Soundtrack of an (After)Life: Performing Transfemicide, Mourning, and Pop Music in *La Prietty Guoman* by César Enríquez

Christina Baker

Pretty Woman, walking down the street
Pretty Woman, the kind I'd like to meet

These lines from Roy Orbison's catchy pop tune, "Oh, Pretty Woman," for many, conjure memories of the cinema classic, *Pretty Woman* (1990). The film is more often thought of as a romantic comedy even though the entire plot revolves around the fact that Julia Roberts' character is a sex worker on the streets of Los Angeles, hired by a wealthy businessman (Richard Gere's character) to accompany him to events. Inspired by the romantic side of the film, as well as the gritty realities of prostitution, César Enríquez's *teatro-cabaret* piece, *La Prietty Guoman*, comes to life.[1] The protagonist, La Prietty, however, differs from Roberts' character in two notable ways: she is a dark-skinned transwoman and tells her story from beyond the grave. The piece's focus on transfemicide, racial marginalization, and sexual labor would seem to make it difficult to sit through. However, as an example par excellence of *teatro-cabaret*, La Prietty deploys costume changes, quick wit, impeccable comedic timing, and stunning punchlines to keep the audience engaged. The present essay focuses specifically on how *La Prietty Guoman* filters socio-politically driven humor through audio-visual revisions of U.S. pop songs and Divas from the 1990s. For example, embedded in her fierce aesthetic and revised lyrical performances of "Pretty Woman," "Vogue," "I Have Nothing," and more, La Prietty recounts horrific violence and tragedies she experienced due to being a dark-skinned transwoman. Combining theatre and performance studies, the ethics of mourning, and queer theory, I argue that by way of La Prietty's physical and lyrical transformations, her performances of an (after)

life accomplish two goals: they stage hope for myriad marginalized Others and resist the erasure of transwomen murdered in contemporary Mexico.

Teatro-Cabaret: A Brief Introduction

Teatro-cabaret, a theatre and performance style unique to Mexico, emerged during the 1980s, appearing on Mexico City stages amidst unsettling events such as the nation's economic collapse in 1982 and the 1985 earthquake that shook the capital city to its core. As a response to a context of crisis and uncertainty, the work of Jesusa Rodríguez, Liliana Felipe, Tito Vasconcelos, and Astrid Hadad reflects deeply on the kind of art they wanted and needed to make. Officially trained in theatre at leading universities, these foundational figures turned to new creative means, with the sensation of reality, very literally, falling apart around them. Leading *teatro-cabaret* scholar Gastón Alzate contends that the motivation for creating new performance modes was also intimately linked to Mexico's relationship to globalization efforts, appearing during Miguel de la Madrid's presidency: "veo el cabaret mexicano como una red simbólica contestatoria relacionada con una necesidad social frente a mecanismos de marginación" ("Dramaturgia" 50). With further political and economic shifts in the 1990s, *teatro-cabaret* became characterized by dissident voices operating outside of "officially" sponsored cultural spaces (Alzate *Teatro* 56). As Rodríguez declared, "we're in such a profound crisis, and cabaret always flourishes in crisis—remember the Nazis, how cabaret boomed then? In Mexico, we're in an impossible spectacle, beyond Ibsen or the absurd. We're in a kind of perverse fiction" (Obejas 8). Moreover, identifying against the grain of patriarchal heteronormativity, these figures used *teatro-cabaret* as a powerful mechanism for imagining new definitions of belonging embedded in their revisions of dominant narratives.[2]

The use of *teatro-cabaret* to navigate and interrogate contemporary Mexican reality continues to inform current practitioners. In her guide to *teatro-cabaret*, Cecilia Sotres, practitioner and foundational member of Las Reinas Chulas, explains that although cabaret encompasses many aesthetics and performative styles, a piece should always have humor and social or political critique (21). This last point is of particular importance, as Sotres declares that in the Mexico of today, "es claro que vivimos en una época de inestabilidad, de guerra, una guerra velada si lo quieren ver así, pero al fin y al cabo, una guerra. El cotidiano devenir nos obliga a vivir situaciones absurdas que nos sobrepasan, dignas de ser traducidas al lenguaje teatral" (22). Sotres is referencing events like the 43 students of Ayotzinapa who were

disappeared on September 26, 2014, and have yet to be found, the ridiculous circumstances that allowed El Chapo to escape from prison via underground tunnels, or the terrifying reality that ten women are murdered each day in Mexico.[3] Grappling with unfathomable situations, *teatro-cabaret* performers have historically sought, and continue to seek, refuge in the genre's vibrant possibilities for creation.

Echoing the strategies of many of the aforementioned *cabareterxs*, César Enríquez blends his personal experiences as a dissident citizen with formal studies to produce complex *teatro-cabaret* pieces and protagonists. Having studied Brechtian technique and *la commedia de'll arte*, among other theatre traditions, for five years with Ludwik Margules at El Foro Teatro Contemporáneo, Enríquez's routine for developing the personality and physicality of his characters is intense. For him, "el actor debe involucrar hasta la última célula de su organismo y mezclar el conocimiento con el alma. Eso es lo que intento hacer cada que creo un personaje en el cabaret" (Enríquez 2020). Additionally, as a dark-skinned, self-identifying gay man, many of Enríquez's artistic decisions convey autobiographical expression as a form of resistance. Throughout *La Prietty Guoman*, for example, he includes personal anecdotes, like when he was seven and fought another boy in the tortilla line after being called a faggot, imbuing the piece with the racial slurs he has heard his entire life ("Cosas"). Moreover, just as many *cabareterxs* are recognized for being avid researchers and political commentators in the public sphere, Enríquez leverages his university studies in political science to craft characters who push the boundaries of what informed citizenry looks and sounds like.[4] Enríquez's earlier works like *Disertaciones de la chingada* (2012) or *Petunia sola en Sanborts* (2014) incorporate male-to-female drag aesthetics to critique monolithic stereotypes of Mexican identity. In *Por jodidos y hocicones mataron a los actores* (2018), Enríquez re-elaborates popular aesthetics of Mexican *teatro de carpa* to shine light on the nation's forced disappearances.[5] Beyond the world of *teatro-cabaret*, he has also directed theatre pieces such as *Amor en la Obrera* (2018), a commentary on queer love in one of Mexico City's working-class neighborhoods, and was a leading cast member in the Mexican version of Julie Taymor's stage adaptation of *The Lion King* (2015), performing as both Banzi and Scar.

