

Hybridity, Genre, and Ideology in 18th-Century Cuban Theatre: A Reappraisal of *El príncipe jardinero y fingido Cloridano*

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Doubtless the crowning of the Bourbon Philip V ensured that French influence on Spanish and Spanish-American culture would spread. At the same time, the exchanges between Italy and Spain during the Habsburg period could not simply be erased, and they in fact would continue long after the official dissolution of the Habsburg empire, which had served as a vehicle for Spanish cultural influence on Western Europe. The entanglements of culture and empire yielded hybrids that Spain had on many occasions in its history welcomed, and others that it had rejected or involuntarily assimilated. All of this holds true for Spain's New World colonies too, which display striking examples of hybridity through theatre in the eighteenth century. This has been overlooked by scholars who qualify eighteenth-century drama in Spanish America as either rococo or neoclassical, using as critical models the histories of Spanish, French or Italian theatre. But *new drama*, different from the Spanish baroque *comedia nueva* and the Spanish enlightenment *comedia nueva*, and unlike too the French neoclassical drama and Italian opera from the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries, existed in eighteenth-century Spanish America. What colonial dramatists meant when they used the term *comedia nueva* was an adaptation of Spanish baroque drama, French neoclassical drama and Italian opera to the Spanish-American stage, as tragic or comic opera.

A Cuban example of the Spanish-American new drama, *El príncipe jardinero y fingido Cloridano*, is a hybrid in structural and cultural terms. First published between 1730 and 1733 in Seville and republished throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, this new drama was written by Santiago Antonio Pita y Borroto (?-1755), the son of a prominent Creole family from Havana who by 1742 would become a captain of the capital's militia batallion.¹ *El príncipe jardinero* has a basic plot line. The *infanta* Aurora of Thrace and Prince Fadrique of Athens, disguised as the gardener Cloridano, move in fits and starts toward union. The latter is the center of the plot, and

the episodes are as paths emanating from and, conversely, leading to, the wedding of the two royals. As Pita's title underscores, nearly the entire play takes place in one garden setting or another. Honorable sentiments and passionate arias abound, and yet it parodies the discourse of courtly love and social honor, exaggerating the vices and virtues of its characters. Not surprisingly, Pita's new drama subscribes to a medieval political theology of Gothic-Castilian origins which was still very much alive in Bourbon Spain. The need to communicate politico-religious absolutism explains the presence of royalty in the play, while Pita's desire to correct social vices in eighteenth-century Cuba explains his election of the comic genre.

I begin this essay with a discussion of genre that reveals several types of hybridity in Pita's drama and in others from eighteenth-century Spanish America. Thereafter I turn to the hybridity embedded in Pita's political theology. Finally, I address the relationships between the hybridities of genre and ideology in my analysis of *El príncipe jardinero's* plot, character development, and ideal public.

In his introductory remarks, José Juan Arrom situates *El príncipe jardinero* in the Calderonian school while noting also the influence of Agustín Moreto y Cabaña and Lope de Vega. He downplays the Italian influence on Pita, claiming that this adaptation of Giacinto Andrea Cicognini's *Il principe giardiniero* (a three-act play in prose) abandons its original inspiration. While Calderón, Moreto, and Lope were possibly Pita's sources, other Spanish, French, and Italian playwrights must be considered. Certainly, the Spaniard Francisco de Leiva Ramírez de Arellano (1630-1676), whose *La infeliz Aurora y fineza acreditada* was still being performed as far away as Lima in the eighteenth century (Lohmann Villena 388), was known to Pita. But the baroque *comedia nueva* alone cannot explain Spanish-American drama in the eighteenth century.

Pita's *new drama*, as I translate the Spanish-American *comedia nueva*, does not designate itself as such, nor has this designation been explained by scholars.² Like the new tragedy, the new comedy has a happy ending.³ Rather than the ending, the status of characters and a playwright's aims steered his plot toward one of the two dramatic genres (new comedy or new tragedy). Unlike Aristotelian tragedy, as it was understood by purveyors of the new drama, the new comedy does not purge compassion and fear nor, as a general rule, are its characters those of new tragedy (i.e. heroes and kings). *El príncipe jardinero* was written as a libretto – i.e., to be performed as an opera, which earned the designation *comedia nueva* (or *comédia nova*) in eighteenth-century Spanish and Portuguese America.⁴

Because of the type of action and the social status of the principal characters, this Cuban libretto is a *heroic comedy*.⁵ The seventeenth-century heroic comedy was a tragicomedy, but not all tragicomedies were heroic. According to Corneille, a comedy that included a status of person (nobility, royalty) belonging to tragedy, should be called a *comédie héroïque* to distinguish it from comedies that truly followed the precepts for the genre. Corneille's influence on Peruvian eighteenth-century theatre has been suggested by Irving Leonard, but scarcely analyzed and documented. Yet Corneille's designation *comédie héroïque* elucidates a passage from the Peruvian Pedro de Peralta Barnuevo's *Imagen política* (1714), which in turn shall clarify our understanding of the development of Spanish-American new drama:

De consentimiento de todas las Naciones son los Españoles los Príncipes del Theatro . . . Sólo ella parece que ha sabido usar con perfección inimitable todas las especies de Poemas de Theatro, a quienes sin diferencia da el nombre de Comedias, excusando como funesta la Tragedia en todo su rigor. La Sátyra apenas se conoce en las Jocosas; el enredo es admirable en las Cortesanas, la política es grande en las Heroicas, y la hermosura es insigne en las de Fábula; y en todas la invención es ingeniosa, la gracia singular, la conclusión feliz, y el verso sublime. (Peralta quoted by Leonard, *Obras dramáticas* 20-21)

