte Dramático) in the mid-1990s, made their first excursion into the classical canon with *La Gatomaquia* directed by Goyo Pastor. This burlesque epic, described by Barbara Simerka as a “representation of the *Iliad* as a feline war” (165), has only been staged occasionally in recent years. One explanation is that its status as an epic poem rather than a dramatic play discourages stage practitioners. Nevertheless, it is of similar length to a typical *comedia* whilst Lope concludes the poetic narrative with a description of the kind of wedding scene that was a mainstay of many of his comedies, a parallel bolstered by his claim that:

[...] con esta acción dispuso el argumento,
dejando alegre en el postrero acento
los ministriles, y de cuanto en cuanto
adornado de luces el teatro. (vv. 405-08).

Hence, as Celina Sabor de Cortazar notes, “[...] lo narrado en el poema (la acción) sirvió de argumento a una comedia, terminada con un alegre fin de fiesta a cargo de los músicos” (39). This was the approach adopted here by Pedro Villora and José Padilla, who prepared an adaptation described in the Festival program as a free version titled *La*

Gato-maGia (46). They retained the major incidents and dialogue from Lope's third person narrative account, and imposed the dramatic structure of a *comedia* albeit with the addition of a framing device.

An Alpha cat appeared in the opening scene scaring the rest of the characters; this fear was misplaced as he merely promises to tell them a story that then unfolds on stage. Beyond the anomalous presence of actors dressed as cats, there was little to differentiate the production from performances of more conventional *comedias*. It was intelligently staged and choreographed, with the movement of the actors as cats owing as much to the conventions of contemporary dance as to any tradition of *comedia* performance; this appeared to be vital in engaging the audience. The basic conceit of this feline universe was intrinsically interesting but it was overplayed in parts with a constant recourse to meowing soon becoming irksome.

Marramaquiz is courting Zapaquilda but is subsequently rejected in favor of a wealthy *indiano*, Micifuf, to whom her father wants her to marry. In Lope's play-text, it is the young woman who is seduced by the riches and flattery of her new suitor; as Simerka notes, "[t]hroughout the first three *silvas* of the poem, gender specific 'feminine' defects of one sort or another constitute the source of every conflict" (172). Nevertheless, this theatrical re-working posited women more as victims by placing an increased prominence on the generational

conflicts and prohibitions more familiar from *capa y espada* plays. Hence, for example, when Zapaquilda voiced her doubts about her new partner, both her father and new fiancée threatened to kill her if she did not go ahead with the marriage. This ongoing conflict over Zapaquilda led to the outbreak of a civil war that was staged dramatically. The lights in the Patio de los Fúcares were dimmed and the sole source of visibility originated from the luminous swords wielded by the bellicose cats. An apparent impasse in the battle was subsequently ruptured with a loud bang as a human character shot the feline *indiano*; hence, within the self-enclosed narrative, a man in ridiculous hunting attire effectively took on the role of a *deus ex machina*. This bloody resolution paved the way for reconciliation as Marramaquíz married Zapaquilda.

Lope's poem clearly seeks to deflate Góngoresque verse through the bathetic re-telling of an epic tale that has its roots in classical antiquity, but is seen as anachronistic in reference to the prosaic reality of contemporary life. The number of literary references was perhaps understandably cut in the transition from page to stage, but there is nevertheless the question of whether anything of worth remains once this literary game and poetic rivalry is largely neutered? Furthermore, how does the feline presence, central to the mockery on the page, survive on the stage where audiences were confronted not with cats expressing themselves in human form but as actors masquerading as cats?

The most interesting and ingenious moments tended to be those that consciously or unconsciously played with the conventions of *comedia* performance. Hence, for example, the feline identities provided the pretext to dress the actresses in revealing clothes whose erotic potential echoed that of female to male transvestism in the *corrales*. Equally, there was a neat meta-theatrical twist in a comic scene where the *gracioso* cross-dressed in order to gain entry into Zapaquilda's house only to become the unexpected object of her father's desire. In general, however, the anthropomorphic narrative was too slight and inconsequential to ever move beyond novelty value.

This was evident in the treatment of Lope's own biography. In spite of it being written near the end of his life, the parallels between *La Gatomaquia* and the playwright's youthful affair with Elena Osorio are clear. The passage of time seemingly enabled Lope to view his exile from Madrid, as a result of the libel claim, brought against him by her relatives after she married a richer suitor, with a certain level of detachment. Nevertheless, he evokes a degree of worldly cynicism through the use of poetic expression and literary parody; this facet was never explored on-stage as the play was rendered in a more one-dimensional comic mode.

These references were likely to be picked up by some spectators for Lope's biography has often been the source of curiosity and fascination. This

was manifest in *Basta que me escuchen las estrellas*, performed at the Patio de Fúcares in the days prior to the staging of *La Gatomaquia*. The production, staged by Micomicón who have often specialized in performing *comedias*, is heir to an admittedly sporadic tradition of documenting the dramatic trajectory of Lope's life.⁷

Dramatic representations of *El Fénix's* life - and the recent high-budget cinema release *Lope* (Andrucha Waddington, 2010) is no exception - tend to reiterate the sentiment recently expressed in a short book on Lope written by *El País's* long standing theater critic, Eduardo Haro Tecglen, just prior to his death: "todo lo hizo con más vehemencia que nadie" (41). Laila Ripoll's production based on a script written in collaboration with Mariano Llorente honored this tradition. She pitched the production in the Festival program in the following fashion:

Dramaturgo, poeta, soldado, amante, sacerdote, hombre de su tiempo. Abundante en todo, en obras y en amores, en amigos y enemigos, en dudas, en dolores, en pobreza, en gloria, en agonías...Lope abruma y sobrecoge, emociona, entretiene, divierte y espeluzna. Una vida tan rica y compleja da para mucho escenario. Cartas, poemas, comedias, y sobre todo, amores: Marfisa, Filisa, Belisa, Amarilis, Lucinda, Antonia de Trillo, Juana, Lucía. (45)

The text commences with Lope's death as his loved ones pay their last regards; the action then returns to his childhood as his life-story unfolds over three *jornadas*. In terms of dramatic content, the play follows the narrative trajectory of H.A. Rennert's biography pretty closely.⁸ Lope's life is shown in terms of extremes whilst his appetite for women and capacity for work are highlighted throughout.

He is presented in an unambiguously positive light. Hence, for example, on the death of a mistress, he immediately invites their illegitimate children to live with him. Later, he is shown to be very supportive to his married lover, Marta, as she begins to lose her sight; their adulterous shenanigans are justified on account of her being forced into an arranged marriage against her will at an early age with a man who routinely beats her. Lope and his family are, however, shown to be hostage to fate and economic insecurity. He may have multiple affairs on his travels around Spain but the moral implications are downplayed. Nevertheless, an ominous figure appears after his wedding to inform him that he will pay for his sins; his wife then dies in childbirth. Lope is imbued with a sense of weary melancholy in his dotage, beset by personal misfortunes and the need to work ceaselessly to maintain his household and support his daughters.

These darker elements remained subdued in a performance whose dominant mode and style was straightforwardly comic. Hence, for example, in a scene that is likely to sound tragic on the page, an elderly and infirm Lope struggled to settle his bills whilst his exuberant daughters demand a carriage. This is a luxury they could ill afford but Lope knew that the Duke of Sessa might lend him one; the scene adopted a comic rhythm as the ageing secretary pondered the situation whilst his adolescent offspring became increasingly hysterical as they repeated the mantra, “Queremos coche”.

The actors imbued their roles with energy and bonhomie whilst the production’s energy levels were buoyed by a series of songs and dances. Lope’s peripatetic lifestyle also provided an ideal pretext with which to embrace local peculiarities. The highly appreciative Almagro audience was particularly enthused by a musical routine set in Valencia that presented the locals as simple but happy souls replete with tomato necklaces! The contrasting of seventeenth- and twenty-first century discursive styles was another source of humor. Whilst a scene where Lope instructed a beautiful but intellectually challenged actress on how to read could be taken straight out of *La dama boba*, modern-day colloquial words and expressions such as “culo” and “la madre que me parió” were elsewhere de rigour.

The production did assume a certain degree of knowledge on the spectator’s part. Góngora

appeared on stage and was parodied through an outpouring of barely intelligible *culto* verse. Elsewhere, Lope was annoyed when Marta spoke well of Cervantes; he claimed that his competitor was unable to write plays and that his verse was not that good. However, he was left uncharacteristically speechless when she proceeded to compare their prose. Manuel Agredano appeared in drag as Jerónima de Burgos and his/her appearance resembled Tirso's description of Lope's onetime lover and muse as having arrived from hell "con más carnes que un antruejo, más años que un solar de la Montaña, y más arrugas que una carga de repollos" (*Los cigarrales* 451). Her hair was obviously a wig and she clearly had a drink problem. I personally found this performance rather tiresome and symptomatic of a rather facile and one-dimensional comic approach. This resulted in me becoming increasingly restless near the end of the long performance, a sensation not aided by the Patio's uncomfortable wooden pews. Nevertheless, I do concede that, at least on the night I attended, I was in the minority; the audience was in hysterics throughout and rewarded the actors with a lengthy standing ovation.

I still maintain, however, that a more sophisticated depiction of Lope's life would have been more interesting and need not have sacrificed popular appeal. One obstacle is, admittedly, the lack of a modern scholarly biography; dialogue between academics and practitioners might, however, have benefited the on-stage action. Let us take, for

example, the relationship between Lope and the Duke of Sessa. On stage, the latter was presented as a buffoon easily hoodwinked by the former. In one scene, the aristocrat complained that all the women he courts through letters fall in love with the secretary rather than the master. Lope rebuffed the argument in an ingenious manner; this attention is the logical consequence of his being a mere reflection of his patron's perfection. In real life, there was clearly a more complex social and sexual dynamic at play that was largely left unexplored. This could have been developed in relation to the way in which Lope flattered his patron in print and on-stage or, as Teresa Ferrer Vals has explored in relation to their correspondence, the interest the Duke showed in his secretary's *comedias* (128).

This lack in dramaturgical preparation ensured that *Basta* was far less assured than José Maya's production of *Calderón enamorado* staged in Almagro in 2000 in honor of the playwright's four hundredth birthday. In that case, José María Ruano de la Haza, a Canadian based academic, prepared a script that took on the guise of a *capa y espada* play. It adapted various scenarios and characters from the seventeenth-century dramatist's oeuvre to wield a factional narrative about the heady "desengaños juveniles" that, the play speculates, meant that Calderón would never marry. A project of this kind has the potential to be theatrically enjoyable whilst also re-negotiating the simplistic and reductive terms in which Lope and

his contemporaries are often viewed in modern-day Spain. Although he uses his terms anachronistically, there is a poetic if not a historical truth to José Monleón's claim that:

Nadie ha llamado a Lope de Vega, Don Lope de Vega, y en el caso de Calderón el Don es obligado, con todo lo que ello supone. De la misma manera que a Antonio Machado, pese a su pensamiento revolucionario, por su condición de profesor se le recuerda a menudo como Don Antonio, mientras García Lorca se ha quedado en un escueto Federico. Independentemente de la aplicación del Don como anejo a unos determinados estudios o situaciones personales, en el ánimo general tiene un punto de frialdad y alejamiento. La opinión popular suele quitarle el Don a los hombres abiertos y más cercanos, mientras lo aplica a los más integrados en las estructuras del poder. ("Sobre la dificultad" 141)

Whilst *Basta que me escuchen las estrellas* largely reproduced this image, *Calderón enamorado* more ambitiously sought to negotiate as well as reproduce the playwright's reputation as a dour aesthete. This stern image was also counteracted at Almagro in 2008. In addition to *Las manos blancas*, there was a production of *Casa con dos puertas mala es de guardar* that had a lengthy residency at

La Casa de los Miradores from 29 June to 6 July. As was the case in *Calderón enamorado*, it did not seek to dispel the playwright's serious reputation but it did ask that it be nuanced. The play is widely considered to be a refined and representative example of Calderón's comedic art (Balboa Echeverría, Varey), and the director, Manuel Canseco, notes in the Festival program how:

Comedia de capa y espada, comedia de enredo, de burlas y veras y de veras burladas. *Casa con dos puertas* es ese "otro" Calderón que se opone a sí mismo, que se opone y se ríe de lo "calderoniano", que busca la complicidad del público para divertirlo y, a la larga, para moralizarle más con las inmoralidades del "honor" moralizante y asocial. (70)

Canseco is a key figure in the modern-day performance of the *comedia* in Spain. In the late 1970s, he established a collaborative company dedicated exclusively to the staging of Golden Age plays. This co-operative, that predated the CNTC and received no state funding, was unprecedented in terms of continuity. Through their extended residencies in El Escorial and nation-wide tours, they developed an impressive and eclectic repertoire that included *Casa con dos puertas*.

In recent years, the director and impresario has returned to his habit of performing the classics

albeit with better funding opportunities. He staged *Casa* and *No hay burlas con el amor* in 2007 and 2008 respectively in the outdoor Jardines de Gallileo as part of Madrid's annual Veranos de la Villa. Prior to its arrival in Almagro, *Casa* had therefore been performed extensively and the ensemble worked well at delivering a rapid-fire version of what Miriam Balboa Echeverría describes as "a very precise chess-like movement of characters playing hide-and-seek" (168). This pace and humor helped account for the production's undoubted popularity. The *comedia* specialist is, nevertheless, likely to lament the fact that everything, from the actor's facial expressions to overblown costumes, was presented in broad terms. From a theatrical perspective, the delivery of the verse was grandiose, exacerbated by the use of artificial amplification that was distracting and amateur. The narrative was played for high farce and there was little sense that the doors function as psychic as well as physical barriers.⁹

This is the kind of production that was very welcome at a time where *comedia* performance was attempting to reassert itself on the Spanish stage. However, thirty years on, the level of professionalism, and failure to interrogate the play-text in any profound way, is regrettable. Pitfalls of this kind were largely avoided in Brazadoble Producciones' *La mujer por fuerza* directed by Maya that re-united him with Ruano de la Haza. Their working relationship with this relatively

unknown Tirso play is testament to the mutually productive relationship that can be generated between the page and stage.

A student production performed at the Chamizal Festival in 1989 piqued scholarly interest in a play that had hitherto largely been ignored by critics.¹⁰ This, in turn, prompted Ruano de la Haza to prepare for publication the first serious critical study of the play that had been undertaken some years previously by P.R.K. Halkhoree as an appendix to his doctoral thesis. Ruano de la Haza subsequently prepared a version of the play that Maya and his long-standing collaborator, Amaya Curieses, adapted for the stage. Although there is an element of speculation, I would suggest that the 2008 production was so accomplished largely as a result of this interdisciplinary collaboration facilitated by the ongoing collaboration between Ruano de la Haza and Maya.

La mujer por fuerza begins with a fairly standard *comedia* scenario that is then developed through a narrative that is relatively straightforward in comparison to the Tirso plays with which it is most readily comparable: *Don Gil de las calzas verdes* and *Marta la piadosa*. Finea cross-dresses so as to pursue the Conde Federico. The plot's major distinguishing feature is that the male character is entirely innocent in that he has had no prior relationship with his female stalker; she is driven by lust rather than honor.

As Maya notes, the play is unusual in that it is the man rather than the woman whose actions are

subjected more heavily to social convention; he was attracted by the opportunity of moving beyond the clichéd depiction of the male lead as “algún aprendiz de Don Juan” (Festival de Almagro 74). Finea manipulates the patriarchal mores of the time in order to adopt the sexual and narrative initiative; she convinces both the Conde’s love-interest, Florela, and the King of Naples that she has had sexual relations with Federico, and that he therefore has a moral obligation to marry her. In a manner akin to *Casa con dos puertas* or *Calderón enamorado*, the director therefore believes that the play debunks some of the preconceptions about the *comedia* thereby making it more amenable to twenty-first century sensibilities:

HONOR...¿a qué suena la palabra honor? No sé por qué, pero nada más oírla, ¿no entran ganas de echarse a dormir? HONRA...me viene la imagen de una habitación destartelada y vacía [...] ¿No estará dándole la vuelta a la tradicional tortilla Tirso? A mí al menos así me lo parece. Se ríe de las angustias que los hombres sufren por empeñarse en construirse una imagen perfecta y de acuerdo con los valores establecidos, aunque éstos sean tan cambiantes y antojadizos como lo son los hombres y sus conciencias. Ante eso siempre, y aunque aplastada desde hace cuatro siglos la osadía y valentía de la mujer, que con su aparente fragilidad hace

tambalear los cimientos en los que ufanamente el hombre se apoya para someter siempre al otro. (Festival de Almagro 74)

Furthermore, this conception ostensibly matches the theme of the 2008 Festival. It is not, however, immediately apparent what is achieved by turning the male character into a hapless victim whilst making the female manipulative and selfish. In other words, this *comedia* or *mundo al revés* may, to an extent, subvert the hierarchy of gender roles but a straightforward reversal is not necessarily an effective way of making ethical headway towards sexual parity. This consideration was, nevertheless, effectively bypassed by focusing almost exclusively on the comic potential the scenario affords. Whilst this might delimit the range of the play's connotative possibilities, it gained in vitality and brio on stage at least as much as is shed in its transition from the page. Furthermore, humor was not wrought at the expense of intelligence.

The performance lasted around seventy-five minutes and cuts were used to reduce the number of characters, and accelerate the play's rhythm. These were not, however, made indiscriminately. As a result, on-stage exchanges did not feel incomplete and the transition between scenes did not appear incongruous as in many stage versions based on heavily edited texts. The action was skillfully blocked whilst the relationship between stage and auditorium was central to the production's success.

The small cast was bolstered by the presence of an on-stage musician, Toni Madigan, who, in addition to playing skilful and enlivening music, became an active participant. His arrival on stage marked the start of the performance, and he punctuated many speeches with musical strums. One comic scene that worked particularly well was when the bemused Conde heard for the umpteenth time of a woman with whom he supposedly had an affair; he asked both the musician and a member of the audience about this ex-lover of whom he knows nothing.

It is, I think, no insult to characterize this production as modest. It was given a much shorter residence at Almagro than *Casa*, and its success depended in no small measure on the goodwill of the audience. Without this, certain comic scenes, such as when characters interrupted their speeches and held their faces in frozen contorted gestures to express their surprise, would take on the air of an amateur production. There was also a certain lack of originality as some ideas appear to have been appropriated from the CNTC. Beatriz Ortega, for example, donned a waistcoat and jacket in her role as Finea that echoed those worn by actresses playing Doña Elvira in productions of *Don Gil de las calzas verdes* directed by Marsillach and Vasco in 1994 and 2006 respectively. Nevertheless, unlike many *comedia* performances that I have seen in Spain in recent years, the actors gave the impression that they had internalized the roles and this apparently had an effect that the audience appeared

to follow what was taking place on stage with little difficulty.

Where Maya and the actors excelled was in exuding frivolity whilst taking both Tirso and the performance seriously; the play-text may have been simplified but it was never condescending. The other productions discussed in this section paradoxically failed to tap the *comedia*'s comic potential as a result of their desire to focus almost exclusively on their ostensibly lighter and more amusing aspects. This tendency is, I would suggest, symptomatic of both a lack of knowledge and imagination on the part of practitioners and actors who also appear to have a worryingly low expectation of their audience. One, although by no means the only, way of tackling this problem is to encourage communication between academics and practitioners; this was, after all, one of the major reasons for the creation of the Festival in the first place.

Conclusion

In terms of *comedia* performance in modern-day Spain, the 2008 Almagro Theater Festival was unprecedented in both intensity and range. There were sales of nearly eighty-thousand theater tickets; this equates to a three percent increase from 2007, and an average occupancy of eighty-five percent (EFE). This ought to be cause for celebration but, as we have seen, quantity was not matched by quality.

With a few notable exceptions, productions did little to sharpen the specialist's appreciation of canonical or lesser-known works, and it is difficult to imagine that they would make the general public more inclined to further explore Golden Age drama.

This may be attributable in part to the fact that some individual productions did not fulfill their initial promise, but a generally poor level of performance was also the result of wider and deeply entrenched problems. Foremost amongst these structural difficulties are insufficiently trained practitioners; a reluctance to engage with performances from the past or with academics; and a desire to pander to the lowest common denominator through recourse to sexual content, facile comedy or topical concerns. On a more positive note, *Crónica de Fuente Ovejuna*, *Las manos blancas no ofenden* and *La mujer por fuerza* provide compelling evidence that Spanish practitioners and audiences alike are capable of more.

One of the many complaints I hear about Hernández is that he has turned Almagro into a classical theme park. Adrián Daumas – whose production of *El castigo sin venganza* provided one of the Festival's highlights in 2003 – has spoken publicly of how the current director has “convertido el Festival en un espectáculo de *varieties*” (cited in Otto). This impression is bolstered by the increased prominence of street displays and performances that, whilst effectively broadening the potential

audience, also runs the dangers of diverting attention away from investing, both financially and artistically, in stage productions.

The *comedia* may have been crucial in staking Almagro's claim as a cultural tourist destination, but its role is no longer clear. Day-trippers may travel by train but the intense heat of La Mancha means that most performances do not begin much before eleven in the evening. Thus, visitors without a car tend to stay in the town itself; there are no late trains and the town's sole taxi driver does not work late shifts. Hotels are thereby able to charge premium rates that are often double or triple the standard tariff during the Festival period. These arguments clearly provide a justification for the amount of public money invested in the Festival; the problem, however, is that the *comedia* is being understood as cultural capital in the commercial rather the artistic sense of the word. Furthermore, when I interviewed Hernández in the summer of 2008,¹¹ he expressed his personal desire to expand the parameters of what the public considers to be a classic by, for example, staging Valle-Inclán. With all due respect to don Ramón, he is already far better represented on the Spanish stage than Calderón, Lope or Tirso. His inclusion would thereby undermine the Festival's original remit, which is yet to be fulfilled.

These speculations about the director's intentions have, however, recently been made academic. In February 2010, he was dismissed by

the Festival board as a result of mounting debts in addition to complaints of nepotism, a lack of financial transparency and personal differences. The timing is clearly not coincidental as Hernández's market-driven and ambitious approach is markedly less well suited to the mood for austerity and caution occasioned by the current economic crisis. In relation to *comedia* performance, I believe that this could prove to be advantageous as I hope that it might focus attention on a series of ostensibly more modest productions that nevertheless seek to engage with the Golden Age in a less cosmetic manner than has been the norm.

NOTES

¹ The research for this chapter could not have been completed if it were not for generous financial support from the Sir George Labouchere Fund for Spanish Studies, and the Abbey-Santander Bank. I would also like to thank Victor Dixon, Maryrica Lottman and the anonymous peer-reviews for their very useful comments and criticisms.

² Matthew Stroud has been the critic who has paid most attention to this play that he has read through contemporary gender studies. He has, for example, stated how "*Las manos blancas* is, at least in part, a play about what can and cannot be spoken or shown on stage, about the ability of art to send multiple, contradictory messages that will simultaneously uphold and subvert the symbolic culture" ("Performativity" 120). He concludes of the ending that "*Las manos blancas* ends with three marriages, all of which are rather superficially (and heterosexually) imposed" (*Plot Twists* 79).

³ His fame in Spain is such that, for at least some spectators, expectations over what the actors will be wearing resurrects the semiotic density and importance bestowed on costumes by audiences and performers alike in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Wheeler, "We are living" 273-74).

⁴ At the time of writing, they have just made their debut with another Lope play: *La moza de cántaro*.

⁵ As Jonathan Brown and J.H. Elliott note: "just as the Escorial stood as a monument to the regime of Phillip II, so the Retiro stood as a monument to that of Olivares [...] In the sycophantic world of the seventeenth century the palace provided an incomparable opportunity to lavish fulsome adulation on the king and his minister" (228-29).

⁶ For a discussion of the relationship between Lope, his patrons and commissions see Rozas

⁷ In 1935, the German director, Constantin David, directed a speculative cinematic biopic titled *La musa y el Fénix* whilst, in 1958, Luis Escobar wrote *Elena Osorio* about Lope's first great love. Then, in 1962, Cayetano Luca de Tena directed a new play with an old title: Alfonso Paso's *El mejor mozo de España*. In the style of a *comedia*, it depicted a day in the life of a young and hot-blooded Lope.

⁸ Rennert's work, originally published in 1919, and later reissued in 1968, with additional notes by Fernando Lázaro Carreter, is the most frequently consulted biography of Lope (Samson and Thacker, 8).

⁹ As Miriam Balboa Echeverría notes:

The staging of *Casa con dos puertas* on a modern stage should not imagine the house nor the façade as architectonic signs of a culture, but rather the doors that signal never-ending spaces inside an asphyxiating and always dangerous confinement. While the representation of the established order is the house, the *locus* of the performance is the opening and closing of the doors. (184)

¹⁰ For more information on this student production see Ganelin "Designing women."

¹¹ Interview conducted with the author in Madrid on 16 September 2008.

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The following errors appeared in the first part of Dr. Wheeler's article, which was published in the Spring 2011 issue. We apologize to the author.

P. 151, title. Should read "theaters."

P. 151, title. The following endnote to the title is missing: The research for this chapter could not have been completed if it were not for generous financial support

from the Sir George Labouchere Fund for Spanish Studies, and the Abbey-Santander Bank. I would also like to thank Victor Dixon, Maryrica Lottman and the anonymous peer-reviews for their very useful comments and criticisms.

P. 198-200, Works Cited. Several items are missing and some have been incorrectly alphabetized.

DE FUENTE OVEJUNA A CIUDAD JUÁREZ, O LOPE SEGÚN EL TEATRO DEL OPRIMI- DO¹

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“La función del arte no es solo mostrar cómo es el mundo, sino también explicar por qué es así y cómo se puede cambiar”²

(Augusto Boal, *Jeux* 86)

El objetivo de este artículo es presentar un ejemplo de la aplicación de las técnicas del teatro del oprimido a la puesta en escena de los textos dramáticos del Siglo de Oro español. Para ello realizaremos un recorrido por algunos montajes que a lo largo de los últimos cien años han incidido en la lectura sociopolítica de *Fuente Ovejuna*, y finalmente nos centraremos en el análisis del espectáculo titulado *De Fuente Ovejuna a Ciudad Juárez* de la compañía The Cross Border Project, donde se han aplicado los principios de trabajo de Augusto Boal a la dramaturgia, al proceso de ensayos y a la

propia interacción con el público durante la representación.

