

## Restaging the Conquest of Michoacán in the 1990s: Víctor Castillo Bautista's *Nuño de Guzmán o la espada de Dios*

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The years leading up to the 1992 Quincentennial of Christopher Columbus' first voyage saw an increase in Latin American plays representing the discovery, exploration and conquest of the Americas. Numerous plays staged this encounter with a focus on such Spanish figures as Columbus, Hernán Cortés and Gonzalo Guerrero as well as Amerindian figures such as La Malinche, Cuauhtémoc and Moctezuma.<sup>1</sup> The dominant tendency in these plays, argues Juan Villegas, was not to re-read history from the vantage point of the vanquished, but rather to underscore the injustices of the dominant regimes and their interpretation of history (240). In the case of recent Mexican theatre Sabina Berman's *Aguila o sol* (1984), Vicente Leñero's *La noche de Hernán Cortés* (1992) and Hugo Rascón Banda's *La Malinche* (2000) follow the dominant tendency outlined by Villegas and employ a variety of dramatic techniques associated with postmodernism (parody, openness, discontinuity, marginality and anachronism) to deform, decenter and demythify received historical "truths" about the conquest of Mexico, which have underscored the Eurocentric vision of this event.<sup>2</sup>

While the above mentioned plays focus on figures and episodes related to the conquest of Mexico (i.e., the fall of Tenochtitlán), Víctor Castillo Bautista's *Nuño de Guzmán o la espada de Dios: una obra en un acto* (1994) centers on the Spanish conquistador Nuño de Guzmán and the conquest of Michoacán.<sup>3</sup> Nuño de Guzmán arrived in New Spain in 1527 to assume the post of resident governor of Pánuco (modern-day state of Tamaulipas), which he held until 1528. As governor, he issued licenses for the branding and exportation of Amerindian slaves from Pánuco to Hispaniola – an act for which he would be denounced for generations to come. In 1528 Charles V named him president of the Primera Audiencia of New Spain

(1529-1533), specifically to act as a counterweight to the growing power of Cortés. (Guzmán repeatedly clashed with Cortés and Juan de Zumárraga, a Franciscan, the first bishop and archbishop of New Spain [1527-1548], and leader of the Mexican Inquisition [1536-1543].)<sup>4</sup> During his tenure as president of the Primera Audiencia, Guzmán would often leave the city to conquer territory, and in 1530 he left on an expeditionary campaign to conquer lands extending to the Pacific Ocean, which included the modern-day states of Michoacán, Jalisco, Zacatecas, Nayarit, Sinaloa, Sonora and Durango.<sup>5</sup> On his way through Michoacán, Guzmán – accompanied by a band of Spanish soldiers, local settlers, and allied Indians – tortured and publicly executed the Cazonci (hereditary ruler of the Purhépecha Indians), along the banks of the Lerma River on February 14, 1530 (Krippner-Martínez 9). The execution of the Cazonci, which has long been considered one of the most infamous events of the conquest of Mexico, culminated a series of encounters between Spanish conquistadors (mainly Cortés and Guzmán) and the Cazonci.

By the end of the sixteenth century, Guzmán had acquired an immutable reputation for greed and cruelty and had come to symbolize Spanish atrocities against the Amerindians in the New World. His name had become synonymous with the black legend of Spanish colonialism.<sup>6</sup> In large measure this uniformly negative portrait originated from the publication of Bartolomé de las Casas' *Brevisima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* (1552). In a chapter entitled "De la Nueva España, y Pánuco y Jalisco," Las Casas denounces Guzmán for exchanging Indians for cattle, while he was resident governor of Pánuco, and for torturing and executing the Cazonci during the conquest of Michoacán. Since the publication of the *Brevisima relación*, generations of historians and intellectuals have taken their cues from Guzmán's political rivals (mainly Cortés and Zumárraga) and reproduced the content of the documents left behind, all of which depict Guzmán as cruel, brutal and lascivious (Krippner-Martínez 39).<sup>7</sup>

Castillo Bautista follows the essence of historical events about the conquest of Michoacán, based on Las Casas' *Brevisima relación* and the trial record of the Cazonci.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, he introduces fictitious episodes and figures that alter our understanding of Guzmán and the conquest of Michoacán. The play deforms and decenters the official history of Guzmán and this event in order to rehumanize him and challenge the idea of "exceptionality" surrounding his conduct towards the indigenous populations in New Spain. Though the play by no means exculpates Guzmán for his atrocities against the Purhépecha populations, it no longer casts him exclusively

