

A Portrait of the Artistic Process: Federico León's *Las ideas*

Nina Mila Longinovic

This article analyzes Federico León's (1975) documentary play, *Las ideas* (2015), within the context of what Jordana Blejmar calls "the autofictional turn" in contemporary Argentine cultural production. Autofiction, as defined by the coiner of the term, Serge Doubrovsky in his novel *Fils* (1977), and subsequent theorists (Gasparini, Lejeune), is a postmodern fictional form in which author and protagonist typically share the same name.¹ Reading León's play as an autofiction, a self-portrait and ludically fictionalized testimony of the process of artistic creation in an increasingly technologized world, I analyze how *Las ideas* exposes the levels of reality, fiction, virtual reality and falsity that all individuals must navigate in daily life. Looking at how the play toys with the impossibility of accessing an underlying, homogenous reality in our neoliberal, hypertechnologized modernity—a time that has been widely referred to as the era of post-truth—I conclude that *Las ideas* is a euphoric meditation on the possibilities of artist creation in post-dictatorship Argentina, which provides an antidote to the increasing neoliberalization of society through an innovative, community-based framework of mourning and reconstruction. Far from linear narrative, *Las ideas* is fragmented and does not follow a chronological order in its documentation of the artistic process. Towards the end of this play, however, the spectator learns that the central conflict in the play is León's inability to recover files and data that were lost when his laptop fell to the ground one night and was damaged. Focusing on this episode of the computer's lost memory, I show how *Las ideas* speaks to the role of the artist in reconstructing innovative communities of mourning in the wake of the dictatorship.

Following both the work of scholars of theatre of the real, such as Hans Thies-Lehmann, Chris Megson, Carol Martin, and José Antonio Sánchez as well as those of contemporary Argentine cultural production, namely Cecilia

Sosa, Jordana Blejmar, Brenda Werth, and Jean Graham-Jones, I analyze *Las ideas* as a postdramatic autofiction. According to Sánchez, the move “towards ‘realism’ on the European stage signaled the end of an era marked by a certain melancholy, in which postmodern critics focused their attention on condemning the mechanisms used by structures of power and mass media to produce a ‘simulacral’ (Baudrillard 1981) or ‘transparent’ society (Vattimo 1989)” (3). In the same way, it is clear that the turn towards realism on the Argentine stage has likewise signaled the end of a melancholic era that had centered on the dramatic *acting out* of traumatic memory (LaCapra). In contrast, postdramatic theatre actively resists tragedy through the incorporation of the real and serves to critique the neoliberal structures that remain in place from the dictatorial epoch. Both Sánchez and Lehmann emphasize “‘the real’ as a distinctive feature of ‘postdramatic theatre,’ in opposition to the ‘exclusion of the real’ established by Hegel as a minimum condition of tragedy” (Sánchez 4). Therefore, while *Las ideas* features the accident of León’s damaged computer at its center, it is not tragic, but rather ludic and focused on possibilities of reconstruction.

According to Jean Graham-Jones, a number of recent independent *porteño* theatre productions have “constituted different material-theatrical responses to the Argentine crisis.” They depart from the traditional dramatic structure and do not provide overt messages or conclusions, but rather lead the spectator to consider instead their own role, that of the artist, and finally, of artistic creation and theatre “by challenging the processes of representation itself” (43). This crisis, in which “Argentina’s ‘rollercoaster experience with neoliberalization’ flew off the tracks” (Graham-Jones 37), has also coincided with what has been referred to as a “boom” of autofiction in Argentina by critics like Jordana Blejmar, who studies the prevalence of the postmodern (pseudo) genre in relation to the works on the memory of the last military dictatorship (1976-1983). The 2001 *Encyclopedia of Life Writing* defines autofiction as “one of the forms taken by autobiographical writing at a time of severely diminished faith in the power of memory and language to access definite truths about the past or the self” in such that “autofiction acknowledges the fallibility of memory, and the impossibility of truthfully recounting a life story” (Blejmar 6). Furthermore, according to Blejmar, “The emergence of autofiction is closely linked to the difficulties posed to language by trauma and the extreme experiences of the twentieth century” (6). While Ana Casas has reported that “an explored aspect of autofiction is its functionality in art forms other than literature” (7), Blejmar reads Argentine playwright Lola

Arias's *Mi vida después* (2009) as a theatrical autofiction due to the fact that all of the performers recounted real life information related to family members who had either directly or tangentially been involved in the atrocities of the dictatorship, be it as victims, accomplices of the regime, or bystanders, and also because the director felt that this was a generational story. While León's *Las ideas* does not at first appear to feature any overt references to trauma or crisis, the play does center around the dilemma of León's damaged computer and the need to recover lost or deleted files. I read this loss of data and memory as a call for the reconsideration of the role of memory and on the possibilities of contemporary independent theatre in Buenos Aires as a quasi-utopic space in which "national and individual identities, fragmented within the discourses of failure, can be patched back together" (Page 162). In this sense, it is important to signal that *Las ideas* first premiered in 2015, a markedly euphoric time on the Argentine political stage, considering that the first Peronist party-affiliated candidate since the last military dictatorship (1976-1983), Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, had been allowed to carry out her mandate peacefully.

Federico León has long been active in the Buenos Aires cultural scene, having written and produced a number of plays, including *Cachetazo de Campo* (1997), *Yo en el futuro* (2009), *Las multitudes* (2012) and *Las ideas* (2015). He has also written and directed the mockumentary *Entrenamiento elemental para actores* (2009) with Martín Rejtman, a documentary called *Estrellas* (2007), which won the Special Jury Prize at the 9th Festival of Independent Cinema of Buenos Aires, and a semi-fictionalized portrayal of his own breakup in *Todo juntos* (2002), a film in which he played himself. His work is compiled in *Registros: teatro reunido y otros textos* (2005) and has been widely translated and presented throughout the world.

Las ideas first premiered at the Zelaya theatre in the historical Abasto immigrant neighborhood of Buenos Aires. Far from the mainstream theatre of Corrientes, the kinds of productions in and around Abasto are comparatively alternative, independent, and feature the bulk of the city's *avant-garde* theatre. Since then, the play has been performed both abroad in countries including the U.S., Spain, Italy, Belgium, France, Austria, Portugal, Brazil and Japan, and domestically. In addition to having attended the play in the intimate setting of the Zelaya blackbox theatre in August 2016, and then at the Edlis Neeson Theatre of the Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art in 2018, my analysis is also based on a video recording of the play from June 29th, 2015 at Brussel's Kunstenfestivaldesarts. In all three renditions of *Las*

ideas, León and co-star Julián Tello sit across from each other at a ping-pong table that has been joined with a chalkboard upon which recordings and images are projected throughout the play, as if it were the screen of a giant lap-top computer. The table, littered with miscellanea, including a keyboard, various cables, and León's own personal computer, becomes the center of this peculiar *mise-en-scene* where the two friends discuss the creative process that goes into making the very same play that the spectator is witnessing. As indicated by the MCA's synopsis of the play, "*Las ideas* reflects the real life-working relationship of writer-director Federico León and collaborator actor Julián Tello, who perform as themselves" (MCA), thereby underlining the production's autofictional value.

