

## ABSTRACT

Title of dissertation:           MIGRATING TEXTS: CROSS-CULTURAL  
  READINGS OF COSTA RICAN PLAYS OF 1990-2000

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Using the framework of globalization studies and theories about intercultural theatre, this dissertation examines how Costa Rican New Wave dramatists explore the flow of ideologies and cultural identities. While these playwrights examine movements across borders and establish varying settings and links to history or other theatrical texts, they remain firmly committed to their local roots by contextualizing their plays for Costa Rican readers and audiences. I begin this study by focusing on plays that are set in Costa Rica and develop imagery allusive to national history. Leda Cavallini's Inquilinos del árbol (1999) and Miguel Rojas's Madriguera de ilusiones (1998) and Hogar dulce hogar (2000) denounce invasions by market-oriented forms of globalization that homogenize local cultures. Cavallini and Rojas put into practice in these plays the views expressed in their writings about the theatrical medium in San José urging dramatists and theatrical companies to create plays and repertoires relevant to contemporary Costa Rica. I then consider how Víctor Valdelomar, in El ángel de la tormenta (1990), and Linda Berrón, in Olimpia (1998), set their plays in Medieval and

Revolutionary France, respectively, accommodating the historical material to the contemporary Costa Rican socio-political context. Although Valdelomar questions U.S. economic and political hegemony, and Berrón criticizes relying solely upon foreign theories or local activism in the women's movement, both plays suggest that globalization can operate politically in Costa Rica through regional or transnational networks. Finally, I analyze Ana Istarú's Hombres en escabeche (2000), a commercial and critical success in Costa Rica and abroad. Inspired by the Italian play Sesso? Grazie, tanto per gradire! (1996) written by Dario Fo, Franca Rame, and Jacopo Fo, Istarú sets her own play in Costa Rica. However, Istarú also incorporates Western archetypes and employs images and metaphors associated with the plays Flores de papel (1968), by Chilean Egon Wolff, and Cocinar hombres (1986), by Mexican Carmen Boullosa, creating a text with multiple levels of meaning for transnational audiences that questions the fixed nature of gender identity and artistic creativity and suggests that neither Marxism nor neoliberalism provides the answer to Costa Rica's future.

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PLAYS OF 1990-2000

by

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## Chapter 1: Introduction: From the Traditional to the New Wave

Costa Rican theatre has been increasingly attracting the attention of both audiences and critics at home and abroad in the 1990s and the beginning of the twenty-first century. The presence of Costa Rican theatre during three consecutive years, from 1999 to 2001, at the annual International Festival of Hispanic Theatre sponsored by Teatro de la Luna in Arlington, Virginia, and the premiere in June 2003 of César Meléndez's monologue El nica, the first Central American play to be performed in Los Angeles, California, are examples of the erasure of boundaries among Costa Rican playwrights and theatrical companies and North American audiences and critics.<sup>1</sup> While there has always been some sort of theatrical exchange between Costa Rica and other nations since its independence, the dynamic of this contact has shifted. In the nineteenth century, theatrical companies from Europe, the United States, and other Latin American nations regularly traveled to Costa Rica's capital city, San José. Although Costa Ricans were writing plays at that time, and amateur Costa Rican groups performed some of them, the traveling companies tended to present a repertory of foreign plays. By the later part of the twentieth century, however, professional Costa Rican theatrical companies and the works of Costa Rican dramatists were traveling to different parts of the world.

This process of exchange, which encompasses not only cultural expressions like the theatre but virtually all aspects of life, no longer bound by the constraints of geographical space and time, has accelerated during the age of globalization in the

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<sup>1</sup> For additional information about Meléndez's monologue, which he also has performed in Costa Rica and Nicaragua, consult the website El nica at: <http://www.elnica.org/>.

1990s and the twenty-first century. As their plays circulate within and beyond Costa Rica during this time period, the playwrights Linda Berrón (1951), Leda Cavallini (1956), Ana Istarú (1960), Miguel Rojas (1952), and Víctor Valdelomar (1957) engage this process, exploring thematically in their plays the flow of ideologies, and political and economic relationships.<sup>2</sup> While these dramatists examine movements across Costa Rica's borders, they remain firmly committed to their local roots. This can be seen in how they contextualize their plays for Costa Rican readers and audiences, a practice that Cavallini and Rojas recommend in their writings about the theatrical medium in San José as an essential component in Costa Rican dramaturgy and in the selection of repertory by Costa Rican theatrical companies. The playwrights studied in this project appear to share Cavallini and Rojas's point of view. However, in their plays they employ varying approaches to the choice of setting and the establishment of relationships with history or other theatrical texts in order to meet this objective.

Although Costa Rican cultural expressions, such as theatre, are gaining recognition abroad now, violent political events during the late 1970s and the entire decade of the 1980s focused international attention on Costa Rica. Civil wars between leftist guerrillas and right-wing military-backed governments in other Central American countries soon spread beyond national borders in the region. Fighting launched from

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<sup>2</sup> This study focuses on playwrights who work in San José and whose plays generally have been staged in Costa Rica's capital. Although I call these plays and performances Costa Rican theatre, I would like to point out that not all theatrical activity centers in San José. There are, for instance, groups in Cartago that have regularly staged plays in that city. Their repertory includes works written by playwrights who live in Cartago, such as Roberto Piedra, who has written more than fifty short plays. Juan Carlos Calderón, in Teatro y sociedad cartaginesa (1997), traces the history of theatre in Cartago.

neighboring countries, intervention by the United States, and peace proposals from Latin American countries transformed the Central American conflicts into an international crisis. Costa Rica, which possesses a long tradition of democratic and stable government since independence in the nineteenth century and had abolished its army in 1949, avoided much of the violent conflict that was occurring in neighboring countries. Nevertheless, it also felt the impact of the political struggles within the region.

Initially known as a haven fostering freedom of ideological expression for those fleeing oppressive military regimes in Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, and other Central American nations during the 1970s, in the subsequent decade Costa Rica experienced economic, ideological, and political pressure to sanction military action against the Central American revolutionary movements. The severe economic crisis that Costa Rica was experiencing at the same time obligated its government to implement Structural Adjustment Programs in order to receive loans from the International Monetary Fund and made it more vulnerable to offers of aid in exchange for supporting the United States's policy in Central America. Despite this coercion, Costa Rica steered an independent political course. At the height of the violence in the 1980s, Costa Rican President Oscar Arias sponsored a plan, for which he won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1987. Signed by the five Central American nations, this proposal required them to implement reconciliation policies with opposing forces, begin a democratizing process, prohibit insurgent forces from neighboring countries from using their land, and stop aiding those forces.

During the 1990s, when peace and democratic forms of government returned to Central America and international attention on a political level decreased, there is an expanding focus on cultural expressions from the region. Many studies about Costa Rican theatre were published, including those codifying a new generation of dramatists who had begun writing plays around 1980.<sup>3</sup> María Bonilla, Alvaro Quesada Soto, and Carolyn Bell introduce the playwrights and identify certain tendencies in their plays.<sup>4</sup> After theatrical activity peaked in the 1970s, it declined in the 1980s, in part due to the political and economic crises. Nevertheless, Quesada Soto views the dramaturgy of Guillermo Arriaga, Jorge Arroyo, Leda Cavallini, Juan Fernando Cerdas, Ana Istarú, Melvin Méndez, Rubén Pagura, Miguel Rojas, and Víctor Valdelomar as an innovative development in the theatrical medium: “Aún en la difícil encrucijada actual, la reflexión, la búsqueda y la experimentación, el esfuerzo por encontrar nuevas estrategias teatrales para expresar los conflictos contemporáneos a un público quizá más selectivo pero tal vez más sensible y crítico, no ha sido abandonado” (“La dramaturgia

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<sup>3</sup> Besides the research focusing on the new generation of playwrights, an anthology and histories of nineteenth and early twentieth-century Costa Rican theatre also appeared: Antología del teatro costarricense: 1890-1950 (1993), edited by Alvaro Quesada, Flora Ovares, Margarita Rojas, and Carlos Santander; En el tinglado de la eterna comedia: Teatro costarricense 1890-1930 and En el tinglado de la eterna comedia: Teatro costarricense 1930-1950 (1995), by Rojas, Quesada, Ovares, and Santander; and Teatro, público y estado en San José: 1880-1914 (1996), by Patricia Fumero Vargas. Additionally, critical readings of Samuel Rovinski’s plays and an interview with Rovinski were published by Mario Rojas and Nicholas W. Rokas, respectively, augmenting the research disseminated in the 1970s by Anita Herzfeld and Teresa Salas in El teatro de hoy en Costa Rica: Perspectiva crítica y antología and by Dennis Perri about the playwrights Alberto Cañas, Daniel Gallegos, and Samuel Rovinski.

<sup>4</sup> See Bonilla, “‘El ángel de la tormenta’ en la dramaturgia costarricense” (1990); Quesada Soto, “La dramaturgia costarricense de las dos últimas décadas” (1993); and Bell, “Special Report: Costa Rican Theatre in Transition” (1996).

costarricense” 83). Calling this generation of playwrights “The New Wave,” Carolyn Bell notes that its socially committed theatre “is a refreshing trend that is quite different from what appears in the mainstream commercialized theatre” (“Special Report” 876).

Published interviews with some of these dramatists provide additional information about their plays and the types of audiences that they hope to reach.<sup>5</sup> Reports by María Bonilla, who is a director, about the theatrical medium in San José during the 1980s and 1990s explain the infrastructure and document the theatrical companies staging plays during those decades.<sup>6</sup> While the University of Costa Rica and the Compañía Nacional de Teatro’s journal Escena and private and government-affiliated publishing houses have printed individual plays or a few short plays by New Wave authors, Carolyn Bell and Patricia Fumero’s anthology, Drama contemporáneo costarricense: 1980-2000 (2000), is the first attempt to make a body of this generation’s texts accessible to readers in a single volume. Besides grouping together ten plays, the anthology includes a critical reading of each play.<sup>7</sup> Authored by Bell and Costa Rican scholars, these readings, along with those published in the Universidad Nacional’s journal Istmica and

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<sup>5</sup> Miguel Rojas interviewed his fellow playwrights Leda Cavallini, Ana Istarú, and Samuel Rovinski in “Un acercamiento a la perspectiva de tres dramaturgos en Costa Rica, 1990.” Pedro Bravo-Elizondo published interviews with Ana Istarú and Melvin Méndez in 1991 and with Miguel Rojas in 1996.

<sup>6</sup> Consult “Presente, futuro y teatro costarricense” and “Costa Rica y el derecho a soñar: Audacia teatral del siglo XX.”

<sup>7</sup> The New Wave dramatists featured in the anthology include: Guillermo Arriaga, Jorge Arroyo, Roxana Campos, Leda Cavallini, Wálter Fernández, Ana Istarú, Melvin Méndez, Arnoldo Ramos, Miguel Rojas, and Víctor Valdelomar.

in Carole A. Champagne and Marco Guillén's doctoral dissertations, forge new pathways in understanding contemporary Costa Rican dramaturgy.<sup>8</sup>

Although research on contemporary Costa Rican theatre has expanded in the 1990s, it originates and circulates, for the most part, primarily within Costa Rica. While this theatre has not yet generated the number of studies by scholars from different parts of the world that theatre in Mexico and Argentina have, it does appear to have much to say to readers and audiences in Costa Rica and abroad. A reading of Costa Rican New Wave plays reveals that they take place, in most cases, in contemporary Costa Rica. However, some of these plays are set outside of Costa Rica during different historical periods. There also are plays that are set in Costa Rica, but have been performed abroad for transnational audiences. While these plays have a variety of settings, a common thread runs through them: all address the contemporary Costa Rican socio-political context. Nevertheless, a closer look at some of these plays shows that they examine through a critical lens not only Costa Rican society but also, as contacts with other parts of the world accelerate in the 1990s, the dynamics of exchange across different cultures.

This study has evolved from my readings of Costa Rican plays and essays about the Costa Rican theatrical scene written by playwrights and directors, my attendance of performances by Costa Rican theatrical groups in Costa Rica and the United States, and interviews I and others have realized with Costa Rican playwrights and directors. While New Wave dramatists engage their socio-political environment in their texts, they are able to communicate their ideas to a large number of people only if these texts are performed in their country's theatrical circuits. During my visit to Costa Rica in

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<sup>8</sup> See the articles published in 2000 by Bell and Víctor Valembois in Istmica.

2000 and as I examined the plays selected by companies operating in the state-sponsored, independent, and commercial theatrical circuits, I observed that the playwrights' requests in essays and interviews for the staging of more contemporary Costa Rican dramaturgy were neither a rejection of all foreign plays nor a call for cultural isolationism. A play originating from a different cultural context can resonate with an audience, addressing issues that are familiar to it. However, as playwrights Leda Cavallini and Miguel Rojas point out in their essays about the theatrical scene in San José, this potential is not frequently realized in this theatrical medium. Instead, they note that the transplantation of the foreign theatrical work to the Costa Rican stage merely scratches the surface without delving deeper into what they view as crucial matters involving Costa Rican culture and politics.

As I continued reading the plays written by New Wave authors, it appeared to me that many of them enact strategies to resist this surface-level transplantation of foreign cultures that Cavallini and Rojas identify as a problematic practice within the Costa Rican theatrical movement at the end of the twentieth century. By creating a series of metaphors, allusions, and analogies to foreign cultures, as exemplified by the French settings of Linda Berrón's Olimpia (1998) and Víctor Valdelomar's El ángel de la tormenta (1990), or their own nation's prior history, such as the nineteenth-century settings in Leda Cavallini and Lupe Pérez's Pancha Carrasco reclama (1988) and Miguel Rojas's Armas tomar (1991), these playwrights establish a dialogue with these different historical and cultural contexts in order to explore their connection to contemporary Costa Rica. These works not only function as an alternative to the surface-level transplantation of foreign plays in their nation's cultural sphere, but they

also confront the transplantation of foreign models and theories in the political and economic realms as Costa Ricans consider how to respond to pressure from the United States during the Central American Revolutions in the 1980s, how much the government should intervene in the economy, and the role that French feminist theories should play in the movement during the 1990s to extend political participation to men and women. Arguing that these instances of cross-cultural exchange ought to involve a dynamic process, these plays urge their audiences and readers to reject the surface-level adoption of political and economic models and theories. Instead, they stress the need to carefully research the sustainability of the models and theories and, when necessary, to transform them or make counterproposals. This recommended course of action is exactly what the playwrights themselves follow in their borrowings from different historical and cultural contexts in order to construct their plays. Comparing their play scripts to historical sources reveals that they adapt and transform the source material in order to accommodate it to situations in contemporary Costa Rica.

This dissertation seeks to explore how a corpus of plays written by different Costa Rican dramatists in or after 1990 questions forms of globalization. Linda Berrón's Olimpia (1998), Leda Cavallini's Inquilinos del árbol (1999), Ana Istarú's Hombres en escabeche (2000), Miguel Rojas's Madriguera de ilusiones (1998) and Hogar dulce hogar (2000), and Víctor Valdelomar's El ángel de la tormenta (1990) prompt their readers and audiences to think about different forms of globalization. As the playwrights examine in these works the impact on Costa Rica caused by ideologies originating in other parts of the world that involve the role of the political left, neoliberalism, the patriarchy, the arts, and artists, they also intervene in the debate about

globalization influences. Warning about the negative consequences of some forms of globalization, such as when Cavallini's, Rojas's, Valdelomar's, and Istarú's plays reject the adoption of neoliberal practices in Costa Rica as a unidirectional, surface-level transplant from the United States that benefits only a small, upper-class portion of the population, and also advocating other ways of interacting beyond national borders, as when Berrón's and Valdelomar's works propose the formation of transnational networks to fight for the equal participation of both sexes in politics, the plays explore political and economic models and cultural identities. This project also shall consider how the dramatists construct their plays for Costa Rican and foreign audiences through their choice of setting, imagery, and allusions to different cultural contexts. Each of the plays selected for study is an example of the previously described tendencies in the settings of New Wave works. Some, like Inquilinos del árbol, Madriguera de ilusiones, and Hogar dulce hogar, take place in Costa Rica, while others, including Olimpia and El ángel de la tormenta, have foreign settings or, like Hombres en escabeche, possess a local setting, but have been performed abroad.

My study considers Costa Rican plays written between 1990 and 2000 because this is a time period often linked to the acceleration in the process of globalization after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the end of the Cold War. These theatrical works were written after Costa Rica had confronted Cold War ideology during the Central American Revolutions in the 1980s, particularly after the 1979 victory of the Sandinistas in neighboring Nicaragua. Although the United States, viewing the Sandinistas as an infiltration of communism in the Western Hemisphere, pressured Costa Rica to support military efforts to depose this revolutionary government, Costa

Rica instead sponsored a plan to bring peace to Nicaragua and other Central American nations. Costa Rica's proposal of an alternative to U.S hegemony as well as the end of the Cold War prompted Costa Ricans to think about how to establish future political, economic, and cultural relationships with the rest of the world. In the plays I have selected for analysis, the dramatists reflect on this process of globalization.

These New Wave authors have contributed to the growing study and debate about globalization. Since much has been written about this topic, a review of the existing literature uncovers many definitions of the term. However, most studies agree that it is a process in which time and space are compressed and human beings are increasingly aware of this compression.<sup>9</sup> For example, Roland Robertson, in Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture (1992), concisely explains that globalization "as a concept refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole" (8). David Held, David Goldblatt, and Jonathan Perraton, in Global Transformations: Politics, Economics, and Culture (1999) define globalization as "a process (or a set of processes) which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions--assessed in terms of their extensity,

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<sup>9</sup> The studies on globalization consulted for this project include perspectives from scholars writing from a variety of cultural contexts: Ulrich Beck's ¿Qué es la globalización? Falacias del globalismo, respuestas a la globalización (1998); Thomas L. Friedman's The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization (2000); Walter D. Mignolo's Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking (2000); Fernando Mires's Teoría política del nuevo capitalismo: El discurso de la globalización (2000); Carlos Pabón's Nación postmortem: Ensayos sobre los tiempos de insoportable ambigüedad (2002); Mary Louise Pratt's Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation (1992); and Malcolm Waters's Globalization (1995). For the applicability of studies about globalization to literature, see the January 2001 issue of PMLA, which is dedicated to the special topic of "Globalizing Literary Studies."

intensity, velocity, and impact--generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction, and the exercise of power” (16). This “compression” and “transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions” may be observed in the Costa Rican plays I have selected for study. As part of their strategy to make their audiences and readers aware of the need to assume an active role in shaping their relationships with the rest of the world, the authors of these works compress historical time and geographical distances. By alluding to nineteenth-century Costa Rican history, as Cavallini does, when the country entered into the world financial market with the exportation of coffee, or linking the Catholic crusade against Catharism in Medieval France to the military campaign sponsored by the United States during the Nicaraguan counterrevolution, as Valdelomar does, the dramatists make their audiences and readers aware of the connections linking them across historical periods and geographical distance. Furthermore, the ease of access to modern modes of transportation enables the playwrights to address audiences in different geographical locations and from different cultures at the same time with a synchrony that was not possible before. The performance of Istarú’s Hombres en escabeche at theatre festivals in the United States and Venezuela while it was still enjoying its successful run in San José, Costa Rica, serves as an example of the possibilities brought about by this compression.

While there is some agreement about defining globalization, determining when this process began and if its impact has proved beneficial or harmful is a more controversial matter. Paul Jay synthesizes well the different opinions that Roland Robertson, Anthony Giddens, and David Harvey hold about when globalization started and their

implications for those desiring to employ these studies to analyze literary texts:

“Following Robertson, the globalizing of literary studies would engage literatures and cultures from nearly every period, while if, with Giddens and Harvey, we conceive of globalization as a specifically modern or postmodern phenomenon, we would focus primarily on the literatures of the late nineteenth and the twentieth centuries” (36). Jay supports Robertson’s view, and other researchers agree with this stance. Held, Goldblatt, and Perraton cite as examples of globalizing forces world religions, such as Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, and the Roman and British empires (369). Giles Gunn emphasizes that, while many associate globalization with the collapse of the Soviet Union, it in fact existed two millennia before when Afro-Eurasian trade routes were established from the Atlantic to the Pacific (20). These arguments for an early origin of globalization appear convincing, and, it would seem more accurate to consider what was happening in the 1990s to be an acceleration of a process long in existence.

Another issue concerning globalization that has provoked debate is its impact on local cultures and identities. The term globalization, according to Gunn, “conjures up in many minds a spectacle of instantaneous electronic financial transfers, the depredations of free-market capitalism, the homogenization of culture, and the expansion of Western, by which is usually meant American, political hegemony” (19). In Latin America, there is a tendency to equate globalization with neoliberalism and the destruction of the local environment. However, many studies reject linking globalization solely to these harmful forces. Some, as Carlos Pabón does, prefer instead to call these forces globalism and to use globalization to describe other patterns of cross-cultural interaction:

El globalismo es una ideología que se manifiesta en un conjunto particular de políticas económicas vinculadas al neoliberalismo e impulsadas por actores como el Fondo Monetario Internacional, el Banco Mundial, la Organización Mundial del Comercio y otros organismos transnacionales. Mientras que la globalización es un proceso que denota las formas en que fuerzas económicas, políticas y culturales están transformando radicalmente el planeta en un mundo transnacional. (360-61)

While not all studies distinguish between globalism and globalization, they do warn of the harmful consequences of market-oriented homogenizing forces. Emphasizing that there are multiple forms of globalization in cultural, political, and economic fields, these studies analyze specific instances in which nation-states, transnational organizations, and networks operate. The plays examined in this dissertation also resist the market-oriented homogenizing forces that some studies associate with globalism. In particular, Cavallini's, Rojas's, and Valdelomar's works show the extreme consequences of certain characters' allowing potential economic profitability to determine their actions to such an extent that they no longer value human life. Their willingness to evict friends and family from their homes, to kill, or to continue fighting a war, all in order to generate financial earnings, can be read as a cautionary tale of the neoliberal economic policies accepted by certain Costa Ricans.

These reflections about the forms of globalization and their beneficial or harmful impact often vary according to the ideology of who is examining the process, as Fernando Mires concludes by noting that "*globalización es lo que cada uno entiende*

*por globalización”* (19).<sup>10</sup> While it is true that there are a wide range of opinions and thoughts about what comprises globalization, this relativism, seemingly innocuous, could encourage one not to be concerned about the geographical and temporal transformations that are taking place or to be unaware of the power dynamics present in cross-cultural exchange. The texts that I have selected for study reject this relativist agenda. They urge Costa Ricans to think about the processes of globalization and actively consider the sustainability of ideas from abroad for their local environment. They also show that Costa Rica has formulated its own models of transnational interaction, calling attention to the Central American Peace Plan and feminist networks that negotiate the use of French and American theories and local activism.

Since these New Wave dramatists explore forms of globalization not only in choosing themes, imagery, and settings native to Costa Rica but also, in some instances, from abroad, this project shall consult, in addition to studies about globalization, theories about intercultural theatre. Intercultural theatre, in which play scripts, performances, theatrical conventions, and techniques circulate can serve as an example of the flows of ideas and theories that take place in the cultural sphere as processes of globalization. As a part of these globalizing processes, the practice of intercultural theatre dates back a long time, and there exist both potentials and drawbacks for its use. Much like what occurs in the political and economic fields when ideologies circulate, intercultural theatre generates a particular set of power dynamics, dependent upon who is borrowing from another culture and for what purpose.

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<sup>10</sup> The emphasis was added by Mires.

Erika Fischer-Lichte and Patrice Pavis define intercultural theatre in a play text as the adoption of foreign thematic content or literary conventions. This type of theatre is also possible in performance when a play is staged for an audience outside of its original cultural context or when foreign conventions are employed to stage a text.<sup>11</sup> The words foreign and familiar appear frequently in descriptions of intercultural theatrical projects, much as the words global and local do in discussions about globalization. While these words appear to function as adjectives describing discrete, opposite origins, research suggests that there is a more complex relationship between them. For example, Fischer-Lichte and Pavis agree that intercultural theatre arises out of a situation within one's own culture and can have specific goals for one's own culture, the target culture. Fischer-Lichte notes that in the early 1900s, European avant-garde theatre borrowed Asian traditions and Western realistic theatre was performed in Japan for reasons specific to each target culture: "Both sides sought to give a new impulse to their own culture by adopting what had been, till then, wholly foreign theatre traditions" ("Interculturalism" 31). The European borrowing served the aesthetic purpose of reanimating its theatre, and in Japan intercultural theatre had the socio-political aim of introducing a Western style of life to the Japanese. This same principle,

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<sup>11</sup> See Fischer-Lichte's "El cambio en los códigos teatrales: Hacia una semiótica de la puesta en escena intercultural" (1989), The Dramatic Touch of Difference: Theatre: Own and Foreign (1990), "Intercultural Theatre--Passage to New Cultural Identities?" (1997), and Pavis's The Intercultural Performance Reader (1996) and Theatre at the Crossroads of Culture (1992). According to Pavis, the term intercultural is appropriate for describing dialectical exchanges between cultures. He distinguishes it from other similar terms: intracultural for describing the exchanges within a single nation; transcultural for that which transcends; ultracultural as a quest for theatre's origin; pre-cultural for the common ground of any condition; metacultural as a commentary a given culture makes on other cultural elements (Theatre at the Crossroads 2).

Fischer-Lichte emphasizes, applies to contemporary theatre, where “the intercultural phenomenon fulfills a wholly concrete function in each culture which refers to its own culture alone” (The Show and the Gaze 145).

This focus upon the target culture, according to Pavis, is of such crucial importance that writing or staging an intercultural play at times involves not only the translation of words but also a series of operations and transformations that can be visualized as a series of filters or an hourglass that a foreign culture passes through in its transfer to the target culture (Theatre at the Crossroads 184). During this process, a dramatist or director may decide to adapt the foreign material in order to facilitate understanding of the play’s ideological, ethnological, and cultural dimensions. Even if the dramatist or director makes no overt changes to this material, a play’s level of readability can change. In this case, the target culture’s response to the foreign material might differ from how the source culture would perceive the same material (Theatre at the Crossroads 17).

These studies about intercultural theatre provide a framework for my readings of Costa Rican plays, since the dramatists work with foreign themes and imagery in order to focus on situations familiar to Costa Ricans. However, one should keep in mind that these studies tend to examine cultural exchange in a single direction from a source culture foreign to the West to a Western target audience. In the plays analyzed in this study, the cultural exchange flows in a different direction than that described by theorists: from Western cultures to a target audience in Costa Rica, a nation formerly

colonized by a metropolitan European culture.<sup>12</sup> If one does not consider the direction in which the exchange operates and the relationship between the source and target cultures, Derrick Cameron warns that intercultural theatre can reinforce unequal power relations, particularly when a Western culture borrows from a colonial or post-colonial culture: “Despite Patrice Pavis’ benign definition of interculturalism as ‘the dialectic of exchange of civilities between cultures’ (Pavis 1992:2), the more common experience has been a form of cultural expropriation, a ‘borrowing without acknowledgement’ (Verma 1996b: 96)” (18). Rather than borrowing elements from the United States and European countries to add an exotic touch to their works or to suggest that Costa Ricans, whose nation emerged in the nineteenth century from a colonial system of

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<sup>12</sup> I am aware that the terms West and Western are no longer linked to specific geographical locations and that their usage can be misleading. However, when I looked at studies on intercultural theatre, one pattern I noticed was the tendency for theatre practitioners from the United States, Canada, England, and France to borrow theatrical practices from Japan, China, and India. Some of these intercultural projects have generated controversy, since those reviewing them find attempts to inject exoticism into performances and find that the power dynamic in favor of the formerly imperial powers is reinforced rather than interrogated. The terms West and Western can also be misleading in describing Costa Rica, since Costa Rica can be considered the most “Western” of the Central American countries. However, when I consider past instances of intercultural theatre in Costa Rica, such as the European troupes visiting in the nineteenth century, the arrival of the Argentines and Chileans to teach acting and directing during the 1960s, the staging of plays from other countries in the 1980s and 1990s in San José, and when I compare them to the intercultural theatre in Costa Rica that I am considering in this dissertation, including the dramatists’ references to French history, their allusions to biblical and Greek mythological figures, I see some interesting developments. In the plays I am studying, there appears to be a definite need to reference these cultures, which are a part of Costa Rican cultural identity. Yet I do not think that the dramatists are creating these references merely to imitate French society or Classical Greece. Instead, they transform the material or explore, as Istarú does, how it reinforces the subjugation of certain segments of Costa Rican society. Still, I suggest that, by incorporating this material, the dramatists might also be fulfilling certain expectations that their Costa Rican audience, which is middle-class and well educated, have and also facilitating their works’ consumption abroad.

power and have continually confronted foreign economic models and political ideologies, imitate the source cultures, the playwrights studied in this project transform this material to encourage Costa Ricans to challenge U.S. and European hegemony and neocolonialism. Intercultural theatre, therefore, serves as a vehicle for these dramatists to explore the issues of power involved in Costa Rica's relationships with other parts of the world.

These dramatists privilege their target audience in their use of the foreign material, which Fischer-Lichte and Pavis claim is a hallmark of intercultural theatre. However, they borrow from the United States and Europe in order to question systems of power that subjugate certain groups of people, in a process that appears more akin to what Mary Louise Pratt, echoing the earlier theoretical stance of Fernando Ortiz, describes as "transculturation," whereby "subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted to them by a dominant or metropolitan culture" (6).<sup>13</sup> Pratt observes that, "while subjugated peoples cannot readily control what emanates from the dominant culture, they do determine to varying extents what they absorb into their own, and what they use it for" (6). In the plays I have selected to read critically, the changes made to the foreign source material are the result of a conscious process that the dramatists follow in order to reach Costa Rican readers and audiences. They also

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<sup>13</sup> The Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz, in Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar (1940), created the term transculturation to replace the terms acculturation and deculturation. According to Ortiz, the word transculturation expresa mejor las diferentes fases del proceso transitivo de una cultura a otra, porque éste no consiste solamente en adquirir una distinta cultura . . . sino que el proceso implica también necesariamente la pérdida o desarraigo de una cultura precedente . . . y, además, significa la consiguiente creación de nuevos fenómenos culturales que pudieran denominarse de neoculturación. (96)

encourage these readers and audiences to adopt a similar process in thinking about globalization influences, recognizing that isolating their own culture from all foreign contact is not a viable option. They urge Costa Ricans to determine the appropriateness for their local context of models and ideologies from abroad and remind them that, if they choose to accept these influences, they can transform them when necessary.

This study examines a group of plays written between 1990 and 2000 by Linda Berrón, Leda Cavallini, Ana Istarú, Miguel Rojas, and Víctor Valdelomar that critique the process of globalization. The selection of these texts and the organization of the chapter divisions arose after I had read numerous Costa Rican New Wave plays and noticed that one of the recurrent themes in this theatre is the dynamics of cross-cultural exchange. Additionally, the playwrights' choice of settings and imagery and approach to historical and other theatrical texts intrigued me. Why do the playwrights decide to situate their play in contemporary Costa Rica or abroad during a different historical period? Why do they allude to certain aspects of Costa Rican or foreign culture? Moreover, I had the opportunity to attend the performance of one of the plays included in this study at Teatro de la Luna's 4<sup>th</sup> International Festival of Hispanic Theatre, and I was curious about how audience members who are not from Costa Rica would react to its staging. These observations, based upon reading the texts and attending the performance, have guided me in organizing this project in chapters according to the playwrights' stances toward certain forms of globalization and to the extent to which their texts are intercultural.

Chapter 2 begins reading the corpus of texts by concentrating on three plays that are set in Costa Rica and develop imagery alluding to Costa Rican history and culture,

Cavallini's Inquilinos del árbol (1999) and Rojas's Madriguera de ilusiones (1998) and Hogar dulce hogar (2000). Another reason why this study begins by examining these plays is because they delineate a concern that the plays analyzed in subsequent chapters also articulate. In these plays, which have not yet been performed, Cavallini and Rojas denounce the economic and ideological invasions by market-oriented forms of globalization that homogenize local cultures. Taking place within a home or place of residence, as their titles suggest, these texts are political allegories that urge Costa Ricans to recognize the negative impact that these globalizing forces can have on their local environment and identities. This chapter also explains the development of the theatrical infrastructure and circuits in San José, emphasizing how Cavallini and Rojas put into practice in their plays the views they express in their writings about this theatrical medium. Critiquing the transformation of theatre into a commodity in their country, Cavallini and Rojas suggest that their fellow New Wave dramatists should not copy foreign models nor should theatrical companies include plays from other cultural contexts in their repertoires without first considering their relevance to contemporary Costa Rica.

Chapter 3 shifts focus to two plays that have been staged in San José, exploring how the dramatists Valdelomar, in El ángel de la tormenta (1990), and Berrón, in Olimpia (1998), set their plays in Medieval and Revolutionary France, respectively, and accommodate details gained by researching historical records to propose how globalization on a political level can operate in Costa Rica through the formation of regional or transnational networks. El ángel de la tormenta takes place in Languedoc during the thirteenth-century Catholic crusade against Catharism, and Olimpia portrays

the biography of Olympe de Gouges, a woman who was active in the French Revolution. After researching the crusade and women who participated in the French Revolution, I noticed that both Valdelomar and Berrón tend to depart more from historical records than to be faithful to them and that they do so in order to make the events and characters in the plays more closely parallel the contemporary Costa Rican socio-political context. The first play calls attention to how the United States used Costa Rica as a staging ground for attacks by the contras against the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. The second play stresses the need for solidarity across nationalities and social classes among those who are fighting for women's participation in Costa Rican politics. Although El ángel de la tormenta denounces the implementation of U.S. economic and political policies in Costa Rica, and Olimpia criticizes relying solely either on foreign theories or local activism in the women's movement, both plays explore the possibilities of networks as other forms of globalization.

Chapter 4 analyzes Ana Istarú's Hombres en escabeche (2000), a commercially and critically successful play both in Costa Rica and abroad. Inspired by the Italian play Sesso? Grazie, tanto per gradire! (1996) written by Dario Fo, Franca Rame, and Jacopo Fo, Istarú opts to set her own work in Costa Rica, adapting the thematic material about sex primarily for Costa Rican audiences. However, in her choice of imagery, archetypes, and metaphors, she explores the globalization of cultural identities and, in the play's performance at the Arlington, Virginia-based Teatro de la Luna's festival, addresses a transnational audience. Although the director did not adapt the script for the festival audience, Teatro de la Luna translated it into English. A comparison of the

Spanish and English scripts in this chapter reveals different types of reception, or readings, of the play. The English-speaking audience did not receive all of the humor and allusions to Costa Rican politics. Nevertheless, this audience does manage to connect with the play because it contains elements that guide different levels of understanding it. While situating the play in a local context to address Costa Ricans, Istarú incorporates Western universal archetypes that Latin American and American audiences can identify and also employs images and metaphors that one can associate with Flores de papel (1968), a play written by Chilean Egon Wolff, and Cocinar hombres (1986), a play by Mexican Carmen Boullosa. The result is a text rich in multiple levels of meaning for Costa Ricans, Latin Americans, and Americans that questions the fixed, stable nature of gender identity and artistic creativity and also suggests that neither Marxism nor neoliberalism provides the answer to Costa Rica's future.

Using the framework of globalization studies and theories dealing with intercultural theatre, this project presents readings of plays by contemporary Costa Rican dramatists who deserve to be better known beyond the borders of their nation. These New Wave authors actively participate in the debate about political, economic, and cultural exchanges, rejecting market-oriented forces that homogenize local identities and proposing other types of forces that nurture the local environment while building transnational links. Employing themes, imagery, and settings and adapting or alluding to historical and theatrical texts from different cultural contexts, these playwrights create their works specifically for Costa Rican readers and audiences. However, their plays also can migrate across borders. Some of this migration takes place within the

text itself, which transports the readers and audience to different historical time periods and geographical locations in order to encourage them to reflect on the impact that globalizing forces have upon Costa Rica. The playwrights' texts also migrate in the sense that theatrical troupes, performances, and plays travel outside of Costa Rica, calling attention to salient issues that many people face as geographical space and time continue to compress. It is my hope to be able to contribute to these dramatists' renown and to discussions about Costa Rican theatre in the intercultural arena.

## Chapter 2: The Culture of Transplants

Estamos abandonando, por un asunto de carácter material y consumista, las otras cosas, los valores realmente importantes. ¿Qué es más importante: tener o ser?  
(Leda Cavallini, Personal interview)

Digamos que el teatro es una opción dentro del materialismo economicista que domina el mundo y esa carencia de moral y valores espirituales por el bienestar común. El bombardeo continuo e inmisericorde de todos los medios de comunicación acerca de la “vida fácil” colabora con los procesos de corrupción internos y lamentablemente con la búsqueda y afirmación, y a la vez, pérdida, de identidad, introduciéndonos en una falsa cultura universal.  
(Miguel Rojas, “Breve panorámica” 93-94)

Miguel Rojas, in a paper about the present status of Costa Rican theatre that he read at a conference hosting intellectuals from Chiapas, Mexico and Central America in the early 1990s, and Leda Cavallini, in a portion of an interview discussing her play Inquilinos del árbol (1999), have expressed similar concerns about the negative impact of economic materialism on contemporary Costa Rican society.<sup>14</sup> Both playwrights lament the loss of values and cultural identity caused by the pursuit of riches in the world marketplace. This questioning of how society privileges economic wealth at the expense of other aspects of life also finds expression in Cavallini’s play Inquilinos del árbol (1999) and in Rojas’s plays Madriguera de ilusiones (1998) and Hogar dulce

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<sup>14</sup> Editorial Teatro Nacional published Cavallini’s play in 1999 along with her other work Magnolia con almanagues in Magnolia con almanagues; Inquilinos del árbol.

hogar (2000).<sup>15</sup> In each of the three plays, a character betrays for financial gain other characters who are friends or family. While some of the characters are only concerned with material wealth, other characters value humanity, nature, and beauty. Although these plays have not been performed at this writing, their setting in Costa Rica's capital, San José, dialogue in the Spanish language as spoken by Costa Ricans, and use of images and symbols alluding to Costa Rican history and culture encourage their Costa Rican readers to relate the conflicts between the characters to the debate about the present and future of the Costa Rican state and also, looking beyond national borders, to think about globalization influences. The readers also would recognize the harsh social realities present in the plays, in which the Costa Rica that the characters inhabit is marked by violence, sexual abuse, crime, and substance abuse. Expressing a fear communicated by Cavallini in the interview and by Rojas at the conference that a homogenous culture that has spread across the world will replace local cultures, the plays denounce forms of globalization involving neoliberal economic models that give primacy to the market.

Both Cavallini and Rojas have delved into various aspects of Costa Rican history and culture in other plays. Cavallini co-authored her first play, Ellas en la maquila (1984), with Lupe Pérez as part of the thesis for the Licenciatura degree in Artes Dramáticas at the University of Costa Rica.<sup>16</sup> Cavallini continued working with Pérez,

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<sup>15</sup> Madriguera de ilusiones was published by Editorial Guayacán in 1998 and also has been published in the anthology edited by Carolyn Bell and Patricia Fumero, Drama contemporáneo costarricense: 1980-2000 (2000). All quotations from Madriguera de ilusiones will refer to the anthology's edition of the play.

<sup>16</sup> María Pérez Yglesias, in an introduction to Ellas en la maquila, provides biographical information about Cavallini's coauthor, Guadalupe Pérez, a civil engineer, who was

researching the thematic material, to coauthor the plays Pancha Carrasco reclama (1988), Pinocho (1989), a children's play, which won the Aquileo Echeverría National Theater Prize in 1989, and Aguirre: Yo rebelde hasta la muerte (1992).<sup>17</sup> Other works written by Cavallini include the children's plays Ahí viene el futuro (1989) and Musical garapiñado (1999).<sup>18</sup> For adults, she has written Io, coronada de claveles (1998), Magnolia con almanagues (1998), Ocho azucenas para nosotras mismas (1998), and Tarde de granizo y musgo (1998).<sup>19</sup>

Miguel Rojas, a graduate of the University of Costa Rica and an actor, also has written children's theatre: Niño ojos de estrella, which is an unpublished play performed by the Grupo Tierranegra and the Compañía Nacional de Teatro in 1980, and numerous plays compiled in the anthologies Obras teatrales (1988) and Fantasía tropical

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born in Spain and immigrated to Costa Rica in the 1940s. Pérez has actively participated in amateur theatrical groups, such as in the Teatro La Caja during the 1960s, and has written 23 plays, the majority of which remain unpublished, but has been staged by amateur groups and high schools (Pérez Yglesias, "Introducción" Ellas en la maquila 7-9).

<sup>17</sup> See María Pérez Yglesias's prologue to Aguirre for a description of Cavallini and Pérez's collaborative process and techniques for incorporating their research on textile assembly plants, the historical figure Pancha Carrasco, the children's story Pinocchio, and the Spanish conquistador Lope de Aguirre into their plays.

<sup>18</sup> Ahí viene el futuro forms part of Cavallini's Master's thesis, "Dramaturgia infantil: Un espacio para recrear o imaginar," presented to the University of Costa Rica in 1995. The play was staged with the title El libro y el pájaro in 1989. Cavallini has not published Musical garapiñado, but the Compañía Nacional de Teatro staged it, under the direction of Ernesto Rohrmoser, as part of the 1999 Festival de las Artes in Puntarenas and San José (Díaz, "Sorpresa garapiñada").

<sup>19</sup> Io coronada de claveles and Magnolia con almanagues were published in Tarde de granizo y musgo y otras obras. Ocho azucenas para nosotras mismas, based upon an unpublished poem written by Cavallini, has not been published but was performed in 1998 by the Pancha Carrasco collective and the theatrical group TEGE (Teatro de Género) under the direction of Isabel Saborío (Díaz, "Historias de mujeres").

(1995). Costa Rican history and mythology are a common thematic current in his children's theatre as well as in his works for adults, particularly in the plays Los nublados del día (1981), Donde canta el mar (1984), El anillo del pavo real (1988), Armas tomar (1991), and El árbol enfermo (1996). "Miguel Rojas' ultimate goal," according to Carole A. Champagne, "is to direct Costa Ricans to an understanding of their unique past so that a better comprehension of their process of nationhood will guide them on their future course" (73). For adults, Rojas's other plays include: Lo que somos, which won the 1977 Grano de Oro Prize from the Municipalidad de San José; Cacho de luna (1977); El pan nuestro (1977); Aquí abajo estamos (1984); A cada quien su flor (1984); De tiempo en tiempo sin importancia (1989); Ridículo y sublime amor (1990); Piel de ángel (1998); and Mi media naranja de amor está loca (1999).<sup>20</sup>

In Inquilinos del árbol, Madriguera de ilusiones, and Hogar dulce hogar, Cavallini and Rojas explore the options available to Costa Rica in the aftermath of its economic collapse in 1980. International factors, such as the oil crisis and decline in the price of coffee, made it difficult to sustain the Welfare State created after the Civil War of 1948.<sup>21</sup> The population soon felt the impact as "unemployment rose to 10 percent while inflation ran between 80 and 100 percent annually" (Molina and Palmer, The History of

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<sup>20</sup> Rojas also has written the poetry collections Poemas profanos de amor (2000) and Canto al hombre (2000), which he has not published. The titles and dates when Rojas wrote or published his plays come from his curriculum vitae for the year 2000, Pedro Bravo Elizondo's interview with Rojas, "Visión del teatro costarricense a través de su dramaturgo Miguel Rojas," and the anthology edited by Bell and Fumero. See Champagne's dissertation for readings of El anillo del pavo real, Aquí abajo estamos, El árbol enfermo, A cada quien su flor, Donde canta el mar, and Los nublados del día.

<sup>21</sup> According to Jorge Rovira Mas, the social democracy espoused by the Partido Liberación Nacional after the Civil War sought to maintain political stability by constructing a Welfare State to redistribute income, thus fostering the formation and strengthening of a large middle class (18-19).

Costa Rica 119). In order to mitigate these negative consequences, the state borrowed money, signing agreements with the International Monetary Fund as well as Structural Adjustment Programs and received financial assistance from the United States in exchange for political support during the Central American revolutions in the 1980s (Molina and Palmer, The History of Costa Rica 120-21).

In the 1990s, when sources of foreign aid grew scarcer, Presidents Rafael Angel Calderón Fournier (1990-94) and José María Figueres Olsen (1994-98) signed a pact “agreeing to a package of reforms that would dismantle the last remnants of the Welfare State built between 1940 and 1978 by Figueres Ferrer and Calderón Guardia--the fathers of the signatories” (Molina and Palmer, The History of Costa Rica 140).<sup>22</sup> Iván Molina and Steven Palmer call this reduction of state services and the adoption of a neoliberal ethic “shock therapy” because

the results have been shocking indeed: deep spending cuts in education and health, and in subsidies to basic foodstuffs. Public employment fell from 17.4 percent of the labor force in 1978 to 14.7 in 1995. The middle class got poorer, the poor fell into indigence and the so-called informal sector (street vendors and marginal workers) expanded dramatically. (The History of Costa Rica 129)

This reversal in economic and political policies and its negative consequences for middle and lower-class Costa Ricans form the background of Inquilinos del árbol, Madriguera de ilusiones, and Hogar dulce hogar. In particular, it would seem that in these plays the decisions by Presidents Calderón Fournier and Figueres Olsen to

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<sup>22</sup> José Figueres Ferrer was the president of Costa Rica from 1948 to 1949, 1953 to 1958 and 1970 to 1974. Rafael Angel Calderón Guardia was president from 1940 to 1944.

dismantle the economic and political structures constructed by their fathers to ensure the well-being of many Costa Ricans functions as a subtext that underlies the characters' motivation for betraying family or friends. The readers can sympathize with the characters betrayed by other characters because Cavallini and Rojas wrote these works at a time when a good number of Costa Ricans likely felt abandoned by their country, whose leaders had determined that its network of social programs had grown too costly to maintain. By showing how some of the characters opt not to help others and even compromise their moral principles in order to ensure their own financial survival, the plays question the destruction of human relationships not only within the home but also on national and global levels.

Human relationships were not the only things at risk during these political and economic crises. Carolyn Bell, in "Special Report: Costa Rican Theatre in Transition," observes that Costa Rican theatre entered a difficult period in the late 1970s and early 1980s. As the price of tickets became inaccessible to the general population and the government significantly reduced the funding of theatrical productions, "many theatres clearly changed their production selections to light comedy with traditional character roles and predictable storylines in an attempt to attract and maintain audiences" (Bell, "Special Report" 878). A commercially-oriented theatre, which had not existed in Costa Rica prior to the 1980s, emerged (Perales 82).<sup>23</sup> While this theatre became the most popular option among audiences, a politically and socially committed theatre

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<sup>23</sup> Rosalina Perales provides an overview of the theatrical scene in San José during the 1980s in a chapter about the history of Costa Rican theatre in Teatro hispanoamericano contemporáneo: 1967-1987. María Bonilla also reports, in "Presente, futuro y teatro costarricense," on the theatrical scene in San José in the 1980s and provides an update about the 1990s in "Costa Rica y el derecho a soñar: Audacia teatral del siglo XX."

appeared during the same time period. Calling this alternative to commercial theatre the “New Wave,” Bell suggests that “it will probably remain a parallel theatre directed at an entirely different set of theatre-goers” (“Special Report” 879).

Leda Cavallini and Miguel Rojas are part of this New Wave theatre. Cavallini, in a personal interview, explains that she and the other authors are a generation united by age and the exploration of a common theme in their works:

La ciudad sigue siendo, igual que en Latinoamérica, el punto de encuentro y desencuentro. La ciudad sigue siendo la generadora de problemas. La ciudad sigue siendo el desorden, el punto donde esta maraña, que no se comprende y se analiza, está dando posibilidades para trabajar. Pero, realmente, ¿dónde está el ser humano en la ciudad? ¿Cómo se define? ¿Qué es lo que tiene la identidad, esa búsqueda? Hemos perdido cantidades de cosas.

According to Cavallini, a single thread running through the New Wave playwrights’ creations is a search for the human being’s identity in the city, whose growth has transformed society positively as well as negatively in Costa Rica and other Latin American countries. Their plays address the results of the internal migration of Costa Ricans to the San José metropolitan area, where, the Biesanzes note, approximately one third of the entire Costa Rican population lived in 1995 (127). Cavallini also mentions her belief that Costa Ricans have lost elements of their identity in this process of urbanization and that she and her fellow playwrights explore what Costa Ricans have lost, retained or how their identities have changed. Rojas also voices, in his paper at the conference in Chiapas, a concern among the playwrights of his generation about the loss of identity, especially if a universal, homogenous culture replaces it. In this instance, he

is referring to the rise of what Molina and Palmer describe as the “transnational culture,” particularly “the rapid penetration of the ‘American way of life’” promoted by urban expansion in Costa Rica (The History of Costa Rica 132).<sup>24</sup>

As one can see from Cavallini and Rojas’s classifications of the New Wave theatre, these two playwrights are not the only ones from this generation to question homogenizing forms of globalization. I shall begin my reading of how this generation’s plays intervene in the debates about globalization’s impact by focusing on those plays that are set in Costa Rica, more specifically in San José, which form the vast majority of the New Wave plays. Examining plays with a Costa Rican setting will enable me to consider first the familiar or local environment before I turn to plays set outside of Costa Rica or that allude to a variety of cultural contexts. However, since there are many plays set in Costa Rica, this chapter looks more closely at three of them:

Inquilinos del árbol, Madriguera de ilusiones, and Hogar dulce hogar. I have selected these plays not only because their years of publication closely coincide (1998, 1999 and 2000), they take place in Costa Rica and express similar critiques of globalization but also because the title of each alludes to the concept of “home”: Inquilinos del árbol “Tenants of the Tree,” Madriguera de ilusiones “Den of Illusions,” Hogar dulce hogar “Home Sweet Home.”<sup>25</sup> Inquilinos del árbol and Madriguera de ilusiones are set in

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<sup>24</sup> Molina and Palmer state that this process of cultural transnationalization “was assisted by the introduction of cable television in 1981; by the founding of private schools that emphasize the teaching of English; by the boom in advertising agencies whose styles are copied from Miami; and by the opening of video arcades and video rental shops” (The History of Costa Rica 132).

<sup>25</sup> Víctor Valembois analyzes in detail the title of Madriguera de ilusiones, noting that it guides the reading of the play: “Si una madriguera se refiere a una casa, pequeña y fea, con determinante connotación animal, es efectivamente la morada de un puñado de

spaces where the marginalized reside. In the first play, the characters live in a tree located in a vacant lot, and the second work takes place in a boarding house. In Hogar dulce hogar, most of the scenes occur in a middle-class family's house.

Despite the references to “home” in the titles, the characters in these plays are at odds with each other and have far from idyllic lives, recalling in some ways but also contrasting sharply with Costa Rican narrative and theatre from earlier in the twentieth century. In the narrative works, a discourse had evolved equating the family to the nation and alluding “al tipo de relaciones que deberían existir idealmente tanto en una como en otra: armonía, ausencia de conflictos, origen común y respeto a la autoridad y el orden” (Ovares, Rojas, Santander, and Carballo 6). As urbanization increased in Costa Rica, the house became a sign of refuge to readers of these narrative works (Ovares, Rojas, Santander, and Carballo 204). The plays written at the beginning of the twentieth century tended to be set in the living room of a middle or upper-class family's house, in which conflicts generated by forces external to the family were resolved.<sup>26</sup>

The theatrical works published in the mid-twentieth century took place in the houses of

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personas en este ‘perro mundo’: no sin razón la expresión vuelve unas tres veces en la obra” (“La copa” 468). The second half of the title, “Illusions,” according to Valembouis, has a polysemous meaning, referring not only to the characters' passions and their illusion that money is the most important thing in life, but also to the special theatrical effect achieved when the dead characters appear as ghosts on stage (“La copa” 468).

<sup>26</sup> Margarita Rojas, Alvaro Quesada, Flora Ovares, and Carlos Santander, in En el tinglado de la eterna comedia: Teatro costarricense 1890-1930, explain the dynamics of the conflicts that the families confronted in early twentieth-century Costa Rican plays:

Las piezas se estructuran todas alrededor de un núcleo familiar tradicional, que se enfrenta a diversas fuerzas centrífugas que amenazan, desde un espacio social externo, su integridad o cohesión internas, y en ese oscilar entre la cohesión y el cambio, la inercia o la disgregación, se advierte la posición ambigua del liberalismo oligárquico costarricense entre la tradición y el progreso. (94)

the bourgeoisie, but their focus shifted to married couples, whose relationship was threatened internally by the adulterous, sexually passionate woman, and the plays' endings, showing the wife's acquiescence to her faithful husband's authority, reinforced gender stereotypes and the patriarchy's dominance.<sup>27</sup> Although Inquilinos del árbol, Madriguera de ilusiones, and Hogar dulce hogar echo the Costa Rican plays from earlier in the century in that they take place in a house and the characters face conflicts, they depart from these prior plays in that the conflicts between the characters, who are not necessarily a family, are caused by outside forces that are supported by some of the characters residing in the house. In Cavallini and Rojas's plays, these conflicts remain unresolved or end tragically, as Rojas concludes Hogar dulce hogar with the words "Fin de esta tragedia" (190). Their plays, like the narrative works written earlier in the century, can be read as a political allegory, with the relationships between the characters representing the nation.<sup>28</sup> However, in these dramas, the house is not a refuge and is marked by the lack of harmony among its inhabitants.

A final reason for choosing to comment on these plays in this chapter is that their authors, Cavallini and Rojas, have also produced a metatheatrical critical discourse examining Costa Rican dramaturgy and theatrical productions in Costa Rica during the 1980s and 1990s. According to Juan Villegas, metatheatrical critical discourse is

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<sup>27</sup> Consult Margarita Rojas, Alvaro Quesada, Flora Ovaes, and Carlos Santander, En el tinglado de la eterna comedia: Teatro costarricense 1930-1950, for readings of Costa Rican plays from this time period.