as an exceptionally cruel conquistador but rather as a flawed human being. By restaging the conquest of Michoacán and the execution of the Cazonci, which have been featured as the prime exhibits for accusations against Guzmán of excessive cruelty, the play puts into question one-dimensional ideological interpretations of this episode, which traditionally portray the conquistadors as pure evil and the Amerindians as unwitting and passive victims in their demise. And the play employs two strategies to alter our understanding of Guzmán and the conquest of Michoacán. First, it assigns the Buffoon a pivotal role in the torture and execution of the Cazonci, thereby deflecting exclusive attention from Guzmán's role in the indigenous leader's death; and second, it situates Guzmán in quotidian scenes to present him as a flawed human being who shares many of the qualities of the macho in 20<sup>th</sup> century Mexico. While scholars have discussed the multifaceted nature of Mexican *machismo* (the cult of virility, power, domination and superiority), for the purpose of this article I will follow the lead of the sociologist Evelyn Stevens who posits that its chief characteristics are exaggerated aggressiveness and intransigence in male-to-male interpersonal relationships and arrogance and sexual aggression in male-to-female relationships (90).<sup>9</sup> The play, in the end, undermines the dominant trend in Mexican colonial historiography to portray Guzmán as the poster child of the black legend of Spanish colonialism.

### **Relations between the Spanish Conquistadors and the Cazonci**

The on-going conflict between Guzmán and Cortés as well as between Guzmán and the Cazonci serves as the historical backdrop against which Castillo Bautista reenacts the conquest of Michoacán. Soon after the successful Spanish military occupation of Tenochtiltán, the Cazonci established a close relationship with Cortés. As early as February 23, 1521, soldiers under Cortés' command had met with representatives of the Cazonci – led by the Cazonci's adopted brother, Don Pedro – at Tajimaroa, a village on the border between the regions controlled by the Mexica and Purhépecha empires (Krippner-Martínez 17). As a result of these and other contacts, the Cazonci and Don Pedro had journeyed to Mexico City by 1524 or 1525, where Cortés received them. In 1525, Cortés sponsored the Cazonci in his baptism by Franciscan missionaries, and on June 7, 1525, the newly christened Don Francisco agreed that some male children of the indigenous elite should be educated by the Franciscans (Krippner-Martínez 17). As Krippner-Martínez has argued, the Cazonci struck an alliance with Cortés, which was informed

by his own political concerns and obligations. The Purhépecha had been one of the few indigenous peoples to maintain their independence from the Aztec empire during the prehispanic era, and a fierce rivalry had existed between them. Thus, the Cazonci had no reason to view the initial Spanish military victory as anything but a boon to his people, and no reason not to seek Cortés out as an ally (Krippner-Martínez 18).<sup>10</sup>

Like Cortés, Guzmán also attempted to forge an alliance with the Cazonci and extract tributes of gold and silver. As early as 1529, Guzmán had ordered indigenous rulers from each kingdom to pay homage to the *Primera Audiencia* in Mexico City. Although the Cazonci did not personally respond to Guzmán's request, he sent a Náhuatl interpreter to Mexico City with several gifts. Unimpressed with the gifts, Guzmán ordered his soldiers to bring the Cazonci to Mexico City in the spring of 1529 (Verástique 79-80). On that occasion the Cazonci presented Guzmán with 20 silver plates and many gold ingots. Nevertheless, Guzmán remained unimpressed with the tribute and ordered his guards to imprison the Cazonci until he received more gold. This ransom was eventually paid, and the Cazonci returned to Michoacán in May 1529 (Verástique 80).

The following August, Guzmán again summoned the Cazonci and ordered him to collect large quantities of weapons, clothing and food to provision Guzmán's army, which consisted of 150 cavalymen, 200 foot soldiers, and between 10,000 and 12,000 Amerindian allies. This army would be leaving Mexico City on a treasure-hunting expedition to the territory of Nueva Galicia (Verástique 80). The Cazonci was also instructed to bring Guzmán more treasures of gold and silver. From August until late December 1529, the Cazonci was imprisoned at Guzmán's residence in Mexico City, where he was tortured, shackled about the ankles and confined to his room (Verástique 80). Upon release on Christmas day, the Cazonci left for the town of Tzintzuntzan ahead of the army in order to prepare the heavy levy that Guzmán required (Verástique 80). And this is the moment at which the play picks up the action.

### ***Nuño de Guzman o la espada de Dios* and The Conquest of Michoacán**

*Nuño de Guzmán o la espada de Dios* consists of 11 scenes and can be divided into three major sections. Section 1 (scenes 1 through 4) alternate between Guzmán's final preparations to leave Mexico City for the western territories and the Cazonci's conversations with an elderly Indio about his plans to cooperate fully with the invasionary forces. Section 2 (scenes

5 through 8) alternate between violent scenes in which the Spaniards torture the Cazonci and quotidian scenes in a tavern and bedroom, where Guzmán displays his machismo. Section 3 (scenes 9 through 11) focuses on the Spaniards' departure from Michoacán and Guzmán's fulfillment of his lifelong dream of founding an unnamed city.