Although Leonard quotes Peralta for a different purpose, I am convinced that the above passage reveals Peralta's familiarity with Corneille's subgenre of comedy, which required a dignity of politics to match the status of its characters borrowed from the genre of tragedy. Heroic dramas ("las [comedias] Heroicas") were, it is clear to me, Peralta's favorites. Tragedies with a happy ending that involved heroes and kings were in sync with his predilection for epic poetry. "Alabar la virtud," he writes, "mas noble assumpto es, que censurar el vicio: el que escribe celebrando un Heroè, mas util es, que el que refiere condenando un perverso" (Peralta quoted by Leonard in *Obras dramáticas* 20-1). Peralta's *La Rodoguna* (1708?), an adaptation of Corneille's *Rodogune*, bespeaks his fondness for *nouvelle tragédie*. The dignity of tragedy, for Corneille (and for Peralta), rested on ideology not amorous intrigue.⁶ The hero's love of country subordinated to his love for a woman is shown to be bad politics. While the Peruvian also wrote comic operas, these do not involve royals and heroes. Even tragedies that ended well were, for Peralta, not to be confused with heroic comedies: they were tragedies. The distinction is an important one, for it concerns the genre of Pita's *El príncipe jardinero* and his contribution to the development of Spanish-American new drama.

None of Peralta's plays can be characterized as a *heroic comedy*, as Corneille used the term, and yet Peralta did practice a different sort of hybridity. In view of Pita's borrowings from Italian theatre, it is important to recall here that Peralta not only adapted *nouvelle tragédie* to the Peruvian stage but did so by drawing from the Italian theatre. The *loa* for *La Rodoguna* (*Obras dramáticas cortas* 123-139) is replete with stage and performance instructions.⁷ In addition to the twenty-five actors, there are three choruses to do the singing. Although the *loa* to *La Rodoguna* opens with actors performing their verses (i.e. recitative), thereafter different characters and the three choruses sing together and separately, before being interrupted by an aria, at which point the pattern of recitative, ensemble, and aria is repeated. Peralta's borrowings from Corneille, although different from Pita's debts to heroic comedy, are significant insofar as they blend with Italian opera to produce a Gallic-Italian drama unlike the dominant Spanish drama of the same period – and unlike the French and Italian dramas too.

Opere regiocomiche were very much in vogue in Italy, in the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries, thanks to Spanish viceroys and their Italian relations. These were the same plays that Corneille designated heroic comedies, they were usually by Spanish playwrights, and they were rewritten to be performed as operas.⁸ Through Corneille's plays and by way of Italian and French performers, and even Crown officials in Spanish America, opera known as *comedia nueva* entered in the first decade of the eighteenth century and by the third decade was flourishing in the Spanish-American capitals.⁹ Peralta's posture toward French neoclassical drama and Italian opera reveals some discomfort with the French and Italian willingness to adapt Spanish dramas to neoclassical drama and opera, respectively.¹⁰ It is clear from his comments that the colonial new drama should be distinguished from neoclassical drama as this was practiced in France during the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries.¹¹ Such drama was hyperrational: its prose devoid of sound, its comedy off-color, its tragedy wanting in dramatic conflict and resolution. It is no less clear that Peralta *adapted* rather than adopted Italian opera, and thus the new drama in Peru was seeking to inject reason into the dominant sensuality of Italian opera.¹²

Pita's *El príncipe jardinero* would chart a different course for Cuban new drama, which should also be distinguished from the school in New Spain. In Mexico City new drama was practiced by Eusebio Vela, and new tragedy rather than new comedy dominated the opera scene. According to Vela's editors, the musical director for some of his operas was Le Main, a Frenchman doubtless familiar with Corneille and the post-Corneille, operatic culture of

France and Italy. Vela in New Spain wrote new tragedies; Peralta in Peru penned new tragedies and new comedies. Pita wrote a new comedy that involves the status of persons normally seen, during the Spanish-American eighteenth century, in new tragedy. He took the seventeenth-century heroic comedy and re-wrote it for opera, for Spanish-American new drama, producing a hybrid genre which is not the equivalent of the baroque tragicomedy. By returning to Corneille's dramatic theory, one can measure the significance of Pita's comic opera to the development of Spanish-American new drama.

According to Corneille, a drama that verses on affairs of state and the conflict between love for one's country and love for one's woman is not necessarily a tragedy:

. . . [S]'il ne s'y rencontre point de péril de vie, de pertes d'Etats, ou de bannissement, je ne pense pas qu'il aye droit de prendre un nom plus relevé que celui de comédie; mais pour répondre aucunement à la dignité des personnes dont celui-là représente les actions, je me suis hasardé d'y ajouter l'épithète d'héroïque, pour le distinguer d'avec les comédies ordinaires. Cela est sans exemple parmi les anciens; mais aussi il est sans exemple parmi eux de mettre des rois sur le théâtre sans quelqu'un de ces grands périls. (47)

Neither kingdom nor life is endangered in Pita's drama. It cannot be considered a tragedy. At the same time, royals and heroes are placed in farcical situations, which conforms to Corneille's definition of a specific type of comedy, the heroic comedy. Whereas new drama in Peru and New Spain clearly divided into new tragedy and new comedy, the Cuban Pita's *El príncipe jardinero* was a hybrid new drama, and, undoubtedly one of the first heroic-comic operas to appear in the colonies.

Inseparable from the question of genre is that of the play's ideology. The enduring medieval configuration that Ernst Kantorowicz labelled "the king's two bodies" is firmly ensconced in the verses of the actors, as it was in the memory of Pita. The hybrid nature of the subject manifests itself in Pita's heroic comedy in a hybrid subjectivity, which is derived omnipotence. The King of Thrace speaks simultaneously as an aristocratic father and an omnipotent entity whose power is derived from the divine. Nature legitimates the social superiority of the nobility, and Aurora's individual nature must conform to this ideological configuration of nature. Moreover, she is the daughter of a nobleman whom the divine has sanctioned superior to all nobility, and her conformance is therefore a divine charge as well. Aurora therefore participates in the hybrid subjectivity of her father by virtue of the fact that she is the blood of her father. Unlike the plot of new tragedy, Pita's

allows Aurora and Fadrique to choose love over the State, and only Fadrique's true identity and status as her natural and social equal ensures a politically and religiously acceptable resolution to the dramatic conflict.