Focusing briefly on Enríquez's audio-visual aesthetics, although his approach reflects a connection to a genealogy of *teatro-cabaret*, he has never trained under or with anyone from the community. Similar to the way Vasconcelos, Hadad, and Rodríguez are known for incorporating

hyperbolic representations of masculinity and femininity, Enríquez too plays with notions of gender. In fact, Enríquez's performance style is often compared to that of Vasconcelos, especially in the way he crafts captivating female characters. It is worth noting that while Enríquez is certainly aware of Vasconcelos' extensive corpus, they do not have a relationship rooted in formal mentorship. According to Enríquez, Vasconcelos "ha sido generoso," but he has primarily learned from the living legend "a la escucha"; he sought his counsel regarding *Eunucos, Castritis y Cobardis* (2013) and interviewed Vasconcelos on the topic of *teatro de carpa* while developing *Por jodidos y hocicones* (Enríquez 2020). Effectively, Enríquez's creations reflect his own ingenuity, even if some similarities are undeniable. Both he and Vasconcelos have captivating stage presence, beautiful control over physical gestures, and the uncanny ability to improvise provocative jokes. Some of their protagonists even share stories of abuse, discrimination, and resilience. Studying a few of Vasconcelos' seminal characters, such as Vicky La Diabla, María Félix, or Joan Crawford, in relation to Enríquez's leading ladies, there are, however, notable differences that cut across depictions of beauty, race, and socio-economic status. Many of Vasconcelos' female leads reflect his inimitable intellectual prowess and visually capture his light-skinned appearance via a drag aesthetic that emphasizes timeless female beauty. Enríquez's characters, on the other hand, are diamonds in the rough. They often appear as such with messy makeup, disheveled clothing, or even missing teeth, and are known to make commentaries that resonate with the working-class Mexican experience, rather than the elite.

This is certainly the case in *La Prietty Guoman.* Deploying sharp wit to craft a protagonist who re-tools perceived weaknesses, such as being dark-skinned, trans, dyslexic, and a prostitute, the piece is a prime example of bringing marginalized communities to center stage. With mesmerizing visual aesthetics and sonic triggers, César Enríquez's brand of dissident comedy makes a pointed socio-political critique about discrimination and violence in contemporary Mexico. Moreover, through the myriad identities embodied in one figure, La Prietty makes the impossible seem possible. To arrive at these stages of im/possiblilities, Enríquez pushed his protagonist to the limits in order to include "a todas las minorías, minorías entrecomillada, a todos los grupos vulnerables" (Enríquez 2018). Following a basic tenant of *teatro-cabaret*, he is also keenly aware of the need to develop jokes and satirical commentaries that avoid further victimizing the subject.[6] *La Prietty Guoman* showcases the struggles of intersectional and marginalized identities without

further abusing them by way of lyrical revisions and drag re-presentations that incorporate the protagonist into definitions of belonging and impress upon the audience her humanity and mournability as a dark-skinned trans woman.

La Prietty Guoman: *Pretty Woman* Re-Imagined for a Third World Setting

Pretty Woman (1990) is an American romantic comedy film starring Richard Gere and Julia Roberts. Even today, Julia Roberts is often referred to in press releases and news stories as "Pretty Woman," as if she and her on-screen counterpart, Vivian Ward, had merged into one. With iconic scenes like those in which the protagonist appears in the red couture dress and Richard Gere woos her from a limousine, the film is thought of as the love story of a couple from different worlds. Yet, the plot revolves around the fact that Roberts' character is a sex worker who was hired by a wealthy businessman to accompany him to events. Originally intended to be a dark cautionary tale about class and prostitution in Los Angeles, the film was transformed into a romantic comedy, and immediately upon its release, was a success. The film received positive reviews, earning Roberts a Golden Globe and even an Oscar nomination for Best Actress.[7]

While *La Prietty Guoman* has yet to earn César Enríquez any awards, the *teatro-cabaret* piece has been constantly performed for the last three years. Since its debut in August of 2016 as part of the Annual International Cabaret Festival held in Mexico City, the piece has been offered runs in well-known spaces throughout the nation's capital, such as El Vicio, La Capilla, Teatro NH, and the Centro Cultural Helénico. At the national level, Enríquez and his protagonist were invited to close the 38th Muestra Nacional de Teatro (2017) in Guanajuato, and have travelled to Tijuana, Tlaxcala, and Oaxaca to present at other events. Enríquez has also performed this piece for international audiences in Cádiz, Spain, for International Women's Day, and in Chicago for the Annual Chicago Latino Theatre Alliance. In 2019, the piece was programmed as part of the Hemispheric Institute of Politics and Performance Encuentro in Mexico. Enríquez was also awarded the prestigious Lark Fellowship, which allowed him to work with performers in New York City to translate the piece with the goal of producing a US-based version.

The above timeline of performances and venues has allowed for diverse audiences to experience *La Prietty Guoman*. This diversity has meant that, in some cases, such as international performances, audiences have been slow to react to La Prietty's humor and cultural references. In these instances,

Enríquez has had to find ways of connecting content to locally understood references, often improvising on the spot (Enríquez 2018). Focusing on events in Mexico, with the exception of El Vicio, the epicenter of *teatro-cabaret* in Mexico City, many of the performances have taken place in traditional theatre spaces with distinct spatial separation between the audience and the proscenium stage. This has often caused a sense of uncertainty among spectators who were unaware that *La Prietty Guoman* would include direct contact and interaction with the protagonist. Additionally, as "officially-run" spaces in Mexico are generally required to follow set pricing and established discounts, his audiences have included spectators of diverse socio-economic classes and education levels. In private spaces, such as El Vicio, audiences have tended to be more privileged, both intellectually and financially.

Traveling throughout Mexico and abroad has also prompted occasions of resistance, as some have interpreted Enríquez's promotional material as offensively "brownface" and questioned his ability to interpret the trans experience. For example, before arriving in Chicago, Enríquez heard rumors of protest. He quickly tried to establish dialogue with those vocalizing opposition and scheduled a talk-back after each performance, inviting his critics to see the piece before issuing public proclamations against it. In general, during these post-performance conversations, Enríquez explains that the makeup he uses matches his skin-tone in order to draw attention to racial discrimination he has personally faced. Moreover, he works tirelessly to forge ties to trans communities wherever he travels. Whether at Teatro NH in Mexico City or in Cádiz, he reaches out to trans activists and invites them to see his performance free of charge. These guests of honor, which have also included trans sex workers, come on the stage at the end of a performance to speak about their experiences and detail opportunities for the public to support non-profits or events.