The opening scene, which highlights the on-going rivalry between Cortés and Guzmán and the tension between Guzmán and the Cazonci, prepares the audience for the impending clash between Guzmán and the Purhépecha leader. In scene 1, an exchange among the Cazonci, an elderly Indio and the Niño Indígena, who has just returned from a stay with the Franciscans in Mexico City, underscores the decline of indigenous religious practices and the ascension of Spanish control. When the Cazonci asks the Niño Indígena, who is dressed in Spanish-style clothing, what he has learned from the Franciscans, the latter hesitantly recites verses from the Lord's Prayer (9). The cultural and religious conquest of Michoacán, symbolized by the transformation of the Niño's clothing and conversion to Christianity, has paved the way for Guzmán's military conquest of the region, which is foreshadowed by the arrival of Andrés de Tapia, Cortés' messenger. When Tapia instructs the Cazonci not to hand over any gold or silver to Guzmán, the Cazonci acquiesces to Tapia's demands, and thus clears the way for the imminent clash between Guzmán and the Purhépecha leader.

While Tapia serves as the emissary of Cortés, a Buffoon<sup>11</sup> serves as the intermediary between the Cazonci and Guzmán. In Spanish Golden Age theatre, the buffoon was a professional comedian with a compulsion for living the "good life," for enjoying the freedom to violate social taboos (at least in the interests of humor) and for crossing social boundaries (for example, by residing in a royal residence without belonging to it) [Ruiz Ramón 105]. In *Niño de Guzmán o la espada de Dios*, the Buffoon assumes a similar stock role but undergoes a pivotal transformation of character, which brings to the forefront Guzmán's role in the execution of the Cazonci and the conquest of Michoacán.

In scene 3, the Buffoon presents himself to Guzmán and his men as a mere source of fun and entertainment:

BUFON (Gritando a voz en pecho) [. . .] No soy un salvador de almas ni espada cargo para matar al enemigo. No tengo cuentas pendientes ni con el demonio ni con la muerte [. . .]. Victorias tengo de sacar la risa a los cansados y a los desahuciados [. . .]. Muchos cuentos y canciones

sé. Son éstas mis cartas de presentación que ofrezco para solicitar que me lleve, capitán, consigo a las nuevas tierras. (18-19)

As the Buffoon attempts to persuade Guzmán to hire him for the expeditionary campaign, he performs a repertoire of stories, which include rumors that Zumárraga plans to fabricate the miraculous appearance of the Virgin of Guadalupe on the hill at Tepeyac.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the Buffoon asserts that military and spiritual conquests are inextricably linked:

BUFON: [. . .]. Imagen y espada, espada e imagen son la clave [. . .]. Primero fue la espada que ha matado al cuerpo del indio; ahora será la imagen, que ha de matar su alma. Elemental, capitán. Es ése el golpe definitivo [. . .]. (23)

While the Buffoon's comments allude to the staged appearance of the Virgin of Guadalupe and the subsequent conversion of the indigenous to Catholicism, they also remind the audience of the opening scene of the play, when the Niño Indígena timidly and hesitantly recites the Lord's Prayer. The exchange between the Buffoon and Guzmán suggests that the military conquest of Michoacán is well under way, and that the conquistadors will continue the spiritual conquest. And the chronological presentation of events enables the public to witness the systematic capitulation of the indigenous to Guzmán's designs.

Although the Buffoon claims that his sole purpose is to provide fun and entertainment, he gradually becomes an enthusiastic participant in the torture and execution of the Cazonci. In the second section of the play, the juxtaposition of scenes in which the Buffoon performs renditions of Francisco de Quevedo's burlesque sonnets and those showing the torture of the Cazonci underscores the perversity and grotesqueness of the conquest and the stark contrast between the frivolity of the Buffoon and the suffering of the Cazonci. In scene 5, for example, immediately after Spanish soldiers tie the hands and feet of the Cazonci and hang him from the branch of a tree, the Buffoon recites Quevedo's burlesque sonnet, "A lo forzoso que todo lo humano vive sujeto":

La voz del ojo, que llamamos pedo, / rruiseñor de los putos, detenida / da muerte a la salud más presumida, / y el propio preste Juan le tiene miedo. / Más pronunciada con el labio acedo / y con pujo sonoro despedida / con pullas y con risas da la vida, / y con puf y con asco, siendo quedo. / Cágome en el blasón de los monarcas / que se precian, cercados de tudescos, / de dar la vida y dispensar las parcas. / Pues en el tribunal de

sus gregüescos, / con aflojar y comprimir las arcas, / cualquier culo lo hace con dos cuescos. (31)

Reciting this grotesque sonnet highlights the Spaniard's utmost disregard and contempt for the indigenous culture and their disrespect for the Cazonci. Yet at the same time, it humanizes the Cazonci's suffering by making him "everyman."