Act I, the *protasis* of *El príncipe jardinero*, establishes that Prince Fadrique is disguised as the gardener Cloridano with whom the *infanta* Aurora and her servant Flora have fallen in love. The King of Thrace wishes his daughter to marry a prince. Prince Meleandro of Dalmatia and Prince Polidoro of Achaea are competing for Aurora's hand and future kingdom, while she opposes her father's wishes at every turn. Because the outer action of the drama must be stressed in Act I, recitative (and, specifically, it appears from the text, *secco* recitative) dominates.

Pita's heroic comedy opens with an exchange between an off-stage ensemble and Flora:

Dentro canta la música.

*Al salir el sol miró
de Aurora las luces bellas,
y, supendiéndose en ellas,
su hermosura se eclipsó.*

Córrese un bastidor y descúbrese un jardín.

FLORA:

(Sale.)

Su Alteza sale, cantad:
suene esa dulce armonía,
por si su melancolía
da alivios a su deidad.

Dentro música.

*Duplicados arreboles
en Aurora goza el suelo:
luego dos veces es cielo,
pues tiene Aurora dos soles.*

Salen Aurora, Ismenia y Narcisa.

AURORA:

¡Qué acento tan lisonjero!

ISMENIA:

En ti no es adulación.

AURORA:

¿Quién hizo aquesta canción?

FLORA:

Cloridano, el jardinero.

AURORA:

¿Cloridano?

NARCISA:

Sí, señora,

que es jardinero de amores,

y más bien que siembra flores,

echa coplas a la aurora. (vv. 1-21; 30-1)

What follows appears to be simple recitative until verses 65-71, which Narcisa and Flora deliver *a dúo*. The *parlando* character of recitative here would mimic the structures of a gossip session on the mistress' love, which is the subject of the two servants' verses:

NARCISA:

Flora, las que ejercitamos (*Las dos*)

en servir a humanas diosas,

nunca estamos más gustosas

que cuando les murmuramos

Tratemos las dos ahora

algo de murmuración.

¿Qué dices de esta pasión?

FLORA:

Que tiene amor mi señora.

NARCISA:

Muy breve me respondiste,

y a mí, según me parece,

los príncipes aborrece;

mas, ¿en qué lo conociste? (vv. 65-76; 33)

Prince Polidoro of Achaea and Prince Meleandro of Dalmatia vie for Aurora's affections throughout Act I. Near the end of the latter, Polidoro complains to the King of Thrace that Aurora's disdain for their company has become extreme. Meleandro re-articulates the complaint against the Infanta so that her manner, rather than her lack of affection for either man, becomes the object of censure. Aurora has rejected both suitors in uncourtly terms: "de su rigor es la queja,/pues es en tan grande grado,/que deja de ser rigor/y pasa ya a ser agravio" (I, vv. 804-807; 58). This rejection constitutes an offense that is not only affective and personal but, more importantly, social: she has damaged the very honor code, or system, in which noble men and women are placed by their birth. Her father responds that this sort of severity is Aurora's "inclination" – her "very strange, natural disposition" (I, vv. 808-809; 58), to which Polidoro reacts, "La razón ha de vencer/del natural lo tirano" (I, vv.

810-11; 58). It is clear that Polidoro's disapproval is directed toward not only Aurora but her father too. The King's honor is, the Prince suggests, predicated on his daughter's behavior. The two princes' case against Aurora has emphasized the particular (disdain for particular subjects), then the general (the social system of honor that all noble subjects *naturally* recognize), and finally the particular (the King's honor besmirched by his daughter's behavior). The rhetoric of Polidoro and Meleandro is effective. The King finally views the issue from their perspective, describing himself as the injured party:

No pretendo disculpar
 su grosero desacato:
 antes, príncipes, intento
 hablarla ahora despacio,
 dándome por ofendido
 y justamente agraviado
 de su pertinaz desdén,
 esquivez y desagrado. . . (I, vv. 812-819; 58)

Aurora has dishonored her father, who promises her suitors that he shall make her choose between them. He orders the gentlemen to prepare parties, games, musical performances, even the eighteenth-century favorite, *academias* (I, vv.832-35; 59), which provided the privileged and polite set an opportunity to vette their poetic furor and ordinarily produced a long-winded account of the royal festivities. The King then claims that what Aurora began under duress she shall finish with satisfaction:

que ella, atenta a mi precepto
 y a justa razón de estado
 acabará en gusto propio
 lo que empezará en mandato;
 y así, voy a prevenirla,
 ofendido y enojado. (I, vv. 836-41; 59)

This ringing endorsement of the institution of arranged marriage likely will resonate for many modern readers with all the conviction of a serial rapist's denial. But it is important to note that in the rhetoric of these verses Polidoro's and Meleandro's second type of argument from the particular, which had persuaded the King that he was the injured party, yields to a second type of argument from the general. It is argued that Aurora's behavior undermines not only the honor code that buttresses the institution of courtly love but the very foundations of the *res publica*, of the *sociedad de estamentos* detailed by José Antonio Maravall. Aurora's actions therefore deny both the

titled noblemen's natural superiority, which legitimated the subordination of the *hidalgos* and *pechugos*, and the king's position as apex of the social pyramid. As I quoted Peralta earlier, "la política es grande en las [comedias] heroicas." For ideological reasons (including the enduring medieval Catholic tradition of Spain and Spanish America), Pita's heroic comedy portrays Meleandro and Polidoro as reasonable chaps who present their grievance to the king in the rhetoric of the tribunal.

But the social altitude of the King of Thrace is not only a translation of nature, not only a positive law founded on natural law. It was not primarily as a particular citizen, as a human subject, that the King suffered an *agravio*; it was as a *divine* subject, as a human reflection of the infinite. The hybridity of the monarch as subject is underlined by the hybrid subjectivity that his verses manifest throughout this heroic comedy. To highlight the unique nature and social position of the King, both Meleandro and Polidoro are directly removed from the barrister:

POLIDORO:

Impío amor, que me has hecho
de tus iras triste blanco.