The hybrid genre of autofiction, defined by its creator French novelist Serge Doubrovky as a first-person elaboration of real events (purportedly reserved for those not "worthy" of the prestige attached to autobiography) has experienced a boom in recent years in Argentina's cultural production. Describing the form as essentially meta-narrative, Doubrovsky writes: "autofiction is the fiction that I have decided, as a writer, to give myself, incorporating in this particular writing the experience of analysis" (Blejmar 28). As the 'ping-pong' of ideas that initiates León's play suggests, we see that it is precisely the examination of the artist's own project that takes the forefront, a clear example of autofiction. Describing *Las ideas*, León writes:

La obra tiene lugar sobre una mesa de ping-pong desordenada que el artista y su colaborador utilizan como mesa de trabajo. Allí también se proyecta el escritorio de un ordenador. Podemos ver registros de ensayos, material de otros proyectos en diferentes estados creativos, ideas para futuras obras, ideas que se les ocurren en el momento y que se van incorporando, y también otras que se descartaron y están tiradas en la papelera del ordenador. Por un momento podemos entrar en la cabeza de un artista y sumergirnos en sus ideas a través de su ordenador. Vemos cómo escribe, borra, corrige y navega por internet. Conocemos sus archivos, su forma de asociar, su modo de ordenar, organizar y también de desordenar. El ordenador se convierte en un personaje más. (*Las ideas*)

The first scene of *Las ideas* features the director himself and fellow actor Julián Tello playing ping-pong and then discussing a YouTube video called "Animales disfrazados" starring a visual artist with Down syndrome in her workshop staging and recording videos of animals dressed as other animals. In

the center-back of the stage, under a pale-blue light, between the two friends and upon the ping-pong table, sits a laptop computer. Above the table is a large chalkboard that the two use as a projector screen to record and replay their collection of ideas throughout the play and even trace their own profiles using chalk. Throughout the play, the men fiddle around with a series of possible ideas they could include in their play.

Both times I attended *Las ideas*, the audience laughed heartily at the ludic footage of a turtle disguised as a crab and other such impossible transformations. Staged as a spontaneous dialogue between the two, León tells Yuli about the visual artist—revealing that she is an actress that he has hired to *play* a visual artist in the play. This leads the two to debate if the video is real, if the artist/actress herself is real and ultimately, what status the “real” itself holds in *Las ideas* and beyond. What follows, then, is a series of scenes in which the status of the real becomes entirely mixed up and destabilized by simulation. In one, the men smoke what they allege to be marijuana and debate the possibilities of doing the same in a theatre, asserting that the “reality effect” of the smoke would be lost were the play to be performed in a large space. From a playful vantage point, *Las ideas* deconstructs the notion that seeing is believing, suggesting that often the reality that is presented to us is a mirage of sorts.

León appears to cycle through the senses in *Las ideas*, proving that our empirical tools and documentary truths are never fool-proof, and consequently, should be questioned. *Las ideas* initially demonstrates that the reality we are shown and told exists is perhaps not all that trustworthy, and that one must question the kinds of modern media and technologies that are informing our increasingly constructed realities rather than blindly accept them. Building on this premise, León’s play explores the implications of a fragmented reality for national discussions regarding censorship and memory, particularly in relation to authoritarianism. Shortly into the play, Yuli lights what he announces to be a joint and begins to ponder whether they could indeed introduce the drug into their play without penalty. But just as we learned that seeing is not believing, we soon learn that smelling is not necessary believing, either. After commenting that there must be a law against such a thing, the men alternate taking drags and begin to ask, how—in the case that they were legally cleared to smoke in the theatre—would the audience know that the drug was actually *real* and not some kind of synthetic marijuana. Through the substance, León again calls into question the validity of our perceptions—in this case,

smell—leading the audience to consider the possibility that perhaps what our objective senses tell us, is actually wrong.

“La censura no existe, mi amor”

Although the entire play centers around conditioning the audience against blindly accepting the given reality by exposing that it is grounded in simulation and fiction, only one scene touches explicitly on the theme of political censorship. In it, Yuli wakes from an onstage “nap,” apparently drowsy from the effects of the joint, and León tells him that they are going to look at something very intimate—the contents of the computer’s wastebin. He tells him, “te despertaste en la papelera,” ludically insinuating a merging of the virtual and non-virtual realities. After watching a file labeled “La censura no existe mi amor”—a clip from a *franquista* era Spanish porno film with all of the sex scenes censored out—León states enigmatically: “La pregunta es: por qué el archivo se llama ‘La censura no existe mi amor’” and immediately after, Yuli begins to play on the piano the melody of Juan Carlos Baglietto’s 1982 song of the same name, written in the final years of the military dictatorship (1976-1983). Following suit, León imitates Baglietto, singing:

La censura no existe mi amor
 La censura no existe mi
 La censura no existe
 La censura no
 La censura
 La...

In the playful director’s mouth, Baglietto’s words utter a falsity in order to communicate a truth—that the censorship *does* indeed exist, as it most certainly did when he wrote the song. Curiously enough, Baglietto’s song was released on the album *Actuar para vivir* (1982), a playful and dark insinuation regarding survival under oppressive regimes. The title of the album, which appears to sum up León’s own poetics of theatre, communicates a subtle warning regarding how to live through a censored reality as Baglietto did. Ultimately, León’s use of the song suggests that either we are being censored or that perhaps we engage in some degree of self-censorship—that only by being aware that every component of reality is constructed ideologically, on the basis of simulation and held together in a fictional unity, can we begin to realize that alternative scripts are possible.

When León reveals that the play was inspired by an accident, he states meaningfully: “A alguien se le rompe la computadora y pierde toda la me-

moria... Pero es el punto de partida para una nueva idea. Tengo que escribir todo lo que me acuerdo que perdí—esa es la obra—acordarse de los archivos perdidos como acordarse de un sueño.” This invocation of memory, lost archives, erasure, censorship and simulations is more than just a questioning of reality in general. Rather, we see that Baglietto’s song and the crisis of the computer both tacitly point to a local, Argentine political reality, while simultaneously maintaining silence and never explicitly mentioning the dictatorial past. According to Nancy Gates-Madsen, “silence also figures as the content of artistic representations of the dictatorship, for example when censorship, disappearance, or inexpressibility features prominently in a particular work. The prevalence of such themes challenges the traditional assumption that silence denotes an absence of content or meaning” (6). Following Gates-Madsen, the themes of memory, censorship, disappearance (of electronic archives) and inexpressibility (due to the confusion between what is real, simulated or simply verisimilar) are not vicarious. Rather, León’s invocation of such themes establishes a dialogue with the existing conversation on the uses (and perhaps overuses) of memory discourse in post-dictatorship Argentina.

