

El Alma griega

Greek Tragedy in Latin America Today

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I, Katherine Billotte, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

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Abstract:

This thesis examines contemporary productions of Greek tragedy in Latin America through the lens of postcolonial, feminist and queer theory. There is a comparative focus on the conflicting influences of French and American culture on Latin American aesthetic history as well as an emphasis on the body as a site of oppression and resistance. The focus of this thesis is on theatrical and cinematic productions primarily produced between the mid-1990s and the present. Moreover, it should be noted that while the actual linguistic geography of Latin America is quite complicated, the work discussed herein is primarily from the Hispanophone.

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Introduction

On 1 January 1891, the legendary Cuban writer and revolutionary José Martí published his seminal essay “Nuestra America” in New York’s *Revista Ilustrada*. On the 30th of that month, the essay was republished in Mexico’s *El Partido Liberal*. In the now famed call for Latin American cultural independence from both European and American imperialism, Martí included a rejection of the primacy of the Greco-Roman Classical tradition:

La Universidad europea ha de ceder a la universidad americana. La historia de América, de los incas acá, he de enseñarse a dedillo, aunque no se enseñe la de los arcontes de Grecia. Nuestra Grecia es preferible a la Grecia que no es nuestra.¹

Despite Martí’s plea, “la Grecia que no es nuestra” has been far from neglected in Latin American literature and culture. This thesis seeks to document and theorise some of the most recent of those engagements with Western antiquity on the Latin American stage, with a focus on Greek tragedy. In doing so, it hopes to shed light on how the contemporary reception of Greek tragedy in various Latin American countries reflects the political and aesthetic conditions in the region as well as the current relationship between Latin America and the West.

Methodology

This thesis sets out to answer two fundamental questions about the reception of Greek tragedy in contemporary Latin America: (A) What have been the primary cultural, social and educational vehicles through which Greek tragedy has entered contemporary Latin American

¹ Martí, 1891: “The European university must give way to the American university. The history of America, from the Inca onward, must be taught in precise detail, even if the archons of Greece are neglected. Our Greece is preferable to the Greece that is not ours.”

cultural life? and (B) How does the reception of Greek tragedy in Latin America reflect wider social and political realities in the region?

In addition to this introduction and a conclusion, the thesis has two parts. The first section is the largest of these. In this section, the relationship of contemporary Latin American adaptations of Greek tragedy to nineteenth- and twentieth-century Western aesthetic trends is examined with particular attention to how French and American influences interact with indigenous cultures in the Latin American context. To this end, the section will examine the relationship between Surrealism, the Theatre of the Absurd, and magical realism and the place of indigenous and postcolonial theory and aesthetics in understanding the reception of Greek tragedy in Latin America. At the heart of this analysis is a concern with how Latin American identity effects the Latin American engagement with Greek tragedy. To this purpose, this chapter will begin our discussion of the role of the body in the understanding and articulation of identity in Latin American productions of Greek tragedy. The subsequent section will look at two specific instances of the intersection between identity and the adaptation of Greek tragedy in the Latin American context, first through feminist adaptations and then through queer ones. This section will both include discussions of the translation of Western identity politics, its debates, and images into the Latin American context and the aesthetic and cultural implications of this translation. The significance of the body to identities centred on gender and sexuality will allow us to continue our discussion of and use of the body as a discursive tool that began in the previous chapter.

These two sections will be bound together by this discussion of the body as a site of theoretical engagement. In the first chapter, this will focus on the figure of the Minotaur in Latin American literature and the connection of that figure to hybrid ethnicity of Latin Americans. In

particular, we will see how the body of the Minotaur has been used in analysing the link between hybrid ethnic identity and the transgressive sexual relationships that gave rise to such an identity from the beginning of the colonial era. In the next chapter, the themes of hybridity and transgressive sexual desire as they related to the body carry over into the discussion of gender and sexuality as they are related to Latin American renditions of Greek tragedy.

Finally, at the very end of the thesis, you will find three appendices. The first of these contains a comprehensive list of the productions examined in the compilation of this thesis, most of which are not examined herein. These productions all occur between 1986 and 2010. This period represents the primary chronological focus of this analysis. The second two appendices contain graphic data on the frequency of productions of Greek tragedy in Latin America organized by the plays' relationships to the ancient source material. These are compared to parallel data from a number of European countries.

Before we begin, however, there is the issue of defining what is meant by *Latin America*. *Latin America* is a fluid and contested term. Here historical and contemporary sources will be used to interrogate the concept of Latin America. This discussion is, in many ways, much broader than this thesis and so will be limited here only to the extent to which a working definition of Latin America is necessary to the wider goals of this thesis.

This introduction also includes a brief doxology of previous work on the reception of Greco-Roman antiquity in Latin America as well as a similar survey of recent scholarship in Latin American theatre. These are followed by two final introductory sections: one outlining the extraordinary importance French political thought has historically had in Latin America and a second which looks at the particular importance of *primitivism* within the Latin American intellectual tradition.

Transculturation

In addition to the discursive use of the body, the theoretical framework of this thesis is heavily drawn on the idea of *transculturation*. This dependence is such that the concept deserves some further explication here at the beginning of the thesis. The helpfulness of this concept in understanding cultural and aesthetic processes in Latin America is suggested by the fact that the term *transculturation* was coined in the 1940s by a Latin American, the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz. Ortiz invented the word as an alternative to *acculturation*, a term which had been coined in 1936 by Anglo-American anthropologists to explain cultural change in colonial and postcolonial societies.² Ortiz wrote:

The term *transculturation* better expresses the different phases in the transitive process from one culture to another, because this process does not only imply the acquisition of culture, as connoted by the Anglo-American term *acculturation*, but it also necessarily involves the loss or uprooting of one's preceding culture, what one could call a partial *disculturation*. Moreover, it signifies the subsequent creation of new cultural phenomena that one could call *neoculturation*.³

The idea of transculturation was subsequently championed by such important figures in Latin American cultural life as the Peruvian novelist José María Arguedas and the Uruguayan writer and intellectual Ángel Rama.⁴ The idea of transculturation is interesting, because it allows for the possibility that minority cultures do effect dominant ones and posits a model of cultural exchange which is circular not hierarchical.⁵

² Trigo 1999, p. 85

³ Cited in Taylor, 1991, p. 91-92

⁴ Arnedo-Gómez 2008.

⁵ Spitta 1995.

It also does, in fact, reflect more accurately the realities of postcolonial societies. This is particularly true in Latin America.⁶ While there is little doubt that colonial powers (such as Portugal and Spain) and neo-colonial ones (such as the United States) have actively tried to impose their cultural wills on Latin America, the fact is this imposition is different in Latin America than in other (post)colonial societies.⁷ One need only look to the diverse cultural tapestry of Latin American Catholicism or listen to the unique syllables of Latin American Spanish to understand that the cultural conquests of the region have been far from one-sided.

As Diana Taylor noted in her 1991 essay “Transculturating Transculturation”, an understanding of the process of transculturation and its “counter-hegemonic” function is paramount to understanding Latin American theatre since the end of the colonial period.⁸ It is central to understanding the way in which theatre practitioners in Latin America consumed and assimilated various aspects of the Western aesthetic tradition as well as indigenous traditions.⁹ Transculturation is also a helpful concept, because it foregrounds the agency with which Latin American practitioners operate as active participants in aesthetic and cultural traditions. While there is a tendency on the part of many Westerners engaged in the conversation about cultural processes in postcolonial societies to make the role of those living in the colonized society a passive one, the facts on the ground demonstrate how clearly untrue this is.

Take, for example, our present case of Latin American theatre. It is certain that Latin American practitioners have not adopted wholesale the Western theatrical tradition. Musical comedy, for instance, has not caught on south of the Rio Grande. What they have adopted from Western theatre are “forms that could help change their position with regard to their socio-

⁶ Rama 1997.

⁷ Taylor 1991, p. 94.

⁸ Taylor 1991, p. 96.

⁹ For more on this with particular attention to racial issues, see Arrizón 2002.

political exploitation and marginalization”.¹⁰ Moreover, and perhaps even more importantly, Western theatrical forms become essentially different in the Latin American context while still retaining crucial aspects of their native form.¹¹ These facts immediately become apparent when one is examining the reception of ancient Greek tragedy. For this reason, in what follows below, transculturation provides the principal way of understanding socio-cultural exchange.

This is not to say that the concept of transculturation is without its critics. Neil Larsen is perhaps the most vocal critique of the concept, particularly as it has been developed by Ángel Rama. For Larsen, transculturation is yet another homogenising concept that serves to obscure the distinct cultures and histories of the region.¹² Larsen write, “[c]ulture in itself becomes the naturalizing and dehistoricizing containment of what is otherwise potentially an emergence of a particular counterrationality directly opposed to that of the absent state mediation”.¹³ This is a concern echoed by Martin Lienhard, among others.¹⁴ These concerns are, however, robustly addressed in a response by the late Antonio Cornejo: there is an inherent danger that the concept of transculturation could obliterate the diverse realities of plural societies; however, as long as one is conscious of this while working with the term, transculturation can be a decidedly useful term in negotiating a *mestizo* culture.¹⁵

A Brief History of Latin America

With this concept of mutual exchange in mind, we begin with a decidedly brief survey of the history of Latin America. The writing of history for non-Western societies is complicate by a variety of factors including the cultural specificity of historical thing.¹⁶ Moreover, the Western

¹⁰ Sandoval-Sanchez 2001, p. 23.

¹¹ Taylor 1991, p. 97.

¹² Beverley 1999, p. 46.

¹³ Larsen 1992, p.62.

¹⁴ Lienhard 1984.

¹⁵ Cornejo-Polar 1994.

¹⁶ For more on the writing of non-Western histories, see Schmidt 1995.

impulse to divide and explain the history of colonial and postcolonial societies with respect to colonialism can be problematic, as Dipesh Chakabarty has carefully detailed with respect to Indian history.¹⁷ The goal whenever writing about the history of non-Western societies should be, after all, to "...reframe[d] in terms of dialogues from different loci of enunciation rather than as an academic monologue performed in the act of "studying" colonial discourse and not "listening" to politically engaged persons (whether inside or outside academe), writers from colonial, postcolonial, or Third World countries producing alternative discourse."¹⁸

This brief history is set out with these thoughts in mind. Due to the limited scope of this study, the pre-Hispanic history offered here will only be that which is significant to later developments in Latin American cultural and intellectual life. Furthermore, what follows looks primarily at the Spanish colonial history of the region. Of course, several nations besides Spain held Latin American colonies, most notably the Portuguese presence in Brazil. However, since this study is concerned with Spanish-language texts and because Spanish colonialism and its aftermath is the dominant history of the region, the examples which follow below are drawn from the Spanish colonial context. This is not intended to undermine non-Spanish histories in Latin America, but merely to facilitate the reader's understanding and to conform to the demands presented by limited space. And finally, the history below places a great deal of emphasis on the role of the Classics, and particularly Latin in colonial New Spain. The reasons for this should be obvious.

¹⁷ See Chakabarty 2001.

¹⁸ Mignolo 1993, p. 130.

The most notable feature of pre-Hispanic Latin America was the level of development achieved by the indigenous civilizations of the region.¹⁹ It is difficult to discuss the vast differences in the development between native populations in North America and those in Meso- and South America without entering into problematic cultural comparisons. But there are differences, even if the shadows of history makes it difficult for us to mention these differences without the impression of judgment. By the time of the arrival of Europeans in the Americas, the Aztec, Mayan, and Incas were building towering pyramids and vast empires; they were studying astronomy and mathematics and keeping written records of it all. On the other hand, the native tribes of North America were for the most part living in small pre-literate communities, many of which did not engage in settled agriculture.²⁰

The existence of vast empires and metropolises in pre-Hispanic Mexico had serious consequences for the Spanish conquerors upon their arrival. Large political units, really anything larger than a small village, must be governed in a very different way than small wandering bands or villages formed by a handful of families.²¹ To begin with, the larger political unit, the greater the distance between most people and power within the community. This means that gaining access to power becomes a more complex process. Inevitably, the growth of the village into a city means the creation of a noble class who have more wealth and power than others and who also inescapably wrestle amongst themselves to increase their wealth and extend their influence.²² In this, the civilizations of pre-Hispanic America were no different than other advanced civilizations. These existing political realities, including internal and external conflicts,

¹⁹ Joyce 2000.

²⁰ Gunn 1981. Also see, Denevan 1992.

²¹ Kipp 1989.

²² Rounds 1979. For a broad overview of this subject, see Brumfield 2003.

were ultimately exploited to the advantage of the conquerors upon their arrival and influenced the shape of colonial society in the region.²³

Take, for example, the Nahuatl-speaking regions of what is today Mexico. We generally refer to this region as the *Aztec Empire* and speak of Hernan Cortez's conquest of the *Aztecs* between 1518 and 1521. This terminology, however, obscures the complexities of the situation and, ultimately, presents an unrealistic picture of the state of affairs in New Spain. When thinking of the Aztec Empire, it is more helpful to think of the Athenian Empire and not the Roman one. The Aztec Empire was a collection of independent city-states who formed an alliance headed by the most powerful among them.²⁴ The Aztec Empire, as much as it was a unified body, was being held together by a variety of shifting alliances among powerful warlords in a confederacy loosely centered at Tlatelolco (located on the site of present-day Mexico City) and precariously led by Montezuma I. While the other cities in the alliance most certainly paid tribute to Tlatelolco and ordinarily ceded to the authority of its leader in military and foreign policy matters, each city maintained its traditional form of government and the ancestral nobility of each city still held considerable social and economic power.²⁵ Thus when the *conquistadores* arrived, they encountered an Aztec Empire bursting with alliances and rivalries that were both intra-city and intercity.

They also found an emerging merchant class, not unlike the merchant class that was growing increasingly powerful in the Europe they had left behind.²⁶ This Aztec merchant class would see in the arrival of the Spanish an opportunity to wrestle power from the traditional

²³ Matthews 2014 deals in-depth with the role of indigenous people and intra-indigenous conflict in the conquest of Meso- and South America.

²⁴ See Hassig 1985; M. E. Smith 2012; and Conrad 1984.

²⁵ Hassig 1995.

²⁶ Pisani 2000.

aristocracy and sought to claim a place for themselves within the newly established colonial order.²⁷ All this is to say that Aztec society was advanced enough to experience the effects of nascent class politics in a way that was simply not possible in the hunter-gather societies of North America. In short, when Hernán Cortes and his army arrived on the eastern Mexican coast in February 1517, they stumbled into a social climate as alive with change and as full of conflict as their own. This is a situation that was repeated throughout the region we now call Latin America, from the Rio Grande to the southern tip of modern day Argentina, as European colonizers advanced over the entire region.

In part due to the complexities of pre-Hispanic Latin American society, Spanish New World colonialism was radically different than its British and French counterparts with respect to the level of interaction between European and indigenous populations. Today, in many Latin American countries, *mestizos* (individuals of mixed indigenous American and European ancestry) make up the majority of the population.²⁸ This is not the case in North America.²⁹ Ironically, the consensus in Anglophonic scholarship and popular histories has traditionally been that Spanish colonizers were adventurers interested only in striking it rich and going home, whilst English colonizers had come to build nations.

The chart below is representative of the type of ethnic mingling common throughout Latin America, where a variety of factors including economic and religious ones contributed to a level of inter-ethnic marriage unprecedented in North America.³⁰

²⁷ de la Paz 2009 and Gibson 1960.

²⁸ Wade 1997.

²⁹ For more on intermarriage between Europeans and indigenous people in colonial North America, see Nash 1995.

³⁰ McCaa 1979.

Marriages by Socio-Racial Designation: Oaxaca, 1793–97

		<i>Brides</i>					
		<i>Peninsulars</i>	<i>Creoles</i>	<i>Mestizos</i>	<i>Mulattoes</i>	<i>Indians</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Grooms</i>	<i>Peninsulars</i>	0	19	1	0	2	22
	<i>Creoles</i>	0	144	48	12	7	211
	<i>Mestizos</i>	0	35	55	28	20	138
	<i>Mulattoes</i>	0	15	20	13	8	56
	<i>Indians</i>	0	33	45	26	183	287
	<i>Total</i>	0	246	169	79	220	714

1: *Marriages by Socio-Racial Designation: Oaxaca, 1793-1797* (Source: Chance, 1977, Table 4)

Tree of Hate cites the example of Samuel Flagg Bemis, an American professor of history and two time Pulitzer Prize winner, who wrote in two of his works intended for teaching purposes, “[The U.S] were settled by homemakers and state builders alive with English ideas of self-government: Mexico was conquered by Spanish adventurers who wanted to go home with plunder.”³¹ Of course, Bemis’s insight might be quite shocking to anyone who has ever travelled through the American West, a land still littered with Missions and *haciendas* built by Spanish settlers (many of which are still in use) as well as the ruined remains of so-called ghost towns which popped up overnight and disappeared just as quickly when the Anglo-Americans who founded them went elsewhere in search of precious metals. The fact is that the conquest and colonization of the Americas was a complicated process and it is nearly impossible to find heroes or villains in this long story.

Perhaps because of the early arrival of Spain to colonialism, one of the most interesting features of Spanish New World colonialism was the far greater amount of transatlantic travel which the whole affair involved.³² While an Englishman leaving for the Plymouth colony would have (more likely than not) had very little intention of returning home, this was not true for a

³¹ Citations in Powell 2001, p.11.

³² Bronner 1986.

Spaniard who might make the perilous ocean crossing more than once and whose hopes and aspirations for the future frequently remained in the mother country.³³ Also, in the period that followed the initial conquest, a seemingly endless stream of second sons and impoverished gentry newly arrived from Spain provided the upper echelon of colonial government. These Spanish aristocrats were fearful of the indigenous nobility and disdainful of the American-born Spaniards known as *crillos* (who for their part were not particularly crazy about their uppity countrymen arriving afresh each generation to lord it over them).³⁴

The continuous arrival of Spanish-born governors meant that *crillos* and the indigenous aristocracy found themselves in a similarly frustrating political position and as the decades wore on increasingly turned to one another as natural political allies and subsequently marriage partners as well.³⁵ The Church encouraged these domestic unions as a way of minimizing the existence of the much more prevalent phenomenon of interracial concubinage.³⁶ And so, throughout the region, the household became yet another space where, as in political and religious life, indigenous and Spanish traditions and values would have to learn to co-exist.

This domestic closeness was one of the factors that increased Spanish anxieties, particularly religious anxieties, about colonialism.³⁷ These anxieties are reflected in the education system established by the Spanish for indigenous youth. From very early in the Spanish conquest of the New World, young men from the indigenous aristocracy were provided with a classical education, in particular instruction in Latin.³⁸ In effect, the conversation between Latin America and the ancient Mediterranean dates from the very beginning of the arrival of

³³ Lynch 1992.

³⁴ For more on the social hierarchies of colonial society in New Spain, see Cope, 1994.

³⁵ McCaa, Schwartz, & Grubessich 1979.

³⁶ Seed 1985.

³⁷ Kellogg 2000, p. 70.

³⁸ Cortés 2008.

Europeans, and it is important to examine this beginning to better understand its future development. This is because an examination of this origin point clearly demonstrates the extent to which mutual engagement and exchange is a continuously present feature of the dialogue around Greco-Roman antiquity in Latin America.

Andrew Laird has noted that many historians have failed to appreciate the centrality of Latin instruction to Franciscan missionary efforts in New Spain. Laird suggests that this omission is the result of a failure to recognize that the beginning of Franciscan educational efforts in the New World *precedes* the Council of Trent (1545-1563) by nearly two decades.³⁹ While the Council's decree that religious instruction should occur in the vernacular languages did serve to elevate the position of Castilian (and the indigenous languages as well) in the colonies, it did not prevent nor end Latin instruction in the region, because such instruction had already taken root.⁴⁰

The origins of Latin instruction and consequently classical education in Latin America can be traced to the arrival of Fray Pedro de Gante (Peter of Ghent) in New Spain in 1523. Called "the first educator of the Americas", Fray Pedro did not arrive with the original twelve evangelists who had come to Mexico under the leadership of Martín de Valencia. Rather, he arrived with two fellow Flemish clerics, Juan de Acra (Johann Van den Antwerp) and Juan de Tecto (Johann Dekkers). The trio settled in the city of Texcoco and was hosted by city's ruler (and Cortés's ally), King Ixtlilxóchitl. The city of Texcoco held a unique place in the intellectual history of Meso-America as it had once been the seat of two famed "philosopher-kings", Nezahualcoytl and his son Nezahualpilli.⁴¹

³⁹ Laird 2010, p. 174.

⁴⁰ Ong 1959.

⁴¹ Laird 2010, p. 176. For more on the Aztec philosopher kings and Aztec intellectual history more generally, see León-Portilla 2012.

Within two years, Fray Pedro (the sole survivor of the cohort) had learned Nahuatl and commenced to instruct the sons of the city's noble families in Christian doctrine, Castilian, and Latin. In 1527, he left Texcoco for Mexico City in order to found the first educational institution specifically oriented toward the education of indigenous youth: San José de los Naturales. The school was far from the minor project of a lone monk. In fact, it was sponsored by royal patronage and educated up to 1,000 children.⁴²

The success of San José de los Naturales encouraged the establishment of an institution of higher education for indigenous youth who graduated from the school. With the support of figures no less significant than the Viceroy of New Spain and the Bishop of Mexico, Pedro de Gante established the Colegio de Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco in what is today Mexico City on 6 January 1536. The Colegio provided a curriculum similar to the European universities of the era.⁴³ Signalling the Colegio's status as a proper institution of learning and not a mere centre for religious indoctrination, the library was filled with the significant texts of the Western canon, not just biblical and religious tracts. García Icazbalceta, a 19th-century bibliographer, has provided us with a partial catalogue of the institution's library. That catalogue includes the following authors: Plato, Aristotle, Plutarch, Cicero, Livy, Sallust, Pliny, *Quintilian*, Virgil, Marital, Juvenal, Prudentius, Sedulius, Josephus, Boethius, and Martianus Capella.⁴⁴

When the Synod of 1555 forbid the ordination of black, *mestizos*, and indigenous people, the Colegio had to abandon its goal of training young men for the priesthood and adopt the broader goal of preparing its students to be leaders within their own community. However, this rather modest aim was abandoned when the friars realised the talents of the students and their

⁴² Laird 2010.

⁴³ Abbott 1996, p.43.

⁴⁴ García Icazbalceta 1954.

ability to complete advanced work in the humanities. From that time forward, the Franciscans worked *with* their students, not only in order to translate Latin and Spanish texts into Nahuatl, but also to conduct extensive research into native culture. “The College which had begun as an evangelical finishing school was turning into a research institution.”⁴⁵ As such, the Colegio was a unique site at which Renaissance European Humanism and Meso-American culture came into direct contact and engaged in productive dialogue. The role of the scholars of the Colegio in preserving native histories and culture in a way that was authoritative to Westerners remains one of the Colegio’s enduring legacies.⁴⁶ The cataloguing and archiving of indigenous culture and its subsequent comparative study alongside Western cultural products was also critical in shaping post-Conquest indigenous identity.⁴⁷ A research institution at which the Western humanist tradition and indigenous systems of knowledge encounter one another as equals remains a rare accomplishment, and the legacy of the Colegio in shaping the future of Latin American contact with the Western tradition in general and the Western classical tradition in particular should not be underestimated. In the words of Andrew Laird, the educational and scholarly efforts that at the Colegio in the sixteenth century, “...infused an enduring multiculturalism into the Latin ‘humanism’ of Mexico which soon acquired, and retained, a distinctive identity.”⁴⁸

It should be noted that this generous view of the Colegio is not universally shared. In her 2004 essay in *College English*, “Tlaltelolco: The Grammatical-Rhetorical Indios of Colonial Mexico”, Susan Romano describes to the Colegio not as a “research institution” engaged in constructive cultural dialogue, but instead as a “site of active desire to erase native religious and

⁴⁵ Laird 2010, p. 180.

⁴⁶ Brian 2010, p. 125-127.

⁴⁷ For more on this subject, see Echevarría González 2006 and Higgins 2000.

⁴⁸ Laird 2010, p. 219.

cultural practices.”⁴⁹ Mignolo Walter has referred to the Colegio and similar Jesuit and Franciscan educational projects as a type of “intellectual colonialism” in which appearances of dialogue and hybridity are, in fact, tools to suppress and ultimately eradicated non-Western voices.⁵⁰

While there is no doubt of the Franciscan desire to convert the native population to Christianity, it is overly simplistic to declare a desire to erase native religious and cultural practices as the sole motive for their efforts. There is much to suggest that the Colegio was more than a site of cultural indoctrination along the lines of the boarding schools that would later be established to educate (and the verb is used here in its loosest sense) indigenous youth in North America and Australia.⁵¹ This fact is most powerfully pointed to by the centrality of the humanities in the Colegio’s curriculum and the cultural of *mutual* learning and inquiry which that curriculum fostered.⁵² By contrast, the North American and Australian boarding schools were almost exclusively vocational in their orientation and thus never encouraged the level of cultural engagement found at Tlaltelolco.

Among the evidence that refutes an interpretation of the Colegio as an institution in line with later indigenous boarding schools is the intense amount of objection that the Colegio attracted from the Spanish establishment as well as the way in which these objections were answered by the school’s proponents. As David A. Luper makes clear in his brilliant survey of the role of Greco-Roman antiquity in colonial Mexico *Romans in a New World*, it is doubtful that mere indoctrination camps, carefully toeing the party line, could have elicited the type of

⁴⁹ Romano 2004, p. 257.

⁵⁰ Walter 1995, p. 8.

⁵¹ For more on the native boarding schools in the U.S. and Canada, see Adams 1995.

⁵² For more on the curriculum of the Colegio and its wider intellectual implications in New Spain, see Vallejo 2007.

fear from those invested in the *status quo* as the Colegio often did.⁵³ Furthermore, it is difficult to believe that men driven only by evangelical zeal would have answered these objections in the manner which the Franciscans did.⁵⁴

Contemporary objections to the Colegio and the education of indigenous youth in the humanities were chiefly of two kinds. The first was that such an education for indigenous young people would be of little use to the state. The second objection was that giving this type of education to indigenous youth (as compared to a more vocationally oriented one) was, in fact, dangerous.⁵⁵ Some feared that having been given the knowledge of Latin as well as instruction in Church doctrine and history, the educated *indios* would be prone to fall into error and heresy. Once in such error, they might then spread it to their communities.⁵⁶ Others thought that too much information about the history of the Spaniards might ferment political rebellion among the native population. For example, on 25 February 1545, Jerónimos López reported back to the Spanish crown that the Franciscans were teaching the Nahuatl youth:

...the elegance of the Latin language, making them read various kinds of exact knowledge from which they have come to know the whole beginning of our history and where we come from and how we were subjugated by the Romans and converted from paganism to the faith and everything else that has been written about this, all of which inspires them to say that we too came from the pagans and were subjects and defeated and subjugated and were subjects to the Romans and revolted and rebelled and were converted to baptism so very many years ago and are not even yet good Christians, we who demand that they convert in so short a time. There are many Indians who have studied and are studying this sort of thing, and the friars in both the country districts and in Mexico City give them opportunities to preach, and they speak and preach

⁵³ Lupher 2003, p. 231.

⁵⁴ Townsend 2010.

⁵⁵ Gonzalbo 2008, p. 58.

⁵⁶ Laird 2010, p.179.

what they like about these and other things that that take their fancy.⁵⁷

The Franciscan historian Juan de Torquemada, who is most famous for his mammoth 1615 history of the indigenous population of Mexico entitled *Los veinte y un libros rituales y Monarchia Indiana*, refuted these objections and (most rightfully) implied that the root of these objections lay in unfounded prejudice.⁵⁸ To the first objection, de Torquemada noted that from these educated natives the Franciscans had learned indigenous languages and that the students of the Colegio had assisted in the translation of materials used in the religious instruction of other indigenous people. To the second objection, de Torquemada needed to only point out the obvious. Anyone might fall into heresy or rebellion. There was no reason to suspect that the indigenous inhabitants of the Americas were more prone than others.⁵⁹

It should also be noted that the culture of the Colegio managed to produce many students who went on to be formidably intellectual forces in their own rights. These included indigenous men who not only translated Nahuatl texts into Latin, but also wrote original Latin compositions. Andrew Laird correctly calls this body of work “an important part of Mexico’s cultural patrimony and constitute an exceptional body of humanist writing that was not produced by monks or priests.”⁶⁰ Three of the most prominent sixteenth-century indigenous Mexican writers in Latin are known by the Hispanized names Antonio Valeriano, Antonio de Huitziméngari and Pablo Nazareo. Of these three, only the work of Nazareo survives in any significant quantity.⁶¹

An accomplished scholar and engaged political player, Nazareo embodies what the Colegio desired for its students. For example, although a laymen, Nazareo ultimately became

⁵⁷ Lupher 2003, p. 231.

⁵⁸ Laird 2010, p. 179.

⁵⁹ Megged 1995.

⁶⁰ Laird 2010, p. 182.

⁶¹ For more on these writers, see Wood 2012.

rector of Colegio. He also produced a large body of writing, from commentaries to translations to letters. Among his efforts are included three letters in Latin written to the Spanish Crown: two letters to Philip II written in 1556 and 1566 and one letter to Philip's third wife, Isabel of Valois, written in 1561. In these letters, Nazareo pleads for the restoration of privileges and property that he believes he is due and that would serve to alleviate his poverty.⁶² And Nazareo was not the only prominent native to use Latin as a means to appeal to the Crown when efforts in Spanish had failed. This fact is clearly demonstrated by Andrew Laird in his 2011 essay "Aztec Latin in Sixteenth-Century Mexico: A Letter from the Rulers of Azcaputzalco to Philip II of Spain February 1561".⁶³

Letters such as these as well as the translation of native literature into Latin bears witness to the extent to which the Colegio played host to what even Susan Romero describes as "mutual learning, co-authoring, and forms of collaborative inquiry".⁶⁴ Thus the Colegio shows that "the conventional opposition between colonizer and colonized, between observer and subject, and between missionary and convert could sometimes be destabilized."⁶⁵ This is an important feature in Latin American classical reception and suggests a reason why the Classics continue to have currency outside of mainstream and so-called high culture venues throughout the region. Also it points to a reason why the classical tradition ultimately served as a point of reference for individuals across the cultural spectrum in Latin America as they sought to negotiate the new multicultural landscape in which they found themselves.

The scholarly efforts produced from the Colegio also show us that works from the ancient world were particularly important points of reference during intercultural dialogue for both the

⁶² Laird 2010, p. 182.

⁶³ For more on this, see Schroeder 1995.

⁶⁴ Romano 2004, p. 259.

⁶⁵ Laird 2010, p.170.

colonizers and the colonized in colonial Latin America.⁶⁶ While this might not be surprising with regards to the Spanish, it is actually quite staggering when you consider how indigenous people made use of the classical tradition during the Colonial period. Indigenous leaders had the classical arsenal at their disposal as a result of the education provided to them by the Franciscans. At the same time, Spaniards made varying attempts to sort through the consequences of the imperial project with reference to their subjugated position within the Roman Empire. Once again, a mutually engaged in dialogue was the order of the day.

Certainly in religious and cultural matters, the ancient Mediterranean provided a good point of reference. For medieval priests (and the priests who arrived in the New World were still deeply connected to a medieval ethos), pagan gods were pagan gods.⁶⁷ Some went so far as to suggest that the gods worshiped in Tlatelolco were the very same demonic deities as those who had been worshiped in Rome and Athens before the coming of Christ.⁶⁸ They had merely taken up residence elsewhere and would have to be driven out again. As Blaise D. Staples eloquently describes it in his 2003 essay in *Arion* “Graeco-Roman Ruins in the New World”, “Old European gods were discovered in the New World being worshipped, albeit reconfigured, in a strange new pantheon...”⁶⁹ Staples goes on to note the ways in which classical antiquity proved much more helpful in negotiating this intercultural dialogue than Biblical sources. He writes, “Their libraries of Greek and Latin classical texts had prepared the Spanish fathers for their meeting with the fabulous creatures of the New World’s mythology, but their sacred texts and commentaries had not.”⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Gonzalbo 2008 and Cortés 2008.

⁶⁷ For more on the cultural context of the Spanish clergy in the New World, see Leddy 1970.

⁶⁸ The most famous colonial era comparison of Meso-American and Greco-Roman religions is Bartolomé de las Casas’s *Apologética histora*. An excellent examination of the *Apologética* as it relates to the present subject can be found in Luper 2006, p. 259-288.

⁶⁹ Staples 2003, p. 22.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

The cultural exchanges and inquiries that occurred at the Colegio frequently turned to the ancient Greco-Roman myths which were not only used to explain religious differences, but more worldly ones as well. The use of the ancient world as a means of understanding indigenous family life is an important, but often overlooked, feature of the intercultural exchange of New Spain. Domestic arrangements were becoming an increasingly complicated matter in Latin America as the colonial era continued. Polygyny had been prevalent in pre-Hispanic Latin America. The elimination of polygyny is one of the earliest examples of the European conquerors effecting a widespread change in native culture.⁷¹ That being said, this was far from a rapid transformation, and polygyny was still quite common even into the 1540s.⁷² Polygyny is just one example of the many differences that existed between native and European domestic and family cultural practices. As intermarriage between the two communities increased, it became increasingly important to understand and reconcile these differences.⁷³

One could see in the Greco-Roman stories family dynamics that reflected many of the traditional dynamics within Aztec society that were coming under increasing pressure from the Catholic Church. The Olympian household became a way for the indigenous inhabitants of New Spain to explain their religion, families, and homes to the newcomers. For the Spanish, the myths of the ancient world provided an insight into times and places where religious and family life were very different from their own. The myths provided a space where it was acceptable to explore these differences, even as the Catholic Church increasingly sought to exert great control over cultural and religious practices throughout Christendom.⁷⁴

⁷¹ For more on Aztec family life and its changing shape under Spanish rule, see Kellogg 1986.

⁷² McCaa 1994, p. 14.

⁷³ Voss 2008.

⁷⁴ For more on Catholicism in colonial New Spain, see Megged 1996.

As mentioned above, intermarriage between the European and indigenous populations in Latin America was much more common than in North America. The children that resulted from these unions were (and are) known as *mestizo* and came to represent an increasingly large portion of the population. Frequently they were culturally most connected to their European ancestry, and they became increasingly resentful of the legal and social disadvantages which their indigenous ancestry placed upon them.⁷⁵ Likewise, *criollos* (American-born children of dual-European parentage) also came to increasingly resent their subjugation to the *pennisulares* (individuals who had been born in Europe). Inspired by the events of the American and French Revolutions, they began to form a political alliance which would unleash a series of successful wars for independence throughout the region. Between 1800 and 1830 nearly 75% of the continent became independent from its colonial overlords.⁷⁶ The revolutions in Latin America, however, were far from popular uprisings. The rich *criollos* and *mestizos* who lead the revolutions were among the elite, and they were anxious not to share their privilege with others. Indigenous people and those of African descent as well as poor *criollos* and *mestizos* remained in near serfdom. The rigid class structure in the region would far outlast the colonial society that had created it.⁷⁷

Additionally, the revolutions would not bring about the end of foreign influence in the region. Even before the last shots of revolution were fired, the United States was beginning a policy of “influence” in Latin America known as the Monroe Doctrine (after the president under whose administration the policy was first formulated).⁷⁸ Over the course of the next century, the United States would increasingly insert itself into Latin American affairs. More often than not,

⁷⁵ For more on the role of native ancestry in the construction of the Mexican Revolution, see Dawson 2004.

⁷⁶ Andrews 1985.

⁷⁷ For more on revolutions lead by economic and cultural elites, see Trimberger 1972.

⁷⁸ Cottam 1994 provides a comprehensive history of U.S. intervention throughout the region.

the United States would support elite interests throughout the region, propping up dictatorial regimes and using its economic and military might to control the situation in the region. In the past three decades, this intervention has been conducted under the cloak of the War on Drugs.⁷⁹

Disagreements over U.S. intervention in the region have created the other prominent divide in Latin American politics. Strangely, the extent to which the U.S. is involved in countries throughout Central and South America is rather unknown in the United States. This has created a rather peculiar situation which has significant consequences on the American political landscape as well as the Latin American one.

Defining Latin America

The above history focused on regions largely considered to be within Latin America, but the borders of this region are a highly contested question. Therefore, a principal challenge for any study focused on Latin America is to define what the term actually means. This task begins with the reality that defining *Latin America* is not just a purely academic question since the answer has very practical, political implications. Moreover, at first glance, it is not entirely obvious that the region known as Latin America should be considered a single unit at all. It is almost impossible to create geographically continuous, ethnically, linguistically, and/or culturally homogenous Latin America. Ethnicity fails as a criteria. Argentina, for example, has a population that is primarily of European ancestry, though not just Spanish and Portuguese, but Italian, German, and Dutch. Brazil has a large number of citizens who have African ancestry.⁸⁰ There are sizable Japanese communities in both Brazil and Argentina.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Bagley 1988 and Youngers 2005.

⁸⁰ Telles 2014, p. 80-109. Also see, Winant 1992; Agier 1995; and Sheriff 2001.

⁸¹ Toit 1991, p. 78.

This ethnic diversity is reflected in linguistic diversity as well. Undoubtedly there are a large number of Romance language speakers south of the Rio Grande. Perhaps this might qualify the region as being *Latin*. But Spanish and Portuguese are hardly the only languages spoken in Latin America. English is the national language in Belize, and Dutch is in Suriname.⁸² There are between 2,000 and 5,000 Welsh speakers in southern Argentina.⁸³ A variety of indigenous languages also continue to enjoy widespread use, most notably the Quecha language of Peru.⁸⁴ Moreover, what should then be made of those who speak Romance languages in territory widely considered to be North America? The United States is home to around 45 million Spanish-speakers, making it the second largest Spanish-speaking country on earth.⁸⁵ Is the United States part of Latin America? What about the French speakers of North America? Perhaps the Quebecois or the Creoles of New Orleans should be forced to move further to the south.

The fact is that it is not necessarily striking that there would be such a place as Latin America is demonstrated by history as well. For the first decade after Europeans reached the Americas, no one suspected that they had arrived in the *Americas*, and the indigenous people of the continent would have agreed. They lived in *Anáhuac* or *Tawantinsuyu* or any number of indigenous provinces.⁸⁶ The Americas were not called as such until 1507 when a Lorraine cartographer named Martin Waldseemüller gave the name to the new landmass west of Europe.⁸⁷ Waldseemüller was most likely inspired by the letters of Amerigo Vespucci, a Florentine cartographer who sailed to the New World under the Portuguese flag and wrote two famed letters back to the old one: *Mundus Novus* and *Lettera di Amerigo Vespucci delle isole nuovamente*

⁸² For more on the complexities of language in both countries, see Carrington 1976 and St-Hillaire 1999.

⁸³ William 1993, p. 239.

⁸⁴ Mar-Molinero 2000, p. 253.

⁸⁵ Shin 2010.

⁸⁶ Beardsell 2003, p. 70.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

*trovate in quattro suoi viaggi.*⁸⁸ Whether or not Vespucci ever made it to the Americas has of late been called into question, but his letters were just two among a plethora of letters and journals published about the newly discovered continent in the years immediately following Columbus's voyage. Vespucci managed to gain the edge over the competition, because his letters described a much more entertaining landscape than his competitors. Cities of gold and dog-head men make regular appearances in Vespucci's accounts.⁸⁹ There is no doubt that he is a less than trustworthy narrator. The question is whether he was exaggerating real journeys or if he conjured the entire thing from thin air. Ironically, despite these questions, it is Amerigo Vespucci (and not any of the number of confirmed early European travelers to the Americas) who would give his name to the new continent.

The term *Latin America* came much later and has as questionable of an origin. *Latin America* was coined in the early nineteenth century by the French free-market liberal Michel Chevalier.⁹⁰ Chevalier divided the world's population into five racial regions: Teutonic Europe, Latin Europe, Slavic Europe, Anglo-Saxon America and Latin America. Chevalier argued that Latin America shared a natural affinity with Latin Europe, just as Teutonic Europe and Anglo-Saxon America held much in common.⁹¹ He based his theory on perceived ethnic, linguistic, and (one cannot doubt) religious similarities between each pair. Chevalier relied heavily on Victorian sociological and anthropological theories, particularly those concerning race.

Chevalier's work has been the foundation for our understanding of the distinction between Latin America and North America.⁹² It is rather odd that his scheme has maintained

⁸⁸ Rabasa 1993 and Hessler 2008. For more on Amerigo Vespucci, see Fernández-Armesto 2007. For more on Martin Waldseemüller (thought from a slightly dated source), see Stevenson 1904.

⁸⁹ To read part of Vespucci's account: see Vespucci 1894.

⁹⁰ For discussions of Latin America by Chevalier, see the following: Chevalier 1837; Chevalier 1845; Chevalier 1845 (b); Chevalier 1863; Chevalier 1864.

⁹¹ Mignolo 1991, p.77-86.

⁹² Drolet 2008, p. 123.1

such widespread acceptance considering that the nineteenth-century ideas about race on which this distinction is based are fairly scandalous to modern ears.

Whatever prejudices underlined Chevalier's schema, throughout the 19th and into the early 20th centuries, intellectuals from the region became increasingly interested in promoting the idea of Latin America as well, eager to create a separate cultural identity to match their new political independence.⁹³ This was not without good reason. Latin America has been subject to outsiders for nearly five hundred years now, from European colonizers to the United States. While European powers have largely withdrawn from the region, the United States has been ever more involved. In fact, it is arguably in Latin America where the United States first tested its interventionist policies.⁹⁴ The long history of U.S. intervention in Latin America (like all similar histories) has been complex and frequently violent. *Pobre México, tan lejos de Dios y tan cerca de los Estados Unidos* goes an old refrain widely attributed to Don Porfirio Díaz, Mexico's most famous revolutionary-cum-dictator.⁹⁵ This is a sentiment that is not only familiar to Mexico but to the other nations south of the United States' border. As we shall see throughout this study, for over a hundred years and particularly since the Second World War, a desire to challenge American cultural hegemony has led many in Latin America to embrace French culture. The *Latin* in Latin has been seen as a way rhetorically to reinforce this bond. For example, Torres Caicedo, a Colombian intellectual and unapologetic Francophile, was a key figure in promoting the notion of *Latin America*.⁹⁶ For educated creoles like Caicedo, *Latinidad* was a tool by which they could effectively Europeanize themselves by highlighting their linguistic and cultural

⁹³ Ardao 1980.

⁹⁴ Gradin 2007.

⁹⁵ Poor Mexico, so far from God and so close to the United States.

⁹⁶ W. Mignolo 1991, p. 59.

commonality with Spain, Portugal, and (increasingly) France.⁹⁷ This, in turn, also distanced them from the African and indigenous inhabitants of the region. If these creole elites were to be racialized, they increasingly sought to insure that they were “white”.⁹⁸

The racial anxiety which helped to form and perpetuate the concept of Latin America in the 19th century has preserved and perpetuated the concept in the 20th century as well. However, instead of concerning the European vs. indigenous or European vs. African racial tensions that underpinned 19th-century constructions of *Latin America*, 20th-century constructions of Latin America have been largely shaped by Hispanophobia and the subsequent rejection of it. This Hispanophobia, for its part, is deeply entangled with 19th-century racial ideology.⁹⁹

In Spanish-language scholarship, northern European and North American prejudice toward all things connected with the Iberian Peninsula (*Hispanophobia*) is known widely as *la leyenda negra* – the Black Legend.¹⁰⁰ The term was first popularized in 1912 by Julián Juderías y Loyot in his book *La leyenda negra: Estudios acerca del concepto de España*.¹⁰¹ Julián Juderías y Loyot described the nature and origins of this “black legend” thus:

...el ambiente creado por los relatos fantásticos que acerca de nuestra patria han visto la luz pública en todos los países, las descripciones grotescas que se han hecho siempre del carácter de los españoles como individuos y colectividad, la negación o por lo menos la ignorancia sistemática de cuanto es favorable y hermoso en las diversas manifestaciones de la cultura y del arte, las acusaciones que en todo tiempo se han lanzado sobre España fundándose para ello en hechos exagerados, mal interpretados o falsos en su totalidad, y, finalmente, la afirmación contenida en libros al parecer respetables y verídicos y muchas veces reproducida, comentada y ampliada en la Prensa extranjera, de que nuestra Patria constituye, desde el punto de vista de la tolerancia,

⁹⁷ Fowler 1995, p. 290.

⁹⁸ For more on race in 19th-century Latin America, see Graham 2010 and Stepan 1991.

⁹⁹ Navagero 2001, p. 39.

¹⁰⁰ For more on *la leyenda negra* and its consequences, see DeGuzman 2005; Powell 2001; and Greer 2007.

¹⁰¹ Arnoldsson 1960.

de la cultura y del progreso político, una excepción lamentable dentro del grupo de las naciones europeas.¹⁰²

Juderías's complaint that his nation has been portrayed as "una excepción lamentable dentro del grupo de las naciones europeas" points to a link with the racialized creation of Latin America in the 19th-century which pitted the European against the non-European Other (whether that Other was indigenous or African). The *leyenda negra*, Juderías and subsequent scholars have argued, arose from various Spanish and Spanish-American military victories over English, German, French, and Anglo-American forces.¹⁰³ The non-Spanish narrative of these events (argued Juderías) places the "Nordic hero" in direct conflict with the Spanish villain and, in doing so, gives rise to Hispanophobia in all its incarnations.¹⁰⁴

The Tree of Hate, Philip Wayne Powell and Robert Y. Himmerich's exhaustive treatment of Hispanophobia in general and the Black Legend in particular offers the following definition of the Black Legend:

The main pillars upon which the anti-Spanish Black Legend rests are: (1) the fear, envy, and hatred of those—mainly Italians, Germans, French, English, Dutch, Jews, and Portuguese—who clashed with Spanish political, military, economic, or religious power in Europe during some four centuries after the fourteenth; (2) similar antagonism of those people and nations—especially Dutch, English, French, and Portuguese—who challenged Spanish ways in the New World; (3) purposeful defamation of certain individual Spaniards [e.g. Torquemada, Philip II] and Spanish policies, actions, and institutions [e.g., Inquisition, New World conquest and

¹⁰² Juderías y Loyot 2003, p. 6:..the atmosphere created by the fantastic stories about our country have emerged all over the world. The grotesque descriptions that have always been made about the character of Spaniards as individuals and collectively, the denial (or at least systematic ignorance) of what is good and beautiful in the various manifestations of our art and culture; the accusations which have forever been launched at Spain on the basis of these exaggerated facts, misinterpreted or false in their entirety; and finally, the statements of books which appear respectable and true and are publicized in the foreign press that state that our country with respect to tolerance and cultural and political progress, an unfortunate exception among the nations of Europe.

¹⁰³ Navagero 2001, p. 41.