MELEANDRO:

Amor, que me has constituido
término de tus agravios.

POLIDORO:

¿Cuándo de tu airada flecha
veré los filos cansados?

MELEANDRO:

¿Cuándo de tu arpón severo
veré el impulso más blanco? (I, vv. 844-51; 59)

Both suitors now show to the audience their passions rather than their noble reasoning. As noblemen, they are called but not chosen: they remain human while the King of Thrace embodies both the human and the divine. This contrast is drawn out until the end of Act I.

Cloridano's servant, Lamparón, lampoons courtly love from within the dramatic action, and his verses illustrate what a Spanish contemporary of Pita, Ignacio de Luzán, defined as *simulation*. Simulation consists in one's betrayal of the interlocutor's expectations, through calculated but obvious naiveté and saying the unexpected.¹³ In *El príncipe jardinero*, the onstage interlocutor of Luzán's definition is displaced by the opera's spectator. The audience is expecting to hear and see a buffoon in action, based on Lamparón's interaction with his master Cloridano and the two princes, each of whom is

acting out his own chivalric romance. Lamparón, within the action of the drama, appears to acknowledge his social superiors. Act I ends with an out-of-earshot, but not out-of-character, address by Lamparón that begins as a gloss of Polidoro's and Meneandro's courtly settlement of their competing claims to Aurora. But Lamparón's aside turns critical: "¡Oh, qué lindo par de locos!/Todo, todo lo he escuchado;/cumpliré como alcahuete:/voy a darle parte a mi amo" (vv. 882-885; 61), revealing to spectators that Lamparón may be a glutton (and a coward, to boot), but he also knows more than he lets on in the presence of princes. While such jocular asides entertain the audience, they also facilitate an ideological consensus with the latter about the contrasting natures/bodies of princes (human) and kings (human and divine).

By turning the spectator into an interlocutor, Pita could communicate other political and moral lessons that would not be so well-received by his eighteenth-century public. Lamparón engages in humor drawn from the middle, establishing the dramatic action as the middle point between himself and the spectator by stepping out of the dramatic action: "Así, señores, ahora/que atentamente reparo/que han venido a la comedia/sin haberlos convidado./díganme, por vida suya,/que no puedo tolerarlo:/si se predicara aquí/mañana un sermón, acaso,/pregunto, señores míos,/¿vinieran a oírlo tantos?" (vv. 886-895; 61). In other words, the spectator here becomes an interlocutor *malgré lui*.

It is clear to me why Pita shuns verisimilitude through Lamparón's address to the audience. As the buffoon of this heroic comedy, Lamparón instructs the spectators to view this dramatic fiction *as a fiction*; to remove from their everyday, historical existence any immoral or antisocial behavior akin to that which they have seen or will see performed. Not Polidoro's and Meneandro's, but feigning of a more insidious nature than theirs or Fadrique's charade, is the target of Lamparón's diatribe, which he directs to the spectators-interlocutors: "Que no vinieran es cierto:/hubiera mil embarazos/y fingieran más achaques/por no venir a escucharlo,/que suelen fingir algunos/el viernes, por no ayunarlo./Para oír este sermón,/¿quién duda que don Fulano/y Zutanito estuvieran/achacosos de una mano?/Y las señoras doncellas,/tengo por averiguado,/que estuvieran todas ellas/afligidas de un gran flato" (I, vv. 896-909; 61-2).

In Lamparón's closing verses to Act I, Pita makes explicit that the purpose of *El príncipe jardinero* is to reform the customs of early-eighteenth-century Cuban society. He thus adds to his attacks on gentleman and noble damsels by singling out elderly women: "También aquí en mi auditorio/hay, si mal no lo reparo,/grande número de viejas,/¡Oh, qué lastimoso caso!/"

Muchas habrá que a oír misa/no irán, quizá, por sus años,/y a la comedia se vienen/poco a poco tropezando” (I, vv. 910-917; 62). Next Lamparón disparages the elderly men in the audience: “Allí descubro, señores,/un buen viejo y desmolado/que tendrá, a mi parecer,/como seis varas de largo;/pero no es sino una vieja;/miento, que no es sino un calvo:/váyase, abuelo, a rezar,/vaya y tome su rosario;/déjese de estos bureos/que está ya muy acabado” (I, vv. 918-27; 62).

Finally, Act I ends with Lamparón’s verses to noblewomen who live beyond their means: “Y las damas presumidas,/de zapatillo picado,/que le vuelvan a sus dueños/lo que han pedido prestado” (I, vv. 928-31; 62). That men and women had pride in their appearance and a special interest in *making an appearance* in such public venues, is confirmed by José Martín Félix de Arrate’s *Llave del Nuevo Mundo*. Writing in 1761, this Cuban chronicler gives a positive spin to the narcissistic ambitions and displays of fellow Creoles in Havana:

Al lucimiento y primor del vestuario corresponde el aseo y limpieza de las personas, siendo en el sexo mujeril casi extremo este cuidado; pero todo contribuye, así en los varones como en las hembras, para hacerlos más decentes y bien parecidos, pues por lo general son los unos y las otras en rostros y cuerpos de buena proporción, gentileza y arte, prendas de que se suelen pagar algo, pero de que también saben aprovecharse airosamente en los actos y ocasiones que se les ofrecen, sin demasiada afectación, manifestándolas con gracia y compostura en los bailes, y con decencia y honestidad en los conciertos y representaciones. (94)

These social types doubtless existed also in New Spain, to which well-heeled Spaniards and Creoles in Cuba traveled for business or for pleasure and sent their children to study, and in the viceroyalty of Peru, where they parade through the satirical writings of Caviedes and, later, Carrió de la Vadera and Terralla y Landa. Such widely-displayed and thinly-disguised narcissism gave new meaning to the phrase “bad acting.” Such historical feigning had deleterious consequences for Pita’s society that the poetical feigning demonstrated by Prince Fadrique did not. Some thirty years after Pita’s heroic comedy was written, Arrate would summarize them in his geographical account of Havana: soaring levels of consumer debt, shortage of liquid currency, and scarce capital investment.¹⁴

Act II, the *epitasis* of Pita’s new comedy, is full of arias and ensemble parts that reveal the inner lives of characters and reiterate the themes of feigning and misfortune. It again presents to theatre-goers the level-headed

but lovestruck Aurora as well as her servant-girl Flora. The underlying nominalist philosophy of Mediterranean baroque theatre is continued by this *mala* of the drama. Flora's very name indicates an *apparent* virtue (the flowering of chastity, of the Church, of God's earthly creation) that her outward actions serve to cultivate within the drama. Unlike Arrom, I do not believe that Flora's verses to her "auditorio" in Act II serve the same function as Lamparón's verses quoted above. The precarious nature of Pita's creation consists in Flora's boldness, her titillation, her wantonness, which reveal Lamparón's verses at the end of Act I to be a rhetoric of prevention.