La bibliografía específica sobre la puesta en escena contemporánea del teatro clásico español se ha desarrollado en los últimos años. Buena parte de las contribuciones sobre el tema han aparecido en las páginas de los *Cuadernos de Teatro Clásico* de la Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico de España, pero para el caso que nos ocupa nos ha sido de especial utilidad la lectura de las tesis doctorales de Teresa J. Kirschner y Manuel Muñoz Carabantes, esta última dirigida por Luciano García Lorenzo, especialista en la materia que ha dedicado una serie de artículos íntegros a los montajes españoles del texto de Lope. Por otra parte, en cuanto al teatro del oprimido remitimos a las publicaciones del propio creador del movimiento y analizaremos sus principios a partir de nuestra propia experiencia en el proceso creativo de esta *Fuente Ovejuna* ambientada en Chihuahua.

Comenzaremos, pues, pasando revista a algunas representaciones que han insistido en la carga ideológica del texto y que, a través de él, denuncian situaciones actuales semejantes a las que presenta la obra de Lope.

Como es sabido, la lectura escénica de *Fuente Ovejuna* como pieza de carácter revolucionario arranca en la Rusia zarista: la traducción al ruso de Sergei Iurev, estrenada en Moscú en 1876,

fue recibida por los espectadores como una invitación a la subversión y al cabo de dos semanas fue prohibida para preservar el orden público. Más tarde, en 1919, subirá a las tablas de Kiev una nueva versión en la cual Konstantin Mardzhanov suprime la intervención final de los Reyes como *deus ex machina*. En esta adaptación se basarán todas las que en adelante se monten en la recién creada Unión Soviética, y por la sintonía de su desenlace con el programa bolchevique el texto se repondrá con una frecuencia asombrosa, a menudo con el elenco cantando *La Internacional* como fin de fiesta³.

De vuelta a España la “antología de *Fuenteovejuna*” para La Barraca de Federico García Lorca se diferencia de la de Mardzhanov en que el poeta granadino no solo suprime la última escena, la de la sanción real, sino que prescinde de toda la trama histórica, es decir, de más de un tercio de la comedia⁴. Su propuesta, que acababa con el regocijo popular tras la muerte del tirano y con la última escena de amor entre Laurencia y Frondoso, exaltaba la lucha del campesinado por la igualdad social, y los paralelismos con la realidad del mundo rural español se subrayaban mediante el atuendo de los antagonistas: el Comendador vestía como un cacique y sus secuaces como guardias jurados.

El Franquismo tendrá que esperar hasta los años sesenta para ver nacer una *Fuenteovejuna* que recoja el testigo de la de Lorca. Curiosamente, esta no se fraguará en el exilio, sino en el seno de la propia universidad del régimen: al frente del Teatro

Nacional Universitario Alberto Castilla girará con su *Fuente Ovejuna* por Parma, Estrasburgo, París y Nancy, donde obtuvo el Gran Premio en el Festival Mundial de Teatro. Corría el año 65, y con su montaje el TEU denunciaba ante la comunidad internacional la represión que se vivía bajo la dictadura de Franco. La carga ideológica del espectáculo, en el cual no faltaban las referencias explícitas al régimen, como la presencia de guardias civiles sobre el escenario, ocasionaron que Madrid lo censurara de manera inmediata a la vuelta de su gira europea⁵.

En fechas más recientes los directores han recurrido no solo a la actualización, sino también a la relocalización para hacer llegar el público la vigencia del compromiso social de esta comedia. Así, en 1998 la *Fuente Ovejuna* del Centro Andaluz de Teatro, adaptada por Ana Rossetti y dirigida por Emilio Hernández, trazaba un paralelismo entre la violencia de la Castilla tardomedieval y el conflicto de los territorios ocupados por Israel en Oriente Próximo. Con un elenco compuesto únicamente por actrices, ocho de ellas españolas y cuatro palestinas, el equipo ponía de manifiesto su solidaridad con las mujeres de Gaza y Cisjordania⁶. Del mismo modo, la *Fuente Ovejuna* de Mefisto Teatro, dirigida por la dramaturga cubana Liuba Cid, que recorrió los festivales españoles a lo largo del verano de 2010, trasladó la acción al Caribe, con lo cual la asociación del tirano con Fidel Castro resultó inevitable para cierto sector de la prensa española⁷. Con una intención distinta, la versión de Ángel Facio para la

compañía de la ESAD de Murcia en 2001 partió de una estética historicista a la que fue dándole la vuelta poco a poco: al principio retrataba a Isabel y Fernando Católicos como monarcas del Cuatrocientos hasta convertirlos progresivamente en Hilary y Bill Clinton, de la misma manera que los alabarderos se transformaban en marines, poniendo en evidencia la alianza secular del poder militar y el poder político en contra de los intereses de la mayoría⁸.

El compromiso político, sin embargo, no está ausente en otros montajes de corte más clásico. Un buen ejemplo de ello es la *Fuente Ovejuna* que Ramon Simó dirigió para el Teatre Nacional de Catalunya en 2005. En ella Juan Mayorga, responsable de la adaptación, añadía en la última escena una rondalla de su cosecha en la cual dejaba patente lo atemporal del mensaje de Lope:

“Pero llegará hora alguna
en que señores no habrá,
y entonces resonará
el grito: ¡Fuente Ovejuna!” (Mayorga 60)

Y ya centrándonos en el caso del montaje de la compañía transfronteriza The Cross Border Project, hemos de señalar que en él su directora, Lucía Rodríguez Miranda, también ha optado por el *aggiornamento* y el desplazamiento espacial. En esta ocasión el espectáculo traslada la acción de la Andalucía rural del siglo XV a la Chihuahua urbana del XXI con el objetivo de denunciar ante la comu-

nidad internacional los feminicidios y el clima de violencia que se viven en Ciudad Juárez (México), y lo hace empleando para ello diversas técnicas del teatro del oprimido.

Recoge así el testigo de Augusto Boal, quien abogaba por la “nacionalización de los clásicos”, es decir, por acercar los argumentos de los grandes textos del pasado al presente más inmediato del espectador. El propio Boal aplicó este recurso en sus montajes sobre comedias de Shakespeare, Molière o el mismo Lope de Vega, y se planteaba así la cuestión de la fidelidad al original:

“Al montar a Molière, a Lope de Vega o Maquiavelo nunca pretendimos reproducir el estilo de estos autores. Para inscribir sus textos en nuestro tiempo y nuestro espacio, teníamos que abordarlos como si no pertenecieran en absoluto a la tradición teatral de un país cualquiera. [...] Pensábamos más que nada en aquellos a quienes nos dirigíamos, a las relaciones sociales y humanas entre los personajes, que resultan igual de auténticas hoy que en su momento” (*Théâtre* 53-54).

A propósito de Lope, Augusto Boal ofreció una revisión personal de *El mejor alcalde, el rey* a principios de los años sesenta, durante su etapa al frente del Teatro Arena de Sao Paulo, y justificó de esta manera sus drásticas intervenciones sobre el texto de partida:

“Este proceso de nacionalización se llevaba a cabo en función de los objetivos sociales concretos del momento. Por eso el tercer acto de la obra de Lope de Vega sufrió profundos cambios: el autor la escribió en un momento histórico preciso que perseguía la unificación de las distintas naciones bajo la autoridad del rey. Esta fábula, que tenía sentido en la época de Lope, en nuestra época y en Brasil corría el riesgo de adquirir otro significado un tanto reaccionario. De manera que, varios siglos después, hemos tenido que cambiar la estructura para recuperar la idea original. [...] La nómina de personajes se convertía en una serie de símbolos que cobraban sentido por las similitudes que se establecían con el presente” (*Théâtre* 53, 60).

La poética del oprimido entiende el teatro como un ensayo de la revolución (Boal, *Théâtre* 15): si con su teatro épico Brecht se había planteado superar la concepción aristotélica, según la cual la acción dramática genera catarsis en el espectador, Boal intenta ir más allá de la mera toma de conciencia convirtiendo al espectador —ser pasivo— en protagonista activo no ya de la acción dramática, sino de la acción real, para estimular su deseo de cambiar la realidad. En palabras de Boal:

Para entender esta poética del oprimido no debe olvidarse su principal objetivo: transformar al pueblo, espectador, ser pasivo del fenómeno teatral, en sujeto, en actor capaz de intervenir en la acción dramática. [...] Aristóteles instaaura una poética donde el espectador delega sus poderes en el personaje para que este actúe y piense en su lugar; Brecht instaaura una poética en la que el espectador delega sus poderes en el personaje para que este actúe en su lugar, aunque se reserva el derecho de pensar por su cuenta, a menudo en oposición al personaje. En el primer caso se produce una catarsis; en el segundo, una toma de conciencia. Lo que propone la poética del oprimido es la acción misma: el espectador no delega ningún poder en el personaje, ni para que actúe ni para que piense en su lugar: al contrario, el espectador asume el papel de actor principal, transforma la acción dramática, prueba soluciones, adivina cambios... En resumen, el espectador se entrena para la acción real. Puede que este teatro no sea revolucionario, pero lo que es seguro es que es un ensayo de la revolución (*Théâtre* 15).

Y volviendo al *aggiornamento*, en el caso de esta adaptación de *Fuente Ovejuna* al contexto mexicano, la “nacionalización” se ha operado des-pajando al libreto de arcaísmos y localismos del es-

pañol peninsular, puesto que estos vocablos alejaban la historia de su nueva ubicación y dificultaban la comprensión directa del texto por parte de un público poco habituado al teatro del Siglo de Oro (el espectador del Thalia Spanish Theater de Nueva York). Aun respetando la rima y la métrica, han desaparecido las alusiones al Cid, a la geografía castellana y andaluza, a Calatrava y otras instituciones medievales, y se han sustituido los nombres de fauna y flora o de armas por otros más cercanos al imaginario latino (“sábila” en lugar de “encina”, “zorro” por “corzo”, “escopeta” por “ballesta”, “revólver” por “estoque”...).

Con todo, desde el punto de vista de la dramaturgia el cambio más importante con respecto al original es el tratamiento de la acción secundaria. Eliminarla, como hizo Lorca, hubiera supuesto prescindir del problema de Estado en que se enmarca el caso de Juárez. Para nosotros eran claros los paralelismos entre la antigua lucha por el poder de las órdenes militares y la monarquía, por un lado, y el actual enfrentamiento de los cárteles de la droga entre sí y con el Gobierno Federal, por otro. Sin embargo, la red de analogías no resultaba perfecta desde el momento en que Lope, al introducir a los reyes como garantes de la paz y la justicia, da un final feliz a su comedia, mientras el conflicto mexicano está lejos de ser resuelto.

Para cubrir la ausencia de la trama histórica primitiva empleamos los recursos del teatro-periódico de Boal, cuyo fundamento es convertir en

material dramático todo aquello que en principio no lo es para desenmascarar el supuesto contenido informativo de los mensajes que se transmiten en los medios de comunicación. Así lo define el director brasileño:

“El teatro-periódico consiste en técnicas simples que permiten transformar las noticias de los periódicos –o cualquier otro material no dramático– en escenas de teatro” (*Théâtre* 36). “El teatro periódico debe su nombre al primer grupo del Teatro Arena de Sao Paulo, porque cuando comenzaron a investigar estas técnicas el grupo usaba material extraído de periódicos. Sin embargo, la aplicación de estas técnicas no se limita a las noticias de los diarios” (*Legislative* 237). “Su objetivo es desmitificar la falsa objetividad de la mayor parte del periodismo y mostrar así que las informaciones que aparecen en los medios son obras de ficción al servicio de la clase dominante. Incluso las noticias más precisas en las que no se tergiversan los hechos se convierten en ficción al publicarse en un periódico al servicio de la clase dominante” (*Legislative* 235). “Uno de los principales cometidos del teatro-periódico es enseñar a la gente a leer los periódicos correctamente” (*Legislative* 235-236).

De este modo, en los lugares que correspondían a la segunda acción de *Fuente Ovejuna* nosotros introdujimos fragmentos de discursos donde el presidente mexicano Felipe Calderón reivindica

su labor contra el narcotráfico y la violencia en su país. Mediante una síntesis de las técnicas que Boal denomina lectura simple, acción paralela, lectura histórica y concreción de la abstracción (Boal, *Legislative* 237, 242-245) mostramos las contradicciones que existen entre la realidad de México y la versión oficial que de ella nos ofrecen sus políticos: Calderón tranquiliza a los suyos diciéndoles que deben tener “la seguridad de que los policías federales sirven a los ciudadanos y no a los delincuentes” después de un monólogo donde Flores explica que trabaja para el Comendador por los beneficios que le reporta, y más tarde el líder del Partido Acción Nacional se felicita por su labor en pro de “el derecho de las mujeres a una vida sin violencia” mientras vemos cómo Fernán Gómez y su secuaz abusan de Jacinta.

Los hechos que el espectador ve desfilar ante sus ojos, escenas de extorsión, amenazas, malos tratos, violaciones..., dejan patente las similitudes entre el pasado de Fuente Ovejuna y el presente de Juárez, de manera que las palabras de Felipe Calderón solo pueden ser interpretadas en clave irónica. Por eso, cuando se oye su voz en *off* es más que evidente que su discurso vacío no aporta ninguna solución al problema de la inseguridad ciudadana y, privado de autoridad, su última aparición se convierte en una parodia del *deus ex machina*.

En la construcción de los personajes también hemos buscado tender puentes con el entorno cotidiano del México fronterizo (Boal, *Legislative* 243):

las labradoras de Lope se han convertido en trabajadoras de una maquila zapatera; Mengo, sin abandonar su condición de gracioso, es un huérfano de la calle; Flores un militar comprado por los cárteles, y el Comendador un narcotraficante sin escrúpulos. El trabajo de ensayos se orientó a hacer aflorar las relaciones de opresión (Boal, *Jeux* 90) subyacentes en el texto mediante el juego de la hipnosis colombiana y distintos ejercicios de teatro-imagen (cuadros en movimiento, protector y agresor, intercambio de máscaras...), y buena parte de las sesiones, con prácticas como la máquina de ritmos o la orquesta, se dedicaron a la recuperación del concepto de coro, que pese a estar presente en el espíritu de la obra de Lope, en el libreto se diluyó, sin duda por el peso de la jerarquía de las compañías teatrales áureas sobre la escritura de los dramaturgos barrocos. Boal reivindicaba el coro como encarnación del pueblo en escena (Boal, *Legislative* 109), y en nuestro caso la vuelta al personaje colectivo se opera desde la adaptación textual, equilibrando el reparto del número total de versos entre los ocho actores que componen el elenco, y desde la labor interpretativa, subrayando los estrechos lazos de solidaridad que existen entre las tres mujeres que protagonizan la obra.

El espectáculo en sí está concebido como un “proyecto pedagógico para adultos”. De ahí que una exposición de distintos artistas norteamericanos sobre los feminicidios y las maquilas juarenses reciba al espectador a la entrada del teatro y vaya ponién-

dolo sobre aviso del nuevo contexto en el que se ambienta el texto de Lope.

En sintonía con este objetivo educativo la puesta en escena es de corte brechtiano. Algunas marcas de distanciamiento están en la dramaturgia, como el contraste irónico entre la acción representada y la voz en *off*; la apertura de la función con los actores recitando noticias sobre las muertas de Juárez aparecidas recientemente en prensa, o el final épico o narrativo, donde los personajes cuentan directamente al público, y no a los Reyes, el daño que les ha causado el Comendador. No obstante, la mayor parte de los recursos de ruptura de la ilusión tienen que ver con el trabajo de dirección: por ejemplo, los actores permanecen constantemente en escena, de espaldas al lugar donde se desarrolla el drama, sentados en unos bancos que constituyen la única escenografía y que al moverse sirven para construir el atril del discurso de Esteban o el cadalso adonde sube Frondoso para ser ejecutado.

Otro elemento brechtiano es la música. La participación en vivo del mariachi Flor de Toloache, compuesto por tres mujeres que se unen al coro femenino formado por Laurencia, Pascuala y Jacinta, sirve o bien para potenciar atmósferas (romántica en los encuentros de los enamorados con el bolero *Historia de un amor*, festiva durante la boda con las rancheras *Soy infeliz* y *El rey*, combativa cuando las protagonistas se disponen a vengar su honra al son del rap *Ninguna guerra en mi nombre*), o bien para presentar y parodiar a un personaje (como se hace

con Fernán Gómez gracias al narcorrido *Está de parranda el jefe* y a la ranchera *El aventurero*), pero en cualquier caso pone de manifiesto el artificio de la representación, que oscila entre el realismo psicológico de las escenas con texto, más fieles a Lope, y el realismo mágico de las partes mimadas o bailadas, como la escena de *La llorona*, cuando tras el trágico final de la boda las mariachi interpretan este son popular mientras las actrices realizan una danza que alterna dos partituras gestuales: en una vemos a las tres jóvenes preparándose para salir, esperando a su chico, haciendo lo que más les gusta..., y en otra contemplamos cómo esas mismas mujeres son víctimas de una brutal violación por parte de un maltratador imaginario.

Pero sin duda el recurso más claramente distanciadador del espectáculo es la ruptura de la cuarta pared. El Comendador seduce, provoca e insulta al público, que asume poco a poco la prolongación del escenario al patio de butacas hasta que definitivamente se reconoce como pueblo de esta peculiar Fuente Ovejuna, cuando, durante el enlace de Laurencia y Frondoso, los espectadores son invitados a tomar un trago de tequila y a entonar *El rey* todos a coro. Como en las acciones de teatro invisible de Boal, en esta fiesta los límites entre la realidad y la ficción se desdibujan, con lo cual cuando el Comendador aparece en la sala, la celebración que interrumpe no es solo la de los novios y sus más allegados, es la de todos los presentes, convertidos en “espectadores” según la terminología del teatro del

oprimido. Y es a esos mismos “espectadores” a quienes se dirige el monólogo de Laurencia, que les devuelve su propia imagen como un espejo (Boal *Jeux* 21), porque igual que ha ocurrido en el teatro, donde los asistentes han brindado y cantado con la novia pero no han hecho nada para evitar su violación, en el mundo real la comunidad internacional, y con ella cada uno de nosotros, es testigo y por tanto cómplice de lo que ocurre en Juárez.

De Fuente Ovejuna a Ciudad Juárez no pretende aportar una solución directa a la peligrosidad en el México fronterizo. Los miembros del equipo no están seguros de que se pueda poner fin a la violencia asociada al narcotráfico y a la corrupción con métodos como los que describe la *Crónica* de Rades, y en sentido estricto este montaje tampoco es un “ensayo de la revolución”, tal y como hubiera querido Boal (Boal, *Jeux* 26), puesto que no emplea las técnicas del teatro-foro (Boal, *Legislative* 255-288). Partiendo de los planteamientos estéticos del teatro épico de Brecht y de ciertos elementos de la poética del oprimido, Lucía Rodríguez Miranda ha querido que el público tome conciencia de su responsabilidad ante esta situación, y de ahí que los invite a realizar un viaje de ida y vuelta desde la Chihuahua del siglo XXI a la Andalucía del siglo XV. Y este viaje, que comienza como un juego ritual, con el elenco transformándose en los personajes al calzarse sus zapatos, termina como un homenaje a las muertas de Juárez, cuyos nombres van siendo proyectados en el telón de fondo mientras los

actores se descalzan en señal de solidaridad con ellas.

Y es que si el drama de Lope sigue siendo actual es porque, tristemente, la realidad de Ciudad Juárez supera a la ficción de Fuente Ovejuna.

NOTES

¹ Agradecemos al profesor Luciano García Lorenzo sus comentarios y sugerencias tras la lectura del presente trabajo.

² Las traducciones del francés al español procedentes de la bibliografía de Augusto Boal son mías.

³ Ver Kirschner 1979 y Ruano 2008.

⁴ “D'aquesta obra només n'he donat algunes, en les representacions de La Barraca, seixanta escenes. He separat tot el drama polític i m'he limitat a seguir el drama social. Però ho he advertit. No he dit: «Ara aneu a veure i escoltar *Fuenteovejuna*»” (Joan Tomás, “A propòsit de *La dama boba*: García Lorca i el teatre clàssic espanyol”, *apud* Kirschner 1979).

⁵ Ver García Lorenzo 1997 y Castilla 1999.

⁶ Ver García Lorenzo 2010.

⁷ De Pablos 2010. El periodista afirma que la versión “evoca la política cubana” y que el argumento de la obra de Lope “pe-se a transcurrir cuatrocientos años, cobra actualidad si lo trasladamos a la situación política que se vive en Cuba”.

⁸ Ver Facio 2001.

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**DRAMATIZING DOROTEA: CERVANTES'S
PLUCKY HEROINE IN THE RSC'S
*CARDENIO***

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The original Dorotea inhabits the story of Cardenio in Cervantes's *Don Quijote* I (1605). Director Gregory Doran has built a version of this character in his 2011 production of *Cardenio* for the Royal Shakespeare Company. *Cardenio* is an adaptation of Lewis Theobald's *Double Falsehood* (1727), which itself claims to be an adaptation of a lost play by William Shakespeare and his contemporary John Fletcher, and Doran has added material from Thomas Shelton's 1612 translation of *Don Quijote*. A number of recent developments attest to the growing scholarly and popular interest in *Cardenio* and *Double Falsehood*. Most notably, Oxford University Press will soon publish *The Quest for Cardenio: Shakespeare, Fletcher, and the Lost Play*, edited by David Carnegie and Gary Taylor. Of the four young lovers who drive the plot of *Cardenio*, Dorotea is the most difficult for a modern

audience to accept, chiefly because in the play's final scene she freely marries Don Fernando, the man who had once threatened her with rape. Doran's *Cardenio* depicts sexual relations in a way that provokes us to enter the action and to ask essential questions not only about rape but about directorial decisions in the representation of rape. The audience is invited to examine the features of Dorotea's home as keys to her identity, to judge her against the straw dummies of a carnivalesque celebration and among the shepherds of remote mountains, and to recognize elements in the staging that provide a potential for Dorotea's virtuous and decisive character to transform Fernando during their marriage.

Dorotea is a typical *comedia* heroine who cross-dresses in order to pursue her seducer and reclaim her honor. Witty, intelligent and independent, she knows how to whittle Fernando down to size: She sniffs distastefully at his cologne during the serenade scene. In the seduction scene, he powerfully pins her down in a chair, but she forces him to free her by citing his nobility and her own personal dignity, spitting out, "I am your vassal, not your slave, my lord" as she slaps him (Act 1 Scene 6 p. 29).¹ Alex Hassel (as Fernando) towers over Pippa Nixon (as Dorotea), but despite Nixon's relatively small height and slight build, she conveys impressive spiritedness and strength. Dorotea's rage makes the character powerful. When Fernando forces her into a sexual union we are taken aback. Only the

duplicity of her maid (and the apparent absence of her parents) could have possibly let him triumph over her. This key scene—which Doran has labeled “the seduction scene”—requires careful analysis. It deserves our attention not only because it defines Dorotea’s situation but also because it does not appear in *Double Falsehood* ² and is one of the two key scenes without which Doran considered the play “unperformable” (Doran “Curiosity”). While Doran and Spanish dramaturg Antonio Álamo were preparing their adaptation, they directly imported a great deal of this scene’s dialogue from *Don Quijote* (1: 348-351; ch. 28).³



Pippa Nixon and Alex Hassell in *Cardenio*. Photo by Ellie Kurttz.

Dorotea’s seemingly solitary home life contrasts with the situations of all the other young lovers in *Cardenio*, so we pay special attention to her physical environment. No members of her house-

hold appear on stage with the single exception of her treacherous maid, who conventionally sells the *burlador* access to the maiden. Dorotea's character is sketched out in the details of her chamber, which Doran consciously modeled on two sources: his personal tour of Cervantes's birthplace in Alcalá de Henares and the accounts of Gustave Doré and the Baron Davallier—nineteenth-century traveling companions who visited the same site (Doran "Toledo"). Sofia Rodríguez Bernis's guidebook for the Museo Casa Natal de Cervantes reveals just how thoroughly Dorotea's home recalls a modern recreation of Cervantes's. The museum's furnishings were chosen under the direction of the Spanish set designer Juan Sanz Ballesteros, who personally guided Doran through the house. Touring the museum, Doran made note of "the rather stiff little parlour with its upright chairs" and "the women's room (. . .) with its carpeted dais, spread with cushions, its spinning wheel, mandolin, marquetry chests and escritaires and the child's room with its little altar to the Virgin Mary—all very useful material in trying to stage *Cardenio*" (Doran "Cervantes"). The set for Dorotea's chamber combined these three rooms—the parlor, the women's room and a child's room—as if to meld the domestic spaces that together tell the story of Dorotea's ancestry, childhood, and young adulthood. At the beginning of the seduction scene, reproductions of the museum's *estrado* and *brasero* occupy the center of the thrust stage, where Dorotea and her maid are making lace under the gaze of her

parents' portraits. Oddly, the *estrado* platform with its carpets and cushions lies empty, while Dorotea is seated elsewhere. Her chair was apparently included in the set so that Fernando could trap her in it, pinning her arms to her sides and tipping her backwards, in a hold that renders her all but helpless.

Because the portraits of Dorotea's parents hanging on the wall are so dark, some audience members may mistake them for commemorative portraits of the dead. If you view Dorotea as a typical *comedia* heroine you will expect her to have a father but not a mother. If you remember her well from *Don Quijote*, you will recall that she has living parents. But in the RSC's *Cardenio*, the audience may be only very vaguely aware that she is part of a family. In Act 1, Fernando tells Cardenio that Dorotea's parents are very rich (1.5: 26) and during the seduction scene Dorotea tells Fernando they will bestow a spouse on her (1.6: 29). But no actors—not even extras—portray her parents and their invisibility makes her more vulnerable and her actions more heroic. In the seduction scene, the portraits of Dorotea's mother and father are two small dark figures posed stiffly in black costumes, their fluted white collars grayed with age. These dour images look on disapprovingly and helplessly as Fernando tips their daughter backwards in her chair. The absence of Dorotea's father underscores his relative powerlessness as a rich peasant, while the father of every other young lover in the play is an aristocrat with a well developed, protective role. After the se-

duction scene her mother is never again mentioned, as if the forced troth-plight has killed her off and has isolated Dorotea from the feminine world; yet Dorotea will mention her father three more times (2.2: 36; 3.4: 66; 5.2: 98).