<sup>28</sup> Rojas, in the introduction "Casa, hogar y familia" to Hogar dulce hogar, encourages the reading of the play as a political allegory, stating his intention that the family in the play function as a microcosm of society: "La familia, y por consiguiente, el tipo de hogar que labramos, es lo que somos en sociedad, es la sociedad misma. Si la sociedad anda mal, escasa de valores, llena de retorcimientos, es porque la casa, o sea, la familia, está hecha un desastre" (9).

la reflexión de los propios productores de textos teatrales--tanto los dramaturgos como los directores o los grupos teatrales--sobre su propio discurso o el discurso teatral, en general, y en el cual postulan funciones o responsabilidades para sus textos teatrales o para el teatro de su tiempo, reflexión que no se da generalmente dentro de los textos teatrales. (88)<sup>29</sup>

These texts, Villegas notes, address not only theatre specialists but also potential spectators and provide useful insight into the aesthetic and cultural codes used to create a play or performance (89). Cavallini and Rojas, who are currently professors in the Escuela de Estudios Generales at the University of Costa Rica, have trained as cultural promoters and published critical readings of theatre.<sup>30</sup> Cavallini and her coauthor Lupe Pérez have written articles for the journal Escena about the Costa Rican historical themes addressed in their plays.<sup>31</sup> Cavallini also wrote a thesis, “Dramaturgia infantil: Un espacio para recrear o imaginar” (1995), which researches the role of children’s theatre in Costa Rica, for her Master’s degree in Latin American Literature from the

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<sup>29</sup> Villegas explains that this term does not refer to the metatheatrical techniques of creating a play within a play or showing life as being already theatricalized in a play or performance (89).

<sup>30</sup> According to Rafael Cuevas Molina, the Compañía Nacional de Teatro, after its foundation in 1971, trained cultural promoters in its Departamento de Promociones Teatrales. These promoters traveled to schools and rural areas to assist groups wishing to stage plays and make theatre accessible to an expanded audience. In 1977, the Taller Nacional de Teatro assumed the responsibility for training the cultural promoters (Cuevas Molina 158-60).

<sup>31</sup> María Pérez Yglesias, in the introduction to Cavallini and Pérez’s play Ellas en la maquila, provides the titles and publication dates of these articles: “Pancha emerge del pasado y hace una lectura del presente” (1988) and “Maíz/tierra, mito/leyenda, quinientos años después” (1992). Pérez Yglesias also lists other articles written by Cavallini about Costa Rican theatre, but does not include publication information: “Alberto Cañas: Algo más que dos sueños” (1992), “Identidad, didáctica y teatro escolar en Costa Rica” (1992), and “Teatro, literatura y espectáculo” (1993) (11).

University of Costa Rica.<sup>32</sup> Rojas has compiled the articles that he wrote about Costa Rican dramaturgy and theatrical productions for the weekly newspaper Semanario Universidad during the late 1970s and 1980s in the anthology Puntos de vista en el teatro (1987). He also has presented the results of his research on nineteenth-century Costa Rican theatre in the articles “Dramaturgia costarricense en el siglo XIX” (1994) and “Teatro costarricense del siglo xix: Alegoría sobre la libertad en la pieza ‘La guardia del campamento,’ escrita en 1873” (1996), which the journal Káñina published.

This critical discourse by the two playwrights provides information about the structure of the theatrical circuits, infrastructure, and repertories in Costa Rica. Cavallini and Rojas also confront the transformation of theatre in Costa Rica into a commodity during the 1980s and the role of the state in subsidizing theatre. Since the vision that these playwrights express in their critical writings about the role of theatre in Costa Rica is similar to the role of art explored in their plays Inquilinos del árbol, Madriguera de ilusiones, and Hogar dulce hogar, I will conclude this chapter by examining Cavallini and Rojas’s critical discourse as well as information about the staging and critical reception of their other plays. In their plays, they put into practice

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<sup>32</sup> Cavallini, in a personal interview, explains that her professional background differs from that of other playwrights of her generation because she had graduated with a degree in Literature from the University of Costa Rica before she studied theatre and wrote plays and presently combines the roles of critic and playwright:

La impresión que yo tengo, cuando yo empecé a hacer mi tesis, es que yo soy como un fenómeno particular porque primero yo comencé como estudiante de literatura. Terminé mi carrera de literatura y me fui a estudiar el teatro y después volví nuevamente a la literatura a tener mi maestría en literatura latinoamericana. Entonces, tal vez esa parte de fuera, pero estar dentro de, son como las dos cosas que, digamos, yo puedo unir porque en el espacio de haber estudiado literatura y de ser primero investigadora de literatura, investigadora de crítica literaria, me da el otro espacio para acercarme al teatro y puedo estar como en dos canales.

their critical proposals of a politically and socially committed theatre. Although this theatre is often set in a Costa Rican cultural context, it does not advocate closing off society to all influences from other cultures yet it focuses on the negative consequences of homogenizing globalization influences.

In their plays and their readings of theatre in Costa Rica, both Cavallini and Rojas intervene in a growing debate about forms of globalization, in which others have expressed similar concerns about the damage done to cultural identities by market-centered globalizing forces. Thomas L. Friedman explains that the title of his book The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization contains what

are actually pretty good symbols of this post-Cold War era: half the world seemed to be emerging from the Cold War intent on building a better Lexus, dedicated to modernizing, stream-lining and privatizing their economies in order to thrive in the system of globalization. And half of the world--sometimes half the same country, sometimes half the same person--was still caught up in the fight over who owns which olive tree. (31)

If the Lexus, a luxury car manufactured by the Toyota Motor Corporation, represents the desire to succeed economically in the age of globalization, then olive trees “represent everything that roots us, anchors us, identifies us and locates us in this world --whether it be belonging to a family, a community, a tribe, a nation, a religion, or, most of all, a place called home” (Friedman 31). While the Lexus, which one can purchase in many parts of the world, represents the homogenizing forms of globalization, the olive trees symbolize the unique cultural identities throughout the world. Cultural identity, Friedman points out, is not the only thing lost in the wake of these forms of

globalization: “When you strip a people’s home of their distinctiveness--either by homogenizing them or by destroying them environmentally--you undermine not only their culture but also social cohesion” (302). The fracturing of the relationships in Cavallini and Rojas’s plays appears to be this breakdown in social cohesion that Friedman associates with the spread of a market-oriented globalization. Moreover, a closer look at the central conflicts in the plays reveals that they parallel the struggle between the Lexus and the olive tree described by Friedman.

The stage directions before Scene One of Inquilinos del árbol indicate that a tree, in which the characters--Smoking, Quinceañera and Piyama--are presently living, occupies a large part of the stage.<sup>33</sup> An image of a shopping mall or a series of tall buildings with very large windows that is in the process of construction is also projected onto the stage. These first images that Cavallini presents to the reader immediately evoke a contrast: on the one hand, the tree, which one can associate with Costa Rica’s tropical forests and unique biodiversity, and the shopping mall, a commercial space that one could find anywhere in the world. This clash of concepts soon reaches the characters, who have to decide between preserving their home or abandoning it in exchange for payment from the developers who wish to construct a mall on the vacant lot. According to Beatriz Sarlo, the modern mall signifies the dominance of the world market since its project is to construct a space capsule whose structuring aesthetic is that of the market.

There is a way in which all shopping centers are the same: in Minneapolis,

Miami Beach, Chevy Chase, Newport, or on Rodeo Drive; in Santa Fe or Coronel

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<sup>33</sup> As the play progresses, it becomes clear that the setting is in the present, in a vacant lot in the Costa Rican capital city, San José. For example, Quinceañera mentions a jewelry store and public telephones located near the Parque Central (42-43).

Díaz, Buenos Aires. If you were a visitor from Mars, only the currency of the banknotes and the language spoken by merchants, customers, and bystanders could give any indication as to where in the world you were. The constant presence of international brands and merchandise makes for the uniformity of this space without qualities. What we have here is an interplanetary flight to Cacharel, Stephanel, Fiorucci, Kenzo, Guess, and McDonalds, in a spaceship whose insignia is the united colors of the world's labels. (10-11)

If the “tenants of the tree” accept the developers’ offer, they will lose their home, which has provided them with a sense of identity in the harsh conditions in which they live, to this homogenous form of the shopping mall.

Early in the play, the characters establish a sharp distinction between themselves and those from the other side of the bushes bordering the lot. For example, although Smoking tries to coax Quinceañera to gather firewood on the other side, she refuses, saying: “Yo del otro lado no voy. ¿Qué te estás creyendo? Allí hay ladrones, vagos, sinvergüenzas” (39). According to Quinceañera, those from the other side lack moral values and seek to profit by robbing others instead of working. Although Smoking, Quinceañera, and Piyama often mention those from the other side, these people never appear on stage. However, throughout the play, Cavallini shows how a consumerist mentality predominates on the other side by describing in the stage directions the sounds coming from the other side. Sometimes these sounds are those of clocks ringing and coins jingling, or they are associated with machines such as calculators, computers, and video games. The playwright also suggests that radio or television advertisements be projected from the other side: “*Los sonidos son estridentes, voces anuncian*

*promociones de comidas rápidas, llaman a concursos de belleza, a participar en rifas y bingos, a adquirir pasajes de vuelo con destino a Disneylandia y a pasar fines de semana en hoteles de lujo”* (62). This choice of sounds also alludes to the homogenizing tendencies of economic forms of globalization that prioritize the market. Although these ads are transmitted in the Spanish language, their content selling fast food, bingo games, trips to Disneyland, and luxury hotels could be directed at consumers situated in any part of the world. Those on the other side, Cavallini suggests, have lost their sense of home, of a cultural identity, and only aspire to acquire the technological conveniences and material luxuries for sale in the world market. While Cavallini’s use of the term el otro lado in this play could possibly refer to a particular location in San José, the characters’ reactions to el otro lado and the noises emanating from it suggest that it is not necessarily a concrete place but rather an ideological state of mind, a materialist neighborhood.

At the same time that the “tenants of the tree” attempt to resist the offer from this materialist neighborhood, their identity already has been marked to a certain extent by it. Their names come from the clothing that they are wearing, which, judging from its poor condition, suggests they acquired it after those from the other side discarded it. For instance, Smoking wears a worn-out, dirty tuxedo covered with patches. Piyama is dressed in the sleeper-style pajamas that cover the feet to keep a child warm. Quinceañera wears the attire that young women in Latin America, particularly in Central America and Mexico, traditionally don to celebrate the fifteenth birthday, marking the passage from childhood to adulthood. However, Quinceañera’s appearance in the play does not convey the image of elegance and beauty associated with the

birthday celebration. Although she wears a blond wig and velvet gloves, her long, pink gown looks shabby and dirty, and her tiara, which is made of costume jewelry, is missing several gems. The characters' wardrobe, along with the aluminum cans, plastic, and paper waste that are scattered across the stage suggest an affinity between these discarded items and the "tenants of the tree," whom society perhaps also views as disposable. In addition, naming the characters after clothing reflects their status as commodities and moreover, disposable articles of trade, showing doubly that they are tenants, or more property to be owned rather than owners. Furthermore, the names evoke certain cultures or languages. Smoking is the signifier most closely like English, while Piyama is a mestizo form, a mix of English and Spanish, and Quinceañera is more indigenous or Latin American.

Despite the adverse conditions in which the characters live, Cavallini shows that they have created a life together with some other characters included by her in the list of cast members: a coffee pot named Pancracia, which is of an older style, made of metal and heated over a fire; the trees; and blackbirds or grackles (35). These nonhuman characters acquire importance in the play as the human characters identify with them to different extents while considering how to respond to the developers' offer to pay them for leaving their home. This proposal seems most attractive to Smoking, who is irritated with Piyama and Quinceañera, claiming that he does all the work so that they can survive. Although Piyama recycles aluminum cans and newspapers to earn some money, he also spends time writing poetry. Quinceañera occupies most of her time talking with the ants and making dresses for the saplings that sprout around the tree. Ultimately, Smoking opts to end his relationship with the other "tenants" and secretly

enters into negotiations with people from the other side. Once he completes the deal, he tells Quinceañera and Piyama that they must leave, informing them that he has sold the tree. Since neither he nor the other “tenants” possess legal title to the vacant lot, perhaps the playwright is alluding to a tactic employed by those from the other side to persuade the “tenants” to leave without a violent confrontation. The cash payment that Smoking accepts, therefore, could be in exchange for his coercing Piyama and Quinceañera to abandon the lot quietly.<sup>34</sup> While Smoking benefits financially from his agreement with the developers, Cavallini’s use of visual imagery and sound effects suggests that he has sold the home and identity that he shared with the other “tenants.”

Like the characters in Inquilinos del árbol, those in Miguel Rojas’s play Madriguera de ilusiones also come from Costa Rica’s lower social classes. Set in modern times, in a boarding house on the outskirts of San José, the play belongs to one of the tendencies in Rojas’s dramaturgy classified by Víctor Valembois as “la búsqueda de lo popular” (“La copa” 465).<sup>35</sup> However, the playwright’s treatment of this environment in the

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<sup>34</sup> This tactic maintains the invisibility of Smoking, Piyama, Quinceañera, and other marginalized people to those from the other side or the rest of society. Piyama and Smoking show in the following dialogue that they are aware of their invisible status:

PIYAMA. Vecinos de un charral que casi se convierte en residencia de lujo, inquilinos de un árbol mágico que nos permite vivir como en los tiempos de los antiguos antepasados arbóreos. Monos, bestias come hojas o gente rara. ¿Sabrán que estamos aquí? ¿Cómo nos mirarán desde allá?

SMOKING. Ni siquiera nos miran. En realidad, ni les importamos. Esta parte del mundo no existe para ellos. Se pasan ocupados con el telefax, el internet o los negocios de la economía global. (48-49)

While those from the other side are busy tracking the global economy’s progress, Piyama notes that he and the other “tenants” live outside of modernity. Interestingly, the title of the play comes from Piyama’s use of the word inquilinos, or tenants, to refer to himself and his companions.

<sup>35</sup> Valembois identifies other tendencies in Rojas’s theatre, including plays (Los nublados del día, Armas tomar) that explore the confrontation between art and nation or

play avoids pure social realism: “Felizmente, porque mal haría el teatro en transformarse en simple fotocopia de la realidad, la obra tampoco encaja dentro de un realismo socialista ni en una literatura de denuncia” (Valembois, “La copa” 466). Of the three plays being studied in this chapter, Madriguera de ilusiones shows the most negative consequence of making economic profitability the most important goal in life: three of the characters--Azucena, the landlady; Clavija, a moneylender; and Cancán, an alcoholic turned moneylender--die. Only the fourth character, a saxophone, described by Rojas in the cast list as the “alma del género,” remains at the end of the play (409).

From the beginning of the play, Rojas presents the characters’ obsession with money. Clavija is in the room he has been renting from Azucena for the past four months, counting his money and taking inventory of the loans that others must repay him. He reveals that he has yet to pay Azucena the rent. Nevertheless, as he reviews his accounts, it becomes apparent that he should have sufficient income to cover the rent from what he earns by taking advantage of the unfortunate, offering them loans at a fifty-percent interest rate: “Carraco me pagó los cincuenta colones que me debía, más veinticinco de interés, son setenta y cinco. . . .Me debe cien, más cincuenta de interés, son ciento cincuenta. . . .Presté a Jotajota trescientos. Más ciento cincuenta de interés son cuatrocientos cincuenta. Es buena paga” (411). Clavija is so absorbed in calculating his potential earnings that he is unaware that Azucena has entered his room, threatening to evict him the next morning if he does not pay the rent. He replies: “Te pagaré, quiero morir sin deudas. Podés estar segura. Tu dinero conmigo está mejor que

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art and identity and those (El anillo del pavo real) oriented towards “la línea de lo eminentemente teatral,” experimenting with the possibilities permitted by the theatrical literary genre (“La copa” 468-70).

si lo tuvieras en un banco. Yo no robo, no soy político ni empresario. Quiero progresar, tener futuro” (413). Seeing nothing wrong with not paying the rent or charging excessive interest on loans, Clavija tells Azucena that only politicians and businessmen steal. While Rojas certainly could be alluding to cases of corruption, illegal business practices, and banking scandals among the Costa Rican upper classes, he also encourages his readers to realize that the pursuit of material wealth at the expense of other human beings has permeated all levels of Costa Rican society.

In fact, all of the human characters in the play rob and are dishonest. After witnessing Clavija count his savings, Azucena concocts a scheme whereby she pays Clavija’s friend Cancán to help her learn where her tenant hides his money in the room. Later that day, pretending to seduce Clavija, she suffocates him with a pillow and steals his money. Cancán then assumes Clavija’s job as a moneylender and moves into his former room. Clavija’s ghost returns to warn him that Azucena will rob and kill him, too. Suspicious of Azucena’s interest in him, Cancán suffocates her. However, he is unable to enjoy his savings and, feeling guilty about the murder, dies of alcoholism.

By the end of the play, Rojas has shown that none of these characters is innocent. Azucena’s murder of Clavija is not the only case of betrayal for financial gain. Both of the male characters reveal their intention to move out in the middle of the night without paying Azucena rent, but she confronts them earlier in the evening before they can carry out their plans. Not even the prospect of forming a relationship dissuades these characters from acquiring the money they covet. When Cancán questions Clavija’s warning about Azucena, noting that he enjoys her company, Clavija responds:

CLAVIJA. Estás loco.

CANCAN. Un hogar es importante.

CLAVIJA. Deja pérdidas. Las mujeres viven más tiempo y al final se quedan con todo. (455)

The above dialogue indicates that Clavija believes that marrying and having a home is too damaging to one's savings. He views it as a business loss, given that women often live longer than men and inherit their husbands' money. Since Cancán murders Azucena after Clavija's ghost visits him, it appears that Cancán has reached the same conclusion about the lack of economic profitability in marriage and maintaining a home. Far from being a home, the "den" inhabited by the characters is empty at the end of the play, except for the sounds of the saxophone. A consumerist mentality, suggests Rojas, ultimately destroys human beings.

In Hogar dulce hogar, Rojas focuses on the middle-class Nicomedes family. Nevertheless, his choice of the aphorism Home Sweet Home for the play's title does not at all reflect the nature of the relationships among the family members, nor does the house serve as a refuge from the negative impact of pursuing economic success at any cost. Like Cavallini does in Inquilinos del árbol, Rojas presents his readers at the beginning of the play with contrasting images to represent the opposition between homogenizing forces of economic globalization and the preservation of identity. The stage directions describe the Nicomedes's residence as an otherwise attractive, modern house. The cost of maintaining this house, which does not possess a distinctive style linking it to a particular geographic location, generates most of the conflicts among the characters. While the house represents the family's desire for economic status, Rojas's stage directions also call attention to a "granada real" or a giant granadilla tree, which is

in “pleno crecimiento,” on the patio (13). According to Miguel A. Quesada Pacheco, a giant granadilla tree is a “planta trepadora de los lugares cálidos que da un fruto ovalado de color ámbar en su interior, del tamaño y peso de un melón, de sabor algo insípido pero especial para bebida refrescante” (142). Unlike the modern-style house, the giant granadilla sets the play in a specific place, since it is a fruit tree grown in tropical climates. Another play by Rojas, Granada real (1990), which won the 1988 Juegos Florales Prize in Guatemala, also features this image. A comparison of the two plays reveals that Granada real is an earlier version of Hogar dulce hogar. The characters have different names, yet their personalities are similar. However, the more recent play places greater emphasis both on how much some of the family members value money and on the father’s illegal business dealings while increasing the violence in the arguments between the father and mother, and their son Bernardo and his girlfriend. Although Rojas has changed the title of the revised version of the play to Hogar dulce hogar, the granadilla tree still remains an important image of Costa Rica’s natural environment and reminds the readers that what takes place within this family’s house alludes to Costa Rican society.

The characters in Rojas’s play are ambivalent about what they feel is most important in life, oscillating between the pursuit of two goals: succeeding economically and professionally or building solid, affectionate relationships with the family. The father, Alfredo, having decided to leave his salaried job and start a business, seems mostly inclined towards the first of these two goals. The mother, Elizabeth, and the daughter, Vera, are willing to enjoy the comforts and conveniences provided by money, yet they criticize at times that sort of lifestyle and yearn for closer emotional relationships within

the family. For example, when Alfredo discusses his business plans with his wife, she questions his market-oriented mentality:

(Irónica) El intercambio de ideas a través de las compras y las ventas son el medio más rápido y directo de convencernos los unos a los otros en este maravilloso mundo de hoy. Qué tenés? Yo te ofrezco lo que tengo y lo que no tengo pero te lo puedo conseguir. A cambio de qué? (20-21)

In the beginning of this statement, Elizabeth appears to support her husband's point of view. However, the playwright indicates how she really feels by noting in the stage directions that she should speak with an ironic tone of voice. Also, the final sentence asks what one must give in exchange for receiving everything in a world in which even ideas are bought and sold. Later in the play, Elizabeth regrets the familial conflicts: "Tuvimos una casa, hijos, nunca un hogar" (159). The house is just a shell, but a family's relationship makes it a home. At other times, Elizabeth affirms Alfredo's goals. As he talks about plans to attract business investors, she voices the belief that success is the most important thing in life:

ELIZABETH. Claro, claro, lo que realmente importa es seguir adelante.

ALFREDO. Siempre positivos. Fe en uno mismo, empuje para enfrentar la adversidad.

ELIZABETH. (Haciéndole coro) Seguir adelante y triunfar. (22-23)

This dialogue between Elizabeth and Alfredo is an exchange of mottos or catchy phrases about how to succeed in business, to confront obstacles and always move ahead to achieve one's goals. At this point in their conversation, they sound more like business partners than husband and wife.

The oldest son, Alfredito, and an older friend of Elizabeth's, Celina, who lives with the Nicomedes family, value more the beauty in life, art, music, poetry, and seem less concerned with material objects. However, Alfredito and Celina do not entirely reject money. Celina reveals that she has accumulated substantial savings, and Alfredito is always asking his sister for loans because he never has been stably employed. He also likes to borrow his brother's clothes, usually without Bernardo's permission. In creating the characters of Celina and Alfredito, Rojas explores the nuances in the conflict between financial success and relationships, suggesting that in contemporary society one needs money in order to survive. Money in itself is not harmful, provided that one does not value it more than humanity. Alfredito, for example, yearns for a home and criticizes social customs that conceal one's true emotions. Celina used her savings to help the Nicomedes family purchase their house. Her generosity and willingness to help others contrasts with Alfredo's concern with only his own success. She and Alfredo constantly argue, and Alfredo, who views her as no longer useful to him or the family, suggests that she move into a nursing home. Celina and Alfredo's conflicting opinions about what to do with their money allude to debates taking place within Costa Rica during the 1990s about the future of the Welfare State. Rojas encourages his readers to think about whether the state's role should be like that of Celina, who provides a family with housing, or like that of Alfredo, who, although he previously benefited from Celina's support, now advocates private enterprise and personal initiative.

Determining what the middle son, Bernardo, and his girlfriend, Nicol, value the most in life is a difficult task because their behavior is contradictory. On the one hand,

Bernardo criticizes his father's actions and expresses affection for Elizabeth and Celina. He also planted the giant granadilla, which is his favorite tree, and ensures that he is properly caring for it. Nicol, too, says she loves her boyfriend and tries to forge a friendship with Vera. On the other hand, Bernardo appears to have inherited his father's will to win at any price. Resentful because he already was supporting the family after Alfredo had quit his salaried job, Bernardo reveals that, a year ago, when Elizabeth asked him to pay for remodeling the house, he required her to sign the house's title over to him as a condition for payment. Bernardo's acquisition of the house apparently is part of a plan in which he seeks to dominate the other family members. Since the other relatives still remain unaware of this legal transaction, Bernardo and Nicol argue about how to reveal their plan to the family. The disagreement soon escalates into violence, and they slap each other.<sup>36</sup> However, Nicol later agrees to support Bernardo, and they call each other "socio," business partner, which harks back to the discourse in the parents' dialogue, which seems more appropriate for business partners than for spouses (72-73).

The playwright stresses the idea that children learn about values from their parents' example. Bernardo appears to imitate his parents' business-oriented language when he talks with Nicol. He later acknowledges Elizabeth and Alfredo's influence in the formation of his character. Suspicious of how his father can afford the new car and

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<sup>36</sup> Later in the play, Alfredo and Elizabeth have an argument that ends violently. After dining in a restaurant, they return home drunk. Alfredo wants to have sex, but Elizabeth refuses. An argument ensues, he forces her to kiss him, and they slap each other (111). By including this violent incident, the playwright suggests that the adult children, who probably witnessed similar incidents while they were growing up, are imitating their parents' behavior.

expensive clothing that he recently purchased, Bernardo hires a private investigator to check into Alfredo's business dealings and informs Nicol of the findings:

BERNANDO: Negocios sucios.

NICOL. De quién?

BERNARDO. Conducta indigna de mi padre. Está metido en negocios turbios.

Me reservo los detalles. Es de suponer que tiene poco tiempo, entusiasmado con algunos logros inmediatos. Perfumitos de los caros, viajecitos calientes con muchachas, jueguitos de azar, doble personalidad.

NICOL. Es delicado.

BERNARDO. Ocasión propicia para sacarlo de circulación.

NICOL. Qué vas a hacer?

BERNARDO. Todos jugamos algún juego y guardamos alguna carta. Un anónimo va en camino a la policía. Mi padre y mi madre fueron mi primer ejemplo. Les devuelvo la moral. (74-75)

After receiving confirmation that his father is engaged in illegal business deals in order to generate a quick profit, Bernardo anonymously tips off the police. In the above dialogue, Bernardo justifies his actions to Nicol, saying that he is returning to his parents what he learned about morality by following their example. This observation is indeed perceptive, since Bernardo does not report his father to the police for altruistic motives but instead does so as a maneuver, which he likens to a game of cards, to gain the upper hand, wresting control away from Alfredo. At the end of the play, Bernardo's plan is successful, and it appears that money and power are more important than trying to repair the fractured relationships. When Bernardo reveals to his father that he now

owns the house, Alfredo physically attacks him and then announces that he will move out of the house. Celina, too, leaves the house, and the family learns that Alfredito either has committed suicide or died accidentally at a park. Celina's departure and Alfredito's death suggest that there is no place in the Nicomedes family and in contemporary Costa Rican society as well for those who question materialism.

Inquilinos del árbol, Madriguera de ilusiones, and Hogar dulce hogar encourage their readers to think about the negative consequences of a market-oriented globalization that homogenizes cultures. Cavallini and Rojas express in their plays the opinion conveyed by Friedman in The Lexus and the Olive Tree that globalization should be "a confederation of distinct cultures," and not a "homogenization of them" (305). Some of the characters in the plays find it difficult to resist the lure of the wealth promised by the homogenizing forces of globalization. By showing the characters' struggle to choose between relationships with family or friends and financial success, the playwrights are commenting on the all-encompassing tendency of this particular economic form of globalization. Since the world market, or neoliberalism, is only one option among the many forms of globalization, Ulrich Beck prefers to refer to it as globalism because it either relegates these other options to a secondary level or entirely erases them:

Por *globalismo* entiendo la concepción según la cual el mercado mundial desaloja o sustituye al quehacer político; es decir, la ideología del dominio del mercado mundial o la ideología del liberalismo. Esta procede de manera monocausal y economicista y reduce la pluridimensionalidad de la globalización a una sola dimensión, la económica, dimensión que considera asimismo de manera lineal, y pone sobre el tapete (cuando, y si es que lo hace) todas las demás dimensiones--

las globalizaciones ecológica, cultural, política y social--sólo para destacar el presunto dominio del sistema de mercado mundial. (27)

Beck identifies ecological, cultural, political, and social processes of globalization, which envision other ways of interacting with different parts of the world besides that of the market-oriented process. Since these alternative processes incorporate and value the participation of diverse societies, globalism, with its homogenizing tendency that flows in a single direction, limits or destroys their multi-directional dynamic of exchange.

Cavallini and Rojas's plays use the symbols of the tree or the home to signify the Costa Rican ecological, cultural, political, and social identities that globalism is destroying or displacing. Interestingly, Rojas's choice of this symbolism in Granada real (1990) anticipates that used by Friedman in The Lexus and the Olive Tree, which first was published in 1999, and Cavallini employs the same imagery in Inquilinos del árbol (1999), published in the same year as Friedman's book.<sup>37</sup> In Inquilinos del árbol, the tree literally is Smoking, Quinceañera, and Piyama's home, which they lose when Smoking accepts money from the developers of the shopping mall. The words árbol and inquilinos in the play's title evoke this struggle between identity and concern with economic matters. If the tree is a sign of identity, of what roots one in this world,

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<sup>37</sup> Cavallini appears to be resourceful in representing Costa Rican socio-political issues on the stage. Carolyn Bell, in "Ellas en la maquila de Lupe Pérez y Leda Cavallini, como expresión de la realidad de las condiciones laborales en las maquilas de Costa Rica," has noted Cavallini's attentiveness to changes in Costa Rican society in the age of globalization, citing as an example how, in Ellas en la maquila (1984), Cavallini and coauthor Lupe Pérez called attention to the working conditions in the maquilas, the textile assembly plants that arrived in Costa Rica in the 1980s. By interviewing the women working in the maquilas to gather information before writing the work, the playwrights anticipated what later research published in the 1990s would identify as abusive working conditions caused by an economic model devoted to extracting the maximum amount of production at a minimal cost (Bell, "Ellas en la maquila 220).

tenants are those who pay money to a landlord to rent a property. Since tenants do not own their residence, they are unable to put down permanent roots. Cavallini's use of the words tree and tenants in the title, therefore, can be understood as commentary on how the market-oriented forces of globalization are uprooting Costa Ricans from their sense of identity, of a place to call "home." In Madriguera de ilusiones, the human characters are all tenants. Even Azucena, the landlady, reveals that she rents the house where they live and then subleases the individual rooms: "Alquilo esta casa vieja, no es mía. Alquilo cuartos o me muero de hambre" (418). In this play, too, the characters lack ties to each other, which ultimately results in their death. Bernardo, in Hogar dulce hogar, wishes to nurture the giant granadilla tree, but he and his family, in valuing their financial status more than their relationships with each other, appear to destroy their sense of home, their common roots. Living in a house, these plays suggest, does not provide one with a home. Instead, the relationships one establishes with others and the environment generate this feeling of belonging and identity.

Read as allegories of contemporary society, these plays seem to indicate a bleak present and future for Costa Rica. Nevertheless, these plays, even in their endings, when things look the most pessimistic, also include symbols and ideas that suggest ways for Costa Ricans to defend their identities against market-oriented globalization and to find alternatives to its homogenizing process. Although it may be too late for some of the characters in the plays, Cavallini and Rojas prompt their readers to question globalization influences. According to Friedman, a culture's only defense against homogenization is to filter the foreign influences to which it is exposed. The most important filter, he notes, is the ability to "glocalize":

I define healthy glocalization as the ability of a culture, when it encounters other strong cultures, to absorb influences that naturally fit into and can enrich that culture, to resist those things that are truly alien and to compartmentalize those things that, while different, can nevertheless be enjoyed and celebrated as different. The whole purpose of glocalizing is to be able to assimilate aspects of globalization into your country and culture in a way that adds to your growth and diversity, without overwhelming it. (294)<sup>38</sup>

What Friedman advocates is that, rather than close itself off to all external influences, a culture should consider if they would be helpful or harmful when deciding how to respond to them.

Cavallini and Rojas adopt a similar stance towards foreign cultures in their plays. In fact, they emphasize that, although homogenization and the world market come from abroad, certain segments of Costa Rican society do not filter, or “glocalize,” them but instead actively support and promote their absorption. For example, in Inquilinos del árbol, Cavallini never specifies the nationality of the developers or those from the other side, including “el hombre indecente” from the other side, who, according to Quinceañera and the other “tenants,” spies on them. After Smoking accepts money

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<sup>38</sup> The term glocalize, according to Roland Robertson, originated in Japan “(from *dochakuka*, roughly meaning ‘global localization’)” and was “developed in particular reference to marketing issues, as Japan became more concerned with and successful in the global economy” (174). In the 1990s, the term spread to other cultural contexts and became “according to the *Oxford Dictionary of New Words* (1991: 134), ‘one of the main marketing buzzwords’” (Robertson 174). See also Robert Eric Livingston, “Glocal Knowledges: Agency and Place in Literary Studies,” for a discussion of the term’s origin and its applicability to literary studies.

from the developers, Piyama claims that he will not leave the lot and stresses the idea that an internal enemy threatens their home:

SMOKING. Peor para ustedes. Los del otro lado del matorral vendrán y traerán al hombre indecente.

PIYAMA. El indecente compartió las mismas ramas y ahora nos vende. (72)

As Piyama states, “el hombre indecente” is not so much a man from the other side. In fact, “el hombre indecente” is someone who shared the tree branches, or home, with Piyama and Quinceañera. In other words, he is referring to Smoking, who betrayed his friends by selling their home. In Hogar dulce hogar, Rojas also mentions the damage caused to the family by an enemy within the house:

NICOL. Busquemos la paz. Intentémoslo.

BERNARDO. No se puede vivir en paz con el enemigo dentro de la casa. En cualquier momento brotaría la traición y sería peor. (58)

When Nicol suggests peacefully ending the conflicts among the family members, Bernardo replies that it will not be easy to do so, since the discord does not solely originate from an external source, but also is aided by Alfredo, who is one of their own, an enemy inside their house. These dialogues from Inquilinos del árbol and Hogar dulce hogar suggest that resisting a market-oriented globalization involves confronting not only powerful external forces but also those Costa Ricans who promote the spread of these foreign ideologies without considering how they will impact local cultures.

Taking place in residences where family or friends live, these plays allude to debates surfacing on a larger scale within the Costa Rican nation. However, by employing the family or friendships as a microcosm of Costa Rican society, Cavallini and Rojas

encourage their readers, as individuals, to think about how forms of globalization impact their daily lives. My reading of these playwrights' works began by focusing on how they show the negative impact of homogenizing forms of globalization. Now I would like to consider how they indicate alternatives to their readers by reaffirming local cultural identities, recognizing past patterns of interaction with foreign cultures, and reminding them of the importance of filtering globalization influences. Although these plays have uncertain endings, they do leave their readers with the hope of avoiding the homogenization of identities.

Although the characters in Inquilinos del árbol do not possess many material objects, they have managed to create an identity for themselves. The few objects that they do possess, however, symbolize elements of Costa Rican culture. Piyama, Quinceañera, and Smoking's clothing are the first visible signs in the play of certain social classes and age groups within Costa Rican society. Although the three characters are adults, Piyama and Quinceañera are dressed in youthful attire that belies their age. Since Cavallini, in a personal interview, expressed interest in addressing her works to young people who are around seventeen or eighteen years old, it could be that she chooses this clothing in order to reach these younger members of her potential audience. These audience members would recognize the child's sleeper-style pajamas and the gown worn when a young woman celebrates her fifteenth birthday that either they or their friends had worn. Besides attracting their attention, the wardrobe suggests to this young audience that they, too, can play an important role in the struggle against a homogenizing market-oriented globalization and the search for alternative ways in which Costa Rica can interact with other parts of the world.

While Quinceañera's gown attracts the attention of younger audience members who have recently celebrated their own fifteenth birthday or that of a friend or relative, it also reminds other audience members of a Latin American cultural tradition with religious and social components that marks a girl's "transition into adulthood" (Cantú 78). Of possible Spanish and Aztec or Mayan roots, the quinceañera celebration has evolved throughout the years, with its customs varying according to where it is celebrated.<sup>39</sup> As a part of Costa Rican culture, this ceremony plays an important role in Inquilinos del árbol. In the play, the character Quinceañera repeatedly announces that she is celebrating her fifteenth birthday and asks the other characters to prepare for the party.<sup>40</sup> Why is this birthday celebration so important to Quinceañera that she prepares for it again and again?

Norma E. Cantú's study of the quinceañera celebration helps shed some light on this mystery. Although Cantú focuses on quinceañeras during the late 1990s in communities along the US-Mexico border, her conclusion that "cultural displays such as the quinceañera serve as affirmations of ethnic identity and of resistance to outside cultural forces" also seems relevant to the contemporary Costa Rican context alluded to

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<sup>39</sup> Norma E. Cantú states: "Although it appears obvious that the origin of the quinceañera lies in a syncretism between the Spanish court dances and the native Mexican (i.e. Aztec and other Amerindian groups) initiation rituals, there is no conclusive evidence to suggest any particular origin" (74). Although Cantú primarily examines quinceañera celebrations along the US-Mexico border, she also provides information about celebrations in other countries. As an example of the variations in customs, Cantú notes that white is the traditional color of the quinceañera gown in the United States and Mexico and that pink or another pastel shade is the preferred color in Central America, Cuba, and Puerto Rico (85). In Inquilinos del árbol, Quinceañera's gown is pink, the color favored by Costa Ricans.

<sup>40</sup> Smoking, in an argument with Piyama, reveals that the characters have celebrated Quinceañera's fifteenth birthday on numerous occasions in the past: "Y también ayudada por vos para celebrar sus ridículas fiestas de Quinceaños. . . ." (61).

by Cavallini in her play (77). Just as the quinceañera along the US-Mexico border resists neo-colonial hegemonic forces and affirms cultural traditions that survived the 1848 annexation of Mexican territory by the United States, Quinceañera's celebrations in Inquilinos del árbol preserve Costa Rican cultural traditions which could disappear in the wake of a market-oriented globalization.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, the repetitive nature of Quinceañera's calls to commemorate her birthday underscores that the quinceañera celebration is a part of Costa Rican culture that has developed and undergone transformations from generation to generation. It is now in danger of being more consumer-oriented than a culturally specific commemoration.

Although one can read Quinceañera's insistence on celebrating her fifteenth birthday as a positive sign of her affirmation of her cultural identity, it also is possible to interpret it as an indication of the psychological damage she suffers as a victim of sexual abuse. When Smoking asks Quinceañera to go to the other side to collect firewood, one of the reasons why she refuses to leave the lot is because she will encounter "el hombre indecente": "Está él, ese hombre malo y lascivo que nos persigue. Te aseguro que quiere meterse de este lado para arrancarnos nuestro árbol. . . .Me persigue. Quiere tocarme de manera indecente y cortarnos el árbol" (43). Besides being afraid that this man will cut down the tree, Quinceañera fears that he will touch her in a sexually aggressive manner. As Smoking presses her to go to the other side,

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<sup>41</sup> Cantú also points out that the quinceañeras along the US-Mexico border appropriate this neo-colonial hegemony at the same time that they resist it, which can be observed in the way the celebration constructs the feminine and the tendency to host costly parties (Cantú 84, 96). There is also some evidence of this type of appropriation in Inquilinos del árbol. For example, Quinceañera wears a blond wig, which could imply her adherence to an Anglo-Saxon standard of beauty. Smoking also attempts to bribe her into crossing over to the other side to collect firewood in exchange for a necklace.

her reply suggests that she was sexually abused as a child and now worries that “el hombre indecente” also will attack her: “Vos no te imaginás lo que sufrimos nosotras. De niñas el miedo de encontrarnos con un degenerado manoseando por aquí o tocando por allá” (44). Becoming more upset, Quinceañera assumes the voice of her abuser, showing how he encouraged his victim not to resist the molestation: “(*Haciendo voz de hombre*). Que mire, chiquita, déjeme que la toque y le doy este regalo, este muñeco” (44). Abused while she was a child, Quinceañera’s repeated celebration of her fifteenth birthday could indicate that this violation of her innocence and her body has trapped her permanently between childhood and adulthood. By revealing Quinceañera’s suffering, Cavallini calls attention to the sexual abuse of children, which is a taboo topic in Costa Rica, and questions the silence in a patriarchal society that covers up the abuser’s crimes and makes the victim feel ashamed.<sup>42</sup> While the quinceañera celebrations in Inquilinos del árbol affirm a Costa Rican cultural tradition, the character Quinceañera’s history of sexual abuse highlights a problematic aspect of Costa Rican culture, which Cavallini confronts by breaking the silence typically surrounding this subject matter.

Another example of a symbol in Cavallini’s play that affirms but also examines in a critical light a component of Costa Rican culture is the presence of the coffee pot, which is given the human name Pancracia although it is just an old coffee pot. Smoking brings Pancracia with him to the lot and brews coffee, the crop that Iván Molina and

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<sup>42</sup> The sexual abuse of girls, particularly incest, is a principal theme in other contemporary Costa Rican plays. Cavallini openly confronts this volatile issue in Tarde de granizo y musgo. See Carolyn Bell, “Tarde de granizo y musgo de Leda Cavallini,” for a critical reading of this play. Playwright Roxana Campos also addresses this issue in El cristal de mi infancia (1997), which was staged by the Compañía Nacional de Teatro in 1998. Magda Zavala analyzes this play in “Cristal roto (A propósito de *El cristal de mi infancia* de Roxana Campos).”

Steven Palmer identify as the first export product that enabled Costa Rica to enter into the world market during the 1800s: “The desire to find a stable link with the world market was only realized with coffee. The ‘golden bean’ experienced a period of dramatic expansion after 1830. . . .” (The History of Costa Rica 48). Pancracia and coffee function as signs in the play so that the readers can think about Costa Rica’s interaction with foreign cultures during the nineteenth century and relate it to the present. Smoking’s costume is further evidence that Cavallini encourages the readers to look back to the nineteenth century. The tuxedo, which originated as a men’s dinner jacket in England and arrived in New York in 1886, has become a mark of elegance among the higher social classes in Western cultures.<sup>43</sup> This formal attire also arrived in Costa Rica in the late nineteenth century and became the preferred garment among the politicians of the Liberal State and the wealthy. In fact, men were required to wear a dress coat to the National Theater after its inauguration in 1897 (Rojas and Ovares, 100 años 33).

European clothing was not the only thing purchased with the profits of the coffee trade. Europe was the source of other commodities acquired by Costa Ricans, as well as the model of the cultural project adopted by the Costa Rican Liberal State and the coffee oligarchy:

El café, que prometía unas delicias irresistibles, fue la fruta prohibida que sedujo a comerciantes, campesinos y artesanos. La devoraron con avidez y su mordida colectiva produjo, con presteza, cambios culturales de extraordinaria

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<sup>43</sup> In Europe during the last decade of the nineteenth century, “a new type of coat, a compromise in formality between the tail coat and the suit coat, was introduced: the dinner jacket or tuxedo, still a favorite today” (Payne 496-70).

diversidad . . . una autoconsciente clase política liberal y una acaudalada oligarquía cafetalera, con un proyecto nacional para convertir a las masas en miembros fieles de un país civilizado. El eje de este programa fue una veloz europeización cultural, que transformó tanto la alta cultura como la vida cotidiana, en particular en San José y sobre todo a partir del decenio de 1850. (Molina and Palmer, “Epílogo” 208)

Smoking’s tuxedo and introduction of the coffee pot in Inquilinos del árbol allude to this late nineteenth-century ideal of European culture as a model for all Costa Ricans to emulate, made possible with the capital earned from coffee exports. Cavallini further develops this symbolism by specifying in the stage directions how Smoking brews and serves the coffee: “*Smoking vuelve con su carga de leña, la pone cerca del árbol y comienza a hacer el fuego. Revisa su saco y pone sobre un viejo tarro algunos pedazos de mantel, prepara el café y lo sirve como en una gran ceremonia, toma*” (47). The use of the word ceremonia in this description suggests that, in serving the coffee, Smoking follows a ritual that has become part of Costa Rican culture. By serving coffee on a tablecloth, almost as if he were in the living or dining room of a house in Europe or Europeanized Costa Rica, Smoking lends an elegant touch to this routine in the vacant lot. Smoking’s actions could, on the one hand, be read as an attempt to conserve human dignity in desperate circumstances by affirming an identity. Since Smoking, Quinceañera, and Piyama do not have many material possessions or even a house, Pancracia and the coffee-serving “ceremony” function as reminders of the riches derived from the initial development of the coffee market and the European component of Costa Rican cultural identity.

On the other hand, while the characters, especially Quinceañera, truly enjoy Pancracia's company and look forward to preparing coffee for themselves, their interactions with Pancracia also encourage the readers to question Costa Rica's past and present cultural and economic models. Smoking's coffee-serving "ceremony" is incongruous with its setting in the vacant lot. His tattered clothing and the torn pieces of tablecloth placed over a discarded pot are signs of the extreme poverty in which he and the other "tenants" live and allude to the economic crisis experienced by Costa Rica after coffee prices declined in the late 1970s. Quinceañera addresses the negative consequences of Costa Rica's economic dependency on agricultural exports when she says that she is going to mail a letter to Pancracia's mother, who is "la antigua cafetera rectora de todos los países con problemas de metales": "Esa carta es muy importante para los países pobres. Además, la cafetera mayor debe darme consejos para organizar la solidaridad de las ramas" (46). Quinceañera says that the poor countries in the world "have problems with metals." Cavallini's use of the word metal here brings to mind the gold and silver mines operated by the Spaniards after the conquest of Latin America, and in the present context, could refer to countries that are experiencing the negative impact of neocolonial economic models that exploit their natural resources or agricultural production. Quinceañera seeks alternatives to this sort of dependency when she talks about organizing the solidarity of the tree branches. This reference to the tree also implies that she wants to preserve her home and identity.

Smoking, in contrast, accepts the offer from the other side to leave his and his friends' home. Before he departs, he reveals to Piyama that he even has sold Pancracia:

PIYAMA. Recogé a Pancracia. Es lo único que tenés aquí.

SMOKING. Tampoco a ella, también la vendí. Tus bellos zanates se encargaron de decirme que también me defraudó y los quiere más a ustedes que a mí. (71)

This sale of the coffee pot, which had become an important part of Smoking, Quinceañera, and Piyama's lives, demonstrates Smoking's consumerist mentality. His decision to abandon the coffee pot in favor of another deal that generates more income for him parallels in some respects that of certain members of the Costa Rican government or wealthy Costa Ricans to substitute coffee exports with nontraditional crops during the 1980s. This economic policy was adopted as part of the Structural Adjustment Pacts that Costa Rica signed in the 1980s in order to receive loans from the International Monetary Fund and aid from the United States:

The state was required to minimize its control of industry, business and finance, and even social services and to encourage foreign investment, production for export, and open competition in a free-market global economy. It was also required to drastically reduce government spending. (Biesanz 34)

The production for export included diversification to nontraditional products such as textiles, pineapples, ornamental plants, and seafood (Molina and Palmer, The History of Costa Rica 126). Using the character Smoking and the sale of Pancracia as symbols, Cavallini links Costa Rica's present to its first entry into the world market, encouraging her readers to realize that, rather than breaking free of the dependency cycle of boom and bust, those Costa Ricans presently in favor of export diversification have opted to follow the nineteenth-century economic model.

Smoking, as a representative of the Costa Rican upper class or politicians, is willing not only to shift agricultural modes of production, but also to surrender Costa Rica's

uncultivated land in order to remain in the world market. For Smoking, the tree where he has been living and coffee, which symbolize Costa Rica's natural environment, are commodities whose sale can profit him. Cavallini, in Inquilinos del árbol, questions this attitude towards the local ecosystem, which she instead feels should be preserved or carefully developed to sustain human life: "El problema del ambiente es una de las cosas que más preocupa a mí, el desarrollo humano con calidad" (Personal interview).<sup>44</sup> In the play, Quinceañera disagrees with Smoking's point of view and instead argues that the tree is a part of nature that is worth preserving. This debate about the environment emerges when Quinceañera refuses to collect firewood on the other side:

QUINCEAÑERA. Además, esa construcción me tiene harta. No me gusta ver tantos árboles asesinados entre los escombros, el barro y los charcos. Cada vez que los veo me da la impresión de que la Naturaleza nos va a cobrar un día las injusticias. . . .

SMOKING. La naturaleza, la naturaleza. Siempre hay una excusa nueva en la boca de los ingenuos y a mí que se me rompa la columna cargando la leña para la comida. Un día de estos, cuando menos lo pensés, le pido a los intrusos pájaros zanates que abran sus alas, me monten y me lleven bien lejos de ustedes y de esta porquería de vida. Total, ellos buscan siempre lugares donde haya nidos para robar huevos y alimentarse. Pensándolo bien, creo que puedo irme y ser un depredador más. (40)

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<sup>44</sup> Cavallini also explores an environmental theme in Tarde de granizo y musgo. According to Carolyn Bell, in this play Cavallini employs symbols alluding to how cultural colonization and U.S. exploitation destroy Costa Rican natural resources ("Tarde de granizo y musgo" 175).

In the above dialogue, while Quinceañera worries about the long-term consequences of construction projects that kill trees, Smoking show his egotistic concern for his own survival and his wish to “divest himself” of Quinceañera and Piyama. By aligning Smoking with the grackles in her imagery, Cavallini suggests that, just as the grackles feed on other birds’ eggs, Smoking is willing to prey on other human beings. Additionally, the reference to the eggs indicates his willingness to attack the future generations who, if they survive, will have to live in the damaged environment. Quinceañera objects to his association with these birds:

QUINCEAÑERA. Nunca metás a los pájaros en nuestras discusiones. No me gusta pensar en la idea de tratar con pájaros asesinos que destruyen los huevos de otros sólo por la gana de engullir. Y tampoco me gusta la destrucción de casas ajenas. (*Se acerca al árbol y lo acaricia*).

SMOKING. Las casas algún día se pierden. El asunto es por la leña, ¿recordás?  
(41)

When Quinceañera mentions that the grackles eat other birds’ eggs not because they are hungry, but because they enjoy doing so, she implies that Smoking is motivated by greed in his dealings with the people from the other side, who want to cut down the tree. Cavallini closes their argument by juxtaposing the words casas and leña in the final sentences. These words are indicative of different attitudes in Costa Rica towards the environment. While Smoking views the tree as a commodity, producing firewood when it is cut down, Quinceañera stresses that the tree is a house and that ecological destruction also wipes out one’s identity.

Piyama shares Quinceañera's point of view about the importance of the tree, which puts him at odds with Smoking. Cavallini does not reveal many details about Piyama early in the play. The reader at that point only learns that he is a poet and likes to read. However, there are some hints in Smoking's comments about the type of poetry that Piyama writes. As Smoking grows more frustrated with living in the tree, he criticizes Piyama for making Quinceañera think that the tree saplings are pleased with the dresses she sews for them: "Y vos como un tonto alcahueta haciéndola creer que los arbolitos están contentos con la ropa y cuando ya no te ve, quedan ahí donde te resulta más cómodo tirarlos" (61). According to Smoking, Piyama conceals reality from Quinceañera by pretending to deliver the dresses when he really tosses them anywhere. However, when Smoking announces his decision to accept the money from the other side, he also indicates that Piyama is aware of and opposes this market-oriented mentality that threatens to engulf them:

Todo tiene un precio y ni el árbol ni yo somos la excepción. Me voy a vivir lejos de la loca de Quinceañera y del hablador de Piyama que me tiene frito con el cuento ese de la sociedad consumista y la perorata de cambios en la conciencia. Nadie tiene conciencia. . . Mis clientes esperan, el negocio está hecho. (69-70)

These clues given by Smoking suggest to the reader that Piyama functions as a conscience in the play, projecting an awareness of the damage done to society by a consumerist economic model.

Although Piyama is socially and politically committed in his personal life, Smoking accuses him of indulging Quinceañera's illusions. If one examines Piyama's actions more closely, however, they do not seem to be as foolish or useless as Smoking claims.

Quinceañera's motivation for sewing the saplings' dresses is to protect the natural environment and ensure its growth and reproduction. Piyama himself expresses the same consciousness about the environment. While he might mislead Quinceañera about the extent to which her efforts have an impact, he does not destroy her belief that nature, humanity, and beauty are more important than money. When Cavallini presents more details about Piyama, his poetry, and relationship with Quinceañera at the end of the play, she emphasizes Piyama's role in this fostering of political and social consciousness in others. That Piyama is a poet is not at all unrelated to this role, but instead permits the playwright to explore the writer and intellectual's role in contemporary Costa Rica. Much like Piyama serves as a conscience in the play and supports Quinceañera's political and social awareness, Cavallini proposes that writers be society's conscience and encourage their readers to think about the socio-political reality of their country.

At the end of the play, Cavallini shows the impact of the poems that Piyama places on the tree branches for Quinceañera to read. She recounts to Pancracia a recent visit to a park, where "unas señoras muy arregladas me gritaron: andrajosa, piojosa, haraposa, roñosa y yo les respondí mariposa, quejumbrosa, caprichosa. Como haciendo rimas y me gritaron loca, es una loca. No importa, Pancracia. Lo mejor es jugar con las palabras" (73). While Quinceañera's attire and behavior probably make the women in the park think she is insane, her rhyming game, which seems to be an attempt to create poetry or a string of words that are pleasing to the ear, suggests that she shares with Piyama an ability to create something beautiful despite their impoverished lives. Indeed, Quinceañera and Piyama are more concerned about saving the tree and their

friendships than with material possessions. Quinceañera never notices the deteriorated state of her clothing and talks about her dress as if it were in fine condition. While Smoking claims that her insanity detaches her from reality, she seems quite conscious of the threat to her home, and her failure to notice that her clothes are worn out could be a sign that economic wealth is not what she values most in life. Quinceañera pays more attention to the deterioration of nature and the environment than to the material objects that Smoking desires.

Quinceañera and Piyama recite his poetry at the end of Inquilinos del árbol to affirm the love for other human beings that they fear losing. Cavallini includes only one of his poems in the play right before Piyama and Quinceañera acknowledge that they must leave the tree. Piyama begins the recital, and Quinceañera recalls the last portion of the poem:

*Un sueño soñaba anoche*  
*Soñito del alma mía*  
*Soñaba con mis amantes*  
*que en mis brazos las tenía.*  
*Vi entrar señora tan blanca,*  
*Muy más que la nieve fría*  
*¿por dónde has entrado, amor?*  
*¿Cómo has entrado, mi vida? (74-75)*

After they recite this poem about love, they reminisce about how they met. She arrived from the coast, and he reveals that he came from the other side. Before they leave, they state that his poetry and the hard piece of bread she was carrying when they first met are

the only things worth taking with them. These items are signs of their connection with each other, things that they can share, which, although they hold little material value, are important to them.