In purely structural terms, Flora's public is not Lamparón's – it is not the audience who is watching the *El príncipe jardinero*. Flora's recitative advances the outer action and the inner action of the plot. Specifically, it reveals what and why she is plotting. Doubtless her verses would resonate with females who were attending Pita's comedy, who would perhaps see themselves in the false dilemma (either Mary or Magdalene) presented to women by the honor code of men:

¿Dónde hay paciencia que baste
para tanta honra maldita?
¿Que por ser honrada yo,
y porque el mundo lo diga,
haya yo de sentenciarme
a una lastimosa vida,
peleando con mis deseos
y venciéndome a mí misma,
cuando es tan monstruoso el mundo,
que si vivo recogida,
dicen que soy santularia,
y que es todo hipocresía?
Y si al paseo me inclino,
al sarao o montería,
luego lo notan, y dicen
que todo es rufianería. (II, vv. 283-298; 72)

Flora measures herself against her audience within the drama – i.e., the other female characters and gossipmongers (principals and those who are not present on stage and whom the audience must imagine) who would condemn her: “¿Qué ley me puede obligar/a que me esté recogida/en mi casa, sin salir,/hecha una Santa Rufina,/porque [I]o murmure el vulgo/y lo noten las vecinas,/cuando este maldito encierro/trae un millón de desdichas,/ como es la necesidad,/ desnudez y hambre continua,/ pudiendo yo a mi placer/

andar buscando la vida?" (II, vv. 303-314; 72-3). This passage marks a turning point in the drama with respect to the character Flora and it encourages theatre-goers to recognize her as an evil flower.

The poor servant girl who safeguards her honor, as patriarchal society defines it, by preserving her chastity and by recognizing that loyalty to one's mistress must supersede loyalty to class and self, has quit being good, for good. In a violent condemnation of the moral latitude denied women, Flora reveals her planned seduction of Cloridano: "¡Vaya mucho enhoramala/honra tan necia y prolija!/No admito leyes de honor,/que son leyes desabridas;/mi honor es sólo mi gusto,/mi regalo y mi delicia./Esto supuesto, yo vengo/con cautelosa malicia/a buscar a Cloridano/ahora que estoy bien prendida/y a ponérmelo delante/como quien le ruega y brinda . . ." (vv. 319-330; 73). Flora is so enticingly deceptive, so self-liberating, that many spectators might very well have chosen her, not Aurora, as a behavioral model.

In this dramatic context, the adage *Mala yerba nunca muere* is equivocal rather than sententious. Some female spectators might have added silently to the adage, "because she's having too much fun." Certainly, Flora, the *mala yerba* in the royal garden of Thrace, does have a lot more "fun," actively rejecting self-abnegation, than does the impassioned but honorable Aurora. Female spectators might have been tempted to imitate the excesses of these dramatic characters, since their indulgence of the passions is much greater than that which women in Cuban society – at least honorable women – were allowed. (It is also greater than that which Peralta implicitly prescribed for drama, as he criticized the sensualism of Italian opera and muted it in his own operas.) But I am convinced that the affective displacement of the Virgin and Mother Mary figure, Aurora, by the modern-day Mary Magdalene, Flora, was possible not only among females in the audience. I suspect that at least one or two of the male spectators would not have told this Cuban Magdalene that there was no room at the inn. Lamparón's earlier discourse anticipated such possibilities and Pita attempts further to erase them by having Flora go beyond physical self-gratification and into emotional territory that should no longer be tempting but, instead, confrontational and dangerous to the soul. The medieval political theology that still undergirded Spanish-American society was worn in spots and Pita's heroic comedy attempts to patch these.

Flora defines herself in opposition to the *buena* of the drama, Aurora, who remains on stage along with her sister Ismenia throughout these verses. At the same time Flora questions the virtuous conduct and appearance of these women from within the action of the drama. Pacing back and forth, she challenges them and their social status as respectable young ladies (*señoritas*):

“¿Habr  en mi auditorio dama/tan airosa ni pulida?/Yo apuesto que m s de cuatro/ embusteras presumidas,/de las que me est n mirando,/est n rabiando de envidia./No hay sino tener paciencia/o reventar, se oritas;/mas instrumentos tocaron:/oigamos esta letrica” (vv. 339-348; 73-4). Flora is now not only skirts the social codes: she is hell-bent and hell-bound. She justifies her behavior with the suggestion that all women, deep-down, want to be like her, with which Pita intended to ruffle, at long last, any and all sympathetic feathers belonging to the female spectators. These would not have this character speaking for *them*.

Flora’s verses are immediately followed by others performed by the *buenos* of Pita’s comedy, and it should be noted that Pita, like new dramatists before him, incorporates music and song into the very plot. Cloridano performs contrasting and passionate arias which are seconded in recitative by Aurora. Like the choral parts in Greek tragedy, the arias here summon pathos through lyricism and redouble the emotional tension by offering enigmatic platitudes that each female character hears as if they constituted prophesy favorable to her cause. Each of the three women (Flora and Aurora and Ismenia) desperately applies the aria to herself, in brief recitative passages, as the spectators watch.