The seduction scene opens with several moments of dialogue-free lace making, for which the actresses playing Dorotea and her maid received instruction from a lace-making coach (Doran "Lace"). The momentary quiet on stage focuses our attention on the mumble of the moving bobbins and on the demands of the craft. In early modern Europe, sewing, embroidery, and lace making were the quintessential pastimes of the virtuous maiden. Lace making in particular characterizes careful preparation for a matrimonial trousseau, in contrast to Dorotea's quick troth-plight to Fernando. Pippa Nixon is deftly manipulating bobbins when Fernando intrudes and begins his too-forceful pleas. The following morning, Dorotea's sorrowful reference to "the ruined fabric / Which cannot be repaired" (2.2: 36) carries special weight. The participation of Dorotea's treacherous maid in the lace-making on stage points to the fabric's future rupture. The vulnerability of lace alludes not only to Dorotea's situation but also to Luscinda's. In the scene of Luscinda's wedding, the bride's head is covered by a lace veil and Fernando—with a look of comic lust—wipes his hands on his vest before touching the lace and uncovering her beauty. Because we have already seen the lace-making process, we can better

appreciate this delicate, exacting craft and its web of meanings (as in Emilia Pardo Bazán's "El encaje roto," a story that is widely taught in both Cervantes's language and in Shakespeare's).

The seduction scene is framed by the sudden appearance of villagers carrying carnivalesque puppets and straw dummies (*peleles*). These effigies initially appear while the set for Dorotea's room is being lowered onto the thrust stage, so that even before the scene can begin, these limp, grotesque bodies ask the essential question: To what extent is Dorotea a mere puppet in Fernando's strong hands? Doran has cited Gerald Brenan's *South from Granada* as a source for the production (Lottman 209, 215). A passage from the book very evidently influenced the depiction of village revelry before and after the seduction scene. Brenan describes the *peleles* as

dummies that had been stuffed with straw and which often had a sexual or bacchic significance. Phalluses made of sausages would be placed in appropriate positions, female bodies would be bellied out with pumpkins and calabashes and decorated with strings of figs, and jars of wine would be placed beside them. Other dummies would be hung on ropes stretched across the street and in the evening they would all be set on fire and burned with a great crackling of home-made

fireworks and loudly shouted insults and obscenities. (107)

On stage, masked revelers toss the *peleles* in a blanket, advertising the nature of lust and the threat of Fernando's intentions, as well as evoking Sancho's public humiliation in *Don Quijote* (1: 224; ch.17). The *peleles* have outsized heads, breasts, noses and genitals and are dressed like country bumpkins. Bouncing up and down in a blanket, they illustrate energetic love-making, and since they do not move of their own volition, their erotic activity seems controlled by a force outside them, i.e., by lust. Two works by Goya have also inspired the staging. The *pelele* being tossed in a blanket recalls Goya's tapestry cartoon *Straw Mannequin* (1791-1792), and the devil and the masked figures parading through Dorotea's village seem to have stepped out of *Burial of the Sardine* (1793). The latter painting occupies a full page of the RSC's theater program and is credited in Doran's blog ("Pancake").

Death amid carnivalesque celebration—especially in the form of the production's horned and hooded, black-cloaked devil with a skull for a face—suggests Dorotea's loss of honor. The above passage from *South from Granada* describes the fireworks and flames that accompany the destruction of *peleles* in Andalusia. While Doran could not show these figures being burned, he implies as much. After the troth-plighting ceremony, Fernando kisses Dorotea and snuffs out the candle on the Vir-

gin Mary's altar; then drunken peasants carrying torches ignite fireworks that whiz and bang and envelope the stage in dark smoke. When the air clears, we see the limp effigies abandoned on the village plaza as if dead (1.6: 31-2.1: 32). Fire symbolizes passion and violence, of course, and the fireworks can be read both as noisy explosions broadcasting dishonor and as a teasing reference to Hollywood's shorthand for sexual consummation. Questioning his actions, Fernando pronounces his soliloquy while standing among the lifeless, drunken puppets; their naked bodies incarnate the public nature of Dorotea's dishonor (and after his exit she too will contemplate them). Fernando cries, "The Devil, the devil!" (2.1: 32) as he spots a costumed Satan carrying a pitchfork—a *pelele* come alive or a costumed itinerant actor out of the "Cortes de la Muerte" episode in *Don Quijote* (2: 104-107; ch. 11). Fernando's belief in the supernatural character of this costumed devil suggests that he has the potential to share the madness that Cardenio will later experience. Cardenio has walked onto the stage, but no devil appears in the stage directions for *Cardenio* (2.1: 32) or for *Double Falsehood* (Act 2 Scene 1). Doran's decision to bring a devil on stage may have been inspired not only by Fernando's cry of "The Devil, the devil!" but also by his exclamation "My guilt conjures him hither! Cardenio!" (2.1: 33). The verb *to conjure* is usually applied to an evil spirit, not to a handsome young friend like Cardenio, whose presence delivers a rueful insight. As the in-

nocent Cardenio replaces the devil as Fernando's companion, Fernando realizes the truth of his friend's prophecy that lust leaves only regret in its wake (1.5: 27).

The seduction scene asks: To what extent is Dorotea a mere puppet-victim manipulated by Fernando? To what extent is she not an agent of her own future? Fernando spots the Virgin Mary's tiny statue in Dorotea's room and swears upon it that he will marry its owner, but even after he makes this promise, Dorotea forcefully tries to dissuade him. She argues that the great difference in their social classes will make for an unhappy match, one that his father the Duke would definitely disapprove. It is only when Fernando again threatens her with violence that she calls her maid to witness the troth-plaint (1.6: 28-31). Doran explains that after this ceremony "all that remains is the solemnisation of the wedding service, but as far as Dorotea is concerned she is now married to Fernando" ("Thousand"). In all his communications, Doran calls the episode "the seduction scene" not a rape scene; but during our interview he referred to it as "the seduction scene—the 'rape scene,' if you like (. . .)" (Lottman 218). Peter Kirwan, a Shakespeare scholar who has extensively blogged on the subject of *Cardenio*, accurately notes of the seduction scene,

The overall impression was one of consensual sex under false pretences, rather than enforced rape. This was emphasised in a

small but significant textual change as Fernando left. Where in *Double Falsehood* he says ‘True, she did not consent; as true she did resist, but still in silence all,’ here he said ‘True, she did consent . . .’ (“Cardenio”).

Doran and Álamo worked hard to construct a seduction scene that is complex and ambivalent. The resulting scene offers a sharp contrast to the version that was added to *Double Falsehood* in a fringe production at London’s Union Theatre.⁴ Álamo saw this first modern production of *Double Falsehood* during the rehearsals for *Cardenio* and (in Doran’s words) he reported that “They make the Fernando/Henriquez’s ‘seduction’ of Dorotea/Violante a violent rape, with the added insult of money being chucked at the victim as if she were no better than a prostitute. Antonio saw no textual evidence for this in either Theobald or Cervantes, and insisted that it diminishes the story” (“Week Four”).

Soon after *Cardenio* premiered on April 23, 2011 to overwhelmingly positive reviews, a controversy nonetheless arose in the UK theater community over two issues: 1) whether to label the Dorotea-Fernando encounter a seduction or a rape; 2) whether Dorotea’s decision to marry Fernando in the final scene can contribute to a happy ending. *The Independent*, a well-respected London daily, expressed a typical reaction when it condemned Dorotea’s situation altogether, saying, “How one wishes one could

push Falstaff and his anti-honour speech on to the stage. In shame-cultures such as this women, as here, wind up having to woo the men who have raped them. Not exactly edifying" (Taylor). Coincidentally, political events exacerbated the controversy, proving once again the spot-on relevance of early modern drama. In mid-May an outcry arose over the distinction made by Justice Secretary Kenneth Clarke between date rape and " 'serious rape, with violence and an unwilling woman'." Clarke was soon forced to apologize for the implication that not all rapes are serious ("Kenneth Clarke"). Theater commentators linked Clarke's comment to Fernando's misbehavior in *Cardenio*. Kirwan revised his earlier observations and pronounced himself "deeply troubled" by the "treatment of Fernando's seduction of Dorotea," declaring, "I remain frustrated by the production's fudging of this key issue" ("*Cardenio* . . . Revisited"). When I interviewed Doran on June 6th, he seemed to allude to the Kenneth Clarke dust-up while discussing public reaction to Dorotea-Fernando (Personal Interview).

Surveying the popular reviews and academic blogs, one is forced to conclude that many critics were not willing to accept the production on its own terms. For example, Kirwan incorrectly argues that the audience is meant to accept Fernando's soliloquy as the true interpretation of events. According to Kirwan, Fernando's assertion that no rape occurred was "strongly emphasized by the actor in a voice designed to break apart from the character's

comic weakness and determine a truth. For this production, the act is not rape. Fernando's crime is reduced to that of faithlessness, even treachery, but he is spared the tarnish of a rapist" ("Cardenio . . . Revisited"). But it is much more likely that theatergoers recognize the character's self-delusion despite any change of voice during Fernando's self-exploratory soliloquy. The fact that this key speech is a sudden burst of prose in a sustained sea of verse may explain away any change of voice. Moreover, rarely does an actor intentionally jump out of his character's skin to pointedly convey the author or director's interpretation of events. Such an act would blatantly discourage the audience from weighing events and judging motives, while the RSC's *Cardenio* promoted audience independence. A theater commentator reports the following interaction between performer and spectator during Fernando's soliloquy immediately after the seduction scene. Fernando asks, "Was it rape then?" (2.1: 32): "A woman in the audience laughed. Fernando located the origin of the laugh and approached the front of the stage to stare at her before delivering his one-word 'No' as a riposte" (Duncan). Fernando's one-word reply to the woman was very much in character, and far from silencing her, his response may well have cemented her judgment of Fernando by underlining his blind egotism. A very similar incident occurred while I was watching a performance of *Cardenio*.

Regarding the rape-versus-seduction issue, Doran comments, "But at the beginning of the seduction scene, you mustn't know the way it's going to turn out, because in some sense it's a seduction until a certain point. Here's a contentious issue! It's only really a rape when he abandons her. Up till that point, he's married her and she has yielded because she has a ring on her finger" (Lottman 218). Doran's program essay on the subject—" 'A Thousand Perjured Vows' "—invites spectators to make up their own minds. Moreover, Doran's direction of the scene is psychologically realistic and asks us to enter into the action on stage as a reflection of the real world. At key points he encourages us to doubt our senses and to experience fleeting moments of a rape victim's fluid psychological state; we sense her momentary incredulity in the face of threatened violence, her naive attitude of "This cannot be happening to me." Elements of the scene urge us to believe that Dorotea will avoid rape and even forced marriage. Soon after Fernando enters the room he nearly climbs on top of her, but her anger and caustic denunciations force him to free her, and this momentary victory can dupe us into believing that he cannot overpower her will. Humor also plays a part in our own naive seduction. Making his entrance, Fernando sneaks in from behind Dorotea and mischievously claps his hands over her eyes in a childish "Guess who?" game. Since we have just seen Dorotea mock him and easily escape his ardor in the satirical serenade scene (1.4: 20-23), we expect her

to have a fair chance at eluding him now. Modern audiences may find it distasteful to see a potential rapist treated as a comic figure, guessing that the director wished to make the production more family-friendly. However, as Doran has noted, Fernando's counterpart in the original eighteenth-century production of *Double Falsehood* was played by Robert Wilks, an actor famed for his comic roles (Lottman 206).

Commentators who want a modernized, politically correct Fernando-Dorotea plot may be simply unwilling to accept the source material in *Don Quijote* and to acknowledge the legal status of women at the time. Contemporaneous canon law would not have considered what happens to Dorotea a rape since it does not involve abduction. In point of fact, what happens to Luscinda, who is abducted and spirited away in a coffin, comes closer to the contemporaneous definition of rape. Anthony Lappin's study of Cervantes's *La fuerza de la sangre* situates sexual violation in its cultural context and observes that according to canon law, " 'Rape must involve the use of violence, it must involve abduction, it must involve coitus, and it must be accomplished without the free consent of one partner'. "⁵ According to this canonical definition of rape, the crime could almost certainly not occur inside marriage since sex between spouses very rarely involves abduction. Doran's earlier comment that Dorotea "has yielded because she has a ring on her

finger” correctly assumes that in the early modern world rape could not legally occur within marriage.

Today’s audiences may be especially unsettled by Dorotea’s plight because she is threatened with violation by a second assailant. She quickly flees the dishonor brought on by Fernando’s rejection of her, and no sooner does she dress as a bare-foot shepherd boy than she falls victim to the Master of the Flock. This problematic episode of attempted rape is lightly adapted from *Double Falsehood* (4.1: 1-204). In the wilderness scenes of *Cardenio*, the sensuality of Dorotea’s naked feet and calves constantly reminds us of her eroticism, while it hovers at the backs of our minds as we read *Don Quijote*; as a result, the episode of the Master of the Flock takes on far more weight than it is given in the novel. This second threat of rape shocks Dorotea into a greater knowledge of woman’s place in a dangerous world. Her psychology is much enlarged as she moves beyond her own situation and shouts a warning to all women: “You maidens, that shall live / To hear my mournful tale, when I am ashes, / Be wise; (. . .).” A moment later her cry of “O false Fernando!” loudly echoes through the theater as if ricocheting between mountains (4.2: 83).

The Master of the Flock, Dorotea’s new employer and would-be rapist, peacefully tends sheep but wears a red kerchief on his head like a pirate. The production’s pervasive religious imagery prompts us to see him as the evil counterpart of Christ the Good Shepherd. Yet ultimately, the Mas-

ter of the Flock may be more comic than threatening. Like the noble Fernando, he considers himself socially superior to Dorotea and like Fernando he should defend her rather than attack her. He represents an ersatz father figure to the evidently parentless Dorotea, and he guards the cooking pot as if he were a source of food and comfort. Dorotea shelters against her employer, fearing Cardenio's growing madness (4.1: 67-73). In a foretaste of the rape attempt, the Master partially confirms her feminine nature by stripping the gloves off her hands, and he is pretending to affectionately embrace "the boy" Dorotea when he suddenly grabs her breast. He lowers his trousers, and as she attempts to flee he clumsily jumps after her with his pants down around his legs, to the irrepressible mirth of the audience. Just as he mounts Dorotea and is about to rape her, Pedro interrupts the scene and stops the crime without ever knowing its sexual nature. Pedro assumes he has saved a shepherd boy's hide and halted a beating in progress (4.1: 74-77). While his attitude may encourage some audience members to dismiss the rape attempt as a crime averted, it may encourage others to compensate for his blindness and to recognize the psychological assault experienced by any victim of any such a crime.

Like the seduction scene, this episode of the Master of the Flock depicts sexual relations in a way that provokes us to enter the action and to ask essential questions about rape and about the consequences of depicting it comically. We admire

Dorotea's valiant struggle against the Master, but his sheer incompetence as a rapist diminishes her valor. Doran labels the Master "the dirty old man trying to deflower the heroine in the Pantalone tradition of the *commedia dell'arte*" and "the groping old man who's not going to be able to do that much damage" (Lottman 224). But Timothy Speyer, the talented actor playing the Master, is perhaps too young to play an ancient Pantalone, and the Master plans his attack with more craft than any ordinary buffoon. Yet in judging the amount of sexual violence in *Cardenio*, we should not forget that in the wilderness chapters of *Don Quijote* both the Master of the Flock and Dorotea's youthful servant-companion threaten her with violation (1: 354-355; ch. 28). Paradoxically, the Master's rape attempt in *Cardenio* not only intensifies Dorotea's suffering but can also be seen to moderate it. Its comic tone and Pedro's timely interference together promise an ultimate "happy ending" for Dorotea—her marriage to the wealthy and aristocratic Fernando, who will profess his love for her. In this sense the Master's attempted rape can be read as a comic reprisal of Fernando's lust, but this time with a premonition of a brighter future for Dorotea.

Much recent criticism of Dorotea as she is depicted in the RSC's *Cardenio* would have been defused if the character had been as complexly layered as is her Cervantine original. Critics would have been less likely to see her as a rape victim and more inclined to appreciate the nuances of her di-

lemma. Dorotea is making the very best of a very bad situation. A Dorotea with more depth and heft would force us to recognize that she is exercising her free will and good judgment when in the final scene she embraces Fernando as her husband. The stage Dorotea travels completely alone rather than with a servant, but in every other respect the RSC's heroine is less daring than the same character in *Don Quijote*. The stage Dorotea is rescued from the Master of the Flock instead of freeing herself, and there is no lustful servant-companion for her to throw over a convenient cliff. In the *Cardenio* wilderness scenes, she is a less decisive character and takes on less of the masculinity that her disguise implies. While the *Cardenio* Dorotea seems parentless, the Cervantine one has an evidently loving relationship with her own parents, and her stable family background provides her with the inner strength to deal with Fernando's instability. We sense that Fernando too can find a loving family in her household. The RSC's Dorotea has lace-making as her only activity. She lacks the prestige of the additional, professional activities she engages in inside Cervantes's text, where she manages every aspect of her father's farm (1.347; ch. 28). In *Don Quijote*, Dorotea's long autobiographical speech shows off her moral fiber, her intelligence, her ability to define herself, and her great sense of self-worth (1.346-350; ch. 28). In *Cardenio*, her character is given no such expository speech that puts her in control of the narrative. Ultimately, we must come

to believe that the RSC's Dorotea can handle Fernando if anyone can, but we have not been able to see her at her best, and given the sensible limits of the *Cardenio* plot, we can never glimpse the humor and resourcefulness she displays as the Princess Micomicona.

In the long final scene of the play, the task of convincing the audience of Dorotea's desire to marry Fernando remains a difficult one. Dorotea's marriage to Fernando especially unsettles us because it so effectively dramatizes the experience of rape within marriage—a type of assault that has become legally punishable in the US only in recent decades. On stage Fernando's faults have been laid bare in front of his father and brother and every other important character. We weigh Dorotea's choices and once again the question arises: Is Fernando Dorotea's rapist or would-be rapist? Many of us would agree that her consent to the troth-plight equals a *yes* to the sexual encounter, but Fernando must seem a rapist in her mind at some level since he had threatened to violate her, saying that if she denied his "ardent suit" he might forget his noble stature "And stain with violence this holy pact" (1.6: 30). The absence of any on-stage parent makes Dorotea seem more victimized, and we sense that her only chance at a familial relationship of any sort lies in marrying Fernando. Final comedic harmony hinges not only on a restoration of familial honor but on nearly every character's pardon of Fernando.

In this final, climactic scene of *Cardenio*, Dorotea exits and dramatically re-enters dressed as a woman, then attests to her love for Fernando and in a long speech claims her rights as his lawful wife. This extended, essential declaration is an iambic pentameter version of the same speech in the 1612 Shelton translation of *Don Quijote*, the text that was likely read by Shakespeare and Fletcher; this monologue by Dorotea has no precedent in *Double Falsehood* and is one of the two major speeches added by Doran and Álamo (Doran, Personal Interview). In Dorotea's mind, Fernando is her husband according to the dictates of the Church, so she may see loving him as her sacred duty. Doran has prepared us to recognize her embrace of a thoroughly Catholic marriage by dramatizing the pervasiveness of Spanish Catholicism in nearly every scene. He ends his program essay with an appreciation for the complex psychology of Cervantes's heroine in these final moments: "Cervantes makes her appearance before her attacker one of the highlights of the narrative, for she not only insists upon her status as his wife, but confesses the 'matchless affections' that she still holds for him; a climax that is not only theatrically riveting, and provocatively challenging but psychologically profoundly complex" ("Thousand").

Two elements in the staging of this final scene reinforce the possibility that under Dorotea's loving influence and moral sway Fernando will undergo a transformation during their marriage. When

Dorotea suddenly enters dressed as a woman, all the other characters react with utter astonishment, as if she has not merely dropped a disguise but has been miraculously transformed from a barefoot adolescent boy to a queenly woman. The seemingly miraculous quality of her metamorphosis attests to her powerful moral influence over Fernando's future behavior. Fernando addresses her as "Virtuous Dorotea" and remarks, "It is not possible or to resist / Or to deny so many truths united" (5.2: 104). Moreover, he recognizes that her great innocence initially drew him to her: "She looks as beauteous and innocent / As when I wronged her" (5.2: 103).

A second feature of the staging supports Fernando's moral transformation. Dorotea prostrates herself on stage in a sincere and worthy act of humility, a positive counterpart to Fernando's three previous prostrations in the play. According to the stage directions, as soon as Dorotea re-enters the scene, "*She throws herself at FERNANDO's feet*" (5.2: 102). In contrast, Fernando's prostrations are impetuous gestures that we in the audience have read as desperate, weak and at times hypocritical. Fernando sees himself as a victim of love, and the fact that he initially prostrates himself in a soliloquy (when no one is there to judge him) convinces us that he truly believes in his victimhood. Alone on stage, he calls Luscinda "the tyrant queen of my / Revolted heart" and refers to Dorotea as "A brief usurper there" (2.3: 38). Fernando prostrates himself a second time when he asks his brother Pedro to

forgive his waywardness. Intentionally or otherwise, he mocks the Crucifixion by lying face down on the floor, his body taking the form of a fallen cross. Then, in a mockery of Catholic morality and contrition, Fernando proceeds to engage Pedro in the crime of kidnapping Luscinda in a coffin by disguising themselves as hooded *penitentes* guarding a corpse (4.1: 77-79). Throughout Luscinda's abduction, Alex Hassel plays Fernando's part for laughs. Fernando's abduction scheme contains a hard truth. While Dorotea had earlier alluded to "The tomb of my own honour" (2.2: 36), Luscinda's deathlike loss of honor is literalized when she is kidnapped inside a casket. Fernando prostrates himself a third time while begging Luscinda's pardon for abducting her, but first he stands at the bottom of her casket flagellating himself, his large red sash flowing at his side as if he were a remorseful, self-martyring saint (5.1:89).

In the final scene, Fernando's ridicule of religion can only be redeemed by Dorotea's abiding faith in Catholic marriage. She holds him to the binding vow they swore before the Virgin's statue in her chamber. Fernando now refers to Dorotea as an image, suggesting the statue of the Virgin Mary: "Arise, lady, / She should not be prostrated at my feet, / Whose image I've erected in my mind;" and he declares he would choose no other wife "Were she a queen," obliquely referring to the Queen of Heaven (5.2: 104). We are receptive to these allusions because Doran's staging of the wedding sce-

ne, in which Luscinda was forced to marry Fernando, drew an explicit visual parallel between the bride Luscinda and a large statue of the Virgin on an elaborate altar (3.2: 54-57).

There is no easy answer to Fernando's soliloquized question "Was it rape then?" While Doran has repeatedly labeled the sexual encounter "the seduction scene," it might more accurately be called the "failed-seduction scene." Yet in a theatrical production suffused with religiosity Doran has seduced at least some members of the audience to love and embrace her decision to marry the man who had once threatened to rape her. While the RSC's *Dorotea* does not achieve the complexity and daring of the Cervantine original, she displays her own brand of originality against a backdrop that includes carnivalesque celebrations and the forlorn experience of a mountain wilderness. Along the way, we come to appreciate the complexity of the director's choices in portraying early modern rape for a modern audience. Importantly, Doran has such confidence in his *Dorotea* that he sets her the task of redeeming a husband who had tried to stab another bride on the day of his appointed wedding to Luscinda—a dramatic challenge that Lewis Theobald had omitted from his own, possibly Shakespearean adaptation of Cervantes's masterpiece.

NOTES

¹ All citations to *Cardenio* are taken from *Cardenio: Shakespeare's Lost Play Re-Imagined*, an adaptation by Gregory Doran that is based on texts by Shakespeare, Fletcher, Cervantes, et al. This script reproduces the text used during the ninth week of an eleven-week rehearsal process (Doran, Personal Interview). Unless otherwise noted, all the performance elements described in this article do not appear in the published text of *Cardenio*.

² All citations to *Double Falsehood* refer to Brean S. Hammond's edition of Lewis Theobald adaptation.

³ All citations to *Don Quijote* refer to John Jay Allen's edition.

⁴ For a scholarly assessment of this production of *Double Falsehood* see Kirwan's "Theobald Restor'd," forthcoming in 2012 in *The Quest for Cardenio* (Oxford UP).

⁵ James A Brundage, "Rape and Seduction in the Medieval Canon Law", in *Sexual Practices in the Medieval Church*, ed. Vern L. Bullough and James Brundage (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus, 1982), pp. 141-160 (p. 143) qtd. in Lappin 152.

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Interviews

INTERVIEW WITH LAURENCE BOSWELL

KATHLEEN JEFFS
University of Oxford

21 December 2011

Laurence Boswell, renowned for bringing the *comedia* in translation to the Royal Shakespeare Company in 2004-05 and the Gate theatre in London in the early 90s, is the newly appointed Artistic Director for the Ustinov Studio at the Theatre Royal in Bath for the next three years. *The Phoenix of Madrid* is the Spanish play in the autumn 2011 season of three world premieres of European classics new to British audiences. The production (his own translation of *No hay burlas con el amor* by Calderón de la Barca) closed after a successful run at the Ustinov Studio at the Theatre Royal in Bath, England, in the week that I conducted this interview. One of his future seasons during his time at the Ustinov will feature three Spanish Golden Age plays, so this classic by Calderón serves as a tempting taster of good things to come.

KJ: Why did you choose *No hay burlas con el amor*?

I chose this play because it made me laugh, because I love Beatriz, and because it has nine actors! Speaking as a professional theatre person as opposed to a learned academic, I find it interesting that the acting companies seemed to get smaller as time went on in the period, they seemed to change from fourteen to nine, probably due as much to the laws in effect at the time as to the laws of economics. Like those later companies I cannot have huge casts (The Bath Theatre Royal is not publicly-funded) and these later plays are somewhat cheaper to produce in that sense. But I was attracted to the play for its sophistication; I could tell that they had been doing these plays for 55 years by this time. It is evident in the metatheatricity, for instance there is a line in the second act where Alonso points out, "It's as if we're in a comedy by Calderón de la Barca," and also in the sophistication of the relationship between masters and servants.

KJ: Why did you decide to title the piece *The Phoenix of Madrid*?

LB: As you know there is already a translated title *Love is No Laughing Matter*, which seemed to miss the element of warning, like "Don't fool around with love". But then I discovered that Declan Donnellan had done a version of a play by Alfred de

Musset for the Donmar which he called *Don't Fool with Love* which is a very good translation of that title from the French, so it turned out that title had already been used. Our producer at the Ustinov said that he did not want two titles in the season with the word "love" in them, and it's quite hard to get away from "love" with the Marivaux. So the decision was really pragmatic in that sense. In the play Beatriz is reborn, and Don Alonso is kind of reborn too, and it also echoes Lope, who was called a Phoenix in his time.

KJ: It's enjoyable when you're watching it to hear the references to the Phoenix coming up in the text, echoing in the play, like happens with so many Golden Age titles.

LB: Yes and in the end, I do like those moments of mythologizing the title, like in *El perro del hortelano* when the characters all cringe and say, "Oh, no, it's that woman, she's become "The Dog in the Manger". Golden Age writers used titles to create their own myths by celebrating the title. I slightly miss that when Alonso makes his big speech in the third act and repeats, "Only a fool makes a fool of love."