The computer’s loss of memory and the subsequent need to reconstruct the past using only “los mejores desechos” (*Las ideas*) can be seen as an affirmation of the notion that from destruction can come creation and new life. Thus, this shift from “memory boom” (Feld) to critical thinking can also be seen as in line with Beatriz Sarlo’s assertion (translating Sontag) in the seminal *Tiempo pasado* (2005), that “quizás se le asigna demasiado valor a la memoria y un valor insuficiente al pensamiento” (26), a call to stop proliferating and exhausting a homologous corpus of memorialistic texts and instead focus on critical thinking. In León’s play, the absence of memory (due to computer failure) and the need for critical thinking, then, leads to a questioning and deconstruction of what the spectator trusts to be “documentary,” “testimonial” or “objective.” Indeed, following the first scene where León informs his co-star that the “artist” who appears in the YouTube video is not *really* an artist but merely an actress he hired, the audience is conditioned to the premise of *Las ideas*—that we cannot actually trust the so-called “documentary” or “testimonial” since everything is subject to fictionalization and distortion through representation. The fact that the actress who appears in the YouTube video has Down syndrome (a condition that would be impossible to act) confirms that reality is not a mirage, but that it is most likely tucked between layers of virtual reality, simulation and pure fiction.

Even after finishing the chorus of Baglietto's song, León whispers enigmatically, "La canción se va auto-censurando," implying, that just as to live one must act (self-simulation), the sure road to erasure and death is the opposite—self-censorship. In the last scenes of *Las ideas*, León pronounces what sounds like a misquote (in other words, a bad copy) of the legendary Domingo Faustino Sarmiento—he who dared to flout the authority of the despotic Rosas with his ideas about the proper governing of the young Argentine republic. Rather than the original French variant of "*las ideas no se matan*"—"on ne tue point les idées"—León states instead: "*Lo que no se mata, se vuelve idea.*"² While Sarmiento's original words indicate that ideas *cannot* be killed, León insinuates that they *can*—suggesting that self-censorship and censorship must be avoided to ensure the emancipation of thought. As Florence Aubenas and Miguel Benasayag note, the unfortunate condition of journalistic production these days is that "Los directores de periódicos oscilarán entre esos dos polos, aquello que saben y aquello que pueden decir...existe una censura del poder económico, como una autocensura ideológica. O a la inversa. O las dos" (14). In other words, in a world increasingly dominated by misinformation, we must be weary of a new kind of censorship that, while not stemming directly from dictatorial governments, is just as corrosive to democratic society.

In such a way, the reference to censorship through Baglietto's dictatorship era song "La censura no existe mi amor" in *Las ideas* cannot be read without considering the last military dictatorship and Argentina's democratic reconstruction that was carried out largely under neoliberal Menemist policies of the nineties. As Brenda Werth asserts in *Theatre, Performance, and Memory Politics in Argentina*, "theatre's ability to satirize and generate resistance to the embrace of neoliberal policies and amnesia politics in Argentina during the nineties" (3) is one of the central traits of recent artistic projects involving "the real," and the independent and communitarian theatre of Buenos Aires is a solid front of ideological resistance to Menemist policies.

As the ironically disappearing verses exemplify in León's rendition of the dictatorship-era song, the official message regarding freedom of thought information (the idea that censorship doesn't exist) is often in direct contradiction with the actual reality at hand—that censorship often takes on new, institutionalized and covert forms, further exemplifying the fact that "when reality is not consensual, but rather imposed, the real returns in a more violent way in the form of political or traumatic resistance" (Sánchez 3). In this sense, León's strategic incursion into "the real" in *Las ideas* can be seen as a

counter-attack on what social psychologist Juan Carlos Kuznetzoff dubbed “percepticidio,” a term that Diana Taylor adopts in *Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism* to speak of the particular “self-blinding of the general population” and the idea that “military violence could have been relatively invisible, as the term ‘disappearance’ suggests” (123), alluding to a civic-military dictatorial regime that sought to cover up the reality of strategic human rights violations being perpetuated in plain sight.

Postdramatic Theatre as an Affront to Neoliberalism

It is worth asking to what extent autofictional plays like *Las ideas* can successfully challenge the seemingly omnipotent reach of neoliberal structures and the censorship that accompanies them. Philippa Page suggests that they can, given that “the aesthetic multiplicity/hybridity of recent theatre seem to problematize this sense of ‘togetherness’ by representing those ‘who do not fit into the designed form’ of neoliberalism” (164). Page goes on to explain that “theatre and cinema’s identity is generated through the sedimentation of their common social experience since 1983: memory of dictatorship and censorship” as well as “engaging with increasing social fragmentation under neoliberalism” (166). As a genre with a postmodern genesis, autofiction is based on fragmentation, non-linearity, and a lack of narrative teleology. In the theatrical space, this self-reflexive dimension of autofiction is realized as a postdramatic quality. Following Hans-Thies Lehmann, drama is not only a comforting form that provides the spectator with catharsis: “‘Drama’ is not just an aesthetic model but carries with it essential epistemological and social implications: the objective importance of the hero, of the individual” (48). We are particularly enamored by the orderly format of drama since it “brings logic and structure into the confusing plethora and chaos of being” (Lehmann 160). Postdramatic plays, on the other hand, emphasize the importance of the collective over the hero or individual. As Lehmann adds, in postdramatic theatre, “the almost complete lack of a structure enfolding the actions all let a *feeling of community* come about” (121), thus reinforcing the notion this kind of anti-cathartic theatre is also active in combating the primacy of the neoliberal subject, inevitably isolated from society through the mechanisms of globalization. As Werth confirms, recent independent theatre of the real “marks a clear departure from more conventional forms of theatre in the denunciation of neoliberalism” (206). Furthermore, for Lehmann, postdramatic aesthetics also succeed in making spectators aware of their own role as protagonists given that “The task of the spectators is no longer the neutral

reconstruction, the re-creation and patient retracing of the fixed image but rather the mobilization of their own ability to react and experience in order to realize their participation in the process that is offered to them” (135). Certainly, León’s *Las ideas* plays with this dynamic and, in the most overtly political moment of the play, as León sings Baglietto’s “La censura no existe mi amor” from the tellingly named album “Actuar para vivir,” it comes as an invitation for the spectator to consider their own role as a life actor and their perceptions of our increasingly self-constructed reality. As Lehmann puts it, postdramatic theatre is based on “a *politics of perception*... the mode of perception in theatre cannot be separated from the existence of theatre in a world of media which massively shapes all perception” (185), suggesting that *Las ideas* is about the power of artistic creation to make us aware of a reality that, despite the absence of authoritarian governments, is increasingly colored by censorship in the form of misinformation and so-called alternative facts. The antidote to neoliberalism’s dominion, then, comes with the communitarian aspect of the postdramatic.