After the Cazonci fails to meet Guzmán's demand for more gold, Guzmán orders the soldiers to remove him from the tree and to tie him to the saddle of a horse so that the Purhépecha leader will be dragged through the village. After Guzmán gives the order, the Buffoon, guitar in hand, sings another burlesque sonnet by Quevedo, the "Pronuncia con sus nombres los trastos y misterios de la vida":

La vida empieza en lágrimas y caca, / luego viene la mu,  
con mama y coco, / síguense las viruelas, baba y moco, / y  
luego llega el trompo y la matraca. / En creciendo, la amiga  
y la sonsaca; / con ellas embiste el apetito loco; / en subiendo  
a mancebo, todo es poco, / y después la intención peca en  
bellaca. / Llega a ser hombre, y todo lo trabuca; / soltero  
sigue toda perendeca; / casado se convierte en mala cuca.  
/ Viejo encanece, arrúgase y se seca; / llega la muerte y  
todo lo bazuca, / y lo que deja paga, y lo que peca. (35)

The Buffoon's reciting of the sonnet serves as a parodic gloss to the pathetic decline of the Cazonci as leader of the Purhépecha and anticipates his increasing callousness to the plight of the indigenous leader.

By scene 8, the Buffoon's cruel and brutal treatment of the Cazonci surpasses that of Guzmán. At the prompting of the latter, the Buffoon brutally attacks an already bloodied Cazonci, which is indicated in the stage directions: "[. . .] con el bastón con el que malabarea, asesta un golpe a Cazonci [. . .]" (48). Eventually, it is the Buffoon himself who sets fire to the wood to burn the indigenous ruler: "Nuño da otra orden al Bufón y éste empieza a poner la leña encima de Cazonci, mientras chifla" (49). Between scenes 3 and 8, the audience witnesses the transformation of the Buffoon from a benign comedian into a conquistador capable of brutally torturing the Cazonci. After witnessing these scenes, the public viscerally understands the extent of the conquistadors' brutality in the New World and the susceptibility of the Buffoon, and all human beings, to perpetrate acts of violence. This tragedy is situated in a quotidian world in which everyday people brutalize everyday people. The torture of the Cazonci, thus, becomes a ritual of domination, linked to other

everyday rituals of domination. When the audience takes into account the Buffoon's actions, Guzmán – though cruel and brutal – no longer appears exceptionally and uniquely so.

Just as the play presents the Buffoon as a complex and contradictory individual capable of performing rituals of domination, it also aims to go beyond the unidimensional portrait of Guzmán as the human incarnation of evil. During the course of the Buffoon's transformation from innocent bystander to torturer, the play presents Guzmán as a complex and contradictory Mexican macho of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At times the ruthless conquistador behaves as if he were a Buffoon. During the torture of the Cazonci, Guzmán feigns hospitality and mockingly offers food to the beleaguered leader:

[. . .] qué descortés soy que a mi invitado no le he ofrecido ni una sola copa de vino, que es persona principal de estas tierras. Tome usted (le ofrece vino y Cazonci lo rechaza). No me digas que no te emborrachas, si ustedes nada más se la viven de fiesta en fiesta. Anda, bebe. (Vuelve Cazonci a rechazar la botella. Nuño le echa en la cara el líquido y ríe). (32)

Guzmán buffoonish behavior, however, is momentary. Shortly thereafter, he reverts to his role as the cruel conquistador who exercises his power and threatens the Cazonci with violence. Although the play does not undermine Guzmán's reputation as a cruel conquistador, it focuses more attention on everyday scenes that depict Guzmán as a 20<sup>th</sup> century Mexican macho. In a conversation with fellow soldiers Juan and Cristóbal de Olid at a tavern in Michoacán, an inebriated Guzmán presents his lyrical side as evidenced when he waxes about the precariousness of life:

[. . .] la vida cuelga de un hilo de araña y que ese hilo, si se rompe, ya no puede otra vez pegarse: la araña eres tú, la vida es el hilo y la muerte es el viento que lo mueve. (38)

Guzmán sees himself as an active agent in forging his own destiny. Like the spider who lures its prey into its web and in accordance with his historical reputation for lasciviousness, Guzmán subsequently seduces a young virgin. This woman, identified as La Muchacha and dependent on sexually gratifying the soldiers for her economic survival, reluctantly submits to the sexual advances of a drunken Guzmán (42-44).