KJ: There is Phoenix-like redemption in the play with both Alonso and Beatriz.

LB: There's a lot of redemption in the play, we've got the sisters together in the end based on the little hint of a line when Leonor says to Beatriz, "Can't we resolve this together?" The sisters are the biggest conflict in the play, and I love what Calderón does with sibling rivalry. But as for Alonso, I did a bit of research and the young guys around town were part of an unruly culture, getting into sword-fights (even Calderón busted into a nunnery), and that was a little bit like the football hooliganism we had in the 70s and 80s. Men that age are dangerous and a bit wild before they're married, they're post-family-control and pre-marriage-control.



Laura Rees and Frances McNamee. Photo by Nick Spratling

KJ: The text is in your translation, did you work from a literal version or what was your translation process?

When I took over the job I had six months before I started rehearsals, in which time I had to choose the three plays for this season, set up the company, cast it, and design it. Ideally I like to spend a couple of months on a text, and then put it in a drawer, and then spend another couple of months on it. But with this play, I had six weeks before rehearsals started, and so I thought, I'd better stop doing everything else now and concentrate on this script. I did what I always do: I get to understand the play first as a piece of drama, I try to find out what is beneath the language, find the living energy, the conflicts, the characters and relationships, and then the words come easier. My reading of Spanish is getting better from doing those shows in Spain [*El perro del hortelano* and *Fuente Ovejuna* in Spanish with Spanish actors] so I feel much more confident now working from the Spanish, but I did have some support from a literal translation.

KJ: Did you feel you had to cut the play down in your version? Where did you feel you had to make cuts in rehearsal, if any?

LB: I trimmed two of Don Alonso's rants in the second act because I think the idea of him being a wild man and a self-conscious misogynist, a wom-

an-hating reprobate may have been more attractive to a contemporary Spanish audience. It just felt that he was alienating us too much. He's got to have enough charm to keep you on side, and yet enough of his irascible unpleasantness. Calderón's subtitle for the play was "The Critic of Love", showing Calderón's self-indulgence with Alonso. He's the Jeremy Clarkson character, as we were saying in rehearsal, from Top Gear.

KJ: For all three of the plays in this current season, did you work from the model you used at the RSC where you were looking for translations rather than adaptations?

LB: In a way I think there wasn't quite time to do adaptations, and I'm less and less interested in adaptations. If a play is worth doing, do it! I don't mind so long as people are open about it, and say it's "based on an idea by Calderón", or even better, "This is an adaptation", but we were looking for translations in this season.

KJ: What are your favorite ways the three plays in repertory interact? How does Calderón's play relate to Goethe's *Iphigenia*, and Marivaux's *The Surprise of Love*?

LB: There are lots of lovely echoes, but part of the way they interact is by their difference. The *Iphigenia* is high-minded and takes itself very seriously

and the *Phoenix* is a kind of burlesque, where he's joking with the very idea of putting a play on. We've got an audience who are hopefully coming to see all three plays and we want to give them some variety. I chose them for their differences more than their similarities, but there are lots of lovely similarities such as, for instance, sighing, which is an obsession in the Marivaux play. Sighing is an involuntary sign of human feeling and also a kind of obsession in *The Phoenix*. They all have very good parts for women; there are plenty of talented male actors around but there are even more women of talent. And what's very interesting for the Hispanists is that again the Golden Age play has proved its popularity: Marivaux is a very fine writer and Goethe is a genius, but Calderón has outgunned them both at the box office.



Peter Bramhill and Milo Twomey. Photo by Nick Spratling

KJ: The couple that sat next to me said they were pleasantly surprised by how “accessible” the production was, as they expected it to be more “high-brow” as an unknown Spanish classic.

LB: That’s the trick with the Golden Age plays. In England we revere Shakespeare and the classical tradition, so people go a lot to see Shakespeare and, to be frank, people are used to being slightly bored at classics. They go because they know it’s good for them; I think going to the classics is often like going to see your aunt, you know you ought to do it and you get moral brownie points. Golden Age plays are different. These plays are based on narrative, like all popular, accessible dramatic entertainment. Look at Hollywood, the emphasis is always on the story, and Lope de Vega’s *New Art of Writing Plays* could be translated and turned into *How to Write a Hollywood Hit Movie*, because it’s the same ambition really, which is to write plays that grab an audience and keep their attention. He and Calderón wrote for a range of needs from the farmers who drove their sheep up to Madrid to sell them to the intellectuals who hung around the court. Lope and Calderón’s job is to keep both of those kinds of guys focused and entertained. We can talk about the language as much as we like but the main impact is narrative. Calderón is extraordinarily dextrous with how the stories twist and turn, with how he takes those nine people and gives them all a story, then wraps them all together; it’s incredibly intricate.

KJ: What are your future plans for Spanish Golden Age theatre as part of your Artistic Directorship at the Ustinov Studio?

LB: It will be three plays, two of which may be *El mágico prodigioso* and *La dama boba*, but the decision of which three plays is not quite finalized. The latter play interests me again on the theme of sisters; all sibling rivalry stories are fascinating. In both *The Phoenix* and *La dama boba* the sisters consist of an outstanding character and one who is just good. Leonor is a good character, but is more conventional, while Beatriz is brilliant, a true original. It's interesting with Calderón, who is more the intellectual, he chooses the intellectual to be his star character; while Lope is a genius but not an intellectual, he glorifies and makes a wonderful role for the *boba*. We're still searching for the perfect title for *La dama boba* but I think it needs to be something unkind. That's Lope's point; "stupid" is a prejudice. Finea is not stupid.

She finds it difficult to cope with her father and her sister. It's very hard to be the younger sibling of someone who is brilliant like Nise.

KJ: We will look forward to the upcoming Golden Age Season in Bath. How is the *comedia* suited to the Ustinov? Are there plans for a tour?

LB: The Ustinov Studio is the perfect place to do Golden Age plays. The Gate in London was won-

derful because it was up close and personal, it was a small room above a pub and the audience was 70. There's something about these plays which is so intense and so fast-moving that really works well crammed into a smaller theatre, and that's what we have again at the Ustinov. And wherever I am, there will be Golden Age productions. That's what I like doing, it's my job. I would love to tour them to the festivals in Spain, and all over the world. Once we have the titles and the season dates we will begin planning and yes, I'm hoping to tour.

**CARDENIO, OR CERVANTES AND
SHAKESPEARE RE-IMAGINED: AN INTER-
VIEW WITH GREGORY DORAN**

MARYRICA ORTIZ LOTTMAN
UNC Charlotte

Gregory Doran is Chief Associate Director of the Royal Shakespeare Company and the director of *Cardenio: Shakespeare's Lost Play Re-Imagined*. The premier of *Cardenio* on April 23, 2011 celebrated the 50th anniversary of the RSC and also commemorated Cervantes's and Shakespeare's deaths on the same day in 1616. The original Cardenio story occupies chapters 23-24 and 27-29 of Cervantes's *Don Quijote I* (1605) and was dramatized by a variety of seventeenth-century European writers. But the majority of Doran's play text reproduces dialogue from Lewis Theobald's *Double Falsehood* (1727)¹, an adaptation that claimed to be based on the lost play *The History of Cardenio* (1612) by William Shakespeare and John Fletcher. Doran and his dramaturg Antonio Álamo have added to their *Cardenio* three essential scenes not found in *Double Falsehood*, and they have also imported

dialogue from the 1612 English translation of *Don Quijote* by Thomas Shelton (a text that was likely read by Shakespeare and Fletcher).

GD: When did I first hear about *Cardenio*? While I was looking at Fletcher's *The Tamer Tamed*—the sequel to Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*—I heard there was this *Double Falsehood* by Lewis Theobald. The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust gave me a photocopy of their edition. I thought, "Well let's try this out with actors. That's how I'll find out if I can really understand it." So this was probably 2003. Earlier, when Michael Wood was doing his BBC series *In Search of Shakespeare*, he found what may be the long lost song from the original production of *Cardenio*.

MOL:—A song that you generously include at the back of your published script.²

GD: Actually, we filmed that song in the Swan Theatre with the music of Robert Johnson, a Shakespeare contemporary.³ We did our reading of Theobald's *Double Falsehood* with very good actors—Anton Lesser, Emma Fielding, Rory Kinnear. You could hear, every now and again, a quantum leap in the quality of the verse. But the real problem was that *Double Falsehood* had at least three missing scenes. Theobald talks about adapting it for the sensibilities of his age, the eighteenth century, and he was probably cutting some juicy bits. And it just

doesn't work. The plotting is so coagulated! The betrayal of friendship doesn't work because the friends don't meet until Act 5. As I began to plot what was missing and what you would have to supply, I thought the result would be inauthentic. Then I started coming across all these other, seventeenth-century adaptations of the Cardenio story—the Bouscal, the Guillén de Castro, the Pichou, the D'Urfey. I did get a bit obsessional! (*Laughs.*) All of them took the story and did exactly what they wanted with it, in sometimes radical ways. So that in the Pichou (I think it was the Pichou), Dorotea was there at Luscinda's wedding and standing with Cardenio behind the arras!

MOL: How dramatically convenient! The plot coagulates!

GD: (*Laughs.*) So all these writers had also supplied missing scenes. Then I read Thomas Shelton's translation of *Don Quijote* from 1612, and I saw that the major scene, Fernando's seduction of Dorotea, is told in her first-person narrative. I suddenly started realizing, "Actually you *could* do something with *Double Falsehood*." Shakespeare and Fletcher would have read Shelton's translation and their *Cardenio* would *not* have left out that seduction scene. They certainly would *not* have had Fernando say, "Oh, I'll get into Dorotea's room, I'll bribe the maid!"—and then moments later have him

coming out of the room saying, “I shouldn’t have done that.”

MOL: It would have been rather limp.

GD: Rather limp. Fortunately, the RSC happened to have several moments of coming into contact with our Spanish colleagues. My productions of *Coriolanus* and *The Canterbury Tales* both went to Spain. And I was dispatched to Córdoba to receive a Bellas Artes medal given to the RSC by King Juan Carlos. I told him that Shakespeare may have written a play based on Cervantes. And he said, “Fantástico!” I said, “Can we put that on the poster?” A blurb from the King of Spain! Then weirdly enough, I got a phone call from Gary Taylor, an American professor who had done his own reconstruction of *Cardenio*⁴ and he wanted me to direct it. I was quite a long way down my own road by this point. So I said, “It would be very interesting to work with you. Maybe I should just read it.” And he said, “Not until you say you’ll do it!” (*Laughs.*)

MOL: Gee! Hard bargainer!

GD: So I had to say, “Good luck with yours and I’ll go my own way.” I discovered some time later that he had put Don Quijote into the story. But I think Don Quijote and Sancho would overwhelm a play based on the Cardenio story. They deserve their own play.

MOL: Your *Cardenio* already has four complicated young lovers, plus those three elderly fathers who are developed in their own right. Did you happen to incorporate any material from Guillén de Castro?

GD: No, I don't think so. I found that the story as it appears in Cervantes's *Don Quijote* is marvelously written in flashbacks. It's a mystery thriller, a detective story. You find out about the dead mule, the saddlebag—

MOL: —The love letters, all that.

GD: —And you piece it together. On stage I don't see the need for someone like Don Quijote to tell me the story. Shakespeare and Fletcher would not have used that flashback narrative structure. It would have been alien to them. They would have done what I did with our Spanish dramaturg Antonio Álamo, which was to unwind the story and work out the missing pieces. We put together a first version and we still went, "That scene is missing. . . . That still needs fortifying. . . ." It began quite a long process.

MOL: I read your published script before actually seeing the production, and there were three moments where I thought, "Shakespeare, Shakespeare, Shakespeare." One was Hamlet's "nunnery" pun in the dialogue between Pedro and the Master of the Flock. Another was Cardenio's position behind the

arras, rather like Polonius's. And then when Fernando climbs up to Dorotea's balcony, there was a line that seemed to be snatched from *Romeo and Juliet*. But when I was inside the Swan seeing the play none of those moments yelled "Shakespeare" at me. I wonder if you did that deliberately.

GD: We started the project trying to work out whether this was a lost Shakespeare play. How much of *Double Falsehood* is actually Shakespeare's? We began to think that perhaps Shakespeare had helped plot it but that it was Fletcher's writing. And then because there were so many other scenes we were writing in, and bits and pieces we were adding to make the play work, our effort became what it must have been for Shakespeare and Fletcher when they coauthored *Henry VIII* and *Two Noble Kinsmen*. That is, we tried to cover up the cracks. So that you didn't spend the whole time going, "Is this Shakespeare? Maybe it's Shakespeare. I don't know if this is Shakespeare." Because then you stop watching the play. I wanted people to become engaged with the story.

Interestingly, the way we've taken Theobald's adaptation of the *last* act and put some Cervantes back in there has made it more Shakespearean. (*Laughs.*) In that, you do get a sense of catharsis as in the late plays like *Cymbeline*, perhaps, or *The Winter's Tale*. There is the sense of all these things working out in the final scene and giving you a sense of—I don't know if it's redemption or salva-

tion or just completion. I wanted to see what it might have been that Shakespeare and Fletcher saw in the Cardenio story that satisfied them, that made them think it was a play that would sit in the canon of their work.

MOL: Shakespeare and Fletcher titled their play *Cardenio*, but much of the time Fernando was grabbing my attention more. He seems more dynamic. He's funny, he's villainous. How did you work with his ability to overshadow Cardenio?

GD: When I was researching Theobald's titling the play *Double Falsehood*, I discovered it's possible he inherited an existing Restoration adaptation. But Drury Lane was run at that time by a triumvirate of actor-managers. Barton Booth was the tragedian, Robert Wilks was the sort of comedian, and Colley Cibber played the fops, so there wasn't a part for Cibber. Barton Booth and Robert Wilks were very jealous rivals, and if Theobald had said to them, "I've got this play called *Cardenio*," he'd have got *one* of them in it. But he called it *Double Falsehood*, which takes the eponymous role out of it. Certainly in *Double Falsehood*, Cardenio is not a sap. He's a very attractive character and he was going to be played by Barton Booth the tragedian, and Robert Wilks, the comic actor, did play Fernando. Cardenio's got the star role, really, not Fernando.

MOL: Fernando was beautifully handled. It's tough to keep a villain serious and still have him be comic, pulling back the laughs to keep the tension there. Did your experience of directing *The Joker of Seville* back in 1994 inform your understanding of Fernando or lead you to see him as a Don Juan figure?

GD: No. At the end of *Cardenio* we have to feel for Fernando, that he is going through a process of growing up. All the lovers were very young. That was one thing I wanted to make absolutely sure of.

MOL: Especially Cardenio, who is memorably played by Oliver Rix in his first professional role. I noticed that Cervantes describes Cardenio as having a beard in the wilderness, but you decided otherwise.

GD: Fake beards can be terrible!

MOL: I never thought of that. I wonder if you could you talk about discussing *comedia* conventions with Antonio Álamo. Your production seems to incorporate some of them.

GD: We looked at how different the *Cardenio* story was from some of the Spanish plays (for instance, from the plays in the RSC's 2004 Golden Age season), and we looked at how the Cervantes story does finish. The fathers, including the Duke, don't

appear at all in *Don Quijote*. There were conventions in *Double Falsehood* that I felt Shakespeare and Fletcher had already changed by putting in the fathers, which I think is the real Fletcherian influence.

MOL: Those three fathers are a *comedia* convention that was very creatively handled on stage. They interact with each other, each is dynamic and each has a distinct relationship with his son or daughter.

GD: And they represent a very specific stratification in certain terms of society. The Duke–Pedro and Fernando’s father—is at the top, then there’s Luscinda’s father Don Bernardo, and below that is Cardenio’s father Don Camillo.

MOL: Could you talk about how you built them up as characters?

GD: We hardly touched them, in fact. They are really much as they appear in *Double Falsehood*. They seemed to me to have a kind of depth, especially regarding their children. The Don Camillo character is very funny but is also quite moving in his inability to talk to Cardenio, his own son. Whereas we had to fortify Don Bernardo in the last scene because he was so upset by what he had done to his daughter Luscinda that he seemed unable to speak. In the last scene of *Double Falsehood*, after Luscinda arrives he says almost nothing apart from

telling the Duke he is “pleased” at the very end. I thought, “That doesn’t work.” So we gave him a speech of Luscinda’s, a beautiful speech where he says, “When lovers swear true faith, the listening angels / Stand on the golden battlements of Heaven / And waft their vows to the eternal throne.”⁵

MOL: He has come to some understanding of his relationship with not only his daughter, but with his dead wife, whom he believes did not love him.

GD: In Cervantes he has a wife (albeit very sketchily written) and she *is* present at the wedding, which seemed odd to me. In *Double Falsehood* he doesn’t have a wife and presumably he didn’t in the Shakespeare-Fletcher. Mothers often get missed out in Shakespeare, don’t they?

MOL: In the *comedia* they are almost nonexistent, so that the heroine is much more vulnerable and she’s thrown onto her own devices. Another *comedia* convention I find fascinating is the use of the *reja*, which you used so extraordinarily. Did you work with Antonio Álamo to fully understand it?

GD: Actually he gave me a book by an Englishman! (*Laughs.*) It was Gerald Brenan’s *South from Granada*,⁶ which talks a lot about the customs of the grilled window and of how courtship was conducted right through the 1950s in some parts. The grille is mentioned very much in the Cervantes, but

in *Double Falsehood* it's just a window. The grille seemed to us to be crucial—a physical demonstration of the way in which Luscinda, as a young woman, is confined. We put the Duenna in as a character as well because Luscinda says, “My steps are watched.” One of my favorite Cervantes short stories is “The Jealous Old Man of Extremadura.” My assistant director Ben Brynmor did a version of that during our rehearsals to show everybody and to develop the Duenna character. I discovered that in 1770, when *Double Falsehood* was revived at Covent Garden, they did a play called *The Padlock* as a comic afterpiece. I realized *The Padlock* was based on “The Jealous Old Man from Extremadura.” I have no idea whether the company that revived *Double Falsehood* in 1770 was aware of the Cervantes short story or whether that was coincidental.

MOL: —Or if they used the same source possibly.

GD: Who knows? We looked at Cervantes's own dramatization of that situation in one of his interludes, “The Jealous Old Man,” which was also very funny and very broad. But the short story is more detailed and strange and certainly better in giving a sense of how male-female relationships were conducted in that society, and that was very, very helpful indeed. And it sort of led to the grille. When the set designer Niki Turner and I did a research trip to Spain, grilles were on all sorts of windows all over.

MOL: Your set incorporated that type of window and made it physically part of the *reja*, a huge iron grille that resembled the same structure in a Spanish church.

GD: Yes, our grille was based on the one in the Toledo cathedral!

MOL: Beautiful! I really admire everything you did with it on stage, how you made the shadows of the bars form a jail just before the intermission. All through the first half of the play the thrust stage seemed like the free space, because the *reja* closes off all the space along the back wall. Then just before intermission, the *reja*'s bars project their shadows across the floor, and suddenly things have flipped and the freer space is now the smaller one, the area between the *reja* and the back wall. And the characters have to move out into the wilderness back there to find that freedom.

GD: The grille allowed us to open the stage up when we went into the Sierra Morena. Its very absence became liberating. In the first half of the play, it had allowed us to cut off that rear space, for there to be a kind of Holy of Holies behind there in the wedding scene and also in the world of the sick and dying Duke—a theme that isn't really explored in *Double Falsehood*. In the second half of *Cardenio*, the grille only returns for the convent scene. Other-

wise it's just tucked back out of the way. We decided we didn't have to remove it from the entire stage.

MOL: Luscinda faints at the end of the wedding scene, and in the following scene, as her father and his servants try to revive her, Fernando attempts to stab her. According to the stage directions, that scene takes place in a garden.

GD: Yes, we broke the wedding scene into two because of a very complicated structural thing. In *Double Falsehood*, Cardenio comes out from behind the arras and challenges Fernando. Shakespeare and Fletcher needed Cardenio to emerge, because on the Shakespearian stage if somebody went behind an arras they sort of disappeared. Polonius in *Hamlet* shouts from behind the arras and gets stabbed. But you rarely get somebody popping in and out from behind an arras and having any direct communication with the audience. The wedding scene in *Double Falsehood* is continuous action. Cardenio comes out from behind the arras to interrupt the ceremony and challenge Fernando, then the servants subdue Cardenio and bundle him off, Luscinda faints, and the women bundle her off. There's no garden scene. But I felt that Cervantes's Cardenio was much more psychologically real than the one that challenges Fernando at that point in *Double Falsehood*. Why does Cardenio go mad? He goes mad because he *hasn't* challenged Fernando. In order for his madness to "make sense," if you

will, he has to experience this inert inability to act, like Hamlet. So I put in the speech from the Cervantes where Cardenio comes out from behind the arras and turns to us in a soliloquy and says, “Lost, in an instant.” To do that I had to clear the stage of Luscinda’s fainted body, so I had her father, Fernando, and everyone else clear her out as if taking her into the fresh air. Meanwhile Cardenio comes out from behind the arras and talks to us in a soliloquy. The next scene shows Luscinda’s father, etc. attempting to revive her in a garden.

MOL: For me that garden scene contains another use of the *reja*, which can represent the border between the home and the outside world. The “permeability and impermeability” of the *reja* work just wonderfully there.⁷ The garden scene tells us we have to move out into the landscape to find more freedom.

GD: Great, great. And late in the first half of the play, that grille also allowed us to create an entire landscape behind it. Niki Turner’s set design has that wonderful brass back wall, with a sort of belt of brass that reflects things, and then it’s sort of scratched— Seeing the sort of landscape we created back there, you could be looking under clouds and over mountains and through to a skyline, or it could be some kind of horizon.

MOL: And the moon, I think, is there. It also seems that the shadows falling from the *reja*'s thickest bars could, at times, suggest trees.

GD: Yes. They get echoed in that back space. We needed a blurred sort of landscape so you could imaginatively read things into it. One of the critics read into it that this shimmery belt across the wall was somehow conveying the palimpsest of Shakespeare's lost play with others' efforts!

MOL: After the intermission, when we've arrived in the wilderness, there were dried leaves all over the stage. To me they suggested torn pieces of paper. There were so many documents in the play, and letters. And then you see the destruction of this communication. I don't know what you could do with that, but I found the dead leaves very suggestive.

GD: Interesting. *Leaves*. The very word suggests to me more pages and papers.

MOL: Could you talk about using Goya in the fiesta scene after Dorotea's seduction?

GD: His *Burial of the Sardine* is there and also his tapestry cartoon *Straw Mannequin*, which shows a *pelele* (a straw dummy) being tossed in a blanket. The *peleles* came about because we needed a way to show that Fernando and Dorotea clearly go off and

have sex. In the Cervantes, Dorotea mentions that Fernando bribed not only her servants but her parents and the whole village and that he paid for sports and revels every night. So every night there was music again in the square. I thought, "Well that's interesting." I sort of stole the fiesta from Strindberg's *Miss Julie*, where you don't see Miss Jule and Jean the valet having sex, but you do see the peasants having a party. After Dorotea's seduction it felt to me as though the fiesta with the *peleles* could make something very violent and dangerous and dark. The description of the *peleles*, with the calabashes and the grotesque breasts and genitalia, came straight from two accounts of fiestas in Spain that I had read. One was *Voyage en Espagne*, with Gustav Doré's illustrations, along with the Baron Davillier's record of their travels together in Spain. There were lots of lovely stuff we could draw from them, even though they traveled in the 1860s. And the other book was Brenan's *South from Grenada* again, which talked about the rituals throughout the year and how the peasants use these straw dummies. For us the *peleles* were very phallic and very funny, especially when they are dumped at the end of the fiesta. They are two spent bodies.

MOL: That was highly effective, so grotesque and yet very serious.

GD: Yes, because Dorotea has been used like a rag doll, a straw dummy.



The Straw Mannequin by Francisco de Goya. Artstor.

MOL: I also thought that carnivalesque peasant celebration was a nice contrast to the aristocratic wedding ceremony between Luscinda and Fernando. Fernando is such an interesting horseman. Could we talk about the equation between women and horses? For me there's kind of a paradox here, because it's Cardenio who is the superior horseman, but it's Fernando who controls the women. Is there a resolution to that contradiction?

GD: Horsemanship is very, very underdeveloped in *Double Falsehood*. Cardenio's father, Don Camillo, reads the Duke's letter and begins to ask himself,

“What horsemanship has Cardenio?” and then the subject’s virtually dropped. But horsemanship was a theme that had to be developed because it gave Cardenio a sensitivity and something he was good at. He is sensitive to animals and as we invented it, he’s sensitive to women. Whereas what Fernando seems to learn is, That’s how you tame horses, so that’s how you tame women. Horsemanship was clearly the theme in Cervantes that brings the two men together and allows them to become friends. So we tried to track it through. In fact, though none of the critics noticed, I borrowed some lines from *Hamlet* about the ability to ride. There’s the clear sort of duality of the horsemanship image. One of which is a sensitive correspondence between man and animal, as it were, and the other is being able to conquer and domineer.

MOL: I don’t know if this was just my imagination, but when Fernando talks about his desire to possess Dorotea, he’s sitting mounted on a sort of vaulting horse, and he’s shirtless, wearing leather chaps and holding a riding crop—and because he’s got that dark beard—to me he looked like a centaur.

GD: (*Laughs.*) Right.

MOL: There’s something so masculine about him at that moment. Also, he’s trying to tame the beast, but *he’s* the beast. He didn’t use the riding crop as a tail but it’s like a tail in his hand. At the end of the

play when he's prostrating himself before someone and asking for forgiveness, he's holding the riding crop again, I think.

GD: No, he's actually got one of the penitent's flails.

MOL: Right.

GD: 'Lovely you've picked all that up. One of the exciting things about doing this play and discovering it in front of the audience is that people don't know what the story is, as they so often do in a Shakespeare play. So right the way through to the seduction scene—the "rape scene," if you like—when Fernando possesses Dorotea, you have to be attracted to Fernando. He's amazingly charismatic, albeit totally self-obsessed, an egocentric maniac, as Alex Hassell plays him. But at the beginning of the seduction scene, you mustn't know the way it's going to turn out, because in some sense it's a seduction until a certain point. Here's a contentious issue! It's only really a rape when he abandons her. Up till that point, he's married her and she has yielded because she has a ring on her finger.

MOL: In the program you discussed how the situation is so multifaceted. Dorotea's attitude toward what's happened changes radically when she realizes she's been abandoned. The action is all set 400

years ago and audience perspective on these things changes.

