The Melologue and its Latin American Manifestations

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Toward the end of the eighteenth century and following the precedent set in Jean Jacques Rousseau's *Pygmalion*,[1] Tomás de Iriarte, with his *Guzmán el bueno* (1789), inaugurated in Spain a species of monologue which quickly spread to Latin America. Although this newly created theatrical genre, which would eventually acquire the designation "melologue," was short lived, it caused much excitement. The secret of the popularity of Rousseau's *scène lyrique* lay in the novel use of music and gesture as vehicles for intensifying the emotional effect of declamation.[2] A practical musician, Iriarte's attention was immediately captivated by this hybrid French piece which experimented with the addition of a full orchestra as an accessory to a theatrical performance. With his weak imitation, the history of a new genre in the peninsular and Latin American theatre began.

While the fabulist Iriarte is justifiably credited with the establishment of the melologue in Spain, it should be pointed out that another Spanish play similar in structure preceded the *Guzmán el bueno* by one year. In 1785 in Cádiz, Juan Ignacio González del Castillo (1763-1800), who was employed as the prompter for a theatrical troupe, translated in hendecasyllabic verse Rousseau's *Pygmalion*.[3] The adaptation was received with such enthusiasm that González del Castillo decided to write an original unipersonal piece, *Hannibal,* which he completed in 1788 and which was also ardently applauded. The following year in the same theatre in Cádiz, Iriarte's *Guzmán el bueno* was premiered by Luis Navarro. The literary stature of Iriarte overshadowed that of González del Castillo, and the unipersonal work of the former quickly established itself as the prototype of the genre in Spain. Iriarte's play was published in Cádiz in 1790, presented in Madrid on February 26, 1791, by Antonio Robles, and then published three more times in that same year.

The volume *Ormisinda; tragedia con alcune scene liriche,* published in 1783 in Italy by the exiled Valencian Jesuit Manuel Lassala, contains even

earlier antecedents and perhaps represents the first link between the French and Spanish melologues. In addition to a translation to Italian of Rousseau's well-known melologue, the work contains four original lyric-monologue scenes *(La partenza d'Enea, Didone abandonata, El misantropo,* and *Andrómaca)* which through several successful stagings introduced the melologue in Italy. A short time later Lassala composed two additional lyric melologues which were never published: "Margherita di Cortona" and "Agostino."[4] Eusebio Cañas, a friend who was also living in exile, converted to Spanish blank verse all of the material found in the published volume and sent it to Valencia. His translation of the *Pygmalion* was one of several which appeared in Spain in the last two decades of the eighteenth century. Although his renditions of the four original lyric scenes were never published, they had at least a limited appearance on Valencian stages and perhaps motivated the creation in Spain of several pieces similar in themes and characters portrayed.[5]

Although the meteoric development of the melologue has always been credited to direct French influence, namely Rousseau's unprecedented hybrid creation, several precursive monologue species, namely *introitos, loas, relaciones,* and especially the *tonadillas escénicas,* should not be overlooked as significant preparatory antecedents. It is difficult to believe that a single work from the French theatre could have aroused such interest and spawned such a school of imitators had not a foundation been laid previously. "Although *Pygmalion* was well received in Paris and remained on the repertoire until the beginning of the nineteenth century it had no close successors in France, with one or two exceptions, and left no trace of importance in discussions on the theater."[6] While it is true that the step between the *tonadilla escénica a solo,* the last in an evolutionary series of dependent monologues, and the melologue is substantial, it does not represent a complete metamorphosis. Evidence to support the idea that the *tonadilla* significantly influenced the development and popularity of the melologue is the fact that the former reached its peak of maturity between 1771 and 1790, immediately before the introduction of the latter in Spain. Also, several composers who first wrote music for the *tonadillas escénicas* later scored the music for the interludes of the melologues. In addition, the most prolific of the *tonadilla* composers, Blas de Laserna, wrote the complete text of one of the earlier melologues, *El poeta escribiendo un monólogo* (1792).[7] Finally, many of the themes and character types treated in the *tonadilla escénica* reappear in several of the neoclassical melologues. Although the seed came from France, Iriarte, who supplied the text for several *tonadillas,* and his successors found the Spanish theatrical field already tilled and ready for planting.