In addition to fostering community, the piece has received wide recognition and constant programming because of Enríquez's astute ability to balance biting critique with humor in a way that resonates with spectators. *La Prietty Guoman* engages transfemicide and female sex trafficking in Mexico, the "commodity-made-flesh in the body and human life" (Valencia 20), as the protagonist was sold into the sex-trade as a young woman when she came out to her family as trans. Horrific as this sounds, she keeps her spirits high throughout her struggles to provide for herself, always on the lookout for her "Richard Gere." Even after a botched smuggling attempt to traffic La Prietty out of Mexico, she remains hopeful that her knight in shining armor will

rescue her. That is when she meets the piece's only other character, La Muda, the mute, lesbian nightclub entrepreneur who invites La Prietty to become a performer at her cabaret. Though not the figure she imagined, La Muda is the one who saves La Prietty from forced sexual labor, offering her a life of love and safety. It is worth noting that La Muda is always on stage, interpreted by musician Álvaro Herrera. Herrera was not originally meant to be a character, but in directing the way he played the piano and his stage presence, Enríquez decided to morph Herrera into the character that accompanies La Prietty on her journey to find love. Designed to provoke laughter throughout, La Muda is never given a voice, but signals to La Prietty her ideas and serves as La Prietty's musician. La Muda's silence was not because Enríquez did not trust Herrera's acting abilities, but reflects his intention to be inclusive: "me parecía que necesitaba otro punto de grupos vulnerables y uno de ellos era, eh, pues, una persona con una discapacidad" (Enríquez 2018). As the characters developed, La Muda and La Prietty were conceived of as extensions of one another (Enríquez 2018), where La Muda's story and voice became channeled through La Prietty.

When Enríquez first imagined the piece, the protagonist was not trans, but rather a female prostitute who loved to sing. The character was inspired by the real-life story of a sex trafficking victim in Lydia Cacho's *Esclavas del poder,* a journalistic study of female sex slavery around the globe.[8] In her chapter on Mexico, Cacho reveals the deeply troubling sex-trafficking industry in Mexico through the heart-wrenching story of Arely, a 19-year-old Venezuelan girl trafficked to Monterrey, Mexico, under the premise of a modeling career (142-143). Forced to work as a prostitute, she found refuge in a young man who gave her jewelry, stuffed animals, and his favorite film, *Pretty Woman*. Out of the blue, Arely and a group of girls were told: "Ya son muy profesionales y esto se pone aburrido, así que les tenemos una sorpresa. Se van a Cancún, allí trabajarán en un lugar muy bonito frente al mar" (146). In a sickening twist of fate, her knight in shining armor actually worked for the club bosses and had emotionally manipulated her so that she would be less difficult to control.

As revolting as the original events are that inspired *La Prietty Guoman*, after the summer of 2016, Enríquez set out to re-define his protagonist as trans and re-locate her to Veracruz.[9] This decision came in response to the way the Pulse massacre of 49 people in Orlando, Florida, garnered international attention and a Facebook filter while the assassination of four transwomen in Veracruz the week prior barely made headlines (Enríquez "Cosas" 2017).[10]

Between 2007 and 2018, 45 femicides targeting trans women were reported in Veracruz (Romero), with a total of 422 reported in all of Mexico (Matías). These figures only scratch the surface of the violence facing trans bodies, as they do not account for rapes, beatings, aggressions, or those who never report. La Prietty suffers such an experience when a potential client realizes she is a transwoman and drags her around the beach by her hair (*La Prietty* 6). On a national scale, the lack of investigation is compounded by another layer of brutality; most are not even catalogued as femicide. As La Prietty describes, the post-mortem treatment of transwomen is devastating:

> Se nos mata de distintas maneras y a veces más de dos veces en una misma vida. Se nos mata poniéndonos el nombre masculino que nunca quisimos llevar, se nos mata después de muertas llevándonos al féretro con la ropa del sexo que nunca quisimos portar, se nos mata saliendo en la portada del periódico cuando se burla de nosotras diciendo ¡Joticidio! Siendo esto un transfeminicidio. (25)

In 2014, Mexico City passed a law that recognizes that a person's identity may not match the gender they were assigned at birth (Krumholtz), though the oft disparity between the law and its enforcement further dehumanizes the trans body.

Arguably, the disparities between coverage of the Orlando and Veracruz tragedies could be related to the number of victims, yet Enríquez felt a division within the queer community that ran along First/Third world lines. Though not speaking of queerness, Sayak Valencia declares: "First World discourse should pay attention to what Third World discourses have to say about the evolution of the world of capital and of the world more generally" (9). Challenging the way these divisions reflect discourses of power and representation, Enríquez then made drastic changes to the piece. He renamed his protagonist and connected her narrative to gendered trans violence in Veracruz.

To ensure that his piece was humorous, but without becoming a caricature of trans communities, Enríquez worked with several trans activists and trans sex workers to make sure that transwomen could see themselves reflected in La Prietty (Enríquez 2018). He translated this ethnographic work into the language she uses in her jokes and articulations of self, and into a visual aesthetic that pays tribute and calls attention to the trans experience. Though the plot still limits the transwoman of color to sex work, humiliation, and abuse, this imagined life performs many of the strategies of recognizing the humanity of an Other (Butler 32). That is to say, in giving La Prietty a name, a face, and a body, and by recognizing her likes and dislikes and the slogans

by which she lives, the fictional protagonist is not an abstract notion of a transwoman, but rather stands in for trans bodies beyond the performance space.

Cruising in Traffic: To Veracruz and Beyond

In bringing La Prietty to life, just as in the original film, the space of the car is a pivotal reference point for our protagonist's journey. The first scene begins: "(En el escenario se enciende la luz, se ve la parte trasera de un coche. Ella está sentada en la cajuela. El coche saca humo como si estuviera andando. Se forma una nube blanca, que nos asemeja la luz de una estrella internacional)" (*La Prietty* 4). Constructed out of plywood and painted white, the audience is constantly reminded of the car by its centrality on stage. In the original film, cars very literally become the means by which Julia Roberts is transported to a new life, one where she gains riches and respect. For La Prietty, this on-stage car also holds the key to her destiny. Not only does it house her costumes and extra wigs and become a canvas for projecting images, but it also metonymically transports the protagonist to different stages in her life. As she recounts, when she was 13, she told her father that she was a woman: "¡Que quede claro! Yo nunca me travestí," but rather, her parents forced her to present as male (3). In response, her father retorted, "en mi pueblo a las mujeres se les venden. ¿Eso quieres?" (3). Deploying a discourse "that refuse[s] to appeal to victimization and the nullification" of her subjectivity (Valencia 11), La Prietty does not dwell on the possibility of being sold. Rather, she pokes fun at her horrific situation, confessing, "y ahí supe que yo era una mujer de la 'High.' Me vendió a un gringo por unos tenis Nike, y a los trece me llevaron en un coche a Veracruz a trabajar" (3).