GD: Indeed. Dorotea's speech to Fernando in the final scene, which is not there at all in *Double Falsehood*, is one of the two major speeches we put in. She is claiming her rights. Because as an individual in that society she is a non-person. She has given away her virginity and has been dumped. She has no future.

MOL: In terms of that society, she has no honor and no meaningful identity, she's dead. –Speaking of death, I wanted to ask you about the very gripping opening of the play, where you have the casket there in the middle of the stage and Fernando enters, lies down in it, than sneaks away just before his father and brother enter. It's such a serious image—of the omnipresence of death—to open up a play with a lot of comic elements.

GD: The coffin began simply as a tool to explain in the first scene, where people's ears are tuning in. The sick Duke is preparing for his death and yet his oldest son Pedro is finding that disturbing, and the Duke is saying, I'm not going to die any quicker because I'm preparing for my death. So there was an absolute practicality to the coffin. Then of course they talk about Fernando, this irregular younger brother, and it helped us that you had just seen this rather anarchic man trying out his dad's coffin.

You've asked yourself, "What is he doing? Does he have a death wish?" And then of course later on it comes back into play.

MOL: –With Fernando's abducting Luscinda by putting her in a coffin. I find Fernando really fascinating. You could also say he wants to *be* Cardenio and that he's attracted to Luscinda because she belongs to Cardenio, in a case of triangular desire.

GD: Yes, yes.

MOL: To try out a coffin is a mad thing. You don't think of a libertine like Fernando doing that, unless doing it involves a sense of *carpe diem*. After Fernando's lustful rape or seduction or whatever of Dorotea, he says something like, "My guilt calls Cardenio to me". That's a very rich scene because Fernando is slapping himself in the face, and then Cardenio enters and seems to save him from his madness. But later on Cardenio can't save himself from his own madness.

GD: Madness, of course, is a theme that runs through a lot of Spanish drama as well. Antonio Álamo alerted me to it, how each character goes through a sort of madness. Dorotea, when she discovers she's been abandoned, has a moment when she seems to nearly lose it. Luscinda finds herself holding onto her sanity despite the terrible thing she's been pushed into. And, of course, Cardenio

does go mad. Fernando is a very fragile personality in some ways, too. There's a deep need for love in him and he demands it rather than deserves it. His jealousy of his brother Pedro is a very Shakespearean thing. Perhaps Fernando feels his father doesn't love him enough. He finds friendship in Cardenio, and yet as soon as Cardenio—rather stupidly perhaps—shows him his girlfriend, Fernando has to have her too. There's a lack of self-worth in Fernando.

MOL: It seems Fernando is going through some sort of transformation. There are three separate times when he prostrates himself in front of someone and asks forgiveness. Has he successfully transformed himself at the end of the play?

GD: I *think* he has transformed. I think he *hopes* he's transformed. It's an aspiration rather than a likelihood. (*Laughs.*) I don't know whether those people can, but it may be that if anyone can help him, Dorotea perhaps will. Maybe she is one of those women who loves the wrong kind of man, but maybe she also has the possibility to redeem him in some way, and even that aspiration is good and strong. It's very badly written, the last act of *Double Falsehood*. It was a really difficult problem to crack, which took us all the way through rehearsals to do. One of the seventeenth-century adaptations—possibly the Pichou or the Bouscal—released us and gave us a model. So that when Cardenio appears,

Fernando's first instinct was to do another duplicitous moment of pretending he was sorry and then fight him. That action gave Cardenio *his* moment, for whether it's Cardenio's peasant stock or whatever, he is clearly going to be a better fighter, and he beats Fernando to the ground. That's Cardenio's moment of redemption. And then of course Fernando jumps up and grabs Luscinda from Cardenio in very much the Cervantes moment of not knowing who he wants or which one he wants. And that is exactly the moment Dorotea appears, that's how we constructed her entrance. Dorotea doesn't appear at that moment in either the Cervantes or *Double Falsehood*. To us it felt not that she appears like a sort of guiding angel but that she has to make him see sense when he has reached the rock bottom, when his behavior is so desperate that he's trapped himself in a dark corner.

MOL: You initially staged Dorotea's room in the balcony, implying a high moral superiority over him, and later she's up there in the mountains, even up on the third level of the stage in the musicians' gallery. If anybody can guide and control him and limit his destructiveness, it's going to be her.

GD: And it wouldn't have been Luscinda. Luscinda is—as Cardenio is somewhat—a much more temperamental character, perhaps. Right at the beginning, when Cardenio still delays in asking his father's permission to marry, she tells him something like,

“Oh, I see why you want to go now. Oh, it’s because you don’t love me at all.” There is something childish about the two of them, and quite childlike. Whereas, as Antonio kept saying, “I love Dorotea. She’s a strong woman, mature.”

MOL: Everyone who loves *Don Quijote* loves Dorotea too, and Pippa Nixon really captures her passion. Like Fernando, Dorotea’s moving and active. Actually, in some ways they make a great couple! They’re both very bold. She goes into the landscape, and she does the gender switch, and he’s so bold that he’s the mainspring of the action. In your production, the Master Shepard attempts to rape Dorotea and you did that scene comically. Can you talk about that?

GD: That episode has been transformed, presumably by Fletcher and Shakespeare, rather than by Lewis Theobald, because in the Cervantes it is her father’s shepherd boy who tries jumping Dorotea. In the struggle she throws him over a cliff. Now that is an extraordinary moment! Antonio suggested putting that scene in, and I might have if I had been able to think of a way of throwing someone over a cliff! But what Shakespeare and Fletcher have done—if indeed it was they who did it—is to take the idea of the second rape and put it into the Master of the Flock. And because there’s the boy-girl confusion, Shakespeare and Fletcher play the very dangerous game of presenting the rape attempt comi-

cally. I thought, "I don't know how this goes. Either we cut this or we make it harder and more brutal." It's an inversion of Fernando's seduction of Dorotea, in that the Master of the Flock is rather pathetic, not young and athletic and passionate about that particular woman. He's impotently trying to do the thing, desperately, and for him the object of lust is basically girl- boy- sheep- whatever-. After Pedro foils the rape attempt, he treats the Master of the Flock very comically. I thought, "If we are going to do this rape scene, we should just see what the effect of its being absurd is." But I'm still not sure about it. (*Laughs.*) In the end, I felt he's the dirty old man trying to deflower the heroine in the Pantalone tradition of the *commedia dell'arte*. Timothy Speyer played him as the groping old man who's not going to be able to do that much damage, if you like.

MOL: That scene makes Dorotea look stronger because ultimately she is not quite so victimized, perhaps, as in the seduction scene with Fernando. Pedro's sudden entrance saves her from the Master of the Flock, and that gives Pedro a kind of status too, beyond being Fernando's older brother.

GD: It does. I'm sure that increases her trust in him and in a way it increases his role, because he's not in Cervantes at all. He's the character that Shakespeare and Fletcher need as the interlocutor, or as

the one who knows all the bits of the story and can draw it all together.

MOL: Your production seemed to pretty consistently remind us of the Catholic Spanish element. You didn't just visually announce it at the beginning and end. Even the cloaks the shepherds wear have pointed hoods. They reminded me of monks.

GD: Of friars, actually. There's something celibate about the lives of those shepherds in the mountains there.

MOL: When Cardenio asks two of them if they've ever been in love, in the play text they give a one-word answer, "No," but in performance they exchange incredulous, dopey looks that clearly say, "Love? We've never heard of that. We're only *shepherds*." (*Laughs.*) Very anti-pastoral.

GD: Yes, that's very sweet, that exchange. Very charming. And the reverse is the Master of the Flock, with his appetite and his need for sex. The Catholicism we put on stage is potent and does give the world of the characters an intenser feeling somehow. I wanted it to be a Spanish setting, even though we can't be Spanish, as it were. The cult of the Virgin, in particular in Andalucía, I'm told, is a very powerful thing. In *Don Quijote*, Fernando takes up the statue of the Virgin Mary in Dorotea's room, and he makes his oaths in front of the witness

of that statue. Clearly, using that statue is something Fletcher and Shakespeare would not have done—or not been able to do—on their stage. I went to Alcalá de Henares and had a look at Cervantes' house. There were certain features in it that actually appear in Dorotea's room.

MOL: Oh, cool! The *estrado*. And I noticed it had a *brasero*.

GD: That was straight from Cervantes's house. It's very difficult to have fires on the stage but that gave the sense of domesticity I wanted. I wanted the paintings of her parents behind her and the statue of the Virgin Mary. And we put the statue of the Virgin into the wedding scene as well, behind Luscinda.

MOL: And that's where we see the parallel between the Virgin's costuming and Luscinda's huge wedding dress.

GD: Yes. There's a lovely quote when Elisabeth de Valois became the second wife of Philip II of Spain. She complained to her chamberlain of the bell farthingale she had to wear. She said, "It's impossible to wear this without kicking it. I look like a bell when I move." The chamberlain, with a distinct sense of Bergundian punctilio said to her, "The Queen of Spain has no legs." (*Laughs.*) I had to remind Lucy Briggs-Owen (our Luscinda) of that.

MOL: Yes, she *glided* when she walked, though her character has nervous tics and anxieties.

GD: There's something about the doll-like presentation of Luscinda to the marital sacrifice there that is very potent.

MOL: Could you talk about any plans you might have to bring *Cardenio* to the U.S. or to direct a Spanish *comedia*?

GD: I would absolutely adore to bring it both to the States and to Spain. Antonio Álamo is preparing a Spanish translation. Initially we were trying to think of *Cardenio* as a Spanish co-production, to do it in Spanish and in English and open it up to a Spanish-speaking world that we don't generally address. It's the perfect Anglo-Spanish Renaissance collaboration in a way. Partly because of the economic crisis that hit Spain—hit all of us—but hit Spain very badly in 2009, those plans got shelved. But I would still love to bring it to the States and to Spain.

MOL: Is there anything you'd care to add?

GD: It has just been a joy working on it. At one point I had a terrible dark night of the soul thinking, "What am I doing with this? This is going to turn out such a mongrel!"

MOL: I'm so glad you took it on! It's such a great project.

GD: It had more writers than a Hollywood blockbuster. I wanted to be very careful to say it is Shakespeare's lost play "re-imagined." We don't want to claim this is some kind of authentic reconstruction because we can't do that. We can't. And who knows? *Cardenio* may still turn up as a play.

MOL: And you could stage it all over again!

NOTES

¹ Shakespeare, William, and Lewis Theobald. *Double Falsehood or the Distressed Lovers*. Ed. Brean S. Hammond. London: Arden Shakespeare, 2010.

² *Cardenio: Shakespeare's Lost Play Re-Imagined*. London: Nick Hern Books, 2011. All citations to the RSC production are taken from this edition.

³ Robert Johnson (1583-1633) composed music for some of Shakespeare's late plays.

⁴ Gary Taylor's "creative reconstruction" of Shakespeare and Fletcher's lost play was performed in New Zealand in 2008. n.d. 12 Aug. 2011. <<http://www.english.fsu.edu/faculty/gtaylor.htm>>.

⁵ *Cardenio*, Act 5, sc. 2, p.105.

⁶ Brennan, Gerald. *South from Granada*. Cambridge: New York, 1957; 1980.

⁷ See Laura L. Vidler's "The 'Severed Gate': Staging the Versatility and (Im) Permeability of the 'Reja'." *Bulletin of the Comediantes* 59.1 (2007): 69-88.

Theater Reviews

***EL QUIJOTE*. DIRECTED BY OLGA SÁNCHEZ. ORIGINAL BILINGUAL ADAPTATION BY SANTIAGO GARCÍA. BASED ON THE NOVEL BY MIGUEL DE CERVANTES. MILAGRO THEATER GROUP, MILAGRO THEATER, PORTLAND, OREGON. MAY 9, 2010 (RUN: MAY 7, 2010 — MAY 29, 2010).**

JORGE ABRIL SÁNCHEZ
Wake Forest University

Since its foundation in 1985 by live drama enthusiasts—José Eduardo González and Dañel Malán—, the Miracle Theater Group has been a tireless patron of vivacious and visually stunning Hispanic spectacles, which range widely from Golden Age classics to Latin American masterpieces. This patronage has given rise to bold, irreverent, but never irrelevant, shows that combine artistic experimentation with literary and textual tradition in Spanish. Indeed, the Miracle Theater Group has become a hub of expression for the Latino community, who celebrates the vibrancy of its culture at its home—*El Centro Milagro*—in Southeast Portland. Productions have Latino roots, but they also explore

old themes and modern dilemmas by crafting global issues into cutting edge dramatic plays. The Miracle Theater Group captivates, engages and inspires generations of Oregon theatergoers, who are urged to think outside the box. During the performances, spectators let themselves be completely driven by their imagination and embrace the full spectrum of possibilities at a professional theatrical stage.

On May 9, 2010, Santiago García's thought-provoking adaptation of Miguel de Cervantes's *opus magna*—*Don Quijote de la Mancha* (1605 and 1615)—was a soiree like no other. Following his innovative work as founder and head of the renowned Colombian theater ensemble—*Teatro La Candelaria*—, which modernizes national drama while addressing popular audiences, García revisited one of Spain's major works to compose a text that would lift the spirits of his compatriots. In search of a brighter future for his country, which has lived for over half a century in the midst of violence and seemingly irresolvable civil war, the South American theater theorist dug into the romantic spirit and chivalric idealism of Cervantes's knight errant in order to find the will and the faith—that is, the driving forces—of humanity that inspire us to do the impossible. With this idea in mind, García mostly selected episodes from the original Cervantine text in which characters fight to overcome insurmountable obstacles through a total commitment of their body and soul, thus proving

that both in literature and modern Colombia social and political changes are still possible.

This selection of scenes included, in order of performance, the scrutiny of Don Quixote's library and the burning of the books of chivalry by the curate and the barber (I.VI), the knight's fierce attack on windmills (I.VIII), the famous adventures of the enchanted bark (II.XXIX) and of the lions (II.XVII), Sancho Panza's invention of the enchantment of Dulcinea (II.X), Don Quixote and his squire's encounter with the fair huntress (II.XXX), the announcement of the remedy for Dulcinea's bewitchment (II.XXXIV-XXXV), Sancho Panza's wise government of the Barataria Island (II.XLIV-XLV, II.XLVII, II.XLIX, II.LI, and II.LIII), Sancho and his master's encounter with the chariot of the Court of Death (II.XI), the stupendous and marvelous story of the disconsolate matron Trifaldi (II.XXXVI-LXI), and the return of the Cervantine hero to his hometown imprisoned in an oxcart (I.LII). As we can see, the order of the scenes in the play did not strictly follow the plot of the novel. However, rather than confusing the spectators and possible readers of Cervantes's work, these flash forwards and flashbacks were cleverly used to create a context which supported the alternative arrangement of the events. Not only did these drama techniques help to explain the beginnings of the account to the audience—that is, the insanity of the protagonist due to his obsessive reading and memorization of chivalric deeds—, but they also fleshed

out those dramatic moments highlighted by Santiago García.

Indeed, the Colombian dramatist put special interest in emphasizing the transformation suffered by the Manchegan knight, as a symbolic representation of everybody's potential to significantly change and improve his own life and situation. This metamorphosis was suggested, above all, by staging two episodes in the first act in which Don Quixote is baptized with a new honorable name. In the novel, these scenes correspond to the adventures of the dead corpse (I.XIX) and of the lions (II.XVII), in which Alonso Quijano receives the nicknames of the Knight of the Sad Countenance and the Knight of the Lions, respectively. However, Santiago García decided to locate the first baptism at the end of Don Quixote's voyage on board the ghost boat (II.XXIX), in which the knight errant charges against a watermill in the River Ebro. This modification may have been conditioned by the reduced width and length of the stage at *El Centro Milagro*. It is fair to say that there was not sufficient space on the sides from which the penitents could have entered representing the funerary procession of chapter nineteen. As a solution, scene designer Mark Haack realized that they could reutilize the decoration and the visual effects they had just used to recreate the attack on the windmills one scene before, and he opted for moving this transformative rite of passage to the aforementioned nautical enterprise. Once images of colored sails were visually project-

ed over a high tower, installed on the left side of the scenario, to help spectators visualize the famous marvel of farming engineering in La Mancha, it was easy to make a transition and transform the former windmill into a watermill.

In fact, this was not the only time in which artistic director Olga Sánchez and her crew made good use of this outstanding construction. Given its height and size, this platform was converted twice into the figure of a giant (Malambruno, etc.) so that Don Quixote could match up his bravery and strength in a duel. Despite not being an elaborate piece of machinery, it had extendable limbs on both sides and a small tree house on the top, which became the arms and the head of the knight's opponent, respectively. On other occasions, this edifice functioned as the family household of the Manchegan *hidalgo* as characters showed up through a window at the front of the elevated dwelling to make an announcement. The director wisely assigned speeches to every single member of the cast, who took turns communicating the news to the spectators. A few times, actors were also asked to assume the identity of the *alcaláino* novelist at the balcony of the residence. In order to do this, they would put a ruff on the neck of their garments to imitate the fashion of Western Europe at the beginning of the seventeenth century. While playing the persona of Miguel de Cervantes, they would read passages from the original Cervantine text. Among them, the most significant act of reading took place

at the duke's castle, in which a servant recited on behalf of the *madrileño* author his attack against Avellaneda for having published a sequel of his well-known book of chivalry. In any case, as we can see in the following table, during the performance it was common that actors exchanged their roles, which again emphasized the idea that any transformation is possible if we put our heart in it.

Actor	Character
Gilberto Martín del Campo	Don Quixote.
Danny Bruno	Sancho Panza.
Hadley Boyd	Housekeeper, miller, flag bearer, saucy village woman, Duchess, tailor, judge, town woman, demon, penitent, and Cervantes.
Emily Gleason	Niece, fisherman, old village woman, servant, Dulcinea, hangman, rich man, secretary, angel, penitent, and Cervantes.
Will Sonera Gregg	Priest, miller, cartwright, creature, knight, old man, emperor, penitent, and Cervantes.

Rebecca Martínez	Teresa, fisherman, flag bearer, village woman, Dulcinea, servant, Merlin, judge, messenger, Queen, penitent, and Cervantes.
Kevin-Michael Moore	Barber, miller, lion, Duke, farmer, bridge crossing man, Death's assistant, penitent, and Cervantes.

Olga Sánchez's masterful direction, however, was not flawless. In an apparent attempt to assign defining attributes to the cast, she made the duke and the duchess speak with a strong lisp in order to associate them with Spanish aristocracy and King Ferdinand, from which the Castilian Spanish mispronunciation is commonly thought to originate. The Latino audience that crowded the auditorium celebrated this contrast as a comic relief. Nevertheless, it is necessary to say that this story, or legend, is not based on historical fact. While some Southern Spaniards pronounce *s* as the English *th* (*ceceo*), most of the people in Spain share the same sibilant sound with Latin American speakers.

In spite of this mistake, the play turned out to be very compelling. Don Quixote still has the power to haunt our imagination as he has for some four hundred years. He inspires us to fight against social injustice in a world where money, power and violence hinder the aspirations of many idealists who continue to dream of a brighter future.

UN BOBO HACE CIENTO DE ANTONIO SOLÍS DE RIVADENEYRA. DIR. JUAN CARLOS PÉREZ DE LA FUENTE, ADAP. BERNARDO SÁNCHEZ. COMPAÑÍA NACIONAL DE TEATRO CLÁSICO, TEATRO PAVÓN, MADRID. DEL 19 DE FEBRERO AL 3 DE ABRIL DE 2011.

SERGIO ADILLO RUFO
Consejo Superior de Investigaciones
Científicas

Como figura en su estatuto, uno de los principales objetivos de la Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico es “recuperar para la escena otras obras menos conocidas del patrimonio teatral clásico español, pero de gran valor artístico, con objeto de darlas a conocer a los ciudadanos”, y de ahí que por primera vez desde su fundación en 1986 este centro de creación lleve ahora a las tablas un texto de Antonio Solís de Rivadeneyra (1610-1686), *Un bobo hace ciento*. Se trata de una comedia de capa y espada con tintes de comedia de figurón que contiene todos los ingredientes del género: mujeres tapadas, hermanos celosos de su honra, criados ocurrentes y metepatas, casas contiguas, cartas que llegan al des-

tinatario equivocado y Madrid como telón de fondo de todo este enredo.

El director, Juan Carlos Pérez de la Fuente, que estuvo al mando del Centro Dramático Nacional entre 1996 y 2004, se enfrenta así por tercera vez con nuestros clásicos del Siglo de Oro, si bien esta producción se asemeja poco a sus versiones de *El mágico prodigioso* (2006) o *La vida es sueño* (2008), y guarda mayor similitud con sus acercamientos a la estética de Nieva en *Pelo de tormenta* (1997) y al estilo vodevilesco de *Angelina o el honor de un brigadier* (2009).

El responsable de la puesta en escena explica que el punto de partida de su propuesta es la noticia que se conserva de que, junto a la loa sobre las cuatro edades del hombre que Bernardo Sánchez también ha recuperado en su adaptación, este texto se representó en la corte de Felipe IV justo antes de que comenzara la Cuaresma de 1656, un martes de Carnaval, y por ello ha querido plasmar aquí todo el colorido, el humor y la transgresión de esta celebración. El espíritu carnavalesco, ausente en espectáculos anteriores de la Compañía que sí incluían mascaradas dentro de su trama, como *El pintor de su deshonra* (2008), está presente en éste de manera desbordante y un tanto injustificada para aquellos a quienes se les escape el dato sobre las circunstancias históricas de la reposición cortesana -que no estreno- de la pieza.

Bien es verdad que sí hay algo de fiesta de los locos en el argumento trazado por Solís: de la

lectura del original se desprende que don Cosme, el bobo que da título a la obra, va contagiando progresivamente de su torpeza al resto de los personajes, pero en este montaje todas las figuras son igualmente extravagantes al levantarse el telón, con lo que resulta imposible identificar al figurón y valorar el arco de evolución de los demás caracteres. De modo que si el libreto ya era alocado de por sí, Pérez de la Fuente le da una vuelta de tuerca al juego de equívocos y amores no correspondidos con la introducción de episodios lésbicos y homoeróticos entre amos y criados, damas reprimidas luchando contra sus deseos de masturbarse y galanes que dan rienda suelta a sus perversiones sexuales, todo lo cual no hace sino complicar hasta el paroxismo un enredo que no era, de entrada, fácil de seguir.

Con un ritmo y una impronta más propios del entremés que de la comedia, la borrachera de signos escénicos construye un espectáculo excesivo que homenajea y parodia lo español a través de mil y un clichés sobre nuestro país y otros tantos iconos de la Villa y Corte. Sin solución de continuidad se suceden y superponen el himno nacional en su versión dieciochesca, el zumbido de los moscardones veraniegos, seguidillas, pasodobles, toques de clarines, el maullido de los gatos que dan nombre a los madrileños, un cielo velazqueño, la silueta de las Meninas convertidas en luminoso de *after hour*, las barreras de un coso taurino, madroños por doquier, pasos procesionales de Semana Santa, trajes de majos, encajes goyescos, rosarios, abanicos, peinetas y

mantillas. Todos ellos son de gran impacto visual y auditivo pero no ayudan a clarificar la comprensión de la fábula, como tampoco lo hace la escenografía móvil de Richard Cernier, un precioso puzzle desmontable que reproduce en miniatura el entramado urbano de la capital y que funciona más en las escenas de calle que en las interiores.



Don Cosme (Daniel Albaladejo) y su criado Juancho (José Ramón Iglesias) entre las casitas rodantes que componen el Madrid barroco imaginado por Cernier

Este caos buscado a propósito exige a todo el reparto un gran esfuerzo físico y vocal. Tras un proceso de ensayos que no parece haber sido nada fácil, los actores de la Compañía, acostumbrados a otro tipo de montajes más convencionales y muy acomodados en su dominio de la palabra, a menudo se ven aquí obligados a gritar para hacerse oír y de-

ben echar mano de otras herramientas interpretativas con las que están poco familiarizados, como la expresión corporal. Parte del elenco llega a la función muy al límite de sus posibilidades, extenuados y casi afónicos, y no es para menos, pero ello quizá obedezca a que algunos no han asimilado lo mejor de la propuesta del director: el espíritu de juego. No es el caso, por ejemplo, de Muriel Sánchez, que expresa al máximo su vis cómica para crear una doña Ana llena de contrastes, glamurosa a la par que cañí.

El resultado de esta apuesta tan arriesgada es cuando menos muy divertido. El entretenimiento y el sentido del humor, aunque sin llevarlo a estos extremos de autoderrisión patria, son dos claves del teatro áureo que a menudo olvida la crítica, y si hay algo que se le debe agradecer a Pérez de la Fuente es el haber maquinado un juguete hilarante, disparatado y barroco hasta la médula. No podemos afirmar que este montaje se haya puesto al servicio de los versos del poeta alcalaíno, pero hay que reconocer que durante el mes y medio en que el espectáculo ha estado en cartel el Teatro Pavón se ha contagiado del ambiente festivo y canalla que debía de envolver a las representaciones en los corrales. Y a pesar de los excesos imaginativos del director, de cuando en cuando no está de más desacralizar a nuestros clásicos y dejar que lleguen aires de locura a una institución que a veces recuerda demasiado a la Comédie Française.

***EL IMAGINARIO DE CERVANTES* DE SONIA SEBASTIÁN. DIR. SONIA SEBASTIÁN. TEATRO DE CÁMARA CERVANTES, MADRID. DEL 1 AL 31 DE JULIO, 2011.**

ESTHER FERNÁNDEZ
Cornell University

“Madrid, Siglo XVII. Una noche en el Siglo XVII. No hay teatro. No hay butacas. El espectador sigue los pasos de los personajes. Cinco tramas que se plantean en la plaza van a sucederse simultáneamente a lo largo del edificio. El público se debate. Decenas de escenas a su alrededor pero sólo puede escoger una, la que le provoque, la que le emocione, la que le indignen. El aseo de la baja nobleza, una reunión de villanos, la representación de unos comediantes en la plaza, el rapto de una moza de provincias... El único requisito es tener alma de *voyeur*.”

Este es el adelanto del programa de mano que nos da un joven vestido de época a la entrada del Teatro de Cámara Cervantes, radicado en la sede de la Sociedad Cervantina de Madrid—la cual en su día albergó la memorable imprenta de Juan de la Cuesta. La originalidad no se le puede negar a este extravagante *pot-pourri* de personajes y tramas cer-

vantinas sacadas, en su mayor parte, de las *Novelas ejemplares*, de los *Entremeses*, de *Don Quijote*, y de *Pedro de Urdemalas*. Su dramaturga y directora, Sonia Sebastián, finalista de la V Edición de los Premios de Teatro Valle-Inclán, elige entre estas obras a quince personajes— Moza, Leocadia, La dama encendida, Camila, Marcela, Porcia, La Gananciosa, Teresa, La Cariharta, Anselmo, El Repolido, Pedro de Urdemalas, Rodolfo, Tomas Rodaja y Monipodio—para re-imaginar a través de cinco tramas distintas un complejo y original microcosmos cervantino.