Jean Graham-Jones has stressed the importance of this communitarian aspect of Buenos Aires theatre, arguing that such a circuit provides “alternatives to the national paradigm of the cult of the authoritarian individual” (54). Far from a realization of the neoliberal zeitgeist, theatrical autofictions like *Las ideas* actively seek to deconstruct the increasingly isolating paradigms of modern society and act as counter-hegemonic, communitarian discourses. A curious anecdote by León’s fellow *porteña* playwright Lola Arias reveals, these artists were not set on producing melancholic pieces, but rather, utopian ones. Recounting the fact that she and León had both come up with uncannily similar titles for their plays, Arias recalls for interviewer Ana Longoni:

Yo le había puesto *Mi vida futura* a la obra y Federico León justo saca una obra en el mismo año que se llamaba *Yo en el futuro*. Nos encontramos un día y le dije: “Pero, escuchame, ¿quién de los dos se queda con el futuro? No puede haber dos obras, que una se llame *Mi vida futura* y la otra *Yo en el futuro*” y él me dijo: “Yo no lo voy a cambiar” y ahí le dije: “Bueno, te entrego el futuro”... era increíble esa especie de complot generacional, qué latencia había que de repente dos directores con la misma edad, la misma formación y mucho en común, somos amigos, teníamos una obra llamada de una manera casi idéntica, sin que ninguno de los dos supiera. (14)

The importance of the generational affinity between playwrights and artists of the second generation cannot be understated. In the seminal *Prisioneros*

de la torre, Elsa Drucaroff outlines the fact that artists born around the years of the dictatorship are metaphorically confined to a tower that represents the vestiges of the dictatorial past and forces them to deal with this legacy: “Las nuevas generaciones son náufragas de un barco que no condujeron, víctimas de timoneles que no pudieron elegir ni dirigir. Prisioneros de una torre que presiden...pero que los sostiene, es la única tierra firme en la que pueden pararse” (35). For this reason, dealing with the legacy of the past is inevitable for León’s generation, born in these years: “la dictadura militar que se inicia en 1976 se vive como límite en el imaginario histórico de las nuevas generaciones” (27). As Beatriz Catani, a playwright of the same cohort who has collaborated in theatrical productions with León reveals, this self-reflexivity and retrospection as a form of reconstructing national memory can be considered generational characteristics, stating,

Este juego entre la realidad y la escenificación, sobre la representación como acontecimiento real, es una manera de poder reflexionar sobre el teatro. Creo que es la que yo (y muchos, claro está) he encontrado para poder seguir haciendo teatro en la actualidad...la representación, y la relación de la obra con la realidad, genera un lugar de exploración que nos permite continuar trabajando con formas teatrales hoy. (15)

Indeed, it is clear that in plays like *Las ideas*, León, like Catani sought to “Desafiar, poner en riesgo ideas de representación. Poner en evidencia lo artificial, los mecanismos de invención. Ellos crean las historias al público. Y allí se generan relatos o situaciones poéticas” (21). In this way, it is also important to point out that this meta-theatrical quality which appears as a central, generational characteristic of theatre from post-1983 is also intimately related to the reconstruction of national memory and identity. According to Brenda Werth, “dramatic works gesture toward postdictatorial mourning and the reconstruction of community while simultaneously complicating the often-normative messages of national reconciliation” (3), pointing out that León’s tragicomic play *Mil quinientos metros sobre el nivel de Jack* (1998) and much theatre of the Menemist years sheds light on “the ways discourses of global capitalism became embodied in cultural representation of the nineties in Argentina... darkly alluding to the absorption of national identity into the global market and the privatization of the middle class...a clear message denouncing the effects of Menem’s neoliberal policies on the social body” (134). Werth points out that in *Mil quinientos metros sobre el nivel de Jack*, this melancholic take is realized in the form of “Metaphors of family drowning, sinking, and shipwreck” (166), communicating “the fragmentation of

experience resulting from the emergence of a globalized neoliberal memory framework" (198). While *Las ideas* still can be seen in terms of reconstructing national identity after the allegorical shipwrecks of dictatorship and neoliberal economic crises, the tone is no longer melancholic, but euphoric and utopian. As Werth points out, "Subsequent generations do not just bear the burden of a troubled past, they also transform it and develop innovative strategies to own it uniquely" (176). Thus, while León's *Las ideas* represents an innovative questioning and examining of the role of the playwright and the role of art in our contemporary, hyper-technologized society, this self-reflection is also a continuation of a larger trend in Argentine theatre which is related to a national self-examination and process of identity-building alongside the legacies of authoritarianism, namely in the form of neoliberal economic policies. As Werth emphasizes, "Particularly in the area of documentary theatre, new trends and directions probe the relationships between autobiography, media, and memory" (198-199). Another significant example of this trend that pushes the limits of theatre is the work of Rafael Spregelburd. In *Spam* (2014), for instance, the similarly postdramatic play centers around the protagonist's inability to reconstruct his identity through the junk folder in his email account. According to Laura Gabriela Conde, the junk mail attests to the fact that "no hay sujeto de la experiencia y relato de sí que coincide con una lengua y una idea de un mundo posible sin que algo de todo esto esté fracturado, roto, desubjetivado" (43). In the same way, we see that León's ludic tricks with technology and representation lead the spectator to the same conclusion regarding artistic identity and reality as a whole.