¹⁰⁴ Powell 2001, p.6-7; p.166-91.

exclusivism, sack of Rome]-mainly by writers from rival nations; (4) the merging of the residues of 1, 2, and 3 into a broader, more intellectualized denigration of Spain as the “horrible example” of all that the Enlightenment was supposed to flog [Church-State evils, intolerance, traditionalism, obscurantism], rationalized and dogmatized in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; (5) uncritical popular and, more significantly, intellectual acceptance of anti-Spanish distortions, especially in those nations and peoples shaping Western ways of thought after Spain lost hegemony in Europe.¹⁰⁵

While seemingly grounded in geo-politics, there is also a significant racial element in the origin of the Black Legend, particularly anti-semitic and anti-Arab sentiment. This fact has been highlighted by the Swedish scholar Sverker Arnoldness who describes the early Italian origin of the Black Legend as follows:

The intervention of Spanish monarchs and their soldiery—their victories and conquest in Sicily Sardinia, and the Italian Peninsula—is certainly one of the important factors in explanation of the oldest Italian version of the Leyenda Negra. In all this, there is rooted the image of the hidalgo as a rustic uncultured human type barbarous and ridiculously ceremonious. Another factor is the competition of Catalan merchants with Italians, as well as Catalan piracy in Greek and Italian waters. Here is the basis for the view of the Catalan as treacherous, avaricious, and unscrupulous. A third factor is the migration of Spanish strumpets to Italy and observation of certain customs in the Aragonese-Neapolitan court and also, the atmosphere around the Valencian Pope Alexander Borgia. In these things, there is founded the image of the excessively sensual and immoral Spaniard. ***A fourth factor is the age-long mixture of Spanish and Oriental and African elements, plus the Jewish and Islamic influence upon Spanish culture; this motivated the view of the Spaniards as people of inferior race and doubtful orthodoxy.***¹⁰⁶

Rather fascinatingly, the taint of anti-Spanish sentiment has infected the whole of the southern part of the Americas despite the vast ethnic and linguistic diversity of the region on

¹⁰⁵ Powell, 2001, p.10

¹⁰⁶ Arnoldsson 1960, cited and translated in Navagero 2001, p. 40-41. Emphasis is mine.

account of an image of a region which is seen only as “Spanish-America”.¹⁰⁷ Thus, the descendants of Portuguese, German, Dutch, and Italian colonists are afflicted by the very stigma that their forefathers helped to create. For practical purposes, the consequence both of anti-Spanish sentiment and the conflation of all the people and land south of the Rio Grande into a homogeneously Spanish society has lent a great deal of aid to creating the Latin American “Other”.¹⁰⁸ It is possible to see *Latin America* as a very different part of the Americas imbued with all the attributes once attributed to the Spanish: greed, sloth, disorder, and tyranny. From this it can then be happily proclaimed that in North America, English-America (if you will), the people are philanthropic, industrious, orderly, and free.¹⁰⁹

At Least France is Not America: French Political Thought in Latin America

Such a view has had widespread repercussions. In Latin America, it is no secret that the United States meddles in the region. This has inevitably led to resentment and (understandable) anti-American sentiment throughout the region, particularly on the political Left.¹¹⁰ The region has often been on the losing end of U.S. support. For this reason, France and French culture have come to have significant influence in Latin America in the sense that they have been felt to serve as a counterbalance to the United States.¹¹¹ This thesis relies heavily on an analysis of a particular element of this phenomenon.

In the twentieth century, particularly since the end of the Second World War, Franco-American antagonism has run the gambit from the serious to the silly. Everyone knows that an “American in Paris” should result in much entertainment, and we need not forget “freedom

¹⁰⁷ Beardsell 2003, p.106-15.

¹⁰⁸ Kang 2010, p. 558.

¹⁰⁹ DeGuzman 2005. Nowhere might this be more obvious than in the “English-only” debates in the United States. For more on “English-only and its link to Hispanophobia, see Zentella 1997.

¹¹⁰ For general histories of U.S.-Latin American relations, see P. H. Smith 1996; Gilderhus 2000; and Schoultz 1998.

¹¹¹ Quijano 2000, p. 218-222.

fries”. The idea of the United States and France representing two opposite, competing poles has manifested itself in a variety of ways, mainly in the two nations in question.¹¹² This is what makes the Latin American example so fascinating. Latin America has entered into this debate heavily on the side of France. Lacan, for example, is taught in the psychology departments of universities throughout Latin America. This almost never happens in North America or in Europe outside of France.¹¹³ Moreover, politicians and political theorists in Latin America sprinkle their talk with concepts like *republican universalism* and rail against Anglo-Saxon contamination of labor laws in a way that would make any Frenchman proud.¹¹⁴

The Latin American affection for French political language dates to the French Revolution, which was largely responsible for independence movements throughout the region.¹¹⁵ Latin America was one of the first sites of European colonialism, but it was also one of the first regions to gain independence. The period of Latin American revolutions against the European powers, therefore, coincides with and relates to the revolutionary upheaval of nineteenth-century France. Napoleonic reforms to the civil and criminal code deeply influenced newly Latin American nations and continue to shape the legal and political landscape of those countries.¹¹⁶ Matthew C. Mirow, a law professor at Florida International University’s College of Law, is by the far the most prolific Anglophone scholar on influence of the Napoleonic Code on Latin American law. Mirow routinely notes the larger significance of legal codification as a “message” of sorts. He observes as follows:

The independence of Latin America from Spanish rule fell firmly with the period identified by a noted legal historian as the “age of

¹¹² See Mathy 2000 and Carroll 2012.

¹¹³ Kemberg 1993, p. 56.

¹¹⁴ For more on Latin American political rhetoric, see Alan 1998.

¹¹⁵ Robertson 1939 and Houdaille 1956.

¹¹⁶ For a general overview of Latin American legal systems and their relationship to civil systems in Europe generally, see Merryman 2007.

codification.” There was a congruity of purpose in codifying law and in throwing off the yoke of a colonial oppressor. With the code, legislators could rewrite the structure of society in simple terms that were known to all. Feudal relationships and privileges imbedded in rank and nobility could be swept away. The enlightenment values of life, liberty, and property for all could be etched into the new law.¹¹⁷

The Hungarian legal scholar Csaba Varga highlights even more explicitly the connection between legal codification and the broader socio-political context:

If we now look at codification not simply as a technical instrument in the formal organization of law but as a means of *the political power of the state to assert a central will uniformly in the whole community*, then we can explore yet another feature generally characteristic of codification. In respect of its ultimate effect, codification is nothing but a means for the state to assert its domination by shaping and controlling law.

As a matter of fact, codification is the means, and also the product of the transformation of law from its role being an agent of preserving the traditional framework of everyday life to being an agent to formulate and also to assert the arbitrary will of the ruler, effective by its formal enactment and open to further development in any direction through formally controlled processes.¹¹⁸

When we understand legal codification as a significant manifestation of political thought, the importance of France’s influence upon Latin American political thought becomes clearer. It also becomes easier to understand how France has also provided a model of democratic government not obviously tied to the United States, a country which has frequently undermined the execution of democratic principles in the region.¹¹⁹

All this is to say that, for many in contemporary Latin America, to imagine Europe is to imagine France. Not necessarily as France is, but as what it could symbolize, a place that is not

¹¹⁷ Mirow 2000, p. 86. For other works by Mirow on this topic, see Mirow 2001 and Mirow 2004.

¹¹⁸ Csaba 2011, p. 334.

¹¹⁹ Mirow 2004

American, a place where artists rather than cowboys are famous, where culture and fashion rule the day and everyone is very, very sophisticated.

Doxology of Postcolonial Classical Reception

With this background in mind, we turn now to the principal scholarly efforts on which this current study is based. An interest in the reception of Greco-Roman antiquity in Latin America is part of the much larger study of postcolonial Classical reception. A May 2004 conference in Birmingham, U.K. entitled *Classics in Post-Colonial Worlds* and the 2007 volume by the same name (edited by Lorna Hardwick and Carol Gillespie and published as part of Oxford University Press's *Classical Presence* series) in many ways mark the origin point for classical reception studies focusing on the postcolonial context. While there had most certainly been important explorations of the reception of Greco-Roman antiquity in postcolonial societies, particularly with respect to Greek drama, *Classics in Post-Colonial Worlds* is significant in that it signals the engagement of classicists in this subject.

Rightly, therefore, in the introduction to this volume, Lorna Hardwick outlines the central challenges for classicists working on postcolonial issues. Citing a 2005 meeting of the Fellows of the African Leadership Initiative during which Jean Anouilh's *Antigone* was the center of the discussion, Hardwick asks the following:

Are classicists justified in pointing to the importance of the Sophocles' text for debates about how rulers should think and act? Or should they shudder at yet another possible example of cultural imperialism with invocation of the authority of classical material in order to shape the development of independent nations? And what changes in perceptions of the ancient world, its ideologies and its writing and artifacts are created and embedded by contemporary activities that

explore, interpret and translate them into other languages and cultures?¹²⁰

Many of the essays in this book as well as much subsequent scholarship on the subject has sought to deal with these issues, because the history of Classics inevitably complicates the involvement of the classicist in any space touched by colonialism. In *Classics in Post-Colonial Worlds*, Felix Budelmann offers one of the most thoughtful mediations on the problems of Classics and the postcolonial:

...Classics as a discipline comes with heavy colonized baggage. As Lorna Hardwick has pointed out, studying postcolonial responses to Greek tragedy is one way of confronting this baggage. Yet, thirdly, there is a further motivation that I think should not be ignored. Over the last ten to twenty years, postcolonial studies have been a success story more than Classics. Postcolonial studies are attacked for their political opinion making (what stronger testimony could there be to their perceived strength?), while Classics fights a battle against charges of being outdated and quite simply superfluous. One (by no means, of course, the only) of the attractions of reception studies in general is that they allow classicists to get a share of the vibrancy of subjects such as theatre or twentieth century literature.

...However, as a classicist the question that I find difficult to avoid at this point is what Classics has to offer to postcolonial studies or... to postcolonial literary studies, in return.¹²¹

The question as to what the relationship between not only Classics and the postcolonial should be is central as reception studies moves into postcolonial contexts. Arguably, for these relationships to be productive, *dialogue* (both as a component of the theoretical framework and of the methodological approach) must be central. To this end, the efforts of those working on reception as it relates to the African diaspora have provided a particularly excellent role model. For example, Emily Greenwood's 2010 *Afro-Greeks: Dialogues between Anglophone Caribbean*

¹²⁰ Hardwick 2007, p. 1.

¹²¹ Budelmann 2007, p. 36-37.

Literature and Classics in the Twentieth Century does not merely pay lip service to the concept of dialogue but actively utilizes it to explore the ways in which twentieth-century Caribbean writers have *actively* engaged with ancient Greece and Rome in an exchange that includes them as lively participants. In the introductory chapter of *Afro-Greeks*, Greenwood elucidates what she means by *dialogue* and suggests some ways in which classicists might contribute to postcolonial studies, avoiding the one-sided relationship against which Budelmann warns:

At first sight the word “dialogue” in my title may seem counterintuitive. However, a fundamental tenant of my argument is that the reception of ancient Greece and Rome in Anglophone Caribbean literature works both ways. This is a study of how Caribbean authors have “received” Greece and Rome, as well as how they have returned original conceptions of Greco-Roman texts. We learn not just what Greece and Rome signify in the Caribbean, but also how Caribbean authors signify Greco-Roman texts.

...Caribbean literature has successfully thrown off many of the extraneous cultural plots and narratives that were put upon the region during its colonial past, but the literatures of Greece and Rome still await decolonization. Paradoxically, it is in the fields of colonial discourse theory and postcolonialism that this decolonization is most urgently needed. Through false genealogies and cultural traditions masked as historical continuities, ancient Greece is often carelessly and erroneously linked with modern Europe, as though they shared a single continuous history...insofar as “Greece” makes it into contemporary postcolonial theory at all, it tends to be carelessly subsumed in loose, totalizing descriptors such as “the west”, “European cultural heritage”, “European *imperium*”, “western history”, “western *imperium*”, “western episteme”, “occidental knowledge”, or even more loosely, phrases such as “the imperial tradition” or “the colonial archive”.¹²²

This aim to mutual dialogue and benefit pervades many other studies of the reception of Greco-Roman antiquity in the African diaspora, including Patrice Rankine’s 2006 book *Ulysses*

¹²² Greenwood 2010, p. 2-3.

in Black: Ralph Ellison, Classicism, and African American Literature and Barbara Goff and Michael Simpson's 2007 *Crossroads in the Black Aegean: Oedipus, Antigone, and the Dramas of the African Diaspora*. It has been in this spirit that the current study is undertaken, not only because it to be the most intellectual productive, but also because it is the most ethical as well.

Doxology of Classical Reception Research Focusing on Latin America

The Latin language has, quite rightly, been central to the study of the reception of Greco-Roman culture in Latin America. Under the influence of a more general interest in the phenomenon of (post)colonial Classical Reception, there has been a growing body of research on the Latin American reception of Greco-Roman culture, both in the colonial period and beyond.

Scholarship centered on the colonial period has been predominately focused on the geographic area of present-day Mexico and the role of the Latin language in Spanish colonial education and culture. Along these lines, David Luper's fascinating and seminal 2003 book *Romans in the New World: Classical Models in Sixteenth Century Spanish America* explores not only how the legacy of Roman influenced Spain's understanding of its own imperial project, but also how the teaching of Roman history and Latin literature to elite indigenous youth affected their perceptions of Western culture and their own culture. Andrew Laird further explores these themes, with particular attention to the epic tradition, in his 2006 book *The Epic of America: An Introduction to Rafael Landívar and the Rusticatio Mexicana*. In *The Epic of America*, Laird explores the role of neo-Latin in colonial Latin American literature; a fascinating and long neglected subject that integrates well with Laird's other important work on the reception of Vergil in colonial Mexico. On this later subject, Laird has published an important contribution to *A Companion to Vergil's Aeneid and its Tradition* (2010) entitled "The *Aeneid* from the Aztecs

to the Dark Virgin: Vergil, Native Tradition, and Latin Poetry in Colonial Mexico from Sahagún's *Memoriales* (1563) to Villerías' *Guadalupe* (1724)".

While the work done on the colonial period has a significant focus on the reception of Latin and Roman history, there is greater emphasis placed on the Greek tradition in research with a chronological focus in the postcolonial period. This research is still very much, if not in its infancy, then in its adolescents; however, it is clear that there is interest in the subject both in within Classics and beyond. Thus far, the most visible and important manifestation of this interest is a 2012 special edition of *Romance Quarterly* entitled, "Reception of Greek and Roman Drama in Latin America" and guest edited by Konstantinos P. Nikoloutsos. This was an extension of Dr. Nikoloutsos's referred panel on the same topic at the 2012 annual conference of the American Philological Society (now the American Society of Classical Studies). Finally, most recently, a two-day, international conference was held at University College London in June 2014. This was the first event of its kind on the other side of the Atlantic.

Doxology of Recent Scholarship on Latin American Theatre in Anglo-American Academia

The final broad category of scholarship that must be reviewed before our analysis can begin is recent scholarship on Latin American theatre in the Anglo-American academy. Two projects have dominated this area: The Hemispheric Institute at New York University and *Out of the Wings*, an AHRC-funded project at King's College London.

The Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics is housed at NYU's prestigious Tisch School of the Arts and was founded in 1998 as a collaborative project by Diana Taylor, Zeca Ligéro, and Luis Periano. From its inception, H.I. has been a multidisciplinary and multilingual project that has been a hub for dialogue across disciplinary and national borders. As such, it is not surprising that its most visible public presence has been a series of *encuentros* held throughout the Americas. The first of which was held in Rio de Janeiro in 2000. These

gatherings have evolved into biannual festivals that bring together scholars, artists, and activists around issues related to performance and politics throughout the Americas.

H.I. also has a wide publishing footprint, both in traditional print and online. Since 2004, it has published *e-misférica*, a trilingual online journal twice a year. Issue topics have included “Dissidence”, “Archives”, “Performance and Law”, “Aboriginal Performance”, “Sexualities in the Americas”, “Affect and Performance”, and “Body Politics/Corpografias”. This popular and important journal has been joined by three important online publishing forms, *SCALAR*, *Hemipress*, and *Web cuadernos*. These three platforms that are able to publish long-form scholarship in a blog-like format offer the important advantage of being able to provide rapid and democratic access to scholarship, artistic productions, and activist work related to performance and scholarship throughout the Americas to all interested parties, regardless of economic and geographic limitations.

This eye to providing material with wide distribution potential has even been evident in H.I.’s publications in traditional print as well. This is evidenced by a commitment to providing online content connected to some of their printed material. The Institute has supported the publication of several edited and single-author publications, including *Performing Religion in the Américas: Media, Politics and Devotional Practices of the 21st Century* (Seagull 2007), *Stages of Conflict: A Critical Anthology of Latin American Theater and Performance* (Michigan UP 2008), and *Holy Terrors: Latin American Women Performance* (Duke UP 2003).

The second project that has significantly increase Anglophonic access to Latin American theatre has been the ARHC-funded project *Out of the Wings: Spanish and Spanish American Theatre*. This collaborative project between King’s College London, Queen’s University Belfast, and Oxford University seeks to make both Iberian and Latin American theatre available to

English-speaking scholars and practitioners. Their evolving, but already comprehensive, online database of Spanish-language theatre divide into three categories: Golden Age, Modern Spanish, and Spanish American. While this division in some ways obliterates many of the historical and geographic distinctions present in Latin America (a sort of dismissal that does not seem to occur to their Iberian counterparts), this database and the project as a whole is an important step to gaining wider, global recognition of the important contributions of Latin American theatre.

In Search of a Primitive Magic: Magical Realism, Primitivism and Greek Tragedy

That the term *magical realism* was coined by a European at first seems rather incomprehensible. The genre is so closely associated with Latin America that it seems strange that anyone but a Latin American could have invented the phrase. Of course, once one has explored the origins of that coinage not only do the term's European roots seem less unconceivable, but the relationship of magical realism to Latin American literary culture and to the wider global tradition becomes remarkably more vivid. These connections are part of the aim of this chapter. It is in the service of this objective that I have chosen to include a discussion of the role of magical realism in the reception of Greek tragedy in Latin America in the same section in which I discuss those productions connected to various indigenous movements throughout the region.

It is hoped that the reasons behind the broad reach of this section will be fully elucidated below. The short answer, however, is that this section's principal objective is to connect the aesthetic trends within Latin American literature and theatre to those deemed *European* or *Western* or even explicitly *French*, particularly (though not exclusively) as those Latin American ones are either self-consciously indigenous or widely-viewed as such. In practice, this means that this chapter has two goals. The first is to make explicit the connection between magical realism and Surrealism as well as the Theatre of the Absurd. The second is to connect (French) primitivism to the artistic manifestations of Latin American indigenous movements (an argument whose problematic components will, of course, be discussed in greater detail below).

Methodology

Such a broad set of objectives naturally warrants a methodological explanation in addition to the one provided in the previous chapter. Thus below is a brief discussion of the plays that will be examined as well as the principal theoretical frameworks to be employed.

This chapter will examine the influence of magical realism on the contemporary Latin American reception of Greek tragedy through an analysis of two seminal works: Gabriel García Márquez's *Edipo Alcalde* (1996) and Griselda Gambaro's *Antígona furiosa* (1986). García Márquez and Gambaro represent two of the most important Latin American writers of the twentieth century and, by fact of their influence, the study of their work can tell us more about wider trends within this context than the study of others is able.

Antígona furiosa is the oldest of the pieces discussed in depth in this project as it was produced during the 1980s, a decade earlier than any other piece here.¹²³ It has been included for a variety of reasons associated with the larger goals both of this section and of the thesis. To begin with, *Antígona furiosa* is perhaps the most important piece of Argentinean theatre of the late twentieth century. Its influence both within Argentina and abroad are largely undisputed.¹²⁴ As it is an adaptation of Sophocles' play, it would be terribly remiss to exclude such an important piece from a study which supposes to survey the reception of Greek tragedy in Latin America. But more to the point for this particular section, Griselda Gambaro and her theatrical works, such as *Antígona furiosa*, have been widely viewed as outside of the confines Latin America's magical realist tradition. Diana Taylor, probably the most prominent Anglophone scholar of Latin American literature, has referred to Gambaro's work as "theatre of crisis".¹²⁵

¹²³ For the chronological scope of this study, cf. pg. 7.

¹²⁴ For a well-argued perspective on Gambaro's place in modern Argentinean and world theatre, see Giella 1985.

¹²⁵ Taylor 1991, p. 93.

This characterization was declared apt by the nearly equally prominent Marguerite Feitlowitz.¹²⁶ Adam Versényi includes her among his list of Latin American writers routinely denied their *latinidad* on account of not demonstrating “enough magical realism”.¹²⁷ Most Anglophone critics have argued that Gambaro’s work is better classified as Absurdist or Surrealist.¹²⁸ By drawing this sharp and persistent distinction, they have, *ipso facto*, reinforced distinctions between magical realism and aesthetic traditions that are more commonly seen as “Western”. Since one of the objectives of this chapter is to demonstrate the connection between magical realism and Surrealism, the addition of this work is essential, regardless if it is slightly earlier than the other works included in this survey.

Our examination of explicitly indigenous productions will also focus on the Argentinean playwright Alejandro Ullúa’s *Hipólito y Fedra: una pasión desbocada* (2005). This piece provides a model of postcolonial re-appropriation of primitivism and does so in a way that demonstrates a connection to the Western aesthetic tradition, even though that connection is both complicated and complicating. This is in no small part due to primitivism’s association with the Greco-Roman tradition so the inclusion of this piece here is central to the wider thesis of this project as well. In this discussion, we will also begin to look at the body as a locus of postcolonial identity via the Minotaur myth. This use of the body as a discursive tool will carry over to the next chapter where gender and sexual identity are also contested through the vehicle of the body.

This chapter begins with a summary of each of the three plays analysed herein: *Edipo Alcalde*, *Antígona furiosa*, and *Hipólito y Fedra*. There is then a brief examination of the work of

¹²⁶ Feitlowitz 1990, p. 34.

¹²⁷ Versényi 2004 p. 445.

¹²⁸ See, for example, Tamara 1980 and Cardullo 2013, p. 437-457.

the Belgian director André Delvaux, who offers a European example of many of the themes of hybridity and transculturation that mark the core of this analysis. Finally, we will further elucidate the specific theoretical frameworks at work in this chapter using the three plays above as examples and case studies.

Edipo Alcalde (1996)

Our first case study is the 1996 Colombian adaptation of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, *Edipo alcalde* (or *Oedipus the Mayor*), co-written by Stella Malagon, Orlando Senna, and Nobel Prize winner Gabriel García Márquez. The film was directed by Jorge Alí Triana and stars the famed Jorge Perugorria. In the film, Oedipus moves from ancient Thebes to the war-torn highlands of modern Colombia. This is a region where warlords, rebels, and government forces have been doing battle for over five decades.

Edipo alcalde is the most explicit example of García Márquez's lifelong fascination with Sophocles, particularly *Oedipus Rex*. In a 1982 interview with the Colombian journalist Plinio Mendoza, García Márquez spoke of his discovery of the Greeks saying, "repentino *coup de foudre* por los griegos especialmente por Sófocles, gracias a un amigo de juergas, hoy próspero abogado de aduanas que los conocía tan bien como los dedos de su mano."¹²⁹ Later in this interview, he added, "Me ensañó mucho *Edipo rey*. Y aprendí bastante de Plutarco y de Suetonio, y en general de los biógrafos de Julio César [...] Personaje que no solo me fascina, sino que habría sido el que yo hubiese deseado crear en la literatura."¹³⁰ His admiration not just for ancient literature but particularly for Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* is a point that García Márquez

¹²⁹ Citation in Davis 1991, p. 108: I was instantly struck by the Greeks, particularly Sophocles, thanks to a drinking buddy, now a prosperous customs lawyer, who knew them as well as the back of his hand.

¹³⁰ Citation in Cabello Pino 2004: *Oedipus Rex* taught me a lot. And I learned quite a bit from Plutarch and Suetonius and generally from the biographies of Julius Ceasar[...] Character(s) that not only fascinate me, but that are also ones like I would want to create in literature.

made again in his 2003 memoir *Vivir para contrarla* where he writes, “*Edipo rey* se le reveló en la primera lectura como la obra perfecta.”¹³¹

Considering this, it should come as no surprise that even a brief survey of García Márquez’s corpus reveals a plethora of references to *Oedipus Rex* extending far beyond *Edipo alcalde*. In fact, Manuel Cabello Pino argues that there are three unifying elements of García Márquez’s work: plague, the Colombian conflict, and the Sophoclean *Oedipus Rex*.¹³² And Michael Palencia-Roth notes in his 1989 essay “*Crónica de una muerte anunciada*: el Anti-Edipo de García Márquez”:

La presencia del dramaturgo griego se nota no sólo en la novella aquí discutida. Ha acompañado a García Márquez durante casi toda su carrera. Lo cita, por ejemplo, como epígrafe (la cita proviene de *Antígona*) en su primera novella, *La hojarasca*, o lo utiliza como modelo y guía por los míticos laberintos de la sangre en *Cien años de soledad*.¹³³

Six of García Márquez’ ten novels make explicit reference to Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex*: *La hojarasca* (1955), *Cien años de soledad* (1967), *El otoño del patriarca* (1975), *Crónica de una muerte anunciada* (1981), *El amor en los tiempos del cólera* (1985), and *Memoria de mis putas tristes* (2004).¹³⁴

¹³¹ García Márquez, 2003, p. 395: *Oedipus Rex* reveals itself upon first reading as the perfect work.

¹³² Cabello Pino 2004.

¹³³ Palencia-Roth 1989, p. 9: The presence of the Greek playwright [Sophocles] can be seen not only in the novel discussed here [*Crónica de una muerte anunciada*]. He has accompanied García Márquez throughout his entire career. He cites him, for example, as the epigraph (the quotation is taken from *Antigone*) in his first novel, *La hojarasca*, and he uses him as the model and guide for the mythical labyrinths of blood in *Cien años de soledad*.

¹³⁴ For more on the influence of Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex* on the work of García Márquez, see Villaro 2001.

Thus it is best to view *Edipo alcalde* as a work that not only engages with Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* and its previous theatrical and cinematic adaptations, but also García Márquez's own history with the play.¹³⁵

In 1991, five years before the debut of *Edipo alcalde*, Mary E. Davis wrote in the *Revista Hispánica* concerning *El general en su laberinto*:

Whereas in Sophoclean drama events move with rapidity to enmesh the protagonist in a web of his own making, in the fiction of García Márquez the workings of fate are slower, but equally inevitable.¹³⁶

The same could be said for *Edipo alcalde* in which the use of careful cinematography (by Rodrigo Prieto) and music (by Blas Emilio Atehortúa) serves to give the entire film a languid, yet inevitable feel. Visual and auditory clues are also deployed in order to situate the action in a chronological netherworld between ancient Greece and modern Colombia.

This is a strategy that commences at the very beginning of the film. The opening scene shows Edipo (Jorge Ali Triana) walking confidently through Grecian columns as he exits a government building in Bogotá after having received his assignment as mayor of a troubled town where he is being sent to bring peace after years of fighting. As soon as he looks out on the plaza, however, he sees his police escort in full military fatigues.¹³⁷ This is as classic an image of modern Colombia as the columns are of ancient Greece.

The reason that the image of a military escort seems as connected to modern Colombia as towering marble columns are to ancient Greece is on account of Colombia's nearly century of civil war. The violence Edipo is being sent to control is implied to be related to this decades-long civil war.

¹³⁵ Caple Reig 2012

¹³⁶ Davis 1991, p. 108

¹³⁷ Ali Triana 1996, 0:01:47

The centrality of the Colombia's on-going conflict both to his film and to the wider body of García Márquez's work merits a brief discussion here. The current conflict is the result of a previous period of violence known simply as *La violencia*.¹³⁸ *La violencia* began in 1948 with the assassination of the populist leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán and resulted in a period of fighting concentrated in rural areas between the Colombian Liberal Party and the Colombian Conservative Party.¹³⁹ While there was a brief period of relative peace in the late 1950s, hostilities between the right-wing Colombian government (which is supported politically and financially by the United States) and leftist rebels (primarily located in the country's mountainous regions) have resulted in the longest and bloodiest conflict in the Americas.¹⁴⁰ Complicating the matter is the pervasive presence of the narcotics trade. Narcotics have proven a source of funding to rebels and encouraged drug lords to raise armies independent of the revolutionary movements. Perhaps most devastatingly, the role of the narcotics trade in the rebel movement has provided the United States with justification of arming and funding the Colombian regime under the pretense of the "War on Drugs".¹⁴¹ The existence of all these competing factions make untangling the knot of the various revolutionary groups, the drug cartels, the Colombian government, and U.S. intervention a riddle that would put any puzzle the Sphinx might have offered Oedipus to shame. This long civil war is the silent character of the film and arguably its co-writer, co-producer and co-director as well.

The incidental music of this opening scene reinforces the ambiguity produced by the visual images. A flute plays an unassuming song accompanied by a simple stringed instrument. This music will reoccur throughout the film and is ambiguous because it could either be an *aulos*

¹³⁸ Oquist 1980.

¹³⁹ Safford 2002.

¹⁴⁰ Leech 2002.

¹⁴¹ Tickner 2007.

and *kithara* or a *quenás* and a *charango* (traditional Andean instruments).¹⁴² Further uncertainty as to the origin of the music is created by the use of the pentatonic scales. Pentatonic scales occur commonly throughout world music, including in African-American spirituals, jazz, Southeast Asian folk music, and the folk music of the Sami.¹⁴³ Most significantly for our purposes, both the music of ancient Greece and the folk music of the Andes utilize pentatonic scales.¹⁴⁴ The only other reoccurring incidental music in the film is the sound of a piano arrangement of Wagner's "Liebestod" from the opera *Tristan und Isolde*, a fitting song (at least with respect to the title) for Edipo and Yocasta. The gap created by the limited amount of incidental music in the film is filled by the "natural" background noise. This produces the opportunity for a number of auditory, non-musical signals throughout the film.¹⁴⁵

The first of these non-musical auditory signals occurs as Edipo and his armed convo drive toward the town in the pouring rain. On a bridge, they encounter a single vehicle heading the opposite direction. Neither vehicle will yield to the other. A fire fight breaks out. There is a hail of gunfire discharged from automatic weapons on both sides. Edipo, however, draws only a revolver and fires a single shot.¹⁴⁶ This single shot goes directly through the windshield of the other car, presumably striking the front seat passenger.

The sound of the single gunshot is repeated shortly afterward when Edipo encounters Yocasta for the first time. After having arrived in the town, Edipo drives to the colonial-style mayor's house. There he is lead directly into a large stable where a white horse is hoisted up on a levy. The right front hoof of the animal is wrapped, indicative of some injury. This subtly links

¹⁴² For parallels between ancient music around the world, see Sacha 1942. For specifics on similarities between ancient Greek music and the music of the ancient Andes, see Saroli 2005, p. 48.

¹⁴³ Van Khe 1977.

¹⁴⁴ Winington-Ingram 1956 and Winthrop 1934.

¹⁴⁵ For more on the decision to omit incidental music and its implications, see Eisler 1947 and LaBelle 2006.

¹⁴⁶ Ali Triana, 1996, 0:06:21.

the horse with Edipo who, like his ancient counterpart, has a crippled right foot. With a single shot to the head, Yocasta kills the horse and turns to Edipo to explain that the horse was suffering and so had to be killed.¹⁴⁷ As the horse is killed, it lets out a sorrowful neigh. This is the first instance of another auditory signpost that will continue throughout the film: the plaintive whinnying of a single horse.

After Yocasta has killed the horse, she and Edipo walk along the veranda of the house. It is on the veranda that Edipo first meets a sly-looking Creonte (Jairo Camargo). Their first exchange is a heated one. Among other things, Creonte accuses Edipo of being a naïve idealist for thinking it is possible to end the violence in the town. At one point, Creonte sneers at Edipo, “Usted es un poeta.”¹⁴⁸ He also notes that Edipo, like most pacifists, is heavily armed. However, before Edipo can properly respond, they are interrupted by the arrival of Layo’s body, which has been carried to the house by members of his militia. Yocasta coolly gives instructions as to how to prepare the body for burial. She then turns to Edipo saying, “Mal día eligió usted para venir.”¹⁴⁹ After having promised Yocasta to find and punish the killer, Edipo leaves driving off in his white jeep. On the driveway leading away from the property, he sees Tiresias (Franciso Rabal) coming in the opposite direction dragging a coffin on his back.¹⁵⁰

The next scene opens with the nameless dean of the town’s cathedral (Jorge Martinez), who should be seen as loosely based on the priest of Zeus in Sophocles’ play, addressing the crowd in the plaza at Layo’s funeral. During the priest’s eulogy, we hear the first reoccurrence of the plaintive whinny of a single horse that was first heard at Yocasta and Edipo’s first meeting. The eulogy, a call for peace as much as a praise of the dead man, goes as follows:

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 0:09:06.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 00:13:52: You are a poet.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 00:16:14: You chose a bad day to come.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 00:17:19.

Los graves acontecimientos de estos días nos obligar a reflexionar. Si en esta hora fatídica no actuamos con cordura esta crimen desencadenará terribles consecuencias. Layo era un pecador, como todos nosotros, pero acababa de sumarse a la cruzada de la paz y a nosotros no corresponde seguir su ejemplo. El Señor nos dice, “El terror debe terminar.”

Hago un llamado a los pobladores de esta region a los violentos y su víctimas para que pongamos punto final a este mar de sangre que amenaza con ahogarnos a todos. El Señor quiere la paz de este pueblo. Que Él se apiade de nosotros y que el alma de nuestra hermano Layo descanse en su reino.¹⁵¹

The full effect of the horse’s whinny and the priest’s eulogy is not obvious unless taken with Creonte’s brief speech to the assembled crowd immediately following the priest’s. Creonte begins to speak even as the whinny that punctuated the end of the priest’s monologue is fading. He screams a single line: “No habrá paz mientras Layo no sea vengado.”¹⁵² In response, a man on horseback in the crowd (clearly a member of a militia) shouts out, “Muerte a los asesinos de Layo.”¹⁵³ The man then shoots his rifle into the air. The sound of his single gunshot occurs at the same time as the neigh of a horse is heard. Even more interestingly, other men begin to fire their rifles in the air, however, only the sound of a single gun can be clearly made out.

In the following scene, these auditory clues are continued, and the sound of the piano is introduced for the first time. Edipo, who has been wandering through the crowd during the funeral, drives up in his jeep alongside the priest who is walking down the road. As he questions the priest (whom he sees as a potential ally in bring peace to the city) about who might have

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 00:17:21: The grave events of these days obligate us to reflect. If in this fateful hour, we do not act wisely then this crime will unleash terrible consequences. Laius was a sinner, like all of us, but he had been united to the cross of peace, and it is incumbent on us to follow his example. The Lord tells us, “The terror must end.” I call upon the people of this region, the perpetrators and the victims to put an end to this sea of blood that threatens to drown us all. The Lord wants peace in this city. May he have mercy on us and may the soul of our brother Laius rest in his kingdom.

¹⁵² Ibid., 00:19:00: There will be no peace while Laius is unavenged.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 00:19:06: Death to Laius’ killers.

killed Laius and who is responsible for the violence, militia men on horseback ride past. Clearly, it is not safe to talk on the street. Edipo invites the priest to get into his car. As the priest climbs into the back seat, a single piano note is heard.¹⁵⁴ When the jeep drives off, we see Tiresias with his black dog at his side walking down the middle of the street where the jeep just was.¹⁵⁵

The next scene shows the camera looking down on Edipo and the priest as they walk up a spiral staircase inside the cathedral.¹⁵⁶ This is a break from the usual camera angle adopted throughout the film. Only in this scene and two more (discussed below) does the camera give the viewer this perspective as the rest of the film is shot in a direct, almost guerilla-type manner with the camera often angled through a doorframe or looking through windows and fencing. This more omniscient camera perspective only lasts for a few seconds. By the time the duo arrive at the top of the stairs, the camera is once again behind a doorframe. The conversation between Edipo and the priest then ends with this ominous exchange:

Edipo: Necesito saber todas las verdades.

Padre: No las conocerá nunca.¹⁵⁷

The next scene opens with Edipo on a grandstand announcing his plan for peace, or rather, announcing the return of peace to the town:

A partir de hoy quedan restablecidas todas las garantías constitucionales y se suspende el toque de queda. El gobierno le tiende la mano a todos los violentos para que depongan las armas y regresen a sus hogares los desplazados por el terror. Todos los que se acojan a la generosa amnistía promulgada por el gobierno cualesquiera que sean los cargos que pesen en

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 00:21:03.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 00:21:08.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 00:21:10.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 00:21:36: Oedipus: I need to know the entire truth. Priest: You will never know it.

su contra, recibirán la ayuda de éste para que puedan reinsertarse en la sociedad.¹⁵⁸

Immediately the same militant who responded to Creonte's call then shouts back at him whether that means that Layo's assassins will go unpunished. To this, Edipo replies, "Este es la única excepción. A los culpables de la muerte de Layo. Por los propósitos inconfesables de ese crimen ¡Jamás seán perdonados!"¹⁵⁹ Edipo's speech and the brief exchange at the end, like Layo's funeral orations before, are punctuated by the sounds of a horse's whinny.

After Edipo announces that he will continue to pursue Layo's assassins, the crowd cheers and the marching band begins to play. Significantly, the song the band is playing is the rather un-festive: "Liebestod". Edipo moves through the town helping to disassemble the sandbag barricades that so many have constructed as a weak defense against the violence around them. He then comes to the municipal court. It is not only closed but in a state of complete disrepair. He enters into the crumbling office and finds only one person inside. Semi-dressed, unbathed, drunk, and surrounded by chickens while lying on a broken brass framed bed, the man tells the mayor that he is the judges' secretary and the only one who has remained at the court during the period of violence. The secretary tells Edipo that the judges have not returned, because they do not believe that peace has really arrived. After so many years of fighting, they trust no one. In fact, "...al único qe se le puede creer es a Tiresias."¹⁶⁰

Edipo, now beginning if not to understand Tiresias' true power then to understand his power over the people of the town, goes immediately to seek out the blind man. He finds him in

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 00:23:16: From this day forward, all constitutional rights are restored and the curfew is suspended. The government extends its hand to all the militants so that they lay down their arms and those displaced by the terror return home. All those benefiting from this generous amnesty, whatever the charges that were against them, will receive the government's help reintegrating into society.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 00:23:51: This is the only exception: Those guilty of Layo's death! For those guilty of that horrible crime, they will never be pardoned.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 00:26:32: The only one that that are able to believe is Tiresias.

his dilapidated workshop. Edipo casually asks Tiresias what he is making, attempting to charm Tiresias as he has charmed so many others. Tiresias replies flatly, “Hago tu cajón.”¹⁶¹ Edipo interprets this to mean that Tiresias is aware of a plot to kill the mayor, perhaps contrived by the same people who have killed Layo. Thus, he asks the old man who killed Layo. Tiresias replies, “Su propia sangre.”¹⁶² Edipo begins to guess possible killers, although none of the people that he names are actually “su propia sangre” but rather relatives by marriage. For example, he suggests that Yocasta or Creonte may have killed the old man. Ultimately, frustrated with the seemingly ineffectual prophet, Edipo warns Tiresias not to test him and then leaves.

Upon arriving home, Edipo finds Yocasta on the veranda cutting the hair of some orphans living in the great house. Wagner’s “Lieberstod” plays on a stereo in the background. Yocasta wears a Greek-style white dress and her hair is pulled back in a loose half-ponytail. The ambiguity of Yocasta at that moment is both striking and important. She is both Colombian and Greek. She is both sexual and maternal.

When she notices Edipo on the veranda, she sends the children off to play. She and Edipo walk into the house, and she tells him that this portion of the house was Layo’s quarters. She also reveals that nearly everything in these rooms were once her father’s. The sole exception is the piano. Pointing to it, she says, “Ese es el único aporte de Layo, este piano que él tocaba con un oído de artillero.”¹⁶³ After Edipo fiddles with the piano for a moment, playing a few notes of “Lieberstod”, Yocasta kisses him. Moments later they are in bed with each other for the first time.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 00:27:34: I am making your coffin.

¹⁶² Ibid., 00:27:42.

¹⁶³ Ibid.,00:30:03: This is Laius’ only contribution: the piano he played with the ear of a gunner.

Afterward, as they lie in bed together, a piano rendition of “Lieberstod” begins. Yocasta, hearing this, whispers to Edipo, “Ahí está.”¹⁶⁴ Edipo gets up from the bed and looks through a window into the drawing room next door. There he sees an old man all in white playing the piano. It is Layo. As he gazes in disbelief, Yocasta says the following:

No sé porque se te hace tan raro. Ya vagaba por toda la casa desde que estaba vivo. Lo veían de noche a caballo por los campos. Lo veían en cualquier sitio a cualquier hora y a veces en distintas partes al mismo tiempo.¹⁶⁵

With that, Yocasta removes her wedding ring and the scene ends.

The camera then cuts away to Creonte pouring a drink for himself in a bar. On the radio the priest is reading *Ecclesiastes*. The message of this reading has a multiplicity of meanings both within the context of the Colombian conflict and the oedipal myth. The idea of a place abandoned and desolate as a result of human fallibility is all too familiar.

From this dark warning, the next scene opens up on an idyllic countryside. Edipo drives up in his jeep to meet with Creonte who, along with his men, is busy working the cattle. While Edipo exits his jeep, Creonte remains mounted on his black horse. Creonte accuses the priest of being on the side of the rebels and declares that the reading from *Ecclesiastes* was a covert message to those rebels. He tells Edipo that he must be a harsher ruler.

Then, rather strangely, he invites Edipo to try riding his horse. When Edipo mounts the horse, it bucks and rears. However, Edipo is clearly a skilled horseman and manages not only to stay on the horse but to calm it. When the horse has calmed, Creonte tells Edipo that no other person but him has ever been able to ride the horse. Creonte declares that the horse should be

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 00:38:07: He is here.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 00:38:40: I don't know why this seems so strange to you. He has wandered the house since he was alive. They have seen him at night on horseback going through the fields. They have seen him everywhere, all the time and sometimes in different places at the same time.

Edipo's, despite Edipo's protests. The next shot shows Edipo sitting in his office late at night examining pictures of those killed in the conflict. The sound of a horse's whinny, now from a known source, echoes in the background.¹⁶⁶

The time when the ravages of war could only be seen in photographs is short-lived. The next day, Edipo meets with the priest in the market. The priest is dressed in plain clothes and comes bearing a very worldly message: the rebels would like to meet with Edipo. He must, however, come alone. Edipo agrees. In the next scene, we see him driving his jeep across a jungle bridge toward the rendezvous point. Once having reached the meeting place, he is escorted by two armed militia members. They lead the mayor through the woods to their treetop headquarters. Upon their arrival, they discover a grisly scene. Their comrades have not just been killed; they have been brutally butchered.

Violence has returned to the city. In the next scene, shots fly and bombs explode. In keeping with the film's auditory mood, only a single gunshot can be heard at any given time. Edipo is seen in his office talking to the head government commander about what might be done to end the new flare of violence. After the commander has left, Edipo notices that the horse Creonte has given to him has, once again, untied his reigns and is wandering free. Edipo violently tries to catch the horse, but it runs off.¹⁶⁷ Edipo runs after the horse. The horse darts into the stables and directly toward Creonte. Creonte stops and calms the horse, demanding to know what Edipo has done to terrify the poor animal.¹⁶⁸

The next shot shows Edipo walking out of the stables and being greeted by Creonte leaning against Layo's car. The windshield is heavily cracked, but it is clear that only a single

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 00:46:30.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 01:08:03.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 01:08:44.

bullet has gone completely through it. Creonte tells Edipo that he knows that only Layo's son could have killed him (in accordance with prophecy) and that the gossip in the town's bars says that Edipo is, in fact, Layo's son.¹⁶⁹ Edipo is enraged. But before he can respond, Creonte leaves.

Edipo returns home. There he finds Yocasta and confides in her his belief that Creonte killed Layo. Yocasta seems largely unmoved and begins to undress Edipo. The camera then quickly cuts to a shot from above of the two lying naked on Layo's bed. Yocasta sings acapella a Colombian folk song with the (in this context, at least) rather disturbing opening lyrics, "Aquí estoy madre creciendo para ti."¹⁷⁰ As her song concludes, the piano can once again be heard playing "Liebestod".¹⁷¹

The next image on the scene is of a half-drunken Edipo sitting in a bar at last call. Tiresias appears in the doorway of the bar. He is completely colored by the cheap green neon lighting. Facing Edipo, he says the following:

Tú, que tienes los ojos abiertos a la luz no ves la desgracia que se cierne sobre ti. La aterradora maldición de un padre y una madre te acosa. Y hoy que ves claramente la luz pronto no versa más que tinieblas.¹⁷²

While Edipo does not respond, it seems clear that he has heard Tiresias. When the bar closes, Edipo tells his bodyguards to go ahead. Instead of going home, Edipo returns to Tiresias's workshop where they have the following exchange:

Edipo: Queiro saberlo todo.

Tireseas: Pues entonces prepárate a sufrir todas las castigos que has enunciado para el asesino de Layo

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 01:13:26.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 01:16:01: I am here, a mother growing for you.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 01:16:12.

¹⁷² Ibid., 01:17:55: You, who have eyes open to the light, you do not see the misfortune that hangs over you. The terrifying curse of a father and a mother plagues you. And soon you will see that light exists not only in relation to darkness.

Edipo: Déjate de palabrerías. Quiero que seas claro. Pero si rehúsas te voy a acusar de ser cómplice de un asesinato atroz.

Tirseas: Nada temo, pues tengo la verdad, que es poder.

Edipo: Quién te la reveló?

Tirseas: La supe de ti mismo.

Edipo: Que has dicho? Repítelo para que entienda.

Tirseas: Es que estoy hablando con una piedra? Digo que el hombre que andas busando vive en abominable contubernio y no se da cuenta de su oprobio. Que está aquí entre nosotros, y muy pronto se sabra que es el asesino de su propio padre, hijo y esposo de la mujer que lo parió y a la vez padre y hermano del hijo que tundra con ella. Es todo lo que te puedo decir. Este es el tuyo y lo termino al amancer. Pero no lo ocuparás nunca. Así de grande es tu desgracia.¹⁷³

As Tiresias finishes his remarks, he points at the coffin he has been making. It includes among its many designs a replica of the *Bocca della verità*.

In the next scene, we see Edipo in the coroner's office. The coroner removes the single, deadly bullet from the head of Layo and hands it to Edipo. Edipo recognizes it as having come from his own revolver. He then looks down to see the face of Layo. What he sees, however, is his own face.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ Ibid., 01:19:10: Oedipus: I want to know the whole truth. Tirseas: Then prepare to suffer all of the punishments that have been promised for Laius's killer. Oedipus: Cut out the flowery language. I want you to be clear. If you refuse I am going to accuse you of being complicit in this hideous crime. Tirseas: I fear nothing, because I have the truth which is power. Oedipus: Who told it to you? Tirseas: You knew it yourself. Oedipus: What did you say? Say it again in a way I can understand. Tirseas: Am I speaking to a rock? I say that the man whom you walk about seeking lives in an abominable concubinage and does not realise his shame. He is here with us and very soon he will know that he is the murderer of his own father, the son and husband of the mother who bore him and in time, the father and brother of the son that he will have with her. This is all I can tell you. This is yours. I will finish it at moonrise, but you will never occupy it. So great is your misfortune.