El espectáculo se abre en el patio exterior del edificio que, a su vez, recrea una plaza donde, en aproximadamente unos treinta minutos, se plantean indistintamente cada una de las cinco tramas: “La guarida de la hampa,” “El timo del tapete,” “La plaza de la villa,” “La dama encendida” y “El rincón maldito.” En este espacio se congregan todos los personajes, los cuales nos van dando diversas pistas sobre su situación ya sea a través del diálogo o de su actitud. Somos testigos, por ejemplo, de cómo Rodolfo sigue con insistencia a la joven Leocadia, mirándola con una lascivia difícil de disimular. Simultáneamente, entreoímos una conversación entre Anselmo y su esposa Camila a propósito de un buen amigo que vendrá a hacer compañía a Camila mientras Anselmo se ausente. Al mismo tiempo, contemplamos los preparativos de una compañía de cómicos ambulantes que se disponen a interpretar el entremés del *Viejo celoso* o asistimos

a la jocosa conversación entre Pedro de Urdemalas—a punto de ser colgado—con la prostituta Cariharta. Es, justamente, en el instante que dicha prostituta decide liberar a Pedro y, concretamente, en el momento de la huida de éste que todos los personajes se quedan congelados en medio de sus acciones y una moza de mesón recuerda a los espectadores las reglas de cómo continuar adelante con este ‘juego’ dramático.

Cada espectador se dispone, entonces, a seguir la trama de una de las escenas que acaba de contemplar. El público se dispersa y escoge al personaje o conjunto de personajes que más le interese, siguiéndole/s hasta una de las cinco estancias de la Sociedad Cervantina, ambientadas para que se retome, en cada una de ellas, las historias interrumpidas:

- “La guarida de la hampa” => planta baja (sala del fondo)
- “El timo del tapete” => planta baja (sala central)
- “La plaza de la villa” => patio exterior
- “La dama encendida” => planta superior
- “El rincón maldito” => sótano

Depende enteramente del espectador, si éste decide adentrarse en una sola trama, moverse entre los múltiples espacios o seguir a un personaje en específico mientras el nudo de estos relatos se desarrolla durante los siguientes treinta minutos. Final-

mente, todos los protagonistas van volviendo a la plaza donde cada una de las historias continúa— lugar en el que se dio comienzo la representación. No obstante, al final de la función, ninguna de las tramas se resuelve por completo, algunas quedan más avanzadas que otras pero el propósito de la directora es el de ofrecernos un *teaser* cervantino que durante una hora y media nos acerca a los temas, tramas, personajes y fragmentos de los textos más significativos del manco de Lepanto. De tal manera se nos invita a dar rienda suelta a nuestra imaginación, como explica Sebastián en la página web dedicada al montaje del Teatro de Cámara Cervantes:

En *El imaginario de Cervantes* hemos dado un paso más. Con la única idea de crear un nuevo concepto teatral vivo, dinámico y divertido, nace este espectáculo en el se invierten los papeles: el público escribe su propia función. Como directora planteo un principio y un final para actores y público en la plaza de una villa del Siglo XVII. Allí nos encontramos con 15 personajes de Cervantes que vuelven a la vida para contar su historia. A partir de ahí la libertad de movimiento del público es total.
(http://www.tccervantes.com/tagged/imaginario_de_cervantes)

En teoría se trata de una brillante y experimental idea que permite adentrar al espectador con-

temporáneo en el complejo universo de Cervantes y hacerle ‘degustar’ parte de su producción literaria desde un prisma vanguardista, como muy acertadamente afirmaba Luis María Ansón en su crítica del espectáculo para el periódico *El Mundo*: “El delirio teatral, en fin, la explosión máxima de la última vanguardia, el aquelarre de una parte de la nueva juventud hedonista y bisexual, noche roja de Nosferatu y Nieva con tembladera virginal” (09/2010). Sin embargo, en mi opinión, la representación no resulta del todo coherente ni cohesiva. El público, deseoso de ver lo que ocurre en los distintos espacios, deambula por las salas sin adentrarse en una trama en particular, lo que resulta en una serie de escenas que se suceden sin conexión y de manera un tanto superficial sin que se consiga una verdadera profundización en ninguna de ellas. La totalidad de esta puesta en escena casi se podría definir como un museo cervantino viviente, en el que el espectador tiene la oportunidad de ir de sala en sala descubriendo a aquellos personajes y tramas de Cervantes, sin que por ello se consiga llegar a una verdadera obra o unidad dramática.

LA VIUDA VALENCIANA DE LOPE DE VEGA. DIR. CARLOS SEDES. ADAP. EMILIO HERNÁNDEZ. TELEVISIÓN ESPAÑOLA. ESTUDIO 1. 28 DE DICIEMBRE DEL 2010.

ESTHER FERNÁNDEZ
Cornell University



Con esta viñeta cómica, el periódico *ABC* agradecía a Televisión Española la reposición en alta definición —el 28 de diciembre del 2010— de

Estudio 1, uno de los programas dramáticos de mayor éxito de la historia de la televisión y que desde la década de los sesenta logró audiencias millonarias en España. Dicho programa comenzó a emitirse en 1965 y se mantuvo durante veinte años en la programación de manera ininterrumpida, ofreciendo representaciones televisadas de los grandes títulos del teatro universal, entre los que figuraron un amplio catálogo de obras del Siglo de Oro, todas ellas dirigidas por profesionales de la talla de Alberto González Vergel, Eugenio García Toledano, Cayetano Luca de Tena, Mario Camus, José Luís Tafur o José Antonio Páramo, entre otros. El objetivo inicial de *Estudio 1* fue el de acercar el teatro a los hogares españoles aprovechando el alcance de la televisión como instrumento educativo y cultural. No obstante, en 1985 el programa sufrió una interrupción de quince años y no fue hasta el 2000 que volvió a emitirse una vez al trimestre y “adaptado al siglo XXI,” según recientes declaraciones de Pepe Roca—máximo responsable de Culturales, canal dedicado a la cultura—.

La viuda valenciana es la obra elegida por el director Carlos Sedes para inaugurar un nuevo ciclo del programa que ha comenzado a finales del 2010. Aunque en 1975 Eugenio García Toledo ya dirigió una versión de esta misma obra, también para *Estudio 1*, Sedes, por su parte, seducido por el atrevido papel que Lope de Vega le otorga a la mujer en la comedia, vuelve a dirigirla treinta y cinco años más tarde con actores tan reconocidos como Aitana

Sánchez Gijón (Leonarda) o Fran Perea (Camilo). Escrita alrededor de 1600, *La viuda valenciana* narra los ingeniosos enredos eróticos trazados por una joven viuda, Leonarda, quien repentinamente se encapricha de un galán, Camilo y se propone gozarle sin que ello la comprometa social o personalmente. La adaptación textual de la versión que nos ocupa, a cargo de Emilio Hernández, enfatiza todavía más el protagonismo femenino al dotar aquellas escenas claves para la caracterización de la protagonista de una irreverente y contemporánea comicidad y sensualidad que las acerca al espectador actual.

Al tratarse de una puesta en escena en un plató de televisión, existen algunos elementos a considerar, teniendo en cuenta los parámetros del teatro filmado y de la pequeña pantalla. El decorado del montaje, por ejemplo, deja explícito que se trata de una grabación en un plató de fondo negro dividido en tres espacios consecutivos: las estancias de Leonarda, un camino, y un mercadillo/taberna. El aposento de la protagonista queda delimitado espacialmente por un suelo de mosaico, una alfombra persa y una selección de muebles básicos de época, tales como una cama con dintel o un estrado, cuyo propósito es el de acercar al espectador a la intimidad de la protagonista. La chimenea es quizás el elemento más significativo de este insinuante decorado interior por la iluminación claro-oscuro que caracteriza la estética de la representación de principio a fin. Por otra parte, el camino de tierra limita las estancias de la protagonista y tiene la función de

subrayar los desplazamientos nocturnos de Camilo, claves en el plan que urde Leonarda para gozar en secreto del galán. Finalmente, el mercado y la taberna contextualizan aquellas escenas exteriores que se desarrollan en espacios públicos y que contribuyen a profundizar en la ambientación de época del montaje.

La música, a manos de la orquesta de cámara de Andrés Segovia y del compositor Juan Antonio Bardem, logra integrar al espectador en lo que está viendo, al marcar el diálogo de los personajes y el ambiente de las distintas escenas que van desde los encuentros íntimos entre los amantes, acompañados por la viola de gamba hasta animadas escenas callejeras durante los carnavales que requieren una música de pasacalles, propia de tales festividades.

El vestuario, al igual que el decorado, sigue una estética clásica y, en relación a Leonarda, enfatiza su sensualidad y rigidez, una dualidad clave en la caracterización de una protagonista que se debate constantemente entre guardar las estrictas apariencias sociales y disfrutar plenamente de su libertad sexual en secreto. El traje que viste Leonarda en aquellas escenas que tienen lugar en el exterior es un encorsetado vestido negro, mientras que en aquellas que se desarrollan en la intimidad de su hogar, la protagonista luce ya sea un vistoso y escotado vestido blanco o una vaporosa camisa clara de época—esta última en las secuencias con una inminente carga erótica.

El erotismo es, en efecto, uno de los aspectos más importantes de la obra y que mejor ha sabido captar su director en esta adaptación. La iluminación ha tenido un papel crucial en crear espacios de cálida penumbra que perfilan con elegancia y a contra-luz los desnudos de los amantes durante sus encuentros más íntimos. La puesta en escena deja clara la relación sexual que ambos mantienen a través de toda una serie de escenas cargadas de una sensualidad implícita pero lo suficientemente sugestivas para que resulten realistas y sugerentes a un espectador contemporáneo. La caracterización transgresora de la protagonista contribuye a este erotismo patente desde la primera escena con la que se abre la representación y, en la que la vemos sumergida en una bañera con pétalos de rosa mientras lee desganada a Fray Luis, libro que terminará arrojando al agua con despecho. De manera paralela, en la última escena, la protagonista, junto a Camilo, cerrará la comedia desde su cama, tapada únicamente por una sábana mientras corre sugerentemente las cortinas del dintel para volver a la intimidad con su recién prometido amante.

En definitiva, el montaje de *Sedes para Estudio 1* refleja una puesta en escena que ha sabido aprovechar, al máximo, las ventajas técnicas de la pequeña pantalla para subrayar la voluptuosa sensualidad en esta comedia, única en su manera de ser escenificada dentro del repertorio clásico español. La representación del erotismo que logra la versión de *Sedes* combina con eficacia, oscuridad y sexuali-

dad, dos aspectos claves en la trama que resultan muy difíciles de ser transmitidos desde la escena por las limitaciones físicas del medio teatral y corren el riesgo de perderse en muchas de las adaptaciones.

***EL MÉDICO DE SU HONRA.* BY CALDERÓN DE LA BARCA. DIR. JAVIER ANTONIO GONZÁLEZ. REPERTORIO ESPAÑOL, NEW YORK, NY. 16 JUNE 2011. (PLAY'S RUN: 16-26 JUNE 2011)**

***LA DAMA DUENDE.* BY CALDERÓN DE LA BARCA. DIR. JULIÁN MESRI. REPERTORIO ESPAÑOL, NEW YORK, NY. 7 JULY 2011. (PLAY'S RUN: 7-17 JULY 2011)**

***LA DISCRETA ENAMORADA.* BY LOPE DE VEGA. DIR. GAMALIEL VALLE ROSA. REPERTORIO ESPAÑOL, NEW YORK, NY. 28 JUNE 2011. (PLAY'S RUN: 21-31 JULY 2011)**

***TRES OBRAS CORTAS DEL SIGLO DE ORO.* DIR. ANDRÉS ZAMBRANO. (*EL RETABLO DE LAS MARAVILLAS.* BY MIGUEL DE CERVANTES. *LAS VISIONES DE LA MUERTE.* BY CALDERÓN DE LA BARCA. *LAS CORTES DE LA MUERTE.* BY LOPE DE VEGA.) REPERTORIO ESPAÑOL, NEW YORK, NY. 4 SEPTEMBER 2011. (PLAY'S RUN: 25 AUGUST-4 SEPTEMBER 2011)**

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The Van Lier Directing Fellowship brought a much-anticipated season of Golden Age plays to New York audiences this past summer. The New York Community Trust awarded grants to four young directors to stage a play of their choosing by a Golden Age playwright at New York City's Repertorio Español. Audiences enjoyed three *comedias* (Calderón's *El médico de su honra* directed by Javier Antonio González, Calderón's *La dama duende* directed by Julián Mesri, and Lope's *La discreta enamorada* directed by Gamaliel Valle Rosa) and an evening entitled *Tres obras cortas del Siglo de Oro* directed by Andrés Zambrano (which included Cervantes's *entremés* *El retablo de las maravillas*, *Las visiones de la muerte*, a *mojiganga* by Calderón, and an *auto sacramental* by Lope, *Las cortes de la muerte*). None of the directors had ever staged a Golden Age play before, though each provided some fresh, if at times controversial, perspectives.

González's *El médico de su honra* is a good example of some of the unevenness of interpretation throughout the series. The production certainly demonstrates the skill of the director in the management of space, actors and design. All characters except Gutierre and King Pedro are deftly double cast, reducing the number of actors to six. Each actress portrays both a *dama* and the *criada* of the other *dama*. Marcos Toledo, who portrays Coquín, the *gracioso*, also plays don Arias, while Jorge Luna doubles as Enrique and Ludovico, the

bloodletter. The lines of minor characters, such as don Diego and Teodora, are cut or fused into the roles of don Arias and Jacinta. Confusion is avoided through small, interchangeable costume accessories including hats and flowers. For example, Yaremis Félix wears a pointed dunce cap as Jacinta and switches to a purple floral headband in the role of Leonor. Similarly, as don Arias, Marcos Toledo wears a floral boutonniere but switches to a dunce cap for his role as the *gracioso*, Coquín.



Yaremis Félix as Jacinta (dunce cap). Photo Michael José Palma.



Yaremis Félix as Leonor. Photo Michael José Palma.

Jian Jung's scenery is pared down to four translucent shower curtains hanging at different angles several inches above the level of the stage. Actors enter and exit by rolling underneath them when scenes open or close with the characters in bed. On the floor, a detective-style body outline ominously foreshadows the play's denouement. Tim Cryan's lighting design takes advantage of the translucency of the shower curtains, sometimes highlighting, and sometimes concealing, characters behind them. This technique is especially effective in the two scenes in which Leonor and Gutierre take their turns hiding in the King's chambers. With the characters lit from behind, the curtains create the effect of a

visual *aparte* in which the audience is aware of the hidden character's presence while characters on stage are not. The curtains also play a central role in Mencía's murder, as the "house" is marked with the famous "bloody handprint" by pouring fake blood on the *back* of the curtain. Finally, it is transformed into a sort of modern, plastic body bag as Mencía's body is rolled up in the bloody shower curtain and left onstage throughout the departure of the audience.



Tania Molina as Mencía and Jorge Luna as Enrique. Photo by Michael José Palma.

In spite of the arresting stagecraft, however, this *El médico* weaves its own demise in its attempt to unravel the ambiguities of Calderón's text. Critics have long debated Mencía's innocence or guilt based on textual and historical clues. However, in performance, Mencía's verbal and written rejections

of Enrique are necessarily supported, or subverted, by body language, gesture, and facial expressions. That is to say that her actions speak louder than words, and in González's production of *El médico*, Mencía's behavior decidedly belies what she actually says.

The physical contact alone between Mencía and Enrique in this production is enough to dispel any doubt that Gutierre's jealousy is justified. However, this type of directorial clarification only serves to complicate other elements of the plot. If Mencía is guilty, and if Enrique's departure publicly discloses his relationship with her, then Gutierre's failure to carry out the honor killing himself only undermines his own honor. It is only in ambiguity, in the *appearance* of dishonor, that the "accidental" bloodletting reveals Gutierre's ability to leverage the honor code to his advantage. And, in the end, he does get what he wants: the hand of his first love, as well as her obedience through the proof of his actions. In an interview prior to the opening of the production on NY1 Noticias.com, González commented on the theme of jealousy in the play:

"Los celos es algo que yo no comprendo y a mí me interesa mucho siempre explorar lo que no entiendo, o lo que es inexplicable. El crimen para mí es inexplicable, la guerra es inexplicable, y en este caso, los celos que llevan a un crimen me parece una acción ridícula..."

In this production, Gutierre's jealousy is only understood in terms of Gutierre as a victim of Mencía's betrayal, which, unfortunately in this case, undermines the complexities of Calderón's wonderfully ambiguous and controversial text.

Mesri's *La dama duende* demonstrates a much more subtle understanding of the Spanish honor code as well as of the *jongleuresque* environment (to borrow Burningham's term) of the Spanish *comedia*. Prior to curtain, Mariana Buoninconti as the meddling *criada* Isabel, interacts with audience members as she vacuums around their feet. Mixing cheerful mouthfuls of Spanish ("¿Está limpio por allí?") and English ("How are you?"), Buninconti sets the tone for a shared comedic experience. For haven't we all crooned a good "Bésame mucho" while doing housework?

As with the majority of these Van Lier productions, costuming makes use of low-cost, ready-to-wear fashion to distinguish between the upper and lower classes. In the case of Mesri's and María Viteri's costume design for *La dama duende*, nobles sport preppy Izod polo shirts and sunglasses, and are girded with croquet mallets instead of swords. Leni Méndez crafts a simple, flexible, and comic set design that is likewise economical and contemporary. The outside of don Juan's house is suburbanized with a shin-high, white picket fence and a carpet of bright green Astroturf (on which the croquet mallets are put to good use). Angela's secret bedroom is created by a wheeled armoire that spins, Mel

Brooks-like, to reveal the secret passageway into don Manuel's guest room.



Alfredo Tauste as don Juan, Eric Robledo as don Manuel, and Gerardo Gudiño as don Luis. Photo by Michael José Palma.
Soraya Padrao as Ángela, Mariana Buoninconti as Isabel and Eric Robledo as don Manuel. Photo by Michael José Palma.

Further connections are made with the modern audience through additional insertions of contemporary music throughout, including don Juan's Elvis-esque declaration of his love for Beatriz and her tango rejection.

In spite of the comic nature of Calderón's play, honor conflicts and their consequences can be, of course, potentially devastating. Mesri's Ángela handles her predicament with the utmost care, especially in the climactic scenes in don Manuel's room. A flowing, white chiffon *manta* covers Ángela's body as she slips through the secret passageway which serves multiple dramatic purposes. The *manta* at once conceals Ángela's identity and adds to the impression of ghostliness. The *manta* also protects Ángela's honor as hands held through the fabric never actually touch.

Most impressively, Mesri plays beautifully with *comedia* staging conventions both in the presentation of letters and in the staging of ghosts. While Ángela's elusiveness perpetuates don Manuel's impression of Ángela as a *duende* in Calderón's text, eerie vocalizations, as in *El burlador de Sevilla*, can also indicate the presence of ghosts on the *comedia* stage. Mesri ingeniously reaps double the dramatic (and comic) effect by frightening the *gracioso* Cosme with the sound of Ángela's voice reading her letters aloud to don Manuel.

Performances throughout are excellent, especially by Buoninconti and Soraya Padrao as doña Ángela.



Soraya Padrao as Ángela. Photo by Michael José Palma.

Gamaliel Valle Rosa's rendering of Lope's *La discreta enamorada* is lively, colorful, and highly entertaining from beginning to end. The talented cast, comprising both newcomers and seasoned veterans, maintains a rapid pace and high energy while delivering Lope's verses effortlessly, with great fluidity.



Malena Ramírez as Gerarda, Ignacio García Bustelo as Lucindo and Julio Ortega as Hernando. Photo by Michael José Palma.

Much of the color and energy of this production results from the 1950s Latin aesthetic Valle Rosa uses to adorn this classic. Lively 50s salsa music – mambos, rumbas, and cha-cha-chas in the orchestral style of Tito Puente and Celia Cruz – pulsates between scenes, providing upbeat, crisp transitions. The costumes are generally bright and varied: the men wear khakis, sleeveless t-shirts, suspenders, and occasionally sunglasses; the women don 50s-style dresses in pastels or floral patterns. Wardrobe

supports character nicely, especially in the case of the female rivals: Fenisa indeed appears discrete, smart, and elegant in three different swing-skirt style dresses in classic white, green, and light blue, complete with heels and gloves, while the sultry and passionate Gerarda appears every bit the temptress in tight-fitting, sleeveless, pencil-style party dresses in green or flowered designs, and in the satin robe she wears in the first act when she appears at her balcony to ignite Doristeo's passion. In short, Fenisa's neat, pristine "Sandra Dee" character contrasts sharply with the sexy, voluptuous "Rizzo" of Gerarda. Belisa's mourning outfit – a black shawl over a gray dress – and Captain Bernardo's military uniform make up the darker end of the costume palette.

Ladders at stage left and right are used to represent doorways to residences, while also providing for stage pictures with actors at varied levels. Red and green frames hung above each ladder suggest windows or balconies from which the *damas* speak to the *galanes*. The actors utilize the minimalist set quite well, convincingly selling each space as doorway, balcony, or window according to the needs of each scene.

All of the actors turn in strong performances. Soraya Padrao's Fenisa above all carries the show; she seems perfectly cast as the quick-thinking, ever-resourceful Fenisa. Her scenes with veteran actress Inma Heredia as the widow Belisa are particularly well-paced and capture to great

comic effect the stubborn battle of wills so common in the mother-daughter relationship. Heredia's seasoned and mature performance brings to mind the presence, poise, and timing of Carmen Maura in some of her best film roles. Malena Ramírez as Gerarda, Gerardo Gudiño as Capitán Bernardo and Julio Ortega as the *gracioso* Hernando tickle the audience with comic relief both physical and verbal.



Soraya Padrao as Fenisa and Ignacio García Bustelo as Lucindo. Photo by Michael José Palma.

Valle Rosa assesses his cast quite accurately in his program notes when he describes it as “un elenco muscular que ha tomado la picardía del texto a niveles que coquetean con la farsa pero que aun contienen un fuerte contenido emocional.” He recognizes that his actors freely explore the latent sexuality of Lope’s characters. These reviewers would add that they do so to the delight of the audience, which appeared to enjoy thoroughly the bawdy second act scene that takes place in the *Prado* wherein Doristeo (Mauricio Pita) and Gerarda grope one another on the ground, driving the spying Lucindo (Ignacio García Bustelo) crazy with jealousy. Though the audience may have approved, here farce overshadows what could have been a poetic moment in the action: Lucindo’s wonderful sonnet on the nature of jealousy is entirely buried under a tumult of laughter as the audience reacts to the couple’s athletic sexual play and Hernando’s attempts to don women’s clothes. The final scene is also quite farcical, as the characters emerge from Belisa’s house in various stages of undress, the old Captain presenting the most humorous picture in his underwear with his pants around his ankles, awkwardly trying to run away from the alleged fire.

The near-sellout crowd appeared thrilled and delighted with Valle Rosa’s production. The director is to be commended for knowing his audience so well (he also directed a show in the 2010 Van Lier series) and for bringing out the best in his talented cast.

Andrés Zambrano's *Tres obras cortas del Siglo de Oro* is challenging for audiences and controversial for those familiar with the three short dramatic works. The title might seem to suggest that the works are presented as three separate entities, but they are linked by a common locale, and share themes and elements such as death, shifting perspectives, and imagination and dreams in conflict with "reality." The curtain rises on what appears to be a dimly lit bar or nightclub, with a sign, "Siglo de Oro" visible at the rear of the stage; a musician (Rabelín in *Retablo*, played by Julián Mesri) plays a keyboard upstage right. Throughout the play, Mesri provides dramatic underscoring and sings well-known Latin American folk songs between pieces. The songs, thematically linked to the short works, include "Canción para mi muerte" by the Argentine 70s group Sui Generis, Silvio Rodríguez's "Locuras," and "Zamba para no morir" by Argentine songwriter Hamlet Lima Quintana; Mesri renders them beautifully, with great feeling. Bar "Siglo de Oro" provides the space where *El retablo* is performed (Juan Castrado's house in the original), where the theater company in *Visiones de la muerte* rehearses before leaving for their next show, and where the allegorical figures in *Las cortes de la muerte* put Man on trial.

The company performs the first segment, *El retablo de las maravillas*, at a brisk, lively pace. In their brief scene together, Alicia Lobos plays a flirtatious Chirinos while Daniel Ojeda Astigarraga's

gobernador seems to have more than just poetry on his mind in his exchanges with her. The actors all work in synch with one another in reaction to each of the illusions supposedly appearing on the *retablo*; notable here is the energy and animation of Mario Mattei as Chanfalla. Alfredo Tauste portrays both Pedro Capacho and Juan Castrado, and is quite successful at physically distinguishing between the two and playing each fool for great laughs. The *retablo* segment ends, however, on a somewhat disturbing note as the Furrier (Gerardo Gudiño) draws a gun and kills everyone except Capacho, Chirinos, and Chanfalla. We of course expect to see general mayhem and comic fighting here, but the killings seem incongruous and dampen the comic mood.



Mario Mattei as Chanfalla in *El retablo de las maravillas*.
Photo by Michael José Palma.

Zambrano changes the pace and mood for the second segment, Calderón's *Visiones de la muerte*. The actors move slowly, as if in a trance, effecting a less realistic, more conceptual style; they are posed like statues at the beginning of the piece. The director utilizes some interesting intertextual play when he has the actress playing *Cuerpo* (Lobo), as part of the traveling theater troupe's rehearsal, recite quite movingly Segismundo's famous soliloquy from the end of act two of *La vida es sueño*. Surprisingly, at the conclusion of the speech, the actress drops character, remarks, "¡Vaya monólogo!" and marches offstage in annoyance. Zambrano chooses to present the rest of the piece in a unique and interesting way. *Mojigangas* are usually lighthearted, comical, carnivalesque pieces sprinkled with singing and dancing, and Calderón writes his piece in this vein. The wagon in which the members of an acting troupe are traveling turns over, and the actors, dressed in their allegorical costumes as an angel, devil, death, body, etc., confusedly call for help, try to aid one another, and blame the driver's drunkenness for the accident. The humor in the original derives from the fact that the *caminante*, a fool to begin with and further disoriented by wine and sleep, is unaware that they are actors and fearfully thinks he is being pursued and haunted by death, the devil and the others. Zambrano, however, presents the action as a nightmarish vision, as if seen through the terrified eyes of the *caminante*. The actors all appear broken or

mutilated, speak in other-worldly voices, and seem to stalk the *caminante* like zombies. The underscoring and tone are dark and menacing; the pace, especially compared to the energy of the opening *entremés*, seems to lag somewhat.