Just as the Buffoon remarks in scene 3 that military and spiritual conquest go hand in hand, Guzmán extends the conquest of Michoacán to incorporate the sexual conquest of Spanish women. In scene 6, an inebriated



Guzmán engages in a dialogue with his sword, which he clearly genders as female:

[. . . La espada] tiene una melodía como si fuera una voz de mujer en celo, como de mujer enamorada, como de hembra en brama. Ella te habla sólo cuando estás dormido. “Nuño — me dice besándome al oído—, no nací para la funda, sino para el combate.” [. . .] la espada es como la hembra, nunca la dejes insatisfecha, porque si no, cuando usarla quieres, ya no ha de servirte—. Úsame y hazme feliz [. . .].” (39-40)

The image of the sword links Guzmán’s military and sexual power, as evidenced when he exhorts the Muchacha to release herself to enjoy the pleasure of the sexual encounter. Before consummating the act, Guzmán encourages her first to listen to the handle of his sword:

Dime qué te cuenta, qué te dice la espada. Cuéntame qué te está diciendo, cántame la dulce canción que está cantando. Cuéntame qué quiere ahora la espada, además de la sangre. Tú que eres hembra, hablará contigo de igual a igual. La espada desnuda es cuando luce igual que la mujer. Desnúdate tú y alúmbrame. (44)

The scenes related to the sexual encounter between Guzmán and La Muchacha, when juxtaposed against the scenes that display the torture and suffering of the Cazonci, reveal that everyday rituals of domination enable the practice of cruelty, in this case, Guzmán’s taking advantage of a vulnerable virgin. In this scene, while Guzmán’s actions are cruel and brutal, they no longer are exceptionally cruel and brutal.

The final scenes of the play suggest that the conquistadors’ gains from the pillage and plundering of Michoacán will be ephemeral. It is a repentant Buffoon who serves as the collective conscious of the military forces and recognizes the consequences of the destruction as they advance to Nueva Galicia. While Guzmán attempts to allay his soldiers’ fears about an imminent ambush by the indigenous and threatens to be cruel if the indigenous fail to show the conquistadors respect, the Buffoon now empathizes with their plight:

BUFON: (Aparte) ¡Respeto! ¿Le tendrías respeto al ladrón que entra a media noche a robar a tu casa?

SOLDADO 2: ¡Calla esa boca!

BUFON: La callo, pero eso es lo que pienso. (59)

In the final scene there is a tenuous truce between the Spaniards and the indigenous. The Niño Indígena from scene 1 reappears in the closing scene

and once again recites the Lord's Prayer in unison with the Spaniards (62). Shortly thereafter, the Buffoon asks the Niño if he would like to hear a story, but only after El Sacerdote touches his head with the cross. The ending of the play suggests that the conquest of Michocacán contained both military and spiritual dimensions and included the collaboration of the indigenous populations in their own subjugation.

### Conclusions

*Nuño de Guzmán o la espada de Dios* revisits the conquest of Michoacán to transform the infamous conquistador from an ideological emblem of the black legend of Spanish colonialism into a flawed and complex human being. It artistically recasts the execution of the Cazonci in the presence of a Buffoon to underscore the evil of the conquistadors, while it also brings to the stage the performance of everyday rituals of domination. For a Mexican audience, revisiting the conquest of Michoacán serves as a reminder of parallels in the relationship between the conquistadors and the indigenous in the 16th century and those between the Mexican government and the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) in 1994. In the preface to the play, the critic José Caballero explicitly notes such parallels:

Este infausto 1994 se ha visto marcado, entre otros hechos lamentables, por el levantamiento armado en Chiapas, que ha venido a recordarnos que quinientos años después la iniquidad y la ambición mantienen sobre los indígenas la injusticia de que han sido víctima desde la época del despojo. (5)

As Jacqueline E. Bixler has noted in her article on recent Mexican theatre about the 1968 massacre at Tlatelolco, the past is remembered (especially in times of crisis of change) according to the needs of the present. For Bixler, *the politics of remembering* is a dominant trend in current Mexican politics that reopens and ultimately rewrites both remote and recent chapters of Mexican history, including the conquest of Tenochtitlán, the Porfiriato, and the assassination of Luis Donaldo Colosio ("Re-Membering the Past" 134).

*Nuño de Guzmán o la espada de Dios* situates the execution of the Cazonci as one in a series of episodes in which the indigenous have been abused, from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the present. Moreover, the play clears the ground for a different interpretation of the episode, one that moves beyond official accounts and prompts the audience to interrogate the social and political contexts in which Guzmán's image was forged. In the preface to *Nuño de Guzmán's* memoir reissued by the Secretaria de Educación y Cultura

Jalisco in 1992, the anthropologist Alfredo Corona Ibarra argues that rethinking the colonial history of Mexico cannot occur until historians no longer see the conquistadors as “[. . .] ni ángeles, ni demonios: simplemente, hombres” (12). In the realm of Mexican theatre, *Nuño de Guzmán o la espada de Dios* represents a move in that direction. And such a move resonates with recent historical reinterpretations of the conquest of Michoacán and the execution of the Cazonci.