Much in line with *teatro-cabaret* practice, *La Prietty Guoman* waits until the end of the piece to make a dramatic reveal. But, in order to avoid confusion, I am going to do the opposite. La Prietty imagined she would be going to Veracruz, where she would find her romantic ending, just like the Hollywood film. This white on-stage car, however, does not take La Prietty to Veracruz, nor to her Richard. Instead, as if embodying Valencia's assertion that "contemporary history is no longer based on the experiences of survivors, but rather on the vast numbers of the dead" (28), La Prietty reveals:

> A los 13 años fui vendida, me subí a ese coche con felicidad en el rostro imaginándome una vida así, llena de vestidos hermosos mientras mi canción preferida La Pretty Woman sonaba en la radio relatando mi camino hacia la muerte. Terminé con los brazos

> anudados a mis tobillos, quemada por las colillas del cigarro apagadas en mi piel, violada y torturada satisfaciendo los deseos reprimidos de unos cuantos y así después de escuchar un 'Por puto' es que en la oscuridad de una cajuela viajé para siempre. (*La Prietty* 23)

La Prietty's happiness upon entering the car, albeit shocking when we remember that she was sold into sex trafficking, is that of an innocent child. Her dreams and hopes are brutally crushed as she is tortured and murdered. Hence, Enríquez showcases the perspective of the spectral, echoing anthropologist Melissa Wright's observation that activists in Mexico have consistently "thought of creative ways to make the victims visible, knowable and, thereby, recognizable" (258). As a way of combatting discursive mechanisms for erasure, *La Prietty Guoman* is a story told from beyond the grave, giving life to a body otherwise deemed inhuman and unmournable because of her dark complexion and trans identity. Moreover, the piece as a whole resists rhetoric that ex-Presidents Felipe Calderón (2006-2012) and Enrique Peña Nieto (2012-2018) and other government officials have repeated "to the point of absurdity" (Wright 257-258) to suggest that missing and dead women do not exist in time or space; if these bodies do not exist, they could never have existed, and hence, cannot be mourned or missed.

As a performance that re-imagines transfemicide and non-normative identities, *La Prietty Guoman* functions as a tangible example of José Esteban Muñoz's notions of futurity and utopia. For queer bodies that face violence, humiliation, and discrimination, just as La Prietty does, "the here and now is a prison house" (Muñoz 1). Yet, as Muñoz suggests, queer bodies are capable of "enact[ing] new and better pleasures, other ways of being in the world, and ultimately new worlds" (1) by way of performative endeavors. Muñoz's queer utopia is intimately linked to the idea of cruising, a term that refers colloquially to the picking up of lovers and prostitutes for lax affairs and at the same time invokes a sense of traveling through life with ease, like cruising down the highway in a convertible Mustang. Both of these images and meanings are especially apt for considering La Prietty's movement through time and space. Cruising from Tlaxcala to Veracruz, this new world she creates from beyond the grave unsettles heteronormative chronologies, as her spectral presence allows her to circumvent the vacancy created by way of her horrific murder. Moreover, rather than dwell on that painful truth, this new imagined (after)life affords La Prietty the freedom of self-expression and the opportunity to experience desire on her own terms. Specifically, her engagement with sex work and seedy nightlife venues, first out of necessity,

and then by choice, allows to her to accept her body as a site of pleasure and pride, something unattainable in her material realm.

Performances of an (After)Life

La Prietty Guoman's soundtrack is one that includes musical interpretations spanning from the late 1970s through the mid-1990s, with heavy reliance on U.S. dance hits, almost all of which the protagonist re-writes to fit her particular circumstances. In doing so, she allows herself an escape mechanism from the reality of a gruesome end. At the same time, La Prietty's (after)life performances are "an insistence on potentiality or concrete possibility for another world" (Muñoz 1), one where she becomes, very literally, a mouthpiece for renouncing gendered violence. Representing a collective through her monologue performance, La Prietty, "the one who dreams for many" (Muñoz 3), stands in and for a utopic vision of future possibility. One way she does is this is by means of singing live, accompanied only by a single piano played by La Muda. Focusing for a moment on vocal performance, Simon Frith suggests that "the voice, in short, may or may not be a key to someone's identity, but it is certainly a key to the ways in which we change identities, pretend to be something we're not" (97). In this sense, Enríquez's singing voice is one of the crucial ways he brings the protagonist to life and transforms into La Prietty. Throughout the piece, her vocals fill the theatre space, adeptly shifting between deep tenor ranges to alto-soprano notes, showcasing the spectrum of gendered associations she experiences in trying to make her inner identity match her outward appearance. Effectively, singing live becomes a performance of La Prietty's self, of what it means to be a transwoman without surgery or hormone replacement therapy.

The pop musical selection that La Prietty performs in her (after)life is not a frivolous choice; it is an act of queer resistance. La Prietty's lyrical revisions and performances stage hope. In creating this other world, she tells her story accompanied by the soundtrack of her (after)life: "¡Esto es el soundtrack de mi vida! Se puso play con la canción que me dio nombre y con la misma melodía se puso stop; pero yo aquí te la voy a dejar ir sin pausa y no es albur" (*La Prietty* 1). Obviously conscious of her dark-skinned complexion and queer difference, La Prietty re-writes Roy Orbison's classic tune as a way of beginning to integrate her body into a narrative of belonging. Launching into her re-worked version of her namesake song, "Oh, Pretty Woman," La Prietty sings:

Prietty Guoman,
Con el sol crecí
Prietty Guoman
y más me oscurecí
Prietty Guoman
Soy mexicana igual que tú pero parezco de Perú

Prietty Guoman
Los cocos sé partir
Prietty Guoman
Y mojarras freír
Prietty Guoman
Rostro rupestre con gracia mil, soy totonaca del Tajín. (4)

In the above lyrical selection, the references to Peru and Tajín, sites linked to indigenous histories, signal the protagonist's melanin-rich skin, as well as her intention to express belonging in a society that values light-skinned bodies. La Prietty engages master narratives such as those in the Mexican context, as in many sites throughout Latin America, where imagined racial construction has been essential to defining belonging and social recognition. From José Vasconcelos' seminal work, *La raza cósmica* (1925), to Mexico's Golden Age of Cinema (1930-1960), official discourses of the twentieth century sought to blend Mexico's ethnic variability into an almost mythical Mexican mestizo, a light-skinned body that venerated an indigenous past as long as it became de-linked from Mexico's dark(er) skinned ancestors. Of course, the place of the indigenous citizen within contemporary Mexican society is routinely contested. Oaxaca, Guerrero, and Chiapas are the poorest states in the nation, and unsurprisingly the states with the highest number of indigenous groups.[11] Hence, by way of lyrically integrating herself into the nation and appearing as a dark-skinned woman, La Prietty embodies "historically situated struggles" of a collectively marginalized group (Muñoz 3), even in her imagined utopic space.