¹⁷⁴ Ali Triana 1996, 01:21:37.

Convinced that he is both Layo's son and killer, Edipo returns to Yocasta and demands to know if she ever had a son with Layo. She confesses that she did have a son with Layo. She assures Edipo that he could not possibly be that son. Layo was a superstitious man in a superstitious town. There was a prophecy that Layo's son would grow-up to kill him. Thus the baby was turned over to a woman named Deyanira to be killed.

With this new knowledge, Edipo decides to confirm Yocasta's story and goes to find Deyanira (Miriam Colon). When Edipo arrives at Deyanira's hut, she has another child with her. She says that she is watching for the night. She asks him to come back, but he refuses. Instead he insists that she tell him what she did with the child of Layo and Yocasta. Terrified, she nonetheless confesses that she did not kill the child but gave him to a childless couple who was in the region with the cavalry (Edipo's adopted father, we have learned, was a cavalry officer).¹⁷⁵ An enraged Edipo knocks over the boiling pot at the center of the hut and rushes off. He returns to the house to find Yocasta dead. The screen cuts to black. The final shot shows a dirty, blinded man roaming a busy highway.

Antígona furiosa (1986)

Our next case study is one of the most important pieces of 20th-century Latin American theatre. *Antígona furiosa* was first performed on 24 September 1986 at the Goethe Institute theatre in Buenos Aires.⁸⁶ *Antígona furiosa* was written between 1985 and 1986, almost immediately after the end of Argentina's so-called "Dirty War" and was produced for the first time in Buenos Aires in 1986 in the brief interregnum.¹⁷⁶ Like "La violencia" in Colombia, the Dirty War has its roots in the tensions between the country's Right and Left.¹⁷⁷ While the

¹⁷⁵ Ali Triana, 1996, 01:31:12.

¹⁷⁶ Nelli 2009, p. 74.

¹⁷⁷ Robben 1999

particular spell of violence referred to as the Dirty War began with the overthrow of the country's democratically elected president Isabel de Perón by a military coup in 1976. What followed was a violent campaign against the country's Leftist opposition during which dissenters were routinely kidnapped, tortured, and murdered. Human rights groups estimate that as many as 30,000 people were killed.¹⁷⁸ The number is most certainly quite high, as even the Dirty War's chief architect, Jorge Rafael Videla (now serving a life sentence for crimes committed during the period) has admitted to the deaths of 7,000-8,000 people.¹⁷⁹

Most of those killed during the Dirty War “disappeared”, meaning that they were kidnapped by government agents or by extra-governmental militias associated with the government often in middle of the night in order to be tortured and ultimately killed. Most of their bodies were never found.¹⁸⁰ The most visible opposition to the terror came from a group of mothers and grandmothers who would come to be known to the world as *Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo*. Gathering with white scarves over their heads in the central Buenos Aires square of the Plaza de Mayo every Thursday afternoon, these women came together to demand their children (or at least their children's bodies) be returned to them.¹⁸¹ The modern heirs of Priam and Antigone, the Madres de Plaza de Mayo had a profound and lasting impact on national and international sentiments with regard to the Dirty War and the far-right government that waged it. It was exactly because their activism occurred in that space between the public and the private, just like Antigone's (if we can for a moment quite anachronistically call Antigone's protest

¹⁷⁸ Guest 1990.

¹⁷⁹ Muleiro 2012.

¹⁸⁰ Brysk 1994.

¹⁸¹ For more on the Madres de Plaza de Mayo, see D'Alessandro 2006 and Bosco 2006.

activism), that the Madres de Plaza de Mayo were so effective in challenging the Argentinean regime.¹⁸²

Born in the aftermath of this disaster, *Antígona furiosa* has been performed numerous times all over the world. As of the date of this writing, the most recent production was by the Notre Dame University Drama Department in South Bend, Indiana in March 2012. Perhaps the most significant performance of the play after its premiere occurred in 1992 at the Münchener Biennale in Munich, Germany. This production saw the play set to music by the Argentine-born and American-educated composer Jorge Liderman. Liderman's description of the play in the programme notes for the Munich production hints both to many of its distinctive features as well as to what might be the broader appeal of the play. Liderman concurs with Gambaro that *Antígona furiosa* is not an adaptation of the Sophocles's play, but he hints at how it might be connected to the larger tradition of it:

Antígona furiosa (1986) is not a modern or Argentine adaptation of Sophocles's play. It is rather an attempt of two men, Coriypheus and Antinous, to tell us the story of their people, the Argentinian people, by means of enacting and commenting on Sophocles's Antigone. Although at times *Antígona*'s world meets Coriypheus and Antinous's café world of Buenos Aires, she remains within her own world as the main protagonist, providing the dramatic thread of the piece. Her demonstrations of courage and moments of fear are the subject of Coriypheus and Antinous's colloquial commentaries; the two men represent a street choir of mixed voices, controversial judgements and diversified positions about reality which seems to involve everyone...¹⁸³

While the Liderman production was most certainly done in the same spirit as the original, this analysis, however, will focus specifically on the play's first production in Buenos Aires in

¹⁸² D'Alessandro 2006. For more on the Dirty War and its effects on late twentieth-century Argentinean theatre, see Graham-Jones 1997.

¹⁸³ Liderman 1992.

1986. That production was directed by Laura Yusem, who is most famous for her work as a choreographer and has created significant contemporary ballets not only in Argentina but also in Peru, Colombia, and Cuba. The main action of the play occurs in a café and focuses on two men Corifeo (played by Norberto Vieyra in the 1986 production) and Antinoo (Ivan Moschner) as they sit in a café and interact with an ethereal Antígona whose actual presence in the café can most certainly be called into question.

The play opens with Antígona (Bettina Muraña) hanging on the bars of a prison cell located at the centre of the stage. She wears a soiled white dress and a crown of withering flowers in her hair. Antígona's cell is represented by a pyramidal cage. Corifeo and Antinoo sit at a round table next to the cage. They are dressed in typical Argentinean street clothes. As the action begins, Corifeo fiddles with various objects on the table. This includes tearing strips of the napkins and forming the strips into paper flowers.

The first words spoken on the stage are by Corifeo who asks, “¿Quién es está? ¿Ofelia?”¹⁸⁴ This was not, however, a completely uneducated guess on the part of Corifeo. When he asks his question, Antígona is in her cage singing the following song:

Se murió y se fue, señora:
Se murió y se fue;
El césped cubre su cuerpo
Hay una piedra a sus pies.¹⁸⁵

Antígona's song is, of course, a translation of Ophelia's song in Act IV of Hamlet where she sings:

He is dead and gone, lady
He is dead and gone;
At his head grass-green turf,

¹⁸⁴ Gambaro 1989, p. 197: Who is that? Ophelia?

¹⁸⁵ Gambaro 1989, p. 197: He is dead and gone./He is dead and gone./ The grass covers his body./There is a rock at his feet.

At his heels a stone.¹⁸⁶

While Ophelia's song is briefly interrupted by Gertrude, it is Antinoo and Corifeo who temporarily stop Antígona's lament. Corifeo asks, "Debiera, pero no hay. ¿Ves césped? ¿Ves piedra? ¿Ves tumba?"¹⁸⁷ Antinoo replies, "Nada."¹⁸⁸ Unaffected, Antígona just continues her song:

... un sadario lo envolvió;
Cubrieron su sepulture
Flores que el llanto regó¹⁸⁹

This is a less literal translation of the second part of Ophelia's song:

Larded with sweet flowers,
Which bewept to the ground did not go
With true-love showers.¹⁹⁰

The link between Antigone and Ophelia is an obvious one, although there are certainly great differences between the two. As Jean Graham-Jones has noted, Ophelia is essentially a passive character whose actions are nearly all responsive and largely driven by madness. Antigone, on the other hand, is an active, completely lucid player whose behavior is guided by principle.¹⁹¹ She is mad only to the extent that anyone who risks his or her own life on account of deeply held convictions is mad. This includes the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo. Yet, as Annette Wannamaker pointedly notes, Antigone, Ophelia, and (for that matter) the Madres de Plaza de Mayo are all perceived as mad (regardless of their actual mental state), because they desire to honor and memorize dead loved ones whom the rest of society, and especially those in power, would have forgotten:

¹⁸⁶ *Ham.IV.5.2889-2892*

¹⁸⁷ Gambaro, 1989, p. 197: It could be, but not here. You see grass? You see a stone? You see a grave?

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.198: Nope.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*: ... a shroud covered him. Flowers that tears watered covered his grave.

¹⁹⁰ *Ham.IV.5.2780-2783*

¹⁹¹ Graham-Jones 1997.

There are obvious connections between the female characters Antigone and Ophelia referred to in the play, and the public personas performed by the Mothers: these are all dutiful/undutiful women, these are all “crazy” women insistent on remembering their dead brothers, fathers, and children; women whose actions are beyond reason. This female lack of reason is pointed out by the male characters of *Antígona furiosa* throughout the play.¹⁹²

Diana Taylor has noted that the affinity between Ophelia, Antigone, and the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo* might be only part of the reason Ophelia’s lament becomes *Antígona*’s: Turf and stone, the subjects of the song, are burial markers—markers that “the disappeared” will never have.¹⁹³

While singing her song, *Antígona* interrupts herself. She notices Corifeo’s coffee and begins a brief exchange with him that illustrates what exactly *Antígona*’s position is within the world created on stage:

Antígona: ¿Qué toman?

Corifeo: Café.

Antígona: ¿Qué es eso? Café.

Corifeo: Probá.

Antígona: No. (Señala) Osuro como el veneno.¹⁹⁴

This exchange reveals several things about the character of *Antígona*. Her separation from the modern world (or at least the European world after 1492) is suggested by her inability to recognize coffee. However, Corifeo’s ability to interact with her, even offering her a sip of his coffee, seems to suggest that she is very much part of the world.

¹⁹² Wannamarker 2000, p. 82.

¹⁹³ Taylor 1997, p. 211.

¹⁹⁴ Gambaro, 1989, p. 198: Antigone: What are you drinking? Coryphaeus: Coffee. Antigone: What is that? Coffee. Coryphaeus: Try. Antigone: No. (Pointing). Dark like poison.

Antígona now has entered into the world of the café by asking about the coffee and begins to influence the two men who are there. And their first reaction to her is to mock her. However, their mockery takes on a character that is very specific to Antígona's history. Thus when Antígona (wrongly) identifies the coffee as poison, Corifeo mocks her exclaiming that he has been poisoned and is, in fact, dead. Antinoo responds in part to Corifeo's joke and in part to Antígona's reality: "¡Que nadie lo toque! ¡Prohibido! Su peste es contagiosa. ¡Contagiará la ciudad!" This is an overt reference to the Theban plague and Antígona's heritage.¹⁹⁵

From here, Antígona's past quickly becomes the center of the conversation as the rapid fire exchange continues with Antígona remaining in her cage and Corifeo and Antinoo remaining at their table:

Corifeo: ¡Nadie me enterrará!

Antinoo: Nadie.

Corifeo: ¡Me comerán los perros! (Jadea estertoroso)

Antinoo: ¡Pobrecito! (Lo abraza. Ríen, se palmean)

Corifeo (le ofrece su silla): ¿Querés sentarte?

Antígona: No. Están peleando ahora.

Antinoo: ¡No me digas!

Corifeo: Sí. Se lastimarán con las espadas. ¡Pupa!, y serás la enfermera. (Se le acerca con una intención equívoca que Antígona no registra, solo se aparta) ¿Cómo los cuidarás? ¿Donde?

Antígona: Yo sere quien lo intente.

Corifeo: ¿Que?

Antígona: Dar sepulture a Polinices, mi hermano.

¹⁹⁵ Gambaro 1989, p. 198: Don't let her touch it! I forbid it! Your plague is contagious. She will infect the city!

Corifeo (guasón): ¡Prohibido, prohibido! ¡El rey lo prohibió!
¡“Yo” lo prohibí!

Antinoo: ¡Qué nadie lo toque!

Corifeo: Quien se atreva... (Se rebana el cuello.)

Antígona: Ella no quiso ayudarme.

Corifeo: ¿Ella? ¿Quién es ella?

Antígona: Ismena, mi Hermana. Lo hice sola. Nadie me ayudó. Ni siquiera Hemón, mi valiente, que no desposaré.

Corifeo: ¿Y para cuándo el casorio? (Ríe, muy divertido, y Antinoo lo acompaña después de un Segundo. Se pegan codazos y palmadas.)

Antígona: Que no desporaré, dije. Para mi no habrá boda.

Corifeo (blandamente): Qué lástima. (Golpea a Antinoo para llamar su atención.)

Antinoo (se apresura): Lástima.

Antígona: Noche nupcia

Corifeo: Lógico.

Antinoo (como un eco): Lógico.

Antígona: Tampoco hijos. Moriré... Sola.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁶ Gambaro 1986, p.198-199: Coryphaeus: No one will bury me! Antinous: No one. Coryphaeus: The dogs will eat me! (He gasps) Antinous: Poor little thing! (He embraces Coryphaeus. They laugh; they clamp) Coryphaeus (he offers Antinous a chair): Do you want to sit down? Antigone: No, they are fighting now. Antinous: Don't tell me! Coryphaeus: Yes. They will harm each other with swords. Owie! And you will be their nurse. (He approaches Antigone with misleading intent that Antigone does not notice. She moves off alone.) How will you care for them? Where? Antigone: I will be the one who tries. Coryphaeus: What? Antigone: To give my brother Polynices a tomb. Coryphaeus (joking): I forbid it. I forbid it. The king forbade it. "I" forbade it. Antinous: No one touched him. Coryphaeus: Who dares to... (he mimics cutting his neck). Antigone: She does not want to help. Coryphaeus: She? Who is she? Antigone: Ismena, my sister. I did it alone. No one helped me. Even Hemon, my brave man, who will not marry me. Coryphaeus: And when is the wedding? (He laughs, having a good time, and Antinous joins in after a second. They jab and slap each other on the back.) Antigone: He will not marry me, I said. I will not have a wedding. Coryphaeus (blandly): How sad. (He taps Antinous to call his attention.) Antinous (hastily): Sad. Antigone: Wedding night. Coryphaeus: Logical. Antinous (as an echo): Logical. Antigone: I'll never have sons. I will die... alone.

This dialogue sequence has several important features. One of the most important is the ways in which tense is utilized to destabilize the chronology of the play. Past, present, and future tenses are all used with little respect given to the narrative arch of Sophocles's *Antigone* and with such irregularity that it is impossible to chronologically place the events in the café.¹⁹⁷ For example, Antígona uses the present progressive tense to talk about the war between her brothers when she says, “Están peleando ahora.”¹⁹⁸ However, nine lines later, she uses the simple perfect to declare that her sister has not helped her bury her brother: “Ella no quiso ayudarme.”¹⁹⁹ To further complicate matters, Corifeo and Antinoo primarily use the future tense as they taunt Antígona, but Corifeo uses the present and perfect of the “prohibidir” in response to Antígona's declaration that she will give Polynices a tomb: “¡*Prohibido, prohibido!* [present] ¡El rey lo *prohibió!* [perfect] ¡ “Yo” lo *prohibí!* [perfect]”.²⁰⁰ The destabilization of time accomplished here is an important feature of both Surrealism and magical realism (more on this later).²⁰¹ It is also essential for this particular play, because the play is essentially non-narrative and relies on the audience's recollection of the *Antigone* narrative to drive the plot.

The issue of chronology is further complicated when, at the end of the dialogue sequence above, battle noises are heard on the stage. The stage directions in the printed script describe the scene thus:

Irrumpe entrechocar metálico de espadas, piafar de caballos, gritos y ayes imprecisos. Antígona se aparta. Mira desde el palacio. Cae al suelo, golpean sus piernas, de un lado y de otro, con un ritmo que se acrecienta al paroxismo, como si padeciera la batalla en carne propia.²⁰²

¹⁹⁷ Fleming 1999.

¹⁹⁸ Gambaro 1989, p.198.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ See Bull 1971.

²⁰¹ Spindler 1993.

²⁰² Ibid., p.199: The clashing of metal swords, the stamping of horses, cries and inarticulate moans. Antigone draws back. She looks down from the centre platform. She falls down, hitting her legs one then the other with an increasing rhythm escalating to a climax as if the battle is suffered in the flesh.

In practice, this stage direction results in Antígona inside her cage falling to the ground as though in physical pain from the sounds of battle in the background while calling out, “¡Eteocles, Polinices, mis hermanos, mis hermanos!”²⁰³ This scene would logically be contemporaneous with the Theban Civil War in which Antígona’s brothers were killed. But the dialogue that occurs between Corifeo and Antinoo in-between Antígona’s suggests what Antígona perceives is not happening:

Corifeo (se acerca): ¿Qué pretende está loca? ¿Criar pena sobre pena?

Antinoo: Enterrar a Polinices pretende ¡en una mañana tan hermosa!

Corifeo: Dicen que Eteocles y Polinices debían repartirse el mando un año cada uno. Pero el poder tiene un sabor dulce. Se pega como miel a la mosca. Eteocles no quiso compartirlo.

Antinoo: Otro se hubiera conformado. ¡No Polinices!

Corifeo: Atacó la ciudad por siete puertas y cayó vencido ¡en las siete! (Ríe) Y después enfrentó a su hermano Eteocles.²⁰⁴

There are several jarring elements of this conversation in addition to the fact that it is a fairly jovial exchange occurring in the midst of a “battle” scene. The first is the clear incongruity that exists between Corifeo neither knowing who Antígona is at the beginning of the play nor what her primary objective is (i.e. the burial of Polynices) and yet clearly knowing about the civil war and Polynices’ death. Moreover, when he is giving this report of events, he does so in the

²⁰³ Ibid., p.199: Eteocles, Polynices, my brothers, my brother!

²⁰⁴ Ibid., p.199: Coryphaeus (approaching): What is this crazy lady trying to do? To breed penalty upon penalty. Antinous: She seeks to bury Polynices on a beautiful morning. Coryphaeus: They say that Eteocles and Polynices wanted to share control, trading off each year. But power has a sweet taste. It sticks to you like a fly to honey. Eteocles did not want to share. Antinous: Anyone else would have gone along with it. Not Polynices. Coryphaeus: He attacked the City of the Seven Gates and feel dead at seven o’clock. (Laughs) And then he fought his brother Eteocles.

past tense even though the sounds of the battle and (more importantly) Antígona's very physical reaction is occurring at the same moment in incredibly close proximity to him.

This incongruity continues for several more minutes, as Corifeo and Antinoo sit back down at their table to order more wine in order to celebrate, and Antígona remains in her cage wandering among invisible bodies of the dead.²⁰⁵ Corifeo then rises again from the table and begins a chant that bears striking similarities to the words of an ancient Chorus in its reflective tone and invocation of the law and of the natural elements:

Creonte. Creonte usa la ley. Creonte.
 Creonte usa la ley en lo tocante.
 Creonte usa la ley en lo tocante a los muertos. Creonte
 Y a los vivos
 La misma ley
 Creonte no permitirá enterrar a Polinices que-
 Mar a sangre y fuego
 Sangre y fuego la tierra de sus padres. Su cuerpo serviva
 De pasto.
 Pasto a perros y aves de rapiña. Creonte. Creonte.
 su ley dice
 Eteocles sera honrado
 Y Polinices
 Festín de perros. Podredumbre y pasto.
 Que nadie gire—se atreva—gire gire como loca dando
 Vueltas frente a cadaver insepulto insepulto insepulto.²⁰⁶

This section of the play is in verse. It has a rhyme scheme. There are several instances of repetition. There is the repetition of words: the name Creonte, insepulto, and gire. There is also the repetition of two key phrases: “Creonte usa la ley en lo tocante” and “sangre y fuego”. It also makes poetic use of layered meanings within words, particularly the word *usa*. *Usa* is the third

²⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 200.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.: Creon. Creon uses the law. Creon./Creon uses the law by applying it./Creon uses the law the law by applying it to the dead. Creon./ and to the living/ the same law/Creon will not permit Polynices to be buried whom he wanted to des/troy by blood and fire/Blood and fire the land of his fathers. His body lives/as good grazing. Nourishment for dogs and birds of prey. Creon. Creon./ His law says/ Eteocles will be honoured/ and Polynices/ A banquet for dogs. Decay and grass./ Nobody dares to turn, turn, turn carrying madness/ You return to face an unburied, unburied, unburied body.

person, singular, present of the verb *usar*. This verb means both “to use” and “to wear”. Thus when Corifeo says that “Creonte usa la ley”, he could be saying that Creonte uses the law, but he could also be saying that Creonte wears the law. This alternative reading, seemingly absurd at first, becomes a plausible reading in light of what occurs very soon after.

It is at this point in the play that Creonte makes his appearance, but a new actor does not come on stage. The character of Creonte is represented by a moveable shell that is periodically donned by Corifeo, who then plays the role of the tyrant. The shell of Creon as a symbol of power is a particularly poignant one in the harsh socio-political climate of mid-1980s Argentina.²⁰⁷ The brutality of the Dirty Wars and the extent to which ordinary people had played the role of both perpetrator and victim made questions about power and its effect on the individual particularly pressing. The idea of Creon’s brutal exercise of power as a temporary shell that could be put on and then removed was rich ground to be explored.²⁰⁸ In the context of the Theatre of the Absurd, it matches well with a preference for flat, malleable characters responding to an incomprehensible world.²⁰⁹

The first exchange between Antígona and Corifeo after Corifeo as transformed temporarily into Creonte shows how complete the transformation is, a testimony to the malleability of identity in this context:

Corifeo: Eh, la que se humilla, la que gime, la que padece el miedo y tiembla.

Antígona (avanza serenamente): Temor y temblor, temor y temblor.

Corifeo: Hiciste lo que prohibí.

Antígona: Reconozco haberlo hecho y no lo niego.

²⁰⁷ Taylor 1997.

²⁰⁸ de Olcoz 1995.

²⁰⁹ Kott 1969.

Antinoo (asustado): ¡No lo niega!

Corifeo: Transgrediste la ley.

Antígona: No fue Dios quien la dictó ni la justice.

Corifeo: Te atreviste a desafiarme, desafiarme.

Antígona: Me atreví.

Corifeo: ¡Loca!

Antígona: Loco es quien me acusa de demencia.

Corifeo: No vale el orgullo cuando se es esclavo del vecino.

Antígona (señalando a Antinoo burlona): Este no lo es, ¿vecino? Ni vos.

Antinoo (orgullosa): ¡No lo soy!

Corifeo: ¡Si!

Antinoo: ¡Si lo soy! (Se desconcierta) ¿Qué? ¿Vecino del esclavo o esclavo del vecino?

Corifeo (como Antígona ríe): Esta me ultraja violando las leyes, y ahora agrega una segunda ofensa: jactarse y reírse.

Antígona: No me río.

Corifeo: Ella sería hombre y no yo si la dejara impune. Ni ella ni su Hermana escapan a la muerte.

Antígona (palidece): ¿Ismene? ¿Por qué Ismene?²¹⁰

²¹⁰ Ibid., p.203: Coryphaeus: Eh, the one that humiliates herself, the one who moans and suffers fear and trembling. Antigone (moves forward serenely): Fear and trembling. Fear and trembling. Coryphaeus: You did what I forbid. Antinous (scared): She doesn't deny it. Coryphaeus: You transgressed the law. Antigone: It was neither God nor justice that issued that law. Coryphaeus: You dared to challenge me—to challenge me! Antigone: I dared. Coryphaeus: Crazy woman! Antigone: The man who accuses me of insanity is mad. Coryphaeus: Pride is worthless when you are the neighbor's slave. Antigone (pointing mockingly at Antinous): He is not the neighbor nor you. Antinous: I am not. Coryphaeus: Yes. Antinous: Yes, I am! (He is disconcerted.) What? Neighbor of a slave or slave of a neighbor? Coryphaeus (as Antigone laughs): The breaking of the law offends me, and now you add a second offense: You brag and laugh. Antigone: I do not laugh. Coryphaeus: She will be a man and not I if she is left unpunished. Neither she nor her sister will escape death. Antigone (pained): Ismene? Why Ismene?

In *Antígona furiosa*, this conversation ends with a confused moment after Corifeo as Creonte threatens to kill Ismene along with Antígona, but removes the shell and returns to his role as Corifeo before any explanation is given. In fact, the first word Corifeo speaks as Corifeo after the episode is “¿Por qué?”²¹¹ From here, the conversation turns to Ismene’s culpability in the matter.²¹² At this juncture, it seems that all the events of Sophocles’s *Antigone* are all in the past and that all the characters on stage are very much aware of those events. This is, of course, quite a departure from the beginning of the play.

At this point, the conversation between the three turns to Hemón, Antígona’s long lost betrothed. It is clear that for Antígona the real punishment has come not in death, but in being denied marriage and motherhood. Shortly before this extended conversation about Hemón, Antígona has already said, “Dejarme casar con Hemón... conocer los placeres de la boda y la maternidad. Quiero ver crecer a mis hijos, envejecer lentamente.”²¹³

When the conversation turns to Hemón in greater detail, Corifeo dons the shell of Creon for the second time:

Antígona: ¡Hemón, Hemón!

Corifeo (va hacia la carcasa): Ama a Antígona.

Antinoo: ¡No se la quité!

Corifeo (en la carcasa): No soy yo. Es la muerte. (Ríe. Bajo)
¿Hémón? (Antígona se vuelva hacia él) ¿No estás furiosa?

Antígona (todas sus replicas con voz neutra): No.

Corifeo: Seré inflexible.

Antígona: Lo sé.

²¹¹ Gambaro 1989, p. 203: Why?

²¹² Ibid., p.204-205.

²¹³ Ibid., p.204: Leave me to marry Haemon...leave me to know the pleasures of marriage and motherhood. I want to raise my children, to age slowly.

Corifeo: Nada modificará mi decision.

Antígona: No intentaré cambiarla.

Corifeo: Me alegro. Uno desea hijos sumisos que devuelvan al enemigo de su padre mal por mal y honren a los amigos.

Antígona: Es justo.

Corifeo: La anarquía es el peor de los males. Quien transgrede la ley y pretende darme órdenes, no obtendrá mis elogios. Sólo confío en quienes obedecen.

Antígona: No osaría decir que tus palabras no son razonables. Sin embargo, también otro puede hablar con sensatez. Tu Mirada intimidada. Yo puedo oír lo que dice la gente. ¿No merece ella recompensa y no castigo?

Corifeo: Esa mujer se te subió a la cabeza.

Antígona: Hablo con mi razón.

Corifeo: Que tiene voz de hembra. No hay abrazos más fríos que los de una mujer perverse, indómita.

Antígona: ¿Perversa? Indómita.

Corifeo: Como ésa. Escupile en la cara y que busque un marido en los infiernos.

Antígona: Le escupiré. (Un silencio. Se lleva la mano a la cara) No me escupió, Creonte.²¹⁴

²¹⁴ Ibid., p.206-207: Antigone: Haemon! Haemon! Coryphaeus (goes to the shell): He loves Antigone. Antinous: Take it off. Coryphaeus (now in the shell): I am not myself. He is dead. (He lets out a low laugh) Haemon? (Antigone turns to him). Aren't you furious? Antigone (all her replies are said in a neutral voice): No. Coryphaeus: I am inflexible. Antigone: I know. Coryphaeus: Nothing will change my opinion. Antigone: I am happy. One wants meek children so that they might give to their father's enemy evil for evil and honour his friends. Antigone: That is right. Coryphaeus: Anarchy is the worst of evils. Whoever transgresses the law and tries to give me orders, he will not receive my praise. I only trust in those who obey. Antigone: I would not dare to say that your words are reasonable. However, you can also speak sense. You look intimidating. I can hear what the people say: Does she deserve punishment or reward? Coryphaeus: This woman is touched in the head. Antigone: I speak with reason. Coryphaeus: You have a woman's voice. There is no embrace colder than those of a perverse, untamed woman. Antigone: Perverse? Untamed. Coryphaeus: As it is. Spit in his face and look for a husband in the underworld. Antigone: I spit. (Un silencio. Se lleva la mano a la cara) No me escupió, Creon.

Sophocles' *Antigone* exhibits this sorrow over the loss of the roles of wife and mother as well. Antigone laments:

...καὶ νῦν ἄγει με διὰ χερῶν οὔτω λαβὼν
ἄλεκτρον, ἀνυμέναιον, οὔτε του γάμου
μέρος λαχοῦσαν οὔτε παιδείου τροφῆς...²¹⁵

But the centrality of marriage and motherhood in *Antígona furiosa* is also a way in which it is deeply connected to other Argentinean *Antigones*. In her 2011 essay about the history of *Antigone* in Argentina, “An Argentine Tradition”, Moira Fradinger very rightly argues that *Antígona furiosa* is as much a product of the tradition of Argentinean *Antigone* as a specific historical moment (i.e. the immediate aftermath of the Dirty War). Speaking of the whole tradition of Argentinean *Antigone* in connection with the well-documented history of women taking a central role in Argentinean politics, Fradinger writes that Argentinean *Antigones* “...dramatize, conform, or put in crisis one of the most influential narratives that the nation devised to interpolate women as its political builders qua *women*, but especially qua *mothers*.”²¹⁶ In *Antígona furiosa*, this tradition manifests itself through a continual stress upon Antígona’s lost marriage and maternity.

Much of the subsequent dialogue focuses on Antígona’s inability ever to be a wife and mother. Phrases such as *noche de bodas*, *cantos nupciales*, *virgin*, and *cámara nupcial* fill the language of the play.²¹⁷ However, ultimately, Antígona does fall back into her ancient role as sister *par excellence* and speaks lines that are a near translations of Sophocles’:²¹⁸

Si hubiera sido madre, jamás lo hubiera hecho por mis niños.
Jamás por mi esposo muerto hubiera intentado una fatiga

²¹⁵ Soph. *Ant.* 915-917: ...And now he leads me by his strong hand, unmarried, without a nuptial song, not having received any portion of marriage or of the nurture of children.

²¹⁶ Fradinger 2011, p. 69.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 210-211: *wedding night*, *wedding songs*, *virgin*, and *marriage-bed*.

²¹⁸ See Soph. *Ant.* 995-1005.

semejante. Polinices, Polinices, ¿sabes por qué lo digo! Otro esposo hubiera podido encontrar, concebir otros hijos a pesar de mi pena. Pero muertos mi padre y mi madre, no hay hermano que pueda nacer jamás. ¡Jamás volverás a nacer, Polinices! Creonte me ha juzgado, hermano mio.²¹⁹

With the contrast between virgin and matron at the centre of events, a character defined by contrast enters onto the scene. Just like Creonte, Tiresias does not actually appear as an actor on the stage; however, the other characters speak to him and about him as though he were physically present onstage. The first mention of Tiresias comes as Corifeo transforms between himself and Creonte. Addressing Antígona, he says, “¡No preocuparse! Vendrá Tiresias, y aunque ciego, Tiresias sacerdote, ¡arregla todo!”²²⁰ He then puts on the shell and says in the character of Creonte, “¿Qué hay de Nuevo, Viejo Tiresias? Me espanta tu cara oscurecida, como con doble ceguera. Nunca me aparté de tus consejos. Por eso goberné bien esta ciudad.”²²¹ This completely positive view of Tiresias results in Antígona and Creonte (or rather, Corifeo in the form of Creonte) competing for ownership of Tiresias:

Corifeo: Los pájaros hambrientos arrancaron jirones del cadáver de Polinices. Por eso gritan. Comieron la carne y la sangre de un muerto en la refriega.

Antinoo: ¡Que arregle esto Tiresias! ¡Quiero irme a casa!

Corifeo: ¡Y en tu casa te seguirá la peste!

Antinoo: ¡Me encerraré!

Corifeo: ¡Te seguirá la peste! Ningún Dios oirá nuestra súplicas! ¡Malditas aves!

²¹⁹ Ibid., p. 212: If I had been a mother, I would not have done this for my children. Never for my husband would I have died, undertaking similar weariness. Polynices, Polynices, you know what I mean. I could find another husband, conceive other children despite my sorrow. But my father and mother are dead so no other brother could ever be born. You will never be reborn, Polynices. Creon has judged me, my brother.

²²⁰ Ibid., p.213: Don't worry. Tiresias will come, and although blind, Tiresias the priest fixes everything.

²²¹ Ibid.: What's new, old Tiresias? I am afraid of your darkened face, just like your double-blindness. I have never turned away your council so I have governed this city well.

Antígona: El mal permitido nos contamina a todos. Escondidos en sus casas, devorados por el miedo, los seguirá la peste.

Corifeo: Tal vez no, si Tiresias consigue de Creonte lo que tu empecinamiento te ha negado.

Antígona: No convenzas a Creonte, Tiresias. Creonte te ha dicho que la raza entera de los sacerdotes ama el dinero. (Ríe) Y contestaste que la de los tiranos el lucro vergonzoso. ¡Se entienden bien ustedes! (Aparta las alas cuyo aleteo ha decrecido) Yo no temo. ¿Qué te dice Tiresias? Que pagarás con la muerte de un ser nacido de tu sangre... (Se oscurece) He... Hemón... por haberme arrojado a la tumba y por retener insepulto el cadáver de Polinices. En boca de Tiresias, la verdad y la mentira están mezcladas. No te ensañes con un cadáver. ¿Qué hazaña es matar a un muerto?

Corifeo: Sí, eso dirá.

Antígona: Perros, lobos, y buitres desgarraron el cadáver de mi hermano y con sus restos mancillaron los altares.

Corifeo: Sí, eso dirá.

Antígona: Perros, lobos, y buitres desgarraron el cadáver de mi hermano y con sus restos mancillaron los altares.

Corifeo: ¡Peste!

Antígona: Tiresias, ¡esto te asusta! Hábil para ser amigo del poder en su cúspide y separarse cuando declina. Pediste por mí, por Polinices despedazado y por miedo, Creonte me perdonó. (Pausa) Yo no lo supe.²²²

²²² Ibid., p. 214: Coryphaeus: Hungry birds ripped shreds from the corpse of Polynices. Therefore they screech. They eat the flesh and blood of the dead man in the fray. Antinous: Fix this, Tiresias. I want to go home. Coryphaeus: And the plague will follow you to your house. Antinous: I will lock myself inside. Coryphaeus: The plague will follow you. The gods will not hear your prayers! Damned birds! Antigone: Evil is able to contaminate us all. Hidden in their homes devoured by fear, the plague follows them. Coryphaeus: Maybe not, if Tiresias achieves what your stubbornness has denied you. Antigone: Do not be persuaded by Creon, Tiresias. Creon has told you that the whole race of priests love money. (Laughs) And you answered that the race of tyrants loves shameful profits. They understand each other well. (She moves the wings out of the way which flutter and fall to the ground) I am not afraid. What does Tiresias say to you? That you will pay with the death of one having been born of your blood... (The lights dim) He... given me over to the tomb and having withheld Polynices unburied body. In the words of Tiresias, truth and lies are mixed together. Do not school yourself with a corpse. What feat is it to kill a dead man? Antigone: Dogs wolves, and vultures tore apart my brother's body and defiled the alters with my brother's remains. Coryphaeus: Yes, I said that. Antigone: Dogs wolves, and vultures tore apart my brother's body and defiled the alters with my brother's remains. Coryphaeus: Plague! Antigone: Tiresias, this frightens you. You

The final lines of Antígona's last speech are especially heart breaking as she posits a scenario in which Tiresias, in his wisdom, could have been her saviour. This is not to be, however. Soon Corifeo has taken off Creonte's shell for a final time, and Antígona has begun to sing Ophelia's song again. Corifeo reminds her that she will never be saved: "Y morirás mil veces."²²³ Even if this is true, Antígona's last words are ones of defiance. She shouts, "¡El resto es silencio!"²²⁴

The Antigone of Antígona furiosa is a defiant one to the end. She is also the character within the play that is most indicative of its relationship with magical realism. While Coryphaeus and Antionus might be at home in *Waiting for Godot* or *Les Chaises*, Antigone most certainly would not be. Her Otherness is a spiritual one and the strangeness of her interactions with the café world of Coryphaeus and Antionus arises not from the fact that she is without purpose, but because she is deeply invested with it.²²⁵ The presence of both "types" on the stage points to the link, however, of this Latin American play with the Western theatrical tradition, while at the same time showing how that tradition is adapted and changed in the Latin American context.

Hipólito y Fedra: una pasión desbocada (2005)

Hipólito y Fedra: una pasión desbocada is the other Argentinean play in this section and has similarly defiant characters. Its creator, Alejandro Ullúa, is probably the most famous unknown Argentinean playwright. Therefore a bit of background seems necessary before proceeding. Born in Buenos Aires and raised in the province of Santiago del Estero, Ullúa has had a long career

are able to be a friend to power at its peak and separate from it at its decline. You plead for me, for torn Polynices, and for fear. Creon forgave me. (Pause) I do not know.

²²³ Ibid., p.217: And you will die a thousand times.

²²⁴ Ibid.: The rest is silence.

²²⁵ Taylor 1997.

that has included productions not only in his native Argentina but also several European capitals—including London, though none of this has translated to any sort of real fame outside of Argentina

Ullúa's *Hipólito y Fedra* was produced in Buenos Aires in 2005 as part of a Fundación Knox funded program which commissioned several plays with classical themes from Argentinean playwrights to honour the 2,500th birthday of Pericles. Ullúa has cited Euripides' *Hippolytus* and Racine's *Phèdre* as the primary sources from which he drew inspiration (a point that will be addressed a bit later as well), though there is a fair bit of (freely admitted to) Seneca, Ovid, and Plutarch to be found as well.²²⁶ Since Ullúa's engagement with Racine is of particular interest to the larger project of this thesis (namely, the influence of France on contemporary Latin American productions of Greek tragedy), the analysis provided below highlights this relationship. In particular, we will examine the ways in which *Hipólito y Fedra* works to transform Racine's *Phèdre* through the introduction of an indigenous perspective in order to become a postcolonial text well within the tradition of magical realism. This is done while still preserving the play's genetic relationship to *Phèdre* and also to the Greco-Roman texts (and Euripides' play in particular). In fact, this is the only way for this to be accomplished. Later we will also explore the connection between aberrant desire and non-normative bodies manifested in *Hipólito y Fedra* before returning to a discussion of the relationship between magical realism and Surrealism.

Hipólito y Fedra is a very active engagement with the tradition of theatrical portrayals of this myth, as well as with the larger Argentine tradition around many of the key characters in the

²²⁶ Red Teatral 2014.

story's mythic cycle, particularly the Minotaur who occupies a central place in the Argentinean literary tradition.²²⁷

The play opens, for example, with a dialogue between Teseo (Theseus) and the Minotaur. The second scene is much more conventional in terms of the *Hippolytus*, or rather, *Phèdre*. The second scene of Ùlla's play closely follows "Act 1" of Racine's play. While training in the gymnasium (and surrounded by very handsome athletes), Hipólito tells Terámenes, his closest friend, that he intends to go out in search of his long absent father (whom the audience has just seen talking to the Minotaur in the underworld). This is in parallel to Racine's Hippolytus who opens the action by announcing his desire to flee, but in contrast to Euripides' character who "upon his entrance transforms the stage into a scared place. His emphatic speech is a prayer to the goddess his father cannot worship."²²⁸ Ulla's Hipolito, however, does see his flight as pious duty, perhaps in line with a prayer. Terámenes is doubtful of the wisdom of this quest and, in fact, wonders if Teseo even wants to be found:

¿Con qué nueva esperanza y en que felices climas crees descubrir la huella de su pasos? Incluso, quién sabe si tu padre desea que el misterio de su ausencia sea develado, y si cuando tememos por su vida, el rey se oculta de una nueva amante...²²⁹

Hipólito finds the idea that his father has found a new lover ridiculous; he believes completely in the power of his stepmother, Fedra. He tells his friend, "Fedra no teme rivales."²³⁰ The extent to which Fedra has been a burden to Hipólito is made very clear as the dialogue continues:

Terámenes: ¿Desde cuándo te resulta molesta la serena atmósfera del hogar de tu infancia, y cuya residencia prefieres

²²⁷ Alvarez 1995.

²²⁸ Cole 2010.

²²⁹ Ùlla 2005, Act1.2: With what new hope and in what new climate do you believe you will find the imprint of your father's footstep? Moreover, who knows if your father wants they mystery of his absence to be revealed? What if as we fear for his life, the king is hidden by a new lover?

²³⁰ Ibid.: Phaedra fears no rivals.

al tumulto pomposo de Atenas y la corte? ¿Qué peligro o dolor te alejan de aquí?

Hipólito: Aquel tiempo feliz terminó. Todo cambió desde que la hija de Minos y Pasifae, arribó a estas orillas.²³¹

Despite his disdain for her, his stepmother is the least of Hipólito's concerns. He is in love with Aricia. Aricia, as in *Phèdre*, is the sole survivor of the royal house which Teseo has displaced and is being held prisoner by Teseo in order to prevent her from bearing children who will revive her line. While Terámenes correctly guesses that Hipólito is in love with Aricia, it is an accusation that Hipólito does not exactly deny, but also does not embrace:

Hipólito: Amigo, ¿Qué te atreves a decir? Conoces mi corazón...Sabes que me amamantó el orgullo de Antiope, mi madre amazona, y me congratulo de ser así. Sabes también que admiro la historia del rey Teseo. No me canso de oír los mismos relatos. Pero también, cuánto me desagrada saber que el deseo dominó sus acciones y que su ardor fue brindado y admitido en los corazones demasiado tantas mujeres cuyos nombres no recordó siquiera. No soy ni quiero ser como Teseo. Y aunque mi orgullo pudiera dulcificarse, no olvido el obstáculo eterno que me separa de Aricia. Mi padre la rechaza, y con severas leyes le prohíbe dar sobrinos a sus hermanos muertos. Desconfía del brote de una estirpe culpable y quiere extinguir en ella la sangre de los Palantes. ¿Debo apoyar su causa contra un padre indignado? ¿Dar atrevido ejemplo de temeridad? ¿Comprometer mi juventud en un amor demente?

Terámenes: Para el destino no existen razones. El odio de Teseo exagera un amor rebelde y presta a su enemiga nuevo encanto. ¿De que sirve fingir con palabras orgullosas? Confiésalo, todo cambia, y desde hace poco tiempo ya no se te ve como antes, altanero y arisco. Tus ojos, llenos de una luz interior, miran con fijeza. No cabe duda, estás enamorado. El amor arrasa tu corazón, y esa fuerza es insuperable. La encantadora Aricia supo atraerlo.²³²

²³¹ Ibid.: Theramenes: Since when did the peaceful atmosphere of your childhood home bother you, and what home do you prefer to the hubbub of Athens and the court? What danger or pain drives you away from here? Hippolytus: That happy time is over. Everything has changed since the daughter of Minos and Pasiphaë came to these shores.

²³² Ibid.: Hippolytus: Friend, how dare you say that? You know my heart. You know that the pride of Antiope, my Amazonian mother, nursed me, and I am pleased to be like this. You know also that I admire the stories about King

Hipólito begins to dismiss the idea that his love for Aricia could have any real consequences when Fedra's maid, Panope, enters. She says that Fedra is distraught and being comforted by her nurse, Enone. The curtain closes.

When the curtain reopens, a distraught Fedra is in her room with an incredibly concerned Enone. This scene is drawn from similar scenes in both Euripides and Racine. It is at this point that Euripides and Racine diverge from one another over the particularly important issue of Phaedra's relationship not so much to her children, but to motherhood as a concept.²³³

The following scene presents another troubled young woman and her loyal nurse: Aricia and Ismene. Aricia asks Ismene if Hipólito wishes to see her. Ismene assures her mistress that he does. They begin to have a conversation about what might be colloquially called Hipólito's "mixed signals". His ambiguity deeply pains Aricia, as is evident in her final speech of the scene:

Aricia: Querida Ismene, ¡mi corazón escucha ávidamente tus palabras, y quizá no tienen fundamento!. Me conoces, ¿te parece posible que yo, triste juguete de un destino implacable, corazón nutrido de amargura y de llanto, deba conocer el amor y sus locas pesadumbres?. Perdí a muchos hermanos en la flor de sus tempranas juventudes. La espada segó sus vidas, y la tierra húmeda bebió su sangre. Sólo yo escapé a los furioses de la guerra. Soy la última descendiente de una familia noble y su pobre esperanza. Desde sus muertes, una severa ley prohíbe a cualquier griego poner sus ojos en mí: temen que el ardor temerario de la familia renazca en los frutos de la hermana.

Theseus. I never tire of hearing them. But also, I hate knowing that passion dominates his actions and his "lust" was offered and admitted into the hearts of too many women, whose names are completely forgotten. I do not want to be like Theseus. And although my pride could mellow, I haven't forgotten the eternal obstacle that separates me from Aricia. My father oppresses her and with strict laws prevents nephews for her dead brothers. He mistrusts the bud of a guilty line and wishes to destroy through her the blood of the Pallantides. Must I support her case against an angry father? Do I dare to give an example of such recklessness? Compromise my youth in the midst of a crazy love? Theramenes: Reasons don't exist for fate. The hatred of Theseus exacerbates a rebellious love and gives new charms to an enemy. What's the purpose of faking with proud words? Admit it. Everything is changing. Even after a little while she already does not see you as before, arrogant and surly. Your eyes, filled with light, stare longingly. There's no doubt. You are in love. Love destroys your heart, and that strength is unsurpassable. The charming Aricia was able to pull it out.

²³³ Because of the importance of this scene to the performance history of the myth, we discuss it in greater detail below.