In the next scene Lampar n and Cloridano appear on stage in an obvious parody of the pastoral opera. Cloridano has a musical instrument in tow and he proceeds to beg his servant to end his suffering song. After Lampar n’s bumblingly demurral, there are several recitative exchanges between the female pretenders to the gardener Cloridano’s hand. Lampar n then makes explicit that this Cuban new drama is not only a parody of the pastoral but of courtly love as expressed in the romance of chivalry:

LAMPAR N:

Se or,  has perdido el seso?

CLORIDANO:

Hoy sabr  Aurora quien soy.

LAMPAR N:

Pues, se or, yo voy

a asegurar mi pescuezo:

no quiero me den garrote

por andar en esta danza,

ni quiero ser Sancho Panza,

ya que t  eres don Quijote. (vv. 633-640; 85)¹⁵

Shortly thereafter, the King confronts his daughter. She tells him that he should already know the cause of her melancholy, that she is surprised

that he is surprised and estranged by its severity (II, vv. 704-706; 87). The King's rejoinder parades the motif that I detailed earlier in my discussion of Act I: she must stop tyrannizing him and depriving Thrace of reason of state – of due pleasure in her marriage to an equal.¹⁶ Desperate, Aurora confronts Lamparón, demanding that he reveal Cloridano's true identity. The Infanta bribes the servant and Lamparón tells her that Cloridano is actually the Prince of Athens. Aurora, in a monologue, rages against the "jardinero traidor" who killed her brother Lidoro: "nuevamente tirano," or in disguise, Prince Fadrique has come to kill her too, she believes (Act II, vv. 791-7; 91).

Against the backdrop of festivities sponsored by the King and the two Princes, Prince Polidoro enters, and swears to Aurora that he aspires only to love her. Pita's noble female character then exhibits not only tyrannical severity but also syllogistic wit: "Discreto andáis./ (Aparte.)/ (Pruebe mi rigor tirano.)/ Vuelvo, príncipe, a deciros/ que discreto habéis andado/ en amarme de esta suerte./ porque debo aseguraros/que no sois el elegido;/ y así aqueste desengaño/ pena alguna os causará./ pues, como habéis afirmado./ me amabais sin aspirar/ a ser dueño de mi mano" (II, vv. 867-878; 93). Polidoro falsely concludes that Meleandro is the chosen one and communicates that to him offstage. Meleandro then enters and is turned out by Aurora: "Idos, príncipe, con Dios./ que ya de oíros me enfado" (II, vv. 925-6; 95). The festivities that were supposed to conclude with Aurora's selection of a mate – with her conformance to divine reason of state – are halted by the King's discovery of Cloridano's identity. He orders the imprisonment of Prince Fadrique and Lamparón in the palace tower (II, vv. 927-48; 96-7). Although this episode entails a risk to Fadrique's life and future kingdom, it is too ancillary to render Pita's opera a tragedy by Corneille's definition. The hero's peril is, in other words, just more starch to thicken the plot, whose center is Cloridano's and Aurora's hitherto *anti-social* relationship – i.e., reciprocal admiration shown by non-reciprocals. Indeed, the recognition and subsequent imprisonment of Fadrique serves to mend the ideological fabric of society rent by a romance between *infanta* and gardener.

The *epitasis* of *El príncipe jardinero* continues into Act III. Fadrique's incarceration prompts Aurora, with cell key in hand and under cover of darkness, to make her way to the royal garden. By traveling alone and by night (circumstances that belie her name and her status), Aurora flouts the social code of honor that is co-dependent with divine reason of state. Prince Fadrique too is a violator, who states unequivocally that he has chosen Aurora over his future kingdom: "Por vos, ilustre princesa,/por vuestro amor, gran señora,/dejé el supremo dosel/y de mi reino las glorias" (III, vv. 231-4; 108).

The King of Thrace tells his friends that Aurora's freeing of Fadrique, who killed her brother and the King's would-be successor, has ruined him: "Sólo la muerte apetezco./ ¡Ah, hija infame, que así/perdiste el decoro regio!" (III, vv. 480-82; 116).

It would be repetitive to detail here the ensemble parts, recitative, and arias of Act III, but I will summarize the inner and outer actions of the plot that are communicated by the music and singing. The plot is further complicated before Fadrique presents himself to Polidoro, Meleandro, and the King of Thrace, as the Prince of Athens. He tells Aurora's father that she shall wear the sacred crown of Athens. Prince Polidoro shall marry Ismenia, Aurora's sister, and receive the kingdom of Thrace. Prince Meleandro shall marry Princess Libia, Fadrique's sister (III, vv. 651-702; 124-5). None of this is pleasing to Flora, who complains, "Sólo yo quedo doncella" (III, v. 735; 126). But she is not alone in her grief. Lamparón too rejects his master's plans: "¿Soy yo acaso Sancho Panza?/No quiero ínsula, señor./yo quiero moneda franca" (III, vv. 754-56; 127). Fadrique then issues an order that pleases both of these imagination-dominant commoners:

FADRIQUE:

Seis mil ducados de renta
te doy en mis reales cajas,
y dale la mano a Flora.

LAMPARÓN:

Logróla aquesta bellaca.

FLORA:

Gracias a Dios que salí
de esta doncellez tirana. (III, vv.757-62; 128)

In colonial new tragedy, Flora and Lamparón would not end half as well. Moreover, Aurora's and Fadrique's behavior would be severely punished in order to purge the audience of compassion and fear.¹⁷ In Pita's heroic-comedy, as in colonial new comedy in general, even the choice of love over state ends in royal bliss.