This is not the only time that La Prietty references her skin tone or pokes fun at Mexico's racist social stratification. Once she arrived in Veracruz, she was driven to work in a brothel, where she was hoping for a place of beauty and refinement, inspired by *Pretty Woman*'s luxury hotels. When she meets her captors, instead of claiming her indigenous past, La Prietty tells them she was from a Caribbean island, letting them surmise she means Cuba. She

openly admits to the audience that she has never been and has, on more than one occasion, had to improvise knowledge of her "homeland":

> ¿A poco sí eres cubana? ¿De qué parte de Cuba eres? .... —De la playa— le dije. Porque hay que ser chava lista. Que me vuelve a preguntar ¿Quién gobierna Cuba me dice? -El pueblo- le dije -porque el pueblo manda- ¡Yo totalmente anti-Trump! ¡Y porque no nada más hay que ser lista también hay que ser culta! Que me vuelve a preguntar - a ver ¿Qué se come en Cuba? -. Enchiladas… cubanas. ¿No ves que también hay suizas? (*La Prietty* 10)

La Prietty's humorous decision to construct herself as an historically exoticized dark Cuban body rather than an indigenous citizen was strategic. As Anita González states, the way *mexicanidad* has been imagined and repeated, "obscures the presence of African, Asian, and other populations that have contributed to the growth of the nation" (1). By not including these dark-skinned bodies in the conceptualization of the new mestizo, the nation racially distanced itself from nations with larger African populations, such as Cuba. At the same time, Mexico's geographical proximity to the island has facilitated the exchange of people, goods, and cultural practices, "primero a través de las regiones geográficamente más cercanas como Yucatán y Veracruz," and later throughout the rest of the country (Figueroa-Hernández 35). This played out on the national stage as Mexico's Golden Age of cinema used representations of Cubanness to cement a space for racial Others within the cultural imaginary of the nation. This space, however, was very often relegated to representing the *rumbera* seductress, a musician, or household help.[12] In inventing a Cuban past, then, La Prietty attempts to insert herself into a narrative that may accept her as some kind of exoticized sexual commodity rather than face a fate of painful discrimination, as in the case of indigenous citizens.

Defying the limitations of her situation as a dark-skinned transwoman and sex worker, in this (after)life, La Prietty transforms herself into images of fierce femininity by looking to Divas of U.S. film and popular music from the 90s. Closing the first scene, she belts out the final refrain of her namesake song: "*Prietty Guoman bienvenido al show / No hago playback yo canto la canción / Prietty Guoman / Yo me transformo ya tu verás*" (*La Prietty* 6). Enríquez's decision to craft a character who imitates popular figures is informed by *teatro-cabaret*'s long history with drag aesthetics on the one hand, and on the other, by his own experiences in bars where drag personifications are a common attraction. Aware that not all drag queens seek to reach exactitude, Enríquez's aesthetic decisions surrounding La Prietty

were inspired by a night in a Mexico City queer bar several years ago; he still laughs at the memory of how different a particular drag performer looked from the artist she was actively trying to mimic (Enríquez 2018). Hence, as the La Prietty lyrically and sonically interprets the work of famous female singers, she employs a style of drag commonly referred to in Mexico as "personificaciones." Her costuming choices consciously poke fun at what can be a startling disconnect between a drag artist's visual image and the singer they seek to imitate. Though speaking firmly of the U.S., Ester Newton's claim that "as female impersonators see it, 'beauty' is the closest approximation, in form and movement, to the mass media images of glamorous women" (43), is particularly useful in considering La Prietty's aesthetic. In looking to pop culture Divas, her (after)life is imagined in relation to glamor, success, and fame. At the same time, these repetitions, sometimes laughably bad, are arguably "merely 'citational,' and can only thereby consolidate the authority of a fantasized original" (Freeman 728). In thinking about *La Prietty Guoman*, I suggest that Enríquez's citationality of the pop Divas, however, does not simply consolidate an authorized vision of stardom or heteronormativity. Rather, the performances allow him to "interrogate the ideals of the past" (Eschen 32).[13] By this, I suggest that in turning to Divas, many of whom are dark-skinned, Enríquez and La Prietty use drag to imagine trans beauty and belonging, and also, simply to live.

Starting with Julia Roberts, her first muse, La Prietty takes shape. From the beginning of the piece, the protagonist appears dressed like Roberts' on-screen counterpart, wearing a red curly-haired wig, a crop top, a blue mini-skirt, and thigh-high black patent leather boots. La Prietty jokes that she and Roberts' character are basically the same: "Es que somos igualitas, no más yo autóctona pero la nariz idéntica, bueno la mía expansiva. Altura 1.75 con tacón, igualitas" (*La Prietty* 4). She goes on, "Les digo igualitas no más ella puta en Hollywood y yo acá en Catemaco, ¿Cuál es la diferencia?" (5). Through the humorous discourse and appearance, Enríquez parodies the film. However, he remains dressed as the sex-work version of Roberts' character for the entire hour and a half show because he felt that he needed to perform the piece in heels to accurately reflect the lives of female sex workers on the street.[14] As La Prietty goes on, she confesses one major difference between her and Roberts' character: talent. The protagonist reminds the audience that "esa no canta, ni actúa, ni hace nada... No más es bonita" (6). In the beginning, La Prietty tries imitating her, posing on the street, generally looking fabulous as she cruised for her wealthy businessman "en los coches, en los camiones,

en el bici taxi... En la lancha, la banana, la acuamoto, el parachute pos a lo mejor ahí venía volando" (5). Sadly, she has no luck. Provoking laughter, her comments are an astute critique of the way prostitution is glamorized in popular culture, like the original film, but in her lived reality, searching for profitable clientele was both exhausting and an unlikely occurrence.