Pero también sabes con qué desden veía la preocupación del vencedor desconfiado. Siempre contraria al amor, a veces daba gracias al injusto Teseo, cuyo oportuno rigor favorecía mi desdén. Pero entonces mis ojos no habían visto a su hijo. No sólo porque al verlo, fácilmente hechizada, amé en él su misterioso atractivo, tan elogiado; don con que la naturaleza quiso honrarle, y que él mismo desprecia y parece ignorar. Estimo en Hipólito otras riquezas: las virtudes de su padre, con la ausencia de sus vicios. Amo su noble orgullo, que nunca se inclinó bajo el yugo amoroso. Fedra se jactaba de la pasión de Teseo: yo soy más orgullosa y rehúyo la gloria fácil de lograr el homenaje que se ofreció a otras. ¿Entrar en un corazón abierto a todos los vientos?, prefiero doblegar al indomable. Que el amor aprisione al insensible con sus dulces grilletes y conozca el sufrimiento; que en vano se sacuda de un yugo que le place: eso quiero. Pero, que imprudencia, no será tan fácil vencer su resistencia. ¿Amar a Hipólito?²³⁴

Just as Aricia finishes her speech, Hipólito enters. It quickly becomes clear that any fears are completely unfounded: Hipólito does love her. He launches into an overwrought expression of love; but before he can conclude, Terámenes arrives and tells Hipólito that Fedra wishes to see him. Confused, Hipólito goes to meet with the queen.²³⁵

The next scene begins as Hipólito enters into the queen's chambers. Fedra's first words to Hipólito show no trace of her forbidden love and are, in fact, filled with motherly concern:

²³⁴ Ibid. I.4: Dear Ismene, my heart listens attentively to your words, and perhaps they are not without merit. You know me; does it seem possible to you that I, the sad plaything of unstoppable fate, nurture a heart of bitterness and tears? Should he know love and its insane sorrows? I lost many brothers in the flower of their youths. The sword cut short their lives, and the damp earth drank their blood. I am the last of a noble family and its poor hope. Only I escaped the terrors of the war. Since their deaths, a harsh law forbids any Greek to set his eyes on me. Fear that the foolhardy ardour of the family will be reborn in the fruits of the sister. But you also know with what disdain the concern of the suspicious victor looks. Always opposed to love, at times, I gave thanks to unjust Theseus whose appropriate strictness favoured my disdain. Then my eyes had not seen his son. Not only because at seeing him, being easily charmed, I loved in him is oft-lauded mysterious appeal; a gift with which nature wanted to honour him, and he just the same despises me and seems to ignore me. I predict other riches in Hippolytus; the virtues of his father and none of his vices. I love his noble pride that never bowed under the yoke of love. Phaedra boasted of her passion for Theseus. I am more proud, and I shunned the easy glory of gaining the homage he offered to others. To enter with a heart open to all the winds? I prefer to crush the indomitable. Oh love that imprisons the callous with its shackles! I know the suffering that in vain shakes off the yoke that is pleasing to it. I do. But will this recklessness be so easy to overcome, this loving Hippolytus?

²³⁵ Ibid. I.5

Señor, se dice que un pronto viaje lo aleja de aquí. Mis lágrimas se unen a su dolor. Vengo a explicar mi inquietud: Mis hijos perdieron a su padre y no está lejos el día en que también serán testigos de mi muerte. A Acamante, el mayor, aún tan pequeño, lo cercan mil enemigos, sólo Ud. puede abrazar su defensa. Pero un remordimiento agita mi alma, temo que Ud. se haya vuelto sordo a sus gritos. Tiemblo que recaiga sobre el hijo, el justo rencor que debe sentir por la madre.²³⁶

This is the conversation that Hipólito imagines that he would be having with Fedra and seems to have a prepared answer. He assures Fedra, perhaps a bit awkwardly, that it is normal for a mother to promote the interests of her children over those of her stepchildren. He declares that speculation over inheritance of the Athenian throne is premature as Teseo might still be alive. Then Fedra reveals the truth. She is not distraught because she fears Teseo is dead. She is inconsolable, because she is in love with Hipólito. Just as she cries out, “¡La viuda de Teseo osa amar a Hipólito!” Enone enters the room.²³⁷ Enone has come to announce the arrival of Terámenes. Terámenes has come to inform Fedra and Hipólito that the Athenian chieftains have met and decided that Fedra’s son will be the new king. With this news, the first act ends.

The second act begins, like the first, in the underworld. This time Ariadne is talking with the Minotaur.²³⁸ When the monologue is finished, the curtain falls again and reopens on Fedra’s bedroom. Fedra and Enone are there. Fedra bemoans her new found power as queen regent, but this is only to be her problem for a short while. Panope enters the room and makes this shocking announcement:

Señora, ahogue su dolor y recurra a su antiguo valor. El rey, al que creíamos muerto, acaba de regresar. El gran Teseo está

²³⁶ Ibid. I.6: Lord, they say soon you will travel far from here. My tears are on account of your pain. I came to explain my discomfort. My children have lost their father; and one day, not far off, they will be witness to my death. A-Acamas, the eldest, still so small, is surrounded by a thousand enemies. Only you can embrace his defence. However, remorse stirs my soul. I fear that you will grow deaf to his cries. I tremble that the righteous anger that you must feel for his mother will fall upon my son.

²³⁷ Ibid.: Theseus’ widow dares to love Hippolytus!

²³⁸ This monologue is discussed in greater detail below.

nuevamente entre nosotros. El pueblo se aglomera en el puerto y corre a verlo, mil gritos de alegría se alzan hasta el cielo...²³⁹

Upon hearing this announcement, Fedra knows that she has much bigger problems. Fedra fears that Hipólito will reveal her confession to Teseo, and she will be punished. She lashes out at Enone, whom she blames for encouraging her to confess her love to Hipólito. Enone, however, has a plan as to how Fedra might avoid disgrace and death. Enone says that she will tell Teseo that Hipólito confessed *his* love for Fedra. Enone knows that this would enrage Teseo who would have to banish Hipólito. Once again, the curtain falls.

The next scene opens on Teseo's homecoming. The welcome he receives is far from a warm one. In fact, it is clear that those around him are terrified of the returned patriarch. This is a fact that is not lost on Teseo. The first words that the audience hears him speak among the living are these:

Oh Cielo, ¿por qué me sacaste de mi prisión si vuelvo a mi familia tan temido y tan poco amado?; Con qué severidad me persigue el destino!; Oh ternura tan mal recompensada!²⁴⁰

At this moment, Enone enters and whispers her lie in Teseo's ear. Teseo is shocked and angered. He summons Hipólito to him and accuses him of the crimes which Enone just reported. Hipólito, of course, denies it. Teseo, however, declares that, "Los criminales siempre recurren al perjurio."²⁴¹ Teseo orders that Hipólito be banished.

As the next scene opens, Fedra seems hopeless out of touch with the true gravity of recent events. She moans to Enone that she has a rival for Hipólito's affection. He loves Aricia. So

²³⁹ Ibid., II.2: Lady, drown you sorrow and reclaim your former strength. The king, whom we formerly thought was dead, has just returned. The great Theseus is back among us. The city is gathered in the port and runs to see him. A thousand cries of joy rise to the sky.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., II.3: Oh, heavens, why did you let me out of prison only to return to a family by whom I am so much feared and so little loved? With what severity fate pursues me! Tenderness is so badly rewarded.

²⁴¹ Ibid., II.2: Criminals always resort to perjury.

ludicrously irrational is Fedra that she sends off Enone, who has been (whatever her faults) absolutely loyal to Fedra.²⁴²

While Fedra is sending away her faithful nurse, Hipólito is meeting with Aricia. Aricia, at first, encourages Hipólito to stay and defend himself against the false accusations. But quickly any such talk is put aside, and they resolve to run off with one another. Their conversation is interrupted, however, by the announcement that the king is coming.²⁴³

As Teseo begins to interrogate Aricia about Hipólito, Panope comes running into the room. She announces that Enone has thrown herself into the sea. When Teseo inquires as to the wellbeing of Fedra, Panope says that she is suicidal. This news shocks Teseo.

The worst, however, is yet to come. No sooner has Panope left the stage then Terámenes enters. Sobbing, Terámenes reports, “Hipólito ya no existe.”²⁴⁴ Prompted by a now crying Teseo, Terámenes gives the report of Hipólito’s death. As soon as he finishes, Fedra and Panope enter the room. Teseo tells Fedra that Hipólito has died. Fedra falls to her knees sobbing. She confesses that she has falsely accused him. She then dies of a broken heart. The last lines of the play belong to Teseo:

Teseo: ¡Lástima que con ella no expire la memoria de tan negra acción! ¡Guardias! ...Preparen mi partida. Voy a mezclar mi llanto con la sangre de Hipólito. Voy a abrazar lo que queda de él. Le rendiré con creces los honores que mereció. ...Avisen a todo el reino que desde hoy, Aricia será la hija de Teseo.²⁴⁵

The Case of André Delvaux: “Postcolonizer” Magical Realism

²⁴² Ibid. II.3.

²⁴³ Ibid. II.4.

²⁴⁴ Ibid. II.7: Hippolytus is dead.

²⁴⁵ Ibid. II.8: Pity that the legacy of such a black deed does not expire with her. Guards...prepare for my departure. I will mix my tears with the blood of Hippolytus. I will embrace what is left of him. I will give his remains ample honours as they deserve...Also, notify the whole kingdom that now Aricia is Theseus’s daughter.

Going forward, the three pieces above will serve as case studies as we draw connections between Latin American aesthetics and Western aesthetic traditions. But first, let us look at an indisputable Western example in which the lines of the various aesthetic traditions discussed in this thesis are interconnected. The orthodoxy that magical realism is in some way inextricably postcolonial (whether it is produced in a location central or peripheral) seems to be challenged by the existence of work that is clearly Western or (perhaps more precisely) clearly non-postcolonial that is also very much under the umbrella of magical realism. The most interesting of the works that can be cited in evidence of this are the films of the mid-20th-century Belgian director André Delvaux (1926-2002). Most well-known for films such as *L'oeuvre au noir* (1988), *Een vrouw tussen hond en wolf* (1979), and *Belle* (1973), Delvaux's earlier work is what most clearly reflects his connection to magical realism. This includes films such as *La Planète fauve* (1959), *Jean Rouch* (1962), and *L'homme au crâne rasé* (1965).

Beyond his body work, Delvaux was gifted with the blessing of a narratively fascinating death: He died of a heart attack literally minutes after giving a self-reflective testimonial-style speech on 4 October 2002. The speech was entitled “Un cinéma éclaté dans une Belgique éclatée”. In the speech, Delvaux bemoaned the fact that he had not been more political in his earlier work (i.e. the films on which we are focusing here).²⁴⁶ While repenting of this sin was how M. Delvaux spent the last moments of his life, there is much to suggest that he was not correct, at least not entirely. Delvaux's work was political in a way that all artistic products created in *lieux éclatés* cannot help but be political.

Delvaux's first commercially successful film, *L'homme au crâne rasé* (1965), was an adaptation of the 1948 novel *De man die zijn haar kort liet knippen* (*The Man Who Cut His Hair*

²⁴⁶ Nysenholo 1995.

Too Short) by the Flemish writer Herman Thiery, who wrote under the pseudonym Johan Daisne. Thiery and fellow Flemish writer Hubert Lampo are widely considered the foremost practitioners of magical realism in the Dutch language.²⁴⁷ This is despite the fact that there are Dutch-speaking postcolonial societies, many with lively literary traditions. For example, there is a rich literary tradition in Suriname.

These examples of Belgian film and literature are significant for this thesis, because they suggest an important point about magical realism, a point that is sadly often either completely missed or quickly noted and summarily dismissed. This is namely that magical realism is not the bastard child of Surrealism and the postcolonial experience, a literary metaphor for how many Westerners have now come to view the whole of the colonial adventure. Rather magical realism constitutes a development that often occurs within the general prevue of Surrealism in hybridized cultural contexts.²⁴⁸ These hybridized cultural contexts do certainly exist within postcolonial societies, but they are also present in a number of Western societies, particularly those (such as Belgium) where the lines of the political state do not correspond to those cultural regions which inevitably pre-exist the state.²⁴⁹ Thus, it is fair to say that magical realism is not, as Rushdie suggested, a “Third World” genre, but instead is a genre of cultural hybridity in whatever place (and for whatever reason) that hybridity might manifest. This is the theme we explore here.

Making Explicit the Connections

The roots of magical realism in hybridity does suggest why magical realism is inextricably linked to Latin America and (in many ways) reflects something specific to the Latin American context, but the relationships of magical realism to global literary and artistic

²⁴⁷ Mosley 1994.

²⁴⁸ Hart 2004, p. 306.

²⁴⁹ Fox 2004.

traditions is perhaps just as defining.²⁵⁰ Yet when these relationships have been elucidated, it has normally been in an explicitly postcolonial context. The presentation of magical realism as the crowning glory of postcolonial literature has served to obscure the relationship of magical realism to aesthetic movements regarded as more traditionally *Western* or *European*. This has done a significant disservice to both the interpretation of pieces categorised as examples of magical realism and to our understanding of transcultural aesthetic dialogue.²⁵¹

In what follows, this thesis will attempt to bring these often ignored connections to the foreground as it seeks to connect magical realism to French Surrealism and the Theatre of the Absurd through the use of the case study plays above. The approach to this task will be twofold. The first is through a rather abstract analysis of the historical development of magical realism and the ways in which that development is linked to French Surrealism. We will then conclude this section by examining the relationship between explicitly indigenous adaptations of Greek tragedy and French primitivism, most clearly demonstrated in Alejandro Ullúa's *Hipolita y Fedra*.²⁵² As a whole, the hope is that these various discussions culminate to paint a comprehensive picture of the aesthetic bonds that join Latin American and French literature and theatre and the manifestation of these bonds within Greek tragedy.

Wanting to Be Real: Surrealism and Magical Realism

The centrality which Surrealism takes in this argument requires some further explanation in the context of a study whose primary subjects are theatrical. Certainly in Surrealism's heyday the effects of the movement on theatre were miniscule. Surrealism was a force in poetry and painting, not on the stage. Yet, as Rudy Cohn argued in "Surrealism and Today's French

²⁵⁰ Shannin 2004, p. 61.

²⁵¹ Cardullo 2013.

²⁵² Cf. p. 40.

Theatre”, his seminal 1964 essay, while Surrealism may not have widely concerned itself with the theatre, it did ultimately serve to create and promote three important French playwrights: Alfred Jarry, Guillaume Apollinaire, and Antoin Artaud.²⁵³

Although Surrealism’s direct relationship with the theatre evolved somewhat later, Apollinaire, in fact, coined the term in reference to two theatrical works. He first used the word in print in May 1917 in reference to a ballet.²⁵⁴ He (more famously) used the term again the next month in the preface to his own *Les mamelles de Tirésias*.²⁵⁵ The relationship between the classical tradition and Surrealism at Surrealism’s linguistic birth is of note to us in reference to our present discussion. It suggests that there is a unique compatibility between Surrealism and related modern aesthetic movements and Greek mimetic art, including tragedy.²⁵⁶ This is possibly, because the world of Greek myth (and consequently the world of Greek theatre) offers a canonical, deep well of source material for those seeking to challenge the austere rationalism of modernity.

This connection to the less rationalist world of the ancients is not only true of Surrealism, but of other modern aesthetic movements with which it shares a relationship.²⁵⁷ The Theatre of the Absurd is one such cousin of Surrealism. Cohen, in his previously mentioned analysis of the connection between Surrealism and mid-century French theatre, notes that in 1947, in Paris, the Russian-born playwright Arthur Adamov completed the first self-consciously Absurdist play *La Parodie* and the first production of Apollinaire’s *Les mamelles de Tirésias* took place, set to music by Francis Poulenc, at the Opéra Comique.²⁵⁸ Adamov, whose first language was French,

²⁵³ Cohn 1964, p. 159.

²⁵⁴ Bohn 1977, p.198.

²⁵⁵ Breuning 1964, p. 67.

²⁵⁶ This idea is explored further in Steiner 2004.

²⁵⁷ Puchnee 2002.

²⁵⁸ *La Parodie* was first produced three years later in 1950 in Paris.

had been significantly influenced by Surrealism since his arrival in Paris in 1924. He had even for a time edited the surrealist journal *Discontinuité*.²⁵⁹

While Adamov's relationship to Surrealism is quite clear, it is easy to find such connections for other important Absurdist playwrights as well, even when the playwrights themselves are more ambiguous about such an association.²⁶⁰ The Romanian-born Eugène Ionesco (who spent the vast majority of his professional life in Paris) wrote in his *Notes et contre-notes* the following concerning his relationship to Surrealism:

They (Breton, Soupault, Péret) said to me, "That's what we wanted to do." But I never belonged to their group, or to the neo-Surrealist, although the movement interested me. For that matter, I can well understand why a Surrealist theatre has been produced only recently; the theatre is always twenty or thirty years behind poetry.²⁶¹

Whatever Ionesco's misgivings were about being associated with Surrealism and its adherents, it is clear that there is in fact a strong connection in between the two as a result of a desire to and ability for "destabilizing realism".²⁶² This is a characteristic that both share with that venerable tradition of Latin American/postcolonial magical realism. In fact, the above phrase was used in reference to magical realism.²⁶³ As has been mentioned earlier, magical realism has been primarily posited as a distinctly postcolonial genre and even a particularly Latin American one. Wendy B. Faris, following in the path forged by Stephen Slemon in his important essay "Magical Realism as Postcolonial Discourse", wrote in *Janus Head* in 2002 that magical realism's "suspension between two discursive systems resembles the colonial subjects between

²⁵⁹ For more on the life and career of Arthur Adamov, see Sherrell 1965 and Rombaut 1971.

²⁶⁰ Jacquart 1998.

²⁶¹ Reprinted in Cohn, 1964, p. 164.

²⁶² Faris 2002, p. 113.

²⁶³ Sasser 2014, p. 114-116; 118-120; 122; 189-190.

two--or more—cultural systems, and hence serves to reflect the postcolonial situations especially well.”²⁶⁴ Faris’s remarks reflect the common image of magical realism as something uniquely postcolonial in its very essence, a literary style that mirrors of the very (often precarious) situation of its creators. It is a style that belongs to what Niall Ferguson might call “the Rest”, even if it is almost without exception written in the language of the West.

Even when magical realism’s connection to Western aesthetic history is openly acknowledged, there seems to be a continued need to reassert magical realism’s postcolonial nature.²⁶⁵ Salman Rushdie, arguably one of the greatest practitioners of magical realism, offers an excellent example of this in his 1982 review of Gabriel García Márquez’s *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*:

El realismo magical [sic], magical realism, at least as a practice by Marquez is a development out of Surrealism that expresses a genuinely “Third World” consciousness. It deals with Naipaul has called “half-made societies in which the impossibly old struggles against the appallingly new (301).²⁶⁶

As a translation of *Oedipus Rex* in the Colombian context, *Edipo Alcalde* reflects the hybrid personality that characterizes so much of Latin American culture. It could even be suggested that this hybridity arises out of colonialism and is as such “genuinely ‘Third World’”. One place in which this is particularly evident is the extent to which the film is incredibly conscious of the role of hierarchy in *Oedipus* and translates the social markers from Sophocles into the Colombian context. For example, the patronizing manner with which Edipo engages with Tireseas when he first visits the prophet’s workshop reflects the way such treatment often

²⁶⁴ Faris 2002, p. 109.

²⁶⁵ Mollory 2005.

²⁶⁶ Reprinted in Faris 2002, p. 115.

manifests in Colombian society as a way for “reform-minded” elites to maintain their elevated status while benefitting from the rhetoric of democracy and equality.²⁶⁷

While making these translations and transitions, *Edipo Alcalde* demonstrates principles underlining the often fraught relationship between knowledge and power. The themes of isolation, hierarchal power, and knowledge are reoccurring ones not only in the work of García Márquez, but more broadly within magical realism.²⁶⁸ This is because all three are linked to issues of perception and position. They are ultimately about what one understands reality to be and how one then interacts with that understood reality. The scene depicting the very different reactions of Edipo and Yocasta to the return of Layo’s spirit for some late night (very eerie) piano practice is one manifestation of this within the film.²⁶⁹ This perception of reality and the individual’s relationship to it are also present in the Surrealist approach, which has been frequently targeted by its critics for the elitism which this perceptual isolation is believed to encourage.²⁷⁰

The idea that intellectual isolation automatically decrees an elitism of some kind is bound to the fact that knowledge and power are intimately linked. Traditional systems of hierarchy depend upon the idea that knowledge only exists in a singular objective way and so can be absolutely controlled by those on top of the hierarchal structure.²⁷¹ The decentralization of knowledge that is an important part of both magical realist and Surrealist approaches challenges this idea of knowledge and, consequently, the hierarchies that depend upon it.²⁷²

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 00:27:09. See Portes 2003.

²⁶⁸ Reeds 2006 and Peavler 1996.

²⁶⁹ Ali Triana 1996, 00:38:46.

²⁷⁰ Zelechow 1992.

²⁷¹ Cleveland 1985.

²⁷² Leplin 1987.

This challenge can be seen quite significantly in *Edipo alcalde*, in part because of the presence of these themes in Sophocles's play.²⁷³ Since, unlike the Oedipus of Seneca, the Sophoclean Oedipus does not have any pre-existing knowledge of his identity or his connection to his city's misfortunes, knowledge (and not just insight) plays a real and dynamic role in altering power structures within Sophocles' play. Thus it is quite productive to examine the relationship of knowledge and power within the film in contrast to the Sophoclean version in order to see how the conceptions of reality and power within Sophocles are related to those in *Edipo Alcalde* as a tool to demonstrate the level of unity between magical realist interpretations and those of (French) Surrealism.

There are three primary "knowledge bearers" in the Sophoclean version of the Oedipus myth, two of whom appear in the Colombian version. By order of appearance in Sophocles, these are the following: the blind seer Tiresias, the Corinthian messenger who ultimately delivered the infant to Corinth, and the Theban shepherd who was ordered to expose the infant. The Corinthian messenger is the missing player in the Colombian version. The two characters with a Colombian adaptation are easy to associate with their Sophoclean counterparts, but they are also thoroughly Colombian characters.

In *Edipo alcalde*, Deyanira would seem to most English-speaking audiences to be a crazed woman living in the mountains in a ramshackle igloo of sticks and stones; however, to a Colombian audience, she is an easily identifiable archetype. She is a *bruja*. Literally translated a *bruja* is a witch, but the role and presence of *las brujas* in Latin American culture is pervasive, even in the present day.²⁷⁴ These women, universally poor and often with indigenous or African

²⁷³ Kane 1975.

²⁷⁴ Uribe 2003 and Pinzon 1988

ethic origins, exist on the periphery of society providing herbal and magical cures at a fee.²⁷⁵

While they are widely regarded as dangerous and certainly condemned by the established hierarchy of the Catholic Church, *las brujas* remain an important part of life in many Latin American countries, particularly in rural areas.²⁷⁶ Along with a healthy dose of fortune-telling and soothsaying, these women provide basic medical services to many rural poor who would not otherwise have access to any form of healthcare.²⁷⁷

The cures they provide are primarily herbal and are derived from ancient indigenous and African practices. Long before it became fashionable to argue for the preservation of the rainforest on the premise that the cures for any numbers of diseases might be lurking in its vast biological diversity, these women were exploiting these resources and their medical knowledge and practice can be seen as an example of hybridity and/or transculturation.²⁷⁸ Because they draw on theoretical and practical tools that are valued across cultural and historical lines, a diverse section of people, from both a peasant villager in the Andes or a research scientist, value the received knowledge of the *brujas* and can agree that they possess a special, hidden knowledge that has great value for the uninitiated.²⁷⁹ *Las brujas* also serve as midwives to many women in rural communities (as well as urban ones but that is another matter entirely).²⁸⁰

The *brujas*' practices are taken freely from Spanish and indigenous cultures. Elements of Catholicism, traditional African religion, the indigenous religious practices of the Americas, and even newly acquired knowledge from modern Western medicine have a place in the healing

²⁷⁵ Press 1971.

²⁷⁶ de Pineda 1989.

²⁷⁷ Chavez, 1984.

²⁷⁸ Napolitano 2003.

²⁷⁹ Brush 1993.

²⁸⁰ Califano 1978.

repertoire of the bruja.²⁸¹ This combination of modern, Western practice and ancient practices both Western and non-Western make the *bruja* an ideal character in the world of magical realism since she is a liminal figure not only in the sense that she stands on the border between the spiritual and the physical, but also in the spaces between the ancient and the modern the Western and the non-Western.²⁸² Moreover, by standing in that space, she comes to possess a type of knowledge that stands outside of those categories. In doing so, she calls into question those categories.

These facts make such a woman the perfect character to play the role of Edipo's rescuer. On a purely factual level, it makes sense that a child who was to be killed would be given to the midwife to dispose. But more than that, it makes sense that such a woman would be the final piece in the puzzle of Oedipus's self-discovery. She represents a frightening figure on the edge of an already fractured society. She possesses all kinds of secret wisdom passed down through the ages; and yet, she is still marginalized. Her marginalization is in no small way caused by how frightening her secret knowledge makes her.

Likewise, Tiresias, both in Colombia and Greece, is effected deeply by his possession of secret knowledge. While this analysis will pay particular attention to Tiresias as he is portrayed in Sophocles, we will generally take a broader view in our examination of the character. There has been plenty of ink spilled over Tiresias for an endless variety of reasons, including, for instance, in Marie Delcourt's seminal *Hermaphrodite: Myths and Rites of the Bisexual Figure in Classical Antiquity* (1961). The legends surrounding Tiresias create a virtually endless supply of fodder for scholarly pens, a trait shared with ancient writers. In his 1976 book *Le Mythe De*

²⁸¹ For more on the sources of folk medicine in Latin America, see Foster 1953; Coloon 1983; and Messer 1987. Of particular interest to Classicists might be Foster 1994.

²⁸² Lillian 2006, p. 440-442.

Tiresias: Essai D'Analyse Structurale, Luc Brisson notes no fewer than eighteen stories related to Tiresias in ancient sources, spanning the entire ancient period.²⁸³ In some ancient sources, he is blinded by Hera; the goddess's wrath was the result of either him having come upon her while bathing (as in Cal. *HM.* 5. 67, 80) or for him arguing that women enjoy sex more than men (as he more famously does in Ov. *Met.* 3.31.6-338). Of course, Tiresias must have had a unique perspective on the issue of gender disparities in coital pleasure, since he had once been briefly turned into a woman after killing the female member of a mating pair of snakes (cf. Apollod. 3.67) Whatever her reason for blinding him, Zeus gives Tiresias the gift of prophecy in exchange for his loss of physical sight (as per Apollod. 3.67). With his new spiritual sight, it is the Euripidean Tiresias who warns Pentheus to accept Dionysus and his rites in Thebes (Eur. *Bacch.* passim) and the Homeric one who advises Odysseus on how he might appease the anger of Apollo (Hom. *Od.* 10.492).²⁸⁴ But Tiresias is most famous in his Sophoclean incarnation, namely for being the first to tell Oedipus who he truly is. In this, Tiresias belongs to a long line of blind prophets and an even longer line of unheeded prophets.²⁸⁵

Similarly, in *Edipo alcalde*, Tiresias is at once a haunting and earthy figure. Portrayed by the famed Spanish actor Francisco Rabal, Tiresias first appears in the film moments after Edipo's arrival in the town.²⁸⁶ He wears the ragged, dirty clothes that are common among Colombia's rural poor. However, in the first moment he appears, he is framed by the marble grandeur of the city hall. His first words to Edipo, who has no idea who the strange, blind man is, are ominous and prophetic: "Has llegado a tiempo para confundir tu destino con el nuestra."²⁸⁷ It is only in

²⁸³ Brisson 1976.

²⁸⁴ For more on the Euripidean Tiresias, see Papadopoulou 2001 and Mastronarde 2010, p. 42; 125; 151; 173; 213; 215; 219; 240; 296.

²⁸⁵ Devereux 1973

²⁸⁶ Ali Triana 1996, 00:07:55

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 00:08:00: The time has come for your destiny to be mixed with ours.

this first appearance that we see Tiresias without his constant companion, a black Labrador-mix. Tiresias's dog is first seen as Tiresias comes up the driveway to deliver Layo's coffin.²⁸⁸

The near constant presence of Tiresias's dog adds an additional ancient association to the character: Diogenes of Sinope (cf. D.L. 6.2). There is historical precedent for making a connection between Diogenes and the Oedipus myth. Diogenes, of course, famously produced a theatrical version of the myth (as attested to in D.L. 6.2.). Furthermore, Diogenes is a character in Dio Chrysostom's tenth discourse in the *Orationes*, an imaged speech in which Diogenes takes a very dim view of Oedipus.²⁸⁹ Here Diogenes ridicules the Delphic Oracle and calls Oedipus a fool:

ὁ δὲ ἔλαθέ με περὶ τοῦ Οἰδίποδος εἰπεῖν, ὅτι εἰς Δελφοὺς μὲν οὐκ ἦλθε μαντευσόμενος, τῷ δὲ Τειρεσίᾳ συμβαλὼν μεγάλα κακὰ ἀπέλαυσετῆς ἐκείνου μαντικῆς διὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ ἄγνοιαν. ἔγνω γὰρ ὅτι τῇ μητρὶ συνεγένετο καὶ παῖδές εἰσιν αὐτῷ ἐξ ἐκείνης: καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα, δέον ἴσως κρύπτειν τοῦτο ἢ ποιῆσαι νόμιμον τοῖς Θηβαίοις, πρῶτον μὲν πᾶσιν ἐποίησε φανερόν, ἔπειτα ἠγανάκτει καὶ ἐβόα μεγάλα, ὅτι τῶν αὐτῶν πατήρ ἐστι καὶ ἀδελφὸς καὶ τῆς αὐτῆς γυναικὸς ἀνὴρ καὶ υἱός.

οἱ δὲ ἀλεκτρυόνες οὐκ ἀγανακτοῦσιν ἐπὶ τούτοις οὐδὲ οἱ κύνες οὐδὲ τῶν ὄνων οὐδεῖς, οὐδὲ οἱ Πέρσαι: καίτοι δοκοῦσι τῶν κατὰ τὴν Ἀσίαν ἄριστοι. πρὸς δὲ τούτοις ἐτύφλωσεν αὐτόν: ἔπειτα ἤλατο τετυφλωμένος, ὥσπερ οὐ δυνάμενος βλέπων πλανᾶσθαι.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁸ Ibid.,00:16:41.

²⁸⁹ Moles 1978.

²⁹⁰ Dio.Chrys.Orat.X.29-30: There is, however, one thing about Oedipus I forgot to say. He did not go to Delphi seeking prophecy, but fell in with Tiresias and suffered great evils from those prophecies on account of his own ignorance. He knew that he had gone to bed with his own mother, and his children were from her. And afterward, when perhaps he should have hidden this or made it legal in Thebes, first he revealed it to everyone then he became distraught and cried out loudly that he was father and brother to his children and his wife's husband and son. But chickens do not become distraught about these things nor do dogs nor donkeys nor Persians. Indeed the aristocracy of Asia expect this. In addition to these things, Oedipus blinded himself. Thereupon he wandered blind as though he could not wander with sight.

This same sort of disdain for Oedipus is reflected in the Tiresias of *Edipo alcalde*.²⁹¹ Connecting Tiresias to Diogenes is a way to highlight the issue of hierarchy and power in the film by referencing a person who does not possess the exterior social markers of status and yet speaks the truth.

Tiresias, however, is part of a tradition of disdained prophets. It does seem counter-intuitive at a very deep level that those who have special, divine knowledge of the past, present, and future would in fact occupy a place of very low social standing.²⁹² But a quick survey of legend and history quickly demonstrates that Jerusalem is not the only “city that kills the prophets.” Prophets are routinely not believed and this is in no small part related to the fact that prophets are very seldom if ever young, free, able-bodied men; rather, they are women, slaves, the old, and the disabled.²⁹³ Prophecy exists in the liminal space between the divine and mortal worlds; therefore, one who acts as a prophet must live at the periphery of human society.²⁹⁴ The consequence of this, however, is that prophets lack the social capital to garner the attention of those to whom they bring divine wisdom. In Sophocles’s play, Oedipus’s anger at Tiresias at hearing the truth of his parentage demonstrates the great social divide between the two men. Oedipus also disparagingly compares prophetic wisdom to ordinary mortal wisdom:

ὦ πλοῦτε καὶ τυραννὶ καὶ τέχνῃ τέχνης
 ὑπερφέρουσα τῷ πολυζήλω βίῳ,
 ὅσος παρ’ ὑμῖν ὁ φθόνος φυλάσσεται,
 εἰ τῆσδέ γ’ ἀρχῆς οὐνεχ’, ἦν ἐμοὶ πόλις
 δωρητόν, οὐκ αἰτητόν, εἰσεχείρισεν,
 ταύτης Κρέων ὁ πιστός, οὐξ ἀρχῆς φίλος,
 λάθρα μ’ ὑπελθὼν ἐκβαλεῖν ἰμεῖρεται,
 ὑφείς μάγον τοιόνδε μηχανορράφον,
 δόλιον ἀγύρτην, ὅστις ἐν τοῖς κέρδεσιν
 μόνον δέδορκε, τὴν τέχνην δ’ ἔφου τυφλός.

²⁹¹ Ali Triana, 1996, 00:19:10.

²⁹² For more on the status of seers specifically in ancient Greece, see Flower 2008, 50; 222-223.

²⁹³ Bremmer 1993.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

ἐπεὶ, φέρ' εἰπέ, ποῦ σὺ μάντις εἶ σαφής;
 πῶς οὐκ, ὄθ' ἡ ῥαψωδὸς ἐνθάδ' ἦν κύων,
 ἠΰδας τι τοῖσδ' ἀστοῖσιν ἐκλυτήριον;
 καίτοι τό γ' αἶνιγμ' οὐχὶ τοῦπιόντος ἦν
 ἀνδρὸς διειπεῖν, ἀλλὰ μαντείας ἔδει·
 ἦν οὔτ' ἀπ' οἰωνῶν σὺ προυφάνης ἔχων
 οὔτ' ἐκ θεῶν του γνωτόν· ἀλλ' ἐγὼ μολῶν,
 ὁ μηδὲν εἰδὼς Οἰδίπους, ἔπαυσά νιν,
 γνώμη κυρήσας οὐδ' ἀπ', οἰωνῶν μαθῶν·
 ὄν δὴ σὺ πειρᾶς ἐκβαλεῖν, δοκῶν θρόνοις
 παραστατήσιν τοῖς Κρεοντείοις πέλας.
 κλαίων δοκεῖς μοι καὶ σὺ χῶ συνθεῖς τάδε
 ἀγηλατήσιν· εἰ δὲ μὴ ἴδοκεις γέρων
 εἶναι, παθῶν ἔγνωσ ἄν οἶά περ φρονεῖς.²⁹⁵

The beginning two lines of his diatribe are replete with the vocabulary of prestige:

πλοῦτε, τυραννι, and τέχνη. This is the language which Oedipus attaches to himself and it is *τέχνη* to which he returns in the second half of the speech when he declares that he destroyed the Sphinx “γνώμη κυρήσας οὐδ' ἀπ', οἰωνῶν μαθῶν”²⁹⁶ when in the logic of oracle and prophecy:

καίτοι τό γ' αἶνιγμ' οὐχὶ τοῦπιόντος ἦν
 ἀνδρὸς διειπεῖν, ἀλλὰ μαντείας ἔδει.²⁹⁷

By this reasoning, the art of prophecy is obsolete at best, at worst a horrible falsehood that confers upon weak men the attributes and honors rightly conferred upon the strong. The weak are as they appear: weak. This logic underlies Oedipus' attack upon Tiresias in the above

²⁹⁵ Soph.*O.T.*380-403: Oh riches and power and skill above skill in a much-envied life! How much hatred have you stored up against me? If it is on account of the authority which the city placed in my hands although I did not ask for it? Faithful Creon, my friend from the beginning, has secretly approached me wanting to throw me out. He has engaged this conniving sorcerer, a treacherous beggar, who only sees profit clearly but is blind to his art. Come, tell me, where are you a true prophet? Why when that dog of a singer was here did you not say anything to free the people? Indeed the riddle was not for the first-come to solve, but required the art of divination. And you do not possess it neither from the birds nor any knowledge from a god. But rather I, unknowing Oedipus, stopped her hitting on the answer by my wit alone and not having learned anything from the birds. Indeed it is me that you are trying to throw out anticipating that you will stand near to Creon's throne. But it seems to me that you and he will regret driving out this curse from the land. If you did not seem to be an old man you would come to know the cost of your haughtiness. Translation is the author's.

²⁹⁶ Soph.*OT.*398.

²⁹⁷ Soph.*O.T.*393-4.

speech. He labels Tiresias both a “μηχανορράφον”²⁹⁸ (wizard hatcher) and a “δόλιον ἀγύρτην”²⁹⁹ (crafty-beggar).

The implications of both accusations are that Tiresias is no better than the other crippled beggars who would have lined the streets of Thebes and other ancient cities. These people constituted the absolute dregges of society. Then, as now, physical beauty was equated with moral goodness or at least divine favor. Physical disability was seen as evidence of divine anger.³⁰⁰ Consequently, most viewed the disabled as completely unworthy of human or divine aid.³⁰¹ Tiresias is only redeemed from this wretched state by his prophetic art. Once Oedipus has dismissed that, he is free to attack Tiresias as he would any crippled beggar. Only a few lines before, Oedipus already makes clear to Tiresias that his physical condition renders him distinctly less powerful from Oedipus, regardless of any prophetic arts:

μιᾶς τρέφει πρὸς νυκτός, ὥστε μήτ’ ἐμὲ
μήτ’ ἄλλον, ὅστις φῶς ὀρᾷ, βλάψαι ποτ’ ἄν.³⁰²

What Tiresias is not, however, is a slave. As a free man, Tiresias is guarded from the absolute worst of Oedipus’s abuses. He is also able to speak the truth to Oedipus without actual fear for his physical safety; this is a luxury not afforded to either the Theban shepherd or the Corinthian messenger whom Oedipus summons into his presence to confirm Tiresias’ prophecy. This restored equity between Oedipus and Tiresias vis-a-vis prophecy has led Alain Moreau to call this scene “un conflict d’hommes”.³⁰³ Lowell Edmunds not only concurs with Moreau, but goes further by saying that this meeting of Oedipus and Tiresias atop the social pyramid of those

²⁹⁸ Soph.*OT*.387.

²⁹⁹ Soph. *OT*.388.

³⁰⁰ There is further discussion of the role of the body in the creation and implementation later in this thesis.

³⁰¹ Garland 1995.

³⁰² Soph.*OT*.374-5: You are nourished only by the darkness, thus you could never harm me or any other man that sees the light.

³⁰³ Moreau 1993, p. 220.

who have access to knowledge and power refers forward to when Oedipus and Tiresias will share the common low status feature of physical disability after Oedipus blinds himself.³⁰⁴ Tiresias, in this way, not only occupies a unique place in the social hierarchy, he points to the instability of that hierarchy.³⁰⁵ He is situated in a liminal enough position so that he can have access to the dangerous truths that are often intentionally kept from the centers of power. At the same time, he is sufficiently protected by at least some social prestige (that of a free man) to be able to speak the truth without fear of physical reprisal.³⁰⁶

For this reason, Tiresias is a particularly important character in *Edipo alcade* which (at least in part) is seeking to use the Oedipus narrative in order to discuss the dynamics of the Colombian conflict; a conflict in which much of the difficulty is the lack of individuals operating in the same paradoxical space as Tiresias. Unlike the *tyrannos*, *el alcalde* has several meetings with his prophet. Each meeting is marked by a sense of foreboding that would fill the screen even if the audience was completely unaware of the great man's fate. The final encounter, however, is by far the most sinister. Edipo comes, without escort, to Tiresias's open-air, wooden garage, a significant but subtle inversion of the events in Sophocles's play.³⁰⁷ Tiresias is not summoned into the ruler's palace; rather, the ruler enters into his humble abode. Consequently, it is Oedipus who must leave. He cannot order Tiresias out of his presence. This subtly recreates the actual power dynamic as opposed to the artificial dynamic imposed by human institutions.

³⁰⁴ Edmunds 2000, p. 43.

³⁰⁵ Faber 1970.

³⁰⁶ Edmunds 2000, p. 36.

³⁰⁷ Ali Triana 1996, 01:19:13.

It is clear that Oedipus, whether he lives in Thebes or in Colombia, is not the sort of man to accept merely the utterances of a prophet. He requires facts and proof; of course, the evidence he is presented with is often flimsy at best and would not have held up in the Athenian courts.³⁰⁸ But this is perhaps beside the point. As a result of his desire for evidence, Oedipus does seek out those involved directly in his adoption (for lack of a better term) as an infant. This includes the servant who was required to expose the infant doomed by the terrible oracle but ultimately decided against this. In the Sophoclean version of the play, this servant is a shepherd. Once again, we see a low-status individual whom Oedipus takes it upon himself to bully and badger. This man is even more vulnerable than Tiresias. Tiresias was a free man. The shepherd is a slave. Oedipus poses a physical threat to him. Oedipus has ultimate control over this man's life. This is why, unlike Tiresias who often meets Oedipus's anger with reply, the shepherd is genuinely afraid of Oedipus.

His fear is also related to the type of knowledge which he possesses. Tiresias is a knower of divine secrets, a man who can have communion with the birds and the gods. "The entire scene with Tiresias teems with references to knowing or understanding ($\phi\rho\nu\nu\epsilon\omega$) and seeing ($\sigma\rho\alpha\omega$) employed with clear differentiation."³⁰⁹ The shepherd is just an ordinary man who has stumbled upon his knowledge of dynastic and political consequence quite by accident in the conduct of his extremely ordinary life. He does not differentiate between types of knowing, because all he has is witnessed, human knowledge. Knowledge does not empower him; it frightens him. Because knowledge is connected to hierarchal position, to have knowledge beyond one's position makes one a threat to the hierarchy, whether one intends to be or not.³¹⁰ He is made more vulnerable by

³⁰⁸ Ahl 1991, p. 21; 200-201.

³⁰⁹ Champlin 1969, p. 339.

³¹⁰ Kane 1975, p. 201.

knowing since he is placed in the position of an involuntary usurper. We must not forget that Oedipus gained his crown, because he knew a hidden piece of knowledge by very mortal means.³¹¹ He knew the answer to a question no one else knew. This poor shepherd is in an oddly similar position and this is rightly frightening to him.

That shepherd has much in common then with others whose accumulated knowledge exceed their place on the social ladder (such as the *bruja*).³¹² It is particularly with respect to when these categories and boundaries related to social constructs conflict that we can see how closely Surrealism is related to magical realism. From its inception, Surrealism (particularly in France) was linked closely to communist and anarchist desires for social revolution. The destruction of existing social hierarchies through art which directly challenged those boundaries was at the heart of the Surrealism project.³¹³ A challenge to existing social hierarchies is a fundamental part of the *Oedipus* narrative, as evidenced by Oedipus' own fall from powerful ruler to wandering blind exile.³¹⁴ The challenge to existing social hierarchies is also significantly foregrounded in *Edipo alcalde*. The means by which this challenge is made is through knowledge, particularly the esoteric or gnostic. These characters demonstrate the frightening "otherness" of sacred or hidden knowledge.³¹⁵ Those who possess this sort of knowledge are more powerful in an objective way than their unknowing counterparts. Nonetheless, knowledge, or better, truths are frightening things. They have the power to challenge our basic conceptions of good and evil or Self and Other. The learning of hitherto unknown truth can and does result in crises both psychological and spiritual. And one needs look no further than our current subject,

³¹¹ Gregory 1995, p. 143

³¹² Cf. p. 23

³¹³ Short 1966

³¹⁴ Ahrensdorf 2004

³¹⁵ Cabello Pino 2004

the mythical Oedipus, to see that this is true. Consequently, those who possess this hidden sort of knowledge must be consigned to the edges of society. Often this is functional: to communion with the gods requires that one occupies a liminal space.³¹⁶ But more importantly, this is necessary for the maintenance of the established in the presence of mystic wisdom. Those who know the truth and can speak that truth to the seemingly powerful are dangerous enough in and of themselves. If they were to be brought into the inner circle of temporal power, their epistemological power would threaten the very existence of the status quo.

This challenge to hierarchy vis-à-vis problematizing the normative knowledge hierarchy points to the fact that magical realism shares this essential feature of Surrealism and that, in fact, in this way, the two genres are remarkably similar. *Edipo alcalde* illustrates the extent to which hybridity is a feature of Greek tragedy in Latin America. It also shows that ancient texts and traditions emerge within the adaptations and that these texts and traditions are very much connected to a wider, more recent aesthetic tradition.

Likewise, *Antígona furiosa* also demonstrates this melding of aesthetic traditions and the discernibility of this meddling despite the protestations of those on both sides of the divide. Take, for example, the white paper flowers Antígona wears in her hair in the opening scene of the play, flowers that look fresher than their natural counterparts.³¹⁷ Moira Fradinger has suggested that the flowers in Antígona's hair (and by extension the flowers that Corifeo creates from napkins) are references to an earlier Argentinean adaptation of *Antigone*: Leopoldo Marechal's *Antígona Vélez* (1951).³¹⁸ Fradinger describes it thus in her essay "An Argentine Tradition":

³¹⁶ Krupp 1999.

³¹⁷ Cf. p. 25.

³¹⁸ Fradinger 2011, p. 76.

The flowers of civilization that her sister had made grow on Marechal's desert now wither on her head: Antígona wears a crown of withering white flowers as she blossoms back to life, undoing the noose of her veil, arranging her dirty white dress and singing. Flowers appear elsewhere in this same opening scene.³¹⁹

Antígona Vélez is one of the most important pieces of 20th-century Latin American theatre and is deeply connected to that critical moment in the mid-20th century during which Latin American writers were actively engaged with the French Surrealist tradition and magical realism was (not coincidentally) coming to dominate Latin American literary output.³²⁰ Leopoldo Marechal was a key player in this moment and Emir Rodríguez-Monegal includes Marechal on his list of Latin American writers who "all avidly read the work of the French surrealists" in his 1970 essay, "The New Latin American Novel".³²¹ The role of flowers in the opening scene and the connection of those flowers to Marechal's work are the first of many elements within the play that demonstrate the connection of *Antígona furiosa* not just with a wider tradition within Argentine literature, but explicitly with an Argentinean literary tradition that is deeply invested in both magical realism and French aesthetics.³²²

Instead of highlighting these connections, however, Gambaro's work is usually classed as being one of a few examples of a Latin American Theatre of the Absurd.³²³ The Theatre of the Absurd is a primarily French theatrical expression of absurdist fiction which dominated the French theatrical scene in the mid-20th century.³²⁴ In Gambaro's work, we see the connections

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Martin 1996.

³²¹ Rodríguez-Monegal 1970, p. 46.

³²² Martin 1996.

³²³ Holzapfel 1970.

³²⁴ For an overview of the French Theater of the Absurd, see Gaensbauer 1991.

we are discussing here played out in a concrete way, whatever protestations the author might make.

It can be argued that Gambaro's desire to encourage a connection between her work and the Theatre of the Absurd while distancing herself from magical realism is as much, if not more, a political act as an act of artistic self-definition.³²⁵ This is evidenced by the fact that Gambaro has not only actively worked to distance herself and her work from magical realism, but from the reception history of Sophocles' *Antigone*. For example, when she wrote the following in the program of the play's original production:

Esta Antígona no es una adaptación ni la versión de la Antígona de Sófocles. Ciertas obras no lo permiten sin que el intento caiga en la pretensión. Antígona furiosa toma el tema de Antígona, entresaca textos de la obra original y de otras obras, arma una nueva Antígona fuera del tiempo para que paradójicamente nos cuente su historia en su tiempo y en el nuestro.³²⁶

It is ironically for these same reasons that Gambaro conceivably has been so reluctant to identify with magical realism and that commentators have concurred. Namely, the extent to which magical realism has been labelled as a "postcolonial", "Third World", or even particularly "Latin American" genre has served to ultimately "Other" it in such a way that any association with it could be seen as to hinder a specific work's ability to effectively subvert Sophocles and consequently to occupy a more central space in a global political and literary discourse. Yet the particulars of *Antígona furiosa* suggest both its centrality within the tradition of magical realism

³²⁵ See Feitlowitz 1990.