The impetus to reconstruct is not only a theme of León's play (given the fall and destruction of his laptop) but is also a central trait of theatre of the real in general. As Carol Martin explains, "Today's theatre of the real both acknowledges a positivist faith in empirical reality and underscores an epistemological crisis in knowing truth" (14). Just as León and Tello sort through the scraps of their artistic process and meditate on each recreation and recording of said process, Martin points out that "Recording ourselves, re-creating our experience and our narrative accounts of history, and remembering and memorializing the events of our own time and other times are central preoccupations of theatre of the real" (59). At the same time, following Martin, it becomes clear that any "objective" recreation of past events is imperfect, given that "Memory, however, is not a stable domain of data stored as text and image" (59). Nevertheless, this does not mean that the inability to fix any

static meaning regarding the past is taken as a failure. Quite to the contrary, Martin emphasizes the fact that

Theatre of the real is not a tragic form. Inherent in theatre of the real is an implicit belief in agency, possible change, and the value of knowing something. Through the citation and reconstruction on stage of what audiences understand as real events, theatre of the real begs spectators to cultivate and use their moral imaginations. Spectators are implicitly asked to consider how things might be different. (70)

In line with Sosa and Werth's contentions that the new wave of documentary productions of the real in Argentina move away from melancholic accounts of the past to instead reach towards euphoric, community-based national horizons, that these "unconventional acts of mourning" give way to "forms of social belonging that have emerged from loss" (Sosa 151) is Martin's belief that "Theatre of the real engages the process of forming new memories both after and instead of the memory of the original events. The work of subsequent memory is to reinscribe, reform, and revise original memories in relation to the project of the current social and political communities in terms that anticipate possible new futures" (70). In such, both the form and content of *Las ideas* communicate possibilities of euphoric reconstruction.

Emancipating Spectator and Community through Autofiction

While both testimony and autofiction deal with some version of the broad concept of "the real" in their elaborations, they do so in markedly different ways. As Jean-Graham Jones has elaborated on León's play specifically, in this "era dominated by 'theatre of the real' (and several Argentine artists, such as Lola Arias, Beatriz Catani, and Vivi Tellas, are internationally known for their work in this capacious category), *Las ideas* provided a refreshingly playful and much-needed serious reconsideration of what the artist, and the spectator, might actually be doing" on stage (253). Following Graham-Jones, this "refreshingly playful" aesthetic serves to interrogate and reassess how both spectatorship and creation can be subversive with regards to the status quo.

In this vein, it is important to consider León's own poetics of theatre of the real. In Martín Rejtman and León's meta-theatrical film *Entrenamiento elemental para actores* (2009), which Cecilia Sosa asserts "podría ser la primera obra sobre estudios de performance en Argentina" (139), the irreverence of playful performance is emphasized. Much as *Entrenamiento* functions as "una escuela de vida para todo su público" (139), it can be said that *Las ideas* is similarly a meditation on perception both within the theatrical space and

beyond. Just as in *Entrenamiento* we can observe an “encuentro entre cine y teatro...un ensamble perturbador donde ambos géneros comparecen en una comunión siempre desencajada” where this “sorprendente concurrencia de géneros” represents “una intervención crítica sobre los modos de hacer arte” (Sosa 142), *Las ideas* delves into the clash between the internet and theatre. In both cases, the clash between genres and self-reflexive nature of the productions generate an ambiguity in terms of what is real and what is not. As Rejtman states in an interview with Sosa, “Tal vez por eso tanta gente toma la película como un documental. Los chicos tienen sus nombres reales y los padres de los chicos son los padres de los chicos...Genera esa ambigüedad” (144). In the same way, *Las ideas* also works to construct the same kind of ambiguity given that León is himself in the play, just as Julián Tello (Yuli) also performs as himself, not to mention the fact that both men are friends and collaborators in real life, as they purport to be on stage as they “bounce around” ideas under the guise of a game of table tennis. As Jean Graham-Jones summarizes, “León and Tello’s expertly casual performance of the creative act was riveting, as it was never clear if the entire event was improvised or staged as an improvisation, if the audience was being had or being invited into the process” (253). This confusion which is generated in *Entrenamiento* also constitutes its subversive core, since, as Sosa reminds through Benjamin’s *Programa de un teatro infantil proletario*, “Nada considera la burguesía más peligroso que el teatro” and that “el teatro es el ámbito por excelencia de formación del niño revolucionario” (147). In such a way, much like *Entrenamiento*, *Las ideas* “aparece como manifiesto sobre los cruces entre teatro y vida” (148) through the playful mixing of fiction and reality.

It is important to signal that autofiction is much more utopic and optimistic than its solemn and often melancholic testimonial counterpart. While testimony is characterized by urgency (Beverly), as a postmodern genre, autofiction tends to deal with parody, satire, retrospection, distance, and other self-reflexive literary devices. This ludic quality of autofiction is also consistent with the postdramatic as described by Lehmann, given that “It is not the occurrence of anything ‘real’ as such but its *self-reflexive* use that characterizes the aesthetic of postdramatic theatre” but that “self-referentiality allows us to contemplate the value, the inner necessity and the significance of the extra-aesthetic *in* the aesthetic and thus the displacement of the concept of the latter” (103).

As Martin reminds, documentary theatre is a fertile terrain for mourning and even euphoric memory work to take place since “Theatre of the real

is not a tragic form” (70). Just as León’s plays like *Yo en el futuro* (2009) or *Las ideas* and the work of his cohort exhibit, the tone of documentary theatre is often not melancholic, but rather, is focused on the possibilities of rebuilding communities. In such a way, returning to Blejmar’s definition of autofiction, we can see that in post-dictatorship Argentina, the uses of this form (particularly in the theatrical realm) are linked to the work of a generation of mourners who look towards one another’s work across boundaries of genre and register, creating an unprecedented ‘community of post-orphaned artists’ (4). As Blejmar emphasizes through Alain Badiou, “the use of autofiction, parody and humor...allows these artists...to present themselves, in the words of Alain Badiou as ‘creator bodies’ rather than as merely ‘suffering figures,’ replacing the *spectacle of victimhood* for a more productive and affective memory” (5), allowing one to conclude that to engage in performing autofiction in post-1983 Argentina is inherently a means of engaging in a larger conversation regarding national identity, memory, and the role of artistic creation.

A 2016 piece on León’s play for the Argentine newspaper *La Nación* written by fellow playwright Lola Arias entitled “¿Se puede hacer un autorretrato en el teatro?” seemed a sure confirmation that León’s theatrical enterprise in *Las ideas* was autofictional. Arias answers her own question, stating that we are indeed witnessing “Un auténtico autorretrato donde, en lugar de ver al pintor frente al cuadro con un pincel en la mano, vemos al director mismo pensando, escribiendo en la computadora...” further indicating that *Las ideas* can be read as part of the “autofictional turn” (Blejmar) that has taken place in Argentine cultural productions in recent years. Arias’s comparison of León with a painter also indicates a key parallel for understanding *Las ideas* and the fascinating kind of self-referential (yet fictional) text that is being constructed, that of Diego Velázquez’ groundbreaking *Las meninas* (1656). As Argentine critic Álvaro Ariel Guarnaccia has pointed out, the self-referential nature of León’s play, “propone un régimen de visibilidad que invoca la ‘representación de la representación’ que Foucault observa en el cuadro de Velázquez” (“Las ideas: entre ficción y realidad”). Similarly, beyond simply staging a self portrait of his ideas or his autobiography for *Las ideas*, León guides the gaze of the spectator to self-introspection through autofiction. Just as the gaze of the painter in *Las meninas* (who we assume to be Velázquez himself) leads to the space that we associate with ourselves—the spectators—León’s ‘autorretrato’ in *Las ideas* leads the spectator to question his or her own role in representation; in other words, in constructing reality. As Jacques Rancière has stated in