In spite of Quinceañera and Piyama's declaration of love's importance, they are separated at the play's conclusion. When he goes to retrieve the poems and the bread, at first she waits for him, then later wanders off into the distance. As he leaves to search for her, the tree falls apart, completely destroyed. Quinceañera returns to the lot and sees the damage to her home. However, what happens next suggests that Quinceañera does not resign herself to losing her home and identity. Finding Pancracia, she cleans the coffee pot and prepares to take it with her in a boat that she will construct with the broken tree branches. She also collects some tree saplings and resolves to sail away, in search of a place that is ecologically safe. Her final line in the play, before she departs the lot reciting Piyama's poem, is proof that she still retains hope and views the tree as a symbol of her home and identity: "Yo creo en mi árbol" (79). Cavallini's use of the verb creer and the possessive adjective mi connect the tree to Quinceañera's own beliefs and sense of belonging to a particular location.

Even though Quinceañera remains optimistic that she will find a place where the saplings can grow, she does not reunite with Piyama after he reappears and calls to her. Since she is reciting his poetry, she does not hear him and wanders off into the darkness. As the lights dim to signal the play's conclusion, Piyama, holding the stale bread he retrieved from the tree branch, feeds it to the ants and asks them to lead him into a tunnel to the center of the earth. This wish to go underground has both positive and negative implications. On the one hand, it could signal Piyama's desire to form

closer ties to the roots of his Costa Rican identity, since all that remains after the tree's destruction is its roots. Given that his poetry does not allude to a particular historical or cultural context, perhaps his journey underground, in dialogue with the ants, which are a part of the natural environment, indicates his search for an approach to writing that is more connected to contemporary socio-political conditions. On the other hand, his entry into the tunnel could be read as his complete disappearance, or escape, from reality.

While Piyama does not reveal his motivation for going underground, his separation from Quinceañera and Smoking seems to allude not only to the destruction of social cohesion, which Friedman warns is the ultimate consequence if a culture does not “glocalize” or filter foreign influences and market-oriented ideologies, but also to the difficulties that writers face in reaching their readers if they wish to protest the homogenizing tendencies of these market forces. Piyama's costume, the sleeper-style pajamas, is suggestive of his previous somnolent state as a young writer, who now has awakened and developed a consciousness about the threats posed by certain forms of globalization to the local identity and environment. At first, he had been asleep as he lived on the other side among people who either supported this one-way flow of influences or, while not actively advocating it, did not question it. However, once he awakened and viewed these globalization influences in a critical light, he joined the other “tenants” in the lot. The fact that Piyama feels that there is no place for him on the other side, in the materialist neighborhood, communicates to the readers the marginalization of writers and literature by these globalizing forces. Deemed unimportant or unmarketable, literature and writers, who can act as a social conscience,

struggle to reach their readers, in whom they can foster a critical awareness. The open ending of Cavallini's play, which leaves the readers wondering what Quinceañera and Piyama will encounter on their separate journeys, provides no easy solution to this situation. However, it does not accept total defeat by market-oriented globalization and instead sends a message to Costa Ricans to examine their own lives and identities and develop a consciousness about their country's participation in the processes of globalization.

While Cavallini stresses the importance of poetry in Inquilinos del árbol, Miguel Rojas highlights the important role of another artistic form, that of music, in Madriguera de ilusiones. Although it never appears in a visual form on the stage, a saxophone can be heard throughout the play. Rojas invites the reader to pay closer attention to the role of the saxophone in his work by listing it as one of the characters and also, according to Valembois, by starting and concluding the play with it:

El instrumento musical en cuestión, por así decirlo, abre y cierra el telón, porque es el primero en entrar en escena (*Se escucha el saxofón con largas prolongaciones rítmicas y un acento abiertamente burlesco*) y en el epílogo se denota su presencia *en crescendo* diríamos en términos musicales, desde *El saxofón toca tristemente*, hasta *El saxofón llega a su clímax y corta de golpe*. ("La copa" 467)

Valembois, in the above passage, quotes Rojas's stage directions at the beginning and end of the play. The saxophone's presence at the end of Madriguera de ilusiones is particularly striking, since it is the only character that does not die.

While in the beginning this musical instrument appears to be merely a sound effect to help establish the background of the scenes or to reflect the other characters' passions, according to Valembouis, it later evolves to become a character in its own right, either imposing certain rhythms or, in the end, contrasting its own melody with the other characters' deaths.<sup>45</sup> In the end, the "*dulce melodía de amor*" played by the saxophone expresses the love that the other characters either cannot or choose not to feel because money is more important to them than sharing emotions with other human beings. Moreover, I believe that Rojas, in highlighting this role of the saxophone, encourages his readers to understand that music, or the other arts, can play a central role in Costa Rica as an alternative to the market mentality, which, lacking human emotions like the other characters in the play, evaluates everything according to its potential profitability.

Interestingly, at a time when many have commented on the increased circulation of foreign cultures and influences to different parts of the world and the homogenizing tendencies of some globalization processes, Rojas focuses in his work on a musical instrument that is not native to Costa Rica. Valembouis, too, has commented on the saxophone's foreign origin, which he views as something that would make the play

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<sup>45</sup> Quoting from Rojas's play, Valembouis analyzes the evolution of the saxophone's role:

En el tiempo intermedio, la adjetivación recurrente insiste en periódicas intervenciones de *lamento jocoso*, (...) *de graves acordes*, (...) *una bochornosa melodía*, (...) *violentos sonidos*. El espacio queda también sugerido en la acotación: es lo *urbano*, *un sudoroso cabaré*, (...) *toca Bambé* (...) Más adelante, de puro elemento ambiental, se vuelve cada vez más personaje en sí, imponiendo él un ritmo "chispeante", "sensual" hasta el macabro final, contrastante, entre la suerte de los personajes de carne y hueso. Hacia el final *se escucha el saxofón con una dulce melodía de amor, después se desborda en armonías*. ("La copa" 467-68)

relevant in other cultural contexts, such as in Louisiana, where the saxophone plays a prominent role in jazz music:

Por la directa ambientación y el lenguaje, Rojas subraya que la acción transcurre en un suburbio de la capital de San José, pero esa lánguida voz musical, nada tan frecuente en Centroamérica le da al conjunto un aire que un director creativo de repente querrá situar en sectores marginales de la misma Nueva Orleáns. (“La copa” 467)

While the saxophone may link the marginalized neighborhoods of New Orleans to the one in San José where Madriguera de ilusiones takes place, it is not native to the southern United States. Invented in Belgium by Adolphe Sax in 1840, this musical instrument was used in French military bands during the late 1800s before it became popular in the United States after World War I and in the field of jazz music after 1920 (Raumberger and Ventzke). As an instrument that has traveled outside of its original cultural context, the saxophone can be viewed as an example of a foreign element that French and American musicians in the past and Rojas in his work in the present have glocalized or filtered.

Rojas and these musicians have employed the saxophone to enrich their artistic expression within their own cultures. Rojas explains why he develops the saxophone as a character in his work, noting that the instrument “sabe lo que hay debajo de la piel. Cada vez que lo escucho me lleno de sentimiento y una tremenda vibración se apodera de mí. Entonces comprendo que la lógica y las emociones me hacen humano, muy

humano.”<sup>46</sup> According to the playwright, listening to a saxophone stirs an emotional response within him, helping him to understand that both logic and emotions are what make him a human being. In an age when neoliberal economic models spread to different parts of the world, emphasizing the logic of the market, neglect of this emotional component of the human being is a real danger. Rojas uses the saxophone in his play to remind the readers of the importance of counteracting this tendency to overlook the emotions that make one human. He does not advocate that his readers or Costa Rican society close themselves off to all foreign influences, since, after all, he has found that a foreign musical instrument helps put him in touch with his feelings and employs it as the “alma del género” in his play (407). The playwright instead emphasizes the need to filter globalization influences, rejecting those, like the market mentality, that destroy social cohesiveness in Costa Rica and accepting those, such as the saxophone, that enable Costa Ricans to build links with other cultures and share identities.

The saxophone in the play acts as a soul, expressing the love that the human characters are unable to share with each other. At the end of the play, Rojas shows how Azucena’s attempt to build a relationship with Cancán fails. When he kisses her passionately, Azucena stops him and voices her hope of sharing a home with him:

AZUCENA. ¡Así no...!

CANAN. Querías un macho. Pues aquí está.

AZUCENA. Un hogar. Un hombre, un hogar. ¿Entendés...?

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<sup>46</sup> This quotation of Rojas is from p. 467 of Valembois, ““La copa desbordada de lo humano’ (Tres líneas y un eje común en la búsqueda teatral de Miguel Rojas).”

CANCAN. No.

AZUCENA. Compartir, acompañarnos, protegernos. Vivir juntos. Tener un hogar. ¿Es muy difícil para vos entender eso...? (459)

Since Clavija's ghost had warned Cancán about how Azucena murdered him and stole his money, Cancán rejects her request because he fears that she also will kill him for his money. After they dance to a bolero, he leads her to the bed and suffocates her with the pillow as she tells him "te quiero" (460). At first, one wonders if Azucena's declaration of love to Cancán is genuine, since she had professed her love to Clavija as part of her scheme to rob him. However, Rojas's stage directions indicate that she might have some feelings for Cancán because they specify that she does not resist his attack (460). This lack of resistance contrasts with her earlier actions, when she had struggled with Clavija to gain the upper hand and kill him. Although Azucena loves Cancán, he does not return the sentiment and justifies murdering her by asserting his plans for professional and economic success: "Le robaste a Clavija. Querías robarme a mí también. Yo tengo futuro, tengo planes. Seré banquero...¡Necesito un trago de ron. Necesito una botella de ron. Necesito un barril de ron...! (460).

If Rojas had ended the play at this point, after two characters are murdered and a third character kills himself by abusing alcohol, he would be projecting an extremely pessimistic vision of contemporary society. What he does instead is create an epilogue in which the three dead characters appear on stage together. This prompts the readers to think about how the characters' obsession with money cost them their relationships and to consider what is most important in their own lives. In this epilogue, Azucena, Clavija, and Cancán explore their motivations and perhaps are completely honest with

each other for the first time. For example, Azucena confirms her love for Cancán, and he apologizes for murdering her. After hearing this, Clavija calls Azucena a hypocrite, since she also is a murderer, and she reveals that she was protecting her own interests when she killed him. As their conversation reaches its conclusion, they talk about topics that they never had addressed while they were alive:

CANCAN. No entiendo nada.

CLAVIJA. Hablamos de la vida.

AZUCENA. Aquí esperamos. (460-61)

Clavija's suggestion that they talk about life is particularly noteworthy, since it is the first time that he expresses interest in something without considering what it will cost him economically. After these characters exit the stage when a voice calls them, the saxophone plays "una dulce melodía de amor, después se desborda en armonías" (461). There is applause, then the music reaches a climax and suddenly stops. Rojas, by ending the play with this dialogue between the dead characters and with the saxophone, suggests the important role theatre and music can play in reminding people of the emotions that make them human beings.

In Hogar dulce hogar, Rojas continues to show how some Costa Ricans have lost sight of their emotional relationships because they are more concerned with their own professional and financial success. Rojas links this conflict that the Nicomedes family is facing in the play to the damages caused to Costa Rican society by a market-oriented process of globalization and, using the giant granadilla tree as a symbol, emphasizes the importance of filtering influences and ideologies from abroad. Bernardo complains to

Elizabeth that, after he had planted some fruit bushes, his father transplanted them without his permission:

BERNARDO. El año pasado sembré tres arbustos frutales en un lugar de sano crecimiento.

ELIZABETH. Crecen admirablemente.

BERNARDO. Claro que crecen. Tuve que abonarlos. Manos sigilosas trasladaron su residencia, colocándolos en el lugar menos apto para sembrar.

ELIZABETH. Se trasplantaron, eso fue todo.

BERNARDO. Cómo que “se trasplantaron”? Acaso los árboles tienen patas en sus raíces que les permiten andar de aquí para allá? No. Fue un acto deliberado. Quisieron hacerlos desaparecer muy discretamente. (88-89)

Bernardo, in the above dialogue, voices concern not only because Alfredo transplanted the shrubs without his permission but also because he was careless about where he placed them. This image of transplanting plants calls to mind what Friedman considers to be healthy glocalization, which is when a culture determines how to respond to foreign influences by considering if they will fit in with the local culture and their impact upon it. This filtering process is akin to the transplantation process in gardening. In order for the transplanted plant to thrive, the gardener should place it in the proper climate and soil, fertilize it and ensure that it will receive adequate sun and water. The gardener also will not want the transplant to endanger the other nearby plants by blocking their sunlight or engulfing them with its excessive growth. As Bernardo notes in the play, transplanting a tree is a deliberate act, and he does not want his treasured giant granadilla tree, which is presently thriving, to be transplanted to a place where it

could die. Since this tree suited to a tropical climate functions as a symbol of Costa Rican identity, a Tico version of Friedman's "olive tree" that provides Bernardo and Costa Ricans with a sense of belonging, Bernardo's fear that Alfredo will transplant it alludes to what could happen if Costa Ricans displace or relocate their cultural identity, failing to fertilize and properly care for it, in order to absorb foreign economic theories.

Bernardo's defense of the giant granadilla tree is rather extreme. His order that nobody touch the plant resembles a culture's decision to protect itself by closing itself off to foreign influences. This stance also implies that culture is a static entity that never undergoes transformation. While a culture should defend itself against homogenization, it should not avoid all contact with other cultures. As David Held observes, it is difficult to isolate one's own culture in the age of globalization: "Even though most people remain rooted in a local or national culture and a local place, it is becoming increasingly impossible for them to live in that place disconnected culturally from the world in which it is situated" (369). Rojas encourages his readers to understand that a closed culture is not a healthy option by showing Bernardo's authoritarian manner when he issues the command that nobody touch the tree: "El que toque mis plantas, quede claro, le pateo el trasero" (89). This threat of physical violence further damages the already fractured relationships within the family.

Bernardo's tactics in protecting the giant granadilla tree are questionable, especially if one reads the play as a political allegory. His authoritarianism seems more akin to home-grown dictators who try to justify their tyranny as a way to gain power. There is cause for concern that the market mentality adopted by some of the characters leaves no place in the family for Celina and Alfredito, the characters who represent the values of

art, nature, and emotional relationships. At the end of the play, these two characters literally disappear. Celina decides to leave the house, and the family learns of Alfredito's death. Without Celina and Alfredito, it seems unlikely that the family will resolve its conflicts peacefully.

Rojas maintain an aura of mystery about Celina's origins, revealing little about her life before she moved in with the Nicomedes family, except that she has traveled all over the world. Nevertheless, she is important to the family not only because she helped buy their house but also because she presents an alternative point of view about what is most important in life. While Elizabeth and Alfredo discuss his professional goals, Celina sings an aria, which expresses the emotion lacking in their business-oriented discourse. Since Celina has come in contact with foreign cultures through her travels, perhaps she chooses an Italian aria that she heard abroad or in performances by visiting theatrical companies in Costa Rica. Despite all she has seen in her travels, she still appreciates the view of the sunset from the family's patio, commenting on its natural beauty: "Ay, si fuera poeta escribiría versos encendidos, dulces y tempestuosos a la vez, totalmente desenfundados. . . ." (26). Emphasizing Celina's interest in the poetry, Rojas presents her as alternative model for interacting with other parts of the world. Always appreciating her local culture and environment, Celina expresses in poetry and music from another cultural context her passion for life, her emotions, and the importance of following one's dreams.

Although Celina leaves the house feeling content and having no regrets about her life, Alfredito appears troubled by social conventions and wishes for more loving relationships within the family, and his death suggests that some aspects of the artist's

life are too fragile. When he asks Vera for a loan, he complains about the daily social routines that he feels compelled to follow:

Captaste la mueca de dolor que hay en mi corazón? Es hilar muy fino con vos. Observá. . . .Se [sic] decir “buenos días, dormí de la puta madre, cómo están todos, tengo mal aliento, tomate un vaso de agua en ayunas, gracias, y lavate las manos. Ah, se me olvidaba que tienen que soñar con los arcángeles, serafines, y por supuesto, con los angelitos a culito pelado. . . .Gracias, grosero el muchacho, es todo un ángel maldito. Me santiguo, Amén. Mamá, me das un beso en la camita? Disculpen, estoy con el ánimo bajo”. Con toda la mierda, qué papel jugás vos en toda esta farsa? Te creía más lista, dispuesta a romper con tanto circo. (39)

This dialogue reveals Alfredito’s psychological state. Feeling trapped, he cannot fit into the social norms expected in a materialist world. Even as he appeals to his sister for help, he is unable to escape from the vision of his family as a circus-style farce, which emphasizes the performative nature of these daily conventions in which one follows a predetermined script. By showing Alfredito’s unhappiness in a world where he cannot express his true emotions, not even at home where his sister and, presumably, his other relatives comply with these social norms, Rojas foretells this character’s death.

In the only scene in the play in which Rojas departs from realism, Alfredito searches for what he cannot find in his family’s house. Vera finds Alfredito in a park in the city, where he is drunk or high on drugs and is talking to the full moon: “Mi hogar. . . .Yo te pertenezco, quiero volver. Enviame la nave, lunita. Qué feliz me siento en tu regazo...! Feliz de saber que habrá paz y armonía...! Los quiero a todos, los amo con

todo mi corazón. . . .” (119). In this speech to the moon, Alfredito describes it as having all of the qualities lacking in his life with his family. For example, he calls the moon his home and says he has a sense of belonging to it. He also personifies the moon by saying that he feels happy while sitting in its lap, which suggests his yearning for human contact, especially the comfort a child would find in a parent’s lap. Finally, he rejoices in the peace and love that he will find on the moon, the emotional component of life that is not present in his family’s house. Rojas shows Alfredito’s death in a symbolic manner, specifying in the stage directions that Alfredito’s shadow is inserted into an image of the moon projected on stage. However, at the end of the play, the family receives a phone call from the police, informing them that Alfredito died from falling off a streetlight. While it is not clear if his death was an accident or a suicide, it is likely the lack of love among the family caused him to feel alienated and seek solace in drugs or alcohol and was at least a contributing factor to his death.

The loss of Celina and Alfredito are not the only signs at the end of Hogar dulce hogar suggesting that the family is about to be torn apart by conflicting values. Bernardo’s authoritarianism culminates much like a dictator’s coup d’etat when he reveals that he owns the house and, if his relatives wish to remain there now, they will have to follow his orders. Upon hearing this, Alfredo physically attacks Bernardo. What happens next, however, offers some hope that some of the characters will realize the importance of their familial relationships. The stage directions indicate that Bernardo only protects himself from his father’s attack and does not hit Alfredo. Although Bernardo thinks about killing Alfredo, he explains that he wishes to change his own and his family’s behavior: “(Contenido) Sería capaz de matarlo sin que me

temblaran las manos. Tolerancia y respeto para empezar el día. Por favor, no más violencia. La casa es para vivir en paz” (189). Nevertheless, Bernardo’s behavior is disturbing. Although his rhetoric espouses peace, he imposes his will on his relatives.

Nicol seems to support Bernardo’s call for a peaceful environment in the house when, after informing the family of Alfredito’s death, she speaks the play’s final line: “No movamos la luna para que no se agite el mar” (190). It could be that Rojas ends his play with this poetic statement in order to emphasize Alfredito’s dreams. Nicol refers to the moon, where Alfredito wished to travel before his death. Her request not to move the moon so that the sea does not become rough echoes statements that Alfredito had made about the moon, calling it “el mar de la tranquilidad” and noting that “ella sabe mover lo que sentimos” (101-02). By repeating these words at the end of the play, Rojas reinforces the association between the moon and human emotions. Nicol, in her statement, seems to ask that calmness reign in the house.

Although there are some positive signs suggesting that some of the characters will change their behavior, the play’s ending remains uncertain. Bernardo still asserts his power in the house. The family also has lost Celina, Alfredito, and Alfredo, who opts to move out of the house. Rojas leaves the readers wondering if it too late for the characters to change their attitudes. Will the children stop imitating the violence and pursuit of success at any cost that they learned from the parents and create a true home? Will future generations of Costa Ricans nurture their emotional relationships? Since Rojas alerted the readers in the introduction that the Nicomedes family represents Costa Rican society, at the end of the play, he prompts these readers to question globalization influences that have a negative impact on their identity and social cohesiveness.

During the 1980s, the economic crisis displaced many Costa Ricans from their homes, impacting in particular the lower as well as the middle classes. Inquilinos del árbol, Madriguera de ilusiones, and Hogar dulce hogar question the foreign economic models adopted by the Costa Rican government in response to this crisis, suggesting that, in the 1990s, Costa Rican cultural identities are in danger of homogenization from market-oriented forces of globalization. Cavallini and Rojas invite their readers to consider alternative ways of interacting with different parts of the world. While Cavallini affirms and questions aspects of her local culture, Rojas emphasizes the importance of filtering influences from abroad. Both dramatists explore the role of art in these plays, showing how it expresses emotions and fosters political and social consciousness. However, the fate of characters like Piyama, Celina, and Alfredito suggests that art increasingly is displaced and viewed as a commodity and evaluated according to its potential economic profitability.

While Cavallini and Rojas focus on poetry and music in the plays examined in this chapter, what they have to say about the role of these artistic forms is also applicable to the theatrical medium in Costa Rica during the 1980s and 1990s. Cavallini and Rojas have commented on this theatrical scene in their writings. They address many themes in this metatheatrical discourse, including the importance of children's theatre, the need to decentralize theatre so that it reaches a broad spectrum of social classes in regions beyond San José, and the role of the critic. However, their exploration of the factors governing theatrical groups' selection of repertory is particularly pertinent to the themes addressed in Inquilinos del árbol, Madriguera de ilusiones, and Hogar dulce hogar. Costa Rican New Wave playwrights have written and published plays addressing their

socio-political context. However, as Carolyn Bell notes, “these works are not available to the public and cannot be bought in the larger bookstores in San José” (“Special Report” 879). Unless theatrical companies stage these plays, these dramatists’ works will remain for the most part unknown, circulating only among the dramatists and scholars. Rojas, urging potential audience members to attend performances of these plays, sums up well the importance of including Costa Rican dramaturgy in theatrical repertoires: “El teatro sin público no existe más que en la idea” (Puntos de vista 28).

Before exploring the nature of these repertoires, it is necessary to review the development and basic structure of the theatrical circuit in San José in order to understand who is determining which plays will be staged and the factors influencing these decisions.<sup>47</sup> The Costa Rican state has played a major role in this development since the late nineteenth century, actively supporting and promoting the theatre during certain historical periods. Patricia Fumero, in Teatro, público y estado en San José, examines how, from 1880 to 1914, the Costa Rican state subsidized foreign theatrical companies by exonerating them from taxes, transporting them between the Atlantic or Pacific ports and San José, paying them fixed sums of money, and providing them with a performance space, wardrobe or scenery (161-75). Since the Liberal government’s goal in supporting these companies was to educate Costa Ricans from different social

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<sup>47</sup> The sources consulted for this review of the development and structure of the theatrical circuit include: María Bonilla, “Costa Rica y el derecho a soñar: Audacia teatral del siglo XX” and “Presente, futuro y teatro costarricense”; Leda Cavallini, “Dramaturgia infantil: Un espacio para recrear o imaginar”; Rafael Cuevas Molina, El punto sobre la “i”: Políticas culturales en Costa Rica, 1948-1990; Patricia Fumero Vargas, “Teatro y política cultural en Costa Rica (1950-2000)”; Samuel Rovinski, “El teatro y el cine contemporáneos en Costa Rica”; Salvador Solís, “El movimiento teatral costarricense: (1951-1971)”; and personal interviews with Leda Cavallini and Amaral Sánchez, director of Teatro Skené.

classes, ensuring that they acquire European culture, manners, and customs, it did not promote an interest in Costa Rican dramaturgy nor facilitate the staging of Costa Rican works (Fumero, Teatro, público 201-05).<sup>48</sup>

The foreign theatrical companies were unable to travel to Costa Rica during the World Wars. However, after the Costa Rican Civil War ended in 1948, the state became, according to Rafael Cuevas Molina, the major promoter and supporter of culture in Costa Rica (244-45). In 1950, the Teatro Universitario was founded at the University of Costa Rica, which the state opened in 1941. In 1959, the state created the Editorial Costa Rica, a publishing house that circulates the works of Costa Rican writers.<sup>49</sup> The state also established national literary prizes during the 1950s, including the Aquileo J. Echeverría awards, which include an annual prize for a play (Cuevas Molina 99-100).

While these were noteworthy developments for the arts in Costa Rica, the 1960s and 1970s became “the golden age” for culture, as Patricia Fumero explains:

El período de oro de la cultura, en la gestión socialdemócrata se ubica entre el momento de la creación de la Dirección General de Artes y Letras (1963), dependencia semiautónoma del Ministerio de Educación Pública (MEP), y 1978,

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<sup>48</sup> Alvaro Quesada, Flora Ovaes, Margarita Rojas, and Carlos Santander have published the works of Costa Rican dramatists from this time period in Antología del teatro costarricense: 1890-1950 (1993). For a history of Costa Rican dramaturgy during this time period and critical readings of the plays, see En el tinglado de la eterna comedia: Teatro costarricense 1890-1930 (1995).

<sup>49</sup> The Editorial Teatro Nacional began publishing plays written by Costa Rican authors in the series Teatro para el Teatro in 1989 (Cavallini, Personal interview). Rafael Cuevas Molina, in El punto sobre la “i”: Políticas culturales en Costa Rica, 1948-1990, and Patricia Fumero Vargas, in “Teatro y política cultural en Costa Rica (1950-2000),” provide a chronology of the artistic institutions founded by the Costa Rican state.

después de dos gobiernos liberacionistas consecutivos y de la creación del Ministerio de Cultura, Juventud y Deportes. (“Teatro y política cultural” 30)

This impulse for the arts, as Fumero emphasizes in the above quotation, was part of the Partido Liberación Nacional’s program of social democracy.<sup>50</sup> As part of this political project, Cuevas Molina notes that the state formed cultural policies based upon the principles of state patronage and cultural diffusion: “*Mecenazgo y difusión* constituirán . . . los dos nortes principales de las políticas y acciones culturales que caracterizarán el trabajo cultural del Estado costarricense desde 1960 hasta finales de la década de 1970” (93). According to this diffusionist concept of culture, the state created the infrastructure and supported programs to circulate to other regions in the country the arts that were produced in San José (Cuevas Molina 142).

In order to professionalize the Costa Rican theatrical medium, the Escuela de Artes Dramáticas was created at the University of Costa Rica in 1969, and the Compañía Nacional de Teatro was founded in 1971 as an entity belonging to the Ministerio de Cultura, Juventud y Deportes, which also had been founded that same year. The Taller Nacional de Teatro, created in 1977, offers theatrical training outside of the university and also trains cultural promoters, who travel to schools and rural areas to assist groups wishing to stage plays (Cuevas Molina 158-60). Argentine, Chilean, and Uruguayan dramatists, actors, and directors fleeing the military dictatorships in their countries in the 1970s also contributed to the professionalization of the medium by teaching classes

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<sup>50</sup> See Jorge Rovira Mas, Costa Rica en los años ’80, for an overview of the Costa Rican political parties that emerged after the Civil War, including the Partido Liberación Nacional. According to Rafael Cuevas Molina, the Partido Liberación Nacional co-opted intellectuals and writers of communist ideology into the social democratic project through cultural institutions such as the Editorial Nacional (97-98).

and working with theatrical companies during their exile in Costa Rica (Rovinski 60). The journal Escena, founded in 1979 by the University of Costa Rica and the Compañía Nacional de Teatro, circulates plays, theatrical histories, theories, and literary criticism among theatre professionals in Costa Rica. At first publishing materials exclusively related to the theatre, Escena later included works dealing with music and film.<sup>51</sup>

Once it established this institutional framework, the state, through subsidizing performances, sought to bring theatre to many Costa Ricans. For example, a theatre ticket, which cost less than a movie ticket, sometimes included transportation to and from the performance space (Fumero, “Teatro y política cultural” 35). The state also funded performances outdoors or those that traveled to different neighborhoods in the metropolitan area, attracting as many as seventy thousand people to a single play’s run at the height of these initiatives (Rovinski 59). While these policies encouraged a broad spectrum of social classes to attend the performances, the largest component of these audiences was middle-class university graduates (Cuevas Molina 169).

In the 1980s, the Costa Rican theatrical medium suffered a significant setback, due to the economic crisis and, during the Partido de Unidad Socialcristiana’s presidential administrations, a change in the state’s cultural policy from a diffusionist to an anthropological concept of culture. According to Cuevas Molina, the state, instead of encouraging Costa Ricans to attend theatrical performances originating from San José, created entities within the Ministerio de Cultura, Juventud y Deportes that fostered “la

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<sup>51</sup> José Angel Vargas has compiled an index of the materials published in the first twenty-seven issues of Escena, which is available on-line at: <http://cariari.ucr.ac.cr/~ec/revistas/escena/indice1a27.htm>. María del Rocío Monge has done the same for the more recent issues at: <http://cariari.ucr.ac.cr/~ec/revistas/escena/indice28a40.htm>.

participación activa, más allá del rol de espectador, de mujeres y hombres del pueblo” (202). The neoliberal economic models adopted by the state in order to qualify for foreign loans also negatively impacted theatre and the arts in general, converting these artistic works into commodities:

En este siglo, con la creación del MCJD en 1971 y la nueva política de subvenciones estatales, se logró consolidar un teatro de base popular, ilusión que pronto se vio destruida con las políticas neoliberales tendientes a someter la producción cultural a las fuerzas del mercado, especialmente a partir de finales de la década de 1980. (Fumero, “Teatro y política cultural” 37)

With less support from the state, and the prices of tickets becoming inaccessible to many potential audience members, María Bonilla notes that theatrical performances, which had typically run from Tuesday through Sunday, only ran from Thursday through Sunday (“Presente, futuro” 63). Promotion of the theatre by the private sector was also limited. For example, only two Costa Rican newspapers employed theatre critics, and one television channel devoted fifteen minutes on a weekly basis to coverage of the performing arts (Bonilla, “Presente, futuro” 63).<sup>52</sup>

These adverse conditions continued to affect the San José theatrical scene during the 1990s, and the structure of this theatrical circuit during the 1990s owes much to the state’s sponsorship in the 1970s and the emergence of a commercially-oriented theatre

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<sup>52</sup> Bonilla also highlights that theatre critics do not review plays in a transparent manner, but rather are influenced by their own ideological orientations. She notes that the newspaper “de mayor importancia en el país, desde el punto de vista del tiraje, mantiene una crítica teatral basada en la instauración de mitos históricos: mito del talento y la inspiración, mito del teatro inmutable frente a la historia, etc.” (“Presente, futuro” 63-64).

in the 1980s.<sup>53</sup> During the 1980s and 1990s, this circuit consisted of two currents: an official, or state-sponsored, current and an independent current (Sánchez, Personal interview). María Bonilla, in “Presente, futuro y teatro costarricense” and “Costa Rica y el derecho a soñar: Audacia teatral del siglo XX,” identifies the active theatrical companies during these decades and explains how they fit into these currents. However, she notes that, despite the existence of different currents, many of the actors and directors do not work solely for a single company, but instead move from job to job, working indiscriminately for both official and independent companies (“Presente, futuro” 63).

Within the official current, besides the Compañía Nacional de Teatro and the Teatro Universitario at the University of Costa Rica, the graduating classes of the Taller Nacional de Teatro and three other state universities, the Universidad Nacional, the Instituto Tecnológico, and the Universidad Estatal a Distancia, stage plays (Cavallini, Personal interview). The independent current is further subdivided into three categories. Some of these independent companies are headed by impresarios, individuals who own theaters, direct the plays, hire the actors, and choose the repertory. Of the independent companies, the ones headed by impresarios tend to be the most commercially-oriented. Another category within this current are the special initiatives, often of an experimental nature, created when a group of people works together to produce a single play. These groups obtain financial support or acquire performance space from the Compañía Nacional de Teatro, which then is credited as being a

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<sup>53</sup> María Bonilla provides an overview of theatre in San José during the 1990s in “Costa Rica y el derecho a soñar: Audacia teatral del siglo XX.”

coproducer of the play.<sup>54</sup> Finally, the independent theatrical groups make up the smallest category in this current. These companies usually possess their own performance space, and their members have worked together staging plays over a period of time (Sánchez, Personal interview).

As this review of the development and structure of the theatrical medium in San José has shown, there are sufficient performance spaces, theatrical companies, and theatre professionals as well as some possibilities for funding, despite fiscal constraints. What Cavallini, Rojas, and other theatre professionals question is how the theatrical groups select their repertoires. María Bonilla notes that the Teatro Universitario and the Compañía Nacional de Teatro have Boards of Directors that decide which plays to perform. Since she was the Director of the Compañía Nacional de Teatro from 1982 to 1986 and is currently a professor at the University of Costa Rica, Bonilla is aware of the limitations that this type of organizational structure imposes on the development of a repertory. The Teatro Universitario, she observes

monta una o dos obras al año, con textos latinoamericanos, costarricenses y clásicos universales de importancia, aunque no siguen una línea de repertorio coherente, en el sentido de que, al igual que la Compañía Nacional de Teatro, ésta refleja la puesta de acuerdo de varios miembros de lo que se llama la Junta

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<sup>54</sup> The state owns many theaters: the Teatro de la Aduana; the Teatro Fanal; the Teatro Nacional, where foreign theatrical companies on tour perform; the Sala Vargas Calvo; the Teatro Melico Salazar, which hosts different types of performances, including children's theatre; the Sala Taller Nacional de Teatro; and a small theater used by the Teatro Moderno de Muñecos (Cavallini, Personal interview). Fumero lists all of the performance spaces that existed in San José between 1960 and 2000, including those owned by impresarios and independent groups, in a chart on p. 32 in "Teatro y política cultural en Costa Rica (1950-2000)."

Directiva o Consejo Asesor, que la mayoría de las veces no tienen una misma visión ni del teatro, ni de la cultura y ni siquiera de la vida. (“Presente, futuro” 62)

According to Bonilla, the conflicting opinions of the board members, and, in the case of the Compañía Nacional de Teatro, the fact that its directorship typically changes every four years after the Costa Rican presidential elections, impede the establishment of a repertory that shows signs of continuity. Cavallini agrees with Bonilla’s assessment of the Teatro Universitario and Compañía Nacional de Teatro’s repertories. She notes that the CNT has not always followed the legal statutes governing its creation in 1971, which specify that the company’s annual repertory include: one play written by a “universal” author, one Latin American work, and one Costa Rican play. Although this legislation requires that the company stage annually three plays that are written by authors from different cultural contexts, Cavallini states: “Eso no ha sido totalmente posible en algunos de los años. Entonces, hay variantes en el repertorio de la Compañía Nacional de Teatro” (Personal interview).<sup>55</sup>

Within this panorama, a change that Cavallini and Rojas particularly hope to see is the staging of more works written by Costa Rican dramatists, not only by the CNT but also by the other theatrical companies. However, since theatre became a commodity in Costa Rica in the 1980s, it is often not financially feasible for a theatrical company to stage Costa Rican plays, particularly those written by New Wave authors that prompt

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<sup>55</sup> A look at the Historia gráfica de la Compañía Nacional de Teatro: 25 aniversario 1971-1996 confirms Cavallini’s observation. This commemorative book reprints the legal statutes governing the company’s creation on pp. 12-13. It also includes photographs of the company’s directors and of its performances as well as lists of directors, actors, and stage designers who are members of the company.

the audiences to think about the local socio-political context. When a company opts to perform a Costa Rican play, it has to compete with the other theatrical companies that are selling their performances to potential audience members. In research for her thesis, Madelaine Martínez Rojas shows that the tendency in theatrical advertisements is to feature a sexually-suggestive title and illustration to market a performance. Analyzing all of the advertisements published in the newspaper La Nación on May 24, 1998, Martínez Rojas points out that five of the plays' titles, comprising 38.46 percent of the total advertised works, allude directly to sexual themes (Sexomanía, El erótico secuestro de Mariano Rivas, La noche de los gritos y las plumas: Gays y lesbianas en una fiesta inolvidable, Despedida de soltera, En paños menores), 53.84 percent feature photographs, and 15.38 include illustrations (70-79). In general, the playwright's name does not appear in the ad, nor does that of the director or cast members: "Lo sugestivo del título, junto con la seducción de la fotografía o caricatura, es una predominante" (Martínez Rojas 79).

While the New Wave plays offer an alternative to this tendency by seriously exploring issues relevant to their audiences' lives, they typically attract only a small segment of the theatre-going population (Bell, "Special Report" 879). In the sample studied in Martínez Rojas's thesis, none of the advertised plays was authored by a Costa Rican. Although this seems to be a discouraging environment for those companies wishing to stage Costa Rican plays and generate enough revenue through ticket sales to pay for the production costs, there are some hopeful signs that it is possible to meet these goals. For example, some theatrical groups, particularly those affiliated with the universities, stage Costa Rican plays, sometimes with the Compañía Nacional de Teatro

coproducing, that are part of the curriculum in middle and high schools. These include the works of Alberto Cañas, Daniel Gallegos, and Samuel Rovinski, who belong to an earlier generation of playwrights, as well as New Wave author Miguel Rojas. By choosing these texts and hosting performances for the students, the groups can guarantee themselves a sizable audience and enough income to support the production costs (Cavallini, Personal interview). The independent initiatives formed by groups working together for a single project often perform Costa Rican plays or employ an experimental approach to plays from different cultural contexts. The financial backing they obtain from the Compañía Nacional de Teatro enables them to offset some of the production costs and bring new plays to their audiences. However, since these groups dissolve after the end of the plays' run, they never establish a coherent repertory (Sánchez, Personal interview).

These types of productions are positive steps forward in bringing more Costa Rican dramaturgy to audiences. However, an examination of the critical response to Cavallini and Rojas's dramaturgy and the history of the staging of their plays illustrates the challenges that remain in presenting a more varied theatrical repertory to Costa Rican audiences. In general, there is more support for their dramaturgy, or acknowledgement of the importance of their work as literary texts, than for staging their works. Cavallini even has stated that her published plays have received more critical response abroad than in Costa Rica: "Yo tengo más proyección a nivel internacional que a nivel nacional" (Personal interview). The playwright's participation at conferences abroad and published criticism of her plays confirm this observation. For instance, in 1988, the organizers of the First International Women Playwrights Conference at the State

University of New York at Buffalo invited Cavallini and her coauthor Lupe Pérez to speak.<sup>56</sup> Their attendance at this conference generated interest in translating into English their plays Ellas en la maquila and Pancha Carrasco reclama (Cavallini, Personal interview). This second play has won two prizes abroad: the 1990 UNESCO Prize and First Prize in the V Concurso Internacional de Obras Teatrales del Tercer Mundo in Caracas, Venezuela (Pérez Yglesias, Pancha Carrasco 9, 12).

Scholars from Puerto Rico, Spain, Argentina, and the United States also have corresponded with Cavallini, sharing analyses of her play texts (Personal interview). Among these scholars is Carolyn Bell, who, in 2000, published critical readings of Ellas en la maquila and Tarde de granizo y musgo. Although Bell is an American university professor, her articles were published in Costa Rica in Istmica, a journal produced by the Universidad Nacional, and in Drama contemporáneo costarricense: 1980-2000, an anthology edited by Bell and Patricia Fumero, which the University of Costa Rica published. Cavallini's works had received some attention in Costa Rica prior to the publication of Bell's articles. The play Pinocho, which she coauthored with Lupe Pérez, won the Aquileo Echeverría National Theater Prize in 1989. Also, Costa Rican professors Margarita Rojas and Flora Ovares, in Cien años de literatura costarricense (1995), had called attention to Cavallini and Pérez's place in the history of Costa Rican literature, dedicating a few paragraphs to their treatment of the historical themes in

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<sup>56</sup> Anna Kay France and P.J. Corso edited the conference proceedings. See International Women Playwrights: Voices of Identity and Transformation: Proceedings of the First International Women Playwrights Conference, October 18-23, 1988. The other Latin American playwrights who participated in the conference are: Isidora Aguirre (Chile), Leilah Assunção (Brazil), María Irene Fornés (Cuba), Diana Raznovich (Argentina), Sabina Berman (Mexico) and Myrna Casas (Puerto Rico).

Pancha Carrasco reclama and Aguirre (246). Bell's essays, however, circulating among scholars and theatre professionals in Costa Rica, encourage more local recognition of Cavallini's dramaturgy and offer in-depth analysis of two of her plays.

Cavallini points out that not only does her dramaturgy receive more attention abroad, but also that the staging of her plays remains, for the most part, within certain currents of the Costa Rican theatrical circuit. In a personal interview, the dramatist stresses that, except for Musical garapiñado, the Compañía Nacional de Teatro has never produced her plays. The CNT's decision to perform her children's play, which Ernesto Rohmoser directed, as part of the 1999 Festival de las Artes in Puntarenas and San José stems from her advocating that the company stage theatre for children. Although the CNT had performed children's plays after it was founded, it had ceased to do so in the 1990s. In response to Cavallini's suggestion, the company staged a play outdoors at the festival, using text provided by the dramatist and also adding musical elements to the production (Personal interview).

Other productions of her plays, however, have been either independent initiatives by groups, which sometimes obtained funding from the CNT, or done by university and amateur theatrical groups.<sup>57</sup> Her first work to be staged was Ellas en la maquila, which the Teatro Universitario performed to commemorate the International Year of the Woman in 1985. Directed by Eugenia Chaverri, the play attracted primarily a female audience at the university before it traveled in performance to communities where many women worked in textile assembly plants. Teatro de la Colina and director Xinia

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<sup>57</sup> The anthology edited by Bell and Fumero lists basic information about the performance of Cavallini's plays on pp. 176-77. Cavallini provided additional details about these stagings in a personal interview.

Sánchez produced two of Cavallini's plays: Pancha Carrasco reclama (1988) and the children's work El libro y el pájaro (1989), which later toured smaller communities.

The amateur family-run theatrical group Grupo de Teatro Escalinata performed Pinocho in 1989. Directed by Martín Murillo, the productions traveled to poor communities, and the same play was later staged with child actors at the Teatro Giratablas in San José for three days in June 2000 (Cavallini, Personal interview). In 1998, a group of amateur actresses, TEGE (Teatro de Género), performed Ocho azucenas para nosotras mismas under the direction of Isabel Saborío (Díaz, "Historias de mujeres"). Finally, although Tarde de granizo y musgo has not been staged, the Centro Cultural Mexicano in San José hosted a dramatic reading of the play in 1998. As one can see from this history of performances, Cavallini's plays tend to be staged outside of the official theatrical current and are directed at audiences who do not typically make up the theatre-going population in San José.

Rojas's dramaturgy, like Cavallini's, has received some critical responses in Costa Rica and abroad. The Municipalidad de San José awarded Lo que somos, one of his earliest plays, which was performed under the direction of José Luis Rojas, the Grano de Oro Prize in 1977. Carole A. Champagne includes critical readings of six of his plays in her dissertation, Social Commitment and Dramatic Discourse in Three Contemporary Costa Rican Playwrights (1998), which she wrote at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. However, Víctor Valembois notes that, in Costa Rica, Rojas's dramaturgy has not received a large quantity of critical response, which Valembois attributes to "la marginalización dentro de un sistema que no favorece ni el arte ni la autenticidad" ("La copa" 472). Valembois seeks to end some of the silence surrounding

Rojas's dramaturgy, offering a critical reading of Madriguera de ilusiones and an overview of the creative tendencies he finds in Rojas's plays in an essay published in the anthology edited by Bell and Fumero. In another essay published in 2000 in the journal Istmica, Valembois, analyzing El anillo del pavo real, also comments again on how "este autor costarricense sufre una especie de ostracismo interno," which Valembois asserts is due to the fact that "la misma complejidad de la dramaturgia en cuestión la aleja un tanto de las tablas y las editoras" ("Un pavo" 205).

While a combination of market-oriented globalization forces and the complexity of Rojas's plays could be responsible for limiting critical response and the production of his works, some of his plays have received more attention than others. El anillo del pavo real is currently one of the obligatory texts read by students in the eleventh year in Costa Rican public schools.<sup>58</sup> The independent group Tierranegra staged his play for children Niño ojos de estrella in 1980. It performed the play in a theater owned by the Compañía Nacional de Teatro, in schools in different parts of Costa Rica, and in the theater at the Museo Histórico Juan Santamaría in Alajuela, with Luis Carlos Vásquez directing (Tosatti and Ruiz 81).<sup>59</sup> Tierranegra also produced Cuando la luna se durmió,

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<sup>58</sup> The curriculum, dated for the year 2001, is available on the internet at: <http://www.mep.go.cr> (Programa de Estudios, Español, Educación Diversificada). The only other Costa Rican play currently in the curriculum is Daniel Gallegos's En el séptimo círculo (1982), which is an obligatory text read in the ninth year of school (Costa Rica, Programa de Estudios, Español, III Ciclo).

<sup>59</sup> Rojas was a member of Tierranegra, an innovative independent theatrical group, which staged plays between 1973 and 1983. Manuel Ruiz summarizes the group's aims as: "búsqueda, investigación, lenguaje rural, la imagen plástica como síntesis, los problemas de América Latina" ("Apuntes" 70). Although Tierranegra never possessed its own performance space, it traveled to different regions in Costa Rica as well as to other Latin American countries and theatre festivals abroad, producing collective creations and texts authored by a single playwright (Ruiz García, "Apuntes" 70).

which was written by Eugenia Chaverri in 1979, and a different version of the play, called El día que la luna se durmió, in 1980, which was created by Rojas and Manuel Ruiz (Tosatti and Ruiz 81). In 1985, the Teatro Universitario staged Los nublados del día, with the Compañía Nacional de Teatro listed as a coproducer and Manuel Ruiz directing. As is the case with Cavallini's plays, Rojas's works tend to be staged by groups located outside of the official theatrical current and that reach out to audiences beyond the theatre-going population in San José.

Looking at the critical responses to and production histories of Cavallini and Rojas's plays, some common patterns emerge that point to the challenges that playwrights and theatrical companies face in trying to incorporate Costa Rican dramaturgy as part of the repertory in the San José theatrical medium. While independent and university theatrical groups have staged some of these two dramatists' plays, bringing them to audiences beyond the capital city, their other works have not entered into the repertoires of both the official theatrical current and independent companies. Their plays that have received attention, in terms of critical response or being produced, are the ones that deal with historical themes and their children's plays. It could be that the groups producing their historical plays, such as Pancha Carrasco reclama and Los nublados del día, were able to obtain funding from the Compañía Nacional de Teatro because the state supports the exploration of Costa Rica's past in the cultural field.<sup>60</sup> Proof of this is the

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Alejandro Tossati and Manuel Ruiz, members of Tierranegra, wrote a chronology of the group's evolution, which was published in Escena. See p. 82 for a chart showing Tierranegra's complete repertory.

<sup>60</sup> Although Cavallini and Rojas set some of their plays in Costa Rica's past, they use the historical themes to allude to the present. The next chapter mentions these plays'

Ministerio de Educación Pública's selection of El anillo del pavo real as a required reading. This play, according to Valembois, is a version of a Costa Rican legend set in Aserrí, which is a small town south of the capital that "abiertamente evoca resonancias coloniales y se caracteriza todavía por su ascendencia indígena y mestiza" ("Un pavo" 208).

The decisions by the Compañía Nacional de Teatro and independent groups to produce the dramatists' children's theatre also could stem from the state and the groups' support for the philosophy towards the function of children's theatre that is implicit in the plays. Cavallini's Master's thesis argues for more state subsidies for children's theatre in Costa Rica that not only entertains children but also encourages them to think. Rojas and his fellow members of Tierranegra held a similar opinion, preferring to situate plays for children in a Costa Rican context and encourage this young audience to see that it can play an active role in determining Costa Rica's present and future (Tossati and Ruiz 81). While the CNT may have shared Cavallini's point of view about children's theatre when it staged Musical garapiñado, it has not developed a continuous policy of producing plays for young people. Most of the efforts to stage plays for children are carried out in the independent theatrical current in San José, where they are often hindered by economic exigencies.

These reasons why more of Cavallini and Rojas's plays, and those written by Costa Rican authors, have not been staged stem in part from the change in the state's cultural policies and the economic crisis during the 1980s. Valembois's suggestion that the

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relevance to the socio-political context during the Central American revolutions in the 1980s.

complexity of Rojas's theatre, prompting audiences to think, is a deterrent to theatrical companies can also be applicable to other cases of Costa Rican dramaturgy ("Un pavo" 205). A company looking to attract a large enough audience to pay for the cost of the production might be reluctant to take a risk in an environment where other companies opt to present light comedies. Cavallini also notes that critics who publish theatrical reviews in the media often judge Costa Rican dramaturgy harshly, citing the example of Andrés Sáenz, reviewer for the newspaper La Nación, who tends to privilege plays with an Aristotelian structure ("Teatro infantil" 44-45). A look at his reviews of Niño ojos de estrella, Los nublados del día, Ellas en la maquila, and Pancha Carrasco in La comedia es cosa seria and Dispárenle al crítico, two books in which Sáenz compiles his reviews that were published in La Nación, supports Cavallini's assertion. The critic comments not only on the technical aspects of the performances but also analyzes the play texts and seems highly critical of the experimental techniques employed by the dramatists.

While these factors help explain why more Costa Rican plays do not appear in theatrical companies' repertoires, another specific reason why more of Cavallini and Rojas's works are not staged could be because both playwrights are outspoken about the state's cultural policies and the selection of repertory by companies within the official and independent currents in the relatively small theatrical medium in San José. Cavallini questions the type of comedies being produced in the 1980s and 1990s, particularly in the commercially-oriented currents: "Lo que sí salta a la vista es la presencia, en la escena del teatro costarricense, de una serie de espectáculos que buscan 'la risa' y la diversión por medio de textos ligeros que atraen a espectadores, no con el

propósito de provocar una risa reflexiva sino un pasatiempo” (“Teatro infantil” 64).

While not opposed to the use of humor in a play, the dramatist believes that it should do more than merely entertain. Referring to the theory of reflective laughter, she prefers that humor make an audience member think about socio-political realities (Personal interview).

Rojas also criticizes the use of humor purely for entertainment and argues that it results from copying foreign models without considering their relevance to the contemporary Costa Rican context. Commenting on the tendency in the Costa Rican theatrical medium to imitate what is in style in London, Paris or New York, the playwright states:

El resultado que obtenemos es una forma, un patrón exterior. . . .¿Y dónde se queda el contenido, la sustancia, lo trascendente que otras culturas pueden aportarnos? San José está lleno de estos trasplantes en sus pocas salas de teatro. No se estudia, no se llega al fondo, sino que nos quedamos en la fachada y el teatro pasa a ser vil y vulgar comercio de espectáculos pobres y risas para tontos.

(Puntos de vista 10)

Rojas, in the above quotation from one of his newspaper columns published in Semanario Universidad, is not opposed to including foreign plays in theatrical repertories, provided that the works are relevant to the Costa Rican audiences.

Interestingly, Rojas uses the term trasplantes to describe this process of transferring foreign plays and influences to the Costa Rican stage. This term directly relates to the themes explored in Madriguera de ilusiones, Hogar dulce hogar, and Inquilinos del árbol, particularly in Hogar dulce hogar, where Bernardo cautions Elizabeth that

carelessly transplanting the giant granadilla will harm his cherished tree. Rojas, in his metatheatrical discourse, discourages the surface-level transplantation of foreign works and influences. By remaining close to the surface, these foreign elements do not set deep roots in the local cultural context and, therefore, are unlikely to make a long-lasting contribution to the Costa Rican theatrical medium. Instead, they probably will die, and other surface transplants will replace them.

Much as he does with the reference to transplantation and the giant granadilla tree in Hogar dulce hogar, in this newspaper article Rojas is calling for a more conscious process of glocalization in Costa Rica, of interacting with and filtering foreign influences. This is what Friedman defines as healthy glocalization, ensuring that these influences do not destroy one's own culture, the "olive tree" that provides a sense of identity and belonging in a world where a homogenizing form of globalization is circulating (294). Rojas originally published his concerns about foreign influences on the Costa Rican theatre in 1977, anticipating the developments that would take place in the theatrical medium in the 1980s and 1990s as well as the debates about globalization that would intensify at the end of the 1980s. He directs his message to theatrical companies, asking that they not just copy foreign models to make money and guarantee themselves an audience, as well as to potential spectators, encouraging them to think about why they go see a certain play or what a play can communicate to them.

Rojas published another article in 1977 that seems to be directed at his fellow playwrights, urging them not to copy blindly ideas from abroad:

Es aquí donde apuntamos otro de los errores del desarrollo de nuestro movimiento teatral del década del setenta, copias, repetir conceptos, preceptos y

conclusiones de otras latitudes cuyo origen tiene un bagaje cultural y una ubicación histórica particulares. Seguimos en la cultura del “*recorte y pegue*” rotulitos en el cerebro. (Puntos de vista 20)

According to Rojas, what works well in a particular culture, since it is suited for the historical moment and rooted in the local context, does not necessarily transfer well to another culture. He views Costa Rican culture as one of “cut and paste,” suggesting that it overvalues foreign ideas and imports them without considering their suitability for the Costa Rican context.<sup>61</sup> Cutting and pasting while one writes an essay or creates a collage of photographs can enhance one’s project if it fits in with the context of the project or complements it in some way. However, if one cuts and pastes a text or photograph without regard for the surrounding words or photographs, one can disturb the essay or collage’s coherence. Again, Rojas appears to anticipate theoretical debates about globalization in this essay communicating his concern for filtering influences from different cultural contexts.

For the dramatist, this filtering has practical applications in the plays written by other Costa Rican authors, for the audiences, and in the repertoires selected by theatrical companies. Rojas feels that the Teatro Universitario and the Compañía Nacional de Teatro, since they have better access to state funding, should carefully plan their repertoires: “Estas dos compañías con financiación regular, deberían tener programado

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<sup>61</sup> The participants in a roundtable on “El arte costarricense y las culturas populares” reveal that this tendency to import foreign models is not limited to the theatrical medium. A painter, a musician, a sculptor, and a dancer state that a similar process takes place within their own artistic fields in Costa Rica. The participants are: Juan Luis Rodríguez, Manuel Monestel, Leda Cavallini, Alejandro Tosatti, Leda Astorga, and moderator Jesús Oyamburu. See Adriano Corrales Arias.

un plan a desarrollar cada tres años--por lo menos--, donde los montajes tengan algo claro que decir a los costarricenses y no que los mismos actores de una producción estén en la luna. . . .” (Puntos de vista 13). This quotation, from a newspaper article written by Rojas in 1978 as the “golden age” of culture was drawing to a close in Costa Rica, suggests that those working in the theatrical medium develop definite criteria for selecting the works they produce. If this need to establish criteria was a concern during times when the state’s cultural policies favored the development of the theatrical medium, it appears to be even more crucial in the later decades, when economic factors affected the choices made by the groups producing theatre.