³²⁶ Cited in König 2002, p. 5. This *Antigone* is neither an adaptation nor a version of Sophocles' *Antigone*. Certain works do not allow such things to be done without falling into pretension. *Antígona furiosa* takes the theme of *Antigone*, draws on the original text and other works and creates a new *Antigone* that is outside of time and thus paradoxically tells us her story in her time and in ours.

and a larger aesthetic discourse, even whilst it possesses many of the markers of the Theatre of the Absurd.

On Being Primitive: Magical Realism, French Primitivism, and Indigenous Revolution

It is understandable why Gambaro would wish to distance herself from an aesthetic position intimately linked with colonialism and the post-colonial experience, as an association with magical realism in the Latin American context inevitably would. Hybridity can emerge within a culture in many ways, but Latin American cultural hybridity has (of course) come, above all, from the colonial experience. And when colonialism is the source of cultural hybridity, there are unique problems with which to contend.³²⁷ This is particularly true with respect to reconciling with and relating to a past cloaked in the shadow of colonialism. While it might seem that the pre-colonial past might provide the heroic, untainted history that many long for, this is not the case. In Latin America, the indigenous past has proved just as difficult to reconcile with as the European, colonial one.³²⁸ It is, after all, in Latin America where the hybrid nature of (post)colonial culture has been most pronounced.³²⁹ It is in Latin America that the real or imagined pre-colonial past is most distant and where the tradition of cultural meddling is most entrenched.³³⁰ This creates limitless peril in artistic assertions of identity, a point that has not gone unnoticed. The famed twentieth-century Uruguayan writer Ángel Rama said of Latin American literature:

The literatures of Latin America, those born under the violent imposition of a ruthless colonial regime, blind and deaf to the humanist voices who recognized the rich otherness of America; Latin American literatures, progeny of the rich, varied, elite, popular, energetic, savory Hispanic civilization, then at its zenith;

³²⁷ Ramazani 2006.

³²⁸ For an introduction to this topic, see Warren 2003.

³²⁹ Beverley 2001, p. 55-57. Also see Moreiras 2001, p.94-96 and Saldana-Portillo, 2001.

³³⁰ Martínez-Echazábal 1998.

Latin American literatures, offspring of the splendid languages and sumptuous literatures of Spain and Portugal; Latin American literatures have never resigned themselves to their origins, nor ever reconciled themselves with their Iberian past.³³¹

As both a political and aesthetic matter, “traditional” indigenous culture has proven important within the Latin American context. The pre-Hispanic *Indian* has been an important symbol of a truly independent Latin America that exists separate from European and American colonialism and an opportunity to “reclaim space” for non-Western peoples in the cultural and physical geography of the world.³³² Yet even this seemingly independent source of identity is deeply linked to European images of the “Other” and of Latin American conceptions of Europe, particularly France, in as much as “Primitivism was the imposition of a set of European expectations on others and their cultural products.”³³³

As a historical, political, and aesthetic phenomenon, primitivism is a set of concepts, as opposed to any one unified model.³³⁴ In 1935, Arthur O. Lovejoy and George Boas argued in *History of Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* that there are two principal types of primitivism. The first is a *chronological or historical primitivism* which posits that history is the story of decline from the Golden Age that existed at humanity’s origin. The second is *cultural primitivism*, a cultural attitude in which urban, “civilized” people express a dissatisfaction with the ultimate outcomes of civilization and imagine that the lives of those living in more natural and rustic surroundings, such as a rural peasantry or foreign tribal group, experience greater happiness or plentitude.³³⁵ Lovejoy and Boas establish here a system for understanding

³³¹ Rama 1984, p.120.

³³² Shaw 2006, p. 267.

³³³ Archetti 2007, p. 221.

³³⁴ Camayd-Freixas 2000.

³³⁵ Lovejoy 1997.

primitivism that corresponds nicely to the situation in Latin America, where the meaning of primitivism and barbarism is under constant reconstruction.³³⁶

It is important to note that both these ideological systems predate colonialism and were fundamental in the establishment of colonial ideology.³³⁷ European perceptions of native people were indelible influenced by utopian and pastoral imagery from classical antiquity. Arguably, these images were as influential in shaping colonialism as the Christian concept of evangelism and the evangelical efforts of Counter-Reformation Catholicism.³³⁸ As previously noted, unlike their French and English counterparts further north, the native people that the *conquistadores* first encountered in the New World were not, by and large, the hunter-gathers that conventional primitivism would anticipate and desire. The Aztec, Mayan, and Incan empires were vast, urban, and highly developed.³³⁹ This glaring fact, as mentioned above, complicated the creation of a colonial ideology for the first Spanish conquerors.³⁴⁰ However, after much debate, the notion of the indigenous peoples of the New World (as well as those indigenous populations of subsequently colonized lands) as primitive savages in need of Europe's civilizing influence emerged as the principal model of discourse.³⁴¹ Later colonial powers such as Britain and France did not experience the same level of anxiety around these issues as the first Spanish colonizers. Debate, if any, on the subject did not centre on whether or not subject populations were "primitive" but whether or not the attainment of civilization was a wholly good thing.³⁴² We need look no further than Shakespeare's *Caliban* to see this question in effect.³⁴³ There is no

³³⁶ Jackson 2008.

³³⁷ Isacc 2006, p. 201.

³³⁸ Lupher 2006, p.140-53; 265-93. Also see Rabasa 1989.

³³⁹ Cf. p. 9-11.

³⁴⁰ Lupher 2006, p. 9-58.

³⁴¹ Hanke 1959 and Hanke 1974.

³⁴² Camayd-Freixas 2000.

³⁴³ For more on the character of *Caliban* with respect to colonialism, see Mannoni 1990; de Sousa Santos 2002; and Vaughn 1988.

arguing that prior to his contact with Europeans Caliban was in all ways “savage”, and yet Caliban is quick to note that “*You taught me language, and my profit on’t/ Is I know how to curse. The red plague rid you/For learning me your language!*”³⁴⁴

*By the late 19th century, this had become the focus of the colonial debate across national borders, a pattern that would continue into the 20th century as well.*³⁴⁵ *As independence movements swept through Latin America, greater and greater emphasis was given to the native past. This was particularly appealing to the middle classes, who not only made up the base of revolutionary support, but who were (as previously noted) largely mestizos.*³⁴⁶ *Political and social power had been denied to this class on account of their indigenous heritage and so reclaiming that heritage was not only politically expedient, but personally empowering.*

*The empowering aspects of this reclamation were not lost on the leaders of the Chicano Movement in the United States a century later. The construction of Chicano ethnic identity was heavily focused on the indigenous aspects of mestizo identity and was even marked by sporadic attempts to reintroduce the Nahuatl language of the Aztec.*³⁴⁷ *Chicano nationalism viewed itself as an indigenous nationalism, and it was common to posit that it was through the movement’s indigenous identity that other revolutionary aspects of movement would be possible.*³⁴⁸ *The words of the Chicano writer Cherríe Moraga illustrate this point well.*³⁴⁹

The nationalism I seek is one that decolonizes the brown and female body as it decolonizes the brown and female earth. It is a new nationalism in which la Chicana Indígena stands at the center, and heterosexism and homophobia are no longer the cultural order of the day. I cling to the word "nation"

³⁴⁴ *Tempest* I.ii.366-68.

³⁴⁵ Stoler 1989, p. 845.

³⁴⁶ Knight 1990, p. 79-81.

³⁴⁷ For more on indigeneity in the Chicano movement, see Bebout 2011 and Luis 2008.

³⁴⁸ See Delgado 1995 and Pérez-Torres 1998.

³⁴⁹ Moraga’s play *A Hungry Woman: A Mexican Medea* is discussed in the next chapter.

because without the specific naming of the nation, the nation will be lost (as when feminism is reduced to humanism, the woman is subsumed). Let us retain our radical naming but expand it to meet a broader and wiser revolution.³⁵⁰

This reclamation of a non-European history and with it the reclaiming of one's own nation was ironically heavily influenced by aesthetic trends that originated most famously in that most European of places: Paris. While there can be many arguments made that *indignidad* is a completely separate phenomenon from primitivism, these arguments are primarily concerned with seeking political expediency over aesthetic realities. For example, in her seminal 1987 work *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, Gloria Anzaldúa, a Chicana writer and activist, attempts to embrace *indignidad* while deriding primitivism as evidence of the cultural and spiritual shallowness of the West.³⁵¹ But Anzaldúa cannot escape the fact that "Chicana and Chicano indigenism is interpolated necessarily by the history of discursive constructions of the Native."³⁵² Turning away from these sorts of intellectual threads does not make them disappear; rather, it only serves to obscure necessary and helpful links.³⁵³ Without doubt, the political components of these matters should never be ignored, but this false dichotomy ultimately serves to do more harm than good.

The fact is that in claiming the indigenous heritages of the Americas, Latin American practitioners are creating as much as construct of the *primitive* as Picasso. It is, ultimately, impossible to tear away five hundred years of history. Those elements of the indigenous culture which exist in Latin America today do not pre-date the European conquest but rather are the

³⁵⁰ Moraga 2004, p. 227.

³⁵¹ Anzaldúa 1987, p. 90.

³⁵² Contreras 2006, p. 49.

³⁵³ Smith 2010.

result of it.³⁵⁴ Those European features of Latin America, such as the Spanish language and Catholicism, have been utterly transformed in their new home.³⁵⁵ From this perspective, it becomes clear that *indignidad* and primitivism constitute a singular aesthetic tradition, if not a singular aesthetic moment. They are brothers more than cousins and this relationship is both created and sustained in large part by magical realism. This is a fact that strengthens the continuity argument as a whole.

A desire to reclaim the primitive is synonymous with a desire to resurrect an indigenous cultural heritage.³⁵⁶ Such a resurrection by necessity means a greater degree of artistic and cultural hybridity and gave magical realism the incredible cultural capital it has in Latin America.³⁵⁷ Magical realism is emboldened by its ability to accommodate local epistemological systems and the epistemological boundaries which have governed Western thought arguably from the Renaissance but certainly since the Enlightenment.³⁵⁸ For example, it allows for a mystical conception of time.³⁵⁹ Camayd-Freixas describes the different notions of time thus:

Time for primitive man does not flow in a straight line but follows natural, liturgical, or ritual cycles, such that men who live today meaningfully repeat the archetypal, transcendental actions of their mythical ancestors, and associate their reality with a primeval age.³⁶⁰

Anyone familiar with the West's own antiquity will recognize that this distinction applies just as much to the Western versus the non-Western as it does to the ancient versus the modern.³⁶¹ The imposition of a rational, linear time on a previously cyclic one did not only occur

³⁵⁴ Taylor 1991, p. 95-96.

³⁵⁵ Dolan 2003.

³⁵⁶ Contreras 2006, p. 54.

³⁵⁷ Gregorias 1992.

³⁵⁸ Johnson 1974.

³⁵⁹ Camayd-Freixas 2000, p. 116-17.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ See Dowling 2003; Feeney 2007; and Hannah 2013.

during modern European colonialism. There is an impulse to contrast the linear historical perspective of the Abrahamic faiths with the cyclic time of other traditions.³⁶² This argument runs afoul in various places. Most importantly, for our purposes, this argument simply does not work when one considers the pre-Christian antiquity of the West before the historically purposeful God of Abraham.

Primitivism and *indignidad* are both characterised by an *othering* of the past. What distinguishes them is that primitivism actively sought out other societies that could be identified as currently living in that past. Sinister and patronizing though this is, it is difficult to argue that it is a distinct impulse from other attempts to romanticize the past.

Ullúa's *Hipólito y Fedra: una pasión desbocada*, among other things, provides a case study on issues of intersectionality (both as it is commonly understood to relate to the study of oppression and to the intersection of literary style) as well as mirroring many of the issues of meaning and absurdity that occur within *Antígona furiosa*. Interestingly for our purposes, *Hipólito y Fedra* does so while explicitly referencing issues surrounding indigenous and postcolonial identities, highlighting the relevance of these issues to magical realism as a genre. Like *Edipo alcalde* and *Antígona furiosa*, Ullúa's play explores how physical marginalisation holds a similar place to economic and social marginalisation and how the attribution of knowledge to those thus excluded from normative power is a challenge to traditional hierarchies. There will also be a specific focus on the relationship between magical realism and Surrealism since the focus of visual indicators inherent to issues of physicality harkens back to Surrealism's role in the visual arts-- not normally associated with magical realism-- and in doing so further strengthens the connections being made here.

³⁶² Gallios 2007.

Hipólito y Fedra is very much reliant on adaptations of the myth of Hippolytus which have come before, particularly Euripides and Racine.³⁶³ The sort of parallel analysis that occurs below is possible because of the extent to which all three texts (Euripides, Racine, and Ullúa) adopt a standard retelling of the myth, maintaining most of the characters, circumstances, and relationships across the three plays.³⁶⁴ This exercise is helpful in demonstrating the more broad connections between the French reception of Greek tragedy and the Latin American one, the specifics of which are at the heart of this thesis. In all three plays, Phaedra is the wife of the long absent (and presumed dead) Theseus who has fallen in love with her stepson, Hippolytus. In Euripides, Hippolytus is an entirely chaste devoté of the cult of the virgin Artemis. However, Ullúa adopts Racine's view of Hippolytus not as a chaste conqueror of desire, but as the lover of the Athenian princess Aricia.³⁶⁵ Both Hippolytus and Phaedra are the product of unusual familial circumstances, or rather the children of unusual mothers. Hippolytus' mother is the Amazonian queen, Antiope. Phaedra's mother is Pasiphaë, who is a complicated and complicating figure if one ever did exist.³⁶⁶ The daughter of the Sun, she is married to the Cretan king Minos. While she has children by her husband, she is also the mother of the monstrous Minotaur, Asterion, who is born after Pasiphaë is cursed by Poseidon to lust after and copulate with a bull. The story of Pasiphaë is significant to the present discussion, because of the centrality which it takes on in the discussion of the consequence of "unnatural" desire and the products of that desire. Also significant for a postcolonial reading of the myth is the fact that Pasiphaë (like her sister Europa) comes from the East. In fact, Pasiphaë doesn't just come from any Eastern place. She comes from Colchis which is also the home of Medea (yet another troublesome, dangerous mother).

³⁶³ Cf. p.43.

³⁶⁴ For more on the Hippolytus myth generally, see Sanderson, 1966.

³⁶⁵ Crocker 1957.

³⁶⁶ Reckford 1974.

Over the course of the plays, Phaedra wrestles with and ultimately confesses her love for Hippolytus who is horrified by his step-mother's confession, even more so after Theseus has returned very much alive. From here, there are differences amongst the various versions of the myth, but ultimately all embrace the same outcome. Namely, Phaedra accuses Hippolytus of raping her. This results in Theseus banishing Hippolytus who is killed when his horses are frightened by a bull emerging from the sea (just as the bull who fathered the Minotaur did). After his son's death, Theseus learns that Phaedra has lied and repents his error before dying. Phaedra kills herself in Euripides's and Racine's plays. Euripides says it is due to the grief of Hippolytus's romantic rejection; Racine attributes her suicide to guilt. Phaedra is alive at the end of Ullúa's play; however in the last lines, she is condemned to die on account of her crime, a testimony to a certain sense of justice in the most recent adaptation.

The issue of the physical consequences of guilt (particularly guilt arising from sexual transgression) inundate every moment of all three plays and the wider mythic traditions surrounding Pasiphaë, Phaedra, and the Minotaur.³⁶⁷ The connection between aberrant desire and non-normative bodies is a central theme in this mythic tradition and its theatrical portrayals.³⁶⁸ Interestingly, the issue of deviant sexuality and the production of non-normative (and in particular hybrid) bodies is also remarkably important in postcolonial discussions of sexuality and corporality since many of the children literally born of the (post)colonial experience are the product of the transgression of society's sexual norms (i.e. the sexual union of the colonizer and the colonized).³⁶⁹ As a consequence they have bodies that are to some extent "hybrid" and thus bear the stigma attached to those bodies.

³⁶⁷ Helman 2004.

³⁶⁸ Díez-Hiegrua 2014.

³⁶⁹ Paulson 2006.

Racine certainly focuses upon the connection between transgressive sexuality and transgressive bodies much more than Euripides. This is evident in the places at which Racine's text departs from Euripides.³⁷⁰ Racine offers a near translation of the approximately first three hundred lines of Euripides. The deviation only comes at what is line 312 of Euripides.³⁷¹ In this early scene, Phaedra's nurse is questioning a distraught Phaedra as to the source of her misery. Ultimately, as part of the questioning, the Nurse utters the name of Hippolytus. Phaedra reacts violently to the name. The Nurse assumes this reaction is related to Phaedra's desire that her children, and not Hippolytus, should inherit the throne. In Euripides this episode is quite short. The Nurse invokes Phaedra's love for her children and then moves on. In Racine, however, Phaedra does not offer any blanket assertion of maternal love but instead further insists upon the horror of her crimes. In this way, Phaedra and her crime are associated with the mother who bears a child whom she detests.³⁷² Thus in Euripides, the whole episode appears in three lines reading as follows:

Τροφός
 ὀρᾶς; φρονεῖς μὲν εὖ, φρονοῦσα δ' οὐ θέλεις
 παιδάς τ' ὀνήσαι καὶ σὸν ἐκσῶσαι βίον.

Φαίδρα
 φιλῶ τέκν': ἄλλη δ' ἐν τύχη χειμᾶζομαι.³⁷³

In Racine, however, this episode appears in this way:

Oenone
 Hé bien ! votre colère éclate avec raison :
 J'aime à vous voir frémir à ce funeste nom.
 Vivez donc. Que l'amour, le devoir vous excite,
 Vivez, ne souffrez pas que le fils d'une Scythe,
 Accablant vos enfants d'un empire odieux,

³⁷⁰ Marder 1989, p. 58.

³⁷¹ Mulhauser 1953, p. 128.

³⁷² Ibid.

³⁷³ Eur.*Hipp.*313-315. Nurse: You see? You are sane. But even though you are sane you do not want to benefit your children and save your life. Phaedra: I love my children. I am chilled to my bones by another fate.

Commande au plus beau sang de la Grèce et des Dieux.
 Mais ne différez point : chaque moment vous tue.
 Réparez promptement votre force abattue,
 Tandis que de vos jours, prêts à se consumer,
 Le flambeau dure encore, et peut se rallumer.

Phèdre
 J'en ai trop prolongé la coupable durée.³⁷⁴

For his part, Ullúa closes follows Racine's text and offers assurance of Fedra's maternal

feelings:

Enone: ¡Con cuanta razón estalla su cólera! Me complace ver cómo la estremece ese funesto nombre. ¡Viva entonces! Que el amor y el deber le den aliento. No permita que Hipólito sea el odioso opresor de sus hijos. Pero no se demore, cada instante la destruye. Vamos, recupere sus fuerzas, la llama de sus días puede arder de nuevo.

Fedra: ¡Oh el odio de Venus! ¡Su cólera fatal! ¡A qué extravíos conduce! La Diosa del amor quiere que perezca traspasada por sus dardos. ¡Estoy poseída por la furia del amor! ¡Sí! Escucharás el colmo del horror: Amo a ... Ante ese nombre, tiemblo, me estremezco. Amo...³⁷⁵

While the straight-forward comparison of texts as seen above is not always helpful as a means of literary analysis, in the above instance, such a comparison does provide a helpful point of reference. Namely, it suggests the extent to which Ullúa engagement with the myth comes through Racine. It also suggests one of the reasons that this might be, specifically, the much more explicit way in which Racine links Phaedra's "crime" to a disruption in normative maternal

³⁷⁴ Racine. *Phèdre*. I.3. Oenon: Oh good! Your anger explodes with good reason. I am glad to see you aroused by this ill-omened name. So live! Let love and duty animate you. Live! Do not suffer this son of Scythian to damn your children by his hateful power and to rule the noblest blood of Greece and the Gods. Do not delay. Each moment kills you. Quickly repair your shattered strength. While still there is the spark of life in you and it can be rekindled.

Phèdre: I have endured this guilt too long.

³⁷⁵ Ullúa, 2005, I.3: Enone: With good reason, your anger flairs. It pleases me to see how this hateful name arouses you. Live then. Let love and duty nourish you. Do not allow Hipólito to be the hateful oppressor of your children. But do not delay. Each moment destroys you. Go on, recover your strength. The call of your days can be relit anew. Fedra: Oh, the hatred of Venus! Her fatal hatred! To what aberrations it leads. The Goddess of Love wants me to perish pierced by darts. I am possessed by the fury of love. Indeed! Hear the height of horror. I love..before that name I tremble. I am cringe. I love...

relations which usually see a mother loving her children and unambiguously contesting the suggestion that such affection does not exist.³⁷⁶ Instead in Racine (and consequently in Ullúa), Phaedra's deviant lust supersedes maternal nature and further highlights the perversions that arise out of aberrant sexuality.³⁷⁷ In this way, Phaedra is also connected to Jocasta, who also allows lust to supersede natural maternal affections. This is a point of particular interest considering the discussion of *Edipo alcalde* above, especially if we are to consider that Oedipus/Edipo is physically disabled.³⁷⁸

Of course, nowhere in the Greek mythic cycle is the connection between sexual deviation and corporal deformity and/or hybridity more explicit than in relation to the Minotaur. This is the principal concern of the first scene of Ullúa's play, a scene that has no obvious predecessor in the canon with respect to setting or dialogue but (as we shall see) is most certainly grounded in thematic material very much present in Racine. Ullúa's play opens not with either of the title characters but instead with a conversation between Theseus and the Minotaur's ghost.³⁷⁹ This encounter between Theseus and Minotaur provides a fascinating opportunity to explore issues of (post)colonialism inherent within the play, particularly as they relate to issues of deviant sexuality and non-normative bodies. Arguably, this scene is meant to reproduce the postcolonial encounter of the colonizer and the colonized, and this scene in particular highlights many of issues of sexuality and corporality as they relate to the (post)colonialism and thus the relationship between Racine and Ullúa.

³⁷⁶ For more on motherhood in Racine, see Guénoun 1993.

³⁷⁷ Sharkey 1976.

³⁷⁸ Cf. p. 63.

³⁷⁹ Theseus, of course, killed the Minotaur before his marriage to Phaedra with the assistance of her sister Ariadne.

It is worth noting here the central role that the Minotaur occupies in mid-20th century Argentinean literature.³⁸⁰ The Minotaur is a central figure in two important works of the period: Julio Cortázar's lyric poem *Los Reyes* (1949) and Jorge Luis Borges' *La casa de Asterion* (1947). Both Cortázar (1914-1984) and Borges (1899-1986) belong to 20th-century Latin America's so called "international writers", a group that also counts among its ranks García Márquez (1927-2014) and Vargas Llosa (1936-).³⁸¹ In addition to a similarity in literary style and content, these writers also share some significant biographical similarities, namely prolonged residences in Paris combined with frequent trips to their native countries (Argentina in the case of Cortázar and Borges).³⁸² Considering the geographic position of these writers, it should perhaps come as no surprise that their period of engagement with the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur parallels that of many French writers; most significantly André Gide who published his short story entitled *Thésée* in 1946.³⁸³ The influence of Gide, who was seventy-seven in 1946 and thus significantly older than the Argentinean writers, should not be underestimated. Nonetheless, there are significant differences from Gide in Cortázar's and Borges' treatments of the Minotaur. These differences impact the overtly postcolonial stance which Ullúa ultimately adopts.

For all these reasons, the most productive way in which to examine the opening scene of *Hipólito y Fedra* is through a comparative analysis of the scene with respect to *Los Reyes*, *La casa de Asterion* and *Phèdre* I.3. While the last text listed does not feature the Minotaur and is certainly not intentionally (post)colonial in any way, the dialogue between Phaedra and her nurse

³⁸⁰ Shaw 2005.

³⁸¹ For more on this and Latin American writers in Paris more generally, see Weiss 2003.

³⁸² Morello-Frosch 1970, p. 22.

³⁸³ This was, of course, part of a career long engagement with Greek mythology on the part of Gide.

as it relates to her familial origins helps to further interrogate the issues of aberrant sexuality and bodies discussed here.

Since a brief plot outline of *Phèdre* has already been provided, it is perhaps necessary to also offer brief sketches of *Los Reyes* and *La casa de Asterion* as well. *Los Reyes* is a dramatic poem that was first published in 1949. It was Cortázar's second published work and came before he found his most significant success as a novelist.³⁸⁴ At the time that *Los Reyes* was published, Cortázar was teaching French literature at the National University of Cuyo in Mendoza. Two years later, he would leave Argentina for Paris where he would spend the rest of his life (reflecting a common theme of much colonial and post-colonial narrative in seeking to leave the "colonies" for the metropole). *Los Reyes* is much more a subversion than version of the Theseus/Minotaur myth.³⁸⁵ The most notable element of this subversion is that Ariadne is not Theseus' lover, but the Minotaur's.³⁸⁶ She gives Theseus the ball of string only in the hope that it will help the Minotaur escape after he has killed Theseus (a point that Cortázar was fond of making).³⁸⁷ Thus as we shall see, the Minotaur occupies a significantly more ambiguous position than in more conventionally retellings of the myth, making Theseus' final triumph more defeat than triumph. This has led the critic Alfred MacAdams to call *Los Reyes* "a double tragedy".³⁸⁸ Robert González Echevarría describes this mutual defeat and sorrow thus:

What is emphasized in Cortázar version is the violence that Theseus commits against himself in defeating Minos and killing the Minotaur. Instead of the erection of individual presence, Theseus's regressive voyage creates a vacuum at the center; the Minotaur is dead, Theseus has fled. The clash, the violence of conception suggested by the erotic act *contra naturatam* by which

³⁸⁴For more on Cortázar, see Puleo 1990.

³⁸⁵ Echevarría 1976, p. 551.

³⁸⁶ (Taylor, M. 1973)

³⁸⁷ Echevarría 1976, p. 551

³⁸⁸ Citation in Echevarría, 1976, p. 551

the Minotaur was conceived, is repeated at the end of Theseus's journey.³⁸⁹

This idea of mutual defeat, as well as referencing the connection between violence and sexual acts (particularly when those sexual acts are necessary for a postcolonial understanding of the myth) most certainly emerges quite explicitly in Ullúa.

Problematizing the Minotaur's position as enemy is also a feature in *La casa de Asterion*. The story was first published in 1947 in the literary magazine *Los anales de Buenos Aires*. It was republished two years later in the short story collection *El Aleph*. Written in the style of a monologue and only 840 words in its entirety, *La casa de Asterion* paints a powerful and sympathetic image of the Minotaur, who begins the story by lashing out against the misconceptions about him:

Sé que me acusan de soberbia, y tal vez de misantropía, y tal vez de locura. Tales acusaciones (que yo castigaré a su debido tiempo) son irrisorias. Es verdad que no salgo de mi casa, pero también es verdad que sus puertas (cuyo número es infinito) están abiertas día y noche a los hombres y también a los animales. Que entre el que quiera. No hallará pompas femeniles aquí ni el bizarro aparato de los palacios, pero sí la quietud y la soledad. Asimismo hallará una casa como no hay otra en la faz de la tierra. (Mienten los que declaran que en Egipto hay una parecida.) Hasta mis detractores admiten que no hay *un solo mueble* en la casa. Otra especie ridícula es que yo, Asterión, soy un prisionero. ¿Repetiré que no hay una puerta cerrada, añadiré que no hay una cerradura?³⁹⁰

³⁸⁹ Ibid.

³⁹⁰ Borges 1947: I know that they accuse me of arrogance, and perhaps misanthropy, and perhaps madness. Such accusations (which I will punish at the proper time) are laughable. It is true that I do not leave my house, but it is also true that its doors (which are infinite in number) are open day and night to men and also to animals. Anyone can come in who wants to. He will not find here any womanly pomp or the strange ceremonies of the palace, but he will find peace and solitude. Also he will find a house like no other on the face of the earth (They lie who say that there is one like it in Egypt). Even my detractors admit that there is not a single piece of furniture in the house. Another ridiculous notion is that I, Asterion, that I am a prisoner. Shall I repeat that there are no locked doors, shall I add that there are no locks?

The locating of the Minotaur as postcolonial subject is shockingly clear throughout this opening paragraph of the story. For example, there is the Minotaur's assertion that in his home there cannot be found "pompas mujeriles aquí ni el bizarro aparato de los palacios". This simultaneously refutes the image of colonized subject as effeminate and repudiates the manners and customs of imperial culture. Furthermore, Asterion rebuts the image of himself a prisoner, reminding the reader that, "... no hay una puerta cerrada, añadiré que no hay una cerradura?"

Even more interestingly, the end of the Minotaur's monologue seems to suggest the indigenous relationship with Christianity—the religion of the Western colonizer—which through the process of colonization swiftly (and often by force) became the religion of the indigenous, colonized community.³⁹¹ The adoption of an oppressor's religion when that religion centres on the idea of liberation by a redeemer makes for an easily identifiable and very interesting situation. This is why it is difficult not to see what is at stake when the Minotaur closes his speech with the following:

... uno de ellos profetizó, en la hora de su muerte, que alguna vez llegaría mi redentor, Desde entonces no me duele la soledad, porque sé que vive mi redentor y al fin se levantará sobre el polvo. Si mi oído alcanzara los rumores del mundo, yo percibiría sus pasos. Ojalá me lleve a un lugar con menos galerías y menos puertas. ¿Cómo será mi redentor?, me pregunto. ¿Será un toro o un hombre? ¿Será tal vez un toro con cara de hombre? ¿O será como yo?³⁹²

Asterion's hope for a redeemer suggests the extent to which he *does* feel imprisoned, but it is ironic (to say the least) that his hope of salvation comes from the dying words of one of the

³⁹¹ Shaw 1987.

³⁹² Borges: ... one of them prophesized, in the hour of his death, that someday my redeemer would come. Since then, the loneliness has not pained me, because I know that my redeemer lives and at last he will lift me up from the dust. If my ears could hear all the murmurs of the world, I would perceive his footsteps. I hope he will take me to a place with fewer doors and fewer rooms. What will my redeemer be I wonder? Will he be a bull or a man? Will he be a bull with the face of a man or will he be like me?

intruders into his home. In this way, he is like the Christianised (post)colonial subject: waiting for a redeemer who was promised to him by one of those from whom he wishes to be redeemed.

This complicated, sympathetic view of the Minotaur is taken up by Ullúa. But if there was any doubt about the relationship between Borges' Minotaur and Ullúa's, it is erased by the ease with which the last line of Borges' story leads into the first of Ullúa's play. The last line of *La casa de Asterion* is the only portion of the story that is not part of the Minotaur's monologue. Instead it is two lines describing the calm after the Minotaur's death:

El sol de la mañana reverberó en la espada de bronce. Ya no quedaba ni un vestigio de sangre.
-¿Lo creerás, Ariadna? -dijo Teseo-. El minotauro apenas se defendió.³⁹³

Hipólito y Fedra begins many years in the future, but once again with Theseus reflecting on the killing of the Minotaur—except this time the Minotaur is part of the conversation. The opening scene of *Hipólito y Fedra* has no counterpart in Euripides or Racine. The real predecessor of this scene rests with Cortázar and Borges, Ullúa's Argentinean forebears as adaptors of the Minotaur/Theseus myth. It should come as little surprise then that the very first line of Ullúa's play suggests the postcolonial relationships at stake in the myth, particularly as it has been received in the Argentinean tradition:

Teseo: ¿Adónde me condujo el río? No reconozco estas orillas. A mí alrededor sólo se dibujan sombras sobre sombras. El aire está espeso, y reina el silencio; ningún mortal parece habitar esta tierra extraña, y quizá peligrosa. (*Entran espíritus y Asterión, el minotauro*) ¿Quién eres? ¿Animal y hombre al mismo tiempo? ¿No sé cuáles son tus intenciones, pero te advierto que mi espada liberó a la tierra de asesinos y monstruos, combatió con honor en mil batallas, y no se detendrá tampoco ahora!³⁹⁴

³⁹³ Borges: The morning sun glistened on the bronze sword. There was no longer any vestige of blood. Can you believe it, Ariadne, Theseus said, the Minotaur scarcely defended himself?

³⁹⁴ Ullúa, 2005: Theseus: Where has the river led me? I do not recognise these shores. It appears that all around me are only shadows upon shadows. The air is thick and silence reigns; no mortal seems to inhabit this land that is strange and, perhaps, dangerous. (Enter the ghosts and Asterion the Minotaur) Who are you? Animal and man at the same

In these very first lines, Theseus takes on the figure of the newly arrived coloniser. He arrives in a new and foreign place. He is unnerved by the air and silence of the land in which he has arrived. He even goes so far as to characterise it as a dark place, a place of shadows and so when he encounters the inhabitants he immediately threatens violence. These lines take on even greater complexity and significance when placed in dialogue with the Minotaur's description of his journey outside of the labyrinth in *La casa de Asterion*:

Por lo demás, algún atardecer he pisado la calle; si antes de la noche volví, lo hice por el temor que me infundieron las caras de la plebe, caras descoloridas y aplanadas, como la mano abierta. Ya se había puesto el sol, pero el desvalido llanto de un niño y las toscas plegarias de la grey dijeron que me habían reconocido. La gente oraba, huía, se prosternaba; unos se encaramaban al estilóbato del templo de las Hachas, otros juntaban piedras. Alguno, creo, se ocultó bajo el mar. No en vano fue una reina mi madre; no puedo confundirme con el vulgo, aunque mi modestia lo quiera.³⁹⁵

Whether or not diverse people can occupy the same physical space in a peaceful (and hopefully productive) manner is one of the central questions of the modern world.³⁹⁶ It is a fundamental part of the legacy of modern colonialism. In many ways, this defines the colonial and postcolonial experiences. Yet both Ullúa and Borges seem to suggest that peaceful co-existence simply is not possible and that the one signalled out as Other and consequently as semi-human will be subjected to ridicule or to violence and death.

time? I do not know what your intentions are, but I warn you that my sword freed the land of murders and monsters and fought with honour in a thousand battles and will not stop now!

³⁹⁵ Borges: Besides one afternoon I went out on the street; if I returned before night fall it was because of the fear that the faces of the common people inspired in me, flat and discolored faces, like an open hand. The sun had already set, but the helpless cry of a child and the coarse supplications of the rabble said that I had been recognized. The people prayed, fled, and fell prostrate. Some climbed onto the stylobate of Axes Temple. Others gathered stones. Someone, I think, hide under the sea. Not in vain was my mother a queen. I cannot mingle with the riffraff, although my modesty would desire it.

³⁹⁶ For more, see Appiah 2001.

By deploying the image of the Minotaur, it is suggested by all three pieces that default Other will be the hybridized progeny of the union between “nature” (or the indigenous as they are created both by primitivism and indignidad) and the “civilized” (or the Western).³⁹⁷ The Minotaur is *mestizo* in body and in culture.³⁹⁸ The way in which the Minotaur is half-man and half-human is not only about his body, particularly as he is portrayed in the work being discussed here. For example, he eats human beings (like an animal), but he can speak (a very human trait).

He is a near perfect voice for the Latin American subject as can be seen as the discussion continues in *Hipólito y Fedra*. The reply Asterion (the Minotaur) offers to Theseus’s threat of further violence bears the clear mark of postcolonial realities:

Asterión: Teseo, este es el reino de los muertos. La morada de los que no volveremos a sentir el calor del sol. En este lugar no existe el tiempo. Aunque te haya costado reconocerme, si observas detenidamente, mi imagen es la misma que descubriste aquella vez, en otra época, cuando llegaste hasta el último rincón del templo que el ingenioso Dedalo construyó sólo para mí; el que todos llamaban laberinto, y yo hogar. Mi hogar.

Teseo: Pero, ¿por qué no recuerdo ninguna pelea o accidente donde mi alma escapó de mi cuerpo para descender hasta aquí? Es extraño, ahora palpita en mi memoria con más claridad nuestro anterior y breve encuentro, pero al igual que aquella vez, tampoco te tuve miedo cuando te tuve ante mis ojos. Confieso que hasta sentí una insólita admiración. Y lo demás, no fue difícil.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁷ Aizenberg 1992.

³⁹⁸ Volek 1997.

³⁹⁹ Ibid: Asterion: Theseus, you are in the Kingdom of the Dead--the abode of those who will not return to feel the heat of the sun. In this place, time does not exist. Although it might cost you to recognize me, my image is the same the same one that you discovered another time, in another era when you went to the far corner of that temple which ingenious Dandaelus built for me alone—that one which everyone called the Labyrinth but I called home. My home. Theseus: But, why do I not remember any fight or accident during which my soul escaped my body to come down here? It is strange, now there patters in my memory with more clarity our previous brief encounter, and the same as in that time, I do not fear what I see before my eyes. I confess that I felt an unusual admiration. And the rest, that was not difficult.

There are several pieces of this exchange which can be read as the exchange between the former colonizer and the formerly colonized. Most pointedly, Theseus was once an intruder into the space that “everyone” called the Labyrinth but which was most fundamentally the Minotaur’s home. He has removed the Minotaur from that space. In fact, Theseus had previously little reason to believe that he had not completely eradicated the Minotaur. But now, in another strange place, in another foreign environment in which the Minotaur belongs but Theseus does not, Theseus must encounter the Minotaur for a second time in a context where violence simply is not an option because it is ineffectual (the dead cannot, inconveniently enough, be killed). More importantly, Theseus must confront his own crimes against the Minotaur. In this second encounter, Theseus must a) admit that he had some kind of admiration—perhaps even respect—for the Minotaur and b) he must remember the violence that he did against the Minotaur. He cannot actually name this violence, he calls it merely “what followed” but at the same time he says that it “was not difficult”. Clearly, there are tensions here. Theseus says that it was not difficult but if it was not that difficult why can he not repeat what he did. He feels unclear about his actions and his encounter with the Minotaur and recognizing him does, as the Minotaur promised, cost Theseus; it reminds him of the doubt with accompanies his own act of violence.

But this encounter, as a legacy of Cortázar and Borges, is not just about making Theseus uncomfortable (though that certainly does contribute a certain amount of entertainment value). It is about creating dialogue: giving the Minotaur a chance to speak to Theseus and Theseus a chance to respond.⁴⁰⁰ This is a reversal of what is commonly imaged as colonial discourse and can be seen as a model for the desired postcolonial conversation. As such it is about working out the anxieties of the postcolonial encounter as much as it is about confronting the colonial past.

⁴⁰⁰ Harrison 1985

And in the postcolonial context, the anxieties of conquest and the anxieties of sexuality are intimately linked.

It is the conflation of these two anxieties which truly binds this scene and other Latin American depictions of the Minotaur to the traditional understanding of the Theseus/Minotaur legend. For in whatever form they take, the stories of the Minotaur, Theseus, Hippolytus, and Phaedra are bound together by a concern with problematic sexual desire and the physical consequences of it. By placing this encounter between the Minotaur and Theseus at the front of the play, before we ever see Hippolytus or Phaedra (the figures at the center of Euripides's and Racine's meditations on illicit sexuality), Ullúa (drawing on the mid-20th-century Latin American engagement with the Minotaur) allows us to see the themes of sexuality and corporeality addressed in a context which is also obviously postcolonial. This scene also highlights a connection with magical realism by providing a scene rich in both the hybridity and other-worldliness so inherent to the genre and by giving an example of transcultural dialogue. A large part of the reason that this move is successful in Ullúa's play is because, while the Minotaur does not take on a central role in Racine, the threat and warning of the Minotaur is a very present reality. For example, Phaedra's confession of her love for Hippolytus is made by means of her wishing that the Hippolytus had taken the place of Theseus as the slayer of the Minotaur:

Pourquoi sans Hippolyte
Des héros de la Grèce assembla-t-il l'élite ?
Pourquoi, trop jeune encore, ne pûtes-vous alors
Entrer dans le vaisseau qui le mit sur nos bords ?
Par vous aurait péri le monstre de la Crète,
Malgré tous les détours de sa vaste retraite
Pour en développer l'embarras incertain,
Ma sœur du fil fatal eût armé votre main.
Mais non, dans ce dessein je l'aurais devancée;
L'amour m'en eût d'abord inspiré la pensée.

C'est moi, Prince, c'est moi dont l'utile secours
 Vous eût du Labyrinthe enseigné les détours.
 Que de soins m'eût coûtés cette tête charmante !
 Un fil n'eût point assez rassuré votre amante.
 Compagne du péril qu'il vous fallait chercher,
 Moi-même devant vous j'aurais voulu marcher;
 Et Phèdre au Labyrinthe avec vous descendue
 Se serait avec vous retrouvée, ou perdue.⁴⁰¹

In this attempt by Phaedra to rewrite her family history, the Minotaur and his relationship to her must be reaffirmed even if it is in an indirect way. In *Hipólito y Fedra*, Phaedra offers a nearly identical speech at the same moment in the play:

Fedra: Sí, Príncipe, me consumo de pasión por Teseo. Lo amo, pero no como lo vieron en los infiernos, voluble adorador de mil enamoradas; sino fiel, altivo, e incluso un poco huraño; joven, encantador, dueño de corazones, como veo a los Dioses, o como lo veo a usted. Sí, Señor, porque tenía su porte, su hablar, sus ojos, el mismo pudor noble coloreaba su rostro cuando cruzó el oleaje de Creta. Teseo fue digno de ser amado por Ariadna y Fedra. Pero, ¿por qué Grecia convocó a la flor de sus jóvenes sin incluirlo? ¿Por qué Hipólito era excesivamente joven entonces? Por eso no pudo llegar en el navío que arribó a nuestras costas y deslumbró a las hijas de Minos. Sino Ud. hubiera matado al Minotauro en el laberinto. Ariadna habría armado su mano con el hilo salvador para protegerlo de las asechanzas. ¡No! yo me habría adelantado. Sí, yo, Príncipe, yo; mi ayuda certera lo habría guiado en los recovecos. ¡Lo habría cuidado!. El amor me impulsaría. Y no bastaría un hilo para esta enamorada. Compartiendo el peligro, Fedra habría caminado delante de usted, y junto a Hipólito se habría salvado o percido.⁴⁰²

⁴⁰¹ Racine. *Phèdre*. 631-662. Why did the best heroes of Greece assemble without Hippolytus? Why were you too young to be able to board the boat that brought him (*Translation note: him = Theseus*) to our shores? For the monster of Crete would have been killed by you despite the coils of his vast abode. To continue this sweet daydream, my sister would have armed your hand with the fatal crew. Of course not, in this design, I would have supplanted her. Love would have first inspired the thought within me. It's me, Prince, it's me whose timely aid would have taught you the Labyrinth's corridors. What care has cost me this charming head! A thread was not comfort enough to be assured of your lover. Companion in the peril you were bound to find. I, myself, would have wanted to walk in front of you. And Phaedra would have explored the maze with you and emerged with you dead or alive.

⁴⁰² Ullúa, 2005, 1.6: Yes, Prince, I am consumed by a passion for Theseus. I love him, but not like they see in Hell, a fickle worshiper of a thousand loves, but rather, faithful, proud, and even a bit shy, young, charming, a master of hearts. I love him as I see the Gods or as I see you. Yes, my Lord, for you have his bearing, his manner of speaking, his eyes. The same aristocratic modesty coloured his face when he crossed the Cretan waves. Theseus was worthy of being loved by Ariadne and Phaedra. But why when Greece called the flower of its youth were you not included?