In this essay I have begun to address the significant innovations that such new dramatists as Santiago de Pita introduced into colonial theatre. In eighteenth-century Spanish America, new drama, or *comedia nueva*, meant either tragic or comic opera. The musical directions provided by Pita's text alone (the music has not been found nor to my knowledge has anyone looked for it) suggest a complicated score and a sophisticated performance like those found in Eusebio Vela's new tragedies from early-eighteenth-century Mexico. But *El príncipe jardinero* is a heroic-comic opera that ridicules the pastoral

opera, honor plays, and even the chivalric romance. Pita ridiculed these written and performative texts by parodying them through his own characters. At the same time he aimed to put aright Cuban society in the early-eighteenth century by drawing the comedy's spectators into a conversation with Lamparón and other characters, so that the play becomes a mirror of and for Cuban society. Cuba, like the rest of the Bourbon empire, had to be firmly grounded in the political theology that Pita espoused, an ideology that turned on the hybridity of the monarch, who was in effect both human and divine. To correct social vices and to avoid political ones, Pita availed himself of a hybrid genre, the heroic comedy. The latter, like all new drama from eighteenth-century Spanish America, I view as a hybrid of Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and local performance traditions. Such hybridity requires that Hispanists tackle issues of periodization and aesthetics within a broader framework – in short, that we build models and find a critical language that truly reflect what was being written, acted, and sung in eighteenth-century Spanish and Portuguese America.

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Notes

1. See José Juan Arrom's introduction in Pita 8-9. A biography for Pita is provided by Arrom and by Octavio Smith's monograph.

2. Arrom, *Historia* 91-7, 99-104, 111-12 places Pita (and such playwrights as Pedro de Peralta Barnuevo, Eusebio Vela, and Fernando de Orbea, whom I designate as *new dramatists*) in the "ocaso del barroco americano."

3. Pierre Corneille 88-9 expresses his preference for tragedies with happy endings. See his further justification of *nouvelle tragédie*, Corneille 93. According to Pita's Spanish contemporary, Ignacio de Luzán, *Poética* bk. 3, ch. 6; 351-2, Aristotle did indeed accept tragedies with happy endings but he did not consider them the best. Aristotle preferred a tragedy in which the reversal of fortune is achieved through peripety and/or agnition, to a tragedy with no peripety and no agnition or a tragedy with more than one peripety and/or agnition. Luzán preferred tragedies with happy endings that were *implexas* (i.e. involved peripety and/or agnition) and *dobles* (i.e. involved more than one peripety and/or agnition). His *La virtud coronada* (1742), a Peninsular counterpart of the Spanish-American new tragedy, is an adaptation of Metastasio's tragic opera (*melodramma*), *Il Ciro riconosciuto* (Vienna, 1736).

4. Fernando de Orbea's *La conquista de Santa Fe de Bogotá* and Eusebio Vela's published dramas are self-titled *comedias nuevas*, or *new dramas*. No one has examined why the authors chose the designation *comedia nueva*, which did not mean simply an "original" or "new" play (i.e. "una nueva comedia"). Spanish-American new drama must not be conflated with the Spanish and Italian baroque *comedia nueva* or the neoclassical Spanish drama of the late-eighteenth century (e.g. Fernández de Moratín's, *Comedia nueva*, *El café*). The case of Brazil also appears to confirm my understanding of such terms as new drama, new comedy, and new tragedy. See the photographic reproductions of some title pages from Brazilian operas in the second half of the eighteenth century, which were inspired by Italian operas from the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries, in Moura 6-7. The titles suggest

to me that the Brazilians adapted Metastasio's melodrammas and other tragic operas as *Tragédia nova* and other operas as *Comédia nova*.

5. Arrom in Pita 27 ties *El príncipe jardinero* to "teatro bufo" by way of the servant Flora. My linking of Pita's play to *opera* (including *opera buffa*), which is signalled in other colonial new dramas by the nomenclature (*comedia nueva*), is clearly based on different criteria. The Spanish-American new drama was not *like* opera; it was opera.

6. Corneille:

... Lorsqu'on met sur la scène un simple intrigue d'amour entre des rois, et qu'ils ne courent aucun péril, ni de leur vie, ni de leur Etat, je ne crois pas que, bien que les personnes soient illustres [i.e. suited to the genre of tragedy], l'action le soit assez pour s'élever jusques à la tragédie. Sa dignité demande quelque grand intérêt d'Etat, ou quelque passion plus noble et plus mâle que l'amour, telles que sont l'ambition ou la vengeance, et veur donner à craindre des malheurs plus grands que la perte d'une maîtresse. Il est à propos d'y mêler l'amour, parce qu'il a toujours beaucoup d'agrément, et peut servir de fondement à ces intérêts, et à ces autres passions dont je parle; mais il faut qu'il se contente du second rang dans le poème, et leur laisse le premier. (46)

Corneille 47 claims that his own tragedy *Le Cid* follows these precepts.

7. For the dating of this operetta, see Jerry Williams 192. In *Obras dramáticas cortas* 48, the date given is 1711.

8. See Benedetto Croce 113-28, 142-44. The Latin-derived *commedia dell'arte* was in decline in 17th-century Naples. Translations, reductions, and re-writings of Spanish dramas, especially those penned by Lope de Vega and Calderón de la Barca dominated Italian theatre. Spanish playwrights, actors, and actresses poured into Naples. Calderón's death in 1681 was announced throughout Naples and Italy as a national tragedy. Along with the Italian re-writes of Spanish dramas, Spanish comedies and *loas* were performed in Spanish, in private houses and royal palaces, into the early-eighteenth century. Like the *Teatro eroico e politico dei Vicere' di Napoli* (1692), Peralta's plays were often in honor of viceroys, which motivated some of their various names in Naples: *opere regie*, *opere comiche*, *opere regiocomiche*, *opere sceniche*, *rappresentazioni sceniche*, etc. Italian versions were, like their Spanish originals, not what we think of as operas but were recited with a prologue, *entremeses* or *intermezzi*, and musical accompaniment, and performed by a variety of characters including the masked Arlecchino, Brighella, and Pulcinella. The Spanish viceroy of Naples, Juan Francisco Tomás Lorenzo de la Cerda y Enríquez de Ribera (1660-1711), the eighth Duke de Medinaceli, ordered the rebuilding of the theatrehouse in San Bartolommeo, transforming it into a five-ring affair equipped to accommodate every sort of theatrical machinery. During the reign of the Duke of Medinaceli (1696-1702), the musical drama—what we today call Italian "opera"—quantitatively overtook the Neapolitan versions of Spanish plays and the plays in Spanish. During the intermezzi prose-theatre companies performed. The Duke provided a viceregal subsidy for the owners of the playhouse in San Bartolommeo, which was able to maintain a company of singers chosen from the finest in Italy. In 1702 the Duke de Medinaceli was succeeded by the Marquis de Villena (1702-1707), recently the viceroy of Sicily (1701-1702), who would found the Real Academia de la Lengua in Madrid in 1714. On the latter's relationship to the eighteenth-century reform of the arts and the sciences in Naples and Spain, see Gregorio de Andrés, Giovanni Blasi, and Giuseppe Coniglio.