In his monograph on the history of early colonial Michoacán (1521-1565), James Krippner Martínez argues that Guzmán’s actions were extremely functional for the founding of Spanish colonialism in Michoacán and cannot be understood simply as the acts of a deviant individual. Guzmán did not act alone in executing the Cazonci, but rather fulfilled the aspirations of most of the Spanish settlers in the region. These settlers had experienced substantial resistance in their attempts to occupy Michoacán, proving that they and Cortés misunderstood the nature of their alliance with the Cazonci. The ultimate moral responsibility for the Cazonci’s death, argues Krippner-Martínez, lay with those who killed him: namely Spanish settlers, Guzmán, the army under his command, the colonial and royal authorities who placed all of the above in the New World, and, of course, the King (Krippner-Martínez 43-44). While many of Nuño de Guzmán’s actions in New Spain were cruel and brutal, they were not in the end exceptionally and uniquely so.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Representative Latin American plays include Carlos Tulio Altan and the Teatro de los Andes’ *Colón* (1992) and Enrique Buenaventura’s *Crónica* (1988) about Gonzalo Guerrero. Years before the Quincentennial Amerindian and Spanish figures from the conquest of Mexico were the subject of numerous Mexican plays, including Sergio Magaña’s *Moctezuma II* (1953) and *Cortés y la Malinche* (1967), Rodolfo Usigli’s *Corona de fuego* (1960), Salvador Novo’s *Cauhtémoc* (1962) and Carlos Fuentes’ *Todos los gatos son pardos* (1970). For an excellent analysis of the role of La Malinche in Mexican theatre, see Cypess (especially chapter 6).

<sup>2</sup> For further discussion of *Águila o sol* see Bixler (“The Postmodernization of History”) and Meléndez; of *La noche de Hernán Cortés*, see Nigro; and of *La Malinche*, see Day (especially chapter 5).

<sup>3</sup> Víctor Castillo Bautista (1962) is currently Coordinator of the Compañía de Teatro at the University of Guadalajara. He has staged numerous Spanish Golden Age plays, including Miguel de Cervantes’ *El viejo celoso* as well as Lope de Vega’s *El castigo sin venganza* and *La*

*vengadora de las mujeres*. His *Nuño de Guzmán o la espada de Dios* received the 1994 "Premio Publicación de Obra de Teatro" prize, awarded by the University of Guadalajara. As of this writing the play has yet to be staged. The exploits of Nuño de Guzmán are also the subject of Hugo Salcedo's short theatrical piece, *Los endemoniados* (written in 1990 and published in 1996). As Peter Beardsell has noted, the piece is very loosely based on historical events leading to Guzmán's detention by Antonio de Mendoza's envoys in 1537. Driven by his envy of Cortés, resentment, ambition and wanton cruelty, Guzmán in this play is a caricature of the sixteenth-century figure, so disagreeable that his eventual subjection to justice brings a sense of great satisfaction to the audience (Beardsell 75). For further discussion of the play, see Beardsell (especially 75-76).

<sup>4</sup> Guzmán's conflicts with Cortés as well as Cortés' allies among the Franciscan order are legendary. The political rivalry between Guzmán and Cortés began in 1528, when Charles V appointed Guzmán president of the *Primera Audiencia* of New Spain. Although the *Primera Audiencia* was publicly charged with promoting stability by arranging the granting of *encomiendas* in perpetuity, Guzmán bungled the opportunity to institute a permanent *encomienda* system and ignored instructions. Though forbidden to hold Indians, he used his official position as an opportunity to appropriate for himself, his friends and relatives innumerable villages in *encomienda* (Liss 51-52). He also made other grants and revoked them at will, forced Indians to work in labor mines and on private projects, and enslaved large numbers of them. The *Primera Audiencia*, instead of assuming a mediating posture above local interest and of reflecting the royal position, pursued self-interest directly among the Spanish factions in New Spain (Liss 52). As to his clashes with the Franciscans and Zumárraga, such conflicts originated over the question of their respective judicial authority. Zumárraga had been appointed protector of the Indians and inquisitor of New Spain by the crown, and both of these positions carried a judicial function and responsibility. (In Mexico City, Zumárraga initiated court proceedings to hear Amerindian complaints about Spanish atrocities, including those against Guzmán.) These activities, however, overlapped with the civil jurisdiction of the *Primera Audiencia*. The resulting jurisdictional ambiguity was the primary reason for Guzmán's frequent and violent clashes with Zumárraga (Verástique 77).