However, unlike Racine, Ullúa does not permit the audience merely to recall the Minotaur momentarily, but drives home the relationship between Phaedra and the Minotaur in the scene immediately following portrays Asterion and Adriane in the Land of the Dead and has Adriane reflecting upon that shared family history:

Asterión, hermano mio, detengamos la marcha. No quiero ir a su encuentro. Mi alma, aturdida de pena, ya está cansada de sufrir, creo sentir que mi corazón vuelve a palpitar impulsado de esperanza y de temor, pero todavía no sé si siento alegría o dolor. Teseo está perdido en nuestro universo de sombras, confundido en la noche eterna que nos rodea, pero pronto partirá y se alejará nuevamente. Volverá a su patria, a sentir el calor de una caricia, a estrechar sus hijos en un abrazo, a beber copiosamente, a sus mujeres, a la vida...lo sé bien. En cambio, nosotros, almas sin sosiego, desprovistos del envoltorio carnal, estamos destinados a deambular sin rumbo en esta tierra de suspiros. *(Pausa)* ¡Amado Teseo! ¿Como será tu rostro ahora que el tiempo lo esculpió? ¿Y yo? ¿Soy la Ariadna que conociste y amaste una vez?, ¿aquella que se precipitó a tus brazos, o este espectro vacío, que no se anima a encontrarse con el único hombre al que amó? Soy la misma, sin dudas, detenida en el tiempo, ni más bella, ni más querida a tus ojos. Apenas un eco fraterno, ya olvidado. *(Pausa)* Asterión, dicen que un momento de felicidad le devuelve al amante todo el llanto que vertió. A mi me basta, revivir ese encuentro breve, fugaz, intacto en mi memoria. *(Pausa)* Llegó a Creta junto al último contingente de jóvenes atenienses destinados al sacrificio. Aquellos que debían recorrer los rincones de tu inmenso hogar y encontrar su destino en tus manos, hermano. La prisión donde eran alojados lindaba con el parque por donde paseabamos con Fedra. Ese día, casualmente, los observamos desembarcar y dirigirse a las celdas. Caminaban en silencio, ellas tomadas de la mano, ellos lenta y resignadamente; él venía unos pasos detrás del resto. Su cuerpo lucía fuerte y lozano, no era precisamente agraciado, pero había en su andar algo temerario, desafiante, como alguien que enfrenta las convenciones del mundo y las derrota. De pronto, giró la cabeza, se detuvo y sus ojos se encontraron con los míos. Fue apenas un instante que pareció

Why was Hippolytus too young? Why could he not have got on the ship that arrived on our shores and dazzled the daughters of Minos? If only you had killed the Minotaur in the labyrinth! Ariadne would have armed your hand with the saving thread in order to protect you from the snares. No! I should go further! Yes, Prince, my aid would have helped guide you in the caverns. I would have taken care. Love would have inspired me. And the thread would not have been sufficient for my love. Sharing in the risk, Phaedra would have walked with you and united with Hippolytus, I would have been saved or perished.

interminable. Me miró fijamente, una leve sonrisa se insinuó en su rostro y sentí que esa mirada se transformaba en palabras: “Padezco, y ardo tanto como tú, amada mía”, parecía decir. Quedé fascinada. Ya no pude razonar ni desear nada más que buscar refugio entre sus brazos, beber de sus labios, confundir mi alma con la suya. Invoqué a los dioses: “¡Oh, bella Venus, concédeme todas las gracias del amor! Sabes bien que mi corazón será un fiel amante”. Al otro día, mi ser enajenado me hizo ir hasta el lugar. Le ordené al carcelero que lo trajera a mi presencia, que quería hablarle. Al encontrarnos, cuando se acercó a la reja, le dije sin titubeos: “Te ayudaré en secreto a matar al minotauro si me llevas a Atenas como tu esposa”. Su rostro severo y amable al mismo tiempo, me observó sin decir nada; y proseguí, “Toma este ovillo de hilo de oro, cuando entres en el laberinto, ata el extremo a la entrada, donde dejaré una filosa espada; una vez adentro, ve deshaciéndolo poco a poco. Esa será la guía que te permitirá encontrar la salida. Un navío nos esperará en el puerto y podremos huir juntos”. Mientras le hablaba no apartó sus ojos, y cuando estiró la mano abierta para tomar el ovillo, sus manos rozaron las mias, suavemente. Sentí la fuerza y el calor de su cuerpo. Impulsivamente agregué, “Sólo prométeme que me amarás por siempre”. Y acercó sus labios a mis manos en un suave beso como única respuesta. *(Pausa)* Herida de amor, propicié tu muerte, hermano. Teseo salvó su vida, la de sus compañeros y te liberó, Asterión, de tu horrible condena. En el barco que se alejaba de Creta, observé la costa transformarse lentamente en una línea delgada. Allí quedaban para siempre mis padres, mi infancia, mi patria, nunca más los volvería a ver. No pude reprimir el llanto, sin embargo, el amor acostumbra a extraer del dolor un bálsamo para las penas, y cicatriza las heridas que ha infligido. No justificaba mis acciones, pero estaba enamorada. El futuro me pertenecía por completo. Ariadna y Teseo serían una sola voz, una sola piel, arderían en las mismas llamas de la pasión. Las olas, el mar, la tierra, los bosques, los cielos, nos verían amarnos. La luz de nuestros corazones haría palidecer el universo entero. ¡Y ese dulce amor sería eterno! *(Pausa)* Tras una feroz tormenta tuvimos que refugiarnos en la isla de Naxos. Extenuada por el viaje, me quedé dormida en el bosque cercano. Cuando desperté, a la mañana siguiente, descubrí que habían zarpado. ¿Me buscaron y no me encontraron? ¿Volveran en unos días?, tarde comprendí la verdad porque me negué a sentirme abandonada. Perdí la esperanza; la fidelidad vaciló en mi pecho; mi amor se agitó quejoso. Sólo las lágrimas me acompañaban. Lloré con todo mi corazón: “Si sólo pudiera escapar del sol, del día, bajo las limpias aguas del mar; si pudiera volverme piedra, así acabaría mi pena cruel”, me decía. Los dioses se habían vuelto implacables, y el cielo no quiso escucharme. En medio de mis sufrimientos, después de todos los suspiros, la muerte me estrechó en sus brazos,

y con ella llegó la calma. (*Pausa*) Ahora sé que al alma fiel, y al amor sincero, el cielo y el destino, lo recompensan con serenidad. Por eso no quiero volver a verlo: aunque infiel, ingrato e inhumano, prefiero guardar en mi corazón la imagen de aquel Teseo que mi amor liberó de las huellas del tiempo. (*Pausa*) Querido hermano, contemplemos un instante las riberas familiares del pasado y que nuestras almas: mínimas, tiernas y flotantes, alguna vez cálidas huéspedes y compañeras de sus cuerpos, traten de entrar a la muerte, otra vez... con los ojos abiertos.⁴⁰³

⁴⁰³ Ibid. 1.7. Brother, silence the music. I do not want to go to him. My soul, shocked by grief, is already tired of suffering. I feel that my heart beats again, driven by hope and fear. But I still don't know if I feel joy or pain. Theseus is lost in our world of shadows, confused in the eternal night that surrounds us. But soon he will leave and walk again. He will return to his homeland, to feel a warm caress, to hug his children, to drink a lot, to women, to life. I know this well. And we restless souls, deprived of corporeal form, we are destined to roam in this land of allusions. (*Pause*) Beloved Theseus! What will your face look like now that time has sculpted it? And what about me? Am I the same Araidne that you knew and loved? Am I the one who rushed into your arms or am I the woman who does not dare to meet the only man she ever loved? I am the same no doubt in your eyes, neither more beautiful nor more beloved. You grieve a fraternal echo that I have already forgotten. (*Pause*) Asterion, they say that a moment of happiness returns to the lover all the tears I have poured out. I have relived that brief encounter enough, flying as it does intact through my memory. (*Pause*) He came to Crete alongside the last contingent of young men destined to be sacrificed--those who had to roam the corridors of your vast dwelling and meet their destiny at your hands, brother. The prison where they were housed bordered a park where I walked with Phaedra. That day, incidentally, we saw them disembark and head to their cells. They walked in silence, holding their hands behind them, they walked slowly and resigned. He came a few steps behind the rest. His body looked strong and fresh and not particularly graceful. But there was something reckless and defiant in his walk, like someone that faces the realities of life and defeats them. Suddenly he turned his head, he paused and his eyes met mine. It was just a moment that seemed endless. He stared at me. A slight smile crept over his face and I felt that his gaze was transformed into words. "I suffer and I long for you as much as you are loving me," it seemed to say. I was fascinated. I could not imagine desiring anything more than to find refuge in his arms, drinking in his lips, to mingle my soul with his. I called out to the gods, "Oh beautiful Venus! Grant me all the favours of love." The next day, my Other-self made me return to that place. I ordered the guard to bring him to me, because I wanted to talk to him. We met as he approached the gate, I said with hesitation, "I will help you in secret to kill the Minotaur if you take me with you to Athens to be your wife." His face became stern and gentle at the same time. He looked at me without saying anything. I continued, "Take this ball of golden thread. When you enter into the labyrinth, tie the end to the entrance, where I will leave a sharp sword. Once inside unravel it a little at a time. This will be a guide that allows you to find the exit. A ship will be waiting for us in the harbour and we can run away together. While I spoke, he never took his eyes off me. And when he reached out his open hand to take the ball, his hands grazed mine softly. I felt the strength and warmth of his body. And impulsively I added, "Just promise me that you will love me forever." And he placed his lips to my hands in a gentle kiss as an answer. (*Pause*) Wounded by love, I aided in your death, brother. Theseus saved his life and that of his companions and set you free from your horrible fate, Asterion. In the ship, I departed from Crete. I watch the coast transform slowly into a thin line. There remained forever my parents, my childhood, my homeland—I could not keep from crying, although love ultimately removes you from pain and heals the wounds it inflicts. It does not justify my actions, but it was love. The future seemed to me complete. Ariadne and Theseus would be one voice, one flesh. They would burn with the same flames of passion. The waves, the sea, the land, the forests, the skies would look at us in love. The light from our hearts would make the whole universe fade. And this sweet love would be eternal. (*Pause*) After a fierce storm, we had to take refuge on the island of Naxos. Exhausted by the journey, I fell asleep in a nearby forest. When I awoke the next morning, I discovered that they had set sail. Had they looked for me and not been able to find me? Would they return in a few days? Later I realised the truth, but I refused to feel abandoned. I lost hope. Loyalty wavered in my chest. My love stirred with complaint. Only tears were with me. I cried out with my whole heart, "If only I could escape from the sun, from the day, under the cruel water. If I could become a stone! That way my cruel punishment would end. The gods were restless and the heavens would not hear me. In the midst of my suffering, after all my sighing, death took me in his arms and with him calm arrived. (*Pause*) Now I know that a faithful soul and sincere love, the heavens repay with

Ariadne's speech is significant for a variety of reasons. At a most basic level, it serves as a mirror against which Phaedra's declarations can be reflected. While Phaedra longs to rewrite history in order to take Ariadne's place as Theseus's conspirator, Ariadne has come to have a much more conflicted view of her role. More importantly she has come to a fuller appreciation of her kinship to the Minotaur, who is after all her half-brother. Ariadne calls the Minotaur "hermano (brother)" three times in the above monologue. The final time she refers to him as "Querido hermano (beloved brother)".⁴⁰⁴

This declaration comes at the very end of the monologue immediately preceding the spot in which Ariadne acknowledges what is the most important element of the Minotaur's meaning in the postcolonial narrative. Ariadne tells her brother, "...nuestras almas... compañeras de sus cuerpos". Ariadne's acknowledgement of the body is an important element in the Minotaur's role within the narrative in as much a sexuality and corporeality (particularly as they are non-normative) are linked to a postcolonial critique.

This relationship has already been alluded to at the beginning of the play in the dialogue between Theseus and the Minotaur. Theseus tells the Minotaur that the violence he committed against the Minotaur was "not difficult." The Minotaur replies by saying that death was not difficult either. What was difficult was the life he was forced to live in his Othered body. He says, "Soy el fruto de una pasión prohibida ¿Por qué permitieron que naciera de esta forma?"⁴⁰⁵ The Minotaur's body, which denotes him as Other and condemns him to violence, is the result of non-normative sexuality.⁴⁰⁶ Thus in the figure of the Minotaur, we have a body that is visibly

serenity. Thus I never want to see him again. Although, he was unfaithful, ungrateful, and inhuman, I would prefer to keep him as the image in my heart—the image of my lover Theseus freed from time. (Pause) Beloved brother, let us contemplate for a moment the familiar shores of the past and then our souls, tender and floating, ever warm companions of their bodies can try to return again to death with eyes wide open.

⁴⁰⁴ For more on the familial relationship between the Minotaur and his half-sisters, see Reckford 1974.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid. I am the fruit of a forbidden passion. Why did they allow me to be born in this shape?

⁴⁰⁶ Braidotti 2013.

other, that is the result of non-normative sexuality, and that was conquered and destroyed by a hostile intruder into his space. He embodies (quite literally for his body is what is at stake), the intersection between the postcolonial, the sexual, and the corporeal.⁴⁰⁷ He is the living hybridity at the heart of both the postcolonial experience and the aesthetic of magical realism. Ullúa allows us an instance when the Minotaur can acknowledge all of these subaltern aspects of his identity and confronts Theseus, who is the model of the normative and powerful. Poignantly, this happens immediately before events play out on the stage where once again Theseus's role as the enforcer of the normative (of patriarchy, of normative sexuality, of class privilege) is reenacted. This role will cause him once again to unjustly cause the death of another, and this time it will be his own son. The violence done to the Minotaur is, in this way, merged with the violence done to Hippolytus and the body of the Minotaur mangled by nature as a punishment for human disobedience is merged with the body of Hippolytus mangled as a consequence of his stepmother's illicit love and his father's lack of knowledge. The prince and the monster become one. They are both victims of Theseus's attempts to punish what is Other. Both the Minotaur and Hippolytus are innocent of the alleged crimes that caused their mangled bodies, nonetheless they are unjustly suspected. Although Hippolytus has long been recognized as a victim, the Minotaur has not. This is because Hippolytus has been given the chance to speak. This is not the case for the Minotaur, at least not in the dominant Western literary tradition.

The connection between the postcolonial, sexual, and corporeal is really at the heart of so many of the conversations that are going on in a variety of areas.⁴⁰⁸ This is why the story of Hippolytus is so crucial and why an adaptation such as Ullúa's which foreground these issues and connections is so important. Deviant sexuality and deviant bodies, conquered sexual

⁴⁰⁷ See Langer 1998.

⁴⁰⁸ For more on this, see Shilling, 2012.

subjects, conquered bodies, and conquered lands—these are all central themes to the story of Hippolytus, Theseus, Phaedra, and most importantly the Minotaur since it is the Minotaur who *embodies* what it means to be Other.

Bodies are also the medium through which the individual interacts with the corporate. In Judith Butler's 2004 book *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*, she describes this reality thus:

...the flesh exposes us to the gaze of others, but also to touch, and to violence, and bodies put us at risk of becoming the agency and instrument of all those as well. Although we struggle for rights over our own bodies, the very bodies for which we struggle are not quite our own. *The body has its invariably public dimension* (emphasis is mine). Constituted as a social phenomenon in the public sphere, my body is not my own.⁴⁰⁹

The political nature of the body also lends to it an aesthetic significance (our bodies are the means by which we are seen by others and thus obtain our own aesthetic identity) and the treatment of the body can serve as a useful marker in the analysis of ideological DNA. In 1994, the art historian Jame Elkins noted that, with respect to culture theory, bodies in the visual arts tend to be interpreted, while bodies in literature are ignored.⁴¹⁰ The visual nature of theatre makes bodies more difficult to ignore than in literary forms that lack a visual element such as the novel. This is particularly evident in cases such as Ullúa's invocation of the Minotaur when the body in question is deformed or otherwise marked. Through the appearance of the Minotaur's body on stage, it becomes easier to recall the deformed bodies present in Surrealist art.

It is the Minotaur's body then that offers a convincing link between Surrealism, magical realism, and hybridity both in the Latin American context and beyond. It is worth noting that the

⁴⁰⁹ Butler 2004, p. 25.

⁴¹⁰ Elkins 1994, p. 115.

impact of Surrealism in Latin American visual arts (and painting in particular) has been long acknowledged, although this acknowledgement often comes with the sense of a “European” school being imposed on the “Third World”.⁴¹¹ Yet, Latin American artists and intellectuals themselves seem to have been relatively quick to acknowledge their own ability to claim Surrealism as uniquely their own. In an introduction for a 1940 exhibition in Mexico City entitled, *International Surrealist Exhibition*, the Peruvian playwright César Moro wrote “that Surrealism could re-instantiate the interrupted time of the pre-Columbian world that lived on, despite the colonial interlude, in places like Mexico and Peru.”⁴¹² Moro notes, correctly, that it is indigenous identity that forms the affinity between Latin American art and Surrealism. This is as true in the theatre as it is in painting. This is the nature of the ties that bind the Latin American and European culture traditions.

Summary

The primary goal of this section was to make apparent many of the bounds that bind the aesthetic and political traditions of Europe (and in particular France) and Latin America. At the same time, it should also be clear that the distinct features of Latin American identity (such as an intimate engagement with the indigenous past) are an ever present reality. It is with a view to further examining the particulars of identity that we now turn to the second half of this thesis which will focus on two specific instances of identity politics (namely, gender and sexual identity) at play in the contemporary reception of Greek tragedy in Latin America. In this section we will pick up many of themes of the body as we have begun to explore them here and continue to explore the connections between the Latin American aesthetic traditions represented in its contemporary reception of Greek tragedy and wider global trends.

⁴¹¹ Craven 2009, p. ii.

⁴¹² Cited in Craven 2009, p. vii.

Gender, Sexual Identity and Greek Tragedy in Latin America:

As discussed in the previous chapter, the politics of the body have been of critical importance to indigenous identity discourse. In this chapter, we will continue to explore this connection between the body and identity, through the examination of explicitly feminist and explicitly queer adaptations of Greek tragedy. One of the principal goals of this chapter is to highlight the connection between feminist and queer theory that has been posited by scholars such as Mimi Marinucci, Chela Sandoval, and Tina Rosenberg as this connections relates to the subject of this thesis.⁴¹³ This discussion will also touch on the emerging field of Disability Studies, or so-called “Crip Theory” as it relates to gender, sexuality, and the normative pressure place on bodies perceived as Other.⁴¹⁴

We will first outline the critical elements which define Latin American feminism and queer liberation and provide a brief historical context for their development. We will suggest that late 20th- and early 21st- century activist and academic feminism in Latin America was significantly influenced by an oppositional construction of “French Feminism” and “Anglo-American Feminism” championed in Anglophone scholarship in the 1980s and 1990s. This opposition was largely false; although, there were and are a few key distinctions between the feminist tradition in the English-speaking world and the Francophone which ultimately made more French examples of feminist scholarship and activism more appealing to Latin American women than their Anglophone counterparts.⁴¹⁵ We suggest that this greater infinite is derived, at least in part, from the experience of *mestiza* identity in the Latin American context. That is to

⁴¹³See Marinucci 2010; Sandoval-Sánchez 2000; and Rosenberg 2002.

⁴¹⁴ See Sherry 2004.

⁴¹⁵ Spivak 1981 and Fraser 1992.

say, we suggest that the experience of a culture existing with already othered bodies finds difficulty in conforming to the demands of homogenous, internationalised gender identity.

Along these same lines, we will explore the formation of modern “gay” identity and its relationship to wider historical and cultural events. In particular, we will focus on the various cultural conflicts that have arisen from the promulgation of a universal gay identity that was developed predominately in the United State and Britain.⁴¹⁶ As with feminist theory, a “French model” has proven to be a useful framework of resistance against Anglo-Saxon hegemony.⁴¹⁷ The reader will note that this study uses the words *gay* and *queer* interchangeably. This is in order to forgo the rather lively debate that exists around each term and its wider implications. The only time that any distinction between the two is made is when that distinction is relevant to discussion. In those cases, we have explicitly clarified what exactly is at stake in the distinction as it relates to the specific point at issue.

As in the previous chapter, there will also be an outline of the four pieces that will provide our case studies. These are the following: Cherrie Moraga’s *The Hungry Woman: A Mexican Medea*, Patricia Arriza’s *Antígona*, Paz Alicia Garciadiego and Arturo Ripstein’s *Asi es la vida*, and Moro’s *Edipo y Yocasta*. Following the summaries of these pieces, we will end the chapter with a section entitle “Toward of Theory of the Body in Latin American Greek Tragedy”. Using the above pieces as case studies, this section suggests ways in which, using the body as a discursive tool, we can find ways of discussing the construction of gender and sexual identity categories in Latin American adaptations of Greek tragedy. This section seeks to do this with an eye to the issues of ethnic *mestiza* identity highlighted in the previous chapter.

A Brief History of Feminist and Queer Identity in Latin America

⁴¹⁶ See Troiden 1989.

We begin with brief histories of feminism and queer identity in Latin America. The tensions experienced by both feminists and those interested in gay liberation in Latin America resulting from the division between varying global discourses is complicated by the postcolonial and *mestizo* experience. When a body is already othered, its capacity to act as a site of liberation is enhanced.⁴¹⁸ The interaction of the identity and the body in view of global currents in identity construction and politics form the heart of the pieces we will analyze below. Through this process, we will be able to elucidate many of issues at stake in these conversations as they are related to the Latin American reception of Greek tragedy.

In both the case of feminism and gay liberation, the oppositional nature of the “French” and the “American” discussed in the first chapter of this study is very much at play. This opposition has not occurred in isolation within the Latin American context. Since the late 1980s, there has frequently been in Anglophone feminist theory an oppositional distinction posited between French Feminism and Anglo-American Feminism.⁴¹⁹ The divide has been traditionally viewed as significant to Latin American feminism, which is generally held to have emerged out of the political and economic catastrophes that rocked the region throughout the late 1970s and 1980s.⁴²⁰ One of the consequences of the crises was an awakening of political awareness among groups that had been traditionally marginalized in Latin American politics and society: the urban poor, indigenous people, and (of course) women.⁴²¹ While the women’s movement in the West had begun with and continued to be dominated by white, middle-class women; throughout Latin America, the situation was much more complicated.⁴²² The traditionally more nuanced attitude

⁴¹⁸ Spurlin 2001.

⁴¹⁹ Rupp 1997.

⁴²⁰ Safa 1990.

⁴²¹ Rodriguez 1994 and Sternback 1992.

⁴²² Breines 2002.

towards race in the region meant that the ranks of Latin American women's organizations filled with much greater ethnic diversity than their Western counterparts.⁴²³ Finally, class relationships in Latin America were and are quite different than in North America. The middle-class has always been significantly smaller than in the "developed" world and the ties of that middle-class to the ruling elite much closer.⁴²⁴ The greater acceptance of class as a political category resulted in the Latin American women's movement maintaining a much closer relationship to the traditional male-dominated Left than in the United States where decades of anti-Communist rhetoric has created anxiety around discussions of class conflict even on the Left.⁴²⁵ While there were and are real disadvantages to this situation, the existence and continuation of this relationship led to a greater class-consciousness in Latin American women's organizations and, frequently, greater socio-economic diversity within the membership.

A greater diversity within the broader women's movement in Latin America has meant that the women's movement there has in many ways embraced much broader goals than its American counterpart.⁴²⁶ It also meant that many thinkers and thoughts from the French women's movement (as opposed to the American one) found resonance with Latin American feminists.⁴²⁷ This was particularly true of the legacy of the influential French feminist organization *Politique et Psychoanalyse*, popularly known as "Psych et po", and the legacy of France's large number of "class conscious" feminists, whose unique blending of feminism and Marxism were particularly appealing to many radicalized working-class Latin American women.⁴²⁸

⁴²³ Westwood 1993.

⁴²⁴ Veltmeyer 1997 and Petras 1999.

⁴²⁵ Chinchilla 1991.

⁴²⁶ Sternback 1992.

⁴²⁷ Spivak 1981.

⁴²⁸ Miller 1991.

At the same time as these distinctions have manifested in international feminism, especially in the past two decades, the Anglo-American character of mainstream “gay” identity (sometimes called the *Gay International*) has likewise been problematized.⁴²⁹ This is particularly true outside of the West, where traditional constructions of same-sex desire come into conflict with the normative, Western construction of gay identity.⁴³⁰ The contemporary construct of gay identity that forms the core of the Gay International began in the 19th century.⁴³¹ As the Industrial Revolution progressed, greater economic autonomy and the growth of anonymous urban centres created a space in which nascent “gay” identity and politics could form.⁴³² From the middle of the 19th century onward, a number of nations saw the emergence of “homophile movements”, a collective term for various political and intellectual activities which strove to both construct an identity around same-sex desire and to encourage public tolerance for homosexuality.⁴³³ For both of these aims, the classical past was an invaluable asset as it provided examples of same-sex desire within in the heart of the Western canon. The earliest arguments in favour of toleration for homosexuality pointed to ancient Greece, and the some of the earliest organisations dedicated to gay emancipation were named in homage to the ancients.⁴³⁴ For example, the first gay print journal in France was called *L’Arcadie*.

However, despite its best efforts and numerous appeals to tradition, the pace of progress of the early homophile movements was lethargic.⁴³⁵ The event that would awaken it occurred in a bar run by the Mafia and frequented by drag queens in New York City’s Greenwich Village: the Stonewall Inn. On 27 June 1969, during a routine police raid, patrons at the Stonewall Inn did

⁴²⁹ Altman 1996.

⁴³⁰ See William 1993 and Massad 2002.

⁴³¹ For a general overview of this topic, see Miller 1995.

⁴³² D’Emilio 1983.

⁴³³ Bernstein 2002.

⁴³⁴ Matzner 2010.

⁴³⁵ Dececco 2014.

not quietly submit to the police officers on the scene as normally occurred but instead began to fight back. Their resistance spread and erupted into several nights of rioting from which the contemporary gay rights movement would be born.⁴³⁶

Meanwhile, on the other side of the Atlantic, the effects of the May '68 student revolutions were still being felt. In France, the May '68 revolution had largely ignored the rights of sexual minorities, save for short-lived Comité d'Action Pédéristique Révolutionnaire.⁴³⁷ Thus there is little doubt that the modern French gay liberation movement, like its counterparts through the North Atlantic, began in response to Stonewall.⁴³⁸

In France, the debut of the gay rights movement was 10 March 1971. Méné Grégoire was presenting a radio broadcast entitled “The Painful Problem of Homosexuality” on the moderate network RFL. The broadcast, which made no apologies for seeing pity as the better part of disgust, was interrupted by a group of women shouting, “It’s not true, we’re not suffering! Transvestites on our side! We are a social scourge!” and “Down with the heterocops!”⁴³⁹ The network swiftly interrupted the broadcast by cutting to the show’s theme music, and the Front Homosexuel d’Action Révolutionnaire was born.⁴⁴⁰

One of the long term consequences of the Stonewall Riots and its subsequent internationalisation is “the circulation of a ‘universal gay identity’ across various national boundaries.”—the Gay International mentioned above.⁴⁴¹ This universal gay identity is, ironically, far from universal. Rather, what is routinely promoted as the universal gay identity is the embodiment of a quite particular middle-class, Anglo-American (and most often male)

⁴³⁶ For more on the Stonewall Riots, see Carter 2010.

⁴³⁷ Martel 1999, p. 16.

⁴³⁸ Harvey 2003.

⁴³⁹ Martel 1999, p. 19-20.

⁴⁴⁰ Schehr 1996.

⁴⁴¹ Provencher 2007, p. 32.

construction of homosexuality and homosexual identity.⁴⁴² This “universal” image has, nonetheless, been roundly encouraged by a global gay media which is significantly invested in the advancement of a globalised consumer culture.⁴⁴³

The prevalence of English expressions and/or direct translation of English expressions in the nearly official global narrative of gay identity formation give some suggestion as to how Americanised global gay identity is. In Paris, one might *faire un coming-out* or perhaps *sortir du closet* but much more rarely *sortir du placard*.⁴⁴⁴ In Mexico City, it is possible to *salir del armario* or more commonly *salir del closet*. In Berlin, one can speak of *mein coming-out*. Almost universally the involuntary exposure of a person’s homosexual conduct or gay identity is known as *outing*. This lexical homogeny speaks to the attempted homogenisation of identity and experience in global gay culture. In the words of Denis Provencher, it “suggests the emergence of a common way of thinking, a global collective consciousness, a means of conceptualizing and talking about certain homosexual experiences and citizens’ private rights claims in public space.”⁴⁴⁵

And yet, many elements of this standardised identity are highly problematic outside of the specific (Anglo-American) context where they emerged. In France, for example, the ethnic-like nature of Anglo-American/globalised gay identity has proven difficult to reconcile with the universalism which has underlined French political thought and social ideology since the French Revolution.⁴⁴⁶ In many ways, the tensions between “Anglo-Saxon” and “French” feminist discourses are mirrored in the queer context where once again there arises inevitably a conflict

⁴⁴² Duggan 2002.

⁴⁴³ Valocchi 1999.

⁴⁴⁴ Martel 1999, p. 87.

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁴⁴⁶ Martel 1999, p. 34.

between the demands of identity-based politics and universal, republican ideals. This is not the only source of difficulty (though it certainly is the most widely discussed), other differences related to the construction of the family and masculinity (which will be discussed later in this chapter) also serve to alienate French gay culture from a “global” gay culture.⁴⁴⁷ As we shall see, this tension is important in the Latin American context where homogenised gay identity is likewise problematic, and the pre-existing tension between the “American” and the “French” is already an important cultural divide.

Because when one moves away from the North Atlantic, the failures of global gay identity becomes even more obvious. The current gay and lesbian rights movements in developing nations, we are told, are a continuation of what began in “...San Francisco’s Castro, New York’s West Village, the Marais in Paris...”⁴⁴⁸ But the zealous importation of Anglo-American gay discourse into non-Western societies has produced a popular perception in many regions that homoerotic desire (in general) and gay identity (in particular) are part and parcel with Western cultural and economic imperialism.⁴⁴⁹

This creates unique challenges for gay-identified artists and writers working in non-Western contexts, especially when they seek both to embrace an identity category constructed around same-sex desire that in many ways aligns with the Western “gay” model while at the same time embracing a politics that rejects other elements of Western hegemony. In Latin America, this situation is magnified, because any identity constructed around the body (as a sexual identity inevitably is) calls to mind the *mestiza* body and its origins in non-normative sexual desire and expression. These connections problematize the model of Anglo-American gay

⁴⁴⁷ Gunther 2008.

⁴⁴⁸ Garafalo 2003.

⁴⁴⁹ See Cruz-Malavé 2002.

identity. The problematic construction creates a set of circumstances that has increasingly pulled gay and queer identified people in Latin America away from the particularism Anglo-American notions of gay identity and toward French models, if for no other reason than that “France” has become the principal foil to American homogeneity in Latin American thought.⁴⁵⁰

The Hungry Woman: A Mexican Medea (1995)

This confluence of tensions is very much at play in the identity of Cherrie Moraga, a mixed-race, Chicana, American, lesbian. And these tensions can be seen very much at work in *The Hungry Woman: A Mexican Medea*. The play, which was written as a commission of the Berkeley Repertory Theatre in 1995, reflects the complexities of both the female and queer experience in a *latinx* (a term coming into popular use to replace the gendered construction of latino/a) context. It is a product of a self-reflective time in Chicano intellectual life and the socio-cultural landscape of *The Hungry Woman*'s imagined future is deeply invested in this intracultural conversation, focused on the effects of *machismo*, homophobia, and colorism on the Chicano movement.⁴⁵¹ It is also a dramatic extension of issues that were already at play in Moraga's work. *The Hungry Woman* is not so much a response to marginalization or inequity within the mainstream of American life, but rather, within the Chicano movement itself and as such can be best read as a dramatization of Moraga's 1993 essay “Queer Aztlán: The Re-Formation of the Chicano Tribe.” It is a play very much about what it means to have a woman-centered, queer identity within the context of Latino/a culture and what it means to be Other even among the Other.

Like several other of the pieces discussed in this thesis, *The Hungry Woman* plays with the chronology of the narrative. The primary action of the play is set in the near future, and the

⁴⁵⁰ Lancaster 1997.

⁴⁵¹ Tatonetti 2004

events within the play fluctuate between a present in which Medea is housed in an asylum and a present immediately posterior to it. In this second present, Medea, her lover Luna (a stonemason), her grandmother, Mama Sal, and her adolescent son, Chac-Mool, are living together in the ruins of Phoenix, Arizona. Phoenix is in ruins, because the United States has been “balkanized” by an ethnic civil war; *The Hungry Woman* is in many ways about the failed democratic revolutions. Roughly half of the United States has succeeded from the union and formed smaller ethnic states “in order to put a halt to its (i.e. the United States) relentless political and economic expansion, as well as the Euro-American cultural domination of all societal fetters including language, religion, family and tribal structures, ethics, art, and more.”⁴⁵² In the Southwestern United States, *mestizo* and indigenous people have created Aztlán, fulfilling the aspirations of many 20th-century activists.

Despite the revolutionary zeal which began the founding of these new states, within a few years’ time, these fledgling nations experience counter-revolutions that establish, or re-establish depending on how you want to look at it, gender hierarchies and heteronormativity. The play begins several years after these counter-revolutions. Phoenix is located in the physical and metaphysical borderland between what remains of the US and the Chicano homeland. Medea, who had once served as a leader among Chicano revolutionaries, was exiled when her affair with Luna was discovered. Because her son was still a small child, he was allowed to come with her. They were also joined by Medea’s grandmother, Mama Sal.

The chorus of *The Hungry Woman* comprises four women warriors—who in accordance with Aztec mythology have died in childbirth and serve also as a convenient reference to the

⁴⁵² Moraga 2001.

Euripidean Medea's assertion that she would rather stand before men in battle than give birth to a single child (cf. Eur. *Med.* 251).

At the beginning of the play, Medea's ex-husband Jason has come to take her son back with him to Azátlan where Jason is the Minister of Culture and remarried to a much younger woman who is of Apache descent (unlike the *mestiza* Medea). This, however, is not Jason's only goal and in the initial exchange between the two, Jason suggests that Medea join him as well. He tells her that while he must remain married to the Apache woman, Medea could be his mistress. This is an idea which Medea, of course, vehemently rejects. She tells Jason that her son will stay with her and that Medea is staying exactly where she is. Jason leaves in anger when Mama Sal walks onto the stage.

The next act occurs in Medea's room in the psychiatric hospital where she has presumably been sent after Chac-Mool's murder. Luna has come to visit. Luna speaks to a nurse who says that Medea is not entirely present and seems to be living in the past. Luna sits on the bed and attempts to get Medea to eat some soup she has brought.

When the curtain rises again, we are in a time when Chac-Mool is still alive. Although Medea has vehemently refused to send her son back to Aztlán, Chac-Mool has discovered that his father has come for him and is determined to join him. Thus he sets out on his own to cross the border from the land of exiles into Aztlán. Clearly, the metaphoric value of this crossing cannot be underestimated. Like all crossings from the land of the marginalized into the mainstream, Chac-Mool's is not an easy one.

Chac-Mool heads toward his father in Aztlán and encounters a Border Guard whom at first Chac-Mool tells, "I do not want you to be a man. Men scare me."⁴⁵³ Yet despite this initial

⁴⁵³ Ibid., p. 78.

assertion, it is clear as the conversation progresses that Chac-Mool is ever more being perceived as a man, not a boy, and that he is more and more claiming his male privilege. The Border Guard, who is also Chac-Mool's "revolutionary conscious" tells him:

...you are no more than your father's son. The son del Nuevo patron revolucionario, a landowner from whom you will inherit property and a legacy of blood under your fingernails...I am landless. A woman without country. I am she whom you already know to hate. I wipe your infant ass in another life, sensitive Nazi-boy.⁴⁵⁴

Chac-Mool's response betrays the extent to which he is in fact becoming his father's son despite his protestation that he is "not ready to be a man":

I was always blessed to be a boy. My great-grandmother literally traced my forehead with the cross of her thumb and index finger and my brow was tranquil then. I didn't then have these violent thoughts of a man. At four, my father drilled his fingers into my chest, held me at the gun point of his glare. You are blessed, he told me. Open your nostrils and flare like a bull. I want you to smell this land. I remember the wings of my nostrils rising up to suck up his breath. It was a birthing of sorts. He penetrated and I was born of him. His land was his mother and mine and I was beholden only to it...Yes, Aztlán. And then my mother stole me away with the stonemason.⁴⁵⁵

The guard is unimpressed by Chac-Mool and sends him back toward his mother's house. When he returns home, Medea is calm but also aware that, while he failed this time, her son will ultimately attempt another return to Aztlán and the patriarchal privilege that is his. Thus, calmly grabbing a butcher knife from the kitchen, she stabs her son. The curtain closes.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 78-79.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 79.

When the curtain reopens, Medea is once again in the hospital. This time Luna is gone and she is alone with the guards and the nurse. The nurse is trying to coax her to take her medication. Here the play ends.

Antígona (2006)

For Moraga, the dystopian homeland characterized by perpetual violence is in many (though not all) ways metaphorical. For Patricia Aríza, however, the reality of a violent homeland, rift with strife and chaos, is quite literal for Colombia is a country that seems continually on the verge of either a glorious revolution or a terrifying descent into a neo-fascist nightmare.⁴⁵⁶ A report by Amnesty International submitted to the U.N.'s Human Rights Commission in 2010 details the troubling situation in Colombia. Along with describing the activities of drug lords and anti-government guerrillas, the report outlines a variety of illegal activities carried out by the Colombian government against human rights defenders and other activists. It reads, in part, as follows:

A climate of hostility towards human rights defenders and other activists exacerbates the on-going serious situation they face. Such hostility has been fomented by the Government, which appears to perceive human rights and security as mutually exclusive. Senior Government and state officials often seek to equate human rights work with support for the guerrillas or terrorism. Such a systematic, high-profile and public stigmatization has given a powerful incentive to those wishing to threaten and physically harm human rights defenders.⁴⁵⁷

Patricia Aríza is one of the activists who have been targeted by the Colombian regime.⁴⁵⁸ Aríza's work has always been overwhelmingly political in nature, so perhaps it should come as no surprise that she has both run afoul of the Colombian regime and been drawn to the *Antigone*.

⁴⁵⁶ See Safford 2002.

⁴⁵⁷ Amnesty International 2010.

⁴⁵⁸ González Rangel 2012.

Antígona represents an instance where it is difficult to separate Aríza's theatre from her politics. She began her work on *Antígona* after meeting with rural women in the war-torn province of Urába. Aríza has made similar trips throughout her career as part of her activism work in support of left-wing causes throughout the country.⁴⁵⁹ The women with whom Aríza met on this particular trip told her how they had been prevented from burying their husbands and sons killed in a recent bout of fighting.⁴⁶⁰ The *Antigone* is, of course, eerily similar to these women's stories. Aríza then spent nearly eight years working on the play which was premiered in Bogotá in the summer of 2006 at La Calendaría, the theatre which Aríza helped to found almost three decades ago.

The play was produced as part of the Magdalena Project, an international theatre initiative that seeks to support female playwrights engaged in innovative and socially relevant work.⁴⁶¹ It is difficult to doubt that Aríza's play is indeed innovative as she has altered the play's structure to include three Antigones and two Ismenes, a change which (if nothing else) is very innovative.

For all its innovation, however, there is something hauntingly simple about *Antígona*.⁴⁶² The stage is completely bare throughout the entire play. There is neither scenery nor props. The lighting is likewise simple. When the play begins only a single spotlight illuminates the stage. Into that single spotlight walks an old man clothed in rags. It is Tiresias. Pounding his cane on the stage and speaking in a near shout, Tiresias delivers the play's opening monologue. In this

⁴⁵⁹ It is important to note that while Ariza has never made a secret of her left-wing sympathies, she has long denied any connection with FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia), the most active of Colombia's Marxist rebels. Several government investigations have attempted to tie her to the group, but they have produced no conclusive evidence. The Public Prosecutor now denies that Ariza was ever investigated by the antiterrorism unit. (International PEN 2009)

⁴⁶⁰ Pinzón 2006.

⁴⁶¹ The Magdalena Project.

⁴⁶² The summary of the play below is made primarily in reference to the play's 2006 production at the Bogotá theater La Candelaria.

monologue, he relates the events leading up to the moment of the play, namely the curse of Oedipus and the Theban civil war. After he has finished, Tiresias wanders off the stage, leaving the spotlight alone in the darkness.

After several minutes of silence in near darkness, a group of five young women come onto the stage. They are wearing Greek-style dresses. Their hair is slightly unkept. They stomp their feet as they walk out on stage, a slightly louder echo of Tiresias's cane. The women begin to speak, one at a time. They talk about their cursed family, their dead brothers, and the brother that has been left unburied. Their voices are flat and largely inexpressive. Their rhythmic exchange is finally interrupted when a dishevelled man, whiskey bottle in hand, staggers across the stage and shouts, "Antígona!"⁴⁶³

The drunken man's call seems to be a sort of summons, and two other women come out onto the stage. They are dressed completely in black; their hair is tightly pulled back. They are the chorus. The first choral ode, which they speak together, goes thus:

No es buena la obediencia que nace del olvido. Ismene, no dejes de escuchar la voz de Antígona. Ella te indica lo justo y lo correcto. No la desoigas. Piensa en tu hermano Polinices, desabrigado y muerto abandonado a la orilla del camino.⁴⁶⁴

After the choral interruption, the five women on stage continue to debate whether or not they should bury Polinices until a messenger arrives. He announces that Creonte is coming to make an announcement that pertains to all the inhabitants of the city. The chorus responds,

⁴⁶³ Arríza 2006, Scene I.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid.: It is not good the obedience that comes from forgetfulness. Ismene, do not forget to hear the voice of Antigone. She tells you what is just and right. Do not be deaf to it. Think of your brother Polynices, unsheltered and abandoned dead by the roadside.

virtually repeating the messenger's words and reminding everyone that "El es quien dicta ahora las leyes."⁴⁶⁵

All the players then exit the stage and the lights go out. When the spotlight returns, Tiresias is standing in the middle of it. He speaks affectionately to Antígona, even calling her "pequeña Antígona".⁴⁶⁶ For her part, Antígona (in her multiple voices) tells the old seer of her plans. She then turns and leaves the stage once more.

At this point, the chorus returns and three other women enter. They are wearing black as well, except they have wings on their backs. They are the Furies. Scene IV is thus an exchange between Tiresias, the Furies, and the chorus. At the conclusion, all the players flee from the stage, and the lights go out again.

The spotlight reappears on stage. This time instead of Tiresias standing in the center of that light, it is Eteocles. He delivers his monologue while the chorus and the Furies creep slowly back onto the stage. Eteocles argues briefly with the chorus and the Furies, claiming that Antígona has betrayed him by trying to bury Polinices. This argument is interrupted, however, by none other than the ghost of Edipo. The appearance of Edipo's ghost is one of the most pioneering features of Aríza's play. It also is a reminder of the importance of spirits in the tradition of magical realism and Latin American literature more broadly.⁴⁶⁷ As part of this tradition, the ghost of Edipo is deeply concerned about the events in the world. He speaks to Antígona and encourages her to bury Polinices. Edipo is unburied and he does not want the same fate for his son. Encouraged by her father, Antígona exits the stage once more.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid.: It is he who now makes the laws.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid. Scene II: little Antigone

⁴⁶⁷ See Hart 2003.

Edipo is not the only ghost who appears in the play. Shortly after the exit of this first spirit, the ghost of Polinices also makes an appearance. Polinices emerges out of the shadows, accompanied by the Furies and the chorus. He speaks briefly with the Furies and exchanges two lines with Tiresias. Then papier-mâché birds descend from above and drive Polinices from the stage. Shortly after Polinices is driven off the stage, the guards arrive and after them Creonte.⁴⁶⁸ After Creonte has announced his decree that Polinices should remain unburied, everyone exits the stage.

After a moment, Antígona (all three) and Tiresias come back on stage. They gather around the body of Polinices. In the stage directions, this scene is referred to as “Ritual de las Antígonas”. This is a very apt description. This haunting scene shows the Antígonas dancing and singing around the body of Polinices. All the while, Tiresias stands in the background as though presiding over the events. He is silent, except for the closing line of the scene: “El ciego sigue al que ve más, al que no ve, le sigue alguien mas ciego aún.”⁴⁶⁹

It is after this that the guards and Creonte return to the stage. Shortly afterward, Antígona is brought before them. While defending her actions, Antígona speaks directly to the women of the city:

Mujeres de Tebas, Se que están ahí, detrás de las puertas y las ventanas. Mírenme bien. Mis lágrimas no ruedan ya. Se que el miedo les paraliza la voz y el pensamiento. No permitan que el olvido mate de nuevo los hermanos muertos. Erinias vengadoras hermanas de dolor, salgan de sus guaridas salgan, salgan y sostengan en tonos agudos los aullidos de esta historia, para que los hombres no se olviden del llanto.⁴⁷⁰

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid., Scene IX.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., Scene X: The blind man follows one who sees. He who follows someone who does not see is even blinder.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid., Scene XVII: Women of Thebes, I know you are there, behind the doors and windows. Look at me! I am not crying anymore. I know that it is fear that paralyzes your voice and thoughts. Do not allow that forgetfulness to kill our brothers again. The avenging Furies, our sisters in pain, come out from their dens. They come out and sustain with howls the song of this story, so that men do not forget the tears.

As Antígona 2 (she is the one of the three Antígonas who gives this particular speech) says this, she faces out toward the audience. She is not just speaking to the long ago women of Thebes. She is speaking to all women everywhere there are unburied men and undried tears.

Although not right away, the women of Thebes do eventually appear. In the next scene, Creonte and Tiresias argue as to what should be Antígona's fate. Toward the end of the conversation, both "las mujeres" (who have come on stage as three old women dressed in normal widows) and the drunk (who has also returned to the stage) call out in turn, "Para ya Creonte, medítalo."⁴⁷¹ The Furies, the women, and the drunk shout this phrase several times. Finally, the women shout it once more, and Creonte proclaims, "Esta bien que liberen a Antígona."⁴⁷² It is a powerful moment when it is to the voice of these old women, not to those of supernatural spirits or power seers or even a drunken man that the tyrant relents. Yet, the women have been spurred into action too late. Antígona has already died at her own hands. Tiresias offers the final words of the play. These words are obviously not just meant for the "Ciudadanos de Tebas" or even just those in the theatre:

Ciudadanos de Tebas, salgan ya de de sus casas y de sus guaridas, descorran el velo que les ciega la vista, Su silencio ha sido el mayor cómplice de la tragedia. Salgan, sé que están ahí, escondidos. Salgan y vengan a ver de una vez por todas las ruinas de la guerra.⁴⁷³

Asi es la vida (2000)

⁴⁷¹ Ibid.: Creon, think this over!

⁴⁷² Ibid.: It is well that Antigone should go free.

⁴⁷³ Ibid.: Citizens of Thebes, come out of your houses and lairs. Draw back the veil that blinds your sight. Your silence has been the greatest accomplice in this tragedy. Come out, I know you are there—hidden. Come out and see for one time all the ruins of war!

While *Antígona* ends with a call for corporate action, *Asi es la vida* begins and ends with little hope that any human actions can truly change the unhappy state of the world. Written by Paz Alicia Garciadiego and directed by her husband, Arturo Ripstein, *Asi es la vida*, an adaptation of Seneca's *Medea* set in the slums of Mexico City, operates not only as a self-consciously feminist retelling of the *Medea* but also as a distinctly Mexicana retelling that is acutely aware of the unique circumstances of contemporary Mexican women as they exist in relationship both to traditional Mexican culture and to the rising influence of global feminism.

The English word that appears most frequently in media reviews and descriptions of *Asi es la vida* is, quite rightly, "gritty". The film is shot entirely with direct, documentary-style camera angles, and there is no incidental music. There is also a pointed lack of background noise until a mariachi band (filling the role of the Chorus) appears (more on that below). For all the grit, however, the film is also beautifully theatrical. Long soliloquies and scenes that fade out slowly mimicking the actions of a curtain serve to create a piece that reflects the feeling of the theatre. While media associated with the film described it as an adaptation of Seneca's *Medea*, it is clear that the film borrows from other sources as well. Most notably, the Medea character herself is much more like the tragic, forlorn woman of Euripides than the vengeful one of Seneca. This is, in part, because anyone familiar with the realities of the place in which the film is set would have difficulty not sympathizing with a woman who found herself in that place.

Asi es la vida is set in the slums of Mexico City, and life and culture of the Mexico City's slums actually allow for the movie to depict a very realistic situation which closely imitates what would be Medea's own circumstance. The divinely descended Medea of ancient myth is transformed into the very mortal 25 year old Julia (Arcelia Ramirez). She is a *cluderna*, an underground abortion provider who works in a clinic operated by her godmother, Adela (Patricia

Reye Spínodola). Haggard and old, Adela (like many women in the slums) has not been treated kindly by life or men. Having spent her days healing the physical and emotional scars inflicted upon women by the unrestrained lust of men, Adela regularly declares that all men should be castrated.

Adela, for all her anger and vengefulness, proves to be the most consistent and loving figure in Julia's life. Julia's husband, Nicolas (Luis Felipe Tovar) is a failed boxer and general ne'er-do-well. The couple have two children. At the beginning of the movie, Julia is alone and friendless. Her small family serves as her only anchor in the world. The first scene shows Nicolas coming home to announce to his wife that he is leaving her for the much younger Raquel (Francesca Guillen). Raquel is the daughter of Nicolas and Julia's landlord, La Marrana (Ernesto Young). His pseudonym literally means "the pig".

After Nicolas has announced his intentions, Julia understandably flies into a fit of rage. It is the subtext to her rant that is most telling, as it is filled with the language of loneliness. She ends with the words, "Mi alma está sola y todo gracias a ti."⁴⁷⁴ Nicolas, however, does not see himself as abandoning Julia. He envisions that the new found wealth he has obtained through his marriage to Raquel will allow him to keep Julia as his mistress. Julia refuses this arrangement, although it is not an entirely uncommon one in Mexico's slums. Instead she begins to imagine her life without a husband.

It is at this point that the mariachi band, playing songs commonly heard at rural Mexican weddings, first appears.⁴⁷⁵ The sound of the music intrigues Julia. She follows it out of her house and into the street. There she is greeted by a street party. The unpaved, filthy street is decorated with lights and bunting. The band plays and people dance in the street. Among the revellers,

⁴⁷⁴ Ramírez, et al. 2000, 00:07:43: My soul is lonely, and it is all thanks to you

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid., 00:21:42.