Despite these difficulties during the 1980s and 1990s, some companies have been able to produce theatre that is not commercially-oriented and develop coherent practices in selecting their repertory. One example is Teatro Skené, an independent theatrical group founded in 1990 by young professionals, who acquired their own performance space in 1996. According to the group’s “Reseña de Teatro Skené,” its primary objective is: “Llevar teatro de calidad (Entiéndase, de fuerte contenido) a todo el público, con énfasis en el público no tradicional de Sala, que por la distancia y costos de una función de teatro, no tienen acceso a la misma con facilidad ” (1). For more than a decade, this company, which does not receive any subsidies from the state, has staged annually a minimum of one play for adults and one play for children. Teatro Skené’s director, Amaral Sánchez, explains the following criteria used by the group to select this repertory:

Básicamente, hay tres criterios principales. El primero y más importante es el contenido de la obra, si es compatible con la ideología central del grupo, si es

importante para el momento histórico, si tiene algo que aportar al público. El segundo criterio es el criterio artístico, criterio formal, tal vez, en cuanto al reto que nos va a imponer, qué vamos a experimentar y qué vamos a explorar en este espectáculo. Y el tercer criterio es un criterio absolutamente material, que es la viabilidad económica. Digamos . . . si la obra tiene un elenco que podamos manejar, o es demasiado grande; si va a requerir de un vestuario extremadamente caro, que no vamos a poder costear, etcétera. (Personal interview)

As Sánchez emphasizes, the most important criteria is the play's content. The group first determines if a work is appropriate for the Costa Rican historical context and the effect it will have on the audience. This is the process that Rojas and Cavallini argue for in their metatheatrical discourse, and it also resembles the process described by Friedman of filtering globalization influences so that they enrich instead of harm local cultural identities. The other criteria include how the group can grow artistically by producing the work and financial considerations.

The types of plays produced for adults so far by Teatro Skené are collective creations, street theatre, and works written by members of the group. The company also has staged plays authored by other dramatists, including: El enemigo (1991 and 1999), the group's adaptation of the work La guerra by Chilean Oscar Castro; Luz negra (1995), by Salvadoran Alvaro Menén Desleal; Todos tenemos la misma historia (1996), by Italian playwrights Dario Fo and Franca Rame; and the Classical Greek play Prometeo...el dios que quiso salvar a los hombres (1997), by Aeschylus ("Reseña de Teatro Skené" 1-4). As one can see from this list of productions, Teatro Skené's repertory has included plays from a variety of cultural and historical contexts as well as

the group's own creations, and in its "Reseña" the group identifies each play's theme, which relates to the Costa Rican or Latin American socio-political context. For example, the "Reseña" calls attention to "el tema de la unión como medio para lograr la paz y la libertad" in the group's production of the children's play La titiritera del Arco Iris by Mabel Morbillo, an Argentine who resides in Costa Rica. This theme stressed by Teatro Skené is timely, since the group staged the play in 1990, three years after the Central American presidents signed Costa Rican President Oscar Arias's Central American Peace Plan, negotiating an end to the revolutions and rejecting the United States's military and economic intervention in the region (Molina and Palmer, The History of Costa Rica 123).

The economic factor remains a criterion in Teatro Skené's selection of repertory. Nevertheless, the group has found a way to support itself by selling tickets to performances in its theater and at schools, renting its performance space to other groups, and offering classes in acting, clown techniques, and drawing. The company also generates income from its company of clowns, by selling its innovatively constructed puppets, and by writing scripts for advertising campaigns (Sánchez, Personal interview).<sup>62</sup> Although Teatro Skené has been able to carry out its goals of staging politically and socially committed theatre for diverse audiences, Sánchez would welcome more access to state funding for independent theatrical groups. Calling for "un Ministerio de Cultura no proteccionista, pero sí auspiciador," he feels that the state,

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<sup>62</sup> Teatro Skené has employed these puppets in their own performances for children as well as for adults. These puppets are the size of a human being and are manipulated on stage during performances in a manner that makes their movements look like special effects from a film (Sánchez, Personal interview).

through sponsoring the arts as a basic need of all human beings, can help mitigate some of the negative impact from market-oriented globalization, which converts the arts into a commodity: “También es que estamos en un mundo capitalista, globalizado, devorándonos unos a otros. El arte es una necesidad del ser humano. Lo que pasa es que nos han tratado de convencer de que es un lujo, no de que es una necesidad” (Personal interview).

Cavallini and Rojas express similar points of view about this role of art in their plays Inquilinos del árbol, Madriguera de ilusiones, and Hogar dulce hogar, as well as in their metatheatrical discourse. As seen in their plays and in their essays about the Costa Rican theatrical medium, art can foster a social consciousness and express the emotions that connect human beings in relationships. These playwrights warn that the homogenizing forces of the world market are displacing art and the appreciation for nature, humanity, and beauty, thus damaging Costa Rican social cohesion and cultural identities. Cavallini and Rojas explore the impact of globalization on many levels. In these three plays, they encourage their readers to link the conflicts between the characters to the effects of globalization on the everyday lives of Costa Ricans. Read as national allegories, their plays explore Costa Rica’s political, economic, and cultural interactions with the world. In their essays about theatre in San José, they advocate that playwrights, theatrical companies, the Costa Rican state, and potential audience members question foreign influences.

Cavallini and Rojas remind their readers that maintaining an identity, a sense of belonging, is worth more in life than any economic profit they might realize in the world market. Cavallini, asking whether it is more important to be or to have, answers

her own question: “Es más importante ser. Lamentablemente estamos bombardeados por esta gran tecnificación . . . tenemos todo este enorme mundo globalizado en el que dejamos de ser ya personas para convertirnos en objetos de cambio” (Personal interview). In their dramaturgy and essays about the theatrical medium, Cavallini and Rojas show the negative consequences of this consumerist mentality, and, as Rojas pointed out at the conference in Chiapas, propose that theatre and the arts serve as an alternative approach to interacting with the rest of the world. They do not suggest that Costa Ricans avoid all contact with foreign cultures. However, they do emphasize the need to be selective, adopting foreign models if they are relevant to the Costa Rican context, enhancing it or at least sharing something in common with it. Cavallini and Rojas argue that one should assume an active role in evaluating the forms of globalization that are circulating in the world, a point of view, which the following chapters will show, that is expressed in the plays of other New Wave dramatists.

### Chapter 3: To Be “Abroad” Yet at Home: Fading Frontiers on the Costa Rican Stage

Recuerde que el teatro no es para instruir,  
al menos no sólo; sino para conmover.  
Detesto el estilo grandilocuente y  
pedagógico. Ese énfasis de los viejos  
actores de la Comedia Francesa que  
hinchaban los buches como palomos. Es  
estéril, no convencen a nadie. Para  
conmover, hay que convencer primero.  
¿Cómo un francés, vestido de francés y  
delante de un decorado rococó, puede  
convencer al público de que es Julio  
César?

(Linda Berrón)<sup>63</sup>

François-Joseph Talma, an acclaimed actor at the Comédie Française during the French Revolution, is a character in Linda Berrón’s play Olimpia: Drama en cuatro actos (1998). In a scene set in a Parisian café in 1783, Talma discusses with Bernard Vergniaud, Jean Duveyrier, and Olimpia de Gouges how the French aristocracy does not want to see reality or historical accuracy at the theater. Vergniaud replies: “Ese es el gusto de los nobles y cortesanos. A ellos les encanta verse a sí mismos” (53). Although Talma finds an actor portraying Julius Caesar dressed like a Frenchman on a stage set in a French style to be unconvincing, Vergniaud points out that the prevailing norm dictates that the characters in a play must look like the upper social classes in the audience. What these characters in Olimpia are describing is one approach to performing a play based upon historical or mythical events for an audience from a different cultural context. Interestingly, the performance of Berrón’s play by the Costa

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<sup>63</sup> This is a quotation of the character Talma’s lines on p. 53 in Linda Berrón’s play Olimpia: Drama en cuatro actos (1998).

Rican Compañía Nacional de Teatro in San José in 2002 illustrates another approach. Although the scenery and wardrobe evoked the age of the French Revolution, and the characters did not use the voseo, a linguistic feature of Costa Rican Spanish that replaces the familiar subject pronoun tú with vos, the set design and the sequencing of the scenes encouraged the audience to look beyond the historical French setting and consider the play's relevance to contemporary Costa Rica.<sup>64</sup> This staging of Olimpia complemented the play script's treatment of the historical source material. All of the play's characters are historical figures who lived before or during the French Revolution. While Berrón closely follows historical sources in creating most of the characters, she makes key changes in two characters in order to make their struggles parallel that of Costa Rican women fighting in the past decade to participate in politics.

Selecting a foreign content or theme for a play is one type of intercultural theatre.<sup>65</sup> Such a choice might appear to demonstrate a playwright's lack of interest in local culture. However, as Erika Fischer-Lichte points out in The Show and the Gaze of Theatre, "the starting point of intercultural performance is not primarily interest in the

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<sup>64</sup> Olimpia premiered on October 18, 2002, at Teatro de la Aduana under the direction of Alfredo Catania, who also designed the set, with Rolando Trejos in charge of wardrobe. Andrés Sáenz, theatre critic of the Costa Rican newspaper La Nación, in a review of the October 19 performance, notes: "El montaje de Catania sostuvo un ritmo precipitado y, si bien en aspectos de decorado y vestuario hubo cierto intento de aproximación al marco histórico de la obra, el enfoque dramático y escenográfico esquivó el realismo para centrarse en lo abstracto, emblemático y simbólico" ("Crítica de teatro: Profeta"). The play completed its run in December 2002, after 33 performances, and attracted 1,800 spectators (Sáenz, "Teatro 2002"). Catania was awarded the 2002 Scenic Arts National Prize for his direction of Olimpia (Schumacher, "Con nombre").

<sup>65</sup> Erika Fischer-Lichte classifies the adoption of foreign elements in plays on three levels: "1) contenido o tema, 2) pautas literarias, y 3) medios de puesta en escena" ("El cambio en los códigos teatrales" 13).

foreign, the foreign theatre form or foreign culture from which it derives, but rather a wholly specific situation within one's own culture or wholly specific problem originating in one's own theatre" (153). If the familiar culture dominates in this type of intercultural performance, then why does a playwright decide to set a play in a foreign context? Moreover, how can a critic/reader/receiver who does not share that familiar culture recognize the specific situation of interest to the playwright?<sup>66</sup>

Playwrights of the Costa Rican New Wave, who began to produce texts around 1980, have set their plays both within and outside of Costa Rica. Alvaro Quesada Soto has identified a tendency among this generation's plays set in Costa Rica, including Víctor Valdelomar's Como semilla 'e coyol (1982), Melvin Méndez's works, and Ellas en la maquila (1985) by Leda Cavallini and Lupe Pérez, to feature characters from marginalized sectors of Costa Rican society. Unlike the costumbrista plays earlier in the century, which treated the rural population as an object for picturesque description or ridicule, the neocostumbrista works of the New Wave feature peasants and factory workers as protagonists who are "sujetos dramáticos, que buscan sus propias formas de expresión e identidad y que elaboran sus estrategias de lucha o solidaridad, en un mundo hostil que los excluye o los margina" (Quesada, "La dramaturgia costarricense" 82).<sup>67</sup> Quesada identifies another tendency in plays set in Costa Rica, which questions

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<sup>66</sup> Sandra Messinger Cypess, in "From Colonial Constructs to Feminist Figures: Re/visions by Mexican Women Dramatists," argues, that in a critical reading of a text, "acknowledging that the reading involves issues of race, class, sex, and culture does not mean that a reader must mirror the writer's identity or socio-historical situation in order to read the text" (493). Instead, she points out that a critic may use a "recognition of difference as a starting point" or locate a position that she or he shares with the writers that provides the critic "with a sensitized perspective from which to read at least one aspect of their texts" (493).

“la marginación o la represión de la mujer en una sociedad patriarcal” and is closely related to the first tendency (83). Melvin Méndez’s Eva, sol y sombra (1989), Cavallini and Pérez’s Ellas en la maquila and Pancha Carrasco reclama (1988), and Ana Istarú’s El vuelo de la grulla (1984) and Madre nuestra que estás en la tierra (1988) illustrate this interest in relations between the sexes. Quesada notes that historical displacement is also a strong tendency in the New Wave theatre. He lists as examples the play 1856 (1984) by Juan Fernando Cerdas and Rubén Pagura, which is set in the Costa Rican past, and Juana de Arco (1986) by Cerdas, which dramatizes the French heroine’s fight against English invaders. Quesada insists upon these historical plays’ relevance to contemporary Costa Rica:

Son obras que recurren a la representación de conflictos del pasado para establecer un paralelo con la crisis de identidad y soberanía nacionales en un presente dominado por la intervención económica, política y militar de los Estados Unidos y los organismos financieros internacionales. (“La dramaturgia costarricense” 82)

Whether they are set in Costa Rica or in another cultural context, the New Wave plays express a concern for the political and economic situation of contemporary Costa Rica.

Although some playwrights of this New Wave theatre have set their plays outside of Costa Rica, the vast majority of this generation has selected a Costa Rican setting for their plays. For example, Deb Cohen, in a review of the anthology edited by Carolyn Bell and Patricia Fumero, Drama contemporáneo costarricense: 1980-2000 (2000), calls

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<sup>67</sup> Albino Chacón proposes the use of the term neocostumbrismo to describe some of the contemporary Costa Rican plays. For more information about how neocostumbrismo pertains to Jorge Arroyo’s plays, see María Lourdes Cortés.

attention to how Jorge Arroyo's Sentencia para una aurora (1987) "no cabe bien con las otras, siendo una obra histórica sobre una persona extranjera en vez de reflejar la actualidad costarricense" (209). Out of the ten plays comprising the anthology, only Arroyo's play does not take place in Costa Rica. Looking at the settings of plays not included in the anthology produces similar results, with the vast majority set in Costa Rica. As exceptions to this trend, besides Olimpia and Juana de Arco, Víctor Valdelomar's play El ángel de la tormenta (1990) takes place in thirteenth-century France during the Catholic campaign against heresy, Leda Cavallini's monologue and ballet Io coronada de claveles (1998) features the Greek mythological character of Io from Aeschylus's Prometheus Bound, and Jorge Arroyo's monologues Sentencia para una aurora and Azul Marlene (1997) are set in Europe.<sup>68</sup> In the first of Arroyo's plays, the historical figure Mata Hari speaks the night before her execution in France during World War One, while in the second play, a transvestite who dresses like the actress and singer Marlene Dietrich talks to Jewish cellmate Otto in a Nazi prison during World War Two.<sup>69</sup> All of these plays with non-Costa Rican settings, except Io coronada de claveles, have been staged in San José.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Io coronada de claveles was published, along with Cavallini's plays Magnolia con almanaques and Tarde de granizo y musgo, in Tarde de granizo y musgo y otras obras. Although the stage directions do not specify a geographical location for Io coronada de claveles, they do instruct that the character of Io dress like a woman from Ancient Greece (13). Io does not use the voseo or Costa Rican vocabulary.

<sup>69</sup> The information about Azul Marlene comes from Arnaldo Rivera's newspaper article published in La Nación, in which Arroyo explains that the play serves as a companion to Sentencia para una aurora: "Mata-Hari se ubicaba en la Primera Guerra Mundial, con una mujer. Ahora es la Segunda Guerra y con dos hombres, uno de ellos homosexual. Las dos obras ocurren en una celda, son de un acto, y solo en la mitad de Azul Marlene se rompe el monólogo."

The New Wave Generation has written other plays inspired by foreign themes. For example, the title page of Arroyo's Con la honra en el alambre (1987) describes the play as a "comedia costarricense inspirada en el cuento LE ROSIER DE MADAME HUSSON (sic) de Guy de Maupassant" (Dos obras y una más 23). In 2000, Víctor Valdelomar and Colombian director Luis Carlos Vásquez adapted the canonical Colombian novel María for the stage, alternating scenes using the voseo and modern dress with those employing less local language and nineteenth-century costuming, for performances sponsored by the Ministry of Education in Heredia and San José. Staged by Teatro Estudio from the Universidad Nacional, the adaptation's target audience was school children who read Jorge Isaacs's novel as part of the curriculum.<sup>71</sup> In the same year, Ana Istarú's play Hombres en escabeche premiered. In a conversation with La Nación reporter Manuel Murillo Castro, Istarú revealed that the Italian play Sesso? Grazie, tanto per gradire! (1996), by Dario Fo, Franca Rame, and Jacopo Fo, inspired her to write a play dealing with the same subject matter for Costa Rican and Latin American audiences. Although these three playwrights find thematic influences beyond

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<sup>70</sup> Juana de Arco was staged by Teatro 56 at the Sala de la Calle 15 in 1986 and by the Teatro Municipal in the Sala de la Aduana in 1990. See Sáenz, ¡Dísparenle al crítico!, for reviews of these performances. Sentencia para una aurora, awarded the Aquileo Echeverría National Theater Prize in 1996 in Costa Rica, premiered in 1995 in Puerto Rico in the Anfiteatro Ramón Frade at the University of Cayey. It was also staged in 1995 at the Teatro Cajigal in Barcelona de Anzoátegui, Venezuela, in 1996 in Costa Rica at the Sala Vargas Calvo, and in 2001 by Teatro Marília in Belo Horizonte and Sao Paulo, Brazil (Bell and Fumero 119; Díaz, "Mata-Hari"). Azul Marlene premiered at the Teatro Lawrence Olivier in 1997 (Bell and Fumero 119).

<sup>71</sup> The director, in his program notes, describes this staging as a "búsqueda," or a search, for the novel's relevance to today's audience.

Costa Rica's borders, they set their plays in Costa Rica and attempt to adapt the foreign source material for a local audience.<sup>72</sup>

In the next chapter, I will examine how Istarú's play Hombres en escabeche, taking place in Costa Rica but based upon an Italian text, reaches audiences in Costa Rica, Latin America, and the United States. The present chapter, however, focuses on two plays, El ángel de la tormenta and Olimpia, which are set in France's past in order to encourage the audience to think about what is happening currently in Costa Rica. The playwrights do not displace the setting of these plays from Costa Rica to France because of political repression; nor does the displacement suggest that France serve as a political and cultural model for Costa Rica, as some members of the Costa Rican intellectual and political elite had proposed during the late nineteenth century. Instead, the plays' endings occur during moments of political crisis in France. Valdelomar's play, taking place as feudalism is ending, before France united into a single monarchy, and Berrón's play, concluding in Revolutionary France during the shift from the monarchy to a republican government, were written and staged after Costa Rica had experienced a decade of political and economic crisis during the 1980s. In both plays, the events on the stage prompt Costa Ricans to consider the matters of national sovereignty and the more equitable participation of men and women in politics.

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<sup>72</sup> Con la honra en el alambre premiered in 1987 at the Teatro del Angel in San José (Bell and Fumero 120). Hombres en escabeche premiered in 2000 as a production of Teatro Surco at Teatro de la Esquina in San José. Teatro Surco also performed it at the Festival de Oriente, in Barcelona, Venezuela, and in Maturín, Venezuela, in 2000 and at the 4<sup>th</sup> International Festival of Hispanic Theatre at Teatro de la Luna, in Arlington, Virginia, in 2001 (Murillo Castro).

Before presenting my reading of these plays, I would like to explore why these playwrights set their plays outside of Costa Rica. In the case of theatre from Spain and Latin America, Juan Villegas notes that playwrights sometimes encode their ideological positions, especially in situations of political repression (54). Displacing the setting of a play to another cultural location conceals the immediate, local implications of the political message, an important tactic for a playwright producing under conditions of implicit or explicit censorship. Since a play script produces meaning for a specific audience in a limited cultural context, Villegas urges critics always to consider in their readings the dates when the text was written or the play premiered (51). If such crucial information is missing in the reading, critics can dehistoricize the play, examining only its aesthetical workings and ignoring its ideological position and meaning for the spectators, which, Villegas warns, “lleva a los críticos a proponer su universalidad, aunque los destinatarios del texto teatral lo perciben primariamente como un mensaje político de significación inmediata” (54).

One of the more salient examples of this historicized critical reading proposed by Villegas for Spanish and Latin American theatre can be found in studies of Griselda Gambaro’s plays. Sandra M. Cypess points out that, “in her early phase of writing, Gambaro did not situate her dramatic universe in any exact time or geographic location and specifically avoided the use of nationalist motifs or the Argentine forms of *voseo*” (“Dramatic Strategies” 127). This allowed the playwright to evade censorship and transmit to her readers and audience “her specific political commentary clothed in the signs of the latest theatrical currents from Europe” (Cypess, “Dramatic Strategies” 127). Over the course of a decade, Gambaro also wrote four plays set outside of

contemporary Argentina: Real envido (written in 1980 and performed in 1983), in the form of a fairy tale; La malasangre (written in 1981 and performed in 1983), which takes place in nineteenth-century Argentina; Del sol naciente (1984), set in Japan; and Antígona furiosa (1986), a reworking of Sophocles's Antigone. In reference to these plays, Becky Boling observes: "In spite of the imaginary settings of these plays, they clearly comment on and question the political environment of the 1980s" (5-6).

Gambaro displaced the settings of her plays in order to express political opinions despite censorship. However, "because of the very real possibility of political reprisals in that period of the military dictatorship, Gambaro and her family moved to Barcelona where they stayed for three years" (Cypess, "Griselda Gambaro" 188).

Playwrights of the Costa Rican New Wave Theatre, who began writing in the 1980s and continue to write in the present, have also displaced the settings of some of their plays. However, the reasons for that displacement often do not stem from political repression as was the case in Gambaro's dramaturgy. Costa Rica, which abolished its army in 1949 after the Civil War, has been relatively free of dictatorships and threats to its democratic government, even avoiding the type of violent conflict that occurred in neighboring Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala in the 1980s. As tensions escalated in the Central American region between 1975 and 1980, writers and artists in Costa Rica experienced much freedom of ideological expression. According to playwright Samuel Rovinski, the Costa Rican government, at a time when the military dictatorships in Argentina, Chile, and Brazil were carrying on their repressive tactics, adopted a stance "no sólo, tolerante sino promotora de una corriente crítica social que ponía en la picota tanto a los dictadores del continente como los casos de injusticia social o de

abusos de autoridad que aparecían en la propia sociedad costarricense” (61). However, he reports that official support later declined in the 1980s during the economic crisis and fear of political repercussions from the Central American conflicts (61).

Alvaro Quesada Soto identifies the Sandinista victory in Nicaragua in 1979 as a turning point in the political climate for writers and artists in Costa Rica:

El teatro y la cultura en general--cuando no sea la cultura de masas o el embrutecimiento comercial--pasan a ser considerados actividades superfluas, o bien peligrosas y subversivas, sobre todo durante el gobierno sandinista en Nicaragua, cuando la intervención norteamericana en la región y su consiguiente manipulación ideológica, provocaron una histeria filofascista donde toda posición crítica ante la ideología oficial venía a ser considerada antipatriótica y sediciosa.

(“La dramaturgia costarricense” 80)

This sharp shift to the right in Costa Rican politics could appear to explain why Víctor Valdelomar sets his play, El ángel de la tormenta (1990), in the Languedoc region of France during the thirteenth-century Catholic crusade against Catharism. Some of the characters in the play are historical figures. However, other characters are invented and certain events are different from those recorded by historical sources. These changes make it clear that the play is commenting on Costa Rica’s situation during the Nicaraguan counterrevolution supported by the United States during the 1980s.

While it could be that the playwright wished to address this volatile issue more indirectly, other facts suggest that the displacement is not primarily motivated by fear of political repression. El ángel de la tormenta was published and staged by Teatro Ubú in the Fine Arts Auditorium of the University of Costa Rica in 1990, three years after

the Central American Peace Plan, proposed by Costa Rican President Oscar Arias, was signed by the other Central American presidents and the same year that an opposition coalition defeated the Sandinista government in elections.<sup>73</sup> Proof of the possibility to present politically critical plays is Ultima noticia, written in 1979 by Guillermo Arriaga, published in 1983 and premiered in 1984 by the Teatro Universitario, which is set in contemporary Costa Rica and openly questions the freedom of the Costa Rican press during the Nicaraguan revolution and counterrevolution.<sup>74</sup>

If fear of political repression is not a primary motive for writing a play about medieval France, a careful reading of the play script reveals that Valdelomar establishes parallels between France and Costa Rica in order to question the nature of power and the viability of the current political system, consisting of nation-states, to negotiate solutions in the age of globalization. In the staging, the wardrobe and scenery suggest medieval France, and the characters do not use the voseo when they speak; however, the events that transpire clearly refer to Costa Rica.<sup>75</sup> The impact upon the audience is similar to that reached by Olimpia. Set five centuries later in France, Berrón's play also

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<sup>73</sup> El ángel de la tormenta premiered on April 26, 1990. María Bonilla directed the play. César Valverde S. provides a brief history of the independent theatrical group Teatro Ubú: "El grupo Ubú se formó en 1989, y según su propia explicación, 'pretende seguir siendo una alternativa abierta de producción teatral independiente, profesional y experimental, cuyos objetivos se centran en la necesidad de crear espacios libres de discusión sobre la identidad costarricense y latinoamericana'" (224). The group remained active as late as 1994, when it traveled to the University of California, Irvine, to present Barriendo sombras, a play composed by the members of the group.

<sup>74</sup> Arriaga won the Joven Creación Prize and the Aquileo Echeverría National Theater Prize in 1979 for Ultima noticia, which was his first play. See Carole Champagne's dissertation for a reading of this play. Manuel Ruiz directed the 1984 staging.

<sup>75</sup> The published play script includes photographs of the characters from the staging by Teatro Ubú on pages 2 and 4. The stage directions indicate that the scenes take place in the great hall and the dungeon of a castle (3).

parallels struggles in France and Costa Rica in order to critique the concept and structure of power in Costa Rica and to encourage those who fight for gender equality to move beyond the divisions of social class and nationality and recognize their solidarity.

A first look at these two plays reveals an interesting geographic similarity: both are set in France. The choice of France does not seem surprising, if one recalls that France served as a model during the process of nation-building in nineteenth-century Latin America.<sup>76</sup> The elite politicians and intellectuals in Costa Rica looked to Europe as a model not only for the political system but also for the emerging national literature. In 1894 and 1900, writers belonging to the Olimpo Generation discussed in a series of articles published in Costa Rican newspapers and literary journals the themes and models that should guide this literature.<sup>77</sup> Two positions surfaced out of this debate:

En la disputa acerca de las posibilidades estéticas de los temas, asuntos y personajes nacionales, así como en el afán de definir un marco para la naciente literatura, se percibe la oscilación entre los códigos literarios del criollismo y el modernismo, que se interpreta como una dicotomía entre nacionalistas y cosmopolitas. Al igual que el resto de Centroamérica, la práctica literaria en el país se mueve en sus inicios entre dos corrientes, costumbrismo y modernismo,

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<sup>76</sup> Steven Palmer discusses how the elite politicians and intellectuals of the Costa Rican Liberal State, during the last three decades of the nineteenth century, did not envision a specifically Costa Rican nationalism, but rather looked to European nations as a model: “El proyecto nacional era precisamente llegar a ser *igual* a los países desarrollados de Europa” (182).

<sup>77</sup> The writers who participated in the debate included: Leonidas Briceño, Pío Víquez, Jenaro Cardona, Manuel González Zeledón, Carlos Gagini, Ricardo Fernández Guardia, Benjamín de Céspedes, Aquileo Echeverría, and Máximo Soto Hall (Quesada, Ovarés, Rojas, and Santander 9).

deudoras ambas de “las formas artísticas recién arribadas y . . . los ideales de una cultura europea.” (Quesada, Ovares, Rojas, and Santander 9-10)

Critics soon came to regard criollismo, or costumbrismo, to be the appropriate frame for transmitting an image of Costa Rica as a nation of yeomen, or smallholding farmers, and patriarchal families (Quesada, Ovares, Rojas, and Santander 13). However, writers also continued to produce works in the modernist, or cosmopolitan, vein. At times, the dichotomy was not sharply defined. For example, Margarita Rojas, Alvaro Quesada, Flora Ovares, and Carlos Santander, in En el tinglado de la eterna comedia: Teatro costarricense 1890-1930, point out that Carlos Gagini wrote comical costumbrista plays as well as Las cuatro y tres cuartos, which features characters who are colonels and generals and is set in France, and El marqués de Talamanca, which was later adapted to the form of a Spanish zarzuela (96).

A similar polemic about the use of Europe as a cultural model developed before the inauguration of the National Theater in San José in 1897. Margarita Rojas and Flora Ovares remind us that it was debated whether the National Theater should open with the performance of a work by a Costa Rican or a European author and what type of attire audience members should wear to the theater. In the end, the opera Faust, performed by a French theatrical company, was selected for the inauguration, and men were required to wear a dress coat for admittance to the theater (100 años 33). Those in attendance at the event sang the Costa Rican National Anthem and the French National Anthem, “La Marseillaise” (Rojas, Quesada, Ovares, and Santander, 1890-1930 43).

Although the National Theater debuted with a European opera, plays written by Costa Ricans were staged in San José in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

However, almost all of these plays were performed by foreign theatrical companies on tour in Costa Rica, who were “ajenas por completo a la vida y cultura nacionales” (Quesada, Ovares, Rojas, and Santander 11).<sup>78</sup> Costa Rican Spanish appeared in comic sketches and revues, but in dramas the voseo was only employed to show the ignorance or poor education of characters from lower social classes. Characters from the middle and upper classes spoke Peninsular Spanish, “forma ajena a los usos nacionales pero que responde al modelo culto o literario de los grupos educados” (Quesada, Ovares, Rojas, and Santander 13-14). During the first half of the twentieth century, José Fabio Garnier and H. Alfredo Castro, also known as Marizancene, two of the most prolific Costa Rican playwrights at that time, opted not to set their plays in Costa Rica. Castro explained this decision by voicing the opinion that, since Costa Rica had not developed a literary tradition comparable to that of European countries, Costa Rican writers would be inspired by the Spanish and French cultures that had influenced Costa Rican culture. Having some misgivings about the suitability of Spanish or French plays for the Costa Rican stage, Castro felt his only option was an abstract dramaturgy: “No le queda más el (sic) dramaturgo que ir hacia una humanidad en general, de tipo clásico, hacia una dramaturgia abstracta.”<sup>79</sup> In pursuit of a universal dramaturgy, Castro wrote in French, and his Costa Rican friends published Spanish translations of his plays (Quesada, Ovares, Rojas, and Santander 12).

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<sup>78</sup> See Patricia Fumero, Teatro, público y estado en San José: 1880-1914, for additional information about theaters in San José, theatrical companies, critics, audiences and government support. According to a chart on p. 93, between 1880 and 1915, 42.1 percent of the touring theatrical companies originated from Spain, 10.5 percent from Italy, 7.9 percent from the United States, 5.3 percent from France, and 2.6 percent from Mexico. The remaining 31.6 percent of the companies are of unknown origin.

<sup>79</sup> The quotation of Castro is from p. 12 of Quesada, Ovares, Rojas, and Santander.

It is not until after 1950, according to Quesada, that the dichotomy between national and universal theatre breaks down, also ending “los convencionalismos discriminatorios que identificaban la vida nacional con los estereotipos costumbristas” (“La dramaturgia costarricense” 77). The plays of Alberto Cañas and Samuel Rovinski are successful in moving beyond the local-universal dichotomy. They reflect local language and lifestyles in the context of contemporary social and political themes (Quesada, “La dramaturgia costarricense” 78). However, their contemporary, Daniel Gallegos, appears to hark back to the old cosmopolitismo by avoiding the use of local language and setting his plays in Costa Rica and instead expressing a preference for a universal dramaturgy: “*Yo no tengo una sensibilidad como la que tiene Alberto Cañas de captar el lenguaje popular. Yo escribo en un lenguaje neutral (...) Es un teatro que tiene pretensiones de ser universal. . . .La preocupación mía es el hombre y sus interrogantes y condición.*”<sup>80</sup> This presumption turns out to be misleading. Quesada observes that despite the lack of a local setting, Gallegos’s plays are quite relevant to Costa Rica because they develop “conflictos morales, sociales y políticos muy cercanos e inquietantes para el espectador contemporáneo” (“La dramaturgia costarricense” 77). I agree with Quesada’s observation. Gallegos’s approach to the national reality appears more subtle and general, but nevertheless he does have something to say to his fellow Costa Ricans.

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<sup>80</sup> The quotation is from an interview with Gallegos in 1970, originally published by Anita Herzfeld and Teresa Salas on p. 26 in El teatro de hoy en Costa Rica. The italics and punctuation are from Quesada’s quotation of the interview, which can be found on p. 77 of “La dramaturgia costarricense de las dos últimas décadas.”

In the plays of the Costa Rican New Wave, it remains clear that the barriers between national and universal theatre have been transcended. A playwright can set a text outside of Costa Rica to explore matters involving the nation-state and politics. These issues, which El ángel de la tormenta and Olimpia discuss, coincide with those presented in scholarly debates about globalization that arose during the 1990s. Although there is a tendency to consider globalization to be an economic process, Fernando Mires points out that the term originated as a political concept:

La verdad es que si hay que aceptar el término globalización, no podemos omitir el momento político en que surgió, y éste no fue otro que el marcado por el derrumbe de las dictaduras comunistas en la URSS y en Europa del Este. Incluso, estoy seguro de que si no hubiese terminado el “mundo comunista”, nadie hablaría hoy de globalización. (24)

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, which ended the cold war, there arose a questioning of the nation-state. According to Roland Robertson, the national society, an idea that is central to globalization, entered a phase of uncertainty in the late 1960s and had developed crisis tendencies by the early 1990s as the international system became “more fluid” with the “end of bipolarity” (58-59). While many agreed that the nation-state was in crisis, they did not believe that it would disappear, but instead would continue “to be a fundamental locus of power and cultural referent for rooted and uprooted citizens, for those who live at the centre and for the millions who live at the margins” (Waisbord). What would change, however, would be the nation-state’s exclusive claim to loyalty. As Carlos Pabón notes:

En los tiempos de la globalización el Estado nacional se hace cada vez más

anacrónico y otras formas de adhesión e identidad se disputan su lugar. Aún cuando las naciones Estado continúen existiendo, la erosión sostenida de las capacidades del Estado nacional para monopolizar lealtades estimulará la formación de identidades divorciadas de Estados territoriales. (375)

When facing political problems, people might not necessarily align with the nation-state and can find solidarity beyond the nation's borders in the search for resolutions. The dates when Valdelomar and Berrón's plays were written and performed, in addition to the fact that their plays look beyond national borders when confronting problems in Costa Rica, suggest that these plays question the role of the state in determining the political future in the age of globalization.

Valdelomar, a graduate of the Taller Nacional de Teatro and the University of Costa Rica, who also teaches theater, acts on the stage, and works as a script writer for television and radio, achieved success with critics and the audiences of his first play that was performed, Como semilla 'e coyol (Chaverri and Quesada 505-06).<sup>81</sup> Staged in 1983 by the Compañía Nacional de Teatro in San José, with Valdelomar playing the role of the protagonist Chepe, the play traveled in performance to the Costa Rican provinces and to Guanajato, Mexico, and Los Angeles in the United States and won the Aquileo Echeverría National Theater Prize for best play that year (Chaverri and Quesada 506). Eugenia Chaverri, who directed the play, and Alvaro Quesada have studied how language and naming in the play represent "el motivo de la oposición campo/ciudad" in relation to the theme of the peasant who emigrates to the city after

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<sup>81</sup> Como semilla 'e coyol was published in 1983 in the journal Escena as well as by the Ministerio de Cultura, Juventud y Deportes (no date of publication given). It also appears in the anthology edited by Bell and Fumero in 2000.

being dispossessed or forced from his land (508). This theme has been prevalent in Costa Rican theatre since the beginning of the twentieth century. However, Como semilla 'e coyol became one of four plays written during the 1970s and 1980s that Manolo Montes considers to be “representative” or “paradigmatic” of a shift in the treatment of the peasant. No longer the “idílico víctima de las fuerzas urbanas,” the peasant in these plays becomes a “protagonista activo en la construcción de su destino” (41).

The playwright also focuses on the theme of the peasant in a theatrical adaptation of the Costa Rican novel Juan Varela (1939), by Adolfo Herrera García, which the group El Retablo staged in 1991. Valdelomar explores different aspects of Costa Rican culture in other plays. The journal Escena published La parábola de la riqueza (1981) and Macedonio el viejo (1984), and the Ministry of Culture staged the second play.<sup>82</sup> The graduating classes of the Taller Nacional de Teatro have performed more of his plays: Los comediantes (1991), Game Over (1995), Zárate (1997), and Alicia en el laberinto (1998).<sup>83</sup> Valdelomar has won second prize three times in the National Dramaturgy Contest, sponsored by the Foundation Compañía Nacional de Teatro, most recently for the play Todos tus muertos (1997). However, none of these plays has been staged because the Compañía Nacional de Teatro has agreed to only stage plays that

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<sup>82</sup> In 1990, Nuevo Teatro Panamá staged Receta original, a play inspired by Valdelomar's La parábola de la riqueza. The group presented it at the University of Panama, at the Jamboree Juventud in Panama, on tour at the Colegio Universitario in Cartago, Costa Rica, and at the 16<sup>th</sup> Festival of Teatro de Oriente, el Caribe y Países Bolivianos in Caracas, Venezuela. See the group's Internet homepage at: <http://www.teatropanama.com/Receta/receta.htm>.

<sup>83</sup> The anthology edited by Bell and Fumero lists basic information about the staging of these plays on p. 515.

have won first prize (Montero). In 1998, El Teatro del Quijote performed in San José his play about a soccer fan, Todos los morados van al cielo, which portrays “las peripecias, dificultades y ocurrencias de los costarricenses en su vida normal, y sobre todo cuando esta se mezcla con la pasión por el deporte de las masas” (Briceño).

The director, María Bonilla, in the introduction to the published play script of El ángel de la tormenta, groups Valdelomar’s plays into two stages. She observes that each of his earliest plays, including Macedonio el viejo, the unpublished Artelio Cornetas y los papanatas and Todos te queremos mucho, Aurelia, and his most successful work, Como semilla ‘e coyol, “aborda algún tema que afecta a la Costa Rica de hoy en día: inmigración, guerra, despojo del campesino, militarismo” (1). El ángel de la tormenta and Aoyaque, el espíritu del fuego are examples of the later stage of more mature productions in Valdelomar’s dramaturgy, when, according to Bonilla, the playwright begins to focus on historical events.<sup>84</sup> Valdelomar looks to these events

no con la intención de reconstruirlos, ni siquiera de hurgar en la realidad histórica, sino para establecer analogías con lo contemporáneo y enfocar causas y consecuencias de hechos pasados, que sean válidas hoy en día para comprender hechos presentes y delinear proyectos futuros. ( Bonilla, “El ángel de la tormenta” 1)

I agree with Bonilla that Valdelomar does not situate El ángel de la tormenta in medieval France in order to instruct the audience about the crusade against Catharism or to question the veracity of the historical record. In fact, the play presents very little

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<sup>84</sup> El espíritu del fuego was published in 1993 with Quince Duncan’s El trepasolo by the National Theater as part of the series Teatro para el Teatro.

information from historical sources on Catharism. Moreover, comparing the play to these sources makes it clear that the playwright alters a key event in the play, making it more analogous with contemporary Costa Rica. Interestingly, critic Andrés Sáenz, as a member of the audience during the performance directed by María Bonilla, does not mention in his review what the play's historical French setting could signify to Costa Ricans (¡Dispárenle al crítico! 332-33).<sup>85</sup> However, placing the play's treatment of the historical theme in the context of the date of the play's publication and performance (1990) suggests that the key motifs in the play encourage the spectators to link the topic of the crusade to eradicate heresy in medieval France to the use of Costa Rica by the United States as a staging ground for contra attacks against the Sandinista government in Nicaragua during the 1980s.

Costa Rican readers and audience members of El ángel de la tormenta, having felt the political, economic, and cultural impact in the previous decade stemming from the Nicaraguan counterrevolution, would be able to understand that the play's foreign setting alludes to the current situation in their own country. As the movements of peasants in medieval France were a sign of the escalating tensions between the Catholic Church and Catharism, the tens of thousands of Nicaraguan refugees who came to Costa Rica during the 1980s would be a visible reminder of the conflict taking place within Costa Rica and its northern neighbor (Honey 8). Additionally, Costa Ricans would be

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<sup>85</sup> Finding the performance boring, Sáenz writes that he left the theater early, after the first scene of Act Two, and that some audience members had left earlier during the intermission. Nevertheless, Sáenz does point out an underlying political meaning of Juan Fernando Cerdas's Juana de Arco in its 1986 staging by Teatro 56. Although the critic reviews the performance unfavorably, he states that "era posible hacer una lectura de la obra según la cual Juana es Nicaragua; Warwick y los ingleses son los 'yankees'; Cauchon y los inquisidores, los 'contras'" (¡Dispárenle al crítico! 97).

aware of previous conflicts between the two nations. As Martha Honey, in Hostile Acts, explains:

Costa Rica and Nicaragua have a long history of territorial and political hostilities, stemming from 1824 when Costa Rica annexed the Nicaraguan province of Nicoya. This touched off a series of border disputes and squabbles. In the 1850s, North American adventurer William Walker invaded Costa Rica from Nicaragua in an unsuccessful bid to set up a slave state. Following Costa Rica's 1948 civil war, the losing side twice--in 1948 and 1954--launched attacks on the central government with the help of the Somoza dictatorship. Likewise, anti Somoza forces staged several abortive invasions from Costa Rica, and in the late 1970s, Costa Rica gave arms, political support, and military bases to the Sandinista rebels fighting against Somoza. (9)

Before presenting a thorough analysis of the United States's involvement in Costa Rica during the 1980s, Honey reviews these prior events in Costa Rica and Nicaragua, which "helped pave the way for the creation of the contras' Southern Front during the 1980s" (9). These military maneuvers reinforced the contemporary validity of "the popular saying that 'in Costa Rica there are three seasons--the dry season, the rainy season, and the season for conflict with Nicaragua'" ( Honey 9).

After the Sandinistas in Nicaragua defeated the Somoza regime in 1979, the resulting victory soon led to the development of different war fronts on Nicaragua's borders with Honduras and Costa Rica. Unhappy with the leftist Sandinista government in the context of the cold war, the United States supported counterrevolutionary attacks launched by contra troops from military bases in Honduras during the Reagan

administration in the 1980s. Another front of war developed on the Costa Rican/Nicaraguan border. The Anti-Sandinista group ARDE, led by Edén Pastora and Alfonso Robelo, who had been active in the Sandinista movement in the late 1970s and become disillusioned with the social revolution's course, fought along this southern border zone until the late 1980s. While the United States could openly support the military operations on the Northern Front, it had to secretly support the Southern Front because "the Reagan administration was barred by Congress from taking military actions aimed at toppling the Sandinista government and was permitted to use the contras only to interdict the supposed flow of arms north, from Nicaragua to the FMLN guerrillas in El Salvador" (Honey 11). The Costa Rican constitution, prohibiting "the presence of any foreign military group--contra or U.S.--without the legislature's prior approval," was another obstacle to the actions on the Southern Front (Honey 11).

Despite pressure from the United States to sanction military action against the Sandinista government, Costa Rica's President Luis Alberto Monge (1982-86) "adopted an official policy of 'unarmed neutrality,' under which the thousands of Nicaraguan exiles in the country could engage in peaceful political activity but not in armed resistance" (Honey 11). This stance, however, did not stop the Southern Front's military campaign. Instead, it maintained a covert presence; if contras were discovered operating within Costa Rican territory, they temporarily left Costa Rica to give the impression of complying with the neutrality policy. At the same time, the United States exerted political and economic pressure on Costa Rica to abandon its neutrality. Additionally, Honey presents evidence suggesting that U.S. strategists attempted to persuade U.S. citizens and Congress to support the war against Nicaragua not only by

“hyping each Sandinista attack against rebel forces in the border region or against contra leaders in San José into a fevered pitch and by building an image of unarmed, democratic Costa Rica about to fall to Sandinista-style communism,” but also by “carrying out their own terrorist attacks, border clashes, and internal sabotage” and blaming the Sandinistas for the violence (203).

Ultimately, these pressure tactics proved unsuccessful. Costa Rica’s President Oscar Arias (1986-1990) maintained the policy of neutrality and promoted a peace plan to negotiate diplomatically with the five Central American leaders an end to the region’s conflicts. As a result of his efforts, “Arias was able to outmaneuver a US administration obsessed with defeating the Sandinistas militarily, and in 1987 he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize” (Molina and Palmer, The History of Costa Rica 123). Although the military aggression ended after the presidents signed the peace plan in 1987, Costa Rica continued to feel the impact of the Nicaraguan revolution and counterrevolution. Many of the Nicaraguan refugees remained in Costa Rica, and more Nicaraguans arrived in Costa Rica in search of employment. The Costa Rican census for the year 2000 counted 226,374 Nicaraguans living in Costa Rica. This group constituted 76 percent of the foreigners residing in Costa Rica and 5.94 percent of Costa Rica’s total population. Some demographers believe that, in reality, Nicaraguans could make up 10 percent of Costa Rica’s total population, since the census did not count children born to foreign parents nor adults living in Costa Rica for less than six

months.<sup>86</sup> Although Nicaraguans certainly form a significant portion of the population, the census results dispelled a popular perception among Costa Ricans that a million immigrants were living in Costa Rica. This view of an exaggerated number of foreigners reflects concern regarding the Costa Rican government's ability to attend to the immigrants' needs and for the foreign population's means to contribute financially to the government's expenses in meeting their needs (Leitón and Avalos).

Some plays written by the Costa Rican New Wave generation address Costa Rica's relationship with Nicaragua as a principle theme. Most of these plays, such as Ultima noticia (1979) by Guillermo Arriaga, Juana de Arco (1986) by Juan Fernando Cerdas, and El ángel de la tormenta (1990) by Víctor Valdelomar, focus on the war during the 1980s. Miguel Rojas, in an interview with Pedro Bravo Elizondo, explains that he set Armas tomar in 1842 because "el costarricense es un desmemoriado, no conoce su historia" (516). Written in 1991 and published by Editorial Costa Rica in 1999, the play dramatizes Francisco Morazán's return to power in 1842 in Costa Rica at the behest of certain members of the political elite and culminates in the Costa Rican fight against the Nicaraguan invasion. Although the action takes place in the previous century and ostensibly helps the contemporary audience to recall events of national history, it also helps the audience, who would be aware of the violent events of the 1980s, to identify with the characters' vows to defend their freedom and their denunciation of excessive militarization.

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<sup>86</sup> Patricia Leitón and Angela Avalos present these statistics from the Costa Rican census of 2000 in the article "Censo revela transformación de Costa Rica," published in La Nación.

Leda Cavallini and Lupe Pérez do not specifically address Costa Rica's relationship with Nicaragua in Pancha Carrasco reclama (1988), which seeks to rectify the historical neglect of how Pancha Carrasco fought in the Costa Rican National Campaign of 1856-57 to defeat William Walker and his army of filibusters from the United States.

However, Cavallini and Pérez, speaking at the First International Women Playwrights Conference at the State University of New York at Buffalo in 1988, acknowledge the play's resonance in the context of the Central American Revolutions during the 1980s:

Pancha calls for peace, demands a war-free zone--a position recently realized in the Peace Plan of Estupulas 2 (sic)--as opposed to the possibility of internationalization of an armed conflict in Central America. Pancha claims the right of self-determination for the people of the isthmus of Central America, the need for a true freedom that implies dialogue and not domination. (France and Corso 225)<sup>87</sup>

As in the case of Armas tomar, the Costa Rican audience or reader of Pancha Carrasco reclama can link events from the nineteenth century to the recent use of their country as a staging ground for attacks during the Nicaraguan counterrevolution.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> There is a typographical error in the transcription of the conference proceedings that were translated from Spanish into English. "Estupulas" should be Esquipulas, Guatemala, where the presidents of the five Central American states signed the peace accord in 1987.

<sup>88</sup> Armas tomar was also published in the journal Escena in 1996. Pancha Carrasco was premiered in San José in 1988 by El Teatro de la Colina as a co-production with the Compañía Nacional de Teatro. The play, which was first published in Escena in 1988, won the 1990 UNESCO Prize and First Prize in the V Concurso Internacional de Obras Teatrales del Tercer Mundo in Caracas, Venezuela (Pérez Yglesias, Pancha Carrasco 9, 12).

While these plays deal with the armed conflict involving Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and the United States, the New Wave Theatre of the 1990s has not confronted the transformation of Costa Rican society by Nicaraguan immigrants. When I questioned Miguel Rojas about how Costa Rican and other cultures are reflected in contemporary Costa Rican theatre, he specifically mentioned the influx of Nicaraguans:

Siempre queda un remanente genético y cultural que tiende a mezclarse con los locales. Ya a partir de la tercera generación lo que hay son costarricenses.

Digamos que esto enriquece el acervo genético y cultural. El costarricense ha vivido del mito de que somos una población de raza blanca. La realidad es que somos mayormente descendientes de españoles sefardíes, esto es, hijos de padre judío español, o converso. Somos negros. Somos indios. Somos nicaragüenses. Somos pequeños cruces con chinos, alemanes, italianos y de unas cuantas comunidades más. Pero todavía faltan migraciones genéticas y culturales de mayor relevancia en la vida intercomunitaria dentro de nuestras fronteras. ¿El teatro refleja esto? No. Sin embargo, es cuestión de tiempo y seguir adelante con el proceso de sincretismo genético, cultural y teatral. (Miguel Rojas, Personal interview)

Rojas debunks the vision of Costa Rica as a culturally homogenous society. However, he acknowledges that the heterogeneous cultures in Costa Rica have not found expression in the theatre. Still, Rojas remains optimistic that a theatrical syncretism will take place along with the mixing of races and cultures. Recently, a play premiered in the theater at the Café Britt plantation in Barva in January 2002 that appears to be a step in that direction, garnering success with critics and audiences. César Meléndez,

who is of Costa Rican-Nicaraguan heritage, wrote and performed the monologue El nica, in which a Nicaraguan immigrant employed as a construction worker talks about his experiences in Costa Rica (Sáenz, “Crítica de teatro: Verdades necesarias”).

While El ángel de la tormenta does not focus on Nicaraguan immigration, it does allude to the way U.S. dominance attempted to subordinate Costa Rica’s political position during the Nicaraguan counterrevolution. Two of the eight characters in Valdelomar’s play are historical figures: Pedro de Castelnau, the papal legate, and Raimundo VI, the count of Toulouse. The first of these historical characters arrives at an unnamed, fictitious kingdom in the Languedoc region in southern France. After excommunicating Raimundo, Pedro de Castelnau requests King Orosio’s help in mounting a crusade against heresy in Toulouse. He asks Orosio not to defend Raimundo and to permit troops from the county of Turin and the duchy of Gascony to establish camps in the kingdom, from where they will attack Toulouse. Orosio is unable to decide immediately whether to support the legate. The king and Queen Irene are concerned about opening a trade route to Flanders and are reluctant to violate the holy peace, Paz de Dios, an agreement between the nobility in the neighboring lands. Even if, as Teodolfo, their head guard, points out, the war would not take place in their kingdom, Irene, saying “igual nos afecta, Teodolfo,” recognizes that the Flemish merchants would not risk traveling to their kingdom (8). Additionally, Orosio and Irene wish to conceal a secret from Pedro de Castelnau and the Catholic Church: since Irene has been unable to conceive a child, Orosio has impregnated their servant, Cármina, and he and Irene intend to pass off the child as their own.

When the women descend to the dungeon to hide from the legate, they meet Dicuil, a mysterious prisoner who identifies himself as “un caminante,” a wanderer who brings his wisdom to different lands. This man with a vast knowledge of nature and herbal remedies gives Irene two flowers. She must follow careful instructions in using them because, while taking one of them promotes fertility, the juice of the two flowers causes sterility. After Irene and Cármina leave the dungeon, Pedro de Castelnau interrogates Dicuil:

LEGADO. No trates de engañarnos. ¿Quién eres?

DICUIL. Un caminante.

LEGADO. ¿Dominico?

DICUIL. No.

LEGADO. ¿Cátaro entonces?

DICUIL. No.

LEGADO. ¿Albigense?

DICUIL. No.

LEGADO. De la orden de los humillados?

DICUIL. No. (12)

First, Pedro de Castelnau asks Dicuil if he is a friar from one of the orders sent by the Catholic Church to prevent heresy by preaching to the people. When the prisoner says no, the legate asks him if he is a heretic, a Cathar or an Albigensian, which Dicuil also denies. As the questioning continues, Dicuil admits that he was in Toulouse but says that he comes from far way, that he is neither from Toulouse nor the kingdom where he is a prisoner. Suspicious that Dicuil’s answers and knowledge of herbs are signs of

heresy, Pedro de Castelnau orders the guards to torture Dicuil and burn the parchments in which he had compiled his learning.