<sup>5</sup> While Guzmán was on this expeditionary campaign, Queen Isabel named him governor of Nueva Galicia (Jalisco) in 1531 and appointed the *Segunda Audiencia* of New Spain, a body that overturned many of Guzmán's decisions. In 1532 the *Segunda Audiencia* reprimanded Guzmán for his conquest of Colima and stripped him of his governorship of Pánuco. In 1536 Guzmán decided to return to Spain, where he would ask the Crown for absolution or punishment for his alleged misdeeds. While he was passing through Mexico City en route to Spain, Diego Pérez de la Torre, the judge of the *Segunda Residencia* and Guzmán's successor as governor of Nueva Galicia, arrested him for his mismanagement as governor of Pánuco and as President of the *Primera Audiencia* (Álvarez). Initially, Guzmán lived in the house of Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza until his 1537 arrest and incarceration in the public jail in Mexico City. In 1538 royal authorities recalled him to Spain, where he endured a form of house arrest until his death in the 1550s, somewhere between 1550 and 1558. Nuño de Guzmán spent his final years a bitter and sickly man, one of the great losers in the battles that occurred as the Spaniards fought over their newly seized wealth (Krippner-Martínez 44-45).

<sup>6</sup> The Spaniard Julián Juderías originally coined the term *black legend* in his book *La leyenda negra y la verdad histórica* (1914) [Maltby]. The author of revisionist works on a variety of topics, Juderías was convinced that Spain and its culture had been systematically vilified by foreign authors who were inspired by Protestantism or the Enlightenment. His book, which was popular in Spain, defends Spanish accomplishments. In 1944 the Argentine scholar Rómulo Carbia applied the concept to the historical treatment of the Spanish conquest of

America and linked the black legend specifically to the work of Bartolomé de las Casas, whose *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* had been widely circulated in translation since the sixteenth century (Maltby). For Carbia Las Casas had exaggerated the brutality of the conquest in an effort to secure improved treatment for the Indians, and in the process, he had provided Spain's political and religious enemies with a source of propaganda. Like Juderías, Carbia was primarily interested in defending the Spanish record (Maltby). The black legend as a body of literature that portrays Spain, its history and its people in a consistently unfavorable light has achieved a measure of acceptance in the non-Hispanic world. It has resulted in a widespread perception that the Spanish people were uniquely cruel, lazy, bigoted and ignorant, and that their culture had contributed little to Western civilization (Maltby). If few scholars would now argue that Spain's reputation and conduct in the New World were beyond reproach, fewer still would claim that it was uniquely reprehensible, especially in comparison to the behavior of other imperialist powers from the same time period. Nuño de Guzmán shares center stage with another conquistador, Lope de Aguirre (1513?-1561), as human incarnations of the black legend. Lope de Aguirre was the self-proclaimed rebel leader of an ill-fated descent of the Amazon River in search of El Dorado. He was a soldier from Oñate, in the province of Guipúzcoa, Spain, who joined the Pedro de Ursúa expedition to the Amazon. Aguirre was one of the instigators of a plot to assassinate Ursúa, and at first supported Fernando de Guzmán (no relation to Nuño de Guzmán) to replace the slain Ursúa. As the group traveled downstream, discipline disintegrated, Indian carriers were abandoned, and an increasing number of men were killed in brawls (Cook). Aguirre captained Fernando de Guzmán's militia, heading fifty Basque harquebusiers. Paranoid and filled with delusions of grandeur, Aguirre cowed followers and massacred Fernando de Guzmán and others suspected of disloyalty. Challenging the authority of king and church, Aguirre argued that the land belonged to the conquerors. His unrealistic goal was to descend the Amazon, sail northwestward until he could attack Spanish authorities in Perú frontally, then assume the land's administration. Shortly after he reached the Venezuelan coast, however, royal supporters surrounded his encampment. Aguirre killed his own daughter to prevent her capture (Cook). The Lope de Aguirre episode is one of the bloodiest and most controversial expeditions of the Age of Discovery. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Lope de Aguirre had become the prototype of the Spanish oppressor. For further discussion of the representation of Lope de Aguirre in Latin American literature, see Chanady, Galster and Ramos-Nadal. For an analysis of Lope de Aguirre in Werner Herzog's 1972 film *Aguirre, the Wrath of God* (Perú and Germany), see Davidson, Holloway and Koepnick.

<sup>7</sup> Generations of Mexican intellectuals have depicted Guzmán as an exceptional figure, sometimes even as a tyrant, deviant or psychopath. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the historian García Icazbalceta elaborates on Las Casas's unfavorable image of Guzmán in *Don Fray Juan de Zumárraga: primer obispo y arzobispo de México* (1881). Icazbalceta remarks on Guzmán's:

[. . .] índole perversa, desmedida codicia e insaciable sed de mando [. . .]. Guzmán que pudo haber alcanzado alto renombre en la conquista, donde mostró dotes de buen capitán y sobre todo una asombrosa energía, junta con una constancia a toda prueba, no ha dejado memoria sino de tiranía y crueldad. (qtd. in Blázquez and Calvo 12)