Set back in the Bar Siglo de Oro, the final piece, Lope's *Las cortes de la muerte*, is fittingly preceded by Mesri singing "Zamba para no morir," which was purportedly a favorite of Che Guevara, who often requested it be sung for fallen comrades. *Tiempo*, *Muerte*, *Pecado*, *Locura*, and *Amor* here resemble, respectively, a loud-mouthed bar owner, a pimp, a prostitute, a stand-up comic, and a drag queen. They await their next "victim," as the director explains in his program notes, and when *Hombre* arrives they tie him to a chair and put him on trial, like betrayed mobsters interrogating a nark. This seedy and ironic twist on the auto-sacramental, while shocking, works surprisingly well, giving the abstract entities and debate a concrete, cohesive context. Tauste, as *Hombre*, is impressive, delivering a taut and tense yet poetic monologue filled with metaphors describing life and death, salvation and damnation. The desperation in his voice increases as he senses his own death approaching. The conclusion is perhaps the most shocking revision of Lope's *auto*: instead of man being saved by God (*Niño Dios* in the original), God never appears. Zambrano gives some of the lines with which, in the original, God condemns the *cabritos negros*, to *Muerte*, who utters them to *Hombre*, condemning

him to eternal damnation: “No me cubristeis desnudo / y no me visteis siquiera / una vez, preso y enfermo, / y así, mi justicia eterna / en el monte de mi cielo / a eterno fuego os sentencia.” With these words, *Muerte* walks away, leaving a panicky *Hombre*, feet poised precariously on the edge of the stage, as if on a ledge, contemplating his death, and all fades to black.



Mariana Buoninconti as *Pecado*, Daniel Ojeda Astigarraga as *Muerte* and Mario Mattei as *Tiempo* in *Las cortes de la muerte*. Photo by Michael José Palma.

The spectator is left with a feeling somewhere between shock at Zambrano's bold manner of turning these classic works on their heads and

admiration at his courage and creativity in seeing them from a different angle. The director's vision is certainly dark, cynical, and pessimistic, and his style recalls the theater of the absurd and existential theater. He reads these works against the grain, ironically altering the contexts of the originals, and presenting an unforgiving world in which humankind has long since left innocence behind and harbors little hope for moral redemption. It is not, however, a desire to protest against Golden Age aesthetics that motivates Zambrano; rather, it seems that the director favors a conceptual brand of theater that explores matters of life, death, and being, and he has molded these classical materials to express his vision. Zambrano furthermore clearly respects, reveres, and celebrates the language of Cervantes, Calderón, and Lope. He and his cast revel in the power, transcendence, and poetry of their verses, which, even in these dark places, ring poignantly in protest of our human limitations.

DE FUENTE OVEJUNA A CIUDAD JUÁREZ, A PARTIR DEL TEXTO DE LOPE DE VEGA. DIR. LUCÍA RODRÍGUEZ MIRANDA, ADAP. SERGIO ADILLO. THE CROSS BORDER PROJECT, CLÁSICOS EN ALCALÁ, 2 DE JULIO DE 2011. (GIRA POR ESPAÑA: FESTIVAL DE TEATRO CLÁSICO DE CÁCERES, 25 DE JUNIO; TEATRO ZORRILLA DE VALLADOLID, 28 Y 29 DE JUNIO; CLÁSICOS EN ALCALÁ, 2 Y 3 DE JULIO; SALA TRIÁNGULO DE MADRID, 9 Y 10 DE JULIO; UNIVERSIDAD DE ANDALUCÍA, BAEZA, 12 DE JULIO; CERTAMEN INTERNACIONAL ALMAGRO OFF, 19 DE JULIO)

GUILLERMO GÓMEZ SÁNCHEZ-FERRER
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La compañía The Cross Border Project ha pasado por España, aprovechando la ebullición veraniega de los festivales de teatro, con ánimo de hacer honor a su nombre para mostrar al público de la patria de Lope de Vega su punto de vista sobre la realidad de su (y nuestro) tiempo y su manera de hacer teatro. Lo que empezó siendo un taller de prácticas y un

punto de encuentro para un grupo de profesionales de las artes escénicas que fueron a dar en Nueva York por diferentes razones, inmersos en esa ‘ciudad sin sueño’ lorquiana y alejados de su espacio habitual, ha resultado ser una de las más agradables sorpresas de la temporada teatral.

Esta nueva *Fuenteovejuna*, fruto de la colaboración entre Sergio Adillo (dramaturgo y actor de la función) y Lucía Rodríguez Miranda (directora del espectáculo), se puede definir, en palabras de esta última, “como un proyecto pedagógico para adultos acompañado de una serie de propuestas educativas que permiten percibir desde distintos ángulos la problemática de los feminicidios de Ciudad Juárez.” El montaje retrata muy directamente la violencia de la vida en la frontera mejicana y lo que en origen podría haber sido simplemente una versión modernizada de la *Fuenteovejuna* lopesca se ha convertido en algo todavía mayor con su proyección internacional, se ha convertido en un grito para despertar la conciencia que nos lleva *De Fuenteovejuna a Ciudad Juárez* y que confunde a propósito realidad y ficción en busca de una *anagnórisis* colectiva que sacuda al espectador, con imágenes de plasticidad casi sangrante y símbolos que destilan un lirismo propio de las mejores tragedias.

La propuesta de The Cross Border enlaza con la tradición escénica de la creación colectiva y del teatro denuncia —e incluso el teatro documento— a partes iguales y plantea un juego metateatral en el que se sumerge al espectador según llega al recinto

de la función y se siente rodeado por murmullos – que luego serán voces y, a poco que se les preste atención, voces de mujeres asesinadas en Ciudad Juárez–, creando un clima de tensión que sólo parece romperse cuando la acción da comienzo después del canto de las ‘Women of Juárez,’ que en boca de Melinna Bobadilla adquiere una fiereza inusual. La calma dura poco (apenas una hora y media) porque el final de la función está marcado por la vuelta más cruda y angustiosa a la realidad de la frontera. Lo que queda cuando se hace la luz en el patio de butacas, después de que los actores se hagan a un lado sin siquiera saludar al público, son sólo los nombres que hay detrás de esos más de mil asesinatos (probablemente muchos más) cometidos en torno a la maquila.



Sergio Adillo y Shae Fiol, una de las mariachis, en un momento de la representación durante el festival Clásicos en Alcalá. Foto cedida al grupo por Cecilia Vallejo.

Todo ello está contado desde el punto de vista de Lope de Vega: el despotismo de un traficante de drogas con las maquiladoras son los abusos del Comendador con Laurencia, rancheras y corridos forman parte de la música que suena durante la función, al público se le invita a brindar con chupitos de tequila durante la boda de Laurencia y Frondoso, el discurso de Felipe Calderón sobre seguridad y víctimas de la violencia sustituye la presencia final del rey y, como toque de gracia, el pueblo se levanta victorioso sobre el tirano en un cuadro lleno de movimiento escénico y de justicia poética. A pesar de que la comedia del Fénix se ha visto considerablemente adelgazada para adaptarse a su nuevo contexto, lo cierto es que la función guarda un equilibrio armónico entre el espíritu de la obra y la sociedad contemporánea que la rodea en la puesta en escena, como si la realidad de nuestros días estuviese dando un abrazo a los personajes de Lope en el que ambos círculos pueden convivir paralelamente. Poco importa que el Comendador cace con ‘balles-ta’ o con ‘escopeta’ o que los villanos en vez de ceñirse ‘estoques’ lleven ‘revólver,’ pues lo cierto es que en poco más está alterado el texto áureo para acercarlo al público de nuestro siglo. El montaje del Cross Border Project ha sido capaz de modernizar la obra sin caer en las incoherencias que, a la vista de tantos otros espectáculos (*Fuenteovejunas* de ambiente caribeño incluidas), parecen insalvables siempre que un director quiere trastocarle tiempo y espacio al dramaturgo, bien que ello se ha conse-

guido a base de entresacar de la obra de Lope episodios secundarios y de reducir su argumento.

Con una escenografía muy sobria (tres bancos, varias picas de madera y un cielo de zapatos son todas las herramientas que directora y actores tienen a su disposición para poner en pie la lucha de Laurencia), el montaje adquiere fuerza gracias al valor del objeto simbólico con función didáctica y del uso del texto de Lope en concepto de parábola moderna. Aunque con ciertas irregularidades interpretativas, es el actor el gran protagonista de esta puesta en escena, teñida de luces tenues. Son ellos quienes dan nueva vida al texto de Lope gracias a un trabajo actoral de investigación que forja una estética común a la hora de representar, sobreponiéndose a la disparidad de acentos (de españoles, mejicanos, ecuatorianos, colombianos y estadounidenses) y de formaciones de los componentes de la compañía.

El carácter intercultural de la función resulta todavía más patente con la presencia del trío Mariachi Flor de Toloache, que es testigo de la acción y hace partícipe al público de la sentimentalidad que destila el amor de Laurencia y Frondoso con un repertorio que abarca desde 'El rey' hasta Cyndi Lauper. La integración de música y acción alcanza su momento álgido durante la pequeña *performance* que tiene lugar después de haberse cometido la violación de Laurencia, cuando las actrices del montaje maquillan –literalmente– sus heridas en un mimosdrama que representa la cara más íntima de las mu-

jeros maltratadas mientras de fondo se oye a las mariachis diciendo aquello de: “yo soy como el chile verde, Llorona, picante pero sabroso.” Todo ello apuntala un cuadro que contiene las que son posiblemente las imágenes más poéticas del montaje, en donde se condensa la dicotomía dominación-sumisión sobre la que se construye el espectáculo desde una estética y una fisicidad muy próximas a las del teatro del oprimido de Augusto Boal.

La magia del teatro, la fuerza de la juventud y el mestizaje de un proyecto que nace con el objetivo expreso de tratar temas de relevancia social y política trascendiendo fronteras ha dejado, sin duda, uno de los Lopes más interesantes del año. Un espectáculo dirigido con sutileza y contado más desde el impacto de la imagen y del trasfondo real que desde las propias palabras del Fénix de los Ingenios. Aunque con algunos aspectos mejorables, lo cierto es que los espectadores de los festivales españoles veraniegos hemos podido disfrutar de una trasposición de la *Fuenteovejuna* clásica muy pertinente, carente de contradicciones internas en su modernización y llena de la vitalidad contagiosa del teatro. A Lucía Rodríguez Miranda aún le queda camino por recorrer al frente de The Cross Border Project, no nos cabe duda, y tampoco dudamos que el espíritu de lo que ha creado con ellos todavía tiene que llegar a más gente. Utilizando la divisa que aparece en todo lo relacionado con esta obra –los zapatos– y parafraseando una canción de Nancy Sinatra que parece haber formado parte también de la vida del

grupo, sabemos que las botas que se han calzado para hablar de Laurencia y de Frondoso, del Comendador y de Ciudad Juárez, les harán andar en nuevas direcciones y con nuevos proyectos que estamos deseando ver.



Cartel utilizado para la gira por España

EL CASTIGO SIN VENGANZA. BY LOPE DE VEGA. DIR. ERNESTO ARIAS. LA COMPAÑÍA RAKATÁ. TEATRO ALCÁZAR, MADRID, SPAIN. 20 JULY 2011. (RUN 6 JUL. - 4 SEP. 2011)

CHARLES PATTERSON
Stephen F. Austin State University

The illustration for this production's publicity and playbill is a photograph of the Duque embracing Cassandra in the moment before he drags her offstage to bind her and have her killed. The photograph itself, seen out of context, is ambiguous because the embrace appears to be both loving and violent. The graphic designer enhanced this ambiguity by blurring sections of the photograph and leaving others in focus. In the same way that this photograph conveys the impossibility of seeing and judging a situation in its entirety, the production emphasizes this theme in Lope's play. As the playbill asks rhetorically, "¿Quién se atrevería a juzgar cuál es la manera correcta de proceder ante esa situación?" Several artistic choices in the production reinforce this idea of moral ambiguity.

The costume design reflects a temporal ambiguity that echoes and universalizes the theme. There does not seem to be any effort to accurately recreate the dress of any particular time period, but rather to give the general impression of historicity. For example, the caps and capes worn by the men seem reminiscent of the sixteenth century, but the pants and footwear seem more appropriate to the nineteenth century. The effect is to give a sense of universality and ambiguity. Another interesting choice is that of Cassandra's costume when she first appears on stage having been rescued from the river by Federico. She is dressed only in a long undershirt, making it impossible to determine her identity or social class. To an audience unfamiliar with the play, and to Federico himself, it comes as a complete surprise when she reveals her identity. In addition, the undershirt is soaked in water, making it semitransparent and heightening the scene's intense eroticism. The partial revealing of her naked figure through the nightgown also undermines the ensuing conversation, in which Federico claims to be born again as her child. It is the *child* who should come naked into the world, not the mother, yet Federico remains fully dressed.

This production's set design also contributes to the sense of ambiguity, as well as providing interesting possibilities for recreating on a conventional stage scenes intended for a *corral de comedias*. The stage is decorated with what look like tree trunks spaced at regular intervals. For the

outdoor scenes, they look like trees, but for the indoor scenes they easily pass as columns in the ducal palace. In the same way that the play casts doubt on the possibility of telling right from wrong, the set design causes the audience to question the difference between inside and outside space. The trees also provide hiding places from which characters can deliver their asides or eavesdrop on one another. Another element of set design is the use of transparent screens that can be raised or lowered to separate the stage into sections. Their transparency, however, casts doubt on the possibility of truly separating space and action on the stage, reinforcing the theme of moral ambiguity. In addition, the screens provide a discovery space reminiscent of the dressing rooms sometimes used in the *corral*. The climatic revealing of Federico and Cassandra's corpses at the end is particularly moving because the framing provided by the screen gives a chapel-like appearance to the scene. This is enhanced by the fact that Cassandra's hands are raised in cruciform, and Federico's body lies across the bed in a position that reminds one of a pieta. The audience is left with an intense sense of ambiguity as the sinners are depicted as Christ-like victims to the honor code.

A final artistic choice that enhances the sense of ambiguity is the use of loudspeakers to create a cinema-like introductory montage. While Lope's play begins *in medias res*, this production of it begins with an offstage narrator somewhat comi-

cally introducing the characters and situation in a manner reminiscent of some Hollywood movies.



Publicity for Rakata's *El castigo sin venganza*

The contrast between this playful and thoroughly modern introduction and the rest of the tragedy is faithful to Lope's own advocacy of the mixing of genres, and certainly adds to the audience's sense of ambiguity. While this device seems appropriate for a modern audience, it disappointingly meant cutting the Duque's speech comparing the *comedia* to a mirror. This modification is as inex-

cusable as would be cutting the famous "The world is a stage" speech from Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. Perhaps this change was motivated by a desire to downplay the metatheatricality of the work in order to focus more fully on the moral themes.

Aside from this flaw, the performance is superb. The acting is phenomenal and reveals the characters' anguish caused by indecision and ethical entrapment. The lighting effectively communicates the changing moods. The blocking is complex and effective. It is gratifying to see that such high-quality productions are still possible even in a time of economic crisis.

**LOS EMPEÑOS DE UNA CASA. BY SOR
JUANA INÉS DE LA CRUZ. ADAPTED BY
KARMELE ARANBURU AND JUAN POLAN-
CO. DIR. JUAN POLANCO. ACADEMIA DEL
VERSO Y ES.ARTE. ANTIGUA UNIVERSI-
DAD RENACENTISTA, ALMAGRO, SPAIN.
17 JULY 2011.**

CHARLES PATTERSON
Stephen F. Austin State University

Sor Juana consciously played with the theatrical conventions of the Golden Age. In fact, the title of her most famous play, *Los empeños de una casa*, parodies Calderón's own *Los empeños de un acaso*. It is, therefore, fitting that a staging of this work at the annual Festival de Almagro would call attention to the act of making theater. As the director, Juan Polanco, says in the playbill: "no hemos podido resistir la tentación de realizar una puesta en escena metateatral, o sea, fundir en nuestras representaciones el teatro con el teatro" The final product is thoroughly entertaining and modern, while at the same time faithful to Sor Juana's interest in revealing the artistic process.

Although this show previously ran at the Corral de Comedias in Alcalá de Henares, the Antigua Universidad Renacentista in Almagro provides a particularly appropriate space for crossing the boundaries between fiction and reality, and between old and new. It was of course not originally intended for use as a theater and therefore had to be retrofitted for that function. The scaffolding required to support the seating at first seems out of place next to the Gothic arches, but, in conjunction with the play performance's own mixing of old and new costumes and acting styles, the visual discord feels appropriate. The building appears to be undergoing renovation, which couples well with Sor Juana's tendency to reveal the creative process through literature. Finally, the building's floor is dirt, which blurs the boundary between inside and outside space. For example, audience members seeking the restrooms before the show are often surprised to suddenly find themselves outdoors. Polanco's production also blurs the limits between what is "inside" the action of the play and what is not.

A good example of this blurring comes before the show even starts. As is typical at theaters, a recorded voice announces over loudspeakers that the play will begin in five minutes and that the audience should turn off their cell phones. A similar announcement is made at the presumed beginning of the play. But the play does not begin. Instead, the actors run frantically around the stage as if they are not ready yet. Several minutes go by before the rec-

ordered voice testily informs the audience that the play should have already started by now! The actors ask to cancel the performance because they are not prepared, but the voice on the loudspeakers threatens legal action against them if they do not fulfill their contract. This unconventional and highly metatheatrical beginning effectively prepares the audience for numerous reminders of the play's constructedness throughout the performance. For example, the actors not appearing in a given scene sit on the edge of the stage viewing the action and making wardrobe changes in plain sight of the audience. They even sometimes applaud or otherwise intervene in the action, giving the audience a behind-the-scenes view that allows them to see art as a work in progress.

Although this staging's ubiquitous metatheatricity is both effective and appropriate, the handling of the already inherently metadramatic scene in which Castaño cross-dresses is somewhat disappointing. Castaño is the lone character in the scene, but each of the actors sitting on the sides enters briefly to assist him in putting on an article of female attire. Although this is certainly an interesting choice and in keeping with similar devices throughout the performance, its effect is to speed up the scene and distract from the marvelous lines that Sor Juana wrote for it. The actor playing Castaño puts very little emphasis on the lines in which he is to directly address the women in the audience. If he

did so, no other metadramatic device would be necessary.

The acting and verse delivery are somewhat exaggerated, but in a way that is consistent with the director's metatheatrical vision for the production. Each character is portrayed through his or her movements as somewhat shallow and clownish, which is once again a reminder of theater's artificial nature. For example, Ana minces her steps (providing a model for Castaño's performance of gender later) and, at the beginning of each aside, swirls her arms in a childish dance-like motion. Both are unnatural movements that add to the production's conscious artificiality. While the verse delivery is mostly transparent throughout the performance, there are moments when the actors make it opaque by either speaking a long passage quickly without taking a breath, or by creating tension between the words and the action. For example, when Ana tells the audience that she is moved to compassion by Leonor's beauty, her facial expressions and movements communicate the exact opposite. This dramatic irony calls attention to the way the words are written and reminds the audience that the actors are acting a part.

Although the playwright's intentions are not necessarily the yardstick for judging a performance, it is nonetheless gratifying to see a company explore and modernize Sor Juana's own interest in the relationship between fiction and reality. Aranburu and Polanco's adaptation is both complex and playful,

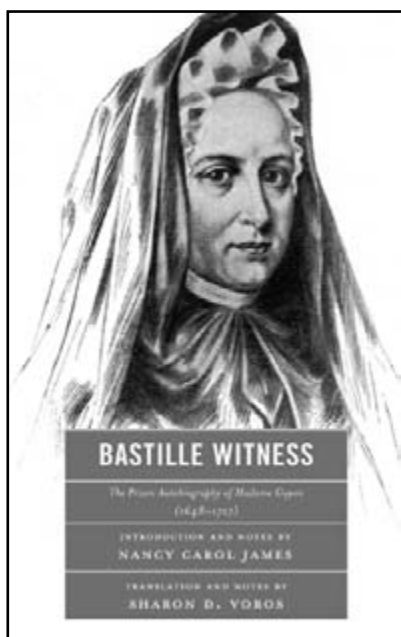
which allows it to reach and entertain a diverse audience. Having seen a play that blurs the boundaries between theater and life, that audience will likely view other plays in a new light. Sor Juana could not have asked for more.

BASTILLE WITNESS

The Prison Autobiography of
Madame Guyon (1648-1717)

Introduction and Notes by
Nancy Carol James

Translation and Notes by
Sharon D. Voros



This translation of Madame Guyon's prison autobiography provides a compelling account of her eight years of incarceration from 1695 to 1703.

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Bárbara Mujica



**New Anthology of
Early Modern Spanish Theater**
Play and Playtext

Yale University Press, Fall 2012

Book Reviews

Tirso de Molina. *Don Gil de las calzas verdes*. Ed. Enrique García Santo-Tomás. Madrid: Cátedra. 218 pp.

ELLEN C. FRYE

William Paterson University of New Jersey

In this most recent edition of *Don Gil de las calzas verdes*, published by Cátedra (2009), Enrique García Santo-Tomás has taken on the enormous task of attempting to improve the excellent Castalia edition (1990), while at the same time offering new perspectives on the play, its author, and the historical-political-social contexts of 17th century Spain. This edition, as well as most previous ones, such as those by Alonso Zamora Vicente and Ignacio Arellano, is based on the first edition of the play, which appeared in the *Cuarta parte de las comedias del Maestro Tirso de Molina* in 1635. When speaking of the *comedia*'s Triple Crown (Lope, Tirso, Calderón), many of their plays deserve multiple editions, which can serve a variety of individual purposes, whether for *comedia* specialists; North American university students; directors bent on developing a new production for performance; or for scholars who work solely on the written text, what-

ever their subspeciality may be, such as cognitive studies, performance aspects, dramatic devices, or actor-spectator relationship, among many others. Of course, even among the Triple Crown's vast dramatic output, there are *comedias* that do not warrant manifold editions; however, due to its incredibly wealthy richness of levels, language, and themes, as well as its profundity of perspectives for further investigation, *Don Gil de las calzas verdes* literally begs for editorial variety, and this is what we have before us.

In terms of the play, or written text, itself, there are several very significant improvements and changes in this Cátedra edition. First and foremost, García Santo-Tomás has taken on the tedious chore of further modernizing the spelling of many words and expressions in Tirso's text. He has also altered accentuation and punctuation, including capitalization, as well as adjusted certain grammar issues, such as contractions with *de*, to modern language criteria. For the traditional academic, modernization of a text could seem insulting on several levels, but in this case, although these numerous changes seem monumental in their totality, in fact they are not initially (nor individually) obvious, and they certainly enhance the flow of reading for the contemporary scholar, all the while not changing the written text's messages in any way. He is careful not to alter any spelling or grammar point that would modify any rhyme or syllable count in any way. Second, García Santo-Tomás is careful to make note of the most

significant textual variations of the extant editions of *Don Gil de las calzas verdes* throughout the text, mainly Zamora Vicente's Castalia edition, and Arellano's Instituto de Estudios Tirsonianos edition as well. On a different path from Zamora Vicente, who followed Juan Eugenio Hartzenbusch's edition with scenic divisions, García Santo-Tomás has eliminated the demarcation of scenes in the play, which is an extraordinary move for some readers, who are accustomed to the regular breaks, whether for ease of instructional purposes in a classroom or simply for research purposes, in terms of marking "scene," in addition to act number. This divisional aspect of textual alteration is opinion-based, whether new readers will appreciate it or not. Nonetheless, the issue of marking scenes is purely speculation, for it is impossible to say where Tirso himself would have marked a break; thus, contemporary academic scholars may prefer the purest version, as Tirso left it, since numeration of verses is all that is ever really necessary.

Regarding footnotes, García Santo-Tomás has chosen which locales, historical figures, references, words, and expressions deserve further explanation in his opinion. Thus, there are many overlaps with Zamora Vicente (as well as Arellano), which he indicates, and in many footnotes he updates corresponding publications in case the reader is interested in studying the point further. For example, García Santo-Tomás refers scholars to a recent study of the *cancionero* for verses 2430-32,

and in his note for verse 2738 about “el Conde Partinuplés,” he mentions Ana Caro’s *comedia* that has been widely analyzed in the past decade. In some footnotes, he enhances what Zamora Vicente mentions with supplementary details, which we see in verse 328, where he gives additional information about the Persian physician-philosopher Rasis, and more so in verse 346 about the Greek physician Galeno. Furthermore, there are footnotes by García Santo-Tomás which contain references that are not mentioned at all in the Castalia edition. Many of these shed light on different social and economic aspects of the day, which in turn further enhance the reader’s understanding of 17th century life in Madrid. For example, in the note for verse 107, García Santo-Tomás briefly discusses the carriage as a symbol of the quickly shifting economic and social status of the time, and he refers readers to significant studies of this and related themes. Overall, most scholars should prefer the footnotes in García Santo-Tomás’s edition because by and large, they are much more concise than Zamora Vicente’s, yet equally informative. Thus, today’s reader is given a choice: for smoother reading, with quick glimpses into the most essential, helpful, and interesting of points, the Cátedra edition is superior. If the reader is searching for a specific use of a word, phrase, or reference in other *comedias* and texts, then the Castalia edition is an option (for example, see verse 81).

In terms of the written text, García Santo-Tomás has done an excellent job with indicating the dramatic devices, in particular the aside. Tirso de Molina himself marked many asides in his manuscript by using parentheses and the word *aparte*, as seen in most previous editions of the play; additionally, many editors also added their own asides, usually indicating them with brackets and *aparte*. According to the Cátedra edition, Tirso indicated 31 *apartes*, whereas in the Castalia edition, which purportedly followed the same original playtext, there are 36 asides designated by Tirso; however, it is not merely a difference of five additional asides in Castalia. In eight asides in the Castalia edition, Zamora Vicente indicates with parentheses that they are Tirso's, but García Santo-Tomás uses brackets to indicate those same asides as editorial (see verses 836-39, for example). There are several possible reasons for this, such as editorial assumption or error in using parentheses instead of brackets, or difference of copy used of the original edition (which seems implausible, but could be possible). In the marking of Tirso's asides, it does not seem to be García Santo-Tomás who errs because he is vigilant in alerting readers to the differences in editorial marked asides among extant editions, such as in verses 773-77, which are three asides forming one dialogical aside, which both he and Zamora Vicente mark, but Arelano does not. Furthermore, García Santo-Tomás points out differences in exactly where an aside begins, such as in verse 791; in Castalia the aside be-

gins in 789, and he explains in a footnote that the placement of the aside partially changes the meaning of what Don Juan says.