The historical characters, the geographical setting, and the mention of Catharism during Pedro de Castelnau's interrogation of Dicuil indicate that El ángel de la tormenta takes place during the early 1200s. However, the historical, geographical, and cultural distance in the play from contemporary Costa Rica is not as vast as it initially seems. Valdelomar creates the dramatic situation so that the audience and readers can see that Orosio and Irene's kingdom faces the same situation that Costa Rica does during the 1980s when the United States pressures the Central American nation to allow the contras to attack from its territory the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. The parallel between the kingdom and Costa Rica becomes even more apparent after a massive flock of black birds attack the kingdom. Calling the birds "demonios," after characterizing the crusade on an earlier occasion as "la gloria de defender al cristianismo . . . de derrotar al demonio," Pedro de Castelnau blames Toulouse for unleashing the deadly assault (10, 16). As the legate urges Orosio to commit to the crusade against Toulouse, Alcuino, a merchant, confides in Irene that he saw foreign troops caring for the birds in the Bosques Azules region of the kingdom. Alcuino also informs Irene that he had given Dicuil shelter, and that Dicuil was arrested after encountering the foreign troops with the birds in Bosques Azules. Alcuino's information reveals that Pedro de Castelnau and the foreign troops, who are present in the kingdom without Orosio's permission, deliberately ambushed the kingdom, blaming it on Toulouse so that Orosio, upset and enraged, would commit to war against Toulouse. The legate and the troops' actions are similar to those taken by the United States against Costa Rica in the 1980s,

as documented by Martha Honey: “Costa Rica, the region’s only real democracy, was to become the base for what is known in the covert trade as ‘simulated terrorism,’ actions designed to be blamed on one’s enemy and to cause a public outcry. Simulated terrorism is a well-established CIA tactic” (341). This deceptive tactic is used in an attempt to persuade both Orosio and the Costa Rican state to abandon their policies of neutrality.

Although the attack against the kingdom in El ángel de la tormenta is analogous to acts of violence in Costa Rica by the contras, covertly supported by the CIA, that were blamed on the Sandinistas, historical sources do not mention the use of this maneuver by the Catholic Church in the crusade against Catharism in Languedoc, nor is there evidence suggesting that the Cathars physically attacked Catholics.<sup>89</sup> The only violence

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<sup>89</sup> Honey spent eight years working as a journalist in Costa Rica. Other journalists and researchers have substantiated Honey’s conclusions about U.S. intervention and CIA actions in Costa Rica during the 1980s. For example, see Walter LaFeber, who also provides information about U.S. involvement in the other Central American countries in the 1980s. For investigation pertaining specifically to Costa Rica, see Manuel Bermúdez, James LeMoyne, and Jacqueline Sharkey. Marc Edelman and Joanne Kenen, editors of The Costa Rica Reader, reprint the U.S. Department of State’s “Secret Memo: U.S. Response to Costa Rica’s Urgent Request for Security Assistance” and “Problems of the Southern Front: A Memo from Robert Owen (‘The Courier’) to Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North (‘The Hammer’)”. Honey, after investigating a shooting on September 28, 1983, at the Peñas Blancas border crossing in Costa Rica, concludes that “the incident had been orchestrated by the CIA and contras to scuttle the New Neutrality Proclamation and escalate the war against Nicaragua” (306). She later details similar CIA-orchestrated incidents, including a bomb explosion on May 30, 1984, at La Penca, during a press conference with Edén Pastora, which injured her husband, who was a journalist reporting on the conference, and an attack in Las Crucitas on May 31, 1985, which killed two Costa Rican civil guardsmen. Honey documents other examples of simulated terrorism in Costa Rica after the La Penca bombing: “a 1985 assassination attempt on Pastora, a phony ‘Sandinista’ attack on the border town of Los Chilies (sic), a series of bombings against the U.S. embassies in Costa Rica and Honduras, and the murders of U.S., Costa Rican, and contra officials in both these countries” (341).

prior to the crusade is that against the Church sponsored by the count of Toulouse, Raymond VI. Malcolm Lambert relates that Raymond, while never abandoning the Catholic faith, employed mercenaries and “was guilty of violently anticlerical acts, imprisoning the abbots of Moissac and Montauban, pillaging churches and chasing away from their bishoprics the bishops of Vaidon and Agen” (63). These actions and the count’s refusal to swear to a “peace of the legates” in 1207, “precipitated a breakdown of relations between him and Pierre de Castelnau” (Lambert 99). Ultimately, the count continued employing mercenaries, and the church excommunicated him. The Papal Bull of May 1207 justified this decision on grounds “which ranged from Raymond’s maintenance of Aragonese who ravaged the land and his confiscation of the patrimony of the bishop of Carpentras, to the protecting and receiving of heretics” (Lambert 99-100).

In Valdelomar’s play, the Paz de Dios that Orosio is reluctant to break by supporting military action against Toulouse corresponds to the historical “peace of the legates.” Lambert reports that this oath, which “lasted with minor infractions for some six years,” was “sworn to by the leading magnates of the area, including Peter of Aragon” (99). The antagonism between Raimundo and Pedro de Castelnau in the play also is faithful to historical accounts. However, in El ángel de la tormenta the legate, in his appeal to Orosio, mentions neither the count’s employment of mercenaries nor his violent acts against the church:

Desde que aprobó y apoyó el comercio de Tolosa con Persia, sabía muy bien en qué lío se estaba metiendo. Ahora los herejes lo rodean como moscas, predicán sus insolencias, insultan la Autoridad Espiritual y proclaman a voces el nuevo

conocimiento . . . conocimiento que puede llevar a la cristiandad al caos. Muy pronto habrá un hereje detrás del conde de Tolosa aconsejándolo, si es que ya no lo hay. (9-10)

Instead, the legate emphasizes the count's economic and religious practices. According to Pedro de Castelnau, Raimundo knowingly courted trouble by approving trade with Persia. This economical expansion to the East opened the door for heretics to arrive and preach their beliefs, challenging the dominant Christian orthodoxy.<sup>90</sup> By emphasizing Raimundo's ties to the East, Valdelomar approximates the situation to that of Costa Rica after the Nicaraguan Revolution. Just as the Catholic Church disapproved of Raimundo's looking to Persia for an economic transformation that brought with it new religious beliefs, the United States was unhappy with the Sandinistas' Marxist and socialist ideals, ideologies that originated in Eastern Europe. The legate's fear that a heretic is or soon will be advising Raimundo politically corresponds to U.S. concern that the Soviet Union is influencing Nicaragua's political decisions. In each case, a hegemonic authority, the Catholic Church or the United States, feels threatened in an area where it previously asserted power. The invented kingdom in Valdelomar's play, like Costa Rica during the 1980s, finds itself pressured by the hegemonic power to support the destruction of alternative beliefs or ideologies.

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<sup>90</sup> Lambert explains that Catharism has historical ties to the East, but adapted to conditions in Western Europe:

Catharism is a protest movement rejecting the Western Church. Their leaders are aware of a link to the East, and as the late twelfth-century journeys of Cathar leaders to Constantinople and the Balkans indicate, Eastern cradles of belief have prestige, and continue to have it right into the fourteenth century. But it is never subservient to the East: as soon as we have records of its existence, it is unmistakably and thoroughly westernized and develops a life of its own. (32)

In El ángel de la tormenta, Valdelomar calls attention to certain aspects of the thirteenth-century crusade against Catharism that correspond to the contemporary Costa Rican context. The historical theme serves well as a vehicle for exploring Costa Rica's position in the struggle between Washington and Managua. Several parallels exist between Cathar religious beliefs and the Sandinistas' leftist political ideology. Lambert notes that Catharism "had an international impact and there were few countries in Western Europe that were not touched by Cathar missionary activity" (2). The Catholic Church viewed this heresy as an illness or contagion, which called for a "thorough cleansing: that alone would remove all the spores that carried infection" (Lambert 9). Centuries later, Marxism would also have an international impact. After World War II, the Soviet Union and the United States would establish spheres of influence throughout the world, each trying to check the power of the other. With this configuration of power, other nations in the world could align with one of the world powers or declare themselves as non-aligned. The nations in the American continent felt particular pressure since during the cold war the United States treated socialist governments in the region, like those in revolutionary Cuba or Salvador Allende's Popular Unity in Chile, as threats to the balance of power that must be eradicated. The United States also viewed them as a contagion; if one country in the hemisphere espoused socialism, then that ideology would spread to other countries in the region, in a "domino effect." After the Sandinistas' triumph in 1979, the Reagan administration in the United States accused "Nicaragua of being a totalitarian state and a platform for Soviet/Cuban-directed subversion in Central America" (Vanden and Walker 155).

Pedro de Castelnau warns Orosio and Irene that opening their kingdom to foreign trade could corrupt local traditions. It is a pattern that the legate has witnessed elsewhere in the spread of heresy:

LEGADO. He visto tantos levantamientos de campesinos en otras tierras.

Pierden su temor a Dios y se vuelven seres endemoniados . . . herejes.

IRENE. ¿Cómo puede saberse quién es un hereje?

LEGADO. Sencillo: adoran los objetos materiales más que a los espirituales.

¿Dónde está Dios, en las alturas o en los objetos?. . .ellos contestarían: en los objetos, lo cual es falso. Ese es el primer indicio. (15)

According to Pedro de Castelnau, concern about material instead of spiritual objects is the first sign of heretical rejection of God's authority. Catharism, reports Lambert, was a "drastic challenge . . . resting on a dogmatic core with ascetic practices conflicting with those of orthodoxy, a rival hierarchy, a claim to ethical superiority and a continuous history going back to the apostolic age" (23). It attracted followers in the context of "the moral ferment of the twelfth century in the aftermath of the Gregorian reform, in an age of much anticlericalism and disappointed expectations" (Lambert 23). The playwright's references to the contagious quality of the Cathars, their decision to eschew material objects and criticize the Catholic clergy's pursuit of economic wealth, and peasant uprisings, link the Cathars to the Sandinistas, who ousted the Somoza regime, which had benefited the lives of a few, and attempted to improve the material welfare of all Nicaraguans. The Cathar challenge to Catholic orthodoxy parallels that of Marxism to capitalism. Valdelomar's emphasis on material versus spiritual objects also could allude to the movement of liberation theology that evolved among certain

Catholic priests. Believing that the church should struggle to meet the people's material needs of food and shelter in addition to caring for their souls, these clergymen generated debate about the role of the church, and their ideas had taken root throughout Central America in the 1970s and 1980s.

Additional comparisons of El ángel de la tormenta to historical accounts of the crusade against Catharism reveal that Valdelomar tends to depart more from these sources than to follow them closely.<sup>91</sup> Writing an intercultural play that displaces the action and time to medieval France, Valdelomar intends to address what is happening currently in the local context. It is likely that the Costa Rican readers and audience members, or those familiar with the Costa Rican context, would not know much about Catharism. Therefore, the playwright adapts the historical material so that the audience and readers can relate it to their own experiences. Besides setting the play in Languedoc during a time of peace threatened by hostilities between Raymond and the papal legate, the playwright does not present much more information about the historical events; nor does he explore the Cathars' beliefs. As I have shown in the cases of the character Pedro de Castelnau's appeals to Orosio and Irene, Valdelomar selects and emphasizes the aspects from the crusade's historical record that correspond most closely to the context of the Nicaraguan counterrevolution in Costa Rica during the 1980s. For the most part, however, Valdelomar does not follow the crusade's history but rather creates symbols and events to represent the situation that Costa Rica faced in the covert war between the United States and Nicaragua. The most obvious change in

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<sup>91</sup> See Malcolm Lambert, The Cathars, and Zoé Oldenbourg, Massacre at Montségur: A History of the Albigensian Crusade, for more information about Catharism and the crusade against it.

the play is when the birds attack the neutral kingdom and Pedro de Castelnau blames the violence on Toulouse. However, the playwright makes other modifications to the historical record that further explore Costa Rica's options in confronting and resolving its present circumstances.

In the rush to escape from the attacking birds, Cármina falls and miscarries Orosio's child, exposing the king and queen's secret. Pedro de Castelnau orders Cármina's imprisonment but attempts to use Orosio and Irene's desire to have a child as a bargaining chip to get them to agree to support a military attack on Toulouse. In return for their cooperation, the legate, as a representative of the Catholic Church, promises to sanction Orosio's future attempts to have another child with Cármina by offering to be the child's godfather. Helping the king and queen to conceal the origin of a future heir is not the only manner in which the church pressures them to end the kingdom's neutrality. At the beginning of the play, Orosio returns to the kingdom after the pope has given him a golden beard. Irene realizes that these "barbas doradas" are a special distinction, noting that "de todos los reinos y los condados del Languedoc, sólo él las tiene" (9). Orosio admits, however, that he must pay a price for this privilege of being the only one in Languedoc to wear the golden beard: "El Papa me las ha dado en premio a mi obediencia" (13). Raimundo's arrival in the kingdom after the birds attack prompts a discussion of exactly what one must give in return for wearing the golden beard:

RAIMUNDO. Orosio. (Por las barbas) Veo que has recibido un maravilloso obsequio. Que Dios te las conserve.

LEGADO. Obsequio que tú nunca recibirás, por cierto.

RAIMUNDO. No soy amigo de obsequios, casi siempre significan un compromiso.

OROSIO. Un compromiso, eso es justamente lo que requerimos de ti, Raimundo. Un compromiso de encaminar tu condado dentro de los principios de la cristiandad. (26)

As the above dialogue shows, after the legate makes clear that Raimundo will never receive the golden beard, Raimundo replies that he does not wish to accept a gift that requires him to do something in return. Orosio responds that he and the legate want Raimundo to respect the orthodoxy of the Church. Orosio's willingness to consider the legate's request to assist in the attack against heresy in Toulouse earns him the golden reward. Raimundo's disobedience of the church's instructions to extirpate heresy in his lands keeps him from acquiring the beard.

The golden beard that the church awards in negotiation for adherence to the crusade against Catharism in El ángel de la tormenta symbolizes the money that the United States gave in the form of aid to Central American countries in the 1980s. Martha Honey quotes a U.S. Senate Democratic Policy Committee report that finds that "the Reagan administration . . . placed high priority on greatly increased aid to Central America as a means of countering the threat posed to other Central American countries by the Sandinista government of Nicaragua" (57). Honey's own research uncovers statistics verifying a significant increase in U.S. aid, channeled through the U.S. Agency for International Development, to the region: "In 1979, Central America had received less than 1 percent of total U.S. foreign aid. In 1986, 8.7 percent of AID's worldwide allotment went to the four U.S. allies in Central America and to the contras. The dollar

amount grew almost ten-fold, from \$103.9 million in 1979 to \$995.5 million in 1986” (57).<sup>92</sup> Receipt of this aid, like that of the golden beard, is contingent upon compliance with the requests of the giver. Honey documents repeated instances in which the United States “turned off the AID pipeline when Costa Rica balked at accepting Washington’s economic and political preconditions” (58).<sup>93</sup> Despite these pressure tactics, Costa Rica maintained political neutrality. However, Costa Rica did agree to make structural changes to its economy during the 1980s because it needed aid after experiencing its most serious economic crisis in fifty years.<sup>94</sup>

In El ángel de la tormenta, Orosio’s position is similar to that of contemporary Costa Rica. The golden beard will bring him wealth and enhance his power, since he would be the only ruler to receive this gift from the church. In return, he has the obligation of following the church’s rulings. Ultimately, Orosio accepts the golden beard from the pope and, after the attack of the birds and the legate’s promise to support Orosio’s

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<sup>92</sup> Honey reports that “the percentage of military aid also rose sharply. Between 1946 and 1980, U.S. military assistance to Central America averaged only 7.7 percent of the total, while between 1981 and 1987, military aid ranged from 8 percent to 36 percent of the total aid package to these countries” (57).

<sup>93</sup> Honey cites the following specific cases:

In November 1983, for example, both AID and the IMF suspended disbursement just after Costa Rica declared its neutrality policy and voted in the United Nations against the U.S. invasion of Grenada. In mid-1984, AID withheld funds in order to pressure Costa Rica into passing a bank-reform bill. Then, in both 1986 and 1987, AID withheld funds after President Oscar Arias spoke out against U.S. aid to the contras and launched his Central American Peace Plan. (58-59)

<sup>94</sup> Honey reports that sources close to Costa Rican President Oscar Arias say that he decided to support a bank denationalization law “and other economic policy changes, for both personal and political reasons” (89). A primary political reason for this support was that Arias “could not simultaneously oppose Washington’s economic and political strategies” (Honey 89). Jorge Rovira Mas calls the period between 1978 and 1980 in Costa Rica “la más severa crisis padecida por el país en el lapso de medio siglo” (35). See Helio Fallas Venegas for more information about the economic crisis.

attempt to have a child with Cármina, agrees to allow the foreign troops into his kingdom to prepare for the crusade against Toulouse. Afterward, Orosio wonders if he made the correct decision. Dicuil's status as a prisoner weighs especially heavy on Orosio's conscience. After Alcuino says that Dicuil claimed to be an angel, the king questions the prisoner. Dicuil denies being an envoy from heaven. Cármina, who is now sharing a cell in the dungeon with Dicuil, tells Orosio that she believes her fellow prisoner is human and asks Orosio to intervene in Dicuil's fate. The king offers to arrange Dicuil's freedom if he agrees to declare his conversion to Pedro de Castelnau. Although Dicuil eventually accepts this offer, Pedro de Castelnau orders his execution without Orosio's knowledge or consent. In the third and final act of the play, an intoxicated Orosio sits on his throne. His golden beard has grown long, wrapping around the throne and the table in front of him with Dicuil's decapitated head on it, extending along the floor "como una gran enredadera dorada" (29). The stage directions' comparison of the beard to a climbing vine aptly suggests that accepting a gift from the church has limited Orosio's own power. Entangled by the strands of gold, Orosio is unable to move easily or to act independently. Addressing Dicuil's head, he asks Dicuil not to expect him, nor anyone else, to do what is morally correct:

A quién le importa en estos tiempos la moral. . . .Consígueme a un hombre con moral en estas tierras y yo te digo: es un impostor. Un mercader que negocia con ella como se negocia una pieza de buena tela. Dales un puño de monedas a esos hombres con moral . . . regatearán . . . discutirán. Te dicen: ¡No, eso no se vende! Pero al final terminan ofreciéndotela muy barata . . . más barata de lo que pensabas. (29)

According to Orosio, a moral man will compromise his principles for a certain price. Often, he sells out his principles very cheaply, as Orosio has discovered after accepting the church's gift of the golden beard. To further link the medieval church to U.S. foreign aid in the 1980s, Valdelomar, in the above quotation, refers to man selling out his moral principles for a handful of coins, a religious allusion to Judas Iscariot's betrayal of Jesus Christ in exchange for silver coins. Although Orosio, in the play, has learned this lesson too late to spare Dicuil's life, his speech has implications for the readers and audience as it urges them to understand that accepting aid from the United States with strings attached limits Costa Ricans from acting freely according to their beliefs and values.

The golden beard in El ángel de la tormenta is clearly identified as a masculine attribute. In the first act of the play, when Irene sees Orosio wearing the beard for the first time, she exclaims, "¡Son dignas de mi señor!" (13). Orosio replies: "Serán la mejor herencia para mi hijo" (13). Although the sex of the child that Orosio conceived with Cármina is still unknown, Orosio, using the masculine noun in Spanish, declares that his son will inherit the golden beard. This specification of the male child as the kingdom's heir introduces a key theme that Valdelomar explores in the play: the role of gender in politics. Irene, as queen, actively challenges the exclusion of women from participating in the kingdom's political processes. Her interest in establishing trade with Flanders brings her into frequent contact with merchants in the kingdom, one of whom confides in her that foreign troops supported by the church are responsible for the attack of the birds. Irene is instrumental not only in making this discovery but also in seeking a resolution to the situation. Concerned that a war would cause negative

repercussions on commerce with Flanders, Irene urges Orosio to seek a peaceful end to the dispute between Toulouse and the church by negotiating with all the leaders of Languedoc. When Orosio decides instead to support the military crusade, Irene convinces Teodolfo to assist her in summoning Raimundo and the other rulers of Languedoc to a Peace Council in the kingdom.

Economic considerations are not the only reason why Irene opposes war with Toulouse. Throughout the play, she repeatedly questions why someone is labeled a heretic. For example, when her husband informs her that the church has excommunicated Raimundo for harboring heretics, she asks him how to identify a heretic:

IRENE. ¿Cómo se sabe quién es un hereje?

OROSIO. Es algo así como un hombre inclinado a prácticas demoniacas.

IRENE. Pero cómo se sabe.

OROSIO. No sé. (14)

Orosio answers Irene with a definition, but she presses him to tell her how one arrives at the definition, how one knows who is a heretic. Orosio is unable to tell her. Orosio and Pedro de Castelnau provide Irene with the church's definition of a heretic as someone who is inclined to demonic practices or who envisions a different distribution of material wealth in life. What really interests Irene is heresy as an identifying category applied to an individual. Orosio and the legate's answers to Irene's questions suggest the existence of classifications governed by a binary division: one is either a heretic or Catholic; one either cares about material or spiritual objects. Those labeled as heretics,

according to the church, must convert to Catholicism or lose their lives to the crusade or in prison cells after interrogation.

Irene, on the other hand, is receptive to other possibilities. She criticizes Dicuil's torture in the dungeon and listens to Dicuil when he affirms that the residents of Toulouse treated him with respect, welcoming his teaching, and, therefore, should not be the target of a crusade: "Tolosa es una tierra hospitalaria, llena de sabiduría. A ellos dejé muchas de mis semillas. Son gente buena, entendieron mi misión" (21). Although the church, in categorizing the residents of Toulouse as heretics, maintains that they behave in a demonic way and do not value spirituality, Dicuil observes in their actions signs that they are good people. Dicuil does not comment on their beliefs, nor does he mention if they are practicing Catholicism or another religion. However, his statement and his treatment as a prisoner in the kingdom suggest that human behavior is not contained within a fixed identity. All are capable of good and bad deeds; good behavior is not limited to Catholicism, nor is evil only a characteristic of heresy. By questioning this fixed notion of identity, Valdelomar encourages the readers and audience to think about the polarization of political identities in Costa Rica during the cold war, in which nations were classified as belonging to the first, second, or third world, and the impact of this war's end on Costa Rica's political future. When the United States intervened in the 1980s to stop what it viewed as the spread of Soviet influence to Nicaragua, it pressured Costa Rica to align with one of the two powers. Costa Rica's proposal to negotiate a peace process among the Central American nations functioned as an alternative to this system of two world powers.

Valdelomar's play also questions the binary division of gender roles, focusing particularly on the notion that women should not participate in politics. Irene demonstrates an interest in the kingdom's political situation and acts to prevent violence from destroying its future. As a woman in a patriarchal society, however, she encounters opposition to her attempts to forge a political role in life that would move beyond the scope of giving birth to a male heir who will inherit the right to rule the kingdom. Her inability to have her own child is a barrier to participating in the kingdom's politics in even this limited manner. Orosio and Pedro de Castelnau frequently attempt to dissuade her from transgressing social norms. For example, after learning that Orosio has given permission for the foreign troops to establish camps within the kingdom, Irene confronts him in the presence of Pedro de Castelnau:

IRENE. ¿Qué clase de rey eres entonces, que dejas pisotear tu dignidad y la de tu pueblo?

OROSIO. No son tus asuntos, Irene.

IRENE. ¿Cuáles son mis asuntos, entonces? ¿Debo quedarme callada mientras la cizaña corrompe la dignidad de un reino?

LEGADO. Sería lo mejor, señora. Estos asuntos no le incumben. ¿O es que acaso usted está a favor de la herejía? (22-23)

Irene believes that Orosio's decision injures his own and the kingdom's dignity. When he and the legate reply that she should not concern herself with political matters, Irene refuses to be silenced and proceeds with the arrangements for the Peace Council.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Earlier in the play, Pedro de Castelnau questions Irene about her involvement in establishing trade with Flanders: "¿La señora reina se encarga personalmente de los

Valdelomar's casting of Irene as a political actor can be viewed in the context of the debate about women's participation in politics in contemporary Costa Rica. The Costa Rican Legislative Assembly was debating different versions of the Proyecto de Ley sobre la Igualdad Real de la Mujer (the Bill for Women's True Equality) between 1988 and 1990, prior to and during the publication and staging of El ángel de la tormenta. As Yadira Calvo Soto points out, Costa Rican women have been for the most part excluded from political posts:

Since 1949, the year in which the Constitution gave us the vote, the female representation in the Legislative Assembly has reached barely 6 percent. Only 10 percent of labor union jobs and 11 percent of municipal positions are held by women. In some presidential administrations, women have not occupied a single ministerial post; in others, such as the one of President Oscar Arias Sánchez, whose election campaign spoke of a "Costa Rica with the soul of a woman," the highest post for which a woman was named was vice minister. In the following administration, that of President Rafael Angel Calderón (1990-94), the cabinet included two women ministers. (11)

The Bill for Women's True Equality fought against this discrimination by proposing a system of quotas by which women would occupy "at least thirty percent of high political posts" (Calvo Fajardo 11). While Aixa Ansorena Montero reports that after two years of debate a compromise bill was eventually passed as the Ley de Promoción de la Igualdad Social de la Mujer (the Law for the Promotion of Women's Social

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asuntos del reino?" (15). This query suggests that Irene's interest in politics seems unusual to the legate and not what is expected of her role as queen.

Equality), the final version of the bill did not include this controversial proposal of quotas.<sup>96</sup> By having Irene assume a political role in his play, Valdelomar shows that women do not have to confine their behavior to the binary division of roles in patriarchal society and encourages the audience and readers to reflect on this recent debate in Costa Rica.

At the end of El ángel de la tormenta, it appears doubtful that Irene's efforts to negotiate a peaceful solution to the conflict between the church and Toulouse will succeed. As the preparations for war continue in the kingdom, Pedro de Castelnau pressures the queen to stop planning the peace council. In the last scene before the third act, as the sounds of battle can be heard outside, Irene squeezes the juice of the two flowers that Dicuil had given her into the bronze goblet used for ceremonial toasts. As she does this, she remembers Dicuil's instructions for using the flowers: "Una trae la fertilidad; las dos juntas, la esterilidad" (28). Having consciously selected the floral combination that causes sterility, Irene proposes a toast to the men who have entered the hall, maintaining her wish to convoke the council: "Si antes de que las armas hablen pueden hablar las bocas, en buena hora. Yo sólo espero que los buenos propósitos sean los que triunfen. Brindemos, entonces, por los buenos propósitos. ¡Salud señores!" (28). Orosio, Pedro de Castelnau, Teodolfo, and Alcuino are in the hall with Irene, and the stage directions indicate that each one of them partakes of the toast: "(Cada uno

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<sup>96</sup> Ansorena Montero summarizes the proposals included in the different versions of the bill in the table "Selected Dimensions of the Four Versions of the Equality Bill" (116-17). Regarding election to public office, the final version stipulated that "each party will spend a percentage of election funds to improve women's participation," but it "eliminated preference for women when candidates are equally qualified for top posts" (116).

toma la copa y bebe)” (28). The men accept the toast, without knowing what they are really consuming. Only Alcuino refuses, saying that a physical condition prevents him from drinking alcohol. Why does Irene decide to administer the flowers in a manner that will render the men, including her own husband, infertile? This action seems strange, given the arrangements that she and Orosio had made to produce an heir, concealing the fact that Cármina would be their child’s biological mother. Additionally, if Irene has in her hands the remedy to her infertility, then why does she not take it?

The final act of the play sheds some light on Irene’s motives for selecting the floral combination for sterility. However, it leaves the readers and audience with some uncertainties as well. As we have seen, Orosio, having learned of Dicuil’s execution, is drunk, and the golden beard restricts his movements. Orosio seems weaker, and, earlier in the play, Raimundo had foreshadowed Pedro de Castelnau’s loss of power.

Confronting the legate, Raimundo asserts:

Ya pasaron aquellos tiempos en que ayudado por el humo del incienso te elevabas sobre la tierra, y te hacías llamar a ti mismo el ángel vengador . . . el ángel de la tormenta. Así podías conducir a los ejércitos donde quisieras y obtener muchas glorias. Pero ya esos tiempos pasaron. . . Ya no puedes ni siquiera elevarte un ápice de la tierra. (25)

Raimundo notes that times have changed and the legate can no longer call himself the avenging angel. This type of angel, to which the play’s title refers, used to lead armies into battle with the aid of incense, which enabled the angel to rise into the air. This image of Pedro de Castelnau as an angel capable of bringing misfortune to humans represents the church’s supreme authority during the Middle Ages. The spread of

Catharism, which began as a movement dissatisfied with Catholic doctrine and hierarchy, challenged the papacy's power. Raimundo is aware that other religions may contest the church's claim to the people's loyalty. Indeed, he predicts that the people will tire of the violence perpetrated against them by the church and that they will revolt against their faith: "¿En qué miserable pergamino se ha escrito que se debe honrar eternamente a los que hacen uso de la fuerza para someter a los más débiles? Goliat, con toda su fuerza, no pudo contra David, ¿qué te hacer pensar ahora lo contrario, Goliat de Castelnau?" (25). Comparing the situation to the story of David and Goliath from the Bible, Raimundo warns Pedro de Castelnau that, just as Goliath could not defeat David, so will he be unable to continue exerting his power without a challenge from the people. Even though the legate's position in the church makes him strong, he is not invincible. Moreover, by calling Pedro de Castelnau Goliath, Valdelomar is once again signaling to his audience the analogy between the church and the U.S. political and military "Goliath."

Despite Raimundo's prediction, the legate's power still appears intact in the final act of the play. The legate arrives and admonishes Irene for sending out a parchment to convoke a peace council among the leaders of Languedoc. He reveals that he has intercepted Teodolfo and cut off his tongue to punish him for being the council's messenger. Alcuino interrupts to report that the birds have multiplied and, because they are hungry, are attacking the troops and the kingdom. When Pedro de Castelnau sees that the soldiers are killing the birds, Irene informs him that she ordered them to destroy the birds in order to protect the castle and the kingdom. Angry, the legate orders that the queen be imprisoned for her disobedience, and he offers to go outside personally

and climb the highest tower in order to pacify the birds. Irene's decision to administer the flower juice that causes sterility to the men can be understood as a reaction to seeing the king grow weaker as the legate asserts the traditional authority of the church.

Although she does not halt her attempts to negotiate a peaceful end to the conflict, she can see that the violence has not ended and would not want future generations to live in that environment. Her decision also ensures that the system of power currently in place, in which her kingdom is subservient to a hegemonic force, cannot reproduce.

Alcuino, looking through the window, reports on the legate's progress in feeding the birds. At first, he sees Pedro de Castelnau rising in the air and the birds perching on his shoulders and arms in order to eat. Then, suddenly, the birds knock Pedro de Castelnau to the ground. This attack on the legate indicates a weakening of his authority and suggests that the violence he inflicted upon others has now turned against him.

However, the events that follow it point to an uncertain future for the kingdom.

Alcuino states that the pope will send another legate to the kingdom, suggesting that, although a particular leader has fallen, the overall system of power remains intact. Irene asks Orosio to send the parchment convoking the peace council. As the play ends,

Alcuino, disagreeing with the queen's request, destroys the parchment, the birds begin to caw again like they did during the prior attacks, and Orosio asks Irene what they will name their child. As the stage lights fade to black, Irene, speaking from offstage,

answers: "Cuando haya un camino claro y abierto para los ángeles sabios . . . cuando las semillas de la locura puedan sembrarse sin ser pisoteadas . . . entonces podremos tener un hijo que nazca con la luna y las estrellas sobre su cabeza . . ." (31). Irene's reply alludes to Dicuil, whom some had regarded as an angel sowing his seeds in

different lands, and indicates her current dissatisfaction with the state of the kingdom. The use of the subjunctive shows that the favorable conditions that the queen views as necessary before the birth of a child do not presently exist.<sup>97</sup>

The political status of the kingdom remains uncertain at the end of El ángel de la tormenta. The kingdom has been unable to maintain an adequate supply of food to keep the birds from attacking the castle. Orosio appears willing to obey the church's orders and does nothing to help Irene summon the peace council; nor does he protest when Pedro de Castelnau dictates her imprisonment. Although Pedro de Castelnau has died, it is possible that the pope will send another legate to the kingdom to replace him. Even if the church should opt not to dispatch another legate, Irene still will encounter resistance to her plan to negotiate peace. Alcuino reminds Irene that the merchants in the kingdom have a vested interest in the war. They wish to realize a financial return on what they spent in supplying the army with food, clothing, and weapons. Alcuino, therefore, destroys Irene's invitation to the leaders of Languedoc and warns her:

Sería muy grave que una ofensa hiciera que los mercaderes lanzaran su carne al mar, quemaran sus telas y que ni un solo barco de los que van a Flandes se moviera del puerto. Detener la guerra sería una grave ofensa para nosotros, sus humildes siervos. Usted elige. (31)

Discovering the foreign troops in the kingdom does not offend Alcuino. He only complains to Irene and the legate because the troops took supplies without

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<sup>97</sup> Earlier in the play, Irene had said about her child: "Mi hijo, si algún día nace, será un hombre con la luna y las estrellas sobre su cabeza . . . no una baratija con la que se puede negociar" (23). The use of the future indicative suggests that Irene at that time feels certain that she can resist the legate's use of the child in bargaining for political support.

compensating him. Alcuino views the end of the war as an offense to his earning potential and pressures the queen to abandon the peace council by threatening that the merchants will sabotage the kingdom's trade with Flanders. The kingdom, in deciding its political course, is subject not only to coercion from the external, global authority of the church, but also from this group of merchants located within its own territory. According to Alcuino, the merchants are essential to the kingdom's survival: "Ni una sola piedra de este castillo se podría mantener firme de no ser por las contribuciones que mes tras mes y año tras año pagamos los mercaderes" (20). The image of not even a single stone in the castle being able to stay in place without the merchants' economic support indicates that the merchants feel they are the kingdom's foundation and have the right to determine its political future. It is not certain that Irene's peace plan will succeed, given that Alcuino and other merchants actively oppose ending the war.

Valdelomar departs from historical sources by ending the play in this inconclusive manner. Lambert reports that one of Raymond's officers assassinated Pierre de Castelnau in January 1208 and that there is no indication that the count "had given orders for Pierre to be killed, but his unwisdom in failing immediately to express his sorrow or to hunt down the murderer led the pope to assume the worst" (102). The pope reacted to the murder by summoning the Albigensian Crusade against heresy, which would last for twenty years and would be the only crusade fought by Europeans against other Europeans (Lambert 63). The playwright's decision to present a series of events in Act Three that is different from that recorded by historians of the crusade against Catharism enables the readers and audience to link the play more closely to the situation in Costa Rica during the Nicaraguan counterrevolution.

Interestingly, the play does not show if the peace council is able to meet to negotiate an end to the war. It is possible that Valdelomar wrote the play before the Central American leaders approved President Oscar Arias's peace plan in 1987 and, not knowing how the conflicts in the region would end, the playwright did not reveal at the conclusion of El ángel de la tormenta if there would be war or peace in the kingdom. It also is possible that Valdelomar wrote the play after 1987 and created this incomplete ending to show what could have happened if Costa Rica did not maintain its political neutrality. The golden beard presented to Orosio by the church represents the foreign aid offered by the United States to Costa Rica to coerce it into supporting war against Nicaragua. Pedro de Castelnau's fall parallels the failure of the United States to convince Costa Rica to espouse this military campaign and Costa Rica's decision to propose a regional peace plan.

Valdelomar adds the merchants' opposition to the peace council to reflect how certain factions within Costa Rican society collaborated politically and economically with the United States during the counterrevolution. Honey notes that there were U.S. AID collaborators of neoliberal ideology within the Costa Rica government "who viewed Costa Rica's existing economic model--based on consumer goods industries, production for the local and regional market, a large state sector, and a few traditional agricultural exports--as incapable of pulling the country out of its economic crisis" (64). Groups on the far right and far left also sought to end neutrality. Rumors of a coup by these groups to oust President Monge and install Armando Aráuz, who had close ties to the U.S. Embassy, prompted the pro-neutrality Security Minister Angel Edmundo Solano to tell reporters on August 8, 1984, "as he left a stormy Council of Government

meeting that he had ordered the metropolitan police and OPEN--Costa Rica's equivalent to a national guard--on 'maximum alert'" (Honey 84). According to Jean Hopfensperger, the three main daily newspapers in Costa Rica, La Nación, La República, and La Prensa Libre, promoted "the U.S.-backed Nicaraguan rebels, Costa Rican militarization, International Monetary Fund programs, and most U.S. State Department programs" in their editorial columns and articles (294).<sup>98</sup>

Although Alcuino and the merchants in Valdelomar's play adopt a position similar to that of Costa Ricans favoring U.S. economic and political policies during the 1980s, Irene and Teodolfo's position is comparable to that of Costa Ricans who advocated neutrality. The Costa Rican weekly newspapers, including Semanario Universidad, The Tico Times, and Esta Semana, "supported Costa Rican neutrality, the Contadora Group peace negotiations, and the Central American Peace Plan, and criticized, on occasion, U.S. foreign policy" (Honey 258). A large number of Costa Ricans supported the peace process. On May 15, 1984, between twenty and thirty thousand Costa Ricans gathered in downtown San José, in the country's largest march to that date, to demonstrate for peace and neutrality. Endorsed by President Monge, Liberation party leaders, and Archbishop Román Arrieta, this march "was supported by a broad coalition of trade unions, youth and university groups, former presidents Figueres and Daniel Odúber, University of Costa Rica President Fernando Durán, a number of government officials, and a contingent of U.S. residents" (Honey 309). Despite pressure from outside and

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<sup>98</sup> Hopfensperger attributes the pro-U.S. coverage in these privately owned newspapers to scholarships permitting Costa Rican journalists to study in the United States, friendships between reporters, editors and the contras, and alleged payoffs to reporters (295).

within their country's borders, Costa Ricans who favored maintaining neutrality defended their point of view until the other Central American nations signed President Arias's peace accord.

Valdelomar's departure from historical accounts of the Albigensian Crusade in the final act of El ángel de la tormenta encourages the audience and readers to think not only about Costa Rica's policy of neutrality during the Nicaraguan counterrevolution in the 1980s, but also about the future of the Costa Rican nation in the age of globalization. Published and performed in 1990, the play reached the audience and readers as the cold war was coming to an end after the collapse of the Soviet Union and globalization, defined by Malcolm Waters as "a social process in which the constraints of geography on social and cultural arrangements recede and in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding," was accelerating (3). According to Waters, the impact of globalization, which emerged as a consequence of the expansion of modernization, European culture, and capitalist development, could be felt throughout the world, and, consequently, in each part of the world "every set of social arrangements must establish its position in relation to the capitalist West" (3).

This need for a society to relativize itself, or compare itself interactively with other societies, could also account for the play's open ending.<sup>99</sup> Valdelomar situates the play in the origins of Western, or European, modernity. In this sense, the fall of Pedro de Castelnau, foreshadowed by Raimundo's statement that the legate will no longer be able to command armies by rising into the heavens, functions as a sign of the significant

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<sup>99</sup> Roland Robertson employs the terms relativize and reflexiveness to describe this process of a society's interactive comparison with other societies.

decline in the Catholic Church's power that would indicate the beginning of European modernity. According to Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, the shift from divine to secular power over worldly affairs, which took place between 1200 and 1600 in Europe, is "a symptom of the primary event of modernity: the affirmation of the powers of *this* world, the discovery of the plane of immanence" (70). Raimundo's assertion that the people will fight against the legate's abuses can be understood as a type of consciousness emerging in political, scientific, artistic, and theological fields that Hardt and Negri mark as the origins of European modernity: "What is revolutionary in this whole series of philosophical developments stretching from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries is that the powers of creation that had previously been consigned exclusively to the heavens are now brought down to earth" (73).

At the end of the play, Valdelomar encourages the audience and readers to relate the kingdom's options in confronting the beginning of this modernizing process to ways in which Costa Rica could position itself in regard to the process of globalization. Catharism, the Catholic Church's crusade against heresy, and the merchants' assertion that economic matters determine the kingdom's political course allude to ideologies that had arrived in Costa Rica and to which the Costa Rican nation must respond: Marxism and neoliberalism. Walter Mignolo calls these Christian, Marxist, and neoliberal ideologies examples of "global designs," which "were conceived and enacted from a particular local history generally identified as 'the West'" (301). However, because these ideologies, or theories, originated in a specific location, they are not necessarily useful when they are implemented in other regions of the world as part of a colonial system, which in recent years has evolved into a global colonialism. These ideologies

arrive in spaces that Mary Louise Pratt calls “contact zones”: “social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination--like colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today” (4). Mignolo has developed a similar definition of these spaces, which he has named “the colonial difference”: “the space where *local* histories inventing and implementing global designs meet *local* histories, the space in which global designs have to be adapted, adopted, rejected, integrated, or ignored” (ix). Mignolo reminds us that even a theory that is considered now to be “global,” because the location in which it originated has become a hegemonic power, in reality has a “local” origin, specific to a particular historical and cultural context. Costa Rica, as a nation that emerged from a colonial system, is now facing forms of global colonialism, and Valdelomar invites the audience and readers of El ángel de la tormenta to consider how Costa Rica can respond to this process.<sup>100</sup>

Although, as Pratt and Mignolo have indicated, there are a wide range of responses to global designs and conditions created by globalization, Valdelomar at the end of the play concentrates on two particular responses that Costa Rica could articulate. At the beginning of the 1990s, the Costa Rican state needed to decide what its role would be in the global context of the crisis of Marxism and the end of the cold war. One possibility is to adopt a neoliberal model in which the economic market guides human behavior,

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<sup>100</sup> Regarding the origin and nature of global colonialism, Mignolo points out: In the second half of the twentieth century the emergence of global colonialism, managed by transnational corporations, erased the distinction that was valid for early forms of colonialism and the coloniality of power. Yesterday, the colonial difference was out there, away from the center. Today it is all over, in the peripheries of the center and in the centers of the periphery. (ix)

similar to the point of view expressed by Alcuino and the merchants in the play, who wish to continue a war because it is financially profitable. Another option is political action on a regional or transnational level, presented in the play in Irene's plans to convoke a peace council. This second possibility does not reject expanding trade across borders. Irene is in favor of establishing trade with Flanders. However, she does not support a war for economic profit if it will harm other aspects of human life in the kingdom. Valdelomar does not reveal the ultimate course taken by the kingdom. Does economic policy predominate and the war continue, with the kingdom subordinate to the Church's hegemony or to new hegemonic forces emerging in the kingdom? Or does the regional council negotiate an end to the war and offer an alternative to hegemonic power? Valdelomar suggests that adopting a neoliberal model might have harmful consequences and points to the beneficial possibilities offered by political action on a transnational or regional level that includes actors who have been traditionally excluded from the political decision-making process. The play's unresolved ending stresses that the Costa Rican response to globalization is still an ongoing process and invites the audience and readers to think about different ways of responding to globalization.

Valdelomar brings out the importance of including women in the political process. Similarly, Linda Berrón, in Olimpia, proposes building solidarity across cultures and social classes in order to fight for the equal participation of both sexes in politics in Costa Rica and other parts of the world. While Olimpia is her first play to be published and performed, Berrón is recognized in Costa Rica primarily for her novel, El expediente (1989), and two collections of short stories, La última seducción (1989) and La cigarra autista (1992). She has won awards for these narrative works, including the

IV Premio Internacional de Narrativa de Mujeres de Habla Hispana in Spain (1990), the Premio Unico de Cuento de los Juegos Florales de México, Centroamérica y Panamá in Guatemala (1991), and the Ancora Literature Prize in Costa Rica (1992-93). In 1990, Berrón founded Editorial Mujeres, the first publishing house in Costa Rica and the third in Latin America dedicated to publishing books written by women. Berrón's incursion into the dramatic genre includes two plays; before Olimpia, she had written La sombra de la torre, which was influenced by the theatre of the absurd. Besides writing and editing, she also has promoted Costa Rican culture abroad as the Minister Counselor for Cultural Affairs at the Costa Rican Embassy in Spain.<sup>101</sup>

Although Berrón is active in Costa Rican literary circles and has worked so that Costa Rican literature gains recognition in other parts of the world, she was born in Spain. While her birthplace could prompt one to question the inclusion of Olimpia in this study of Costa Rica plays, the reception of her narrative works and play in Costa Rica indicate that she addresses issues relevant to the Costa Rican cultural context. Having moved to Costa Rica approximately twenty years ago after marrying a Costa Rican, Berrón considers Costa Rica to be her "segunda patria" and an inspiration for her literary works ("Linda Berrón"). She explains, in an interview with Edward Waters Hood, that she began her career as a writer in a workshop taught by Costa Rican writer Carmen Naranjo. Other critics also consider her work to be part of Costa Rican literary expression. Margarita Rojas and Flores Ovares, for example, include Berrón in their history of Costa Rican literature, 100 años de literatura costarricense, placing her

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<sup>101</sup> There are two interviews with Berrón that include information about her professional activities. See Edward Waters Hood and "Linda Berrón: Mujer de letras tomar."

narrative works with those produced by a group of Costa Rican writers whose texts began to appear in the 1980s.<sup>102</sup> Luis Fernando Gómez, the current director of the Compañía Nacional de Teatro, calls her “una autora nacional” when he justifies producing and staging Olimpia in 2002: “Porque es un texto de una autora nacional, porque es una obra polémica de temática muy vigente y porque es un montaje épico de gran resonancia” (Díaz, “CNT”). When the CNT was founded in 1971 by Alberto Cañas, Costa Rica’s first Minister of Culture, the legal statutes that created it stated that it would have the goal of staging three plays a year: a play of classical or universal origin, a Latin American play, and a Costa Rican play.<sup>103</sup>

This classification of Berrón as a national author is understandable because Olimpia relates to the Costa Rican socio-political context. María Silva, the actress who portrayed the play’s protagonist, Olimpia, remarks that its theme has validity in contemporary Costa Rica (Díaz, “Olimpia”). Alfredo Catania, the play’s director, agrees with Silva, noting that “el tema de la producción es sumamente vigente para Costa Rica y América Latina, a través de distintas aristas: la lucha de la mujer por sus derechos, la resistencia del pueblo ante el poder que lo traiciona después de utilizarlo, la pelea contra la injusticia, y la recuperación de la solidaridad” (Díaz, “Renace la compañía”). Luis Fernando Gómez also points out the play’s contemporary relevance despite its setting in revolutionary France, emphasizing that the play explores the

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<sup>102</sup> Rojas and Ovarés include the following writers in this group: Linda Berrón, Anacristina Rossi, Hugo Rivas, Víctor Hugo Fernández, José Ricardo Chaves, Dorelia Barahona, Carlos Cortés, Rodrigo Soto, and Fernando Contreras (100 años 241).

<sup>103</sup> Leda Cavallini, in her Master’s thesis, “Dramaturgia infantil: Un espacio para recrear o imaginar,” summarizes this statute on p. 57. See pp. 55-70 of her thesis for additional information and analysis of the CNT’s cultural policies.

themes of women's rights and the issue of true equality (Díaz, "CNT"). These comments indicate how the play would be relevant to the audience, who would be aware that earlier in the decade the Costa Rican Legislative Assembly had debated different versions of the Bill for Women's True Equality, which eventually became the Law for the Promotion of Women's Social Equality.

Berrón also has stated her intention to focus on this issue of women's participation in politics, noting that the play's protagonist, Olympe de Gouges, sought for women the right to vote and to be elected to political office when she wrote and published her "Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Citizen" in 1791 and that similar efforts in Latin America achieved some success "unos 160 años después, y con todas las limitaciones que conocemos" (Schumacher, "Olimpia"). Berrón also remarks that, in her play, she includes de Gouges's proposal of legislation requiring fathers to economically support their illegitimate children and allowing these children to inherit the father's estate, a matter that the Costa Rican Legislative Assembly addressed when it approved the Law of Responsible Paternity (Ley de Paternidad Responsable) on April 27, 2001 (Schumacher, "Olimpia").<sup>104</sup> While Berrón focuses on the legal struggle for women's rights in her play, she does not overlook the need for this legislation to impact women's personal lives. The play's ending, in which the protagonist is executed, suggests that the struggle for equal rights has not ended in France, nor in other parts of the world, reflecting Berrón's opinion about these legislative proposals: "Ahora bien, ¿acaso podemos decir que el ideal de colaboración y de equidad entre mujeres y

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<sup>104</sup> The text of the Law of Responsible Paternity is available on the Internet at: [http://www.nacion.com/ln\\_ee/ESPECIALES/leyes/proyectos/paternidad.html](http://www.nacion.com/ln_ee/ESPECIALES/leyes/proyectos/paternidad.html).

hombres, en el manejo de la cosa pública y la privada, o la no violencia contra las mujeres, aún en Occidente y en los países con cierto nivel de desarrollo, se ha logrado?” (Schumacher, “Olimpia”). Berrón’s message is therefore valid beyond Costa Rica’s borders, and her play was translated into French in 2001 to facilitate its circulation abroad. Berrón explains that she wants her audience to learn about Olympe de Gouges, whose pioneering efforts had remained obscure until recently, even in France, where, in 1998, the government placed a commemorative plaque on the house where she was born (Schumacher, “Olimpia”).

Basing the drama upon bibliography and documents compiled by Benoîte Groult, Berrón seeks to revindicate de Gouges, offering a perspective that differs from these prior historical and psychological interpretations of the historical figure, which viewed her as a “‘mujer mundana, prostituida famosa’ . . . una histérica con ‘paranoia reformadora’” (Berrón, *Olimpia* 5-6). The play, divided into four acts, follows de Gouges’s life chronologically (1748-93), beginning with her birth in Montauban as the illegitimate daughter of Anne, a laundress, and Jean-Jacques Le Franc, the Marquis of Pompignan. In the play, Berrón focuses in particular upon Olimpia’s relationships with men and her interactions with women from different social classes in order to help the audience understand the character’s entrance into the political sphere. When she is fifteen years-old, her stepfather Pierre Gouzes, a butcher, arranges her marriage to pay a debt owed to Louis Aubry, a middle-class merchant who is much older than Olimpia. Widowed at age thirty, she refuses to remarry and moves to Paris, where she obtains an education. She participates in literary circles, frequents intellectual gatherings at salons, and writes plays that are eventually performed at the Comédie Française. Although she

had addressed political and social issues in her dramaturgy, when she attempts to join political clubs she is told that women cannot join these organizations. To protest the exclusion of women from politics, she composes the “Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Citizen.” As she participates in the revolution, she comes into contact with women activists from lower social classes, including Claire Lacombe and Pauline Léon, who hold different opinions about how to fight for their rights. Eventually, Olimpia is arrested and imprisoned for hanging posters expressing her political views in public places throughout Paris, and the play ends with her execution at the guillotine.

Berrón’s treatment of the character Olimpia parallels historical research starting from 1992 that has reevaluated Olympe de Gouges’s role in the French Revolution and the fight for women’s rights.<sup>105</sup> As Gabrielle Verdier explains, de Gouges selected her own name, changing it from Marie Gouzes, her birth name (192-93). By signing her plays with a name belonging neither to her father nor her husband, she challenged the social norms of her time, entering into the public sphere, where she became the only woman to be executed during the revolution for subversive writings (Verdier 192-93). Joan Wallach Scott draws attention to the significance of Gouzes’s decision to call herself Olympe de Gouges, too, noting that it “made a mockery of the rules of

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<sup>105</sup> Catherine R. Montfort and J.J. Allison, Janie Vanpée, and Gabrielle Verdier, in chapters in the book Literate Women and the French Revolution of 1789 (1994); Joan Wallach Scott, in a chapter in the book Rebel Daughters: Women and the French Revolution (1992); and Shirley Elson Roessler, in the monograph Out of the Shadows: Women and Politics in the French Revolution, 1789-95 (1996), have published studies about Olympe de Gouges.

patrilineal origin and naming” (107-108). Berrón includes this naming process in her play. After Marie Gouzes arrives in Paris, she tells her friend, Jacques Biètrix:

*(Frente al espejo, como hablando seriamente consigo misma).* He llegado a París como quien llega a un escenario vacío. ¡Todo está por escribirse! *(Se quita el sombrero y el pelo cae sobre la espalda).* Se acabó Marie Gouzes. Se terminó la Viuda de Aubry. Ahora empiezo yo. Me inventaré un nuevo nombre. *(Breve pausa).* ¡Olimpia! El segundo nombre de mi madre, el que suena a cielo, a la grandeza que ella nunca pudo alcanzar. *(Se vuelve hacia Jacques y le tiende los brazos).* Jacques, este es mi nuevo nombre. Así quiero que me presentes en París: Olimpia de Gouges. (42-43)

The stage directions specify visual imagery that communicates Olimpia’s assertion of her independent identity. First, she looks in the mirror and addresses herself, indicating that her decision came after a period of inner reflection. Then she removes her hat, allowing her long hair to fall over her back. This motion, freeing her hair from the confines of the hat typically worn when out in public, stresses her transgression of social norms. As she speaks, Olimpia directly rejects her stepfather and husband’s surnames. However, she does select her mother’s second name, Olimpia, requesting that her friend introduce her in public as Olimpia de Gouges. When she compares her arrival in Paris to entering onto an empty theatrical stage and notes that the play script has not yet been written, not only is she alluding to her aspirations to become a playwright and writer, but she also emphasizes that she is constructing her identity. In other words, she can actively shape her destiny instead of following a script written by someone else or rules formulated by society. This notion of Olimpia writing her life

reappears at the end of the play, when she reflects on her life to a childhood friend: “Tengo 45 años, Thérèse. Y no cambiaría ni una sola coma de las que puse en la historia de mi vida” (115). By saying that she would not change a single comma that she placed in her life’s story, Olimpia reaffirms her subjectivity. This metaphor in the play comparing the construction of identity to writing conveys an observation similar to Scott’s that Olympe de Gouges “was always involved in a process of self-construction” (108).

Berrón also incorporates into her play the theme of solidarity, which research in the 1990s has identified as a recurrent subject in Olympe de Gouges’s writings. Janie Vanpée notes: “As de Gouges’s texts addressed to women repeatedly bemoan, French women, far from identifying as a group, have no consciousness of the commonality of their needs, demands and identity; on the contrary, their jealousies and their incessant petty criticisms of one another fracture their solidarity” (66). In the play, Berrón repeatedly shows that French women have failed to unite across social classes to fight for their rights. However, in one particular scene, she communicates visually how solidarity could transform the political system. The audience sees on the stage a labyrinth of pathways leading to a series of ramps and platforms of varying heights. Olimpia, carrying a packet of envelopes that contain legislative proposals, enters into the labyrinth and approaches the first platform, which is labeled “Journal de París.” The newspaper’s editor scoffs at her proposal of luxury taxes to fund programs for children, the elderly, widows, and the unemployed. She encounters similar rejection at the second platform, the Court of Justice, where she delivers to the magistrate a request that

all defendants face a jury of their peers at trial and that paternity laws enable illegitimate children to inherit their father's estate.