Jáson and his new bride dance together.⁴⁷⁶ This is no ordinary street fair, however. Julia walks among the crowd completely unnoticed by the party. It is impossible to tell if they are her hallucination or if she is the apparition. As Julia walks among the crowd, they vanish without warning. She is left alone on the desolate street.⁴⁷⁷

As the next scene opens, Julia is at home in the backroom clinic. She sits in the chair that is used by the women who come there for abortions. In a long, prosaic she contemplates murdering her children. Throughout she is interrupted by a small, black-and-white television in the corner. The television periodically turns on without warning. The mariachi band appears on the screen appears and plays their wedding songs before vanishing. Julia seems not to notice. She does, however, note that she cannot properly care for her children as a single woman and her dignity forbids her from being Jáson' mistress. She suggests that she would be better off if she had sought an illegal abortion like the women who come to her clinic.

The camera then follows her as she slowly walks down the hallway. The hallway seems longer now than in earlier scenes. The camera pulls back as Julia stands over the fenced off playpen in the corner. The camera abruptly cuts to the street. There is silence. From above, we see Julia emerge from the house and walk directly into a yellow cab that drives slowly away. The screen fads to black.

Edipo y Yocasta (2001)

Our finally case study for this section is Moro's *Edipo y Yocasta*, which was first performed in 2001 in Buenos Aires. The play is largely a comic send up not only of the iconic story of Oedipus but also of the theatrical tradition of *Oedipus Rex*. In particular, Moro insists upon highlighting through humour the rather odd way in which subsequent interpreters have

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid., 00:24:56.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid., 00:27:13.

dealt with the numerous instances of non-normative sexuality in the whole Theban saga. Moro (understandably) takes issue with the fact that Oedipus and Jocasta's incestuous relationship has remained a visible part of the Western canon while Laius' homosexual relationship with Chrysippus (a significant back-story element in the Oedipus saga) is largely ignored or hidden. In an attempt to rectify this, Moro foregrounds the character of Laius *and* his homoerotic desire. In fact, the most marked difference between *Edipo y Yocasta* and Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* is the much greater role Laius plays in the in the former. In the Sophoclean version Laius has, of course, died long before the play's central action. In Moro's rendition, however, the content of the play is about evenly divided between Laius's reign and that of Oedipus, with Oedipus's birth and Laius' death both appearing on stage.

The first scene of *Edipo y Yocasta* shows Layo telling Yocasta before a chorus of Thebans that the child she is carrying must die. Layo has been cursed by Pelops on account of his seduction of Pelops' son, Crisipo. Layo's description of the affair offers a sultry and often humorous description of Crisipo and the affair that is in the best traditions of camp performance, even as it adopts the choral dialogues common to the ancient stage:⁴⁷⁸

Layo: ...Conozco a su hijo
Muchacho adorable, con tremendo pi⁴⁷⁹...

Coro: ¡Conoce a Crisipo!

Layo: ¡Rostro tan hermoso que te saca el hipo!
Piel de manzana trasero turgente...

Coro: ¡Parece que Layo se puso caliente

Layo: Labio de amapolas,
Lindo par de bo...

Coro: ¡Conoce a Crisipo!

⁴⁷⁸ A discussion of *camp* is offered in this thesis at p. 65.

⁴⁷⁹ The word which Laius allows himself to break half way through is clearly meant to be *pene* (*penis*).

Layo: Si fuera yo hembra con ese me caso.
¡Qué ojos tan dulces, que flor de peda...!

Coro: ¡Conoce a Crisipo!

Layo: ¡Y supe enseguida que él era mi tipo!⁴⁸⁰

In this passage, we see the highly sexualised and comic language of camp answered by the repetition of the Chorus' "¡Conoce a Crisipo!" The brilliance of the Chorus' reply lies in that it can be interpreted as either an echo of camp performance language or of ancient choral language since *conocer* can, like the English "to know", refer to either casual or carnal knowledge.⁴⁸¹

The next two scenes in the play show Layo attempting to deal with the effects of his revelation to Yocasta. She is, quite naturally, devastated by the news that the child to whom she has just given birth must now be killed. As the child is sent off with the Shepard to be slaughtered, the Chorus sings a song that not only addresses the soon to be murdered child, but makes allusions to the consequence of other instances of non-normative sexuality, including the Minotaur:⁴⁸²

Coro- Se va desolada la reina Yocasta.
Parece que Zeus una broma le gasta.
Nos ha encomendado tarea fatal:
Matar un bebé; eso está muy mal.
Grecia realiza muchos sacrificios
Por ahuyentar de los dioses los maleficios.
De manera llana y lisa
Ciervos y niñas pide Artemisa.
Hay que partarlos con el hacha

⁴⁸⁰ *Epido y Yocasta* I.3: Laius: ...I knew his son. So adorable, with a huge pen... Chorus: ¡He knew Chrysippus! Laius: What a handsome face; it takes the hiccups right out of you!! Skin like an apple; nice round ass... Chorus: It seems that Laius was horny Laius: Lips of poppies, Sweet mou.... Chorus: He knew Chrysippus! Laius: If I were a woman I would have married that one. Such sweet eyes, flower of ped...! Chorus: He knew Chrysippus
Laius: I know immediately that he was my type.

⁴⁸¹ Santaemilia 2008.

⁴⁸² Cf. p. 110.

Y entregar a la muchacha
 Sin bombacha.
 ¡Ni que hablar del Minotauro de Creta!
 ¡Le das lo que pide o te rompe la jeta!
 En cuanto a los caprichos de Poseidón...⁴⁸³

While Act I ends with the infant Edipo being carried off to his death, Act II begins with the grown man standing before the audience in suggestive military regalia proudly proclaiming his identity: “Soy el hijo de Pólipo y de Peribea.”⁴⁸⁴ He also declares that he is on his way to Delphi to visit the oracle. He is certain that a good future will be predicted. Not surprisingly, such confidence is quickly brought to ruin. Moments later, the oracle reveals to Edipo the horrible curse that has been attached to him. While the information being exchanged is shocking and terrible, the dialogue between Edipo and the oracle is hilarious. Immediately after telling a confused Edipo that he is doomed to kill his father and marry his mother, the oracle tries to gain some slightly more carnal knowledge about the young man:

Pitonisa- ...¿Por qué no te desnudás y yo te toco?

Edipo- Pensé que eras virgen.

Pitonisa- Muchos defectos se corrigen.

Edipo- ¿Y qué de las normas que rigen?

Pitonisa- Si lo hacemos rapidito no creo que se fijen.

Yo siempre fui una pitonisa decente.

Pero no puedo más. Estoy caliente.

Desde que vino Orestes a consultarme

Ya no hago más que mastur...

⁴⁸³ Moro 2001, I.V: (*Translator’s Note: This and many subsequent passages in the play are quite loutish. An attempt has been made to offer translations that are not excessively vulgar while at the same time maintaining the sense of the original text*). Queen Yocasta will be devastated/ Because Zeus makes a joke out of her/ This is the fatal task entrusted to us/ To kill a baby; that’s too bad/Greece makes many sacrifices/ in order to banish the curse of the gods./ and smooth/ Deer and girls pray to Artemis/ You have to split them with an axe/and give it to the girls/ with no panties/And don’t even mention the Cretan Minotaur!/You give it to him like he asks and he breaks his knob./Ah, the whims of Poseidon.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, I.1: I am the son of Polybus and Periboea.

Edipo- Necesito los saberes de tu oficio.

Pitonisa- Si vos también sos virgen yo te inicio.

Edipo- ¡Ramera! Exijo la verdad que se me oculta.⁴⁸⁵

The oracle is lucky to only be called a whore by Edipo for making an unwanted advance on him. Layo is not so lucky. Here Moro's staging of Layo offers a blistering critique of gender norms, the policing of sexuality, and the often horrifying, violent consequences of both:

Layo- ¡Qué chico divino!

Edipo- Si a Pólipo y Peribea no ves más
La espantosa predicción no cumplirás.

Layo- No quieras saber, sirviente,
Que deseo imperioso me inunda de repente.
Desde el famoso asunto de Crisipo
No me había calentado con un tipo.
¿Cómo te llamas?

Edipo- Edipo.

Layo- Tu belleza conmueve y corta el hipo.

Edipo- No estoy para bromas, le anticipo.

Layo- Sólo fue un piropo. No me ladre.

Edipo- ¿No se da cuenta que podría ser mi padre?

Siervo- ¡Señor, no lo pongas más violento!

Layo- Paz y amor es todo lo que intento.
No creo que haya un griego que se asombre
Si le proponen el deleite de hombre a hombre.
El mito dice que lo inventé yo.
Primero me enojé. Después se me pasó.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid. II.2: Oracle: Why don't you get naked and let me touch you? Oedipus: I thought you were a virgin. Oracle: Many faults are correctable. Oedipus: What about the rules? Oracle: If we make it a quickie, I don't think that's getting laid. I have always been a decent fortune-teller, but I want more. I'm horny. Since Orestes came to consult with me, I keep mastur... Oedipus: I need to learn your craft. Oracle: If you are also a virgin, I will initiate you. Oedipus: Whore! I demand to know the truth that is hidden from me.

Edipo- El amor contranatura
 Valioso es en nuestra cultura
 Mas debe ser admirado el hombre mayor
 Para que el muchacho griego le otorgue su amor.
 Se ama al hombre sabio, noble, importante,
 Y usted lo que parece es un viejo atorrante.

Layo- Corintio insolente, no te permito.

Edipo- Si me permite o no me importa un pito.

Layo- ¿Tenés un cuchillo? (saca el suyo)

Edipo- ¡Y pronto a cuchilladas te acribillo!

Layo- ¡Eso está por verse!

Siervo- ¿Dónde habrá un buen lugar para esconderse?

Layo- ¡Hacia ti voy! (es clavado)
 ¡Muerto soy!

Siervo- ¡Era mejor pagar un taxi boy!⁴⁸⁶

This scene, with its humour and insight, also hints at what might have been lost by the ancient convention of keeping violence off stage. It also in a tongue-in-cheek way suggests why. Moro portrays Edipo as being provoked to kill Layo by the latter's attempts to seduce him. This scene recalls Layo's description of his affair with Crisipo and suggests that the Crisipo

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid., II.3: Laui: What a divine boy! Oedipus: If you no longer see Polybus and Periboea You will not complete this horrifying prophecy. Laui: You would not wish to know, servant. What a strong desire for repentance floods me. Since that famous incident with Chrysippus, I have not been this horny for a boy. What is your name? Oedipus: Oedipus Laui: Your beauty moves me and makes me light-headed Oedipus: I am not in the mood for jokes. I am going. Laui: I was only flirting. Don't yell at me. Oedipus: Don't you realize you're old enough to be my father? Servant: My lord, don't do him violence Laui: Peace and love is all that I attend for him. I do not relieve that there is a Greek who would be surprised. If one man propositions another Legend says I invented it. At first in annoyed me, but not now. Oedipus: The love contrary to nature is valued in our culture. But it is better if the older man in admired. For the noble great grants his love to him.He loves a man who is knowledgeable, noble, and important. And you appear to be an old tramp. Laui: Insolent, Corinthian. I do not permit this. Oedipus: Either you allow me or pity does not matter to me. Laui: Do you have a knife (takes out his own)? Oedipus: And soon I will riddle you with stabs? Laui: This is too much! Servant: Where is there a good place to hide? Laui: This is how I go I die! Servant: It would have been better to pay a rent boy!

“incident” was far removed from an isolated moment of desire. Moreover, the scene also foreshadows the subsequent scene in the play in which Jocasta makes sexual advances toward Oedipus in a similar manner, but with much less lethal results. Here again the connection between violence and non-normative sexuality is highlighted as the body of Edipo is imperilled by the desires of that body.⁴⁸⁷

This intentionally comic seduction/ murder scene mocks both Layo and Edipo and in doing so once again conforms to camp’s characteristic parody of gender and sexuality.⁴⁸⁸ Layo appears as a slightly licentious, very silly old man. His seduction of his son is campy in the most conventional sense. Thus Edipo seems wildly intemperate in his reaction to the annoying but relatively harmless Layo. Edipo reacts with murderous rage. The campiness of it all gives a certain humour to the scene and yet this scene points to a much a sombre reality: the very real violence experienced by sexual minorities. Violence that is committed against sexual minorities is noted by law enforcement officials for its excess.⁴⁸⁹ It is also often excused by its perpetrators (and the judges and juries who hear their cases) as an acceptable reaction to sexual advances by the victim.⁴⁹⁰ While it may not be politically-correct, it is arguable that using camp, and thus obviously humour, to address this violence is effective precisely because it is entertaining.

The intention of this scene is further strengthened by the scene which immediately follows it. Having killed Layo and justified it through his very own “Twinkie defence”, Edipo arrives in Thebes. There he is almost immediately sexually accosted by his mother:

Yocasta (entrando)- A toda ceremonia me anticipo
Y vengo a conocer al gran Edipo
Salvador de muchachos y muchachas,
Fin de las angustias y las malas rachas.

⁴⁸⁷ Meyer 2012

⁴⁸⁸ M. Meyer 2005

⁴⁸⁹ Clare 2001.

⁴⁹⁰ Butler 2004.

Se me caen de gusto las bombachas.
¿Quién eres tú? ¿Cómo has llegado?

Edipo- No me has de preguntar por mi pasado.
En tristeza y dolores abundo.

Yocasta- De eso hay para todos en el mundo.
La emoción es intensa.
Te hablaré sin vergüenza.
De nuestra ciudad eres el gran amigo
Y Tebas me pide que me case contigo.
No estás obligado, sin embargo.
Soy más vieja que tú. Sabor amargo
Llevamos en la piel
Quienes hemos bebido tanta hiel.
Mi juventud se acaba. No hay retoños
Y me duelen como clavos los otoños.

Edipo- Menos joven soy de lo que ves.
Cada año que viví cuenta por diez.
Con angustia fatal de mi casa partí
Y sólo respiré cuando te vi.
Mi espíritu enloquece;
Acabo de conocerte
Y me parece
Que siempre viví para volver a verte.

Yocasta- Lo mismo siento yo. Da tu presencia
Mágico temblor de reminiscencia.
Je sais que je te connais. D'où viens-tu?
Je tombe dans les bras du déjà-vu.
Cómo brillan esos dos tesoros verdes.
Me miro en tus ojos y me pierdes.
No te conozco y has llegado
Como si antaño nos hubieran separado
¿será que llevamos todo escrito adentro
y que el primer amor es un reencuentro?

Coro- ¿Primer amor? ¿Y qué hay de Layo?
No dije nada. Mejor me callo.

Yocasta- Dije primer amor. No es un invento.
Hoy digo la verdad. No me arrepiento.
Cuando mi padre, Meneceo,
Me entregaba a Layo en himeneo
Yo era una adolescente

Obnubilada, común y corriente.
 Desconocía mi propia opinión
 Pues el único que opina es el varón.
 El rey gobierna y hace la guerra
 Mientras la reina
 Se peina
 O le lame los pies como una perra
 Cuando él regresa.
 La vida es ésa.
 Quise ser madre y las divinas artimañas
 Me arrancaron el hijo de mis entrañas.
 Pero si aquí estoy, débil y cansada,
 Estoy por vez primera ilusionada.
 El fluir amoroso de tu sangre joven
 No quiero que me nieguen o me roben.
 De ser madre de tus hijos hazme la gracia.
 Todavía no me vino la menopausia
 Y pido enloquecida que la vida entre
 En el deseo profundo de mi vientre.

Edipo- Yocasta, dulcemente al amor me invitas.
 Me amparas y también me resucitas.
 Si poco tiempo atrás deseé la muerte
 Hoy muero por fervor de poseerte.
 Ablándame. Mi carne siente el ansia
 De las maternas caricias de la infancia.
 Pero esposo seré. No soy un niño.

Yocasta- De esposa y madre te daré el cariño
 Y cuando me des en el lecho tu beso sabroso
 Serás tanto un bebé como un coloso.

Coro- ¡El coloso de Rodas!

Edipo- Coro, ¡no te metas y no jodas!
 Ven a mis brazos y guíame a la cama.

Yocasta- Mi cuerpo hacia tu cuerpo se derrama. (se van).⁴⁹¹

⁴⁹¹Moor 2001, III.2: Jocasta (entering): All great ceremonies make me nervous. And I come to meet the great Oedipus, Savoir of so many boys and girls, the end of anguish and curses. My panties fall with pleasure. Who are you? How did you arrive? Oedipus: Do not ask about my past. Which is abundant in peace and pain! Jocasta : There is much of this in the world. Emotion is intense. I will speak to you without vengeance. You are a great friend of our city. And Thebes asks me to marry you. You are not obliged, however. I am much older than you. A bitter taste rises in the skin of those of us who have drank much oil. My youth vanishes and does not return to us. And pains me like the leaves of autumn Oedipus : I am older than I seem each year seems like I have lived ten I left my house with great anguish and I only breathed when I saw you. My spirit is driven mad; I long to meet you and it seems to me

This scene is full of maternal language and imagery that is continually put forward and summarily ignored by the characters completely ignorant of their identities. Nonetheless, it is incredibly disturbing for an audience that is all too aware of who the characters are. This is a further manifestation of the camp tradition in which the play is written. The ironic use of identity in camp is conventionally confined to gender. In this instance, however, Moro uses it to point to another sexual taboo: incest. Edipo does not reject his mother's advances. The next scene opens with Yocasta coming out onto the stage to announce that, "Y vengo a conocer al gran Edipo."⁴⁹² Edipo clearly has no idea that anything is wrong when he joins her on stage and begins to oversee wedding celebrations.

The stage goes dark, and when the lights come back on there is a narrator dressed in jeans and a very tight t-shirt standing on the stage. The narrator tells the audience that a plague has come to the city and that Edipo is trying to find out why. Then Tiresias comes on stage and tells the narrator to leave, he will take care of everything.⁴⁹³

that I always lived to come and see you .Jocasta: I feel the same. Your presence gives a magical tremble of reminiscence. *Je sais que je te connais. D'où viens tu? Je tombe dans les bras du déjà vu.* Like two green treasures they shine. I look in your eyes and I forget myself. I did not know you and you arrived As if we were separated long ago. ¿Will it be that we carry all that written before and that first love is reencountered? Chorus: First love? What about Laius? I said nothing. It's better for me to be quiet. Yocasta: I said first love. It is not an invention. Today I speak the truth. I do not regret it. When my father, Menoecus, delivered me to Laius in marriage. I was a teenager dazzled, common, plain, and ignorant of my own opinions. Then the only opinion belonged to the man. The king governs and makes war while the queen brushes her hair or lays at his feet like a dog when he returns home. Thus is life. I wanted to be a mother and divine tricks pulled my son from my womb. But I am here weak and tired. I am for the first time dreamy-eyed. The living flow of your young blood I do not wish to refuse nor steal. I am grateful to be the mother of sons. I am still not menopausal. I am eloquently desires of life. That is the profound desire of my womb. Oedipus: Jocasta, sweetly you invite me to love. You protect and revive me. A little while ago I desired death. Today I die with a hunger to possess you. Tenderize me. My flesh is eager. Caress me like a mother caresses her infant, but be my wife. I am not a child, Jocasta; I will care for you like a wife and a mother and when you give me taste kisses of milk. You will be as a baby, as a colossus. Chorus: The Colossus of Rhodes! Oedipus: Chorus, don't fuck with me! Come to my arms and pleasure me in bed. Jocasta: I am made weak by your body. (They exit.)

⁴⁹² Ibid. II.2: I have just come from the bed of the great Oedipus.

⁴⁹³ Ibid. III.5.

Edipo comes on stage. In a giant break from other versions of the story, Tiresias bluntly tells Edipo the truth, and Edipo believes him. He doesn't consult others. Perhaps most shockingly, he doesn't even attack Tiresias. He just casually calls for Yocasta.

Yocasta sees Tiresias and panics. She knows instantly what has happened and runs off stage. A scream tells the audience that she has killed herself. The dancing girls and boys from the wedding celebration earlier in the play come out on stage and dance happily around Edipo as he plucks out his eyes. The curtain falls.

The curtain reopens, however, on a strange epilogue. Edipo, now blinded, is standing on a rock with the noise of the sea being overheard. He is chatting with a mermaid. The mermaid is comforting Edipo. She has the last words of the play:

¡Qué linda la amistad que ahora tenemos!
 Y es que de algún modo, nos parecemos.
 Por incestuoso y parricida, te han repudiado.
 ¡Y a mí, me dan la espalda por pescado!
 Un aviso a la ostra, al pingüino y al delfín:
 La tragedia de Edipo llegó a su fin.⁴⁹⁴

Toward a Theory of the Body

Edipo y Yocasta ends with a mermaid. Mermaids, like the Minotaur, are mythic creatures distinguished by a human/animal hybrid body.⁴⁹⁵ That *Edipo y Yocasta* should end with this Other-bodied creature is fitting, because it is a play about the body. That is to say, the body, its desires, and impulses are at the center of the thematic and aesthetic goals of the play. Which

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid., V.1: What do you say? What a beautiful friendship we have now! And we will be what that makes us! For incest and patricide, you have been denounced. And me, I am turning my back on the fishes. A notice to the oysters, penguins, and dolphins: The tragedy of Oedipus has ended.

⁴⁹⁵ For more on mermaids in literature generally (and Latin American literature in particular), see Knight 2006 and Leadbeater 1993.

should not be terribly surprising considering the centrality of the body and embodiment to any identity or discourse centered on sexuality or gender.

The fraught territory of identity can be difficult to traverse, especially when faced with competing identities and discourses. This chapter tries to negotiate these conversations as they pertain to the reception of Greek tragedy in Latin America by using the body as discursive sign post, using the body as a tool to link conversations of race, sexuality, and gender. This focus on the body, it is hoped, ties this discussion to earlier of the body with reference to indigenous identity and in doing so connected the various threads of identity and aesthetics as they play out in the context of Latin American Greek tragedies.

Terence Turner in his 1994 essay “Bodies and Anti-bodies: Flesh and Fetish in Contemporary Social Theory” describes the centrality of the body to identity in the following way:

...the appropriation of bodilines, in all its aspects, from sexuality and reproductive capacities to sensory powers and physical health, strength and appearance, is the fundamental matrix, the material infrastructure, so to speak, of the production of personhood and social identity. What is at stake in the struggle for control of the body, in short, is control of the social relations of personal production. Consistent with this, the body remains the site of some (although by no means all) of the most fundamental forms of social inequality and control in contemporary society, as well as some of its characteristic forms of mystified social consciousness. The focus of both identity production and some repressive social controls on the body tends to obscure their social dimensions and exacerbate the tendency to see them and the body itself in individualistic (and often psychologistic) terms.⁴⁹⁶

In the words of the queer disabled activist and academic Eli Claire “...we must not forget that our bodies are still part of the equation, that paired with the external forces of oppression are the incredibly internal, body-centered experiences of who we are and how we live

⁴⁹⁶ Turner 1994 p. 31.

with oppression. To write about the body means paying attention to these experiences.”⁴⁹⁷ The importance of the body cuts across disciplinary delineations with respect to theory and social divides with respect to politics and personal experience, because all oppressions (by necessity) are ultimately about controlling bodies. The idea of the body as the principal locus of oppression has been most famously elucidated in the work of Michele Foucault.⁴⁹⁸ While Foucauldian analysis can be quite helpful and has in many ways dominated the discourse around the body, the limits of Foucauldian theory are clear, namely the extent to which Foucault’s focus on the body as a construct obscures the role of autonomy and corporeal self-identification.⁴⁹⁹ A similar issue arises with many critiques by Anglophone feminists that have looked to the biological body as the origin point of patriarchy, including Shulamith Firestone’s seminal 1971 book *The Dialectics of Sex*. *The Dialectic of Sex* clearly elucidates how the physical differences between males and females have been deployed in the perpetuation of patriarchy; yet Shulamith fails to go the next step in reclaiming the body as a potential site of liberation.⁵⁰⁰

The potential of the body as a site of liberation is one of the reasons the centrality of the body is particularly pronounced in the Latin American context where (as we have previously discussed) the *mestizo* body exists as a material manifestation of transgressive sexuality.⁵⁰¹ Therefore the body provides a useful site of analysis for understanding Latin American Greek tragedy with respect to gender and sexuality.

In the previous chapter, we discussed the relationship between the Minotaur’s non-normative body and the aberrant sexuality which produced it. This link between non-normative

⁴⁹⁷ Clare 2001, p. 359-360.

⁴⁹⁸ The following represent Foucault’s work that is most focused on the body: Foucault 1954; Foucault 1975; and Foucault 1976-1984.

⁴⁹⁹ McNay 1991.

⁵⁰⁰ Shilling 2012, p. 35.

⁵⁰¹ Cf. p. 171.

sexuality and the body has not been lost on some queer theorists, like Ken Plummer, who have come to see sexual liberation as primarily about the liberation of the body and bemoan the disembodied turn of post-1970s queer theory and gay activism as a serious error.⁵⁰² Gary Dowsett concurs with Plummer declaring the following:

We must no longer refuse the sedition of ordinary human bodies-in-sex ... Were we to follow this path, we might find a new sexuality exists... we may see sexuality in modes of sociality that confound conventional structural categories. We may begin to take seriously the sex experiences and activities of other peoples, places and times. We may even cease that pastoral project, stop seeking to clean up sexuality in some liberal pluralist project of purification, and instead begin to enjoy a little more of creative potential in its sweat, bump and grind.⁵⁰³

Later in this section, we will also see Cherrie Moraga's political awakening around the "brown and female" body and the extent to which this has influenced her politics.⁵⁰⁴

Perhaps it should come as little surprise that it has been those at the intersection of queer and disabled identity who have been most successful in naming and reclaiming that "sweat, bump and grind." While obviously there are significant difference between queer and disabled experience, the equally significant overlap is fertile ground for theoretical development that has been first cultivated by queer, disabled people.⁵⁰⁵ A renewed focus on the body, not only as a site of oppression, but also as a site of liberation has been a significant contribution by "crip theory" to the wider academic debate.⁵⁰⁶ The consequence has been an increased awareness of the body as a locus of resistance to normative and normalizing pressure on it.⁵⁰⁷ This is closely related to

⁵⁰² Plummer 2013.

⁵⁰³ Dowsett 2000, p. 45.

⁵⁰⁴ Cf. Pg. 38.

⁵⁰⁵ Sherry 2004.

⁵⁰⁶ See Sandahl 2003.

⁵⁰⁷ McRuer 2003.

the discussion in the previous chapter concerning the postcolonial body and its marginalisation, because the experience of postcolonial bodies most certainly helped to shape both feminist and queer identities in Latin America.⁵⁰⁸

Camp and the Construction of Masculine Bodies in Argentinean Theatre

These intersections are at play in Moro's *Edipo y Yocasta* as camp is deployed as a means of interrogating the body and the violence done to it. Creating queer theatre in Argentina (and throughout Latin America) is ultimately about offering a critique of masculinity and its narrow construction as defined by *machismo*. Challenging such a primary social principle is a complicated process. It requires that tradition be reinterpreted in the presence of modern realities and individual experience. In *Edipo y Yocasta*, the homoeroticism and gender non-conformity that pre-exists in Greek mythology is co-opted into the camp tradition to create a uniquely suitable vehicle to address matters of identity. It allows Moro to challenge his own culture's gender and sexual norms and (at the same time) reject a homogenised Western gay identity. This allows the play to occupy a unique third space made possible only by the use of camp

Edipo y Yocasta's camp sensibilities highlight this goal, especially as it pertains to the body as a site of liberation. Broadly defined, camp refers to an aesthetic sensibility defined by its love of the *unnatural*.⁵⁰⁹ It is the comic send up of the mediocre, up to and beyond the point of bad taste. Camp is a simultaneous biting and frivolous critique of the usual, the conventional, and the ordinary.⁵¹⁰ Though the word *camp* was first used in relation to an aesthetic sensibility in 1907, the current use of the word is largely drawn from Susan Sontag's seminal essay "In Defence of Camp" which first appeared in the *Partisan Review* in 1964 and was republished in

⁵⁰⁸ Garcia 2009 and Yarbo-Bejarano 1995.

⁵⁰⁹ Sontag 1964.

⁵¹⁰ See (Cleto 1999) for more.

Sontag's 1966 book *Against Interpretation*. Sontag held that one of the most important features of camp was its ability to create a permissible space in which to not only express, but rather, celebrate gender non-conformity. Sontag writes:

Camp taste draws on a mostly unacknowledged truth of taste: the most refined form of sexual attractiveness (as well as the most refined form of sexual pleasure) consists in going against the grain of one's sex. What is most beautiful in virile men is something feminine; what is most beautiful in feminine women is something masculine.⁵¹¹

For this reason, camp has been a popular and effective a way to challenge gender norms and by extension a whole host of normative behaviour. In whole, this has made camp a powerful weapon of liberation.⁵¹² Yet, as the gay rights movement sought greater mainstream respectability, the camp aesthetic came increasingly to be seen by many as a threat to that greater acceptance.⁵¹³ Drag queens (the embodiment of camp, if such an embodiment exists) may have started the modern gay rights movement at Stonewall, but for over twenty years the role of drag and camp in Anglophonic gay culture has been routinely marginalised and viewed as a barrier to mainstream acceptance and political advancement.⁵¹⁴ It is notable that for almost nearly as long there has not been much Western scholarship on camp either.

The politically correct response to the disappearance of camp in the English-speaking West has been to say that "AIDS killed camp", but this both simplistic and suspicious.⁵¹⁵ To begin with, camp survived as a strong aesthetic force throughout the 1980s, the worst years of epidemic in Western gay communities. In fact, much of grassroots HIV/AIDS activism relied heavily on camp sensibilities to create powerful and effective street theatre that brought

⁵¹¹ Sontag 1966, p. 9.

⁵¹² Levine 1979.

⁵¹³ Taywaditep 2002.

⁵¹⁴ Bronski 2000.

⁵¹⁵ Flinn 1999.

government and corporate inaction to the public attention (even if it didn't result in much real action on the part of either culprits). Furthermore, it was in the late 1980 and early 1990s that many drag performs first began to experience mainstream success. No, nothing (not even a pandemic) killed camp. Rather, camp was silenced by increasingly well-organised forces within the gay liberation movement that sought to end camp's reign as the public face of the gay community.⁵¹⁶ Assimilationists tried to kill camp, not AIDS.

Their efforts, however, were not successful. In fact, their labours have done a great deal to strength the position of camp and drag a tool of resistance. Now, in addition to being a critique of traditional and mainstream norms, camp has become a way in which to critique the assimilation of gay culture as well. Moreover, while drag and camp were marginalized in the West; in many non-Western societies, they have continued to feel the role they once played in the West, namely offering a space for the public expression of queer identity in societies in which same-sex desire is still stigmatised.⁵¹⁷

The dual function of camp in its current incarnation can be seen in *Edipo y Yocasta*; for example, in the contrast between the events surrounding Layo's seduction of Edipo and Yocasta's. This use of a camp sensibility is particularly important for the purposes of this study, because work in tandem to form a critique of violence as it is done to certain bodies. The primary difference between the two scenes is the presence of violence in the first (Layo's seduction of Edipo). This reflects the assumption that homosexual sex, as a violent psychic disruption of patriarchal order, must include physical violence.⁵¹⁸ While the events of the play echo this assumption, Moro also challenges it as well. This challenge comes by means of camp

⁵¹⁶ Ruiz 2008.

⁵¹⁷ Menicucci 1998.

⁵¹⁸ Mosher 1991.

performance. The violence when it comes seems so unnecessary and so shockingly terrible that it is comic, especially since this violence is perpetrated only because of the *kind of body* Layo has (i.e. a male body). The absurdity of Edipo's violent response to Layo is reaffirmed when Jocasta describes her own early marriage to Layo. She was young woman (like many young women before and after her) exchanged in an agreement between men. She is robbed of all volition and power. In fact, as a result of the curse place upon Laius, she is also robbed of the one power most women, even in the most desperate of circumstances, maintain: motherhood. Her entire relationship with Layo has been a series of violent and/or cohesive acts against her body as a result of it being a female body. The juxtaposition of these two scenes, therefore, presents a rejection of, if not patriarchy and hetronormativity, than at least some of the assumptions that flow from them. Namely, these are the assumptions that are made about what can be done with and to certain kinds of bodies. These assumption are the foundation of gender norms.

In Latin America, even today, traditional gender norms are still omnipresent and relatively unchallenged. The ideals of the patriarchy are well intact. Most academic literature about male gender construction in Latin American societies focuses on *machismo*. While arguably some of this focus hints at an Othering of the Latin American male subject, there is a considerable degree of truth to the point that *machismo* and the strict boundaries of masculine behaviour it creates are an important feature of gender construction in Latin American countries.⁵¹⁹ Playing with gender is still an essential component to challenging sexual norms in the region.⁵²⁰ Therefore, in addition to the campy overtones of the scenes between Oedipus and his parents, Moro's play provides an example of high camp in the character of Tiresias. Tiresias is a figure who since antiquity has represented the fluidity of gender and of physical sex, a

⁵¹⁹ Hardin 2002.

⁵²⁰ Newell 2009.

fluidity that stands in direct contrast to a binary construction of gender intimately dependent on static rigidity. He is the perfect candidate for camp. This aspect of the Tiresias's persona is often muted in adaptations of the Oedipus; however, in *Edipo y Yocasta*, Tiresias is introduced by the narrator as "El primer travesti de la historia griega."⁵²¹ Tiresias then begins a dialogue with the narrator that overflows with the language of camp and gender fluidity.

In this passage, we see Tiresias and the narrator engaged in a banter that is on one hand completely in keeping with many, if not most, ancient sources; and yet, at the same time, it makes constant reference to the terrain of gender in the 21st century.⁵²² While this conversation could potentially become painfully anachronistic (not to mention simply too tedious for words), the humour that is the play's mainstay makes it a lively and thought-provoking exchange. The simultaneous reference to both gender confirmation surgery and breast augmentation are the most humorous of the conversation's modern references, but all are a pointed attack upon a ridged gender binary, particularly as it relates to physicality by pointing to the mutability of the body. In this way, Moro once again calls into question ridged standard derived from and directed toward bodies that should be liberated.

The Body and Liberation in Latin American Greek Tragedy

There is much in this conversation that *Edipo y Yocasta* shares with *The Hungry Woman*, particular as it relates to queer bodies. It should not be surprising, however, that queer Latin American theatre created by a female playwright and centered on female characters will be different in some ways than its male counterpart. To begin with, its engagement with its own cultural context is significantly complicated. Many scholars have suggested that *machismo* is a

⁵²¹Moro 2001: Act IV.1: The first drag queen in Greek history.

⁵²² Cf. XX

response to colonialism, a reassertion of masculine authority by those robbed of any power by imperial oppression.⁵²³ The emphasis upon male privilege takes on intensity when it is the sole source of power left to a group of men. In these circumstances, the lack of male privilege also takes on different characteristics than in the powerful Western centres.⁵²⁴ A nation to be respected abroad and inspire patriotism at home must assert its power, virility and strength. This is difficult for a nation that has experienced colonialism. The language of colonialism is full of the language of sexual dynamics: subjugation, domination, and penetration.⁵²⁵ A postcolonial nation is a nation that must reassert its most masculine self and, in Latin America, this has come to mean that it must be a nation ruled by *machismo*.⁵²⁶

The connection between *machismo* and empowerment is crucial to understanding the historical context in which Moraga created *The Hungry Woman*. On March of 1969, in Denver, Colorado, a group of young Mexican-Americans gathered together at an event dubbed the First National Chicano Liberation Youth Conference.⁵²⁷ The conference had been organized by Denver native and former lightweight boxing champion Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales in the wake of student walk-outs in East Los Angeles and Denver the previous year. The most enduring product of the gathering would be the adoption of a manifesto whose spirit, if not content, would guide the future of Chicano activism: *El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán*.

A spiritual plan for Aztlán might be a bit redundant as Aztlán is a mythical homeland, the fabled origin point of the Nahuatl people.⁵²⁸ The invocation of Aztlán in the manifesto was a powerful symbolic gesture that framed Mexican-Americans as the indigenous inhabitants of the

⁵²³ For example, see Hardin 2002.

⁵²⁴ Newell 2009.

⁵²⁵ See Powers 2002.

⁵²⁶ For more on *machismo*, see Mosher 1991.

⁵²⁷ For more on the Chicano Movement, see Munoz 1989.

⁵²⁸ See Anaya 1991.

southwestern United States and called upon Chicanos to reclaim this native soil, if not as a geographic reality, than at least as emotional one that could affect concrete political outcomes.⁵²⁹ Central to these desired outcomes was the hope that Mexican-Americans would emerge from the margins of mainstream, Anglo-American society to a position of inclusion and, most importantly, self-determination.⁵³⁰

These desires were framed in the democratic rhetoric of the era and the language of democracy permeates *El Plan*. Undoubtedly the most interesting part of any movement that utilizes the word *democratic* or any of its derivatives is the *democratic*. The term democratic is now used universally as a term of approbation, but it is a vague sort of praise which can mean any number of things.⁵³¹ It is used to mean fair or just or transparent or just plain good. There is frequently little further thought given to the idea that *democratic* might inhabit its own field of semantic space. This space may frequently overlap with concepts like fairness, justice, transparency or goodness, but it does not necessarily imply all or any of these things. Consequently, the indiscriminate use of the term democratic has rendered it, in many contexts, meaningless and impotent. The domestication of democratic rhetoric has proven to be a significant barrier to those in marginalized positions within socio-political and economic frameworks.⁵³² If democracy can mean everything, then it in effect means nothing. This makes appeals to democracy as a means of winning greater power largely ineffective.

In “Queer Aztlán”, Moraga envisions an Aztlán, a mythical homeland, where she and others might be free of the twin evils of racism and homophobia and calls for a progressive “nationalism” built on democratic principles which destroy any attempts at marginalising any

⁵²⁹ Flores 1997.

⁵³⁰ Almaguer 1971.

⁵³¹ See Winnicott 1950.

⁵³² De Bonoist 1993.

group. Moreover she posits that the experience of queer people can bring about this “wiser revolution”:

If women's bodies and those of men and women who transgress their gender roles have been historically regarded as territories to be conquered, they are also territories to be liberated. Feminism has taught us this. The nationalism I seek is one that decolonizes the brown and female body as it decolonizes the brown and female earth. It is a new nationalism in which la Chicana Indigena stands at the center, and heterosexism and homophobia are no longer the cultural order of the day. I cling to the word "nation" because without the specific naming of the nation, the nation will be lost (as when feminism is reduced to humanism, the woman is subsumed). Let us retain our radical naming but expand it to meet a broader and wiser revolution.⁵³³

Here, Moraga is able to reclaim the body as a site of liberation where so many other discursive methods have failed. Because her alienation has come from her body, it is through her body that she must claim liberation.⁵³⁴ It is the consequences of a revolution that is not “broader and wiser” which Moraga explores in *The Hungry Woman*.

This notion of dual liberation via the body is particularly interesting in the context of radical movements, such as the Chicano Movement, which are born within marginalized groups, because the dynamics of marginalization within these communities provides fascinating microcosms in which to explore the power dynamics of the larger society.⁵³⁵ Racism, misogyny, homophobia, classism, or other ideology of oppression does not disappear under the activist banner. Moreover that very banner can serve as a powerful means by which to silence dissent to this kind of oppression within the ranks of a movement.

⁵³³ Moraga, 2004, p. 227.

⁵³⁴ Soto 2005.

⁵³⁵ For more on this with respect to the Chicano Movement in particular, see Segura 1988.

Perhaps not surprisingly, much of the reflection on the internal dynamics of power and privilege within the Chicano Movement did not occur until after its zenith. Thus it is only in the early to mid-1990s that we see the appearance of a significant body of artistic and scholarly work concerned specifically with sexism and homophobia within the movement.⁵³⁶ This same body of literature was also more likely to problematise the question of race within the Chicano Movement, exploring the issue of mixed-race and light-skinned individuals.⁵³⁷

For Cherrie Moraga, the question of inclusion within the Chicano Movement is not merely an academic or artistic one. She is the child of a white father and a Mexican mother, a lesbian, and a feminist, Moraga challenges many of the basic assumptions that underlined Chicano radicalism in the 1960s and 1970s. In “Queer Aztlán” Moraga explains that, while she recognized herself in the Chicano Movement, her political awakening came through her lesbian identity not her Chicano one:

My real politicization began, not through the Chicano Movement, but through the bold recognition of my lesbianism. Coming to terms with that fact meant the radical re-structuring of everything I thought I held sacred... That was twenty years ago. In those twenty years I traversed territory that extends well beyond the ten-minute trip between East Los Angeles and San Gabriel. In those twenty years, I experienced the racism of the Women's Movement, the elitism of the Gay and Lesbian Movement, the homophobia and sexism of the Chicano Movement, and the benign cultural imperialism of the Latin American Solidarity Movement.⁵³⁸

Moraga's early sense of alienation from the Chicano Movement is not surprising given the character of the movement in its early years. *El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán* provides a

⁵³⁶ Pérez 2004.

⁵³⁷ Zavella 1991, p. 79.

⁵³⁸ Moraga 2004, p.225.

fundamental insight into how Chicano identity would be constructed by the mainstream of the movement and as such is particularly interesting for our present purposes:⁵³⁹

In the spirit of a new people that is conscious not only of its proud historical heritage but also of the brutal "gringo" invasion of our territories, *we*, the Chicano inhabitants and civilizers of the northern land of Aztlán from whence came our forefathers, reclaiming the land of their birth and consecrating the determination of our people of the sun, *declare* that the call of our blood is our power, our responsibility, and our inevitable destiny.

We are free and sovereign to determine those tasks which are justly called for by our house, our land, the sweat of our brows, and by our hearts. Aztlán belongs to those who plant the seeds, water the fields, and gather the crops and not to the foreign Europeans. We do not recognize capricious frontiers on the bronze continent

Brotherhood unites us, and love for our brothers makes us a people whose time has come and who struggle against the foreigner "gabacho" who exploits our riches and destroys our culture. With our heart in our hands and our hands in the soil, we declare the independence of our mestizo nation. We are a bronze people with a bronze culture. Before the world, before all of North America, before all our brothers in the bronze continent, we are a nation, we are a union of free pueblos, we are *Aztlán*.⁵⁴⁰

As is evident from this preamble, at the heart of the Chicano movement was an understanding of Chicano identity as being an indigenous identity.⁵⁴¹ This was radically different than earlier self-constructions of Mexican and Mexican-American identity which stressed the Spanish/European heritage of Mexican people.⁵⁴² This position was radical in many ways and the product of the changing racial climate of the era. The Chicano Movement, after all, owed much to Black Nationalism and to the activities of the American Indian Movement.⁵⁴³ While in earlier

⁵³⁹ Delgado 1995.

⁵⁴⁰ MeChA de Tejazlan.

⁵⁴¹ Shank 1974.

⁵⁴² Sánchez 1995.

⁵⁴³ Jensen 1980.

times Mexican-Americans had argued for their racial equality by stressing their “whiteness”, Chicanos embraced the non-European parts of their heritage and in doing so highlighted the ways in which their racial oppression was linked to other instances of racism. Moreover, from an aesthetic perspective, by highlighting their indigenous heritage, the Chicano Movement gained access to the image of the Aztec warrior and other images of native strength and independence.⁵⁴⁴ Most importantly for our purposes, the Chicano Movement’s emphasis on the indigenous heritage of Mexicans reflects earlier Mexican-American focus on European heritage in as much as both are denials of *mestizo* bodies.

Moreover, there were consequences for this turn toward the indigenous. The most obvious is the fact that by undermining the *mestiza* identity of Mexican people, the Chicano Movement alienated many people of more recent mixed-ancestry, who although they had one white parent had suffered the ill-effects of racial discrimination.⁵⁴⁵ This sense of racial alienation was certainly present for Moraga who was the daughter of a white father and a Mexican-American mother:

At the height of the Chicano Movement in 1968, I was a closeted, lightskinned (*sic*), mixed-blood Mexican-American, disguised in my father's English last name... Although I could not express how at the time, I knew I had a place in that Movement ... What I didn't know then was that it would take me another ten years to fully traverse that ten-minute drive and to bring all the parts of me-Chicano, lesbiana, halfbreed (*sic*), and poet-to the revolution, wherever it was.⁵⁴⁶

⁵⁴⁴ Gutiérrez 1993, p.46.

⁵⁴⁵ See Tessman 1999.

⁵⁴⁶ Moraga, 2004, p. 225.

This distrust of *mestizo* heritage had deep roots in the mythic history of Mexico which tells of the birth of the Mexican people in a child born from the union of the conqueror Hernán Cortes and the Nahuatl women known as Doña Marina or La Malinche.⁵⁴⁷ This historical figure has become intermingled with the mythic Aztec character known in Spanish as La Llorona (The Weeping Woman) and still looms large in the Mexican imagination.⁵⁴⁸ She is at once the mother of the Mexican people and the betrayer of the Aztec. And perhaps most importantly of all, her continued stigmatization has continued to influence the lives of Mexican/Chicana women who can be labeled as *malanchista* for any perceived betrayal of “their men”.⁵⁴⁹ This is particularly true in the context of the Chicano Movement where, as in many contexts, issues of racial oppression and gender were intimately linked:

Since so much of the ethnic militancy that Chicanos articulated was profoundly influenced by Black Nationalism, it is important to recall one of the truly poignant insights in the *Autobiography of Malcolm X*. Reciting the psychic violence that racism and discrimination had wrecked on African Americans, Malcolm X noted that the most profound had been the emasculation of black men. In the eyes of white America, blacks were not deemed men. Thus whatever else the Black Power movement was, it was also about the cultural assertion of masculinity by young radical men.⁵⁵⁰

In the Chicano Movement, this dynamic was particularly evident in the glorification of the traditional *familia* as the natural foundation *for* the Chicano community.⁵⁵¹ This ideology by extension justified and even celebrated *machismo* as a central value of Chicano culture and justified the relegation of women to subservient roles within the movement itself where they

⁵⁴⁷ Becerra 1996.

⁵⁴⁸ González Hernández 2002.

⁵⁴⁹ Glantz 1992.

⁵⁵⁰ Gutiérrez 1993, p. 45.