Perhaps more significant is the discrepancy in the number of total asides in the Castalia and Cátedra editions of *Don Gil de las calzas verdes*. Like many editors in the past, García Santo-Tomás marks his own asides, but where Zamora Vicente found it pertinent to designate some verses as asides, García Santo-Tomás does not always see them as necessary to be marked. In García Santo-Tomás's edition, there are 65 asides in total (including those marked by Tirso), whereas there are 93 in Castalia (again including Tirso's). There are multiple explanations for this, including the designation of metatheatrical situations (rather than calling them asides) by García Santo-Tomás; marking only the first aside in a dialogical aside, which by nature must always consist of at least two asides; and differing of interpretation by the editors. The first two categories are not problematic at all, since the outcome is the exact same: the character is already eavesdropping anyway, or stepping "aside" to speak aloud, so other characters cannot hear (unless it is a dialogical aside between characters). An example of the first category is seen in verses 2747-51, where Zamora Vicente marks Caramanchel's verses as an aside, whereas García Santo-Tomás edits the preceding stage direction, "(*Sale Caramanchel [y queda a un lado]*)," thus forming the brief metatheatrical circumstance that Tirso intended anyway: Cara-

manchel is eavesdropping. In the second category, if asides are marked individually, it is still a dialogical aside, but an editor may mark it as only one aside (see verses 1912-14 in Cátedra; Quintana's reply actually is another aside, which is thus indicated in Castalia, v. 1914).

However, the third category gives scholars pause, and leads us into the area of editorial prerogative (and naturally, director's freedom of interpretation, too). Is it permissible for an editor to call a line an aside, if the author did not? Certainly, before the term aside or *aparte* came into use, it is almost imperative that the editors of modern editions do so. In the case with *Don Gil* and other *comedias*, the term was clearly being employed by the 17th century, but not as frequently as probably necessary, and thus, editors should be marking asides. In the case of the Cátedra edition, García Santo-Tomás indicates the necessary asides that Tirso probably intended, and he does not go overboard into the realm of speculation. For example, in Act Three, there are only 28, whereas in the Castalia edition there are 48 (in both editions, Tirsián and editorial asides combined for those totals). As the action grows more complicated because of the many Don Giles appearing onstage, it is natural that there is a higher number of asides, particularly of the self-commentary and exclamatory variations. However, García Santo-Tomás remains more faithful to Tirso's original text, by not indicating too many additional asides. Perhaps previous editors felt that indi-

cating extra asides would help the scholars, directors, and actors in their interpretation of the complex dramatic action and its twisted nuances, but García Santo-Tomás's edition leaves the door open for several possibilities, which may have been Tirso's intention, anyway.

The introduction to García Santo-Tomás's edition of *Don Gil* is superb. In the biography section, he dedicates more emphasis on Tirso's plays, specifically to *Don Gil*, and he cites Zamora Vicente's edition where necessary. In the next section, "Madrid como motivación escénica," he discusses many aspects, such as spacial-geographical, political, symbolic, and architectural, and he includes thorough, corresponding bibliographical references to the latest and current research. He explores Tirso's complicated relationship with the Court and its various famous players and other literary figures of the day, such as Quevedo, Calderón, Lope, and Alarcón, and he stresses the unusual circumstance of Tirso, a man of the cloth, writing for the secular stage, deftly addressing contemporary socio-political situations through his plays. The following part of the introduction, "La comedia urbana," includes García Santo-Tomás's excellent analysis of the "«economía visual» del cuerpo" (32). He cites many of Tirso's plays for what today's readers and scholars find curious – female characters who go after noble but unscrupulous men, such as here in *Don Gil* with Doña Juana. He emphasizes the importance of interior action, such as the domestic

space and the female body, and he also lists the actual emblematic places in Madrid which are mentioned in the play. Through labyrinthal twists and turns, nothing is what it seems and all is unstable: “Tirso muestra en estos enredos de túneles y portillos que lo que yace detrás es arquitectónicamente hueco y simbólicamente inestable” (38). In his estimation, Tirso also excels at imparting interior scenes: “adelanta materiales e ideas para lo que será la comedia de enredo calderoniana que unirá, en fantásticos diseños, el homenaje a los exteriores madrileños de Lope y la explotación de los interiores de Tirso” (38).

The subsequent section of the introduction is a synopsis of the dramatic action of *Don Gil*; it is thoroughly detailed and slightly more concise than Zamora Vicente's, to whom García Santo-Tomás occasionally refers. In the next part, “El viaje, el mercado, el sentimiento,” he elaborates on the theme of displacement in the play, ranging from city to city (Valladolid to Madrid and back and forth), court to court, periphery to center: whether the edges of a city to its center, or the peripheries of the court to its height of nobility, or even the family itself, parent to child. He also asserts: “esta comedia es también un canto al *aquí y ahora*, al goce del día y a la superación de las barreras institucionales—matrimonio arreglado, dotes generosas, convento reparador—que cortapisan la libertad y el disfrute. Nadie como el personaje de Inés para encarnar los vericuetos emotivos de esta juventud caprichosa”

(46). Here, García Santo-Tomás also explores the theme of identity, not merely who the characters are, but rather focusing on their constant shifting, which he indicates is part in thanks to the anonymity of city life. When discussing the doubling, tripling, cross-dressing, and reverse cross-dressing, he also mentions their personal touches, “«imitation with a twist»,” (47), and he emphasizes color (and the lack thereof): “las calzas verdes son la marca del juego y la fantasía, pero también de lo raro y lo novedoso en esta juventud donde todo puede darse” (47). He constantly returns to his theme of the periphery-center duality, while discussing names, public-private spaces, vision-optical illusions, and money. He concludes this section by stating: “El viaje al centro (de personajes, de cartas, de dinero...), el mercadeo y el juego de sentimientos se unen en esta comedia creando sorprendentes combinaciones” (54).

Continuing with identity as a broad theme, the next section is “«Plata quebrada»: La identidad como desencuentro,” and here, García Santo-Tomás focuses on a serious aspect of the play, simple personal identity. Among all *comedias* that treat the theme of appearance-driven mistakes, he rightfully finds *Don Gil* to contain the most sophisticated example of male-female gender transformation. He believes that the play should perform the following function as well: “debe también dejar espacio para una reflexión sobre lo que, ayer y hoy, implica la idea de lo humano” (56). At the very least, the read-

er owes this to Tirso and the masterpiece, in his opinion. After discussing the “ausencia de lo divino” (56), and the “economía de seducción de la pieza” (57), García Santo-Tomás posits that Juana-Gil (I would add Elvira, too) is Tirso’s most perfect creation (57). He feels that the play’s title is a homage to fantasy, and he concludes: “Nada es lo que parece ser, todo se comprende a medias, todo genera engaño. Desde el uso de la vestimenta hasta lo más íntimo y particular del género de cada uno, la actuación fingida subraya el carácter artificial y artificioso de la conducta humana, su construcción compleja, su comedia interna” (58). The final section of the introduction is the well-researched “Fortuna escénica de «Don Gil de las calzas verdes».” Here, García Santo-Tomás begins by explaining that many of Tirso’s plays that triumphed in the past are rarely studied, much less performed, today (59). He offers a thorough review of previous centuries’ editions, research, and theatrical productions, impressively including lists of directors and actors when possible. As he reaches the 20th century, he includes choreographers and musicians as well, in addition to dates and cities where the play was performed. In addition to completely updating the bibliography on Golden Age Theater studies; Tirso and his drama in general; the most recent studies on *Don Gil de las calzas verdes*; and editions of the play itself; he includes two new bibliographical sections, “«Don Gil de las calzas verdes» en la red” and “«Don Gil de las calzas verdes» en film,” which

undoubtedly are just the initial springboards for these newest of *comedia* formats.

In sum, what we have before us is a meticulously complete new edition of *Don Gil de las calzas verdes*. The play text itself is vigilantly edited; the footnotes are thorough; the bibliography is wide-ranging and complete; and the critical introduction is extensive, with many intriguing ideas for the reader to meditate upon, perhaps for the academic to draw future investigative perspectives. It will serve many generations of scholars, students, and directors well into the future.

Calderón de la Barca, Pedro. *Los alimentos del hombre*. Edición crítica de Miguel Zugasti. Pamplona: Universidad de Navarra; Kassel: Edition Reichenberger, 2009. Publicación. Teatro del Siglo de Oro: Ediciones críticas 169; Autos sacramentales completos de Calderón 67. Tapa dura. 340 pp. € 58,-.

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Esta edición crítica consiste de un extenso estudio preliminar (89 pp.) de la loa y el auto sacramental *Los alimentos del hombre* de Pedro Calderón de la Barca, los textos de la loa y del auto, amplias notas filológicas, un vasto aparato de variantes, una considerable bibliografía y un útil índice de voces anotadas. Como es de esperar, esta obra refleja el cuidadoso esmero crítico de su editor, Miguel Zugasti, anotador también de *A María el corazón* (vol. 25) y *El día mayor de los días* (vol. 45); Ignacio Arellano y M. Carmen Pinillos, dirigentes de la serie Autos sacramentales completos de Calderón, auspiciada por la Universidad de Navarra; y Eva Reichenberger, directora de Edition Reichenberger.

Los autos *Los alimentos del hombre* (AH) y *La serpiente de metal* se presentaron en Madrid en 1676 en ocasión de la fiesta litúrgica de Corpus Christi. Miguel Zugasti da información precisa sobre las compañías que representaron estas obras (Antonio de Escamilla para el primero, Manuel Vallejo para el segundo); los actores que presentaron las obras, entre ellos la célebre Francisca Bezón (la «Bezona»), hija natural de Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla; los costos de representación; la música usada (Fray Juan Romero, maestro de capilla del convento mercedario de Madrid compuso la música para las obras de ese año); e incluso los tipos de danzas utilizados para estos dos autos (de ciegos, de bandoleros, de negrillos, de espadas). Zugasti también da una historia completa de la representación de AH hasta 1765, fecha de la prohibición de los autos llevada a cargo por Carlos III de Borbón. En efecto es fascinante notar que en 1717, 1735 y 1763, tres compañías pusieron AH en los corrales madrileños (v. gr., del Príncipe), recaudando un total de 127.397 reales en los 55 días de representación (21 en 1717, 14 en 1735 y 20 en 1763). Se aprecia el hecho de que Zugasti hace mención de la historia musical de la obra, notando que el padre Antonio Soler, maestro de capilla del Monasterio de San Lorenzo del Escorial, compuso música para la *Loa sacramental del reloj* y el auto AH en 1756. Otrosí, en 1952, Bernd Alois Zimmermann compuso una ópera radiofónica transmitida en Colonia con el

nombre de *Des Menschen Unterhaltsprozeß gegen Gott*, basada en la traducción alemana de *AH*.

Para el auto y la loa, Miguel Zugasti cotejó 11 testimonios (6 mss. y 5 impresos) para la segunda y 17 (14 mss. y 3 impresos) para el primero. En ausencia de un ms. autógrafo, Zugasti optó por crear una edición ecléctica basada en los mss. más cercanos al arquetipo (O) perdido: A (Biblioteca del Arsenal de París, B (Biblioteca Histórica Municipal de Madrid) y C (Biblioteca Nacional de París). En efecto, el estema que Zugasti propone sugiere dos ramas. De la rama A, pasando por dos ascendientes ilativos (z, anterior a A, y x, posterior a A), deriva la versión de Valbuena Prat (Madrid: Aguilar) de 1952, la cual proviene de los errores introducidos por Pando y Pando y Mier en 1717 y 1718 respectivamente. Por lo tanto, la versión crítica de Miguel Zugasti representa la más fidedigna lectura posible de *AH* hasta este momento.

El auto en sí versa sobre un pleito o juicio. Esta situación ocurre en otros autos sacramentales calderonianos como *El pleito matrimonial del cuerpo y el alma* o *El indulto general*, como apunta Zugasti (p. 26). Aparte del asunto teológico, importante en sí, este auto presenta un interesante conflicto entre varias leyes o «derechos humanos»: el derecho de gentes y la ley natural. Por medio de la segunda, Adamo, desterrado legalmente por su transgresión y desobediencia del mayorazgo del Padre de Familias, tiene derecho a un sustento. Aunque las Estaciones del Año le otorgan utensilios pa-

ra su sobrevivencia natural (una azada, una hoz, una podadera y un cayado), así como sustentos naturales (una guirnalda de flores, espigas, vides y un vellón de cordero), sólo la intercesión de Emanuel, el Segundo Adán, le permite a Adamo, después de su contrición, su reincorporación y salvación conclusiva. Adamo, por medio de su Razón Natural y su Apetito, jamás es, por ende, abandonado completamente por la providencia divina, aun durante su momento de destierro. Esta idea teológica y legal es vigente hoy día, sobre todo en momentos posteriores a una victoria militar o una ocupación injusta, donde, a pesar de los límites impuestos a una población vencida, el derecho al sustento natural es legal y naturalmente justificable.

El valor de este texto es por lo tanto insuperable y imperecedero.

González-Ruiz, Julio. *Amistades peligrosas. El discurso homoerótico en el teatro de Lope de Vega*. Peter Lang: Ibérica, 2009. pp. 132. \$65.95.

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Según indica el Prof. González-Ruiz en su introducción, este estudio “intenta sacar a la superficie ese discurso homoerótico y subversivo que Lope intenta insertar en algunas de sus obras (2).” Para poder realizar este análisis el libro está dividido en una introducción, una conclusión, y cuatro capítulos en los que se analizan principalmente tres de las obras que representan la teoría que el Prof. González-Ruiz quiere probar. Las tres obras son *La prueba de los ingenios*, *La boda entre dos maridos*, y *El mesón de la corte*.

El primer capítulo se titula: Materia y forma: El discurso homoerótico en las cartas de Lope de Vega al Duque de Sesá. El segundo es: Monstruos ambiguos: Homoerotismo femenino en *La prueba de los ingenios*. El tercero “En los dos uno sólo”: El discurso *queer* en *La boda entre dos maridos*. Y por último el cuarto capítulo trata del travestismo femenino y sodomía en *El mesón de la corte*.

Como los títulos de los capítulos indican, cada uno de ellos trata de un tema en particular, aunque todos ellos obviamente están relacionados o con el título o subtítulo de este trabajo o con ambos: las amistades peligrosas y el homoerotismo.

El primer capítulo analiza las posibles relaciones homosexuales entre Sesa y Lope de Vega a través de su correspondencia y el lenguaje usado en ellas. Este capítulo también está dedicado a una visión más o menos panorámica del tratamiento de la sodomía en el siglo XVII desde el punto de vista del poder, la iglesia y la sociedad. Siempre teniendo en cuenta que la sodomía era un delito de lesa majestad castigado con la muerte.

El segundo capítulo está dedicado a lo monstruoso, a lo fuera de lo normal, lo cual era típico del barroco. Se define qué es un monstruo y qué se puede considerar uno también, para poder aplicar después esta definición a la obra que se va analizar. Además de *La prueba de los ingenios*, el profesor González-Ruiz explica como el *Arte Nuevo* es, en sí mismo, el mayor monstruo que crea Lope, ya que rompe reglas y crea nuevas reglas. A través del análisis del *Arte Nuevo*, de toda una serie de historias mitológicas (como el Minotauro) y de obras italianas en las que Lope se basa para escribir la obra, González-Ruiz explica la construcción de la comedia y la relación amorosa que presenta entre Florela (el monstruo de la obra) y Laura, las dos protagonistas de la misma.

La boda entre dos maridos es analizada bajo el punto de vista de la teoría *queer*. Otra vez vuelve al estudio comparativo de la mitología (Aquiles y Patroclo) para hablar de las relaciones entre los dos amigos protagonistas de la comedia. El tema de la amistad además tiene su propia historia literaria. El cuestionamiento de la institución del matrimonio (el hecho de que el marido le pida al amigo que lo sustituya en la noche de bodas), junto al ataque a la estructura patriarcal de la sociedad hacen que esta obra, sin ninguna duda, vaya más allá de lo permitido por el canon.

El sistema patriarcal vuelve a verse atacado en esta comedia de enredo que es *El mesón de la corte*. Toda la confusión gira en torno a dos mujeres y al cambio que han hecho de traje. Ambas damas están disfrazadas una de sirvienta de mesón y la otra de mozo de mesón. Los galanes de la obra van a requerir a ambas damas aún cuando están completamente convencidos de que una de ellas es un “capón” o afeminado. Este capítulo trata del travestismo a través del cambio de ropa, y de la sodomía a través del requerimiento del “capón”.

Al final todas la obras terminan en boda, se restaura el orden ante el caos, pero durante la obra se ha cuestionado la jerarquía patriarcal y el *status quo* del poder establecido

El trabajo del profesor González-Ruiz es interesante, sobre todo para los estudios de género dentro del Siglo de Oro, y es otro nivel de lectura de

las obras que escribió “el monstruo de la naturaleza.”

Salas Barbadillo, Alonso Jerónimo de. *La sabia Flora malsabidilla*. Ed. Dana Flaskerud. Ediciones Críticas #38. Newark, DE: Hispanic Monographs, 2007. pp. 268. \$ 22.95.

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Esta edición de *La sabia Flora* trae al lector de nuestro tiempo la obra de uno de los autores más prolíficos del Siglo de Oro, y sin embargo uno de los menos estudiados. La obra se publica por primera vez en 1621, y no vuelve a editarse hasta 1907 cuando el incansable Cotarelo y Mori la reproduce en su primer volumen de las *Obras de Salas Barbadillo*. Esta es la tercera edición de la obra y la profesora Flaskerud le dedica una introducción y análisis apto para estudiantes y estudiosos de diferentes niveles de conocimientos del español y del Siglo de Oro.

El estudio empieza con la crítica que existe hasta el momento, que como señala Flaskerud no es mucha y a veces está ligada a otras obras más conocidas del mismo autor, para continuar con una corta biografía de Salas Barbadillo y un resumen de la obra.

El análisis *per se* de la obra se concentra en cuatro puntos: su relación con *La Celestina*, con la picaresca y con la comedia. En el cuarto punto el análisis da un giro total y habla de la función de la poesía en *La sabia Flora malsabidilla*.

La relación con *La Celestina* se ve no sólo en el formato de la obra que es dialogada, sino en la protagonista Flora. Las dos mujeres están cortadas por el mismo patrón: pertenecen a la clase baja, están marginadas, tienen un control completo sobre sus víctimas, y las dos tienen una persona a su cargo a la que protegen y educan en sus artes. El lenguaje es parte integral del trabajo de ambas mujeres y su control del mismo es lo que las ayuda a completar sus tareas. Otra similitud tiene que ver con la forma en que tratan a los hombres en general, pero sobre todo a Calisto y a Teodoro, respectivos protagonistas de las obras.

Aunque Flaskerud habla de la relación de la obra con la novela picaresca, también indica que *La sabia Flora* no es una novela picaresca en su totalidad. Es verdad que el título indica una posible conexión con el género, pero si la característica principal de la novela picaresca es la autobiografía a modo de confesión y justificación por los pecados cometidos, *La sabia Flora* falla en ese primer requisito. La obra cuenta sólo una de las aventuras de su protagonista, no toda su vida. Resume su origen gitano en unas pocas líneas, y en ningún momento Flora da señales de arrepentimiento por los pecados cometidos. Por otro lado, si se mantiene en la obra

la idea de la orfandad del protagonista y el origen criminal de los progenitores, que por supuesto lleva a los protagonistas a mentir sobre su origen social, racial y religioso. Por lo tanto la idea de clase social es importante y, en el caso de Flora, ésta sabe como infiltrar la corte y pasar por dama. El tema del hambre también está presente, pero en el caso de Flora es hambre sexual, que hábilmente se conecta con la comida y el acto de comer se convierte en una acción altamente erótica.

La conexión con la comedia viene a través de algunos de los temas y convenciones que aparecen en la obra, como la recuperación del honor perdido y el terminar la obra con la boda de la protagonista y el hombre que originalmente le había robado el honor. Otro elemento con el que juega es la idea de “mudar el traje” tal y como lo presenta Lope de Vega en el *Arte nuevo*, sólo que en este caso, es el hombre el que va disfrazado de mujer y bajo tal disfraz pierde todos los derechos que tiene como hombre.

Todas estas conexiones hay que verlas también bajo otra perspectiva, y es que la obra tiene lugar durante el carnaval, lo cual hace que cambie el sentido de todo bajo la idea del mundo al revés.

El último análisis de la obra tiene que ver con el uso de la poesía en la obra: poesía amorosa, poesía satírica, la suspensión del tiempo a través de la poesía amorosa y la poesía como entretenimiento. La poesía amorosa sirve para crear el contraste entre los mundo de la corte y de los pícaros. Uno, teoría

de altos ideales, el otro cubierto de mentiras y trucos. Y como yuxtaposición Salas Barbadillo usa la poesía satírica para negar lo que la anterior poesía ha presentado. La suspensión del tiempo se crea a través de las canciones para distraer a los hombres mientras tienen lugar los trucos y artimañas de la protagonista. Y finalmente, toda la poesía, ya sea amorosa o satírica, sirve como entretenimiento, tanto en recitales o cantada, en los saraos de Flora o cuando está pasando el tiempo con su amiga Camila.

La conclusión agrupa los temas que Flaske-rud ha ido mencionando a lo largo de su introducción: el engaño y el disfraz unidos al tema del carnaval. El sentido de confusión social que crean estos personajes y que a la vez ellos mismos mencionan como parte del problema que afecta a la sociedad española del momento (por ejemplo la compra de títulos de hidalguía). Otro de los grandes temas que presenta el trabajo es la representación-interpretación de las mujeres, sobre todo en la persona de Flora a causa de su dualidad como personaje: prostituta-dama.

El texto de *La sabia Flora* no encaja con ningún género en particular, según Flaskerud, Salas Barbadillo ha creado un híbrido innovador y complicado que usa cualidades de *La Celestina*, la picaresca y la comedia.

El español de la obra ha sido modernizado dentro de lo que ya se ha convertido el estándar de modernización de la ortografía y añadiendo acentos,

pero dejando las contracciones de la época. Este es un libro que yo estaría dispuesta a usar en mi clase de Prosa del Medioevo al Siglo de Oro, como uso otros varios de Juan de la Cuesta.

Grubbs, Anthony J. *The Playwright's Perspective. Innovative Dramaturgy and its Poetics in Early Modern Spain*. New Orleans: University Press of the South, 2010. Paper. xx + 244 pp.

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Anthony Grubbs's *The Playwright's Perspective* focuses on six dramatists whose writing for the stage exemplifies not only stage practice but theory. Grubbs delves into areas often neglected by scholars, namely early dramatists before Lope de Vega. This includes plays and treatises by lesser-known writers such as Bartolomé de Torres Naharro and Juan de la Cueva. His central focus involves the three major playwrights, Lope de Vega, Tirso de Molina and Pedro Calderón de la Barca, while Francisco Bances Candamo completes the list. While Grubbs emphasizes ways in which writers themselves conceived of the process of writing for the stage, he does not include women dramatists; he acknowledges their importance for issues regarding writing for the stage, for women often do more than just follow conventional stage practice and often subvert it. Ana Caro even comment on women as

writers and poets. If Grubbs's main argument is that stagecraft in Spain evolved mostly through practice on the board and what pleased *el vulgo*, then women dramatists certainly could have benefited from his analysis. He has, however, written persuasively elsewhere on María de Zayas. Since treatises on stagecraft in this period are not numerous, he centers on the plays themselves as self-referencing statements on dramatic art. Included is a section on Lope's famous mini-treatise on his stagecraft in blank verse, *El arte nuevo de hacer comedias*, with an emphasis on his privileging audience reception and his challenges to Aristotelian precepts on theater. Grubbs argues that while Lope appears to criticize both his literate and his illiterate audience, he nevertheless is concerned with their expectations regarding what is to occur on the stage. Other issues discussed are Lope's use of mixed meter, the three-acts, and oral traditions such as ballad metric forms and songs. Grubbs's understanding of Lope's stagecraft shows that he was clearly aware of audience reaction.

Another aspect of Grubbs's superb scholarship in his book is his attention to religious plays, saints' plays and the allegorical *autos sacramentales*, such as Calderón's *La segunda esposa y triunfar muriendo* and the notion of sin and temptation wrapped up in an historical context of Philip IV's marriage to Mariana of Austria. While there has been much more scholarly attention given to the literary value and theological content of these plays,

Grubbs considers them as performance texts. However, he goes a stage further. While he points out that theater most likely had its origins in allegorical staging of miracles and saints' lives, his contribution here is that he analyzes these works as examples of stagecraft and performance from the point of view of the playwright. His example of Lope's *comedia de santos*, *Lo fingido verdadero*, translated as *Acting Is Believing* by Michael McGaha, is well taken regarding the patron saint of actors, San Ginés, or Saint Genesius of Rome, whose conversion to Christianity on the stage leads eventually to his martyrdom. Apparently one cannot act the part of a Christian without becoming one. Grubbs points out that Lope puts emphasis on the term *arte* as a means of evoking not only his treatise on dramaturgy but on the blurring of fiction and reality that this topic conveys. While acting the part, Genesius, both actor and playwright, converts to Christianity in reality (An Italian painting of his conversion graces the cover of this book). The emperor Diocletian represents the audience whose initial reaction is one of confusion. Grubbs shows that in Lope's play, the writing process involves not only the entertainment value of the play but its spiritual depth. Both are required for success on the boards. He points out that Lope taps into the theater-going public with its huge appetite for diversion and thus writes one of the early considerations of audience reaction as part of his dramaturgy.

Anthony Grubbs's strength as a scholar in the book is that he investigates areas of inquiry often overlooked or underestimated, and thus brings issues into discussions that deepen and broaden our understanding of the process of writing and performing for the stage. He brings such scholars as Otis Green back into the discussion of innovative dramatic forms with his notions of "imaginative authority." Green's article on this topic is rich in comparisons to other European literatures often considered superior to works of the Spanish Golden Age. Both Grubbs and Green prove this undervaluing of Spain and Spanish culture to be dead wrong thanks to the innovative power of authoritative imagination and its impact on readers and spectators. The extensive range and depth of Anthony Grubbs's analysis make *The Playwright's Perspective* a book that scholars and students of the stage and stage practice in Spain, and elsewhere, should not be without.