The Emancipated Spectator, “According to the Brechtian paradigm, theatrical mediation makes them [spectators] conscious of the social situation that gives rise to it and desirous of acting in order to transform it” (8). In the same way, León’s metatheatrical play shows that “Emancipation begins when we challenge the opposition between viewing and acting; when we understand that the self-evident facts that structure the relations between saying, seeing and doing themselves belong to the structure of domination and subjection” (Rancière 13). Through the continuous need to sort the fiction of the play from reality, the spectator of *Las ideas* is conditioned into the emancipation offered by critical thought. León disguises falsities in testimonial and documentary discourse in order to play with the audience’s expectations, just as authors of autofiction engage in the so-called “real” to play with readerly expectations. Simply put, the main operation of *Las ideas* is to present a seemingly “documentary” truth and proceed to playfully denounce the illusion (or fiction) of that truth—thus strategically ‘tricking’ the audience into appealing to personal testimony over critical thinking, and then making the spectators aware of the calculated, theatrical deceit.

Marjorie Worthington points out that “Post-Truth” was the Oxford Dictionary’s 2016 “Word of the Year.” In her work on the relationship between autofiction and what has been called the “Post-Truth” era, she argues that “Autofictions consciously play with readerly expectations about memoir and fiction, thwarting both, thereby simultaneously calling into question, and making a case for, the importance of distinguishing between fact and fiction” (471). In this sense, León’s assertion that verosimilitude is more important than truth in *Las ideas*—despite a foregrounding in documentary techniques—reveals a project that similarly seeks to destabilize the spectator’s notion of reality. Following Worthington, “it is not important to determine the exact moment or moments when these novels shift from fact to fiction” (472) but rather the particular “narrative effect” that is produced through “gesturing outside themselves to a supposed nonfictional reality” (472). Thus, in León’s play when the audience questions whether or not certain parts are “real,” we see that, as Worthington describes:

Autofiction’s onomastic connection between author and character causes intentional if temporary confusion among readers as to whether such texts are fictions... This readerly confusion is part of the point: authors of autofictions are consciously eliding reality and fiction when they construct a fictional narrative around a character who is named for an author who has a real-life public existence. (473)

The play's fictionalization of testimonial and documentary discourse is akin to the onomastic connection described by Worthington that causes "confusión" in spectators. Ultimately, she concludes that "Autofictions consciously play with readerly expectations about memoir and fiction, thwarting both, thereby simultaneously calling into question—and, ultimately, making a case for—the importance of distinguishing between fact and fiction" (474). By blurring reality and fiction, then, the play asserts the importance of knowing fact from fiction over the importance of subjective, multiple memories that reflect the abundance of microtruths, alternative facts, and misinformation of neoliberal society.

Foregrounding his project in premises that more closely resemble the workings of autofiction, León shows that even those objects and people presented to us as "real" can be no more than representations of themselves and that, to take them as "real" simply because we are told that this is "documentary" theatre, is to remain, like the spiritually crippled men of Plato's cave, woefully convinced that our empirical deductions should not be questioned. As Rancière puts it in *The Emancipated Spectator*, "The situation of those who live in the society of the spectacle is thus identical to that of the shackled prisoners in Plato's cave. The cave is the place where images are taken for realities" (44). Analogously, *Las ideas* shows that one should not be convinced that what he or she is seeing is "real" when it is perhaps just a representation or simulacrum—the moving shadows on the cave's walls. León metaphorically leads spectators out of the cave by forcing them to realize that the moving images we are told are "real" are indeed just representations—mere projections.

Censorship: Exposing the Fictions of a Neoliberal Society

In one of the play's most emblematic scenes, the two performers use a money detector to verify whether several bills are real or counterfeit. Considering that "modern capitalism has seen a sustained trend towards the unification and centralization of monetary authority" (Konings 16), this particular episode highlights the corrosive effects of neoliberalism—namely that the ultra-free market philosophy perpetuates the notion that a myriad of truths and so-called "alternative facts" can co-exist (much as the counterfeit currencies coexist with real money).

At first Yuli suggests that they could simply invite a notary on-stage to verify the authenticity of the Argentine *pesos*, but León tells him that even the approval of the scribe wouldn't suffice to verify the "realness" of the money

since he or she could be acting. Exposing the fact that “money straddles the divide between the uniform and the pluriform, immediacy and mediation, autonomy and constructedness” (Konings 20), the two characters of *Las ideas* enact a subversive unmasking of the layers between fiction and reality inherent to the seemingly absolute value of money. As they begin using the device, Yuli comments that it could also be fake since it simply looks like a black, light-emitting box, adding that they might need a detector of money detectors to verify the authenticity of the money. León inserts various bills under the light of the black box and the machine verifies one as real and two as fake. Nevertheless, León declares that “the fake bill is just as real as the real bill since it circulated as real. It’s not a color photocopy—the photocopy would be a false-false bill.” His contention that there are different levels of the real leads Yuli to categorize the bills as real-real, false-real and false-false. Thus, if we see money as a reflection of truth or reality in society, this fracturing of truth serves to reinforce the idea that “In the post-truth era we don’t just have truth and lies, but a third category of ambiguous statements that are not exactly the truth but fall short of a lie” (Keyes 15). So, it would seem that in the era of post-truth, simulacra of the truth—‘bad’ copies of the so-called ‘real’ are able to circulate openly and freely.

The only actual creed for the ‘real’ is that we believe in it, as the case of the false money (which circulated successfully) would prove. It is also clear that money—when seen as the absolute value—is detrimental to building an ethical law and order since all other values are viewed as relative when compared to the hyperreal construction of capital. The fact that a copy of the real becomes a version of the real in itself allows the spectator to understand that even fake currency—if assumed to be real—can pass as equal to legitimate currency under the right conditions. Thus, by openly revealing the varying levels of simulation in the bills that circulate in Argentina (a value that is presumed absolute), the play denounces the absolute and “real” value of capital. By doing so, *Las ideas* unravels the fictional unity of money, since, as Konings explains, “money is both a complex, relational construction and a solid, objective fact. The problem, of course, is how we might understand this: there is something rather paradoxical about this duality” (17). León and his co-star exploit this paradoxical duality of money—that it is seemingly both a fiction and a reality—emphasizing instead that “the transformation of money from a fiction into an autonomous, external force is seen to be never stable” (Konings 19). In this sense, we see that by working with the representation of a series of artifacts of the real that are seemingly inimitable, such as money,

marijuana, or the presence of a woman with Down syndrome, León exposes the paradoxical duality of our constructed reality and questions the absolutism of what is referred to as “the real,” conditioning his spectators to dissect representations of reality rather than swallow them without further meditation.