At the next platform, Olimpia encounters Madame Roland, who was a political advisor and activist during the revolution. After Madame Roland reads Olimpia's documents, she tells Olimpia:

Para que una mujer pueda entrar y permanecer, que es lo más difícil, en ese resbaloso terreno de la política, donde está rodeada de hombres por todas partes, tiene que ser muy cuidadosa en el trato con ellos. Hay que tranquilizarlos, no constituir una amenaza. Por eso yo siempre les digo: "Las mujeres sólo queremos mandar en nombre del amor y sólo queremos un trono: vuestros corazones." (*Pausa*). ¿No quiere sentarse un rato conmigo y tomar el té? (84)

Although Madame Roland is in favor of women participating in politics, she advises Olimpia not to adopt such an aggressive stance if she wishes to exist in the political world dominated by men. She encourages Olimpia to follow societal norms and only express a desire to rule a man's heart, to aspire to a relationship with him. She invites Olimpia to tea, but does not suggest presenting the documents to parliament. In the play, Madame Roland's approach to politics is not radical, which is perhaps due to how this historical figure became involved in politics. Shirley Elson Roessler notes that "it was in 1792 that Madame Roland began her remarkable political career after her husband became Minister of the Interior in the first 'patriot' or Girondin ministry which was created in March" (62). Madame Roland's attitude could be considered representative of middle or upper-class women who were married to politicians and discussed political issues with men in a non-confrontational manner.

After Olimpia goes to the fourth platform, the Parliament of Paris, where the secretary rejects her bills and complains about them to Count Mirabeau, she arrives at the fifth and final platform, which is labeled “Reina María Antonieta.” The stage directions specify that the queen look like the famous portrait of her on a swing done by Watteau. Olimpia is unable to approach Marie Antoinette directly and must hand her documents to a lady-in-waiting, who then passes them to a series of servants and courtesans. Although Olimpia is persistent in her efforts to contact the queen, Marie Antoinette is bored by Olimpia’s requests to feed the hungry and responds with her infamous statement, “let them eat cake” (87). Berrón’s portrayal of Marie Antoinette is similar to the ideal that Elisabeth Roudinesco claims that the queen represented to the French aristocracy: “Marie-Antoinette is the quintessence of the nobility’s conception of femininity, sometimes vested in all of its caste privileges and sometimes stripped of every mark of its former glory” (18). In the play, a large distance is staged between the queen and the lower social classes, and the queen is unaware of the difficulties that they confront.

After witnessing the queen’s indifference, Olimpia enters the labyrinth again, hanging posters everywhere. Her male friends from the literary salons, who are also members of political clubs, join her, voicing support for a constitutional monarchy. Women from the lower classes and workers of both sexes also enter the labyrinth, declaring themselves to be the state. Once this crowd has assembled, they start to dismantle the labyrinth, and some of the people mock the characters from the different platforms by putting on their wigs and costumes. The end of this scene stresses the need for solidarity in the fight not only for women’s participation in politics, but also

for more just living conditions for all. The visual images convey what this solidarity can accomplish. Alone, Olimpia is unable to get the characters on the platforms, who represent different levels of power in Revolutionary France, to consider legal reforms. Although the characters occupy different positions in the hierarchy of power, symbolized by the platforms of varying heights, they all reject Olimpia and her proposals. The stage directions specify that the same actor interpret the roles of the newspaper editor, the magistrate, Madame Roland, the parliament's secretary, and Marie Antoinette. This suggests the complicity of the characters in maintaining the current structure of power. Although female characters are present in this structure, their portrayal by the same male actor and their reactions to Olimpia's requests reveal that they are not interested in transforming the political system, that they support the patriarchal structure of society, or, perhaps in Madame Roland's case, that they reject more aggressive tactics in the fight for reforms. In this scene with the labyrinth, Berrón communicates the division among French women during the revolution that Olympe de Gouges lamented in her writings and hypothesizes how solidarity can change the political status quo. After the men and women join Olimpia, together they take apart the hierarchical political system. By including in this crowd both men and women from a broad spectrum of social classes, many of whom had disagreed with Olimpia about how they should fight for their rights, the playwright suggests that the struggle for equality is not limited to one sex or to certain social sectors. She also shows that, while there may be disagreements over tactics, the people in the crowd share the common goal of transforming the concept of power.

Berrón repeatedly emphasizes the importance of solidarity among women in Olimpia. In an interview published in La Nación, Camila Schumacher quotes one of Olimpia's lines from the play, "¿Cuántas veces se ve a una mujer aplaudir las buenas acciones de otra?" and asks the playwright how she expects the audience to respond to the play.

Berrón answers:

La solidaridad o fraternidad entre mujeres me parece fundamental. . . .En la obra es ejemplar la unión que establece Olimpia con su amiga Teresa, así como con una mujer de otra época: Juana de Arco. Espero que las espectadoras puedan sentir algo similar hacia la gran mujer que fue Olimpia. (Schumacher, "Olimpia")

The playwright hopes that women will unite and recognize each other's achievements and those of women like Olympe de Gouges who fought for equal rights in the past. In her reply to the reporter's question, Berrón identifies two examples of this solidarity in the play: Olimpia's friendship with Thérèse and Olimpia's identification with Joan of Arc.

Berrón, in mentioning Olimpia's solidarity with these two characters, highlights key sections of the play that merit close comparison with bibliographical sources. As I have shown in my reading of other scenes from the play, Berrón, for the most part, presents information and creates characters based upon historical research. However, in the parts of the play dealing with Thérèse and Joan of Arc, the playwright does not follow historical sources. As Víctor Valdelomar has done in El ángel de la tormenta, Berrón departs from bibliographical sources in order to make the events in the play more closely parallel the contemporary Costa Rican context.

The audience and readers of Olimpia first encounter Thérèse de Mercourt when she and Olimpia are young girls who become friends in Montauban. Thirty years later, while Olimpia is at a market in Paris with her male friends, she sees a group of women from the marginalized social classes protesting in the street. Coincidentally, one of these women happens to be Thérèse. Thérèse stops when she notices Olimpia and calls her by the name Marie Gouzes. Olimpia does not immediately recognize her childhood friend, but when she does, it becomes apparent that their lives have taken different paths:

THERESE. ¡Qué elegante burguesa tenemos aquí! Se ve que te ha ido bien, ¡ah! Las vueltas que da la vida. ¡Y los trompicones! ¿No, Claire? (*Claire se ríe con Thérèse*).

OLIMPIA. (*Se acerca y mira a Thérèse fijamente a los ojos. La reconoce y grita con alegría*). ¡Thérèse, mi amiga Thérèse! (*Thérèse se sorprende ante esa reacción y se queda inmóvil cuando Olimpia se acerca y la abraza efusivamente*). ¡Te he recordado tantas veces, he querido buscarte! ¿Recuerdas que siempre siempre íbamos a ser amigas?

THERESE. (*Alejándose un poco, aunque menos fría.*) Ahora no hay tiempo para eso. El hambre no sabe de más alegría que comer. Vamos a sacarle el trigo a la fuerza a los malparidos especuladores. Ya no engordarán más con nuestra hambre. Sabemos dónde se esconde Morand. . . .Nos vamos. (66-67)

Since the stage directions specify that Thérèse has neglected her physical appearance, Olimpia's dress contrasts sharply with that of her friend. Thérèse notices the difference, remarking that Olimpia has ascended in social class and become part of the bourgeoisie.

Thérèse observes that she has not had the same fortune as Olimpia. After Olimpia recognizes her friend, she embraces her. While Thérèse rejects this gesture, she does lose some of the coldness in her tone of voice as she continues speaking to Olimpia. According to Thérèse, there is no time for happy reunions while people are starving and there is a way to remedy that by forcing speculators to release the grain that they had been hoarding. Berrón shows Olimpia's entrance into activism when the protagonist decides to accompany the women on their mission. However, afterwards she disagrees with their use of violence, which caused the death of Morand, who was administering the distribution of grain. Although Olimpia prefers to pressure the government through the legal system, Thérèse justifies her own point of view by explaining that her two daughters died of hunger.

The relationship between Olimpia and Thérèse could serve as a model for exploring how to bridge divisions across social classes in order to fight for political reforms. While Berrón highlights the importance of this friendship in the interview with Schumacher, Thérèse de Mercourt's name does not appear in historical studies of the women who participated in the French Revolution. For example, Shirley Elson Roessler reports that four women actively participated in the revolt to overthrow the monarchy: Reine Audu, Théroigne de Méricourt, Claire Lacombe, and Pauline Lèon (63). Elson Roessler also dedicates a considerable part of her book to the accomplishments of two women in particular, Olympe de Gouges and Théroigne de Méricourt, explaining that "the first wrote commentary on the Revolution and the second participated as a street activist" (63-64). Claire Lacombe and Pauline Lèon, whom other scholars of the French Revolution have studied, are characters in Olimpia.

However, at the beginning of the play, Berrón lists Thérèse de Mercourt with these other two women as characters who are women of the Revolution. If Lacombe and Lèon are historical characters based upon bibliographical materials, how can de Mercourt's role in the play be classified?

Thérèse de Mercourt's name is similar in spelling to that of Thèroigne de Mèricourt, which Elisabeth Roudinesco notes was a name created by the royalist press to refer to Anne-Joséph Terwagne (1762-1817).<sup>106</sup> Despite the similarity in these names, the character in Berrón's play is of different nationality and social class and was Olimpia's childhood friend. Terwagne was born in Belgian Luxembourg to a family of rich peasants (Roudinesco 18, 223). According to the play script, Thérèse de Mercourt was born in Montauban, France, and lived in economically precarious conditions in revolutionary Paris, where she could not even meet her family's basic needs for survival.

While Berrón departs in some respects from historical documents about Terwagne in the creation of Thérèse, she selects other details that suggest the character in the play is partially inspired by the historical figure. For example, both Thérèse and Terwagne are street activists. They also meet similar fates for their political engagement. According to Roudinesco, Terwagne escaped an attempted whipping by a crowd of people from the faubourg Saint-Antoine after "she had called upon the women to arm themselves with the pikes which the men had refused to bear" (101). However, she eventually was

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<sup>106</sup> Roudinesco relates that the name Thèroigne de Mèricourt was "formed from a transposition of her surname and from a corruption of *Marcourt* [village] . . . and one which Anne- Joséphe never acknowledged" (18). Marcourt is the name of the village where Terwagne was born.

whipped in a public square in May 1793 and went mad a year after the incident. She was committed to the La Salpêtrière insane asylum, and “she died there twenty years later, implacable and furious at all the outrages and the ingratitude which she had suffered” (Roudinesco 136). In the play, Thérèse is whipped by a crowd in a public square after she reads to the men and women assembled there Olimpia’s “Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Citizen.” Immediately afterwards, Thérèse collapses and is put into a strait jacket. The last time that the audience sees Thérèse is when Olimpia visits her in the La Salpêtrière asylum, but Thérèse does not speak nor otherwise acknowledge Olimpia’s presence. Although Terwagne and Thérèse are whipped for different reasons, and Thérèse appears to suffer a more complete mental breakdown than Terwagne, both women are punished for publicly expressing support for equal rights for both sexes.

Olympia’s visit with Thérèse at La Salpêtrière perhaps could be considered one of the play’s darkest moments. Witnessing her friend’s illness and facing threats to her own personal safety from different segments of Parisian society, Olimpia feels that she is alone in her political struggle. However, the playwright shows how Olimpia maintains some optimism in her outlook by establishing solidarity with Joan of Arc.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Other Costa Rican playwrights have featured Joan of Arc in their plays. The saint is the protagonist of Juan Fernando Cerdas’s *Juana de Arco* (1986). Additionally, Leda Cavallini’s play, *Ocho azucenas para nosotras mismas*, based upon an unpublished poem written by Cavallini, was performed in 1998 by the Pancha Carrasco collective and the theatrical group TEGE (Teatro de Género) under the direction of Isabel Saborío. Joan of Arc is one of the historical figures who narrates her life in the play. The other characters are: Pancha Carrasco and Angela Acuña Braun, Costa Ricans who fought to gain space for women in the public sphere; and Frida Kahlo, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Juana de Azurduy, Olympe de Gouges, the papess Joan, and Hypatia, women from Latin America and other parts of the world who challenged norms governing gender

Earlier in the play during a dream sequence, Olimpia sees a person with short, black hair who is wearing armor. The stage directions specify that either a Gregorian chant sung by women or Richard Einhor's composition Voices of Light, which was inspired by the French film The Passion of Joan of Arc (1928), be played in the background during this scene. Not recognizing that this person is the fifteenth-century Catholic saint nor even that she is a woman, Olimpia questions her:

OLIMPIA. ¿Quién eres? (*La figura no responde*). ¿Quién eres? ¿Un soldado?

JUANA. Soy una doncella. Soy Juana, la doncella de Orléans. (*Pausa*). Yo también creí que estaba sola.

*Se abrazan. Olimpia se baja de la tarima. Antes de desaparecer Juana se vuelve y grita. Suena como un eco.*

JUANA. Nada de lo que hice fue en vano. (94)

After identifying herself, Juana de Arco tells Olimpia that she also felt alone at times, but that she does not regret her actions nor feel that she struggled in vain to defend her beliefs. Olimpia embraces Juana de Arco and appears comforted by the saint's appearance. When Olimpia visits Thérèse at the asylum, the same music is played from when Juana de Arco appeared to Olimpia, and Olimpia repeats to Thérèse what Juana de Arco had said to her, with a key change: "Nada de lo que hicimos fue en vano" (115). The use of the first person plural conjugation, or the nosotros form, of the verb hacer could refer to Olimpia, Thérèse, and Joan of Arc's actions, expressing the sense of unity that Olimpia has found with the other women. This feeling remains with

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roles. For more information about Ocho azucenas para nosotras mismas, see Doriam Díaz, "Historias de mujeres."

Olimpia even at the end of the play as the executioner prepares to decapitate her. While Olimpia approaches the guillotine, the background music from Juana de Arco's prior conversation with Olimpia is played. Although Olimpia is alone when she is executed for her writings, the use of the music suggests that she views the solidarity that she achieved with women from the past and the present as an important achievement in her life.

Berrón departs from historical sources in portraying this relationship that Olimpia establishes with Thérèse and Juana de Arco in order to address important issues within the women's movement and feminism in Costa Rica during the 1990s. As Olimpia looks to Joan of Arc, a woman in France's past who defied social norms governing men and women's behavior, recent historical research with a feminist perspective in Costa Rica has called attention to Manuela Escalante, Pancha Carrasco, and Angela Acuña Braun, Costa Ricans who "claimed the right to be individuals even though their behavior failed to conform to the standards that custom considered suitable for a woman of their era" (Calvo Fajardo 5).<sup>108</sup> By disseminating information about these women, this research in Costa Rica has shed light on their participation in national history, which historical studies had previously neglected.<sup>109</sup> Escalante's prominence in high

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<sup>108</sup> See Yadira Calvo Fajardo for more information about Escalante, Carrasco, and Acuña Braun. Ana Isabel Gamboa Hernández and Sara Gurfinkiel Hermann have also researched Costa Rican women, including Acuña Braun, who have been declared "Distinguished Citizens of the Nation." Sonia de la Cruz Malavassi provides an overview of Yadira Calvo's biography of Acuña Braun, *Angela Acuña, forjadora de estellas* (1989). Pancha Carrasco is the protagonist of Leda Cavallini and Lupe Pérez's play *Pancha Carrasco reclama* (1988), which was staged by Teatro de la Colina in 1988. See the introduction by María Pérez Yglesias for an analysis of the play. Carrasco and Acuña Braun are characters in Cavallini's play *Ocho azucenas para nosotras mismas*, which was performed in 1998 (Doriam Díaz, "Historias de mujeres").

society gatherings in the early nineteenth-century, Carrasco's bearing of arms in the National Campaign of 1856-57 to defeat American invader William Walker, and Acuña Braun's campaign to extend the suffrage to women, which was eventually granted in the 1949 Constitution, could serve as inspiration for Costa Ricans who are currently fighting for equal rights for both sexes. Berrón's play advocates this identification with women from the past as a source of strength and encourages the audience and readers to learn more about pioneering feminists not only in France but in Costa Rica and other parts of the world.

A comparison of the character of Thérèse with the historical figure Anne-Joséph Terwagne suggests that Berrón loosely based the character upon Terwagne, but altered the character's nationality and social class. This enables the playwright to portray Olimpia and Thérèse as childhood friends who are native to the same village in southern France, thus establishing an intimate bond between the two women. Both women also have in common a move to Paris when they were adults. However, their belonging to different social classes threatens to divide them. As I pointed out earlier, Olimpia warmly greets her friend when she sees her for the first time in Paris. Thérèse's response is much chillier, and she points out that, while Olimpia has ascended to the bourgeoisie through marriage, she herself has witnessed her children die of starvation. Their social classes also inform their choice of tactics in fighting for their rights, which

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<sup>109</sup> Leda Cavallini, in a personal interview, describes the audience members' reaction to her and Lupe Pérez's play Pancha Carrasco reclama, noting that the audience was completely unaware of Carrasco's existence: "El público decía: Yo no sabía que esa mujer existía." In the play, the playwrights appear as characters discussing how they identify in the present with Carrasco, who lived in the nineteenth century.

can be seen in the following conversation between the women when they discuss what will happen after revoking the nobility's privileges:

THERESE. ¡Oh, sí, ahora todos los ciudadanos somos iguales ante la ley, ante los impuestos! ¡Todos tenemos los mismos derechos y deberes! Pero no todos tenemos la misma comida . . . moriremos democráticamente de hambre. Para qué tanta maldita Asamblea Constituyente, nadie nos defiende ahí. Ni un solo diputado salió de los barrios de París. ¡Claro, sólo los propietarios votan, sólo ellos son ciudadanos! ¿Y los que no tenemos nada, los obreros, los campesinos!

OLIMPIA. ¿Y las mujeres, Thérèse? Ninguna mujer es ciudadana. Ninguna votó ni llegará nunca a la Asamblea. La mitad de la población no cuenta en la política francesa. (90)

In Thérèse's opinion, laws do nothing to end hunger, and the Constituent Assembly does not represent the lower social classes. Olimpia, on the other hand, insists on the need for women, who make up half of the population, to achieve the right to vote and be elected to the Assembly. From Thérèse's comments one can infer that a double discrimination is operating within French politics, since she states that, under the current legal system, only property owners are considered citizens and can vote. Thérèse is denied the right to vote not only because she is a woman but also because she does not own land. Talk of reforming the legislative system seems too abstract to Thérèse because it would not remedy the unequal distribution of food.

Although it initially seems that Olimpia and Thérèse will be unable to overcome this separation caused by social class, they find a way to unite in order to fight for women's

rights. Neither woman completely abandons her particular perspective after they meet in Paris. Thérèse continues protesting in the streets and confronting those who exploit the poor with violence, if necessary. Olimpia maintains her drafting of legislative proposals and taking her arguments to the parliament. However, each woman approaches the position of the other. Olimpia joins Thérèse in the street protest demanding grain from Morand, and Thérèse reads Olimpia's "Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Citizen" to the people in the marginalized neighborhoods of Paris. In the end, the women share a similar fate when they are confined in an asylum or prison and lose their sanity or their life.<sup>110</sup> By portraying the relationship between the two women as one that bridges social classes and combines ways of combating inequalities, the playwright comments on the dynamics involving activism and theory in the Costa Rican women's movement. As Ilse Abshagen Leitinger points out, Costa Rican feminism contains both activist and theoretical dimensions:

Costa Rican feminists today are at the vanguard of feminism in Latin America and even worldwide, provided we assess this feminism according to the principle of investigación-acción as action-oriented, not as emphasizing abstract theorizing. Costa Rican feminists do theorize, of course, but they do so in order to understand and to propose solutions to real-life problems, as part of their effort to give women better access to equal opportunity in all realms. (xiv)

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<sup>110</sup> The play's director, Alfredo Catania, comments on how Berrón unites the women's two approaches in their struggle for equal rights:

Hay personajes muy interesantes como Olimpia y Thérèse, amigas de infancia que se van por diferentes caminos para luchar las dos contra la injusticia desde muy diferentes campos, una más intelectual, más beligerante la otra, pero sus caminos se unen al final y la lucha es la misma. (Madrigal)

Perhaps the audience and readers might think, echoing Thérèse's initial misgivings about Olimpia's "Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Citizen," of the Costa Rican Bill for Women's True Equality or the Law for the Promotion of Women's Social Equality as abstract theorizing, having little to do with transforming issues that affect women's daily lives. The play, however, shows that Olimpia and Thérèse do not lose sight of the concrete issues as they consider how to reconfigure political systems of power. Although these two women unite in the play, the other characters remain divided by different tactical approaches to the revolutionary movement. In fact, the crowd in the public square whips Thérèse as punishment for her support of Olimpia's "Declaration." Olimpia's execution and Thérèse's madness suggest that the struggle for equality and justice has not ended, that solidarity is lacking among the people participating in this struggle, thereby stressing the need for a combination of theory and activism in the women's movement in contemporary Costa Rica.

Berrón also has explored the role of theory in the women's movement in her work as the editor of Las mujeres y el poder (1997), a volume that presents currents of thought regarding women's participation in politics in Latin America. Olimpia, which was published a year after Las mujeres y el poder, serves as a companion piece to this book, expressing on the stage the ideas explored in the essays. In the book's introduction, "De la exclusión a la participación política de las mujeres," Costa Rican anthropologist and sociologist Montserrat Sagot provides an overview of feminist theories.<sup>111</sup> The authors of the other essays debate and analyze the themes of power,

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<sup>111</sup> Sagot cites the contributions to feminist studies by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Anne Phillips, Carole Pateman, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Margaret Fuller, Amelia Valcárcel,

democracy, citizenship, and women's participation in politics in Costa Rica, Central America, and Latin America.<sup>112</sup> Sagot examines feminist theories from the West that she feels are relevant to the content of these other essays, beginning with those developed during the French Revolution justifying equal rights for women on the grounds that both sexes possessed a universal, common humanity. Olimpia expresses this same idea in the play, when she reads the first article of her "Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Citizen" at the National Convention: "Artículo Primero: La mujer nace libre y permanece igual al hombre en derechos" (98).

Sagot then explains that, in the nineteenth century, there emerged a critique of this abstract universalism, which preferred to emphasize heterogeneity, diversity, and difference. She highlights in particular Charlotte Perkins Gilman's call in 1898 not just for a transformation in politics but also in other aspects of life, such as in the relationships between men and women in the home. In the twentieth century, those interested in fighting for women's rights debated whether to emphasize a universal humanity or to acknowledge that there are differences among all human beings, which do not make one human being less equal than another. Sagot points out that recent studies, such as the one by Virginia Vargas, instead of viewing this debate as dichotomous, visualize it as a process "que trata de superar la diferencia sexual por

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Rosemary Pringle, Michel Foucault, Nancy Hartsock, Virginia Vargas, Alejandra Massolo, and Zillah Eisenstein.

<sup>112</sup> According to Sagot, the book includes authors from various professional and national backgrounds: "En él se escuchan las voces de académicas, activistas, militantes feministas, ex-guerrilleras, mujeres de partidos políticos y funcionarias de instituciones estatales, tanto de Costa Rica como de otros países de Centro y Latinoamérica" (16).

medio de la búsqueda de una universalidad que nos reconozca, pero al mismo tiempo sin olvidar la importancia de la diferencia y la urgencia de particularizar la universalidad” (14). There is a need to understand what human beings have in common and also to be aware of differences in gender, age, social class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation.

Sagot notes that it is difficult to determine how to balance these needs in the fight to secure women’s access to political positions, yet she urges that the women’s movement not completely abandon the universalist position:

Sin embargo, el movimiento de mujeres no debería situarse en una posición de sólo reconocer las diferencias y contra el ideal de la universalidad, ya que este ideal es el que puede llevarnos más allá de nuestras diferencias inmediatas y específicas, lo cual es una necesidad fundamental para cualquier movimiento que aspire a una transformación social radical. (15)

This same idea is communicated by Berrón in Olimpia. Olimpia crafts her legislative proposals proclaiming the universal equality of all human beings. However, her relationship with Thérèse makes her aware of the differences in social class between her and her friend. While Olimpia finds a place for both the universalist and particular positions in her fight for women’s rights, others in the play are unable to do so. As Sagot’s essay indicates, the women’s movement in Costa Rica is currently grappling with the theoretical issues that the characters in Berrón’s play confront in Revolutionary France.

Berrón play and edition of essays explore ways in which feminist theories and experiences within the women’s movements from other cultures could benefit the fight

for women's rights in Costa Rica. In the age of globalization, as this type of interaction between cultures has accelerated, transnational, or what David Held calls third, networks have formed. These transnational contacts, of which the women's, peace, and environmental movements are examples, produce "cultural and intellectual networks of communication and discussion between groups in many nation-states," questioning the "impermeability of national culture and identity" (Held 371). However, this does not mean that the feminist theories that travel within these networks are relevant to all cultures. As Roland Robertson points out, "what seems to be emerging from that movement is an increasing recognition of the diversity of women's experiences and a recognition that the perspective of Western, more specifically American, women is by no means of universal applicability" (107). Robertson employs terms that are similar to those used by Montserrat Sagot, universal or universality and diversity or differences, in discussing the transnational nature of the women's movement. Both also emphasize the coexistence of the concepts of universality and diversity within these networks and groups operating in a particular culture.

Many ideas in the form of "global designs" have arrived in the Costa Rican "contact zone" before and after its independence, impacting women's legal rights positively as well as negatively. An interesting example is what happened after the adoption of Spanish and French laws in Costa Rica. Clotilde Obregón Quesada notes that the Spanish laws benefited women because they "clearly established women's dowry and inheritance, and their right to represent their husbands and to emancipate their children (i.e., to declare them legally of age)" (55). The adoption of French laws in the

nineteenth century by liberal politicians seeking “highly respected European ‘progress,’” however, had the opposite effect:

One consequence of the change was that women lost their status, above all in family law. Toward the end of the century, women could, for example, be accused of infidelity and punished by being sent to prison, whereas husbands could be unfaithful for a period of up to a year before a woman could sue.

(Obregón Quesada 55)

These examples of what happened after Costa Rica implemented Spanish and French laws call attention to the importance of a society’s need to consider the implications that could arise from adopting legislation that originated in other cultural contexts. By relativizing itself with other cultures, a society can determine if the proposal is appropriate or, if not, opt to reject or modify it. I believe that Berrón’s play is an exploration of the usefulness and limitations of a contemporary example of “global designs” in Costa Rica: the feminist theories from Western cultures that those involved in the fight for equal rights have read and debated. Berrón includes Olympe de Gouges’s theories in a play directed at Costa Rican audiences and readers, suggesting that the French historical figure’s ideas could be helpful to the women’s movements in Costa Rica. Berrón does not advocate rejecting theories solely because they originate from abroad. Her play suggests that theories have a place in any struggle for political rights. Since one current meaning of the word theory, which developed from an earlier meaning as “a scheme of ideas which explains practice,” is “always in active relation to *practice*: an interaction between things done, things observed and (systematic) explanation of these,” it enables one to consider something from a distance and in a

broader perspective.<sup>113</sup> Nevertheless, by creating the relationship between Olimpia and Thérèse, the playwright emphasizes the importance of relativizing these theories, adopting them if they seem relevant to the experiences they describe and modifying them to acknowledge differences in the local context.

As theories and ideologies circulate at an accelerated pace in the 1990s and the beginning of the twenty-first century, Linda Berrón and Víctor Valdelomar explore strategies for participating in and responding to forms of globalization at the same time that they address specific situations in Costa Rica. The ideas from abroad that have arrived in Costa Rica and that these playwrights examine include neoliberalism, U.S political policies, Marxism, and feminist theories from Western cultures, primarily France and the United States. Víctor Valdelomar, in El ángel de la tormenta, rejects militarization and denounces neoliberal economic policies, although he suggests that it will be difficult to completely resist them and instead advocates political neutrality and a regional peace process as strategies for Costa Rica to adopt during the Nicaraguan counterrevolution. Linda Berrón, in Olimpia, suggests that feminist theories from Revolutionary France can be helpful to the contemporary campaign to increase women's participation in Costa Rican politics, but also stresses that differences among women, primarily in social class, could threaten to divide the women's movement. However, if there is a connection between these theories and activism, they can help legitimate the struggle for equal rights, and women can find solidarity.

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<sup>113</sup> This definition is from Raymond Williams's Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society. See p. 267.

There are some interesting similarities between these two plays. Both question the role of gender in politics and are set outside of Costa Rica, in France. They feature characters who are imprisoned and tortured or executed, which also links them to the other examples of intercultural theatre among the Costa Rica New Wave plays set outside of Costa Rica mentioned earlier in this chapter. In El ángel de la tormenta, the papal legate orders Dicuil's torture and execution for heresy, Cármina's imprisonment for carrying the king's illegitimate child, and Irene's imprisonment for disobeying his orders. In Berrón's play, Olimpia is imprisoned and executed for her writings, and Thérèse is confined to an insane asylum after a crowd physically attacks her for supporting Olimpia's "Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Citizen." Juana, in Juan Fernando Cerdas's Juana de Arco, is burned in a marketplace after the Catholic Church convicts her of heresy. Mata Hari, accused of espionage, and La Marlene, a transvestite who dresses like Marlene Dietrich, in Jorge Arroyo's plays Sentencia para una aurora and Azul Marlene, speak from prison cells, and Mata Hari faces a firing squad. Io, in Io coronada de claveles by Leda Cavallini, calls herself "una diosa prisionera" and explains that the goddess Hera, the god Zeus's wife, has punished her and that Zeus makes her ceaselessly wander the earth (14). While these characters' similar fates could seem purely coincidental, each one of these characters is punished for defying forms of hegemonic power, which in many of these plays includes patriarchal authority. By including characters who are deprived of freedom for questioning social norms or the political status quo, the playwrights communicate a sense of urgency to their Costa Rica readers and audience. Although Costa Rica is known for its long-standing democratic tradition in politics, Martha Honey, in an

assessment of the impact of the Central American revolutions on Costa Rica at the end of the 1980s, notes:

By the end of the decade, Costa Rica had not become as violent as its neighbors, but it was also no longer immune to human-rights abuses and political terrorism. It had been drawn into both the war against Nicaragua and international drug trafficking. And, like the other “democracies” in Central America, Costa Rica had been taking the same medicine--U.S. economic and military aid--and while the country’s traditions of nonmilitarism, respect for human rights, and the rule of law provided some protection, it also suffered serious side effects. (337)

These plays set outside of Costa Rica allude to issues that the audience and readers can recognize as relevant to their own country and that it must confront in the 1990s and beyond.

A final and crucial similarity between El ángel de la tormenta and Olimpia is the playwrights’ treatment of the historical themes. I believe that the way in which Valdelomar and Berrón treat the foreign thematic material, not copying blindly from the bibliographical sources and instead modifying it to make it more relevant to the Costa Rican context, is analogous to how the characters in the plays propose forming transnational or regional networks to negotiate peace and the political rights for marginalized sectors excluded from power. These networks can be spaces for new theories to emerge or for clashing global theories to be adopted, modified, or adapted for a particular local context. The manner in which Valdelomar and Berrón present the crusade against Catharism and Olympe de Gouges’s biography is akin to what Mary Louise Pratt calls “autoethnographic expression,” which are “instances in which

colonized subjects undertake to represent themselves in ways that *engage with* the colonizer's own terms" and involve "partial collaboration with and appropriation of the idioms of the conqueror" (7). These two playwrights base their works upon research they have conducted on French history. Although they appropriate these histories to a certain extent, they also misappropriate them by departing from these bibliographical sources to accommodate more closely the foreign historical and geographical situations to the contemporary Costa Rican socio-political context and to question globalization influences.<sup>114</sup>

"Autoethnographic texts," Pratt notes, "are typically heterogeneous on the reception end as well, usually addressed both to metropolitan readers and to literate sectors of the speaker's own local group, and bound to be received very differently by both" (7).

Valdelomar and Berrón, in El ángel de la tormenta and Olimpia, responding to situations within Costa Rican culture, primarily address Costa Rican readers and audiences. This local reception of the texts, by those who have not researched or who are unfamiliar with the French source material, might not completely perceive how the playwrights appropriate the historical themes and transform them to explore recent

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<sup>114</sup> Sandra M. Cypess has examined how Mexican playwright Xavier Villaurrutia introduced Greek mythological allusions in plays that he wrote during the 1940s:

The surface level of his plays reveals contemporary Mexico, with references to current events for those who want to see their familiar world reflected in the play. But below the surface, Villaurrutia has incorporated the elements intended to associate his theater with the broader tradition he wished to see flourish in Mexico. ("The Function of Myth" 262)

There is a similarity between the link that Villaurrutia hoped to establish between Mexican and universal theatre and the connection between Costa Rica and the rest of the world that Valdelomar and Berrón make in their plays. However, El ángel de la tormenta and Olimpia, with their French settings, appear to be distant from Costa Rica on the surface, and references to Costa Rica form a subtext below the surface.

political and economic developments in Costa Rica. However, these audience members and readers would recognize the relationship of French history, as presented by the playwrights, to their own cultural context and be able to think about Costa Rican contributions to globalization in the form of the Central American Peace Plan and efforts within the women's movement to find solidarity across nationalities, social classes, and different historical periods. Audiences or readers outside of Costa Rica, particularly in France or the United States, possibly would respond differently to these plays, recognizing the misappropriation of their histories and cultures and missing the references to Costa Rican politics. However, within Costa Rica, the playwrights' appropriation and misappropriation of foreign thematic contents serve the purpose of bringing in an audience who will recognize the underlying Costa Rican subtexts. Although these plays have not been performed abroad, other Costa Rica plays or performances by Costa Rican theatrical companies have traveled recently to the United States and Latin American countries. The next chapter will explore how audiences from different cultures respond to a Costa Rican play that was staged in the United States.

## Chapter 4: Familiar or Foreign?: Costa Rican Feminist Theatre's Response to National Problems

Me parece que . . . el público al cual me dirijo es, primeramente, el costarricense, que es quien tiene acceso a las salas de espectáculo en mi país, y en segundo término, al público latinoamericano. Me pregunto si la problemática que presento podría interesar a algún otro tipo de espectador, de otras latitudes, donde puede tener manifestaciones y matices muy distintos.

(Ana Istarú)<sup>115</sup>

Ana Istarú, while answering a questionnaire to accompany the publication of her second play, Madre nuestra que estás en la tierra, in the anthology Dramaturgas latinoamericanas contemporáneas (1991), recognized that she addresses, primarily, a Costa Rican audience and also a Latin American audience.<sup>116</sup> Since her plays had not traveled in performance beyond Costa Rica's borders at that time, the playwright could only speculate if her theatre would appeal to an audience in a broader geographical context. On March 17, 2001, at the 4<sup>th</sup> International Festival of Hispanic Theatre at Teatro de la Luna, in Arlington, Virginia, Istarú, wearing an elegant bridal gown and

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<sup>115</sup> This is part of Ana Istarú's response to a question posed to her by Elba Andrade and Hilde F. Cramsie about who forms the audience for her plays. See p. 229 of Andrade and Cramsie; see pp. 69-70 for the entire questionnaire and pp. 225-30 for all of Istarú's responses.

<sup>116</sup> Madre nuestra que estás en la tierra was first published in the Costa Rican journal Escena in 1989. The play has also been published in the anthology Drama contemporáneo costarricense: 1980-2000 (2000). Istarú's other plays include: El vuelo de la grulla (1984); Baby boom en el paraíso, which was first published in 1995 in Spain by la Asociación de Directores de España and again by the journal Escena in 2000. Her most recent play, Hombres en escabeche, was published along with Baby boom en el paraíso by Editorial Costa Rica in 2001.

floral headpiece, walked on stage. As the actress in her most recent play, Hombres en escabeche (2000), she spoke the first line: "Estoy esperando a un hombre" (65).<sup>117</sup>

What follows is a two-act performance of a comedy which will break down gender stereotypes, question the binary division of gender roles in a patriarchal society, and demonstrate how artistic creativity can break the bonds of established conventions. How will these messages reach the diverse audience in the United States? Certainly, the Costa Ricans comprising the majority of the audience will recognize the play's use of local language and references to local politics. But how do these messages reach the audience members from other parts of the Spanish-speaking world, the Americans who are relying on simultaneous English translation via headphones of Men in Marinade, and, in particular, this United States-based scholar of Latin American theatre?

Performing a play outside of its original cultural context is nothing new. What has changed is the recent shift in theoretical focus to its impact on the target culture's audience. Patrice Pavis has observed that "every intercultural project obeys the constraints and the needs tied specifically to the target culture" (16). Erika Fischer-Lichte has concluded that stepping outside the familiar in the theatre can have aesthetic/theatrical and/or socio-cultural goals for the target culture. At times, the target culture's needs and constraints can be of such importance that they result in the translation, adaptation, or transformation of the source culture on the stage.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> This and all subsequent quotations will be from the Editorial Costa Rica edition of Baby boom en el paraíso; Hombres en escabeche: Teatro.

<sup>118</sup> Fischer-Lichte provides an overview of historical and more recent intercultural practices in theatre in the chapter "Theatre Own and Foreign: The Intercultural Trend in Contemporary Theatre," pp. 11-19, in the collection of essays The Dramatic Touch of Difference: Theatre: Own and Foreign, edited by Fischer-Lichte.

However, a close comparison between the play script written in Spanish and the festival performance of Hombres en escabeche reveals very few changes to the play. The play was performed three times at the festival in Arlington, twice in October 2000 at the Festival de Oriente, in Barcelona, Venezuela, and once in Maturín, Venezuela, in all instances receiving a standing ovation. It also was invited to the 2001 Festival de los Temporales Teatrales, in Puerto Montt, Chile (Murillo Castro). The enthusiastic audience response abroad and the play's commercial success and favorable media reviews in San José, Costa Rica, since its August 2000 debut in a local theatre environment characterized by critic Andrés Sáenz as "descerebrado" and "comatoso," clearly indicate that "esta comedia es cosa seria."<sup>119</sup>

If audiences at the festivals were presented with the same script of Hombres en escabeche as it was performed in San José, Costa Rica, what aspects of the play did or did not transcend boundaries and become meaningful to them? In order to explore this process of cross-cultural communication, it is necessary first to examine the evolution of the play script and the local context of its performance in Costa Rica. Then it will be possible to evaluate the festival performance at Teatro de la Luna. Although the director did not adapt or transform the script for the festival audience, Teatro de la Luna did translate it into English. A comparison of the Spanish and English scripts will

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<sup>119</sup> The phrase esta comedia es cosa seria alludes to La comedia es cosa seria, a compilation of reviews written between 1979 and 1981 by Andrés Sáenz, the theatre critic of the Costa Rican newspaper La Nación. Sáenz used the same phrase in his review of Hombres en escabeche in San José: "Salvo en una o dos escenas de cariz dramático, los espectadores que llenamos la pequeña sala no paramos de reír durante la función. Sin embargo, no era la risa vacía de la bobada o el disparate sino la que induce el humor agudo, pertinente y refinado. ¡La comedia sigue siendo cosa seria!" ("Crítica de teatro: ¿Para qué el ombligo?"). Sáenz also published ¡Dispárenle al crítico!, a compilation of reviews that he wrote between 1984 and 1991.

reveal different types of reception, or readings, of the play. The English-speaking audience did not receive in translation all of the humor and allusions to Costa Rican politics. Nevertheless, this audience does manage to connect with the play because it contains elements that guide different levels of understanding it. While situating the play in a local context to address Costa Ricans, Istarú incorporates Western universal archetypes that Latin American and American audiences can identify and also employs images and metaphors that I, and other Latin American theatre scholars, can associate with Flores de papel (1968), a play written by Chilean Egon Wolff, which forms part of the canonical reading in American university classes, and Cocinar hombres (1986), a play by Mexican Carmen Boullosa.<sup>120</sup> The result is a text rich in multiple levels of meaning for Costa Ricans, Latin Americans, Americans, and scholars of Latin American theatre in the American academy.

Costa Ricans recognize Ana Istarú as a poet as well as an accomplished actress and playwright in the local theatre scene. The Bell and Fumero anthology notes that Istarú's first three plays have been staged in Costa Rica under the auspices of the Costa Rican Compañía Nacional de Teatro (315). El vuelo de la grulla premiered in 1984 in the Sala Vargas Calvo under the direction of Jaime Hernández and was later performed by the CNT, with Remberto Chávez directing. The CNT and director Lucho Barahona premiered Madre nuestra que estás en la tierra in 1988. Istarú performed Baby boom en

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<sup>120</sup> Frank Dauster, Leon Lyday, and George Woodyard included Flores de papel in the anthology 9 dramaturgos hispanoamericanos (1979), making it more easily accessible to university courses in the United States. Latin American Theatre Review, founded in 1967 and edited by George Woodyard, and Gestos, founded in 1986 and edited by Juan Villegas, are journals that circulate Latin American theatre research in the United States and have published different critical readings of Flores de papel and Cocinar hombres. See Gann, Lyday, Peden, Taylor, and Wehling.

el paraíso, a monologue, in 1996 with Xinia Sánchez's direction in the Sala Vargas Calvo.

Istarú's acting and plays have come to the attention of Costa Rican theatre critics. She received the 1980 National Prize for Debuting Actress in Fernando de Rojas's La Celestina and the 1996 National Prize for Best Lead Actress in her play Baby boom en el paraíso.<sup>121</sup> Although Istarú's dramaturgy initially won awards in Spain, where Baby boom en el paraíso won the 1995 María Teresa León Prize for female playwrights, awarded by the Asociación de Directores de Escena, and Hombres en escabeche earned the 1999 Hermanos Machado Theater Prize from the Ayuntamiento de Sevilla, it soon achieved critical success in Costa Rica, where Istarú was the recipient of the 1999-2000 Ancora Prize in theatre. The decisive factors for granting that award included: the performance of Madre nuestra que estás en la tierra in 1996 by the Instituto de Bellas Artes de Chihuahua, Mexico, and the play's publication in two anthologies; Istarú's acting as a protagonist in Baby boom en el paraíso and Hombres en escabeche; and the fact that her two most recent plays are "los más significativos aportes a la dramaturgia costarricense de fin de siglo" (Sáenz, "Premios Ancora 1999-2000").

Costa Rican scholars of theatre have analyzed how Istarú's first three plays offer feminist perspectives regarding contemporary Costa Rican society. Margarita Rojas and Flora Ovaes include El vuelo de la grulla and Madre nuestra que estás en la tierra in their history of Costa Rican literature and present further analysis of the second play in the Bell and Fumero anthology, noting that Istarú's theatre and poetry deal with "el

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<sup>121</sup> See Rogers, p. 96, for news of the first acting award. Istarú, Baby boom en el paraíso; Hombres en escabeche: Teatro, lists the second award on p. 9.

asunto de la identidad y la situación de la mujer” (“Geneología de mujeres” 307).<sup>122</sup>

Marco Guillén, in his doctoral dissertation and in an article published in Escena, examines how, in Baby boom en el paraíso, the playwright uses postmodern practices, such as the monologue, in order to criticize “la complicidad de todos en la formación de la percepción cultural y, en este caso en particular, de la percepción de la experiencia de la mujer” (“Juegos posmodernos” 90). Making reference to Istarú’s first three plays, academic publications in Costa Rica have studied how her theatre treats the husband/wife, mother-in-law/daughter-in-law, and mother/daughter relationship.

Istarú’s inspiration for writing Hombres en escabeche comes from beyond Costa Rica’s borders. Speaking with La Nación reporter Manuel Murillo Castro, she describes the influence of an Italian play:

La idea de escribir esta obra empezó a gestarse después de que leí Dejemos el sexo en paz, una pieza de Franca Rame, esposa del Premio Nobel italiano Darío Fo, la cual es un monólogo sobre la vulgarización del sexo, muy ceñido a lo científico. . . .Mi propósito, por el contrario, fue construir un texto vital, dominado por la emoción, contando cómo una niña va formando su concepción del sexo a través de los mensajes que la sociedad le da. . . .

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<sup>122</sup> Rojas and Ovarés state that Istarú’s poetry collections transitan principalmente por la política, el mundo femenino y el erotismo. Su lírica se interesa por aspectos relacionados con la infancia y la figura de la madre; destaca también la importancia del ámbito doméstico, en poemas en los que lo femenino adquiere nuevas significaciones. Lo mismo ocurre con asuntos como la gravidez y el parto, que se integran al ámbito de la representación literaria. (“Geneología de mujeres” 308)

Istarú’s poetry appears in anthologies published in Costa Rica; see Monge, and Mora and Ovarés. See Hernández, “Poetas,” for a critical reading of Istarú’s poetry.

Although reading the text created by Franca Rame, Dario Fo, and their son, Jacopo Fo, motivated Istarú to write a play about the same subject matter, sex, Hombres en escabeche contains more differences than similarities to Dejemos el sexo en paz. This is understandable, considering that Istarú has stated clearly her intention to address a Costa Rican and Latin American audience. Juan Villegas, in urging the use of a different model for writing theatre history and literary criticism in the Spanish-speaking world, has highlighted the importance of assuming “la especificidad del objeto-en este caso ‘teatro’ o ‘texto teatral’ . . . Esta posición implica . . . aceptar la importancia del destinatario y las variedades del mismo como elemento integral del texto y factor condicionante de los estudios sobre el mismo” (13). This emphasis on the audience is also a concern of those who theorize about intercultural projects in the theatre (Fischer-Lichte, The Dramatic Touch; Pavis 16).

When Istarú writes a play about sex, the Costa Rican audience whom she addresses is different from the Italian audience of Franca Rame. Marga Cottino-Jones provides detailed information about the local context of Rame’s theatre, describing Sesso? Grazie, tanto per gradire! (1996) as

a much more autobiographical piece than most of the works we have analyzed in this essay. It was inspired by Jacopo Fo’s book Lo Zen e l’arte di scopare and was intended for an audience of school children in an attempt to dispel some of the tabus (sic) and ignorance that still surround sex today especially among the young generation of Italians. Unfortunately also this piece shocked the Italian government representatives and provoked their censorship, proving again how provocatively dangerous Rame’s voice is held by the official representatives of

the system in power, even at the time when we are approaching the beginning of a new millenium (sic). (40)

The government is not alone in its opposition to Rame and Fo's plays. Cottino-Jones informs us that the middle class also has opposed the couple because of the critical nature of their theatre (10). Their "innovative experimental performances," taking place "not only on the traditional stages of the most reputable theaters in Italy and abroad, but also in the marginal improved performing spaces of *Camere del Lavoro*, factories, public parks, city squares, and village fairgrounds," have "thrilled as well as shocked" a broad spectrum of social classes (Cottino-Jones 8).

Although Sesso? Grazie, tanto per gradire! criticizes the sexual education that young people receive in Italy, it has resonated with non-Italian audiences during successful travels around the world. The published script mentions that there have been more than 300 performances (Fo, Sex? 67). Rame's performing style, however, is open to adapting the monologue to the audience's local context. Ron Jenkins, who has worked on stage with Rame, translating the play into English and who has published an English translation of it, Sex? Thanks, Don't Mind if I Do! (1999), explains that:

Unlike some performers who work in similar situations by trying to pretend that the translator does not exist, Rame incorporates my presence on stage as part of her performance. Drawing on her family's experience of changing their texts to fit the specific circumstances of each stage venue, Franca plays theatrically with the fact that someone is standing beside her. (59)

As part of a family of traveling players, Rame grew accustomed to making changes in the midst of a performance. She acknowledges the role of translation on the stage,

making the translator the target of jokes and asking for the audience's patience that those who understand Italian might laugh at different times than those who are listening to the translator (Jenkins 59). Not only does Rame make spontaneous adjustments for the audience but the play script itself also allows for adaptation to local circumstances. For example, it indicates when it might be helpful to substitute references to specific places: "For us Westerners it's difficult to separate ourselves from our mundane problems, except for people from Naples (insert here Brooklyn, Cuba, South Beach or an appropriate local reference), who demonstrate through the way they talk that they understand everything" (Fo, Sex? 105).

Written with primarily a Costa Rican audience in mind, the script for Hombres en escabeche does not suggest substituting local references for different audiences, nor did the 4<sup>th</sup> International Festival of Hispanic Theatre performance openly address the mediation of the translators, who did not appear on stage and instead provided simultaneous interpretation via headphones. There were a few small changes in Spanish as well as in English, such as replacing the reference to the OIJ, the Costa Rican Organismo de Investigación Judicial, with an American equivalent, the FBI, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, which Americans and Latin Americans residing in the United States would recognize more easily.<sup>123</sup> However, overall, the performance followed the published play script very closely.<sup>124</sup> The playwright's use of archetypes,

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<sup>123</sup> See p. 66 of Istarú, Baby boom en el paraíso; Hombres en escabeche: Teatro, for the initial reference to the OIJ. I noticed the reference to the FBI during the performance of Hombres en escabeche at Teatro de la Luna on March 17, 2001.

<sup>124</sup> Istarú provided me with an unpublished manuscript of Hombres en escabeche while Teatro Surco was rehearsing for the play's premiere in 2000. She explained that the director suggested dividing the one-act play into two acts to allow for an intermission

images and metaphors in the script helps the diverse audiences to understand the play's themes and reduces the need for transformations or adaptations in performances abroad.

Before examining how Hombres en escabeche can reach foreign audiences, comparing the play to Sesso? Grazie, tanto per gradire! will enable us to envision how Istarú treats the theme of sex in a Costa Rican context. It is difficult to work with the script of the Italian play because there is no definitive script. Fo and Rame's "scripts have a wide margin of openness that allows for improvisation even on an open stage, as dictated by the audience's reactions and by the actors' perceptions of them" (Cottino-Jones 9). This study considers the published English translation of the play and a description of performances posted on the internet by Ed Emery. Additionally, a search for the Spanish translation of the play, identified by Istarú as Dejemos el sexo en paz, locates a translation done in Spain by Carla Matteini, with the title Tengamos el sexo en paz.<sup>125</sup> These versions will give a basic idea of the play's content in order to understand that, while Istarú's play is similar in some respects, for the most part it is quite different.

Hombres en escabeche confronts socially transmitted beliefs about gender in Costa Rica, a country "where even a mild expression of opinion, disagreement, or opposition . . . carries more weight than the same expression would in another culture" (Abshagen Leitinger xii). The tendency instead is for Costa Ricans to avoid confrontation, "to get along *sin hacer olas* (without making waves)" (Abshagen

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and shortening some of the dialogue at the end of the play. The play script published in 2001 by Editorial Costa Rica incorporates the director's suggestions, and the performance at Teatro de la Luna followed it very closely.

<sup>125</sup> Lucho Barahona directed the play Dejemos el sexo en paz at Teatro del Angel in San José, Costa Rica. Andrés Saénz briefly mentions it in a review, calling it "más terapias" for a local theatre scene suffering from a "convalecencia estética" ("1999"). No additional information about the staging was available.

Leitinger xii).<sup>126</sup> This cultural tendency has spread to the theatre scene in San José, where, as Carolyn Bell has noted, in the last fifteen or twenty years purely commercial performances, involving slapstick humor that do not challenge the audience to think, predominate. Bell, however, points out that the picture is not entirely bleak. In this same time frame a Costa Rican New Wave Theatre has emerged, which “engages audiences in social realities instead of escapism and fantasies by addressing a myriad of socio-political and economic issues and conditions evident in Costa Rica and the world today” (“Special Report” 876). Ana Istarú is part of this New Wave Theatre which is not afraid to address volatile national issues. Hombres en escabeche's commercial success is unusual, given the local theatre environment. The New Wave Theatre, for the most part, exists as an alternative, which appeals to a small audience (Bell, “Special Report” 879).

In the hopes of seeing her theatre performed and attracting a larger audience, Istarú wrote her two most recent plays as comedies. She explains her decision in an interview with Camila Schumacher for La Nación:

El humor, de alguna manera es casi el impuesto para mí. No puedo optar, por el momento, por otra cosa, si mi objetivo es vivir y trabajar el teatro en una sociedad tan pequeña como la nuestra en la que los teatros independientes se mantienen a base de comedias; tengo que alcanzar el difícil equilibrio de hacer una obra de pretensión artística con una posición ideológica pero que, también, tenga éxito comercial. (“Hambre de hombres”)

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<sup>126</sup> Biesanz, Biesanz, and Biesanz explain that “in their relations with others, Ticos want above all to *quedar bien* . . . to get along and make a good impression in an encounter, to appear amiable” (8).

Rather than fight against the commercial theatre in San José, she has opted to “invadirlo con textos en los que la gente pueda identificarse y reflexionar sin dejar de llenar las salas” (Schumacher, “Hambre de hombres”). Humor, in fact, can be a powerful weapon of social and cultural critique. As Istarú commented to me in a personal interview: “A través de la risa . . . la gente está dispuesta a aceptar este tipo de posición crítica .” Laughter can cross the gap separating the audience members from the stage, making it easier for them to accept different points of view and to relate these ideas to their own lives.

The use of humor, perhaps, is the most obvious similarity between Hombres en escabeche and Sesso? Grazie, tanto per gradire!. Cottino-Jones notes that it is an important element in Fo and Rame’s theatre:

The *spettacoli* that they produce address the audience with a transgressive and defiant discourse aimed at denouncing, mostly through comedy and laughter, social injustice, political corruption, religious and social hypocrisy and private and institutional intolerance. Indeed Fo himself has stated several times that farce and comedy are the ideal tools for political denunciation. (9)

In Istarú’s play, comedy, as a vehicle for presenting different ideologies, has the same function as Fo and Rame’s play: “to amuse as well as to provoke its audience” (Cottino-Jones 9).

Looking at the section titles of Sesso? Grazie, tanto per gradire!, we find many themes that Hombres en escabeche also addresses. The English translation of the Italian play is divided into the following segments: “Adam and Eve, the First Sexual Encounter on Earth”; “Sex, The Unknown Territory”; “My Mother”; “The Male Sex Organ”;

“Menstruation. . . What a Horrible Word!!”; “Virginity”; “The First Sexual Encounter”; “Temporary Impotence”; “Absolute Impotency”; “True Stories of My Son: Men Suffer Too”; “The Clitoris ”; “The Female Sex Organ”; “Male Erogenous Zones: The Male Sex Organ”; “The Song”; and “The Rape.” Istarú’s play, which is not divided into sections bearing titles, deals with some of the same topics, but in a different manner.