9. In addition to the musicians and other performance artists whom I mentioned earlier in this essay, Crown officials were part of transatlantic exchange in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. For example, in 1680, when Antonio Juan Luis de la Cerda, the seventh Duke de Medinaceli, took over as Spanish secretary of state, Tomás Antonio de la Cerda y Enríquez (1638-1692), Count de Paredes and Marquis de la Laguna de Camero-Viejo, was assigned the coveted post of viceroy of New Spain (1680-1686). Tomás was the younger brother of the eighth Duke de Medinaceli and future viceroy of Naples. This Duke's sixth daughter, Juana de la Cerda y Aragón, would marry the tenth Duke de Alburquerque, Francisco Fernández de la Cueva, future viceroy of New Spain (1702-1710), and grandson of the eighth

Duke de Albuquerque, Francisco Fernández de la Cueva (1619-1676), former viceroy of New Spain (1653-1660). The Count de Paredes would be succeeded by the Count de la Monclova (1686-8). When the latter became viceroy of Peru (1689-1705), another member of the Cerda clan, Gaspar de la Cerda y Sandoval (1653-1697), seventh Count de Galve, would succeed him as viceroy of New Spain (1688-1696). See the studies by J. Ignacio Rubio Mañé and Cesáreo Fernández Duro. Such exchange had to have influenced performance cultures and traditions on both sides of the Atlantic. The American exchange of officials—the transfer and promotion of captain-generals and viceroys from one kingdom or viceroyalty to another—also would have influenced the development of the new drama in New Spain, Peru, and Cuba.

10. His opinions are remarkably similar to those aired by Gianvicenzo Gravina, the teacher and mentor of Metastasio, in *Della Ragion Poetica*. Gravina 79-80 blasts the Italian dramatists for imitating foreigners (the Spanish and French authors of seventeenth-century *comedia nueva*, *nouvelle comédie* and *nouvelle tragédie*), vowing to make “nuove favole e nuovi favoleggiatori” by cutting a path away from foreigners and toward the Ancients.

11. Peralta quoted by Leonard in *Obras dramáticas* 20-1: “Los Antiguos, que no conocieron más que dos especies de Poemas Dramáticos, carecían de invención y hermosura de Scena, así en lo jocoso o satyrico de la Comedia, como en lo funesto de la Tragedia. Entre los modernos la Italia inventora de la ópera sólo ha intentado formar una gloria a los sentidos, sin darle parte a la razón; imítala la Francia y, aunque en las demás especies en que retiene el carácter antiguo de lo Cómico y Trágico es sublime a su gusto, lo poco sonoro de la prosa, y la libertad de la Sátira en las unas, y la falta de enredo y de conclusión en las otras las haze estrañas aun al genio severo de nuestra Nación.”

12. Orbea's new tragedy, *La conquista de Santa Fe de Bogotá*, written and performed in the viceroyalty of Peru probably during the first or second decade of the eighteenth century, confirms what I have stated regarding the Gallic-Italian hybrid initiated by Peralta in Lima. In a quasi-*licenzia*, one of its characters salutes the theatregoers in attendance and asks them to forgive the dramatic license applied to the Peruvians' conquest of Santa Fe. The latter was not established as a viceregal capital until 1719, which explains why Orbea directed his new tragedy to a theatrecrowd in Lima, for which Orbea's editor ridicules him.

13. Luzán, *Arte* 162: “La risa que de las cosas medias procede, tiene su origen del engañar la expectación ajena con respuestas y dichos impensados y muy fuera de lo que se creía y esperaba, o de entender los dichos ajenos diversamente de lo que suenan; a lo primero llama Quintiliano simulación, a lo segundo disimulación. . . .”

14. Arrate 93: “Esta poca moderación en los primeros [the rich] y exceso notable en los segundos [the poor] es causa de atrasarse aquéllos en sus caudales y de que no se adelanten éstos en sus conveniencias, pues por lo general todo lo que sobra de los gastos precisos para la mantención o sustento corporal se consume en el fausto y delicadeza del vestuario y en lo brillante y primoroso de las calesas, de que es crecido el número y continuo el uso, y en otros destinos de ostentación y gusto, de suerte que no conformándose muchas veces el recibo con la data, o la entrada con la salida, resulta el que queden al cabo del año empeñados; lo que se hace constante por el poco o ningún dinero que, a excepción de muy señaladas casas, se suele encontrar en las de los vecinos más acomodados, al mismo tiempo que se hacen notorias sus deudas o créditos.”

15. Later, in an exchange between Aurora and Lamparón, the former demands that Lamparón reveal the identity of the gardening impostor. In Pita, II, vv.748-752; 88, the buffoon replies: “Es un hombre, señora, que delira:/los libros del manchego don Quijote/le traen su pobre juicio al estricote,/ pues con libros de caballería/me rompe esta cabeza cada día.”

16. II, vv. 707-712; 87: “Basten, basten, Aurora, los enojos,/enjuga el necio llanto de los ojos;/no me tiranices el contento/que me ha de conducir tu casamiento;/ni con tu displicencia y tu desgracia/urupes el placer que espera Tracia.”

17. In Vela's *La pérdida de España*, for example, the subordination of politico-religious concerns to personal concerns (specifically, human love) is punished severely. Both love and kingdom

are lost. The political and moral lessons learned, however, are fashioned into an upbeat close, a happy ending.

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