Yielding little financial reward, La Prietty reveals that Julia Roberts' approach to prostitution was not working for her. Unable to pay the bills, she began impersonating others with more talent and whom she resembled. She recounts, "Así que te hago a la Julia, a la Madonna... Te hago a la Whitney Houston, que en paz descanse, a Celia Cruz, que en paz descanse y la Mariah Caray; también que en paz descanse. ¿Que no está muerta? Tiene la carrera destrozada, 'tá muerta en vida, la pobre y no se ha dado cuenta" (6). Prompting laughter in the audience, these figures speak to La Prietty's connection to women of color, with the exception of Madonna. At the same time, Madonna is arguable the most crucial of all the Divas for her journey. The protagonist begins her series of transformations channeling the master chameleon herself, performing selections from "La Isla Bonita," "Like a Virgin," and "Vogue,"

La Prietty, patient and pretty, waiting for her Richard. Performance at Teatro NH, Mexico City, 2017. Photo courtesy of author.

each one mapping her body's trafficked movement and abuse. On the day she is driven to Veracruz to work in a brothel, she is inspired by the lyrics: "¡En la Isla de San Pedro! La Isla Bonita… La Isla Bonita… La Isla Bonita…" (6). Still dressed like Roberts' character, La Prietty does not yet visually interpret the U.S. pop singer, but to make her performative intentions clear, she tries very hard to dance a box step with exaggerated gestures while repeating the one line she knows. She admits to the audience, "No hablo muy bien inglés pero sé claramente que esta canción habla de La isla bonita: Me imagino que habla de los arrecifes, de las cascadas, de los aborígenes; también es poeta la Madonna como yo" (7). Just as Muñoz suggests, in this new stage of her life, La Prietty turns to hope, in what could very easily be a time of despair, to imagine herself in a tropical paradise, one where she lives in harmony with beautiful surroundings. Rather than focus on the horrors of her situation, by way of creative means La Prietty offers an alternative ending to her tale of being trafficked.

Accompanied on her journey by other young women, the protagonist is constantly harassed and abused because of her trans identity and dark skin. In a painful revelation, she tells the audience that the other young women called themselves "Baby Girls," and referred to her, the outcast, as "monster high," a reference to the horror-inspired dolls (7). Eventually, she wins them over with an assist from Madonna. As La Prietty explains, at 15, she choreographed a routine to "Like a Virgin" for the young captive women. The irony of the song selection is not lost on the audience members, who often burst into laughter at this revelation. Singing a few bars of the easily recognized tune, La Prietty reveals: "Nos la aprendimos en inglés y en español porque a todas nos habían dicho que nos iban a llevar pa los United" (8). Connecting her narrative to the collective struggle that Muñoz invokes in thinking about utopias and to Wright's creative initiatives to combat erasure, La Prietty reminds the spectators that underneath her optimistic tone lie horrific truths. Her voice shifts, now flat and serious, as she states: "Porque no solo en Tlaxcala se venden a las mujeres, en el mundo las mujeres somos de exportación" (8). Then, quickly dancing across the stage, as if performing a jarabe tapatío, La Prietty sings a list of over 30 Mexican cities and states where women are kidnapped and sold into the sex trade. Within this performatic gesture, the protagonist showcases how female bodies in Mexico "are conceived of as products of exchange" (Valencia 20). The hard transition between the catchy 90s pop tune and the litany of cities where vulnerable young women become commodity products is a startling one, prompting listeners to consider how

even within this imagined afterlife, La Prietty is still haunted by the dangerous reality women face daily in Mexico.

After memorizing the lyrics and her dance routine to Madonna, La Prietty is prepared to be sent abroad. This time, a boat would bring her to the next stage of her journey rather than a car. As she recounts, her male captor realizes she is trans after sexually assaulting her. Fearing what would happen to her if she stayed aboard, potential death by drowning or shark attack seemed preferable to the torture or whatever other cruelty awaited on that boat. Remembering that all of this action occurs in La Prietty's afterlife, the fear and violence she experiences in her own imagination are a terrible reminder of the way transwomen are murdered "a veces más de dos veces en una misma vida" (*La Prietty* 24). As if these bodies cannot rest in peace, La Prietty's efforts to emphasize hope and resist erasure are always marred by the fact that the "here and now" is often an awful experience for Othered bodies who do not fit "white, heterosexual, masculinist formulas" and discourses of power (Valencia 10).

Our protagonist, however, is a symbol of resilience. When she washes up on shore, upon seeing the sun, she assumes she made it to Miami. Basking in the light of her imagined future with Gloria Estefan, she echoes Muñoz's utopic queerness as the "warm illumination of a horizon imbued with potentiality" (1). La Prietty very quickly realizes she only made it to Tabasco when she is greeted by the woman who would change her life: La Muda, her new best friend, musician, and entrepreneur. Gesturing with sign language and writing on small sheets of paper, La Muda invites her to become a performer in her nightclub, but as an artist, not a prostitute or sex slave. Feeling relieved, La Prietty accepts the offer with a nod to Madonna, as if to close this stage of her life. Voguing across the stage, she proclaims:

> *¡Y yo te hago el chow!*
> *Soy Madonna en negra costeña Ey Ey Ey*
> *¡Te hago el chow!*
> *Yo soy una Artista completa.* (*La Prietty* 11)

At La Dorothy, "lugar de ambiente, un lugar para usted gente diferente" (12), La Prietty is given a chance at a new life, one filled with characters that accept her for who she really is. This club, "su lugar jotero y especial" (12), is a sanctuary for LGBTQ+ populations like herself, and embodies the very literal stages that Muñoz imagines filled with utopic potential. Just as Muñoz analyzes the stages of Los Angeles, filled with amateur aesthetics, drag queens, and a sense of belonging (106-110), La Dorothy offers La Prietty a

space to not just imagine inclusivity, but to live it. Approaching the white car on stage, the protagonist opens the trunk and pulls out a curly blond wig and a gold corset with pointy brassier. Transformed into Madonna in front of the spectators' eyes, she gives her first show, "Vogue," at La Dorothy. As in her interpretation of Julia Roberts, La Prietty uses music to recognize similarities and differences between her and the Diva who gives her new life:

> *Soy Madonna pero con pelo quemado*
> *Se pasó el decolorado*
> *Mira el chino me quedó ahora bien cerrado*
> *Me puse el tubo apretado*
> *Yo y mi talento harán brillar tu congala le pondré diversidad*
> *Un bar con porno y con arte cultura. Será el mejor lugar pa' venir a jotear*. (*La Prietty* 10)