Best exemplified in the scene with false and real currencies, it becomes evident throughout León’s play that the neoliberal economy tends toward generating a climate of misinformation—an environment in which multiple truths are seemingly available and legitimate. These three bills that the two men verify to have varying authenticities also correspond to the trifecta of layers that León outlines for the play—that there will be parts that are scripted, other parts non-scripted and some parts that are in between improv and acting. The repeated outlining of these three facets is significant because it implies that different “versions” of the truth exist simultaneously—on the same plane of reality. As we know, it is precisely the neoliberal economic implementations of Carlos Menem in the 90’s that led to the circulation of false bills alongside real currency in Argentina and the creation of an essentially fictional currency—*atacones*. Thus, by separating the three layers of currency—false-false, false-real, and real-real—and putting them on display for the audience, *Las ideas* denounces the idea that multiple versions of the truth can circulate nonconflictuously on a single plane.

Through the performers’ play with money, we see how multiple currencies can exist simultaneously on a single plane of reality and how certain counterfeits (analogous to false-truths) are more acceptable than others. Given that “neoliberal governmentality in fact requires the systemic production of ignorance” (Martyn 1) and given that the multiple currencies are a product of neoliberal economics, the connection between money, truth and the hyper-free market becomes all the more significant. Evidently, just as neoliberal systems promote the circulation of false and false-real currencies that are able to pass as real, they similarly encourage the production of multiple truths that can circulate as truths of equal value.

By revealing the constructedness of what we take as “real,” León initiates a deconstruction of the absolutism of this neoliberal reality, showing that our world is instead composed of intersecting panels that involve a constant dialectic mitigation between reality, fiction and increasingly, virtual reality. Playing with money in *Las ideas*, then, can be seen as a philosophical inquiry into the issue of money as authority: the fact that the new deity—capital—seems to have derailed any system of ethical politics through its claim to absolute value.

“Las ideas no se matan”

Perhaps the play’s allusion to the father of Argentine letters and his apocryphal words is ultimately a reminder of the simulated nature of society—a fictional unity where what is “real” is determined through relativity. Although culture is essentially grounded in fiction, it nevertheless forms the basis for reality. Just as Sarmiento’s emblematic misquote that initiates *Facundo* is a foreshadowing of how he crafts and “writes” the Argentine nation through false semblances—the multiplication of false copies of reality that for Piglia constitute “Marcas de un uso que habría que llamar salvaje de la cultura” (17)—León makes visible the fictionalization of reality through his theatrical autofiction, thus stimulating the spectator to take ownership of their gaze. Following this logic, just as Sarmiento’s *Facundo* is (in an unintentionally Borgesian fashion) replete with erroneous attributions and false quotes, a wild distortion of reality where “estos barbarismos proliferan” (Piglia 17), León undertakes a similar exercise in playfully distorting reality before the spectator, inviting active introspection. According to Chris Megson, rather than seeking a “wholly objective representation of ‘truth,’ much documentary theatre has functioned to complicate notions of authenticity with a more nuanced and challenging evocation of the ‘real.’ By extension, audiences are often engaged in dialogue as citizens and putative participants in the public sphere” (2). In this sense, the allusion to Sarmiento’s famous misquote is not surprising, given that *Facundo* is considered a “foundational fiction” (Sommer) in fomenting Argentina’s early national reality. By misquoting Sarmiento, León playfully alludes to this fact—that often civilization’s version of reality is, at its core, imbued with the barbarism of fiction. Piglia concludes in his close inspection of Sarmiento’s misattributions in *Facundo*, “ese manejo ‘lujoso’ de la cultura como signo de la civilización está corroído, desde su interior, por la barbarie” (17). In the same way, León’s playfully deceitful manipulation of reality in *Las ideas* primes the spectator to the possibility that the foundational discourses of reality are manipulable, even if they appear to be erudite and well reasoned. As in Sarmiento’s *Facundo*, under every layer of official history and accepted reality, there are layers of barbarous fiction waiting to be unearthed; one only need attune their perception in order to detect them.

León’s play significantly concludes with the gradual inflation and eventual explosion of a balloon that I, as spectator in the intimate Zelaya theatre, feared would perhaps touch me as it expanded dangerously, in Graham-Jones’s words, filling “nearly the entire stage” (252). This kind of intimate contact

with the spectator—a radical rupturing of the fourth wall—seems to come as yet another sign that viewing is not a passive act in postdramatic theatre, but that the spectator is also a protagonist. As I have discussed, *Las ideas* incorporates the real to address the crisis of reconstructing digital memory, and by extensión, participates in a larger discussion regarding the artist's role in present day Argentina. Federico León, much like Lola Arias, has no blood ties to the disappeared, yet his subtle reference to dictatorship-era censorship provides an innovative framework for addressing issues of historical memory. According to Cecilia Sosa, regarding Arias's *Mi vida después*,

In this political context, the performance develops a way of 'showing and saying' for those who seemingly have 'no business' within the local experience of loss. Also in this sense, Arias's piece 'speaks for itself,' and it does so on behalf of those who seemingly do not have the 'right' to speak, those who lack *pedigree* and, thereby, do not have the most 'interesting' roles within the current discourses of memory... *Mi vida después* shows how seemingly underestimated subjects of politics can have surprising things to say, if they are allowed to step into 'main' roles. (127)

Similarly, León invites his spectator to meditate on his or her own role in perceiving, constructing, and questioning reality and the need to “Actuar para vivir” as Baglietto's album title suggests. As Sosa sums up, euphoric theatre of the real has the capacity to provide “non-victimising accounts of trauma that have also confronted the official duty of memory” (170), thereby forging an alternative community of mourning that seeks to “highlight the intimate connection among humour, subjectivity and technology which permeates Argentina's post-dictatorship [and]... rethink the relationship of affect and trauma by deploying a time machine of memory... a creative response to injury coming from the future” (118). As an antidote to the neoliberalization of society, *Las ideas* playfully explores themes of memory, censorship, creation, and artistic identity and invites its spectators to do the same.

Tulane University

Notes

¹ According to Alfonso de Toro in his study “Hacia un modelo para el teatro postmoderno,” several central characteristics of postmodern theatre are: an abundant use of humor, collage and discursive play. Furthermore, postmodern theatre is essentially antitotalitarian, reactionary, metareflexive, deconstructive, and perhaps most importantly, “se despidió definitivamente del sueño obsesivo de la unidad totalizante que se extendía del concepto clásico de la *mathesis universalis* al de las utopías sociales del siglo XIX” (5). In precisely this way, León's *Las ideas* deconstructs reality through postmodern autofiction.