⁵⁵¹ For more on the role of the family in the Chicano Movement, see Rodríguez 2010.

were “denied leadership roles and were asked to perform only the most traditional stereotypic roles—cleaning up, making coffee, executing the orders men gave, and servicing their needs”.⁵⁵²

If focusing on *la familia* and glorifying *machismo* made the Chicano Movement an uncomfortable and unwelcoming place for Chicana women, then it was an utterly hostile place for gay men and lesbians, who often found themselves excluded by homophobia from the Chicano community and by racism from the emerging gay community.⁵⁵³ It is not irrelevant that Cherrie Moraga could be seen as outside of *Chicanidad* at all three major points of contention. Her engagement with Aztlán is, therefore, a much more complicated one than that of a heterosexual, racially “pure” man. For the dream of Aztlán to have meaning for Moraga and others similarly excluded, it must be reformed.⁵⁵⁴ And this “reformation” of Aztlán is exactly what she attempts in the “Queer Aztlán” essay. It is not insignificant that this essay was written in the early 1990s during a period when the active Chicano Movement had long ended but at the zenith of the Queer Nation Movement as well as the ACT-UP protests.⁵⁵⁵ In this historical moment, Moraga is able to recognise freely the shortcomings of the Chicano Movement as well as its connection to other forms of progressive activism even if the Chicano Movement had worked to actively exclude those benefiting from these other movements:

What was right about Chicano Nationalism was its commitment to preserving the integrity of the Chicano people. A generation ago, there were cultural, economic, and political programs to develop Chicano consciousness, autonomy, and self-determination. What was wrong about Chicano Nationalism was its institutionalized heterosexism, its inbred machismo, and its lack of a cohesive national political strategy. Over the years, I have witnessed plenty of progressive nationalisms: Chicano nationalism, Black nationalism, Puerto Rican Independence (still viable as evidenced

⁵⁵² Gutiérrez 1993, p. 47.

⁵⁵³ Foster 1999.

⁵⁵⁴ Arrizón 2000.

⁵⁵⁵ Tatonetti 2004.

in the recent mass protest on the Island against the establishment of English as an official language), the "Lesbian Nation" and its lesbian separatist movement, and, of course, the most recent "Queer Nation." What I admired about each was its righteous radicalism, its unabashed anti-assimilationism (*sic*), and its rebeldia. I recognize the dangers of nationalism as a strategy for political change. Its tendency toward separatism can run dangerously close to biological determinism and a kind of fascism.⁵⁵⁶

Moraga's unique position in relationship to both the Queer Movement and the Chicano Movement allow her to articulate the difficulties inherent in each as well as to rightly honour their efforts to give voice and centrality to positions and people historically silenced and marginalised.⁵⁵⁷

The Hungry Woman is the most visible attempt by Moraga to articulate the realities of her position. In this, the choice of *Medea* as inspiration for *The Hungry Woman* is closely linked to the wider political goals of the play and is absolutely inseparable from the parallels which can be drawn between *Medea* and *La Malinche*.⁵⁵⁸ Both are "barbarian" women whose lives are defined by their love for a "civilized" man and the ways in which that love leads them each to betray their families and nations. The connection between *Medea* and *La Malinche* is also present in *Asies la vida* as well as other pieces, including Jesus Sotelo Inclán in *Malintzin, Medea Americana* (1957) and Sergio Magana in his 1967 play *Los argonautas* which was later renamed *Cortés y la Malinche*.⁵⁵⁹

But who is *La Malinche*? Alternately known as Doña María and a host of other names, she is one of those many historical figures that have taken on a colourful mythological afterlife.

⁵⁵⁶ Moraga 2004, p. 227.

⁵⁵⁷ Ybarra 2008.

⁵⁵⁸ McBride-Limaye 1988.

⁵⁵⁹ Van Delden 2004.

Like most myths, there are countless versions of the life of La Malinche.⁵⁶⁰ Yet, in nearly all its forms, it is easy to understand why any Mexican hearing the story of Medea would quickly recall this story. Later accounts of her life would say that La Malinche was born the daughter of a very powerful chieftain who later discarded the young girl after her mother died and her father's new wife gave him a son. It is widely accepted that this part of the story was most certainly made up later, most likely by the Spanish historian of colonial Mexico Bernal Diaz del Castillo who wrote the first full account of her life in *Historia Verdadera de la Conquista de la Nueva España*.⁵⁶¹ The addition of this detail is widely seen as an attempt to ennoble her birth after she became an important figure. Regardless, we do know that she was one of Nahuatl woman given Cortez as slaves by the natives of Tabasco in 1519. She was young and by all accounts beautiful and also quite clever. She quickly mastered Castilian Spanish. Then she became Cortez's lover and translator. Soon she had a child by him. The child, named Martin, was Cortez's first son and has become part of Mexican folklore as "the first *mestizo*".⁵⁶² For this reason, La Malinche is the symbolic mother of the Mexican people.⁵⁶³

But Mexico has a complicated relationship with her mother, because along with giving birth to the first *mestizo* child, Doña María is also traditionally held responsible for the destruction of the Aztec Empire.⁵⁶⁴ Legend holds that she revealed to Cortez a secret plan between the Chocutul Mayan and the Aztec of Tenetecholon to band together to defeat the small Spanish army. And so she comes to us from history as both the mother of the Mexican people

⁵⁶⁰ Cypress 1991.

⁵⁶¹ See Hernández 2002.

⁵⁶² Cypress 1991.

⁵⁶³ Zinam 1991.

⁵⁶⁴ Romo 2005.

and the betrayer of Mexico's indigenous past. For this reason, she is known not only as *Doña María* and La Malinche, but also as La Chingada—the fucked one.⁵⁶⁵

To complicate things even further, she has been frequently identified with an Aztec goddess known in Spanish as La Llorona-The Weeping Woman. This legend, which pre-dates the arrival of the Spanish and the life of *Doña María*, happens thus: A woman falls in love with a man who is not her husband. She drowns her children in order to be with the man she loves. She is a goddess (in some versions of the story she is even the daughter of the sun) so she attempts to return to the heavens, but the sun god will not permit her in, but instead asks, “Where are your children?” Thus she is condemned to roam the earth weeping and looking for her children.⁵⁶⁶

La Malinche takes on all these attributes from these different strains of myth and history. She is descended from the sun, she betrays her people in order to help her foreign lover, and she is either the mother of a mixed-race child or the murder of her children. It should clear at this point why La Malinche becomes so central to the discussion when Medea is placed in the Mexican context. But, perhaps most importantly, La Malinche has continued to influence the lives of Mexican/Chicana women who are accused of *malanchisma* for any perceived betrayal of their traditional roles as dutiful wives and mothers.⁵⁶⁷ La Malinche has been a powerful influence on the construction of Mexican womanhood, arguably just as powerful as the image of the Virgin.⁵⁶⁸

Because of the power of which the condemnation of La Malinche has had over Mexican women, the reclamation of the “Mother of Mexico” has been important project for many

⁵⁶⁵ Glantz 1992.

⁵⁶⁶ For more on the origins and variations of La Llorona myths, see Kirtley 1960.

⁵⁶⁷ Palma 1990.

⁵⁶⁸ Soto 1986.

Mexican feminists and, there have been many attempts to reclaim La Malinche as a feminist symbol.⁵⁶⁹ One of these attempts is the poem “Yo Soy La Malinche” by the Mexican-American poet Carmen Tafallo. The poem begins this way:

Yo soy la Malinche.
 My people called me
 Malintzín Tenepal
 the Spaniards called me Doña Marina
 I came to be known as Malinche
 and Malinche came to mean traitor.
 they called me—chingada/Chingada.
 (Ha— ¡Chingada! ¡Screwed!).⁵⁷⁰

It then continues by calling into question the designation of Doña María as *chingada*:

And yes—I helped you—against Emperor Montezuma
 Xocoyotzín himself.
 I became Interpreter, Advisor, and lover.
 They could not imagine me dealing on a level
 with you—so they said I was raped, used,
 chingada
 ¡Chingada!⁵⁷¹

The poem describes the fall of the Aztec Empire and the birth of the first metizo child and then concludes:

But Chingada I was not.
 Not tricked, not screwed, not traitor.
 For I was not traitor to myself—
 I saw a dream/and I reached it.
 Another world...⁵⁷²

⁵⁶⁹ For more, see Birmingham-Pokorny 1996.

⁵⁷⁰ Tafallo.

⁵⁷¹ Ibid.

⁵⁷² Ibid.

A common theme in feminist representations of La Malinche is to portray her as a visionary rather than a traitor. She did not destroy the Aztec Empire, instead she saw the new transcultural, hybrid world that will emerge out of the destruction of the Aztec Empire and ultimately out of the destruction of Spanish Empire. La Malinche is the herald of a free, *mestizo* world. As such, the *mestizo* body created by her body in the body of her child is not a mark of transgression but a sign of liberation.

A very predominantly Mexican feature of *Asies la vida* related to La Malinche and her reclamation is the way in which the actual murder of the children is portrayed. However, this distinctive feature is only made possible by the wider performance history of *Medea*, in particular Corneille's *Médée*. The figure of Medea is a liminal one whose womanhood influences every assessment of her character. Yet, whilst the murderous rampage of the ancient Medea is just a further occasion for misogyny; in *Asi es la vida*, Medea is given an opportunity to reclaim her power through the murder of her children. We are able to see how the murder of her children is empowering for Julia, in part, because of a variety of important clues which are placed throughout the film. These clues primarily take the form of humbling the traditional trappings of ancient tragedy to the point of absurdity. For example, in *Asi es la vida*, the Euripidean and Senecan choruses are downgraded to a terribly annoying mariachi band, which first comments on Julia's actions in person and then on an old television set with terrible reception. Even more striking is the way in which the *deus ex machina* falls from grace. Instead of the Sun's chariot coming to rescue her after slaughtering her children, Julia simply must content herself to walk on onto the street and get into a yellow cab.

This alteration in the treatment of Medea's murders is in part possible, because of how Corneille's treatment of the myth altered the ways in which the character of Medea could be

perceived. Corneille's unique approach to the position and character of Medea has long been noted. In his 1967 essay in *South Atlantic Bulletin* entitled "Médée; A Tragedy?", Claude K. Abraham remarked that, "Médée is not only a sorceress in a world of men, she is a tragic figure in a world of comic characters."⁵⁷³ The use of the mariachi band and the yellow cab in *Asi es la vida* are a legacy of Corneille's approach to Medea. That is to say, they create a world around Medea that is comical to the point of being grotesque. By this the vengeful Medea is ennobled. The more complicated treatment of Medea in Corneille is also discussed by Holly Tucker in her 1995 study published in *The French Review* in which she suggests some reasons as to why Corneille might have taken a quite different approach to Medea than the ancients when she writes the following:

...the intense brutality of the vengeance of Corneille's Medea is more closely linked to the status of women in the seventeenth century. Specifically, the woman who rejects her social and economic role as passive object in the patriarchal system (e.g., dutiful wife, daughter, and commodity to be traded) in order to become an active participant in the process of self-interested gift-giving must eventually be (re)dominated, destroyed, or in case of Medea, become the destroyer herself.⁵⁷⁴

In *Asi es la vida*, Corneille's treatment of Medea interacts with the unique associations which Medea will inevitably have in the context of Mexican society to create the circumstances for Julia to be empowered via infanticide. This confluence could, of course, not occur without the historical engagement of Latin American aesthetic culture with France. For Julia (as for la Malinche and la *Llorenda*), motherhood, both the social constructions of motherhood and its really physical and material demands, has been one of the primary vehicles for the subjugation of

⁵⁷³ Abraham, 1967, p.7

⁵⁷⁴ Tucker 1995, p. 1.

women. Take, for example, *las otras*. A large part of what causes women to seek out and remain in these incredibly emotionally and financially difficult situations is that their children do have slightly better lives than they might have otherwise had. When Jason announces that he is going to marry and establish a “real” family, Julia is tied with him because of her children, even when his future father-in-law evicts her, even when Jason continues to torment her. She has become a mother “by any means necessary” and must remain linked to a man who is horrible to her as a result of needing to provide for her children. By killing her children, Julia liberates herself from what ties her to Jason and as well as severing her last ties to the mainstream of Catholic Mexican culture. While in the ancient plays, Medea kills her children solely to punish Jason, in *Asi es la vida* Julia kills them to liberate herself from Nicolas. He is no longer at the centre of her actions. Moreover, whilst the Weeping Women might be condemned to wander the earth for killing her children, the displacement of the indigenous religion and the advent of hell mean that Julia’s actions in *Asi es la vida* do not affect her long term spiritual outcome. She is already damned for a plethora of other reasons. She has lost eternity so she might as well play full for freedom in this life.

Of course, the significant difference between Medea and La Malinche lies in the fact that La Malinche, transformed and motivated by Christian love we are told, does not betray Cortés and she certainly does not murder her child, even when (like Medea) she is relegated to the status of a concubine and easily put aside for a proper “civilized” wife. Sandra Messinger Cypess has suggested that by placing La Malinche in the paradigm of Medea, La Malinche becomes the scapegoat for the deaths of all the indigenous people who died in the wake of the European invasion and as such is guilty of a type of infanticide.⁵⁷⁵ In the context of the Chicano movement

⁵⁷⁵ Cypess 1991.

with its glorification of indigenous identity, the branding of La Malinche as a *genocider* is natural, albeit not entirely logical.⁵⁷⁶

Moraga's lesbian Medea takes this rhetoric a step further than even Julia in *Asies la vida* and directly confronts the accusations levelled equally both at La Malinche and at Chicana lesbians. By forgoing the romantic affections of all men, Moraga's Medea is an extreme version of her forebear. While La Malinche commits genocide by bearing a *mestizo* child, this Medea can do so simply by not bearing any further children. Moreover, in refusing to have anymore children, Medea ends the patriarchy's access to her body. Her body is liberated reproductively from the patriarchal order. If accusations of being *malanchista* have been an important vehicle by which Chicana women have been kept from speaking out against their experiences of gender-based oppression, then Moraga provides in her Medea a woman who is able to embrace this accusation without ambiguity of sexual desire.⁵⁷⁷ This is a Medea who can tell Jasón clearly and without question:

Don't flatter yourself, Jasón. I wore this dress for myself...the cloths are for me. The feel of silk against my thigh, the caress of satin slip over my breasts, the scent of musk when I bury my own face into the pillow of my arm.⁵⁷⁸

Euripides' Medea kills her children as a protest against her own treatment at the hands of the patriarchal order and (more particularly) at the hands of one man.⁵⁷⁹ In *The Hungry Woman*, however, Medea murders her son in order to protect him from being turned into the guardian of the patriarchy. The most poignant aspect of this act is its acknowledgement of the destructive effects of patriarchy on both genders and its equal harm to those who can conform and those who

⁵⁷⁶ Romo 2005.

⁵⁷⁷ Kuwabong 2002.

⁵⁷⁸ Moraga 2001, p. 52.

⁵⁷⁹ Van Zyl Smit 2002.

cannot.⁵⁸⁰ Moreover, that Medea kills her son not to punish Jason (although certainly the murder does harm him), but rather to protect her child, is a continuation of Moraga's aim of rehabilitating Medea's image. In essence, by invoking this justification for the filicide, Medea's murder of her child becomes a sacrificial offering to the end of patriarchal domination and to the freedom of women and other marginalised groups. Furthermore, in sacrificing her son, Medea actually embraces the wishes of Jason and Aztlán and in doing so forces both to confront consequences of the nation which they are creating. This is all evident in an angry exchange between Jasón and Medea in the play's third act:

Jasón: If you really loved your son, you'd remove him from your tit.

Medea: So his mouth can suck your dick?

Jasón: That how your dyke friends talk, Medea? Look at you. You hate men. And boys become men. What good are you for Chac now? He needs a father.

Medea: My son needs no taste of that weakness you call manhood. He is still a boy, not a man and you will not make him one in your likeness! The man I wish my son to be does not exist, must be invented. He will invent himself if he must, but he will not grow up to learn betrayal from your example.⁵⁸¹

Later Medea continues this line of reasoning when she tells Jasón:

...Marry your child-bride. A mi no me importa. No, in that lies no traición. Betrayal occurs when a boy grows into a man and sees his mother as a woman for the first time. A woman. A thing. A creature to be controlled.⁵⁸²

⁵⁸⁰ Arrizón 2000.

⁵⁸¹ Ibid., p.69.

⁵⁸² Ibid., p.70.

Medea may have taken Chac-Mool from Aztlán, but he can return and be a free man there. Even if Medea returns to Aztlán, as Jason promises her she can if she renounces her lesbianism, she will still be an outsider and a slave. This is a fact that Jasón too acknowledges even in his attempts to persuade her return.⁵⁸³ Yet, Jasón is a servant to the narrow ideology of Aztlán and his marriage is not merely compelled by the desire for “a tight pussy around (yours) dick.”⁵⁸⁴ Jasón’s intended bride is an Apache girl and Medea, with senses heightened by her own outsider status, recognizes the extent to which Jasón’s choice of wife is compelled by his own lacklustre racial resume:

She’ll never call you by your true name, Jasón, so you may fortunately begin to forget it. Forget the U.S. Air Force father, the quarter-breed mestizo-de-mestizo cousins, your mother’s coveted Spanish coat-of-arms. That girl can’t know you because your lies were sown long before she made root on this earth. Send me your wife. I will teach her of her own embattled and embittered history. I will teach her, as I have learned, to defend women and children against enemies from within. Against fathers and brothers and sons who grow up to be as conquistador as any Cortez.⁵⁸⁵

While the implication of patriarchy in an adaptation of *Medea* is an obvious move, Moraga’s critic of the failures of the Chicano Movement’s racial and sexual ideology is largely unique.⁵⁸⁶ Jasón, who is conveniently and powerfully Aztlán’s “Minster of Culture”, is implicated by his own obvious lack of indigenous roots. His marriage to an Apache girl is an attempt to disguise his own heritage. Yet this action in itself only highlights the difficulty of neglecting any one facet of identifies which are ultimately characterised by its heterogeneous mixing and not by homogenous purity. It makes it clear that Medea is entirely justified when she

⁵⁸³ Ibid., p.69.

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 70.

⁵⁸⁶ Sternbach 1989.

accuses Jasón and those who prompt this type of racial construction for Aztlán of being “Traidores de una cultura mas anciana que [Traitors of a culture more ancient than] your pitiful ego’d life can remember.”⁵⁸⁷ In this accusation, Medea invokes both the imagined matriarchal and matrilineal past of the indigenous people of Meso-America as well as the very real *mestizo* past of Mexico since Cortés.⁵⁸⁸ To posit a native (and heterosexual) identity as the only legitimately Chicano identity and as such as the only legitimate identity of a citizen of Aztlán is to deny the true nature of what it means to be a Chicano and thus to deny the true purpose of Aztlán. Jasón’s purposed marriage to an Apache girl is a marriage that, despite whatever pretence Jasón or his allies might have, will ultimately produce even more *mestizo* children whose paternal grandmother will have had a Spanish coat-of-arms. Jasón’s prized bride will follow in the footsteps of her *La Malinche* grandmother bearing *mestizo* children to the conqueror even as he exiles other *mestizos* from their rightful homeland. In the end, Medea is an exile from Aztlán because Aztlán has failed to fulfil its promise of revolution. It has failed to become the homeland for all Chicanos. In *The Hungry Woman*, Moraga places on stage what the failure to create a “Queer Aztlán” would look like and the violent consequence for all that that failure would entail. Ultimately this failure is the failure of democratic rhetoric to become a democratic reality: a failure that not only haunts the Chicano Movement but the mainstream American experience as well. This is why *The Hungry Woman* speaks to an audience that extends beyond the Chicano Movement and its discontents. By invoking the myth of Medea, Moraga invokes traditions of patriarchal oppression, racial domination, and colonial exile that extend beyond the American context and even extend beyond modernity. This is a way not only

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁸ See Kirchhoff 1954.

to speak to a wider audience but also to circumvent the modern domestication of democratic rhetoric, calling forward a radical sisterhood both with Medea and beyond her.

Mourning, the Body and the Creation of Corporate Identity

Central, though largely unstated, in both *A Hungry Woman* and *Asi es la vida* are the questions around appropriate mourning and the use and justification(s) of violence. Mourning is not, as it is discussed it here, the same as grief. For our purposes, mourning is a series of public behaviours which may or may not be connected to genuine feelings of sorrow or loss. Mourning is not about whom and how we actually grieve, but whom and how we are *supposed* to grieve.⁵⁸⁹ The seminal discussion of the issues of mourning and mourning's connection to violence is Judith Butler's *Precarious Lives: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. The book is comprised of a series of essays, born of a reflection on post-9/11 America, which seek to understand the violence which emerged as a response to grief in the wake of the 11th of September attacks and imagine how mourning might be a means by which to reduce violence and encourage an awareness of global interdependency.

Butler asks in *Precarious Lives*, "Who counts as human? Whose lives count as lives? And, finally, what makes for a *grievable life*?"⁵⁹⁰ Perhaps more than the relationship between the state and the individual or the responsibilities of kinship, these are the matters at the heart of *Antigone* and *Medea*. It is not a minor point that Butler's 2000 book tellingly entitled *Antigone's Claim* is concerned in part with how the figure of Antigone relates to normative notions of kinship. To ask, "Who is kin?" is not entirely dissimilar from asking, "Who is human?" Both questions are concerned with the definition of the person as related to the individual's

⁵⁸⁹ Concepcion 1962.

⁵⁹⁰ Butler 2004, p. 20.

relationship to others and the answers to both questions rely, in large part, upon community consensus.⁵⁹¹

Issues of kinship, death, mourning and violence are all deeply connected to the body. When we ask who is human or how human beings are related to one another, we are asking what it means to have a body such as ours and what the possession of that body means about our relationship to others with similar bodies.⁵⁹² For this reason, the body has, as Butler says, “an invariably public dimension.”⁵⁹³ Nowhere is the public dimension of the body clearer than in the rituals of mourning. Burial rituals are concerned with a body which is completely devoid of life and thus any personality. Yet the very nature of the customs implies the unique personality of the lifeless body and affirms the connection between that body and the life which once inhabited it.⁵⁹⁴ It is for this reason that there is such a close connection between the worth granted the individual and the amount of mourning afforded the corpse. In Sophocles’s *Antigone* this is recognized by Creon in his reaction to the news of Polynices’ burial:

πότερον ὑπερτιμῶντες ὡς εὐεργέτην
 ἔκρυπτον αὐτόν, ὅστις ἀμφικίονα
 ναοὺς πυρώσων ἤλθε κἀναθήματα
 καὶ γῆν ἐκείνων καὶ νόμους διασκεδῶν;
 ἢ τοὺς κακοὺς τιμῶντας εἰσορᾶς θεοῦ;
 οὐκ ἔστιν⁵⁹⁵

He then repeats this sentiment in even clearer terms when he tells Antigone that, “... οὐχ ὁ χρηστὸς τῷ κακῷ λαχεῖν ἴσος.”⁵⁹⁶ Creon must continually affirm that Polynices is an evil man

⁵⁹¹ For more on kinship in *Antigone*, see Hamilton 1991 and Ierulli 1999.

⁵⁹² Gatens 1996 and Acampora 2006.

⁵⁹³ Butler 2004, p. 26.

⁵⁹⁴ Quay 1984.

⁵⁹⁵ *Soph. Ant.* 284-289: Did the gods bury him with special honours for being such a great benefactor to Thebes, a man who came here to torch their column-ringed temples and all the rich offerings, a man who came to destroy both their land and their laws? Do the gods honour evil men? No, they do not!

⁵⁹⁶ *Soph. Ant.* 497: ...the evil man does not deserve the same honour as the good.

who behaved lawlessly and in doing so placed himself outside of the community in order for Creon to justify his decision to deny Polynices burial.

Creon is not, however, just asserting that Polynices is an evil man. Arguably even evil men should be afforded some kind of burial. Creon goes further than this and attempts to suggest that Polynices is not even human, at least not human in any way that is meaningful. Creon describes Polynices as isolated from and hostile toward his community. If humanity is dependent upon relationship to other human beings, then it is possible to question whether Polynices even deserves to be called human. To suggest that someone who alienates himself from the community does not qualify as human is not an outlandish claim. Aristotle would say as much in the *Politics* when he declared that man is an animal who lives in a *polis* and that any man who should find himself without a *polis* is not a man at all but instead a god or a beast.⁵⁹⁷

The view that human identities rely upon community consensus is also present within the *Antigone*. Haemon tells his father that, “καλῶς γ’ ἐρήμης ἂν σὺ γῆς ἄρχοις μόνος.”⁵⁹⁸ Of course, Haemon is implying that a ruler alone in a desert is no sort of ruler at all, because a ruler is only a ruler inasmuch as he has subjects over whom he can rule. This is part of the same paradigm of community-based identity which says that a human being without a *polis* is not a proper human being. Thus it is possible to say that the view of human identity advanced by Aristotle is present in the *Antigone*. Consequently, in alienating himself from his *polis*, Polynices has placed into question the status of his humanity. To deny him burial is to create an outward display of his sub-human status. Thus in burying her brother, Antigone not only fulfils her role as a dutiful sister she reasserts her brother’s humanity by honouring his lifeless body.

⁵⁹⁷ *Pol.I.1253a*: ὅτι ὁ ἄνθρωπος φύσει πολιτικὸν ζῷον, καὶ ὁ ἄπολις διὰ φύσιν καὶ οὐ διὰ τύχην ἦτοι φαῦλός ἐστιν, ἢ κρείττων ἢ ἄνθρωπος.

⁵⁹⁸ *Soph.Ant.739*: Alone in a desert, you would make a perfect ruler.

By rebutting attempts to deny her brother's humanity and, consequently, delegitimizing the decision to deny him burial, Antigone also calls into question the legitimacy of the violence which brought about his death. That it is necessary to dehumanize an individual in order to perpetuate violence against him or her is an oft-repeated truism. The mechanism by which this occurs is less often discussed. In *Precarious Lives*, Butler suggests one possible reason why individuals and/or groups of individuals who have been dehumanized rhetorically are thus rendered as potential targets of violence when she writes the following:

If violence is done against those who are unreal, then, from the perspective of violence, it fails to injure or negate those lives since those lives are already negated. But they have a strange way of remaining animated and so must be negated again (and again). They cannot be mourned because they are always already lost or, rather, never 'were', and they must be killed, since they seem to live on, stubbornly, in this state of deadness.⁵⁹⁹

It is possible to see this framework employed in *Antigone*, not only in Polynices' death and subsequent non-burial, but also in Antigone's own death sentence. Haemon warns his father against doing violence to Antigone by noting that, "ὀδύρεται πόλις..."⁶⁰⁰ ("the city mourns...") for Antigone. If Antigone is, to borrow Butler's word, *grievable* then she is shielded from violence since those who should be mourned cannot legitimately be the victims of violence.⁶⁰¹

Antigone, of course, does not accept that her brother should have been killed (except in the sense that she accepts that they are both from a cursed bloodline). Consequently, she refuses to believe he should be unburied. She sees herself as obliged to correct this wrong, because he is

⁵⁹⁹ Butler 2004, p. 32.

⁶⁰⁰ *Soph.Ant.* 694 : If I had been the mother of some children or if my husband had lain rotting in the ground, I would not have done such a thing against the will of the city.

⁶⁰¹ See Söderbäck 2011.

her brother. She does not, however, believe that she would have a similar obligation were she to share another bond with him, a point made clear in the following speech:

οὐ γάρ ποτ' οὔτ' ἄν, εἰ τέκνων μήτηρ ἔφυν,
οὔτ' εἰ πόσις μοι κατθανὼν ἐτήκετο,
βία πολιτῶν τόνδ' ἄν ἠρόμην πόνον.⁶⁰²

Such a disclaimer seems strange to modern ears, particularly to modern ears for which the linked dual roles of wife and mother have been the primary positions assigned to women, not only within the family but within the society at large. If daughter and sister were the primary identities of ancient women, then wife and mother are those of modern womanhood.

Aríza notes and highlights these issues of identity via community-affirmation and the relationship of such an identity to the body in her adaptation of *Antigone*. In Aríza's adaptation, not only are there multiple incarnations of the characters who are already in Sophocles's play, there are additional characters who never appear in the ancient play. Eteocles, Oedipus, and the Furies all add their voices to *Antígona*. Since the Chorus is still present, the result is a much larger cast than in Sophocles's.

The most immediate consequence of this expanded cast (other than a very crowded stage at times) is that there are many more perspectives involved in the debate over whether or not Polynices should be buried. A debate which, though obsessively a debate over the fate of Polynices's body, is really a debate over Polynices's humanity. The dead and the living, the mortal and the immortal are all consulted on the issue of who should be mourned and how. In doing this, they also (as we have discussed earlier) offer an opinion on who might be the subject of violence. Jocasta and Polynices are the only members of Oedipus' household who do not make an appearance at what one might think of as a very strange family reunion. Both absences

⁶⁰² *Soph.Ant.* 905-907.

can be explained if we understand *Antígona* as a meditation upon mourning, violence, and their consequences.

The absence of Jocasta is particularly striking when one considers the significant role which organizations formed by mothers have played in anti-violence movements throughout Latin America. In fact, it might even be argued that these organizations constitute the principle representation of women's groups in Latin America. La Asociación Madres de Plaza de Mayo in Argentina is the most well-known of these organizations, but similar organizations and movements have appeared in many other countries throughout the region, including Colombia.⁶⁰³ Why then is Jocasta excluded from *Antígona* when so many others are included, particularly if *Antígona* represents an example of feminist theatre? Jocasta's exclusion from Ariza's extended cast is linked to the play's thematic focus on mourning and violence. If Ariza's *Antígona* (like its ancient counterpart) is concerned principally with questions surrounding mourning and violence, namely who is worthy of mourning and who is worthy of violence, then the appearance of Jocasta in *Antígona* would undermine the play's ability to ask those questions. This is particularly true in the Latin American context where mothers have routinely organized and entered into the public debate explicitly in order to humanize the victims of political violence through mourning and thus to prevent further individuals from being victimized.⁶⁰⁴ Jocasta's voice could potentially silence the debate and in doing so undermine the political value of the play.

This same framework can also be used to explain why Polynices does not appear either. It is Polynices's humanity which is ultimately in question. His appearance on stage could serve only to offer explicit proof of his humanity by affirming his corporality. This would end the potential for constructive debate about the wider issues which he represents. The exclusion of the

⁶⁰³ D'Alessandro 2006.

⁶⁰⁴ Taylor 1997.

individual in question from the debate concerning his own humanity is also very representative of how these sorts of conversations tend to occur, regardless of whether or not the individual in question remains on this side of the grave. Because Polynices remains silent as others are left to debate how he should have been treated by the community in life and how he will be treated in death, Polynices becomes emblematic of so many victims of violence whose humanity is called into question by the political necessities which surround them. The exclusion of both Jocasta and Polynices from Aríza's enlarged cast is, therefore, ultimately about the political goals of the play. In Colombia, a nation where generations have grown up under the threat of violence and in the shadow of both the mourned and the unburied, it is difficult to do anything that is not in some way touched by the long shadow of that violence. Colombia is also a nation that is still torn apart into multiple warring factions and haunted by tyranny. The shadow of that tyranny seems particularly hard to escape if one is staging any version of *Antigone* since *Antigone* has traditionally been understood to be about the relationship between the virtuous individual and the tyrant. It is, of course, important and necessary to question how an individual should respond in the face of tyranny, but the (for lack of a better word) political questions which the *Antigone* asks extend much deeper than this. *Antigone* is asking not just how we should respond to violence, but why that violence occurs in the first place. By looking at the dynamics of mourning, the *Antigone* is questioning the legitimacy of violence.⁶⁰⁵

The cultural performance of mourning is in many ways an acknowledgement by the community that it rejects the loss of a certain individual.⁶⁰⁶ The community believes that man or this woman should not have died. Mourning says in no uncertain terms, "This one was one of us and so he should have remained with us." This expression happens in part through the care of the

⁶⁰⁵ Beushausen 2008.

⁶⁰⁶ Frank 2006.

body. Violence then is the opposite of mourning. Violence declares an individual as not belonging to the community and so seeks to remove him or her from the community through harm done to the body. For violence, it is the victim's membership in the community (and by extension humanity) that is illegitimate. Perhaps this means that when all can be mourned then none will be a victim of violence.⁶⁰⁷

Historically, as we see in *Antigone*, mourning has been the province of women. In this public role (arguably the only public role offered to women in many traditional societies), women serve as guardians of communal peace. They act as a barrier between the individual and violence. It is a role conferred from Homer right down into the women of La Asociación Madres de Plaza de Mayo. While it is a traditional role, the positional of mourner can become a radical one when it occurs within the context of a larger movement. This is what we see at work in *Antígona*. This radicalization of such a distinctly traditional role is made possible by that distinct brand of Latin American feminism that gains its character by embedding itself in the larger social justice movement in the region. It also allows for the traditional images of womanhood to remain cultural significant and worthy of reverence. The mourning woman can be a force for social change just as much as she is a symbol of communal continuity.

But, of course, there is in the end not some remote idea of womanhood, but the figure of Antigone grieving and calling for us to mourn the un-mourned and, consequently, calling us to question how we arrived at all this talk of young men's tombs in the first place. These questions are, in the end, more revolutionary than any single election could hope to be.

Summary

Identity is a complex web made up of both individual assertions of self and of community recognition. Gender and sexual identity are ground in which these two often do battle, so it should not be surprising that in the production of Greek tragedy in Latin America these forms of identity are often centred on the body. In this chapter, we have examined a few occurrences of this conversation using the body as a discursive tool. Here, as we have seen, the body is particularly helpful, because sexual and gender identity are particularly focused on the body. This focus on the body has linked our conversation here to the discussion of racial identity in the previous chapter. Furthermore, we have seen the ways in which violence and mourning (central themes to ancient plays such as *Medea*, *Antigone*, and *Oedipus*) are linked to the body and how the body is used to shape and created identity in these contexts.

Conclusion

Summary of Findings

The goal of this thesis has been to provide new insight into the possible roots and relationships present in the most recent reception of Greek tragedy on the Latin American stage. As a quick survey of the attached appendix will show, the plays analysed herein represent only a small portion of a diverse and fascinating body of work. That being said, the works examined here, while not comprehensive, is representative. The plays analysed in this thesis have each been selected for their ability to demonstrate more widespread currents and trends within the general prevue of Latin American receptions of Greek tragedy over the past two decades.

One goal in this thesis has been to demonstrate the significant impact that French thought has had on not only the Latin American reception of Greek tragedy, but the wider cultural climate of the region. The reasons for this long and productive relationship between France and Latin American artists and intellectuals have been touched on briefly throughout this thesis. The most important of these reasons are rooted in the complexities of the postcolonial relationship.

The complex identity issues created by postcolonial realities have been another major theme of this thesis. It is hoped that it has been made clear that the difficulties belong as much to the former colonizer as to the formerly colonized.⁶⁰⁸ One of these difficulties manifests in that the categories created by critics and academics are often as much the product of ideology as realty. This is the reason magical realism and indigenou-centred art and literature has so often been separated from the French intellectual and aesthetic traditions with which they share a kinship.

⁶⁰⁸ Hsieh 1997.

Navigating how we are to understand ourselves and our intellectual kin as we engage in the dance of cultural exchange is perhaps one of the great questions of our era.⁶⁰⁹ This thesis has used the body as the primary discursive tool, primarily because corporeality is both a human constant and entirely unique to each person.⁶¹⁰ That is why it was important to include discussions of plays which come directly from the realm of identity politics and to look at their use of the body as site of oppression, liberation, and contemplation.

In the end, however, it is Greek tragedy that is at the heart of this study. Arguably understanding how Greek tragedy is interpreted and adapted in and of itself is a useful exercise. Greek tragedy provides a clear and continuous marker by which to chart the path of Western culture around the globe. It also gives us an instance of how often something that seems so thoroughly Western can be (re)-claimed by those who have often suffered most at the hands of Western imperialism.⁶¹¹

Avenues for Further Research

As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, the study of the Latin American reception of the Greco-Roman tradition, particularly in relation to the 20th and 21st centuries is still relatively unexplored territory (though that is becoming increasingly less true). Moreover, despite the long and certain intellectual and artistic relationship between Latin America and France, there has been shockingly little formal scholarly research on this subject. For this reason, the future potential for research in the issues addressed here is vast. However, there are a few potential areas which might ultimately prove more useful (and interesting) than others.

⁶⁰⁹ Appiah 2001.

⁶¹⁰ Dowsett 2000.

⁶¹¹ Hardwick 2007.

First, it is impossible to imagine any long-term engagement with Latin American art and literature (or any modern cultural tradition) that did not include an examination of prose fiction. A study such as this would be required to not place its gaze too heavily on the extraordinary mid-20th-century Latin American novels, but also include the exciting and engaging fiction written by Latin American authors in the past twenty years (and that is still being produced). This is because, while most critics, scholars, and readers have rightly identified the mid-20th century as a period of great literary output through Latin America, the reverence for that era has led many (even Latin Americans themselves) to ignore more recent work. This has been to all of our collective detriment.

Another potential avenue for future research would be to move beyond looking at the reception of Greek tragedy, to examine the reception of other aspects of ancient Hellenic culture in Latin America. As was previously mentioned, there has been a great deal of excellent work conducted on the reception of various aspects of Roman history and epic in the Spanish colonial period. Similar studies with respect to Greek culture might also prove helpful, particularly with reference to further understanding the role which classical antiquity as a whole plays in shaping Spanish colonial ideology and practice. Of course, my own interests lie much more in the present where I also believe that a comprehensive study of the reception of Greek epic and history in the Latin American context might prove very helpful.

Finally, this study has focused (at least in part) on the role which French intellectual and artistic movements have played in shaping the contemporary reception of Greek tragedy in the Latin American theatre. One of the features of this channel of reception that first struck me was the extent to which the British and American theatrical traditions have played a relatively minor role in shaping the course of Latin American theatre practice as a whole. Instead it has been the

French theatrical tradition that has most influenced the Latin American stage. This is noteworthy in itself as Spain certainly has its own rich early modern theatrical tradition which includes such seminal playwrights as such Lope de Vega, Calderón, and Ruiz de Alarcón.⁶¹² Their plays, linguistically at least, would seem most accessible to Latin American theatre practitioners and audience.

It is also noteworthy (or perhaps to be expected) that the exception in terms of an English-language playwright engaged in the Latin American context is Shakespeare. As in other parts of the world, Shakespeare is routinely performed on the Latin American stage, usually intriguingly in 19th-century Spanish translations.⁶¹³ This, however, is a relatively recent development that has by and large emerged after 1969. In fact, writing in *The Modern Language Journal* in 1951, Thomas A. FitzGerald noted that there had been only a handful of productions of Shakespeare in Spanish-America.⁶¹⁴ Examining the relatively recent upswing of interest in Shakespeare in the region and the interface between that engagement and the much longer Latin American engagement with Greek tragedy seems like a particularly fascinating way to explore the relationship of contemporary Latin American writers with the larger global literary culture.

For these reasons, I propose my own future research to be a comparative study in the reception of Greek tragedy and Shakespearean tragedy in late-20th- and early 21st-century Latin American novels. I believe that there is much more to be learned about the ways in which recent Latin American writers have engaged with those aspects of the Western tradition that have been deemed “high” culture. By focusing on prose fiction, which is by far the most prevalent current genre in all parts of the world, I hope to seek a wider scope than that of this current study and

⁶¹² Sell 2008.

⁶¹³ Kliman 2005.

⁶¹⁴ FitzGerald 1951, p. 590.

perhaps to trace even wider themes in the cultural past and present of Latin America. But that is for another day.

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Appendix 1: Productions Inspired By Greek Tragedy in Latin America (Selected), 1986-2010⁶¹⁵

Title	Author	Country	Year	Source Play(s)	Film/Theater
Antígona furiosa	Griselda Gambaro	Cuba	1986	Antigone	Theatre
Antígona	Joel Saez	Cuba	1993	Antigone	Theatre
Hungry Woman: A Mexican Medea	Cherrie Moraga	USA	1993	Medea	Theatre
Epido Alcade	Gabriel Garcia Marquez	Colombia	1996	Oedipus Rex	Film
Edipo Alcalde	Gabriel Garcia-Marquez	Colombia	1996	Oedipus Rex	Film
Ulises y la maquina de perdices	Peky Andino	Ecuador	1997	Cyclops	Theatre
Edipo Guey	Mario Cantu Toscano Mario Cantú Toscano	Mexico	1999	Oedipus Rex	Theatre
Los motivos de Antígona	Ricardo Andrade Jardí	Mexico	2000	Antigone	Theatre
Asi es la vida	Paz Alicia Garciadiego	Mexico	2000	Medea	Film
Antígona	José Watanabe	Peru	2000	Antigone	Theatre
Epido y Yocasta	Mariano Moro	Argentina	2001	Oedipus Rex	Theatre
Edipo y Yocasta	Mariano Moro	Argentina	2001	Oedipus Rex	Theatre
La ley de Creón	Olga Harmony	Mexico	2001	Antigone	Theatre
Antígona, historia de objetos perdidos	Daniela Capona Perez	Chile	2002	Antigone	Theatre
Antígona... con amor	Hebe Campanella	Argentina	2003	Antigone	Theatre
Antígona, ¡no!	Yamila Grandi	Argentina	2003	Antigone	Theatre
Matras a tu madre	Mariano Moro	Argentina	2003	Oresteia	Theatre
Antígona y Actriz	Carlos Edauardo	Colombia	2004	Antigone	Theatre
Electricidad	Luis Alfaro	USA	2004	Electra	Theatre
Electra-Shock	Jose Maria Muscari	Argentina	2005	Electra	Theatre
Hipolito y Fedra	Alejandro Ullua	Argentina	2005	Hippolytus/ Phedra	Theatre
La Odiesia y la Iliad-musical	Hector Presa	Argentina	2005	Odyssey	Theatre

⁶¹⁵ All productions listed here and used to calculate figures in subsequent appendices had original runs in venues with 200 or more seats.

Las Troyanas	Ruben Szuchmacher	Argentina	2005	Trojan Women	Theatre
La herencia de Edipo	Ensemble	Mexico	2005	Oedipus Rex	Theatre
Los Papeles de Antígona	Diana Casas	Colombia	2006	Antigone	Theatre
Antígona furiosa	Patricia Ariza	Peru/Colombia	2006	Antigone	Theatre
El Clown-Plejo de Edipo	Oscar Zimmermann	Chile	2007	Oedipus Rex	Theatre
Edipo y su senora mamacita	Peki Andino	Ecuador	2008	Oedipus Rex	Theatre
Oedipus el Rey	Luis Alfaro	USA	2010	Oedipus Rex	Theatre

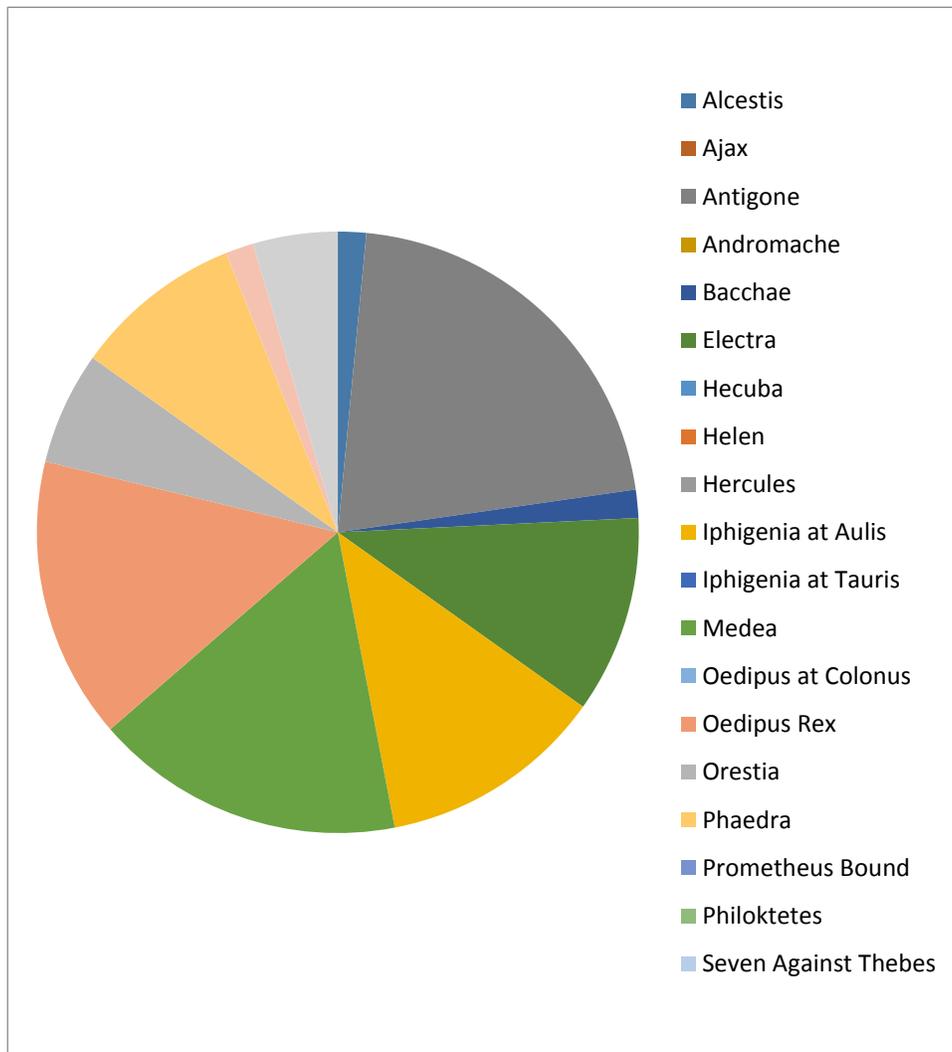
Appendix 2: Comparative Analysis of Productions of Greek Tragedy by Source Play ⁶¹⁶

Source Play	Latin America	France	Spain	England	Germany	Italy	Total
Alcestis	1	6	1	39	7	10	64
Ajax	0	1	1	15	5	4	26
Antigone	14	22	8	110	78	27	259
Andromache	0	3	1	8	1	3	16
Bacchae	1	2	5	78	13	20	119
Electra	7	16	5	74	36	13	151
Hecuba	0	4	1	9	3	7	24
Helen	0	1	1	10	5	2	19
Hercules	0	1	0	5	4	3	13
Iphigenia at Aulis	8	3	1	25	6	8	51
Iphigenia at Tauris	0	6	1	22	8	4	41
Medea	11	32	19	103	77	32	274
Oedipus at Colonus	0	2	1	14	3	6	26
Oedipus Rex	10	32	13	126	60	36	277
Orestia	4	40	11	154	48	91	348
Phaedra	6	12	7	73	8	16	122
Prometheus Bound	0	11	1	16	12	15	55
Philoktetes	0	2	0	18	11	7	38
Seven Against Thebes	0	1	0	5	6	7	19
The Persians	1	5	3	14	47	8	78
Trojan Women	3	11	8	64	20	13	119
Ion	0	0	0	11	1	1	13

⁶¹⁶ Source: Data for all appendices resourced from the Database of the Archive for the Performance of Greek and Roman Drama

Phoenissae	0	0	0	6	2	2	10
Rhesos	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
The Suppliants	0	0	0	4	3	3	10
The Trackers	0	0	0	3	0	2	5
Trachiniae	0	0	0	19	6	5	30
Total	66	213	88	1028	470	345	2210

Appendix 3: Graphic Representation of Greek Tragedies Produced in Latin America by Source Play



Appendix 4: Greek Tragedies by Source Play, 1900-2010-Comparative Charts