Pointing out her beauty, nerve, and talent, La Prietty declares La Dorothy a place of queer culture and appreciation. Just as Madonna does in her version of "Vogue," she raps the following:

> *Anda ven sal ya del closet Ponte orgullo y los tacones*
> *Sor Juana y Sara García las tortillas aplaudían*
> *Pedro Infante y Frida Kahlo le daban a los dos bandos*
> *La Chavela y Monsiváis reinas de la Marcha Gay*
> *Bienvenido gay, lesbiana si es obvia mejor mana. Bisexual, intersexual judío y musulmán.*
> *Negras, blancas, pelirroja, las albinas, tu pecosa;*
> *gorda, flaca, musculosa, qué importa somos personas*. (12)

In her version, La Prietty transforms not just the imagined space of La Dorothy, but also the actual space of the theatre stage to imagine a queer utopia, full of acceptance and love. By enunciating the above list of diverse public figures, sexual orientations, physical attributes, and more, she emphasizes a discourse of belonging, one that resists silence and erasure from the public eye. In the original "Vogue," Madonna lists many Hollywood icons like Greta Garbo and Fred Astaire as standards of beauty and grace, but here, La Prietty focuses on queer icons of Mexican culture, listing those who identified against the grain of heteronormativity, such as Kahlo, Villaurrutia, and Novo, the nation's more closeted activists, like Monsiváis and Chavela Vargas, and those rumored to have engaged in non-heterosexual relationships, like Sor Juana and Pedro Infante.[15] In doing so, La Prietty signals how some of the nation's cultural treasures are part of a queer community. Just as Madonna ends her song

inviting listeners to let their bodies "move to the music," La Prietty makes it clear that any, and every, body is welcome to groove with her at La Dorothy.

Despite achieving professional success at the bar and in her personal friendship with La Muda, La Prietty's goal throughout the various stages in her life was to find her Richard Gere. Even the audience becomes invested in her search for a wealthy gentleman to love and rescue her from the horrors of sex work. After much praying and asking around in La Dorothy and on the streets, the protagonist finally finds her leading man. Driving a 2013 Volkswagen Jetta, La Prietty's Richard, the owner of an avocado stand, brings her flowers, writes her poetry, and says he loves her (20). Not quite the limousine or profession she imagined from the film, but she is thrilled. When he pulls up to the club, she faces a bittersweet end to her partnership with La Muda, but a promising new chapter for her future.

As a farewell gesture, La Muda only asks that La Prietty be her Whitney Houston, that she sing, "I Have Nothing," from the 1992 *Bodyguard* soundtrack. The protagonist concedes and performs for her caring and loving companion. Transforming before her audience's eyes, she removes a dress and wig from the car trunk. Just as Justin Torres proclaims, "the only imperative is to be transformed, transfigured in the disco light. To lighten, loosen, see yourself reflected in the beauty of others. You didn't come here to be a martyr, you came to live, papi. To live, mamacita. To live, hijos" (182), La Prietty gives life. Dressed in a tight, floor-length red dress, covered in sparkles from head to toe, she shines in the spotlight, utterly transformed into the 1990s pop Diva. Accompanied by La Muda on piano, the protagonist performs, word for word, Houston's hit. Foregoing a tendency to make creative interventions, there is no double entendre, no mispronounced English words. Like Houston's version, La Prietty pauses at all the right moments. Belting out, "Don't make me close one more door / I don't want to hurt anymore / Stay in my arms if you dare / or must I imagine you there," the audience gets goosebumps. She even attempts Houston's iconic vocal arpeggio runs at the end, transforming the words, "Don't you dare walk away from me / I have nothing, nothing, nothing / If I don't have you, you / If I don't have you, oh, oh" (*La Prietty* 23), into expressions of raw emotion. Seamlessly maneuvering between deeper chest tones and soprano notes, La Prietty gives the performance of a lifetime to her enraptured audience and La Muda.

La Muda helps La Prietty get dressed for her number as Whitney Houston. Performance at Teatro NH, Mexico City, 2017. Photo courtesy of author.

Siempre aquí estaré: Concluding with Presence

La Prietty's performances are so captivating that it is easy to forget that her relationships with Richard and La Muda are impossible love stories. Although we, as audience members, began to believe the utopia performed in this afterlife and on this theatre stage, none of the events actually happened. Stripped of her Whitney Houston image, once again appearing in her Julia Roberts-inspired outfit, La Prietty takes a seat in front of her audience. She asks them if they liked her story, to which there is, unfailingly, resounding cheering and clapping. In a sudden shift, she declares that she too would have like to have lived that life, but never had the chance. Reminding spectators of the song "Oh, Pretty Woman," that both ended and gave her life at the age of 13, La Prietty then becomes a voice for all the murdered transwomen. She connects her own story of being left for dead in the trunk of a car to the contemporary statistics and names of transwomen killed in Mexico. As she does so, her voice breaks and she begins to cry. But she is not alone. Gasps of horror and held back sobs can be heard throughout the theatre, whether in

Mexico City, Chicago, or Cádiz. In these profoundly moving silences, her spectral existence becomes indelibly linked to the violent reality that excludes her from the protections afforded to gender and sexually normative beings. These silences also represent, time and again, the audience's recognition of not just La Prietty's humanity and mournability, but that of the litany of murdered transwomen:

> ¡Por Paola, por Viviana, por Alessa, por Agnes, por Tavita! Por la Julia por Alaska que la coronaron hace poco como reina de belleza y después le pusieron un alambre de púas como collar. Por cada mujer asesinada, por todas las que se les oculta, por todas las que se les embolsa, por las miles más que no somos ni siquiera una estadística ante una sociedad feminicida. (23)[16]

In transforming the space into an act of remembrance, La Prietty brings us back to the here and now, where the collective struggles for non-normative bodies are often a question of life and death. From her peripheral, spectral positionality, or as Muñoz would call it, her queer subjectivity on the horizon, La Prietty demonstrates the ways in which Othered bodies can become defiant subjects. From her imagined afterlife, she pushes back against the "insane premise" that she, a symbolic stand-in for murdered transwomen, was not worth mourning.