² According to Ricardo Piglia, “La cita más famosa del libro, que Sarmiento atribuye a Fortoul, es según Groussac, de Volney. Pero otro francés, Paul Verdevoye, ha venido a decir que tampoco Groussac tiene razón: después de señalar que la cita no aparece en la obra de Fortoul, pero tampoco en Volney, la encuentra en Diderot: *On ne tire pas de coups de fusil aux idées*. Frase usada como epigrafe en un artículo de Charles Didier publicado en la *Revue Encyclopedique* donde, sin duda, la encontró Sarmiento” (17). In other words, León’s misquote is merely a misquote in a long chain of misappropriations.

Works Cited

- Arias, Lola. “¿Se puede hacer un autorretrato en el teatro?” *La Nación*, 17 April 2016, www.lanacion.com.ar/1890082-el-criticose-puede-hacer-un-autorretrato-en-el-teatro.
- Ariel Guarnaccia, Álvaro. “*Las ideas: entre ficción y realidad.*” *Ramona*, 1 Aug. 2017, www.ramona.org.ar/node/63653.
- Aubenas, Florence and Miguel Benasayag. *La fabricación de la información: los periodistas y la ideología de la comunicación*. Colihue, 2001.
- Baudrillard, Jean. *Simulacra and Simulation*. Trad. Sheila Faria Glaser, U of Michigan P, 1994.
- Beverly, John. “The Neoconservative Turn in Latin American Literary and Cultural Criticism.” *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, vol. 17, no. 1, 2008, pp. 65-83.
- Blejmar, Jordana. *Playful Memories: The Autofictional Turn in Post-Dictatorship Argentina*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.
- Brownell, Pamela and Paola Hernández. *Biodrama: Proyecto Archivos. Seis documentales escénicos*. Facultad de Filosofía y Humanidades-UNC, 2017.
- Catani, Beatriz. *Acercamientos a lo real. Textos y escenarios*, ed. Óscar Cornago, Eds. Artes el Sur, 2007.
- Conde, Laura Gabriela. “La basura como testimonio de la desobjetivación en *Spam* de Rafael Spregelburd.” *Telóndefondo*, vol. 14, no. 27, 2018, pp. 25-46.
- Cornago, Óscar. “*Biodrama*. Sobre el teatro de la vida y la vida del teatro.” *Latin American Theatre Review*, vol. 39, no. 1, 2005, pp. 5-28.
- Dubatti, Jorge and Muniz, Mariana Lima. “A Scene of Exception: Neotechnological Theatre in Belo Horizonte (Brazil) and Buenos Aires (Argentina).” *Revista Brasileira de Estudos da Presença*, vol. 8, no. 2, 2018, pp. 366-89.
- Dubatti, Jorge. “Hacia una cartografía teatral radicante y un pensamiento cartografiado.” *Gestos*, vol. 60, 2015, pp. 47-57.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. Vintage Books, 1994.
- Gates-Madsen, Nancy. *Trauma, Taboo, and Truth-Telling: Listening to Silences in Postdictatorship Argentina*. U of Wisconsin P, 2016.

- Goodstein, Elizabeth S. "Money, Relativism, and the Post-Truth Political Imaginary." *Philosophy & Rhetoric*, vol. 50, no. 4, 2017, pp. 483-508.
- Graham-Jones, Jean. "Rethinking Buenos Aires Theatre in the Wake of 2001 and Emerging Structures of Resistance and Resilience." *Theatre Journal*, vol. 66, 2014, pp. 37-54.
- Jameson, Fredric. *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Duke UP, 1991.
- Konings, Martijn. *The Emotional Logic of Capitalism*. Stanford UP, 2015.
- "Las ideas de Federico León." *Alternativa teatral*, 15 Jun. 2019, www.alternativateatral.com/obra37360-las-ideas.
- Lehmann, Hans-Thies. *Postdramatic Theatre*. Trad. Karen Jürs-Munby, Routledge, 2006.
- León, Federico. *Registros: teatro reunido y otros textos*. Adriana Hidalgo, 2005.
- Longoni, Ana and Lorena Verzero. "Mi vida después: Itinerario de un teatro vivo. Entrevista con Lola Arias." *Ciclo de entrevistas públicas sobre teatro, memoria y pasado reciente*, 22 July, 2011.
- Martin, Carol. *Theatre of the Real*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.
- Martyn, Kevin P. and M. Martin Bosman. "Post-Truth or Agnogenesis? Theorizing Risk and Uncertainty in a Neoliberal Nature." *Journal of Risk Research*, vol. 22, no. 8, 2019, pp. 951-963.
- Megson, Chris and Alison Forsyth. *Get Real: Documentary Theatre Past and Present*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Nicol, Bran. *The Cambridge Introduction to Postmodern Fiction*. Cambridge UP, 2009.
- Page, Philippa. *Politics and Performance in Post-dictatorship Argentine Film and Theatre*. Tamesis, 2011.
- Piglia, Ricardo. "Notas sobre Sarmiento." *Punto de vista*, vol. 3, no. 8, 1980, pp. 15-18.
- Rancière, Jacques. *The Emancipated Spectator*. Trad. Gregory Elliott, Verso, 2009.
- Sánchez, José A. *Practising the Real on the Contemporary Stage*. Intellect Ltd, 2014.
- Sarlo, Beatriz. *Tiempo pasado: cultura de la memoria y giro subjetivo: una discusión*. Siglo Veintiuno, 2005.
- Sassone, Ricardo. "Inscripción de la escena teatral en el contexto de la escena 'neotecnológica.'" *ADE Teatro, Revista de la Asociación de Directores de Escena de España*, no.106, 2005, pp. 49-59.
- Sosa, Cecilia. *Queering Acts of Mourning in the Aftermath of Argentina's Dictatorship*. Tamesis, 2014.
- _____. "Escuela de vida: Una conversación con Martín Rejtman y Federico León." *Latin American Theatre Review*, vol. 50, no. 2, 2017, pp. 139-154.

- Taylor, Diana. *Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina's 'Dirty War'*. Duke UP, 1997.
- Toro, Alfonso de. *Hacia un modelo para el teatro postmoderno*. Institut für Spanien-und Lateinamerika-Studien (ISLA), 1989.
- Werth, Brenda. *Theatre, Performance, and Memory Politics in Argentina*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
- Worthington, Marjorie. "Fiction in the 'Post-Truth' Era: The Ironic Effects of Autofiction." *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, vol. 58, no. 5, 2017, pp. 471-483.