Rame relies more upon the monologue, during which she stands behind a lectern and directly addresses the audience. Emery quotes a 1994 review from the newspaper L’Unità which discusses Rame’s techniques for staging the play. According to this reviewer, the monologue, a “no frills’ argument, which is backed up with some scientific information, risks turning into an anatomy lesson.” However, Rame moves away from the lectern at three moments to present “a Boccaccioesque sketch . . . and a Provençal medieval fable which also provide the edifying ‘moral’ of the whole show” (Emery). The third moment is a “re-enactment of a (perhaps) imaginary American ‘course’ for women in learning how to have an orgasm,” which the reviewer classifies as “pure parody.”

While many parts of Rame’s performance are autobiographical, including anecdotes about herself, her husband and her son, Istarú’s play is not autobiographical, but rather features one actress and one actor. The actress plays the role of the bride, whom we discover is named Alicia, as an adult and when she is a younger girl. At times the actress addresses the audience via monologue. However, she mostly interacts with the actor, who plays seven different roles of the men in Alicia’s life: The Father, her brother Andrés, The First Boyfriend, The Philosopher, The Yuppie, The Musician, and A

Stranger. The use of the definite article the in the play script and in the theater program encourages us to recognize these characters as archetypal figures whom we would encounter in Costa Rica, or, beyond geographical borders, in a Western culture.<sup>127</sup>

In both plays, it appears that the playwrights want the audience to identify with certain situations. This is why Rame and Fo incorporate intertextual references to Giovanni Boccaccio's Decameron, with "a reformulation in more mythic terms of the famous Alibech and Rustico story from the Third Day," and also to a "reformulation . . . of a Provençal fabliaux, disguised linguistically under a rougher Northern Dialect rendition" (Cottino-Jones 42). In these scenes, Italians and other audience members familiar with medieval European literature, can remember Boccaccio, the first writer "in Italian literature to openly view sex as a natural human need to be satisfied without moralistic prohibitions or condemnations" (Cottino-Jones 41). In order to present her audience with familiar situations, Istarú chooses to use archetypal characters, such as The Philosopher, The Yuppie, and The Musician. Regarding this decision, Istarú states in an interview: "La idea es generar la mayor cantidad de identificación posible. Que te identifiqués a través de una risa y también alguna dosis de dolor" (Díaz, "Humor"). This encourages the audience, composed of different age groups, to recognize experiences they might have had in relationships like the ones between Alicia and the different men.

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<sup>127</sup> The theater program, written in Spanish and distributed to the audience at the Teatro de la Luna festival, appears to be the same one used for performances in San José, Costa Rica, because it includes the logo that Teatro de la Esquina displays in newspaper advertisements for its local productions. Teatro de la Luna also provided an English translation of the program to the audience.

Both plays also contain monologues addressing the audience to break the theatrical illusion created by the other scenes and encourage the audience to think about their social realities. The stage directions in Hombres en escabeche create even more distance between illusion and reality at the beginning by indicating that Alicia enter the stage from where the audience sits and at the end by indicating that A Stranger also enter and exit the stage from where the audience sits (65; 156). Additionally, the performance at the 4<sup>th</sup> International Festival of Hispanic Theatre ended with the final dialogue between Alicia and A Stranger taking place off stage, on a level closer to the audience. All of the theater's lights were turned on, including the ones where the audience was sitting, as if the performance had already concluded. This signals to the audience that what they see on stage does not remain there; on the contrary, it is a situation that they can confront and reenact in their own lives.

Coming from countries where a large percentage of the population is Roman Catholic, Hombres en escabeche and Sesso? Grazie, tanto per gradire! call attention to how religion transmits certain beliefs about gender identity and sexual intercourse. In the Italian play, there is a staging of the first sexual encounter between Adam and Eve, which the Bible also describes. However, in the play “the whole situation is projected from Eve's point of view, which is also an innovation in respect to the Christian interpretation of our first parents' ordeal which always positioned Eve as the cause of Adam's ruin and of all the evils the whole Mankind has incurred from that day on” (Cottino-Jones 43). By suggesting that Eve did not seduce Adam, that perhaps Adam and Eve were unaware of what was going on when they experienced sexual attraction

for the first time, the play questions the blame traditionally attributed to Eve and the female gender, by Catholicism.

In the Costa Rican play, when Alicia loses her virginity to The Philosopher, she invokes the names of different saints. Although Alicia had decided that sleeping with a man would be her best way of having a lasting relationship with him, she loses her nerve when he begins to kiss her. At first, she calls out: “¡Ayúdame, San Cirilo! . . . ¡San Hipólito! ¡Santa Prisca!” (108). Perhaps she appeals to the saints because she is having second thoughts about her decision and feels guilty for violating the church’s ban on premarital sex. However, the next few lines in the play suggest that it is also possible that she is asking the saints to give her the strength to go through with her plan:

ALICIA. ¡San Cayetano, no me abandones! (*Súbitamente*). ¡Qué horror! ¿Qué es esto?

FILOSOFO. (*Fastidiado*). ¿Según vos, qué puede ser? (*Suplicante*). Alicia, soy un pésimo violador. ¡Por favor, abrí las piernas! Un poquito, un poquitico, apenas . . . un . . . poquito . . . (*revelando esfuerzo*) un poquitico. . . .

ALICIA. (*Horrorizada*). ¡San Miguel Arcángel . . . (*complacida*) y su espada de de fuego! (*Complacidísima*). Santa María Magdalena. ¡Extasis de Santa Teresa! Amor mío, ¡te adoro! (109)

As Alicia begins to experience pleasure, which the stage directions indicate, she continues reciting the names of an interesting selection of saints. She mentions Saint Michael the Archangel and his flaming sword, which could function here as a symbol for the lover’s phallus. Saint Mary Magdalene was a repentant prostitute who was the first person to see Christ after the Resurrection. Ecstasy of Saint Theresa is a reference

to Theresa of Avila, and more specifically to Italian sculptor Gian Lorenzo Bernini who, after reading the saint's writings, between 1645 and 1653 created a "depiction of a mystical experience of the great Spanish Carmelite reformer . . . during which an angel pierced her heart with a fiery arrow of divine love."<sup>128</sup> The three saints named by Alicia have connections to erotic or sensual experiences. Certainly, Alicia invokes these saints in the context of a situation that would not be supported by the Catholic Church today. Instead of asking the saints to help her avoid sin and enter into heaven, Alicia calls their names to celebrate the awakening of her sexual desire and pleasure.

In Sesso? Grazie, tanto per gradire!, Franca Rame explains that it is her mother, "a fervent practicing Catholic," who transmits to her children her religion's point of view about sexuality. In fact, Rame says that her mother was too ashamed to even call the organs of the female anatomy by their proper names and that "she never talked to her daughters about sex" (Fo, Sex? 73). Alicia's mother, in Hombres en escabeche, is too busy doing household chores to talk with her daughter about puberty. Indeed, she never appears on stage, and Alicia tells us that when she first menstruates, her mother says, "pobrecita, ya empezaste a sufrir. . . .Cuidate de los hombres. ¡Y sentate con las piernas cerradas!" (79). Her mother reinforces a patriarchal society's views about gender roles, much in the same way as the mother and mother-in-law in Istaru's other

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<sup>128</sup> To identify the saints, see A Dictionary of First Names, Oxford University Press, searchable on the Internet at <http://www.xrefer.com>. The quotation about The Ecstasy of Saint Theresa is from the website created by Kren and Marx.

plays, El vuelo de la grulla, Madre nuestra que estás en la tierra, and Baby boom en el paraíso.<sup>129</sup>

While Franca Rame emphasizes that her mother is responsible for her lack of sexual education, in Hombres en escabeche it is the father from whom Alicia learns how to interact with men. Istarú explains why she focuses on the figure of the father in the play:

Vivimos en una sociedad donde la mujer es la que complace; el hombre es el que conquista, es decir, es quien decide cómo, cuándo y dónde.

Esta percepción me llevó a la figura del padre, que es el primer hombre que tenés que “enamorar”, que conseguir que te quiera . . . y casi nunca te quiere, casi siempre te ignora. . . . (Murillo Castro)

The Father and Alicia's relationship parallels what Istarú has described. The first man for whom Alicia is waiting is her father. He refuses to pay attention to her when she is a child and advises her that "las niñas deben aprender a ser femeninas, Beatriz" (69). Calling her Beatriz, The Father ignores Alicia's reality to such an extent that he does not even remember her name. This makes her eagerly anticipate puberty so that she can find a man who not only will remember her name, but also "perder la chaveta" for her, falling head over heels in love with her to compensate for her father's lack of attention (85). Alicia's quest turns out to be not so simple, as she soon encounters the double standard by which society governs a man's and a woman's behavior. "Ser mujer," she observes, "se define por los 'no puede'" (75). Her experiences with men disillusion her

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<sup>129</sup> See Cramsie, and also "Geneología de mujeres" by Rojas and Ovaes, for thorough analyses of these characters.

and cause her to give up any hope of finding a man who loves her back and wants to form a relationship as equal partners.

Both plays deal with male impotency when Franca Rame recounts her own experiences with her husband and Alicia, in Hombres en escabeche, continues her relationship with The Philosopher. Rame focuses on a particular type of impotence, different from that caused temporarily by psychological conditions or due to illness, and explains that it results from “too much ‘science’ . . . They have everything up here . . . (indicates her forehead)” (Fo, Sex? 90). Rame explains in a monologue directed to the audience:

The higher the level of a man’s cultural sophistication, the bigger the risk that he will have problems of impotence. I learned of this type of impotence reading the medical pages of “La Republica” three years ago in 1996. I want you to pay close attention to that date . . . you’ll know why later. . . .So, dear women, if your husband is a Nobel Laureate . . . be content with that, because that’s the most he can offer you!. . . .Don’t laugh! I swear that line has been in the script since 1996! (Fo, Sex? 90)

Since Italians in the audience undoubtedly would be aware that Rame’s husband, Dario Fo, won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1997, they laugh at her inside joke about her marriage.

The reference to the Nobel Prize, however, does not limit the play to an Italian context. The English translation includes a note to the reader about Fo’s award so that the reader does not miss the additional humor in the monologue, and certainly the fact that the Nobel Prize has an extremely international profile allows audience members

from other countries to share in the laughter. Rame incorporates into her monologue reaction to a prior performance abroad of Sesso? Grazie, tanto per gradire!:

A while ago, I found myself in Toronto performing this show and when I spoke of the Nobel Prize, I noticed that half the audience turned around to look behind them. . . .”What happened?” I asked. There was a Nobel Laureate in the house. . . .When I found out I wanted to die! He was trying to disappear into his seat. . . .Sitting in the next seat, his wife was laughing like a madwoman!

(Fo, Sex? 90)

While it is highly likely that audiences abroad would know that Fo is a Nobel Laureate, either from the media or the advertising and program that would accompany the performance, the humor also translates if they think of other Nobel Prize winners.

In addressing male impotency in the fictional relationship between Alicia and The Philosopher, Istarú locates its cause in a shift in the balance of power between the characters. When Alicia first visits The Philosopher in his apartment, she is a student in the Department of Philosophy at the university. She brings him homemade cookies, which she had learned to bake because The First Boyfriend complained that he was hungry when he visited her parents’ house. The Philosopher tells her that she should be doing more important things with her time, asking her, “¿No te parece un poco estereotipado? ¿Te das cuenta de todo lo que pudiste haber hecho durante ese lapso de tiempo que se esfumó para siempre?” (102-3). As he starts to seduce Alicia, The Philosopher claims to have a liberated point of view in terms of relationships between men and women. When Alicia tells him that she loves him, he replies, “Por favor, Alicia, no seas convencional. Nadie puede predecir cuánto va a durar una relación. Eso

no es más que una necesidad enfermiza de encadenar el objeto de nuestro deseo, de sojuzgarlo, de coartar su plenitud” (104).

Alicia is upset that he did not tell her that he loves her. Again, he accuses her of being old-fashioned, of holding on to stereotypical notions about relationships between men and women:

El amor no puede encasillarse tan burdamente. Lo tuyo no es más que un afán exclusivista, posesivo y castrante. Ustedes las mujeres tienen una necesidad infantil de seguridad, que por suerte los hombres no tenemos. Deberían aprender de nosotros la capacidad de autonomía, la independencia emocional y la madurez para enfrentar conflictos. (105)

The Philosopher claims that women should learn how to be independent from men. In his reasoning he includes the word castrating, which makes one think of psychologist Sigmund Freud's theories about sexual identity. Although The Philosopher resists confining love to a single established category, he sees no problem in maintaining a binary division separating the male and female gender, in classifying women as insecure and men as emotionally independent. In fact, by stating that Alicia is attempting to castrate him by asking him to love her, he seeks to keep her from gaining control or power over him. Just as The Philosopher accuses Alicia of acting in a stereotypical manner, the audience in the end laughs at him since his response to her is just as stereotyped and based on a false hypocritical stance of liberation.

He also employs the theories of Karl Marx when he suggests that he and Alicia have an open relationship in which they would be free to be with other people:

Creo en relaciones libres y adultas, sin ataduras, sin engaños. La institución de la

pareja no es más que una antigualla obsoleta y absurda, cimentada en el egoísmo burgués y en la necesidad de convertir al ser humano en una adquisición, en un bien de consumo. Me niego a restringir mis posibilidades de intercambio sexual sólo para complacer una demanda social anquilosada e injusta. (113)

He suggests that Alicia's desire to form a monogamous relationship with him originates in the bourgeois social class, which makes the human being a commodity. He finds in the doctrines of socialism a justification for pursuing sexual pleasure with whomever he wishes. It is quite clear from his conversations with Alicia that he uses philosophical discourse to validate his personal freedom. He even pays homage to the great Western philosophers when he calls out their names every time he has sex with Alicia, as he heads toward sexual climax: "¡Por Hesíodo y las leyes de la naturaleza! Inspírame Heráclito, Sócrates, Demócrito . . . Platón, Aristóteles, Epicuro, Santo Tomás de Aquino . . . ¡Descartes, Voltaire, Kant, Hegel! ¡Marx! (*Culminando*). ¡Heidegger!" (109-10). This litany of names is ironic in relation to Alicia's recourse to all the saints and humorous as he calls out the philosophers in chronological order, ending with Heidegger.

The idea of personal freedom, as expressed by The Philosopher, might sound attractive. After all, it moves beyond the limits established by a patriarchal society. However, just as I earlier noted some contradictions in The Philosopher's statements, it soon becomes clear that he is unable to practice what he preaches. After he has sex with Alicia for the first time, he reclines on the sofa, smoking a pipe, while she sits on the floor at his feet. He asks her if she liked it. Alicia, apparently disillusioned because The Philosopher ended the sexual act when he shouted "¡Heidegger!" during his sexual

climax, without caring if she reached climax , answers, “Yo apenas voy por Aristóteles” (110). Not even looking at her, he tells her not to worry, that women are slow in having an orgasm. Yet he does nothing to ensure that she reaches orgasm and instead tells her that he is hungry. When they have sex again, Alicia pretends to achieve sexual climax by crying “¡Heidegger!” (115). Immediately afterwards, she asks him if he would like some spaghetti. If he at first ridiculed Alicia for baking cookies for him, he now is content to have her cook a meal for him and be subordinate to him.

Alicia realizes the contradictions between The Philosopher’s ideas and actions and asserts her own identity and independence. He stresses repeatedly the importance of an article that he is writing, which he hopes to publish in the Department’s journal. He asks Alicia not to disturb him when he is working on it. Alicia tells him that she is studying the Philosophy of Art with his friend Ernesto and that she is also writing an article. The Philosopher barely expresses any interest in her news and refuses to read her article. They start to have sex, but this time Alicia intervenes and changes the expected outcome:

FILOSOFO. ¡Aristóteles, Epicuro, Santo Tomás de Aquino!

ALICIA. (*Suplicante*). ¡Decime que me querés!

FILOSOFO. ¡No empecés! (*Retomando*). ¡Descartes, Voltaire, Kant, Hegel!

¡Marx! (*A punto de culminar*). ¡Heideg . . . !

ALICIA. ¿Es cierto que tu mamá te paga el apartamento?

FILOSOFO. ¡Por el mismísimo demonio! ¡Alicia!

ALICIA. Lo siento. (*Pausa*). Tengo hambre. ( *Se ilumina el escenario. Ella está tendida en el sofá fumando pipa. El está sentado a sus pies*).

FILOSOFO. (*Enfurrñado*). ¿Así que te publican el artículo? (116-17)

Alicia interrupts his litany of philosophers right before he climaxes by asking if his mother pays his apartment's rent, calling into question his proclamations of independence and defying established conventions. This immediately deflates his desire, rendering him temporarily impotent and unable to continue with the sexual act.

Not only does Alicia halt what had become a previously established pattern of behavior for them but she also completely turns around the situation, reversing the balance of power that previously favored The Philosopher's desires. Now it is Alicia who says she is hungry and who reclines on the sofa, smoking a pipe, while The Philosopher sits at her feet. The news that her article will be published in the Department's journal, and that his will not be published, is simply unthinkable to The Philosopher. She then infuriates him by claiming that she is dating his friend, Ernesto:

FILOSOFO. ¿El, con vos?

ALICIA. Me encuentra brillante.

FILOSOFO. ¿El pendejo ese se tira a mi novia y luego me hace creer que es mi amigo?

ALICIA. Un momento, somos libres, ¿te acordás?

FILOSOFO. Sí, no digo lo contrario, pero podrían avisarme para no hacer el ridículo.

ALICIA. Pero si no te importan las apariencias. . . .

FILOSOFO. Por supuesto que no, el ridículo que lo haga él, saliendo con una hijita de papi y mamá, que cuando la conocí lo único que sabía era hacer galletas y decir monosílabos. (117-18)

The Philosopher curses his friend for going out with his girlfriend, thus exposing his own hypocrisy. Alicia reminds him that he claimed not to believe in exclusive relationships and that he does not care about appearances. So, why should he be angry if she dates him and Ernesto at the same time? He attempts to cover up the contradiction by insulting her, alleging that she did not know how to do anything before she met him.

Nevertheless, the damage to their relationship is irreparable. Before she leaves him, she is honest with him: “Primero: Es verdad que me publican el artículo. Segundo: Es mentira que salgo con Ernesto. Tercero: Las mujeres no somos lentas, sino que todavía no te has enterado de que uno no se toma una botella de vino en cinco minutos de reloj. Y cuarto: Andate al carajo de una buena vez por todas” (119). Alicia reveals that she lied about dating Ernesto. Perhaps she did it to elicit The Philosopher’s reaction, to confirm the double standard that she suspects exists in their relationship. She also recognizes that he has been rushing her through the sexual act instead of helping her to experience an orgasm. Before she leaves, he is curious about the topic of her article. Alicia tells him she is researching a saint who would be completely unfamiliar to him. He asks if it is “¿Santa Frígida?”. She retorts that no, it is “¿San Clítoris Arcángel!” (119). Alicia rejects his insinuation that she is frigid and unable to experience sexual pleasure by pointing out that, despite his attempts to show that he is an enlightened man, he remains ignorant about the female anatomy.

Sesso? Grazie, tanto per gradire! and Hombres en escabeche present situations in which intelligent men are impotent. Rame uses the example of the Nobel Laureate for obviously autobiographical reasons. Although former Costa Rican president Oscar

Arias won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1987 for being the initiator of peace negotiations in the Central American civil wars during the 1980s, Istarú does not focus upon her country's Laureate but rather the impotence of the archetypal character, The Philosopher. As I have noted previously, the playwright works with archetypes in this play in order to allow the audience to identify as much as possible with the situations on the stage. Istarú's play is similar to Rame's in that the impotent man is an intellectual. However, it emphasizes much more his place in the university, and furthermore, aligns him with specific philosophical theories and the Marxist political ideology.

Why does the playwright take such care in situating *The Philosopher* in this particular context? It is true that Dario Fo joined the Italian Communist Party, but there is no mention of his political ideology in the play. Instead, Rame targets the "culturally sophisticated" man. Rather than focus on a single figure, or a small group of Nobel Prize winners, Istarú targets a broader segment of the political spectrum, the left, which has historically not been a strong actor in Costa Rican politics and has more recently been critically reevaluated in other Latin American countries. I will offer further information and analysis of what Hombres en escabeche has to say about Costa Rican and Latin American politics in a later section of this chapter, where I will discuss the levels of meaning that the play offers to different audiences. For now, however, it is crucial to note that the impotent intellectual in Istarú's play, in comparison to the one in Sesso? Grazie, tanto per gradire!, has a more clearly defined political ideology.

Another theme common to both plays is abortion, which each play treats differently.

Rame tells the audience about how her first sexual experience resulted in a pregnancy, and she then reveals that she had an abortion.<sup>130</sup> The characters in Hombres en escabeche do not discuss abortion so openly. It seems that Alicia, who now is an aspiring artist in the School of Fine Arts at the university, has finally found the man she has been waiting for when she meets The Musician. He professes his love for her, and she loves him. Alicia's pregnancy, however, forces the couple to confront their level of commitment and ultimately results in the relationship's dissolution.

The Musician asks Alicia what she plans to do about the pregnancy, and she speaks for the unborn baby, saying that it wants to keep growing. He tells her that a child is incompatible with his lifestyle: "¡Alicia, no puedo! ¡Aunque quisiera! ¡No estoy preparado!. . .No entendés. Es que no es sensato: mirá cómo vivo. No tengo espacio, no tengo tiempo, no tengo dinero. No tengo fuerzas. ¡No puedo!" (153). The stage directions indicate that he is genuinely concerned as he makes her an offer: "Pensalo bien. Si te decidís, puedo vender el saxo" (153). This proposal is rather ambiguous. It is not clear if he is offering to sell his saxophone to get money for an abortion or to embark on a different lifestyle which would be compatible with fatherhood. Alicia decides not to ask him to sell the musical instrument, and their relationship ends. She continues with the pregnancy but later has a miscarriage, which she attributes to the child's decision to not enter the world under such circumstances, stating, "no le interesaba un mundo tan mal diseñado. Y a pesar de mis súplicas apagó la luz, cerró la

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<sup>130</sup> Rame's narration of her abortion does not appear in the translation Sex? Thanks, Don't Mind if I Do!. However, Emery's website and Cottino-Jones mention that Rame has talked about her abortion in performances.

puerta, me dijo adiós con la mano, llevándose no sé adónde ese cuerpecito inconcluso” (153).

The different political contexts in Italy and Costa Rica could explain why one play openly discusses abortion and the other is much more circumspect about it. Cottino-Jones observes that Rame “starts by setting up the issue of abortion in the context of the political situation in contemporary Italy and inserts her personal story in order to increase the chance for people to pay better attention to the needs for safer sex, and avoid abortion” (51). Abortion, although still a sensitive topic in a country with many Roman Catholics, was legalized in Italy in 1978. It is available upon a woman’s request, for social or economic reasons, to save her life, to preserve her physical or mental health, or in cases of rape, incest or fetal impairment.<sup>131</sup>

The legal status of abortion is quite different in Costa Rica. In 1970 the Costa Rican Penal Code legalized abortion only to save the woman’s life or to preserve her physical, or possibly, her mental health.<sup>132</sup> It remains illegal to have an abortion for economic or social reasons, or in cases of rape, incest or fetal impairment. Istarú is aware that this is a volatile issue in her country, as she demonstrates in an interview published in The Tico Times:

Nobody likes to deal with the topic of abortion in Costa Rica. Abortion is taboo, despite the fact it is practiced clandestinely here every day, putting the lives of many women in danger. Here for example, abortion is repressed, while in a place

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<sup>131</sup> Country profiles summarizing the legality of abortion are available on the United Nations’ Population Division’s website.

<sup>132</sup> The United Nations’ Population Division website notes that “the Law does not specify whether preservation of health includes both mental and physical health.” All of the information about abortion in Costa Rica is from this website.

like France it's practiced almost as a contraceptive. Both extremes are wrong. I believe there should be a wide number of circumstances in which abortion is permitted. I don't believe a fertilized egg is a person, but I cannot distinguish when a fetus becomes a person. I think these considerations are important.

(Kussalanant)

Although there have been several newspaper articles published in Costa Rica about Istarú and Hombres en escabeche, only one, the interview with The Tico Times, confronts the controversial abortion issue. This interview with Istarú appeared in a newspaper which is published in English and targets a non-Costa Rican reader.<sup>133</sup>

Abortion is not discussed in the other articles from La Nación, Costa Rica's leading daily newspaper, consulted in this study (Díaz; Murillo Castro; Sáenz; Schumacher).<sup>134</sup>

Since many Costa Ricans are reluctant to talk about abortion, this could be why Alicia and The Musician discuss the pregnancy in an ambiguous manner. If members of the audience can identify with the situation that Alicia and The Musician are facing, they would be more willing to think about the couple's options and the local political situation that regulates their options.

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<sup>133</sup> The editorial in the first edition of The Tico Times, dated May 18, 1956, "explained that the non-profit organization was begun in order . . . to provide the English-language public of Costa Rica with a newspaper of special interest to the American and British colonies and our Costa Rican friends who know, or are learning, English" ("The Tico Times").

<sup>134</sup> It is also possible that La Nación's ties to politically conservative groups in Costa Rica influenced what was or was not published in these articles. See Quesada Soto, Breve historia de la literatura costarricense, p. 68, and Rovira Mas, pp. 137-38, for more information about the newspaper's ideological orientation. Biesanz, Biensanz, and Biesanz state that La Nación is the leading newspaper (83).

Dealing with serious issues that impact sexuality and gender identity in Italy and Costa Rica, Sesso? Grazie, tanto per gradire! and Hombres en escabeche do not present an entirely pessimistic vision of relationships between men and women; nor do they place all of the blame on men for the subjugation of women. In fact, men can suffer, too, under the constraints of a patriarchal society. Rame, in the section “True Stories of My Son: Men Suffer Too,” tells us that her son, Jacopo, when he was a teenager, “fell in love with abandon every fifteen minutes . . . and it was almost always unrequited” (Fo, Sex? 94). He loses weight and his physical appearance deteriorates, caused by the “frustration, insecurity and anxiety” of rejection (Fo, Sex? 94). When he becomes sexually active, he confides in his mother that he suffers from premature ejaculation. Instead of refusing to talk to him, as her own mother would have, Rame gives him advice to help him defeat the problem. Eventually, Jacopo’s suffering ends, Rame states, when

he finally found a girl his own age, more mature than he was, a nice girl . . . who understood almost everything about sex and with tenderness helped him understand that sexual relations were not like the Olympics . . . that it was silly to believe that there would be any prizes for those who came in first place. . . . (Fo, Sex? 97)

It is in the security of a loving relationship that Jacopo finds sexual satisfaction. His relationship with his mother, with whom he can talk about everything, serves as a model for the type of education that the Fo family advocates in their play.

Istarú also wishes to show that both men and women can be victims and villains in relationships. Doriam Díaz, in a conversation with Istarú, points out that Hombres en escabeche not only criticizes men, but that it also tries to vindicate them. Istarú replies:

Sí, la idea no es hacer un panfleto feminista ni condenar a nadie, sino más bien hablar de cómo nos afecta la mentalidad machista de esta sociedad patriarcal y de cómo puede aniquilar hasta al hombre. Esa reivindicación es una forma de dejar un resquicio de esperanza a la relación de la pareja, pero también aclarar que el orden social machista afecta a los dos. (“Humor”)

This glimmer of hope comes at the end of the play, when A Stranger reveals to Alicia that he has been hurt by his former wife, who only wanted “una casa, dos carros y un sueldo en dólares” (158). He suspects that all women might want the same things from men and that he will fare poorly in future relationships, since he no longer has a house or a car, and he never had a salary paid in dollars. Alicia, quite upset and disillusioned after all of her relationships with men have failed, treats him harshly. He tells Alicia that his first marriage failed because, when his girlfriend got pregnant, they got married out of obligation, and later, his wife turned out to be mentally unstable and joined a religious cult, emptying the house of almost all their possessions and leaving him with just a bed, a table, and his books. He then tells her not to even ask him about his daughter. He appeals to Alicia not to blame him for how other men treated her and that she recognize that a woman has treated him poorly: “¡Así que no se dirija a mí como si fuera un verdugo! Ustedes no tienen el monopolio del sufrimiento” (161). In the end, Alicia responds gently to his story and they join together as a couple facing a positive future.

Inspired by Sesso? Grazie, tanto per gradire!, Istarú created a play about sex for a Costa Rican audience. Hombres en escabeche premiered on August 12, 2000, at Teatro de la Esquina, a performance space permanently occupied by the independent theatre group, Teatro Surco.<sup>135</sup> Directed by Marcelo Gaete, who also designed the set, and starring Ana Istarú and Marco Martín, it ran in San José until May 6, 2001. Sara Astica and Paz Gaete were in charge of wardrobe, and Luis Diego Herra arranged the music. Founded in 1977, Teatro Surco typically selects its repertory to showcase the talents of the actors Marcelo Gaete and Sara Astica (Bonilla, “Presente” 60).<sup>136</sup>

Gaete and Astica left Chile during the Pinochet dictatorship in the 1970s and immigrated to Costa Rica. They, and other Chilean actors and directors, by working with the Compañía Nacional de Teatro and the Teatro Universitario and founding independent groups, helped to professionalize the Costa Rican theatrical environment (Rovinski 60). Known for staging plays with “una intención de teatro más profesional y responsable,” Teatro Surco also has had to produce more commercially-oriented plays in order to maintain its own performance space (Bonilla, “Costa Rica” 80-81). Overall, says Artistic Director Gaete, Teatro Surco supports “la filosofía de . . . privilegiar obras de dramaturgos latinoamericanos” (Cantero).

Producing Hombres en escabeche is an effort in this direction, and it was a commercial as well as a critical success in San José. Andrés Sáenz noted on March 4,

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<sup>135</sup> See Manuel Francisco Ruiz García’s Master’s thesis, “Grupo Surco: Teatro en el exilio,” for more information about the group’s history.

<sup>136</sup> For an additional example of the actors’ prominence in Costa Rica, see the July 8, 2000 edition of La Nación, in which the actors’ names serve as the only advertisement for the play El patio de atrás (Teatro Surco). Martínez Rojas, who analyzes a sampling of 1998 Costa Rican theatrical advertisements in her thesis, concludes that these advertisements very rarely feature the actors’ names. See Martínez Rojas, pp. 70-79.

2001, that “desde agosto pasado, la puesta en escena aquí de *Hombres en escabeche* llena a reventar el pequeño Teatro de la Esquina” (“Premios Ancora”). In a review of the theatrical productions of 2000 in Costa Rica, he notes that “del comercialismo corrompido quedaron a salvo pocas salas y obras, pero más que ninguna el estreno . . . de *Hombres en escabeche*, divertida e inteligente comedia satírica . . . que obtuvo éxito de público y crítica y cosechó aplausos en el exterior también” (“Teatro 2000”). He also mentions that the play’s commercial and critical success prompted Istarú and Teatro Surco to restage Baby boom en el paraíso so that audience members who enjoyed Hombres en escabeche would have the opportunity to see another play written by Istarú (“Teatro 2001”). Playwright and former Minister of Culture Alberto Cañas reviewed the play favorably in the newspaper La República: “Farsesca a ratos, aguda y penetrante todo el tiempo, Hombres en escabeche funciona admirablemente como espectáculo humorístico y como despiadada crítica social.”<sup>137</sup>

Although Istarú’s dramaturgy critically examines Costa Rican society, it has also resonated abroad. Scholars publishing in journals located within the American academy have tended to focus more on Istarú’s poetry, exploring how it treats erotic themes and the male and female body.<sup>138</sup> However, Hilde Cramsie, in an article, and Carole

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<sup>137</sup> The quotation is from the back cover of Istarú, Baby boom en el paraíso; Hombres en escabeche: Teatro. Alberto Cañas was Costa Rica’s first Minister of Culture when the Ministerio de Cultura, Juventud y Deportes was created in 1970 (Herzfeld and Salas 17). Cañas is one of the three most important Costa Rican playwrights after the Civil War of 1948 (Quesada, “La dramaturgia” 76). La República, La Nación’s “chief rival” newspaper, “generally supports” the political party Partido Liberación Nacional (Biesanz, Biesanz, and Biesanz 83). The PLN, formed by the victors of the 1948 Civil War, “espoused a ‘social democratic’ ideology” after the war (Biesanz, Biesanz, and Biesanz 71).

<sup>138</sup> See the articles by Hernández and Rojas.

Champagne, in her doctoral dissertation, have analyzed El vuelo de la grulla and Madre nuestra que estás en la tierra. Cramsie focuses on how language marginalizes women while Champagne explains how iconic signs in characterization express social commitment. The Andrade and Cramsie anthology, which was published in Spain, includes Istarú in a list of Latin American female playwrights.<sup>139</sup>

Istarú's plays have circulated abroad, both in texts as well as in performance. Timothy Rogers translated El vuelo de la grulla into English as The Flight of the Crane and published it in Latin American Literary Review. Theatrical companies in Pamplona, Málaga, and Madrid, Spain, produced Baby boom en el paraíso in 1997 and 1998, earning mostly favorable critical reviews. Teatro Vivencia in Chicago staged the play in 2000, using Kirk Anderson's English translation.<sup>140</sup> In 1999 Deutsche Welle broadcast an adaptation of the play, translated into German by Karl Müller, for the radio. Kirsten Nigro, a professor at the University of Cincinnati, has performed Baby

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<sup>139</sup> The list includes: Isidora Aguirre, Griselda Gambaro, Elena Garro, Luisa Josefina Hernández, María Asunción Requena, Myrna Casas, Maruxa Vilalta, Fanny Buitrago, Diana Rasnovich, Lucía Fox, Gabriela Roepke, Teresa Parrado, Elisa Lerner, María Cristina Verrié, Zora Moreno, Gilda Hernández, Yúlky Cary, Lira Campoamor, Teresa Marichal, Dinka de Villarroel, Aleyda Morales, Roma Mattieu, Mariela Romero, Maité Vera, Josefina Plá, Sara Joffré and Hebe Uhart (21-22).

<sup>140</sup> Istarú comments about audience and critical reaction to the play in Spain and Chicago:

En general, ha tenido buena acogida del público. De Chicago casi no supe nada. Creo que dieron pocas funciones en el invierno, pero no les fue muy bien . . . pero no hemos oído más. . . Este grupo de Pamplona me mandó varias críticas positivas, pero me mandó también una muy negativa en contra del texto, muy enfurecido el crítico . . . acusando el texto de reaccionar, de ignorar la lucha feminista de las mujeres. Y, claro, porque asumía la maternidad, como el deber amamantar al bebé, como un retroceso en las conquistas femeninas, lo cual para mí . . . es una ignorancia. . . Y este español lo tomó muy mal y dijo que era un llamado irresponsable a la natalidad sin control. (Istarú, Personal interview)

I have been unable to locate additional information about these performances.

Boom in Paradise, using Anderson's English translation, during academic conferences at universities throughout the United States, such as the Mountain Interstate Foreign Language Conference in Radford, Virginia, in 2000 and the Mid-America Conference on Hispanic Literatures at the University of Kansas.<sup>141</sup>

Before considering audience reaction to Hombres en escabeche at the 4<sup>th</sup> International Festival of Hispanic Theatre, one should know some basic information about the status of Latin American theatre in the United States, the mission of Teatro de la Luna, the theatrical company which produces the annual festivals, and some more concrete statistics about its audience. Kirsten Nigro observes that, but for a few exceptions, "Latin American theatre in English translation simply has little presence on the U.S. stage" (118). She states that the most obvious reason is that

Latin American theatre does not circulate widely in published form. Even within Latin America it travels little from country to country, and within its own national boundaries it can have limited market appeal in the face of European and especially U.S. imports. . . . (118)

Those seeking to produce this theatre in the United States fear that English-speaking audiences assume it will be "too exotic or of inferior quality (meaning usually 'too political')" (Nigro 118). If that is not the case, they stage it "*because* of its 'otherness' (Nigro 119). These positions, Nigro concludes, are "an essentializing that reduces this theatre to a cultural activity marginal for its inferiority or irrelevance, or to an exotic, idealized cultural practice whose relevance depends on its remaining marginal" (119).

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<sup>141</sup> I attended the performance at the Mountain Interstate Foreign Language Conference. University faculty and students comprised the audience of approximately fifty people.

Since plays from the Spanish-speaking world do not form the traditional repertory of theatrical companies in the United States, Teatro de la Luna serves as a meeting place for those who wish to see these plays and also as an exception to the production trends which Nigro outlines.

Founded in 1991 by Executive and Artistic Director Mario Marcel and Producer Nucky Walder, Teatro de la Luna is non-profit corporation whose mission is to disseminate Iberoamerican theatre in Spanish as well as in simultaneous English translation, which it has offered since its third stage production (Bogado 167-68). It maintains a performance space at the Gunston Arts Center, located in an elementary school in Arlington, Virginia. Marcel, who is Argentine, and Walder, who is Paraguayan, in an interview with Víctor Bogado, Jr., explain that when they first arrived in the Washington metropolitan area, they worked with Teatro Gala, another theatrical company with the same mission, which consists of immigrants from Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, and Colombia and also employees of the Inter-American Development Bank and the Organization of American States (168).<sup>142</sup> After founding their own theatrical group, Marcel and Walder received funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Arlington County and the State of Virginia's Commission for the Arts, the Philip L. Graham Foundation, the Inter-American Development Bank Cultural Center, and the Marpat Foundation (Bogado 170-71). Local Spanish-language media, the airlines, and embassies representing Spanish-speaking countries also have supported Teatro de la Luna and its festivals.

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<sup>142</sup> Teatro de la Luna maintains a website on the Internet at <http://www.teatrodelaluna.org/>. Teatro Gala also has a website at <http://www.galatheatre.org/>.

This theatrical company hopes to reach both English and Spanish-speaking audiences. Walder provides specific information about these audiences:

Hay un 30 (funciones en español) a 60 o 70 por ciento de público de origen norteamericano (funciones en traducción). Tenemos una audiencia de aproximadamente 1200 personas por producción. Nuestro teatro llega a los jóvenes, la tercera edad y aquellos con bajos ingresos por medio de entradas subsidiadas. (Bogado 168-69)

According to these statistics, slightly more than half of the audience in attendance at performances with simultaneous English translation are American. Attracting an audience of 1,200 during a production, Teatro de la Luna appeals to a small number of theater-goers in the Washington metropolitan area. It is not uncommon to see audience members who work for its sponsor organizations, are university professors or students, or have ties to the diplomatic representations from Latin America. However, Teatro de la Luna also tries to increase its audience by offering subsidized tickets to teenagers, senior citizens, and people living in less affluent communities. After the performances, the audiences often have the opportunity to talk with the director and actors during post-performance discussions moderated by professors of Spanish and Latin American literature from local universities.

In addition to its own theatrical productions for adults and children, Teatro de la Luna organizes an annual International Festival of Hispanic Theatre. The first one in 1998 honored Spanish playwright Federico García Lorca (Bogado 170). Each subsequent festival has featured approximately ten theatrical companies from Spain and

Latin America.<sup>143</sup> Each group gives three performances, with the entire festival running for six weeks. Mario Marcel describes how Teatro de la Luna invites the groups to participate: “We research what is happening in a country at the moment--the most current thing, the most popular thing--and that’s what we bring over” (Via). Teatro de la Luna wishes to present critically acclaimed theater at the festival. Speaking about the 2001 festival, Marcel adds, “we have three actors who have received their countries’ best actor awards, as well as two plays that won best play awards in their respective countries” (Via). The audiences at the festivals, therefore, can see what is new on stage in Spain and Latin America.

Costa Rica has participated frequently at these festivals. The Teatro Nacional staged Yepeto, a play written by Argentine Roberto Cossa, at the 1999 Festival and returned the following year to perform La edad de la ciruela, written by Arístides Vargas, who was born in Argentina and now resides in Ecuador.<sup>144</sup> At the 2001 Festival, two theatrical companies represented Costa Rica: Teatro Surco, with Hombres en escabeche, and Ticotíteres, with Cocinando sueños, for children, and Hablemos en silencio, a pantomime for adults. According to Sabino Morera, who at the time was Minister Counselor for Cultural Affairs at the Costa Rican Embassy in the United States, the festival audiences responded enthusiastically to both theatrical groups (Díaz, “Más

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<sup>143</sup> The information about the 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2002 festivals is from the theatre programs distributed to the audience.

<sup>144</sup> Sáenz praises Yepeto in his review of 1999 performances in San José (“1999”). Díaz explains that La edad de la ciruela had more than 115 performances, and its acting and production team won awards. In 1998, Alfredo Catania received the National Award for Best Director, Ana Clara Carranza and Eugenia Chaverri shared the award for Best Lead Actress, and Pilar Quirós won the prize for Best Set Designer. They also staged the play in Teatro del Pueblo, Buenos Aires, and in the theater at La Universidad del Litoral in Santa Fe, Argentina (Díaz, “El místico”).

éxitos”). Tícoriteres performed Cocinando sueños two more times at the Inter-American Development Bank and Gallaudet University. Istarú also gave a poetry recital and presented excerpts from Hombres en escabeche and Baby boom en el paraíso at the Mexican Cultural Institute in Washington. The tickets for Hombres en escabeche sold out a day in advance of the festival performances (Díaz, “Más éxitos”).

Afterwards, notes Morera, “la gente estaba encantada. Después hubo una sesión de preguntas y respuestas acerca de sus obras y trayectoria, hasta les sugirieron llevar la obra a otras partes de América Latina” (Díaz, “Más éxitos”).

Comparing the English translation of Hombres en escabeche to the Spanish text will assist in an exploration of how audiences from different countries might react to the play. I would like to stress that the English translation, Men in Marinade, that Teatro de la Luna provided to me is not a published textual translation of the play. It is a transcription of what the simultaneous interpreters read to the audience members who were wearing the headphones. The theatrical group produced this translation as a complement to Istarú and Martín’s acting on the stage, summarizing what the actors were saying in Spanish, to help the English-speaking audience understand the monologues and dialogues. Nevertheless, comparing the translation to the Spanish script is useful to this study because it reveals a transformation in some of the cultural allusions and references that the English-speaking audience received.

Theorists of translation have identified a number of strategies to deal with situations in which the universe of reference of one culture does not overlap with that of

another.<sup>145</sup> The easiest method “involves transferring a source language word or lexical unit into the target language text by graphic means,” which “can be accompanied by a footnote” (Rohzin 140). This transference or transcription is not of much practical use during a performance since the audience cannot read the text. Although it is possible to provide a glossary in the theatre program, the 4<sup>th</sup> International Festival of Hispanic theatre program does not present any explanation of the play’s original cultural context other than to note that it comes from Costa Rica.

However, there is one case of transference in Men in Marinade in a conversation between Alicia and The Yuppie in Hombres en escabeche:

ALICIA. ¿Y qué pensás hacer ahora que volviste?

YUPI. Todo. Llegar a la cima con los semáforos en verde. Me esperan Christian Dior, Givenchy, Rolex. (*Ríe*). No, hablando en serio, antes de los cuarenta quisiera consolidar un capital, alcanzar una curul, o ¿por qué no?, nunca sabe, un ministerio y tener tres o cuatro hijos. (130-31)

The English translation is:

ALICIA. And what do you think you’re going to do now that you’re back?

YUPI. Everything. Get to the mountaintop with all green lights. Christian Dior, Givenchy, Rolex are waiting for me. (LAUGHS.) No, seriously, I’d like to make some capital before I’m forty, reach a CURUL, or why not? You never know, a ministry and have three or four kids. (12)

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<sup>145</sup> Szczensa Klaudya Rohzin summarizes these theories and provides additional examples to explain them.

The translation transfers the Spanish word curul to the audience, which could confuse them. Americans would lack knowledge of the Costa Rican political system, and there is not sufficient context in the rest of the statement for them to guess what the word means: the seat which is awarded to a diputado, or representative, in the national Legislative Assembly. Unlike in the United States, Costa Rican “voters choose a party, not individual candidates, for the legislature, and *diputados* are seated according to their party’s share of the vote and their own places on the ballot. . . .” (Biesanz 67). The result of this election method is that “*diputados* have no promises to keep to their constituents, only obligations to party leaders” (Biesanz 67). The Yuppie also mentions a ministry, which is easily translated from Spanish into English. Some Americans in the audience might understand that it is a political position, but they probably would not know that the president appoints the ministers to implement his decisions about national policy (Biesanz 66). This portion of the audience would therefore miss all of the implications behind The Yuppie’s personal goals, whereas Costa Ricans would understand that the character represents and criticizes those who enter politics for personal gain.

Besides transference, all other translation strategies for dealing with different universes of reference between cultures are substitutions. The most extreme tactic is to “remove all cultural references and allusions . . . and create a totally different play” (Rohzin 142). Teatro de la Luna did not produce a contextual translation of Men in Marinade, which would have set the play in the United States and made all local references American. Instead, the translation adopts other measures. Sometimes, Rohzin notes, the best option is to delete stretches of the text: “Ruthless as it is, this

strategy brings an immediate and easy solution to problems caused by phrases alien to the target culture” (141). There is one small deletion in Men in Marinade from one of Alicia’s monologues in Spanish:

Ser una mujer. Nadie me advirtió lo difícil de la empresa. Para que se informen quienes aspiran a semejante puesto: una mujer no puede (ser mujer se define por los “no puede”) sentarse sola en un parque sin que la hostigue una horrrorteca de tipos más feos que el déficit cambiario, salir indemne de un autobús repleto, ser presidente de la FEDEFUTBOL, graduarse de doctora uróloga o decir malas palabras. (75)

The English translation eliminates the references to the fluctuating currency exchange rate and the Federación Costarricense de Fútbol, a federation with a director and a board that organizes the soccer teams, leagues, and divisions:<sup>146</sup>

Being a woman. Nobody informed me of how difficult this business is. A woman cannot (being a woman is defined by the “cannots”) sit alone in a park without being bothered by a multitude of men uglier than crap itself, stay untouched in a full bus, graduate as a urologist or say bad words. (3)

The deletion of these references to important aspects of Costa Rican life avoids confusing an American audience. By not distancing the monologue too much from the audience, the translation focuses attention on a woman’s role in a patriarchal society.

Another substitution option while translating is neutralization. Rohzin explains that the translator can replace “the alien concepts” with “familiar ones: one kind of flower,

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<sup>146</sup> See p. 268 of Biesanz, Biesanz, and Biesanz for a discussion of soccer’s importance in Costa Rican life.

dish, name of a place is substituted for another” (141). In the case of Hombres en escabeche, details about The Yuppie’s foreign travel and his nickname change in the English translation. The Spanish-speaking audience hears Warner, The Yuppie, tell Alicia that he has just returned from Europe, where he earned a graduate degree. Alicia questions him, and he finally admits that, actually, he only took a graduate course there, during the summer, “un verano largo” (129-30). She later discovers that his name is not Warner, but rather Cupertino, and he implores her, “Por favor, no se lo digás a nadie. Es . . . privado” (140). The English-speaking audience, on the other hand, hears that Chuck, The Yuppie, has studied in New York. Although his nickname changes, his real name still is Cupertino.

The Costa Ricans and Latin Americans in the audience would be aware of the importance of European models during the fight for independence and the process of nation building in the nineteenth century. The Yuppie’s nickname, which they might associate with the Warner Brothers film production company, and his use of English words and phrases, such as “honey” and “business is business,” also encourages these audience members to reflect on the dominance of the United States from the early twentieth century to the present. Making reference to Europe as well as to the United States, the play highlights how certain social sectors, personified by The Yuppie, look abroad to envision the nation’s future. The Americans in the audience at Teatro de la Luna would be less familiar with Latin American history, so the translation instead opts to call attention to their own nation’s relationship with its southern neighbors. The substitutions in the translation make it easier for an American audience to associate The

Yuppie with the United States' hegemony abroad, and, as I will discuss later, to understand the play's critique of it.

Sometimes there are terms or concepts which, although "they can be easily translated into the target language," remain troublesome after translation because they do not cover "exactly the same field of meaning in both languages" (Rohzin 143). There are two examples of these concepts which stand out in Men in Marinade. In a monologue directed to the audience, Alicia examines common phrases that people use to swear and questions why only the mother, and not the father, is the target of obscene insults. Speaking in Spanish, the actress says: "En cambio, la madre. . . .La madre es sagrada. Una réplica en tamaño natural de la Virgencita de Guadalupe. Entonces, que sin conocerla te la traten de ramera levanta más roncha que un ladrillazo en la nuca" (76). The English-speaking audience hears: "On the other hand, the mother. . . .The mother is sacred. A life-sized replica of the Virgin of Guadalupe. So, if they treat her like trash that causes greater pain than being hit with a brick on the neck" (3). It is true that this reference to the Virgin of Guadalupe translates smoothly into English. However, since there is more religious diversity in the United States, some Americans would not fully grasp the Virgin's significance.

It is true that American Catholics in the audience might identify her as Mexico's patron saint since the church, particularly in areas with many Mexican immigrants, celebrates her feast day on December 12<sup>th</sup>. However, they would be unaware of her mythical function in Mexican culture as a female archetype. As Sandra Messinger Cypess notes, "The Virgin of Guadalupe embodies the most virtuous feminine attributes: forgiveness, succor, piety, virginity, saintly submissiveness" (6). Since the

Americans in the audience lack this culturally-embedded knowledge about the Virgin of Guadalupe, it is difficult for them to understand how Alicia questions social patterns of male-female relationships.<sup>147</sup> By selecting the Virgin of Guadalupe as a reference, instead of Costa Rica's patron saint La Virgen de los Angeles, Istarú addresses a broader Latin American audience, encouraging them to think about the role models influencing social behaviors in their own countries.

Another example of a concept which remains troublesome after translation can be found in Alicia's reaction when The First Boyfriend leaves her for another woman. She complains to The Father, "le di mi corazón y lo usó de cenicero. ¡No es más que un farsante, un alacrán, un vendepatrias!" (98). The English-speaking audience at the festival hears her complaint as "I gave him my heart and he used it as an ash tray (sic). He's just a fake, a scorpion, a sell-out!" (7). The word vendepatrias, which means selling out one's country to the foreigner, has a much more political connotation, with a universe of reference for Latin Americans that originates in the Spanish conquest of the

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<sup>147</sup> After I read portions of this chapter that deal with the figure of the Virgin of Guadalupe and the Virgin Mary in Hombres en escabeche at the Twentieth-Century Literature Conference at the University of Louisville, Kentucky, in 2002, an American professor of English told me that she could not understand how it would be negative for women to imitate what she views as the positive model of the good, saintly Virgin. This feedback serves as an example of how an American audience could react to the play. I would like to point out that Istarú's play shows Alicia's rebellion against The Father's attempt to confine her to the role of the submissive, saintly mother. Not remembering her name, he tells her, "María, vení a hacerme algo de comer" (146). Besides referring to the Virgin, María is identified as a maid in the play. Alicia responds: "¡María! ¿María la criada o María la Santa Madre? ¡O mejor ambas! ¡Dame de comer! ¡Ahora me llamo mamá!. . . ¡Me llamo Alicia! (146). It clearly angers Alicia that The Father expects her to obey him and serve his needs by being either a servant, subservient to men in a sexual way, or the Virgin, subservient to their needs as a mother might be. It is also possible that Alicia is referring to her mother, who acts like a servant. Alicia mentions that her mother is always doing household chores, such as ironing The Father's shirt, when Alicia wants to talk with her (75).

Americas.<sup>148</sup> Furthermore, although vendepatrias is usually an epithet against women, in the play Alicia uses it against a man, *The First Boyfriend*. Sell-out signifies a traitor, one who is treacherous or disloyal, but it is not necessarily connected to betrayal of the nation.<sup>149</sup> In fact, Americans often use the word to describe someone who has betrayed his or her own personal values for material gain, such as a writer who, instead of pursuing the dream of becoming a novelist, takes a job writing ad copy for a large corporation. The English-speaking audience would understand that Alicia condemns *The First Boyfriend*'s betrayal, but they would not receive all of the connections in the play between male-female relationships and politics.<sup>150</sup>

A final difference, besides the cases of transference and substitution, between Hombres en escabeche and Men in Marinade is in the amount of humor. Mario Marcel recognizes how the Spanish and English-speaking members of Teatro de la Luna's audience have reacted to humor in the plays it has produced:

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<sup>148</sup> In Mexico, another word with the same meaning as vendepatrias has emerged. Cypess explains that after the Spanish conquest, La Malinche, Hernán Cortés's Indian interpreter, guide, and lover, "comes to signify the traitor to national goals; the one who conforms to her paradigm is labeled *malinchista*, the individual who sells out to the foreigner, who devalues national identity in favor of imported benefits" (7).

<sup>149</sup> For a definition of sell-out, see The Pocket Oxford Dictionary of Current English, Oxford University Press, searchable on the Internet at <http://www.xrefer.com>.

<sup>150</sup> After she ends the relationship with *The Philosopher*, Alicia uses every available insult she can think of to condemn him. One of these insults is "¡Neoliberal!" (120). The English translation conveys the cognate, "Neoliberal!" (10). This word has a political connotation in English, being associated with the economic policies of free trade and minimal intervention by the government in the market. However, neoliberalism is not as frequently discussed in the United States as it is in Latin America, where in Costa Rica, for example, it was a salient topic in the debate between the candidates before the 2002 presidential elections. See "Debate candidatos presidenciales, 7 enero 2002."

Por sus rasgos culturales el humor es más entendido por el público latino. El americano recibe el espectáculo traducido y lo recibe menos pero se sorprende mucho. Por otro lado, el americano respeta y valora el espectáculo. Siente al latino gozando en su “salsa” y admira y respeta lo que sus vecinos están experimentando. Además, vienen mucho a los debates “post-performance” y preguntan e intervienen mucho, ávidos de saber porque se reaccionan de tal o cual manera. (Bogado 169)

Since humor often is a product of a particular culture, the Americans in the audience might not laugh when the Latin Americans do. As Marcel points out, this need not be an obstacle to the Americans appreciating a play at Teatro de la Luna. It often makes them want to ask, during post-performance discussions, why the Latin Americans reacted differently.