Rather than end on a depressing note, La Prietty and La Muda wipe their tears and remind us that they came to live. Transforming one last time, La Prietty descends from the stage, again channeling her Cubanness. Wearing a bright yellow dress with arm ruffles reminiscent of *rumbera* dancers from Mexico's Golden Age of cinema, she performs one last song, "I Will Survive," a la Celia Cruz. As La Muda adds a salsa beat, our protagonist proclaims: "Yo viviré, ahí estaré / Hoy armemos la comparsa yo esta rumba cantaré" (26). Amongst the spectators, La Prietty instructs them to shout the word "fuera" as she utters a litany of discriminatory practices ranging from derogatory language to corrupt politicians. Then, in a final gesture, she invites everyone to sing along with her. In this symbolic move, La Prietty's strained voice becomes intertwined with those of her audience. This chorus of voices, ringing out firmly, commanding the space, and demanding change, is a powerful sensation. The unified proclamations of acceptance and resilience are loud and proud. In this moment, La Prietty and her audience seem capable of "trac[ing] out paths of defiance that allow them to live in struggle through effective, micropolitical resistance" (Valencia 295). Via this collective clamor, the audience joins La Prietty and La Muda in their queer space of

futurity and potentiality, where the reverberating message of recognizing the protagonist's humanity extends to the collective struggles of transwomen and other minorities. Turning a funeral into a party, La Prietty dominates the stage with her presence, defying the impossible:

> *Para ti mi gente siempre aquí estaré*
> *Yo te doy mi azúcar caramba y sobreviviré*
> *(Rompiendo barreras, voy sobreviviendo*
> *cruzando fronteras, voy sobreviviendo)*
> *Yo viviré, yo viviré, yo viviré y sobreviviré*. (*La Prietty* 27)

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La Prietty, always surviving. Performance at Teatro NH, Mexico City, 2017.
Photo courtesy of author.

Notes

[1] I would like to express my deepest gratitude to César Enríquez for his generosity in sharing his unpublished scripts and for his time. I would also like to thank the producer, Mariano Ducombs, and musician, Álvaro Herrera, for their kindness. All references to the text come from the unpublished 2017 version provided by Enríquez. All references to performances come from having seen the piece live. The photos come from the 2017 staging in the Teatro Sergio Magaña, which is characteristic of the performances in other spaces. See the video here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=InVa5pXtQkQ.

[2] For more information on *teatro-cabaret*'s development as a genre and its relationship to dissidence and neoliberalism, see Alzate. For works that consider how *teatro-cabaret* negotiates definitions of *mexicanidad,* see Baker and Gutiérrez. For more on the early stages of *teatro-cabaret*, see Taylor.

[3] For more on Ayotzinapa, see the report published by El Grupo Interdisciplinario de Expertos Independientes, the report released by the Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, and Melesio.

For more on the causes for and ramifications of Mexico's "War on Drugs," see Grayson, 2010 and 2013, and the report by the Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos. For a critique of the way the Mexican government fictionalized and mythologized the *narco*, see Zavala. For more on the ten women murdered each day in Mexico, see "Asesinan"; García; Jiménez.

[4] For example, Vasconcelos is foundational to the LGBTQ+ movement in Mexico, Rodríguez is currently a Senator for the Morena party, and several members of Las Reinas Chulas have been vocal supporters of AMLO.

[5] *Teatro de carpa* is a particularly Mexican performance genre that developed at the turn of the 20th century. *Carpa* refers to the tents where performances were housed, and as generally mobile constructions, they created opportunities for performers and shows to travel to the margins of Mexico City. This mobility allowed those who could not otherwise access "elite" cultural productions a way to engage with content. Moreover, by combining elements from Spanish performance styles, such as the *zarzuela,* and influences from body-centric circus acts, *carpa* was one of the earliest styles in which the popular classes saw themselves reflected (Merlín 12; Gutiérrez 82; Baker 10-12; Alzate 2010; Monsiváis). Known for its biting critiques of social and political events and humorous renditions of neighborhood archetypes, *carpa* influenced Mexico's Golden Age of cinema and contemporary *teatro-cabaret* practices.

[6] On humor, power, and victimization, see Sotres, pp. 65-66.

[7] See IMDB for all awards: https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0100405/awards.

[8] The U.S. Department of State 2018 report on human trafficking suggests Mexico is a "tier 2" nation (301), detailing that as of 2017, "proceedings were initiated against 609 individuals in federal and state cases," and authorities identified "429 victims of sex trafficking" (301-302). Additionally, investigative journalists have recently called the small city of Tenancingo, just hours from Mexico City, the "sex-trafficking capital of the world." See Bertrand; Hernández. For more on violence towards women, see the report by Mexico's Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI). For more on the violence and sexual labor of women on an international scale, see the International Labour Organization's 2017 report.

[9] While the focus of La Prietty is on transfemicide, she makes jokes throughout about Veracruz as a corrupt state, ranging from ex-Governor Javier Duarte to violence towards journalists. See "Mexican Photojournalist"; North; Ruiz Mójica.

[10] In a Facebook post on La Prietty's transformation over the years, Enríquez mentions the four transwomen murdered just a week before Orlando. I have not been able to find news sources; however, it is likely that the tragedy did not make national or even local news. It is also likely that the deaths were not reported as transfemicides at all. See Enríquez "Cosas."

[11] Recent debates about Yalitza Aparicio's role and subsequent nominations for her performance in the Oscar-winning film, *Roma*, reflect deeply entrenched racism. As a member of the Mixtec indigenous group, many online forums and public commentary have focused on her indigenous features, even

suggesting she should not have been allowed on screen nor given feature stories in international press outlets. For an overview of racist indigenous parodies on Mexican television over the last 50 years, see Pineda. For an overview of critical and racist comments towards Aparicio, see "Sergio Goyri"; Agren.

[12] For more information, see Pulido Llano.

[13] The kind of drag Enríquez performs and the challenge it poses to Butler's issue with citationality is not unique to him, but rather a general phenomenon in drag culture. See Eschen for more on the connection between representing a famous figure and re-imagining them as a site for potential change, which is an important component of not just Enríquez's drag, but also the work of famous performers like Lypsinka and El Vez.

[14] To literally walk in their shoes, Enríquez initially could not bear to wear the boots for more than ten minutes and had to build up his stamina and strength to do this show, full of dance choreography and non-stop action (Enríquez 2018).

[15] Here, La Prietty is making a humorous dig at his constant desire to show off his semi-nude body and rumored affair with on-screen rival, Jorge Negrete. See de la Mora.

[16] Many of the women La Prietty references are listed here, a database for cataloguing transfemicides: https://tdor.translivesmatter.info/reports?from=2016-10-01&to=2017-09-30&view=details&filter=.

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