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, José López-Portillo y Weber in *La conquista de la Nueva Galicia* (1935) and Manuel Toussaint in *La conquista de Pánuco* (1948) discuss Guzmán in the context of alleged Spanish excesses during the conquest. López-Portillo writes that the conquistador was: "[. . .] feroz, codicioso, cruel, impío, lascivo, cínico, avaro y calumniador, [. . .] fue pura sombra [. . .]" while Toussaint echoes a similarly negative assessment: "[. . .] después de muerto conserva Nuño la execración universal, la memoria de algo funesto, de una pesadilla dantesca [. . .]" (qtd. in Blázquez and Calvo 12). These images of Guzmán, while containing elements of truth, inaccurately tend to cast Guzmán's behavior in terms of exceptionality, thus reproducing

a bias embedded in the historical record itself. As James Krippner-Martínez has pointed out, one of the primary ways one discredited a rival during the founding of the Spanish colonial order was to accuse him of being exceptionally abusive or violent (38-39). When one engaged in similar activities, this had the benefit of establishing moral distance between truly evil excess, and one's own behavior. The attack figure provided a symbolic foil, an example of someone whose behavior was truly deviant, thus legitimating less "excessive" actions (Krippner-Martínez 39). For example, Francisco López de Gómara, the personal secretary of Cortés, authored a history of the Spanish conquest extremely favorable to his patron. In it he lamented that Guzmán had burned "King Cazoncin, friend of Cortés, servant of Spaniards and vassal of the Emperor, and who was in peace" (Krippner-Martínez 39). In a similar way Zumárraga would write to the King that Guzmán needed to repent to the Church for his activities as a slave trader. This was despite the fact that Zumárraga himself possessed both slaves and Indian vassals (Krippner-Martínez 39). The written evidence left by such men as Gómara and Zumárraga long served as the basis for the historical understanding of the Conquest generation, which explains how the political context of early Spanish colonialism shaped the representation of Guzmán found in the documentation of this period (Krippner-Martínez 38-39). Only recently have North American historians Donald E. Chipman (1967) in a monograph on Guzmán's tenure as governor of Pánuco and J. Benedict Warren (1985) on the conquest of western Mexico, sought to challenge Guzmán's immutable reputation for excessive cruelty in the New World. Both argue that while Guzmán did engage in brutal activities, his behavior was quite similar to that of other conquistadors. Thus, he did not deserve the particular opprobrium that had befallen his name. Krippner-Martínez, however, criticizes Chipman and Warren for their inability to break out of the either/or dichotomy of "black and white" legends of Spanish colonialism. While both historians show that the historical image of Guzmán is flawed, there is little about his activities that can be described as benign, or even less than brutal (41-42).

<sup>8</sup> Our knowledge of the trial, torture and execution of the Cazonci is derived from two written sources: the first, a copy of a copy of the trial record (February 5-14, 1530), based on the testimonies of Guzmán, Spanish soldiers and settlers, the accused and other elite male Indians, as translated and transcribed by Spanish officials; and the second as reported by Don Pedro Panza, Indian noble, in the *Relación de Michoacán*, compiled by Fray Jerónimo de Alcalá, during the late 1530s and early 1540s (Krippner-Martínez 13-14). According to the trial record, Guzmán did submit the Cazonci to torture by water and fire, and later sentenced him to burn at the stake. During the execution, the Cazonci was first dragged by the tail of a horse, and then burned (mercifully garroted or burned alive, according to different versions). For a copy of the trial record and the *Relación de Michoacán*, see Scholes and Miranda, respectively. For a nuanced reading of the trial record, see Krippner-Martínez (especially chapter 1).

<sup>9</sup> For a comprehensive discussion of the meanings of *machismo* in contemporary Mexico, see Gutmann.

<sup>10</sup> Despite the Cazonci's baptism and the gold and silver he gave to Cortés, the indigenous peoples of Michoacán resisted Spanish attempts at colonial occupation. This resistance involved a number of strategies, including an attempt to accommodate at least one faction of conquistadors, a refusal to recognize the legitimacy of Spanish direct tribute claims, flight, and armed attacks that resulted in Spanish deaths (Krippner-Martínez 20).

<sup>11</sup> The figure of the buffoon first appeared in classical Greece and continued in Rome until the fall of the Empire, reappearing in the Italian city-states of the eighth and ninth centuries. In this medieval reappearance, the figure of the buffoon was closely associated with that of the madman or fool, terms that were applied to characters that were stupid, that ignored the problems of this world, and could thus receive the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, whose words would be reproduced by their mouths (Roncero López 235). For an excellent synthesis

about the role of the buffoon in Spanish medieval and Golden Age literature, see Roncero López (especially 235-37).

<sup>12</sup> Such scholars as Stafford Poole and Jacques Lafaye accept the constructed nature of the Virgin of Guadalupe myth, although they date the myth to the 1700s rather than accuse Zumárraga of fabricating the myth. Most scholars agree that there was a Virgin of Guadalupe shrine at Tepeyac early but have found no evidence of the Juan Diego story until later.

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