Ana Istarú also is conscious of how humor can change when a play travels to another language or culture:

El humor funciona mucho por el contexto social. Hay chistes que son intraducibles, los chistes de palabras o chistes que funcionan porque afectan a tal tipo de sociedad, un país desarrollado o un país europeo, o un humor muy latinoamericano de países donde hay militares, que en Costa Rica no va a funcionar. (Personal interview)

Like Marcel, she identifies the impact of culture upon humor. She also notes that differences between the two languages can make jokes that play upon words untranslatable. This happens in the translation of Hombres en escabeche. After The First Boyfriend leaves Alicia, she discovers that The Father has a mistress. She

concludes that, in order to have a lasting relationship with a man, she should behave like the other woman, the mistress for whom a man leaves his wife or girlfriend. She asks herself: “¿Cómo era la otra? La versión humana del *spaghetti alla puttanesca, arrabiata, con aglio, acciughe et molto peperoncino*” (100). The Spanish-speaking audience will laugh at the word play between the Italian word puttanesca and the Spanish word puta, which means prostitute or whore. The English-speaking audience hears: “How was the other one? The human version of spaghetti a la puttanesca, arrabiata, with aglio, acciughe et molto peperoncino” (7). The word play disappears in the English translation and so does the humor. However, the English-speaking audience still might understand what Alicia is saying by paying attention to the actress, who at the Teatro de la Luna performance, pronounced the spaghetti’s ingredients in Italian and made passionate gestures with her hands. Also, those familiar with Italian cuisine would recognize spaghetti alla puttanesca as a spicy dish, flavored with peppers. The actress’s pronunciation and gestures, and knowledge of the dish’s ingredients, help the audience to guess that Alicia is talking about being more daring, spicing up her actions, which she confirms when she mentions next her decision to lose her virginity.

Another example of how Men in Marinade loses some humor arises because of grammatical differences between the Spanish and English languages. For example, in Spanish it is not necessary to include subject pronouns in a sentence. The verb ending itself contains the reference to the subject. However, in the third person, ambiguity can arise if there is insufficient context to identify the subject of the sentence. Hence the humorous situation that develops when Alicia walks up to The Father and says:

ALICIA. (*Gimoteando*). Me dejó.

PADRE. ¿Qué?

ALICIA. ¡Me dejó! ¡Me dejó!

PADRE. ¿Te dejó ir adónde, tu mamá? ¿Y si te dejó ir por qué te quejás?

Amor: ¿mis llaves?

ALICIA. Mi novio, papá, mi novio. Terminó conmigo.

PADRE. ¡Es cierto! Tenías un novio. (*Tratando de sacar el último residuo de colonia*). ¿Así que se fue? (97-98)

The Father at first misunderstands when Alicia tells him that The First Boyfriend broke up with her. The Father thinks that Alicia is talking about her mother. The English-speaking audience would have a different reaction to the situation because there would not be ambiguity in the subject pronouns for The First Boyfriend and Alicia's mother, he and she:

ALICIA. He left me.

DAD. What?

ALICIA. He left me! He left me!

DAD. Where did your mom leave you? And if she let you go, why are you complaining? Honey: My keys?

ALICIA. My boy friend, Dad, my boyfriend. He finished it off with me.

DAD. That's right! You had a boyfriend. So, he left? (6-7)

The English-speaking audience might think it strange if the Spanish-speaking audience laughs at the confusion caused by the missing subject pronoun. However, they could still understand the situation, perhaps attributing The Father's confusion to his distraction as he is looking for his keys and preparing to leave the house.

The strategies of transference and substitution in the translation of Hombres en escabeche analyzed in this study, along with the loss in humor due to language differences, at times may distance the English-speaking audience from what is happening on the stage, keeping them aware that they are watching a foreign play. However, if these members of the audience were unable to identify at all with the situations in the play, it would be a frustrating experience for them, and they would leave the theater without understanding the performance. Therefore, the translation does adapt certain references to make the situations seem more familiar to this segment of the audience. Overall, the translation provided by Teatro de la Luna balances the foreign and the familiar for the English-speaking audience, permitting them to bridge cultures and appreciate theatre from Costa Rica.

The festival performances at Teatro de la Luna attracted Costa Ricans, Latin Americans, Americans, and scholars of Latin American theatre who work in the American academy. Because the audience is not homogeneous but rather consists of people from different cultural contexts, it is necessary to consider what the play would communicate to each of these contexts, with the understanding that a spectator might belong to more than one cultural context. Although Teatro Surco did not change the performance for the festival, and the English translation made only some minor adaptations, a fundamental transformation has taken place in Hombres en escabeche. According to Richard Schechner:

When a performance moves to a new place encountering new audiences (on tour, for example), even if everything is kept the same, the performance changes. The same happens when an audience is imported, as when tourists or anthropologists

see “the real thing”. . . .The reception of a performance varies according to how much individual spectators know about what’s going on. . . . (4)<sup>151</sup>

Before the process of translation even began at Teatro de la Luna, Istarú’s play balances elements that would seem foreign or familiar to audience members. Each of the different groups composing the audience of Hombres en escabeche, then, would have a unique reception, or reading, of how the play questions gender roles in a patriarchal society and the established conventions that govern artistic creativity. I will first consider how the audience members perceive the feminist messages in Hombres en escabeche and then conclude by examining how they perceive the theme of artistic freedom.

Although the use of archetypal figures enables the play to reach Latin Americans and Americans, the play is firmly rooted in a Costa Rican context. Costa Ricans in the audience will detect references to their national history and local laws. Alicia tells the audience about the first time that she saw the male sexual organ when she was a young girl:

Sin embargo, un día lo vi, allí, desnudo, maravilloso, puro, inocente, expuesto a la vista de los transeúntes que no parecían caer de rodillas extasiados por tanta

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<sup>151</sup> James Clifford, in “Traveling Cultures,” challenges the traditional practice of localizing non-Western peoples when anthropologists rely upon informants while conducting fieldwork:

A great many of these interlocutors, complex individuals routinely made to speak for “cultural” knowledge, turn out to have their own “ethnographic” proclivities and interesting histories of travel. Insider-outsiders, good translators and explicators, they’ve been around. The people studied by anthropologists have seldom been homebodies. Some of them, at least, have been travelers: workers, pilgrims, explorers, religious converts, or other traditional “long distance specialists.” (97)

belleza. De ese cuerpo arrancado a la perfección sobresalía, en el medio de la pelvis, lo más cercano que he conocido a la fruta del paraíso perdido: el pájaro azul del territorio de los sueños en lo alto de sus muslos, en plena avenida primera, frente al edificio del correo, bajo dos alas angelicales y una plaquita que decía: “A Juan Rafael Mora, la patria agradecida.” (78-79)

Costa Ricans would immediately be able to identify the statue that Alicia is describing, which they can see on a stroll by the post office in downtown San José. They also would recognize that the statue is dedicated to Juan Rafael Mora, president of Costa Rica from 1849-59.

Costa Rica, notes Steven Palmer, did not gain independence from Spain like the other Latin American republics: “Costa Rica consiguió su independencia como parte de un ente mayor y sin el esfuerzo, sacrificio o deseo de ningún costarricense; ciertas autoridades ‘coloniales’ formaron parte del mismo grupo que tomó la decisión de independizarse, ¡y la ‘nación’ fue independiente un mes entero sin saberlo!” (170). As the Costa Rican Liberal State attempted to foment an imagined community, a sense of national identity, during the last thirty years of the nineteenth century, it could not refer to the rather ambiguous 1829 Central American independence from Spain as the birth of the nation. Instead, the State relocated the origin of national consciousness to the mid-nineteenth century.

In 1854, during the Nicaraguan civil war, William Walker and his army of filibusters from the United States took over the country with the plan of annexing all of Central America to the southern slave states of the United States. President Mora “appealed to the governments and peoples of Central America to combine forces and

drive Walker from the region” (Molina and Palmer, The History of Costa Rica 62). The Costa Rican National Campaign of 1856-57 successfully defeated Walker.<sup>152</sup> In the 1880s, intellectuals in the Liberal state designated the National Campaign and the heroic deeds of Juan Santamaría “como capaces de representar el momento más glorioso de la nación y la más épica expresión de la conciencia nacional” (Palmer 182).<sup>153</sup> The monuments constructed during the Liberal State commemorated the National Campaign and, from that point on, the 15<sup>th</sup> of September, a national holiday, did not celebrate Costa Rica’s independence but rather Walker’s defeat.

When Alicia mentions the statue dedicated to Mora, she links her sexual education to the Costa Rican nation, which has disseminated a particular morality concerning the relationships between men and women. Flora Ovares, Margarita Rojas, Carlos Santander, and María Elena Carballo, in La casa paterna: Escritura y nación en Costa Rica, analyze how the 1856 Campaign has entered Costa Rican literary discourse, in which, “se instaura una jerarquía que coincide con la patriarcal, en el sentido de que los términos de razón, orden y realidad se suponen propios del padre y se valoran positivamente por esto mismo” (6). This discourse transmits the image of the nation as a family, in which ideal relationships, based upon “armonía, ausencia de conflictos,

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<sup>152</sup> Iván Molina and Steven Palmer, in The History of Costa Rica, note that “Mora was deposed in a coup in 1859, and subsequently shot in 1860 as he tried to return to the country and take power again” (64).

<sup>153</sup> According to Palmer, Juan Santamaría emerged as the Costa Rican national hero in 1885, when Guatemalan dictator Justo Rufino Barrios declared the union of Central America. Santamaría was “un humilde soldado quien, durante la batalla de Rivas en 1856, se ofreció para quemar el Mesón de Guerra desde donde la tropa de Walker estaba diezmado el ejército tico a balazos. Su intento fue un éxito, pero sacrificó su vida al realizarlo” (Palmer 183).

origen común y respeto a la autoridad y el orden” should exist (Ovares 6). The father, in this patriarchal society, is the authority figure in the family as well as the nation.

As an example, President Mora compares himself to a father in a speech during the 1856 Campaign: “Vengo a recibiros con el orgullo y el amor con que un padre vuelve a ver a sus hijos vencedores” (Ovares 37). If the victorious troops are his sons, the wives and young children are equated with possessions in another of Mora’s speeches in which he warns that the foreign invaders: “proyectan invadir a Costa Rica para buscar en nuestras esposas e hijos, en nuestras casas y haciendas, goces a sus feroces pasiones, alimento a su desenfrenada codicia” (Ovares 38). When Alicia describes the statue, she is conscious of the prohibitions that normally limit exposure of the male sex organ:

Eso era el falo: ese detalle rococó y encantador que el mundo entero ocultaba con más misterio que a la Ciudad Prohibida, pero que, sembrándome una espantosa confusión, se permitía mostrar en todo su esplendor en media calle, a vista y paciencia de niños, pensionados, Testigos de Jehová y vendedores de lotería. (79)

As part of a sculpture dedicated to Juan Rafael Mora, father of the Costa Rican citizens, the exposure of the male organ on a main square is acceptable and not morally censured because it stands as a sign of patriarchy and dominance by the father. Ending with a description of those who view the statue in modern-day Costa Rica, who do not question its propriety, this portion of Alicia’s monologue links the present to the past, reminding Costa Ricans of the foundation of their national identity, linked to paternal authority in the family. The way Istarú uses the statue in Hombres en escabeche reminds us of Nestor García-Canclini’s comments on the monument:

While historical objects in museums are removed from history and their intrinsic

meaning is frozen in an eternity where nothing will ever happen, monuments open to the urban dynamic facilitate the interaction of memory with change and the revitalization of heroes thanks to propaganda or transit: they continue struggling with the social movements that survive them. . . .Although sculptors resist abandoning the formulas of classical realism in representing the past or making heroes in short sleeves, monuments are kept up-to-date by the “irreverances” of the citizens. (222)

In contemplating the statue, Alicia dialogues with Costa Rica’s past, exposing the system of power which controls how men and women behave.

Recent attempts in Costa Rica to give men and women a more equal legal status have obtained only partial success. When Alicia's father encounters legal obstacles while divorcing her mother, he questions his lawyer friend Roberto, "¿quiénes son las mamitas que hicieron esa ley?", and he proposes the enactment of a "contraley" (126). Costa Ricans in the audience would recognize the law to which he is referring as the Bill for Women's True Equality, Proyecto de Ley sobre la Igualdad Real de la Mujer, which proposed "that in the decade of the 1990s at least 30 percent of high political posts should be occupied by women" (Calvo Fajardo 11). While this controversial proposal was eliminated when a compromise bill was passed in 1990, the law afforded stronger protection to women as victims in cases of sexual abuse and aggression, set the goal of eliminating gender stereotypes in teaching materials, appointed a Defender of Human Rights in Costa Rica, and required property purchases through public welfare programs to be registered in both spouses' names (Ansorena Montero 114-15). The father's retort, "¡Igualdad real, tu abuela!", confirms that this law is the subject of his

anger and is an example of reactions to the attempt to improve the legal status of both genders in Costa Rica (126). Tatiana Soto Cabrera reminds us, that, as of 1997, it was still common in Costa Rica for men to be interested not in sharing life with their partners but only in receiving benefits. Housework remains the exclusive obligation of many women, who are threatened by physical violence, sexual or psychological aggression, affective indifference or devaluation, and economic exploitation. (108)

Although some of the legal battle for true equality may have been won, it has yet to become a reality in daily life in Costa Rica.

Ana Istarú also incorporates elements in Hombres en escabeche to reach a larger audience beyond Costa Rica's national borders. Certainly the archetypal figures enable audience members from other Spanish-speaking countries and the United States to understand the play's themes. Two of these figures, The Philosopher and The Yuppie, resonate especially with Costa Ricans and Latin Americans. I have previously explored how Alicia exposes The Philosopher's hypocrisy, which renders him impotent. The Philosopher works within the university and aligns himself, through what he tells Alicia, with politically leftist ideology. Hombres en escabeche, along with other recent Latin American theatre, has critically reevaluated the university professor. Sabina Berman's play Entre Villa y una mujer desnuda (1994) and Myrna Casa's play Voces (2001) feature characters who are university professors in Mexico and Puerto Rico, respectively.<sup>154</sup> In Berman's play, Adrián, argues Stuart A. Day, is a "sophisticated

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<sup>154</sup> Vissepo Producciones, Inc. performed Voces, with the direction of Dean Zayas, on March 6 and 7 at Teatro de la Luna's 4<sup>th</sup> International Festival of Hispanic Theatre.

intellectual” aligned with the political left in Mexico City who narrates the myth of Pancho Villa, which “while appearing ‘revolutionary,’ supports conservative social values, legitimizing Adrián’s treatment of those around him and reinforcing traditional gender roles” (10). In Voces, The Professor seduces a female student, She, which unleashes a series of other relationships between The Professor, She, The Doctor, who is a psychologist, and a male student, He. Hombres en escabeche, Entre Villa y una mujer desnuda, and Voces reveal that these professors are not as liberal or revolutionary in their sexual relationships as they profess to be in politics.

Berman’s play also includes a male character, Ismael, who espouses a neoliberal political ideology. In Hombres en escabeche, there is a character, The Yuppie, who voices support for neoliberal economic policies such as opening Costa Rica’s markets to free trade and limiting governmental intervention in economic matters. Alicia goes on a date with him to an elegant restaurant because The Father had urged her to look for a man who would be “estable, maduro, leal, comprometido” (128). At first, The Yuppie appears to be a promising partner for Alicia, much like Ismael proves to be for Gina in Entre Villa y una mujer desnuda. However, The Yuppie’s behavior and conversation with Alicia reveal that he, unlike Ismael, maintains rather conservative opinions about male-female relationships.

As The Yuppie tells her about his job as a lawyer representing an American corporation, Alicia discovers that she completely disagrees with his vision of Costa Rica’s future. The Costa Rican government has accused the American company of

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Teatro de la Luna staged its own production of Entre Villa y una mujer desnuda in 1996.

violating laws that regulate the amount of tuna that it can capture in Costa Rican waters.<sup>155</sup> The Yuppie reveals that his legal firm is working to change the law to favor the American company. His attitude is that if a foreign company is the first to exploit a national natural resource, then the foreign company should derive all of the economic benefits. This astonishes Alicia, and she accuses him of giving away a natural resource to the United States.

The Yuppie changes the conversation to what he thinks will be a more neutral topic, Alicia. She tells him that she has had a few relationships before meeting him, which appears to be fine with him. He replies that “un par de historias no son muchas historias” (136). Despite his open-minded comment, Alicia soon discovers how The Yuppie really views male-female relationships. After she tells him that she had sex with The Philosopher, she notices a change in how he treats her. He had mentioned previously that he wanted to introduce her to his parents the next weekend. When he hears that she slept with The Philosopher, and that Alicia did not have an exclusive relationship with The Philosopher, he tells Alicia that it would not be a good idea for her to meet his parents: “No se si te van a gustar. Son muy convencionales, you know. Hay cosas que no entienden” (138). He makes Alicia angry when he instead proposes that she go away with him for the weekend. She understands that he is willing to have

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<sup>155</sup> The right to fish tuna in Costa Rican waters has long been a point of contention between Costa Rica and the United States. Rovira Mas notes that the governments signed an agreement about fishing for tuna during the Reagan administration in the 1980s, in the midst of the political crisis of the Nicaraguan Revolution (61). See the article from La Nación by Herrera for concerns in 1998 that foreign companies were fishing illegally for tuna in Costa Rican waters.

an affair with her, but that he will not marry her because society would not view her as an acceptable wife.

Realizing how important external appearances are to The Yuppie, Alicia makes him look ridiculous when he sees a former Costa Rican president at the restaurant and wants to impress him favorably. Alicia hits sore spots in the powerful, macho image that The Yuppie presents to others:

YUPI. (*Con intención*). Yo no lo parezco, pero puedo ser una fiera, un animal.

ALICIA. (*Fría*). Estoy segura.

YUPI. Y he tenido muchas, muchas historias. Las que llegan a conocerme saben que debajo de esta apariencia formal se esconde un casanova.

ALICIA. Tené cuidado. Dicen que los casanovas en el fondo son bisexuales.

YUPI. (*Grita*). ¡Un momento, yo no soy un maricón! (138)

The Yuppie's outburst attracts attention throughout the restaurant. The suggestion that he could be anything but heterosexual would damage the image he presents to society. He worries that the former president heard him scream. Having discovered how to make The Yuppie lose control, Alicia continues to bait him. When she has had enough, she prepares to leave the restaurant:

ALICIA. Deberías invitarlo a cenar a él.

YUPI. ¿Creés que no lo he intentado? ¡No es sino hoy que se fija en vos, digo, que se fija en mí! ¡Es mi oportunidad!

ALICIA. ¡Pues invitalo a él a tu fin de semana y dejá de lucirte con esta cualquiera!

YUPI. ¡A mí se me habla en otro tono! ¡Te dije que tengo mi carácter!

ALICIA. (*Sarcástica*). No sólo bisexual, sino que el único que te calienta es el señor expresidente.

YUPI. (*De pie. Estalla*). ¡Me limpio el culo con el expresidente! (*Silencio total en el restaurante. Se sienta liquidado y se cubre la cara con las manos*). (143)

As Alicia leaves *The Yuppie*, she tells him, “Buscate otras. Y llámame cuando tengás el país en baratillo,” and sinks his cellular telephone in a glass of water (144). Although Alicia had previously challenged *The Yuppie*’s heterosexual, macho image during their conversation, her final act of communication with him, which is non-verbal, also has sexual implications. When she sinks his phone in the glass, she sends him and the audience the visual message that, to her, he lacks the virility to sustain a fulfilling relationship with her. Alicia rejects the *Yuppie* not only because she disagrees with his political ideology but also because of his opinions about gender identity and male-female relationships.

Latin Americans in the audience certainly can associate *The Philosopher* and *The Yuppie* with prominent ideological positions in the region: the left and neoliberalism. Looking at the Spanish play script, Americans might be expected to have more difficulty comprehending the political stances. However, the performance at Teatro de la Luna helped make the scenes with *The Philosopher* and *The Yuppie* more meaningful to the English-speaking audience. As I have noted before, the translation into English by Teatro de la Luna emphasized *The Yuppie*’s complicity with the hegemony of the United States in his country. Additionally, seeing the actors and their wardrobe on the stage clarified the scenes with *The Philosopher*. His glasses were like those worn by John Lennon, and his clothing resembled that from the 1960s, which helped the

Americans in the audience to place him in the context of time period when leftist political views were commonplace among young people in the universities.

Sabina Berman's play responds to a "relatively new, ambiguous political climate in Mexico and to the need for the left to move forward by forming new political alliances" (Day 6). It also does not immediately discount the possibilities offered by neoliberalism. Istarú's play, however, suggests that neither the left, in the form of The Philosopher's Marxist discourse, nor neoliberalism provides the answer to Costa Rica's future. This could be because, in Costa Rica, after the Civil War of 1948, the Communist party, which was banned, and other forces on the far left of the political spectrum were seriously weakened. According to Jorge Rovira Mas, the sectors that emerged victorious after the war consolidated to form the Partido Liberación Nacional, with a political project "que ha favorecido . . . a numerosos grupos de la población, derramando sobre ellos una parte de los beneficios del crecimiento económico. . . ." (25). Since the hegemonic political powers were willing to redistribute some of the economic gains to the Costa Rican population, the left had little to offer materially to the people in exchange for their support.

A large number of Costa Ricans also have rejected neoliberalism. The best example of this is when thousands of Costa Ricans marched in downtown San José on March 23, 2000, to protest the Energy Combo Bill, or Ley de transformación del ICE, which proposed ending the nation's 50-year-old electricity and telecom monopoly. The general fear was that opening the monopoly to competition would eventually result in the privatization of the state-owned company (Herrera Ulloa). The massive protests

resulted in the eventual withdrawal of the bill from the Legislative Assembly.<sup>156</sup>

Although Alicia rejects *The Philosopher*, *The Yuppie*, and the political ideologies they represent, she does not propose an alternative political view. Perhaps this is to encourage the audience members to think on their own about other political possibilities for the future at the same time that they critically examine the characters' beliefs about relationships between men and women.

Istarú's play, in the scenes involving *The Philosopher* and *The Yuppie*, questions the construction of sex as binary. This is similar to what happens in *Entre Villa y una mujer desnuda*, in interactions between characters aligned with the political left and neoliberalism, and in *Voces*, in the heterosexual as well as homosexual relationships among the characters. The three plays suggest that gender is a performance, as Judith Butler has theorized: "As in other ritual social dramas, the action of gender requires a performance that is *repeated*. This repetition is at once a reenactment and reexperiencing of a set of meaning already socially established; and it is the mundane and ritualized form of their legitimation" (178). Perhaps the most vivid illustration of gender as performance in *Hombres en escabeche* occurs in the repetition of the scenes when *The Philosopher* and Alicia have sex. It is as if the characters follow a script: *The Philosopher* pays homage to the great Western philosophers, climaxes while crying out "Heidegger!", tells Alicia he is hungry, while he reclines on the sofa smoking, with Alicia sitting on the floor at his feet. At first, Alicia seems to follow the script, even

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<sup>156</sup> It should be noted that Costa Ricans have not rejected other neoliberal projects. For example, the country has signed free trade agreements with Chile and Canada and is currently planning to integrate economically with Central America in order to sign a free trade agreement with the United States.

perfecting her performance of it by pretending to climax while crying out “Heidegger!”. Of course, this performance cannot continue once the balance of power shifts between the characters. When Alicia publishes an article about philosophy, The Philosopher is impotent, and she tells him she is hungry, as she reclines on the sofa smoking, with The Philosopher sitting at her feet. This change to their scripted behavior exemplifies Butler’s ideas about gender identity: “Gender ought not to be construed as a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow; rather, gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a *stylized repetition of acts*” (188). The Philosopher is unable to accept this shifting identity, and the relationship ends.

Intertextual references are another element that Istarú employs in Hombres en escabeche to reach a larger, non-Costa Rican audience. The names of biblical and classical origin by which Alicia's father calls her because he cannot remember her name, including Beatriz, Débora, María, Penélope, resonate across cultures. If at first it seems unbelievable that a father could not recall his daughter's name, his use of these names of biblical and classical origin, however, suggests that he functions as a symbol of the patriarchy that attempts to regulate Costa Rican society.

One of the ways that this system of power tries to assert control is by maintaining a binary division between genders, which the play questions. As Judith Butler explains:

Because there is neither an “essence” that gender expresses or externalizes nor an objective ideal to which gender aspires, and because gender is not a fact, the various acts of gender create the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all. Gender is, thus, a construction that regularly conceals

its genesis; the tacit collective agreement to perform, produce, and sustain discrete and polar genders as cultural fictions is obscured by the credibility of those productions--and the punishments that attend not agreeing to believe in them; the construction “compels” our belief in its necessity and naturalness. (178)

In evoking Beatriz, Débora, María, and Penélope and applying these signs to his daughter, the father is categorizing this young female according to stereotyped notions of female behavior that are mostly passive in character. I have already commented on the model of the Virgin Mary, which The Father expects Alicia to imitate. It is true that some cultures might view Beatrice from Dante Alighieri's Divine Comedy and Penelope from Homer's Odyssey as positive figures. Beatrice, Dante's object of love, served as his guide to Heaven, and Penelope, Odysseus' wife, put off her suitors during her husband's absence by telling them she must first knit a shroud for her father-in-law and then unraveling her work each night. However, they are not protagonists in the literary works in which they appear. Beatrice guides Dante to a divine love of God, and Penelope does not directly repulse her suitors but rather deceives them. Deborah would appear to be a different figure, one who is strong and active. In the Bible, she inspired the Israelite army to defeat the Canaanites and commanded the male leaders of the tribe. However, it is unclear if The Father is referring to the biblical figure or to his mistress, who also is named Deborah. Perhaps a certain amount of female rebelliousness is tolerable to The Father and patriarchal society, so long as a woman accepts her role as mistress in an extramarital affair with a man. A woman who rebels against conventional religious mores is acceptable as long as she breaks the rules to favor a man. The dismissive tone of voice with which the actor said these names during the

festival performance also cleared up their ambiguity as signs because it attempted to shut off any sort of reply from Alicia.

By ignoring her name “Alicia,” the father implies that he is also ignoring the original Greek meaning of her name, which Alicia tells us is “noble, sincere.” At one point, Alicia gets very angry about The Father’s inability to remember her name. She yells at him: “¡Para que te enterés: Me llamo Lucrecia Borgia, Circe, Morgana! ¡Dalila! ¡Medea!” (146). She challenges him by calling herself other names of biblical or classical origin. Many of these women had been maligned publicly for their actions. Lucretia Borgia (1480-1519) was “regarded in legend as a demon poisoner who had incestuous relations with her father, Pope Alexander VI and her brother Cesare” (Xrefer, “A Dictionary”). Circe, also from Homer’s *Odyssey*, was a sorceress who transformed Odysseus’ men into beasts; Odysseus forced her to return them to their human form. Medea, Circe’s niece, in Greek legend killed her own two children when Jason left her for another woman. Morgan, according to some legends, plotted to overthrow her half-brother, King Arthur. Delilah, who is another biblical figure, convinced Samson to tell her that his hair was the secret of his strength and then, by cutting it, betrayed him to the Philistines.<sup>157</sup>

It could be that Istarú’s point in selecting these names to show how society has subjugated women in a variety of historical and cultural contexts. It also could appear that Alicia is only willing to imitate other role models, repeating acts punished by

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<sup>157</sup> For brief identifications of these classical and biblical figures, see [Xrefer](#) to search [A Dictionary of First Names](#), Oxford University Press, and [The Macmillan Encyclopedia 2001](#). The definitions and encyclopedia entries identify the literary sources to consult for further investigation.

patriarchal society. However, she moves beyond this position by crying next: “¡Me llamo Alicia! ¡Me llamo Alicia! ¡Me llamo Alicia!” (146). She wishes to assert her independence, that she is who she is, and that she does not want to be categorized or confined to playing a role scripted by society. Moreover, with this emphasis on the name Alicia, a cultured audience also recalls the Lewis Carroll character from Alice in Wonderland, a work which questioned social behavior in Victorian England. The intertextual references to these names encourage the audience to think about the roles society has assigned to men and women in different cultures.

To a scholar of Latin American theatre in the American academy, certain images and metaphors in Hombres en escabeche call to mind other plays from Latin America. Alicia's bridal gown in Hombres en escabeche deteriorates as her relationships with the men in her life fail. After The First Boyfriend leaves her for another woman, Alicia removes her gown's skirt to reveal a provocative mini-skirt. After her sexual relationships with The Philosopher and The Musician end, her bridal gown's sleeves appear torn. The stage directions indicate that, by the time Alicia encounters A Stranger at the play's end, it is difficult to tell she is wearing a bridal gown.

The disintegration of a bridal gown also appears in Egon Wolff's Flores de papel. In that play, Merluza deconstructs Eva's old bridal gown by tearing it and patching it with strips of newspaper and fabric from furniture and his own shirt. This occurs in the final scene of play whose action, according to Leon Lyday, centers "on the seduction of a lonely woman by a strange, seemingly unbalanced man. This seduction, is, however, psychological rather than sexual and is complicated by the fact that the submission involves willful self degradation on the woman's part" (23). Eva, a middle-class

Chilean, who possibly is a widow or is separated from her husband, invites the lower-class Merluza to stay in her apartment and permits him to put her wedding gown on her and alter it. The characters' names, Lyday reminds us, encourage us to understand the play on a symbolic level:

The name Eva, of course, is symbolic of woman in general, but may also be related to the fact that this woman's fall stems from an uncontrollable passion or desire here for companionship and affection. Merluza, meanwhile, is a type of deep water carnivorous fish-"hake" in English-but the term is also used in certain areas to mean "gigolo" and in others to signify "drunkenness." All three meanings or acceptations clearly apply to Merluza; he devours, at least psychologically, another human, he refers to himself on several occasions as a gigolo, and Eva attributes his momentary fits of trembling to alcoholism. (24-25)

Indeed, we can see that Merluza has psychologically devoured Eva in the final scene. While they presumably prepare for their wedding, Eva, who initially had done most of the talking, is unable to speak. Merluza covers her face with a large paper flower he has fashioned out of newspaper and has stuck in her gown's neckline. This image, according to Margaret Sayers Peden, represents that Eva "has been completely erased" ("Three Plays" 34).

Eva's psychological destruction as a result of her relationship with Merluza is completely different from what happens to Alicia at the end of Hombres en escabeche. In Flores de papel, Merluza destroys and then reconstructs Eva's bridal gown. Eva, whose personality has been completely effaced, does not protest his actions but rather allows him to determine how she dresses. In Hombres en escabeche, Alicia either

consciously changes her bridal gown's appearance, such as when she removes the long skirt to reveal a shorter one, or her gown's sleeves appear torn after the lights have dimmed in the theater to indicate a scene change. Alicia's gown at the end of the play does not look at all like the white, demure bridal attire that a patriarchal society would consider appropriate. Although she is in a state of despair, she always maintains agency, unlike Eva, who, in the course of her relationship with Merluza, loses her ability to speak.<sup>158</sup> Alicia's encounter with A Stranger gives her hope. Instead of the definite article, we see the indefinite a before the character's name in the play script and program. Could this signal a move away from archetypal figures? The dialogue between the two characters confirms this suspicion. Alicia has said at one point in the play: "Habría dado cualquier cosa por un hombre en escabeche" (101). What does she mean by "a man in marinade"? A marinade, in cooking, tenderizes a tough cut of meat and also imparts flavor. "A man in marinade," to Alicia, would be a man who is not afraid to express his emotions for her, and, contrary to views held by a patriarchal society, will not lose his identity by loving her. This type of man might not conform to a pre-conceived "ideal." He could also have some bitter characteristics, like the taste of vinegar in marinades used in Latin American cooking.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> I thank Sandra M. Cypess for sharing in conversations with me her ideas about images of bridal gowns in Latin American theatre.

<sup>159</sup> The Food Reference Website: Food Facts and Trivia defines escabeche as "pickled": "It is a spicy marinade of Spanish origin, used to season and preserve fried (occasionally poached) fish and sometimes poultry. It consists of vinegar or lime juice, onions, peppers and spices. The fish is first fried, then marinated overnight and served cold." It is found in North Africa, Jamaica, France, Belgium, Italy, and South America.

While Eva and Merluza in Flores de papel, Myra S. Gann notes, are imprisoned by their social class, Alicia and A Stranger do not appear to be bound by society's identity constraints (31). A Stranger tells Alicia about how his marriage failed after he wed his wife because of society's expectations when she got pregnant. His biggest regret is not having contact with his daughter, who also happens to be named Alicia. He is also completely aware of her name's symbolism. Both characters have realized the absurdity of a binary division of gender roles and want to move forward with their lives. A Stranger tells Alicia he is looking for a woman in a bridal gown, and Alicia, in the final lines of the play, tells him: "Yo soy la novia. . . .Hola. Me llamo Alicia" (164-65). Alicia, unlike Eva in Flores de papel, has maintained her identity. She has learned that it is impossible to confine her behavior by society's rules and instead presents herself as she is to A Stranger, who accepts her with a kiss.

Alicia, at the end of the play, appears to have found her "hombre en escabeche." This is just one metaphor involving food in the play, and it invites comparison with Cocinar hombres (1986), a play by Carmen Boullosa, which, originally billed for only six weeks, completed a nine-month run in Mexico City in 1991 (Costantino 199). Although the Boullosa play takes an entirely different, fantastical, approach to confront social myths that construct gender identity in a patriarchal society, it employs metaphors similar to the ones in the Istarú play. In Cocinar hombres, two witches, who have matured from age 10 to 23 overnight, debate whether they should join the other witches in their nightly mission to tempt men with desire or return to society, marry, and become mothers. Wine favors the first option, Ufe the second.

The two characters enter into a role play so that Ufe can decide what to do. Ufe, then, "cooks up a man." The notion of women cooking men, Susan Wehling has observed, "rather than cooking *for* men takes on a definite anti-patriarchal stance suggesting nothing less than revolution" (52). It truly is a heretical disobedience to that society because "it suggests women as capable of creation and production without the help or consent of man" (Wehling 59). Through the role play with the man she has "cooked up," Ufe realizes that loving a man as an equal partner will be impossible in the society in which she had been living. Ufe and Wine opt for the first choice and exit the play with a desire to form a new society, where they will select for themselves a different name everyday and create a new language, which appears in the play script as sentences that are spelled backwards.

The options explored by Wine and Ufe in Cocinar hombres and Alicia and A Stranger in Hombres de escabeche seem to be similar to the rejection of gender binarism as theorized by Judith Butler. The ending of Cocinar hombres appears to be a rejection of patriarchal society's roles that categorize women as mothers or lovers. Wine and Ufe resist fixed identities, emphasizing that they will continually change their names. Alicia and A Stranger also appear to reject this binarism by refusing to conform to rules governing men's and women's behavior

Alicia, in Hombres en escabeche, starts out cooking *for* men. Her first boyfriend asks her to bake him cookies, because he loves "las cosas dulces" (89). She complies, but, after he leaves her for another woman, she becomes frustrated with society's division of women into two classes: "la una era yo, la noviecita pulcra, digna de ser presentada a mamita y la otra era 'la otra', la que podía comerse al novio entero, sin

cubiertos y con mostaza" (94). She then vows to become "la otra" and openly expresses a desire to "consumir hombres" (93). The other woman can also be consumed by men, as Alicia explains: "La otra mujer es la versión humana del spaghetti alla puttanesca" (100). Besides the play on the word puta in Spanish, spaghetti alla puttanesca is an Italian dish prepared with spicy peppers. In other words, it is something flavorful. Alicia recognizes she has a long way to go, saying that she "no llegaba ni a lasaña de espinacas" (101). However, her sexual relationships with The Philosopher and The Musician ultimately do not bring her happiness. The narrowly-defined gender roles impede the establishment of an emotionally fulfilling relationship. It is only after the stereotypes have been broken down that Alicia sees hopeful possibilities for a relationship with A Stranger.

For much of this chapter I have focused on gender identity in Hombres en escabeche, but, in reading these plays in the context of Latin American theatre studies in the American academy, it would also be possible to consider the implications of Hombres en escabeche, Flores de papel, and Cocinar hombres in relation to artistic creativity. Although critics agree that, in Flores de papel, Merluza wishes to destroy Eva psychologically, they offer different interpretations of his motivations. Diana Taylor suggests that Merluza attacks Eva because she is an artist and that "the play's central conflict . . . vitally reflects the confrontation between the affirmation and negation of artistic creation" (65). Taylor's reading of the play and Merluza's motivations is pessimistic: "He feels threatened by all forms of creativity, by anything that does not derive from himself. Eva's artistic attempts, no matter how conventional and trivial, emphasize his own inability to create, and trigger his destructiveness, his 'anti-art'" (66).

Eva's psychological destruction as a result of her relationship with Merluza is completely different from what happens to Alicia in Hombres en escabeche. Alicia embarks upon her career by studying the philosophy of art at the university, where she publishes an article. Her first creation is with words. After she ends her relationship with The Philosopher, she tells The Yuppie that she has transferred to the School of Fine Arts at the university, where she specializes in the plastic arts. When she meets The Musician, she remains determined to be an artist. Although at the end of the play Alicia's bridal gown is worse for wear, and she is in a state of emotional despair, she does not lose her identity after her relationships fail with The Philosopher, The Yuppie, and The Musician; nor does she abandon her desire to be an artist.

In fact, Alicia's relationships with the three men have a strong impact on her evolution as an artist. Each man views life from a particular ideological stance, which Alicia rejects for its narrowness. That is not to say that her encounters with them do not have any effect at all on her, but rather that, in confronting their ideas, she asserts her own artistic independence. The Philosopher represents political commitment to art and the theory that art can transform a society. Unfortunately, he neglects the emotional aspect of art, the love and the beauty that inspire the artist's creativity. The Yuppie approaches life with the goal of obtaining maximum economic profit for himself. He is even willing to sell out his own country if it will benefit him. In the artistic world, The Yuppie's equivalent would be an artist who only creates what the client will buy, someone who sells out his or her creative principles in order to become rich. Political commitment or aesthetic principles only matter in the creative process if they will generate a commercial profit.

The Musician, who is also an artist, reveals how he views life as he dances with Alicia:

ALICIA. ¿En qué estás pensando?

MUSICO. No pienso. Me dedico a ser feliz. La eternidad debería ser esto: un saxofón, una botella de vino y una diosa entre los brazos.

ALICIA. Hasta mañana por la mañana cuando ya no te acordés de mí.

MUSICO. No me digás eso, Alicia. Para mí, el amor es como la música: más tocás un instrumento, más dulce es su sonido. Dejate querer.

ALICIA. Lo siento.

MUSICO. No quiero que sintás nada, salvo la melodía. (*Interrumpe el baile, aunque la música siempre se escucha*). Mirá, tengo mi método.

ALICIA. ¿Para qué?

MUSICA. Para leer el futuro. Dame tu mano. (*Ella se la tiende*). A ver. . . . Veo A una mujer estupenda, pero invisible. Sólo pueden verla los niños, los inocentes y los pájaros moribundos.

ALICIA. (*Divertida*). ¿Y qué sos vos?

MUSICO. Digamos que una mezcla. Si se duerme bajo un árbol de duraznos, el que los prueba visita el Paraíso. Si se mira en el agua, el que la bebe se enamora. Si por ventura, azar o capricho toca la frente de un hombre, este puede construir un palacio o derribar una fortaleza. (148-49)

The Musician prefers not to think too much. Instead, he lets his emotions rule. His poetic descriptions of Alicia suggest that, as an artist, he adopts a purely aesthetic stance in his creations. When he describes himself to Alicia in the final part of the above

quotation, he privileges aesthetics to such an extent that what he says lacks any meaning. What he says sounds beautiful on the surface, but does not make sense. To The Musician, Alicia is a goddess, playing the role of a muse. He and Alicia fall in love, but he is unable to deal with the practicalities of life when she gets pregnant. He feels that he must choose between the saxophone and having a family, and Alicia opts to end the relationship with him. In each relationship with the three men, Alicia refuses to confine her creativity to a single category that governs the function of art.

Although the Boullosa play takes an entirely different, fantastical approach to artistic freedom, it picks up Istarú's challenge to question authority and systems of power by optimistically inventing a new reality and new society. While Wine and Ufe in Cocinar hombres opt to exit the world in which they are living and to create a new reality, Alicia chooses to remain in the world, but to move outside boundaries, showing us that the artist can break the bonds of established conventions. The challenge that both Ana Istarú and Carmen Boullosa are representing is to be unafraid to create in new ways.

Much like the character Alicia that she has created moves beyond artistic boundaries, Istarú, with Hombres en escabeche, seems to have transcended some of the conventions characterizing the contemporary theatrical medium in San José, Costa Rica. Istarú has written and performed a commercially successful play. However, unlike the light comedies that typically attract large audiences in the commercially-oriented theatrical circuit, her comedy delivers a powerful social critique. Her use of humor appeals to audiences at the same time that it serves as a vehicle expressing her political commitment. Istarú's engagement with current Costa Rican socio-political realities in this play, however, is not the only manner in which she aligns herself with other New

Wave playwrights. By using metaphors, archetypes, and imagery, and establishing connections with other plays to craft her work, she aesthetically communicates emotions and ideas to audiences, which is an element often present in the dramaturgy of New Wave authors.

Hombres en escabeche is an example of the possibility for performing a play outside of its original cultural context in Costa Rica. I would like to emphasize that the crossing of cultures in theatre should not be viewed as a binary division between national and foreign, but rather, as Marvin Carlson proposes, a continuum, a series of possible relationships between the culturally familiar and the foreign. The performance of Hombres en escabeche at the Virginia Teatro de la Luna theatre festival falls into different places on Carlson's continuum. Since Teatro Surco did not modify its staging for the festival audience, the performance could be considered "the recreation of an entire play from another culture with no attempt to accommodate it to the familiar" (Carlson 50). However, the translation provided by Teatro de la Luna adapted parts of the play so that it would seem more familiar to the English-speaking audience, and it also retained some foreign elements so that the audience would remain aware that it was viewing a Costa Rican play. Finally, Istarú's text itself blends numerous elements that would be foreign or familiar to Costa Ricans and to audiences beyond her country's borders.

One possible effect of intercultural theatre, according to Erika Fischer-Lichte, is that it "may be understood as an institution that serves the purpose of constructing and/or performing cultural identity" ("Intercultural Theatre"). Istarú's play questions the fixed, stable nature of gender identity and artistic creativity. Cultural identity, as

well, is constructed, and, as Néstor García-Canclini points out, is no longer confined by geographical boundaries:

Today all cultures are border cultures. All the arts develop in relation to the other arts; handicrafts migrate from the countryside to the city; movies, videos, and songs that recount events of one people are interchanged with others. These cultures lose the exclusive relation with their territory, but they gain in communication and knowledge. (261)

Hombres en escabeche confronts its audience with references situated in a variety of cultural contexts. It not only encourages the audience to think about male-female relationships and the function of art in society but also, as an intercultural performance, “enables the spectators to perceive themselves in different ways all the time and to constitute everchanging different selves--and perhaps, additionally to construct everchanging and new cultural identities” (Fischer-Lichte, “Intercultural Theatre” 24).

Ana Istarú, in her latest play, employs foreign images and metaphors, while at the same time she engages the audience in a critique of the familiar. As Alicia tells us in the play, after remarking that men are unable to accept a combination of "la santa y la zorra" in a woman: "Por supuesto, me refiero únicamente a los hombres de América Latina. . . .Y de unos cinco continentes más" (145). Speaking to broad human and social problems, Hombres en escabeche recognizes the past, the construction of Costa Rican national literary discourse, resonates with the tradition of Latin American theatre studies in the United States, and reaches an audience that is diverse, transcending national boundaries without rejecting its own roots.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

As the previous chapters have demonstrated, contemporary Costa Rican dramatists explore in their plays controversial political, economic, and cultural issues that impact the daily lives of their Costa Rican readers and audiences. Among the critical matters addressed by these New Wave authors, who began writing texts in the 1980s during the national upheaval caused by Costa Rica's economic collapse and the Central American revolutions, is the impact of globalization during the 1990s. By questioning the different forms in which this process of cross-cultural exchange operates thematically in their plays and by authoring works that are intercultural in nature, the playwrights communicate their own ideas about globalization and encourage their fellow Costa Ricans to critically examine their country's interactions with different parts of the world.

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, globalization continues to be a crucial issue in Costa Rica. On January 8, 2003, negotiations officially launched for a free trade agreement between the United States, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua (Barquero, Ulibarri). As these Central American nations prepare to regionally integrate their economic policies and discuss proposals with the United States, such as the Central American presidents did with U.S. President George W. Bush during a visit to Washington on April 10, 2003, the urgency persists for Costa Ricans to reflect on the dynamics of global exchanges (Feigenblatt). These transnational contacts function not only on political and economic levels, but also culturally, as exemplified by the migration of Central Americans to the United States and the participation of Costa Rican theatrical companies in theatre festivals abroad.

The order in which my study presents readings of Costa Rican plays traces the various stances adopted by their authors toward globalization. Leda Cavallini, in Inquilinos del árbol, and Miguel Rojas, in Madriguera de ilusiones and Hogar dulce hogar, criticize the unidirectional flow of market-oriented globalizing forces that homogenize local identities. These two playwrights instead stress the need to nurture one's local sense of identity, or roots. Their plays and those chosen for analysis in subsequent chapters, Víctor Valdelomar's El ángel de la tormenta and Linda Berrón's Olimpia, and Ana Istarú's Hombres en escabeche, suggest different ways that Costa Ricans can respond to the ideologies circulating across cultures. For example, one can reject influences that are harmful to the local context, as Cavallini and Rojas do in Inquilinos del árbol, Madriguera de ilusiones, and Hogar dulce hogar when they question the consumerist mentality by showing how the characters who embrace this attitude destroy their own and their families and friends' lives and homes and as Istarú does in Hombres en escabeche during scenes with the archetypal characters The Philosopher and The Yuppie by suggesting that neither Marxism nor neoliberalism is a viable option in Costa Rican politics.

If one determines that some influences could enhance the local environment, one can accept them, building links to these ideas, and transform or adapt them if necessary. For instance, Rojas makes a saxophone, a musical instrument not native to Costa Rica, an integral character in Madriguera de ilusiones, and Istarú alludes to biblical and classical figures and uses Western archetypes in Hombres en escabeche. In both plays, the dramatists incorporate elements originating from foreign cultures during different historical time periods that have become part of life in Costa Rica and many places in

the world. Exploring links with other cultures, these playwrights address issues that are pertinent not only for Costa Ricans, but also for audiences from different cultural contexts who share these bonds. Rojas uses the saxophone in his play to comment on the role of art in contemporary society, reminding his readers that art can express the emotional nature of the human being, which he feels should be a vital part of one's identity in an age when many give primacy to logic and base their actions upon potential market profitability. Like Rojas, Istarú confronts an issue present in many societies. Her use of the biblical and classical figures and archetypes suggests that beliefs that subjugate the feminine to the masculine, which are transmitted through religion and mythology, have not been completely demystified. Arguing for an equal distribution of power between the sexes, rather than repeating previously assigned roles governing male-female relationships in patriarchal societies, Istarú's play resonates in many cultural contexts.

While the dramatists featured in this project recognize some commonality among Costa Rican and other cultures, they also at times transform the historical and theatrical texts that inspired their plays in order to more closely accommodate this material for Costa Rican readers and audiences. Valdelomar and Berrón set their plays El ángel de la tormenta and Olimpia in Medieval and Revolutionary France, establishing parallels between the Catholic crusade against Catharism and Olympe de Gouges's participation in the Revolution and current situations in Costa Rica. Although they incorporate some details acquired from historical accounts of these French events, they depart from the bibliographical sources to encourage their readers and audiences to question U.S. hegemony in Costa Rica during the Nicaraguan counterrevolution and the role of

French and American feminist theories in the Costa Rican fight to improve women's access to political positions. Istarú maintains some of the sexual themes from Dario Fo, Franca Rame, and Jacopo Fo's play Sesso? Grazie, tanto per gradire!, which inspired her to write Hombres en escabeche. Yet she changes this material from the Italian play to focus on current social permutations in her own country, particularly the role of Marxism and neoliberalism in Costa Rica. Like Valdelomar and Berrón, Istarú acknowledges the legacies that Costa Rica shares with European cultures. However, instead of merely copying from foreign models, these three playwrights transform them in order to make their works relevant to situations that are specific to Costa Rica.

A final stance toward globalization presented in the plays chosen for this study emphasizes a two-way flow of influences, suggesting that one's own culture can propose its ideas to other parts of the world. Valdelomar and Berrón construct allegories in their plays to explore how transnational or regional networks can address political, economic, and cultural concerns. The peace council formed by the kingdoms in Languedoc in El ángel de la tormenta alludes to the Central American Peace Plan, a regional agreement proposed by Costa Rican President Oscar Arias that fostered dialogue among the Central American nations rather than acceptance of the United States's policy of using military force against the revolutionary movements. As the same signatories of the Peace Plan currently negotiate a Free Trade Agreement with the United States, Valdelomar's play reminds Costa Ricans of how regional networks can benefit their lives and also warns of the dangers posed by hegemonic forces. The friendship between Olimpia and Thérèse, which bridges the gap in social class that threatens to divide the two women, in Berrón's play similarly suggests that the Costa

Rican women's movement can operate as part of a transnational network, using feminist theories from a variety of cultural contexts to construct an intellectual approach to the struggle for equal rights as well as local activism that seeks to improve the daily lives of Costa Rican women and men from all social classes.

Although the dramatists explore how one can form networks beyond national borders and acknowledge ties to different parts of the world, they do not lose sight of the importance of one's own identity, which becomes apparent as my study investigates the intercultural nature of their plays. While Berrón and Valdelomar set their plays during different French historical periods, and Istarú selects archetypes, imagery, and metaphors from a variety of cultural contexts for a play that she sets in Costa Rica and performs at home and abroad, they do so in order to address the contemporary Costa Rican socio-political context. Their plays and those of Cavallini and Rojas, which take place in contemporary Costa Rica and contain imagery evocative of present and past Costa Rican cultures, read as allegories alluding to the reduction in the size of the Welfare State, U.S. hegemony during 1980s, the Bill for Women's True Equality, and role of Marxism and neoliberalism in Costa Rican politics. Set in contemporary Costa Rica and abroad and alluding to Costa Rican and other cultures, the plays selected for this study, rather than being foreign "or" familiar, seem instead to be foreign "and" familiar, adopting and adapting elements from abroad as they explore situations relevant to contemporary Costa Rica. It is not necessary, it seems, to have to choose the olive tree "or" the Lexus, to use Thomas Friedman's metaphorical choice, but one can engage in transcultural processes in the sense created by Fernando Ortiz.

The production histories of the plays considered in my project illustrate the concerns voiced by Cavallini and Rojas, in their writings about the theatrical medium in San José, about the tendency of Costa Rican theatrical companies to select repertoires of foreign plays. Plays by New Wave authors do not always reach the stage, and, if they do, they attract a small audience. However, there is some interest in producing these works within the theatrical circuit supported by the government. For example, although Cavallini's Inquilinos del árbol and Rojas's Madriguera de ilusiones and Hogar dulce hogar have not yet been performed, the Teatro Universitario produced Valdelomar's El ángel de la tormenta, and the Compañía Nacional de Teatro staged Berrón's Olimpia. At times, an independent theatrical company decides to produce a New Wave play, as was the case when Teatro Surco staged Istarú's Hombres en escabeche. The critical and commercial success of Istarú's play is a hopeful sign for the future of Costa Rican New Wave dramaturgy. While theatre remains a commodity in the commercially-oriented circuit in San José, the playwrights continue writing texts and view the future of Costa Rican theatre with optimism. For example, Miguel Rojas, in a personal interview, shares his vision of this theatre in the twenty-first century:

Sobrevivirá y tendrá cada día más solidez, más personalidad, más carácter. Es de esperar, idealmente, que sea creador de su propia identidad ética, estética y social como gran triangulación de un arte espacio-temporal verdaderamente significativo. Así mismo, tendrá más proyección internacional, se le abrirán puertas fuera de sus fronteras. De hecho es excesivamente joven, cerca de treinta años. Y ya sortea los altibajos de una madurez anticipada, como si fuera una experiencia propia de otros ámbitos históricos de la raza humana. De algo estoy

seguro, llegó para quedarse y encontrar su propio camino. Démosle tiempo.

What Rojas anticipates is beginning to happen, as Costa Rican plays circulate beyond national borders and Costa Rican theatrical companies travel outside of their country to perform at theatre festivals. The anthology edited by Carolyn Bell and Patricia Fumero, the presence of Costa Rican theatrical companies at the Teatro de la Luna festivals in Arlington, Virginia, and the performance of the Grupo Universitario under the direction of María Bonilla at the Fifth Latin American Theatre Conference organized by the University of Kansas in 2003 are just some concrete examples of the attention being paid to Costa Rican theatre.

As contemporary Costa Rican dramaturgy attracts more attention, there is a need for additional research. Scholars have begun to disseminate readings of some Costa Rican New Wave plays, but many more remain that are worthy of consideration. My approach to the plays and playwrights in this study opens up avenues of future inquiry. For instance, it seems feasible to examine how dramatists from another Latin American country intervene in debates about globalization and produce intercultural texts or to examine the extent to which Latin American plays performed abroad contribute to this dialogue about globalization and are intercultural. It also would be helpful to do a cross-cultural study comparing how playwrights from Costa Rica and other cultural contexts explore the process of transnational exchange. Such a project could even be organized thematically, for example, expanding upon the links that I have pointed out between Istarú's play and works from Mexico and Puerto Rico that focus upon the male intellectual in order to comment on Marxist and neoliberal political ideologies that circulate to different parts of the world.

In conclusion, the texts of the Costa Rican dramatists examined in this project have migrated within and beyond national boundaries. Plays, however, are just one example of what can flow from one culture to another during the process of globalization. These playwrights suggest that one's local cultural context can serve as an anchor giving one a sense of identity in the midst of globalizing ideological currents. This anchor, however, is not unmovable. A cultural identity can change, but it should do so after careful consideration. Moreover, such a change should not be externally imposed by hegemonic forces. These playwrights, in their works written between 1990 and 2000, urge readers and audiences in Costa Rica and in different parts of the world to be attentive to the impact of various forms of globalization.

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