Ironically another salient contributory factor to the adoption of the format of this French import was a certain sense of national pride. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, mediocre Italian operas were fast becoming almost a national vice in Spain and several local dramatists and musicians apparently felt that the sensationalistic melologue would serve as one means of combating this influence and replacing it with works of a superior literary caliber.[8] At first, subjects and themes were often taken almost directly from these operas. The melologue spread rapidly and was applauded by many sophisticated audiences, but it never became a deterrent. By 1799 Italian

operas had become so prevalent that a royal decree was issued, temporarily and ineffectively banning the performance of works not written in Spanish. However, the strong spirit of nationalism which propelled the melologue into prominence continued to manifest itself in an increasing adoption of national themes and subjects.[9]

That independent theatrical monologues represented a relatively new phenomenon is evidenced by the multiple epigraphic designations used by the authors of the period to describe their works. Although sometimes jocose and parodic in tone, the labels clearly suggest that the dramatists were dealing with a new type of theatrical spectacle. After the title of his play, *El cochero Domingo* (1791), Vicente Rodríguez de Arellano y el Arco inserts the following description: "escena solo, monólogo, soliloquio, lamentación, declamación o llámese como quisiere, que a su autor le importa poco el nombre."[10] The earlier and more serious pieces of the melologue variety also suggest the lack of a fixed designation. Juan Ignacio González del Castillo labels his *Hanníbal,* apparently the first original melologue written in Spanish, an "escena lírica, soliloquio unipersonal," and Tomás de Iriarte designates his *Guzmán el bueno* an "escena trágica unipersonal, monólogo."

The inclusion of musical intervals in the *unipersonales* of the period prompted the occasional adoption of the term melodrama, a designation which had previously been associated with operatic productions.[11] However, due to the fact that this term eventually became associated more with the histrionic acting, necessitated by the lack of dialogue, than with the musical intervals themselves, it acquired under the encouragement of Gilbert de Pixerécourt an entirely new meaning. Therefore to avoid confusion some modern critics have replaced the designation "melodrama" with that of "melologue." Unknown in Spain at the time the plays of this type were written, the appellation *melólogo* was revived by José Subirá to replace the ambiguous term "melodrama" as a designation for plays with interludes of instrumental music.[12] The term "melologue" was apparently coined by Tom Moore, who apologetically used the "outlandish" appellation to describe a series of airs illustrative of national character which he penned for a benefit at the Dublin Theatre in 1810.[13]

Melologues were not always one-player spectacles, but because the model, *Pygmalion,* was essentially unipersonal, most of the early Spanish imitations of Rousseau's play had only one speaking character. Later, as the genre evolved, variations from the original standard were devised and other players were added. In a second stage of development, the spoken word was completely eliminated in favor of instrumental music and pantomimists who performed *scenas mudas.* Subsequently, poetry was reinstated and the genre expanded to *dílogos* and *trílogos.* In its fourth developmental stage, the melologue called for the addition of singing, thus paralleling opera in many respects. The initial unipersonal varieties constitute our area of focus.

The form of the majority of the melologue pieces follows a fairly rigid pattern, established in large measure by Rousseau. Mood-setting music precedes the opening of the curtain which reveals the player with head in hands, thinking, and seated near some object which will later motivate a portion of the monologue. The scene is often an underground room, a thickly walled

edifice, a dense forest or a deserted locale, each calculated to add to the impression of atmospheric density. After an anticipatory suspense-building interval, the music fades and the characterarises, moves toward the audience, and begins a rhetorical soliloquy which lays bare the inner workings of the mind and which is augmented by exaggerated gestures and facial expressions. Unlike the subsequent monologues of the romantic period or the preceding *loas,* these pieces are not overtly directed to the audience and the fact that spectators are present is not taken into account except for a few isolated instances at the end of certain works. When emotion overcomes the character and words fail, the musical interlude intercedes and purports to suggest through music that which words were powerless to reveal. Highly histrionic pantomime adds to the expressiveness of the interludes. Some type of expository narrative usually provides the spectator with the necessary sketch of background details, although the frequent use of protagonists already familiar to the spectators allowed the dramatists to minimize the narrative element. Objects which elicit memories of past events and scenes limited to the view of the player and described by him for the audience prompt the continuation of the monologue. The music creates a sense of dialogue which is enhanced by the fact that the character addresses himself and by the use of rhetorical devices such as apostrophes, exclamations, personification, and rhetorical questions.

Yet in spite of the existence of this basic pattern, it should be recognized that not all playwrights routinely imitated it. Originality was not totally lacking even though structural innovations were less common than variations in the context in which a limited number of themes found expression.

Synthesizing with regard to the serious pieces, one may say that there arose during the latter part of the eighteenth century several related art forms which focused on a solitary figure, frequently a woman, who expressed through speech, music, costume, and gesture the shifting movements of her soul. That the figure was solitary and that virtually the entire text consisted of her utterance evidences an attempt to focus on her subjectivity; that she was most often feminine was a further indication that the drama was one of passion. For this reason a moment of high intensity was normally chosen, and though occasionally there appear melologues which insist on the unvarying round of a single emotion, for the most part the character is distracted, divided in will, torn between conflicting emotions, so that she or he can run through a whole series of kaleidoscopic changes. Indeed, this variety is essential to the medium.[14]

The excesses of the initial tragic varieties invited harsh criticism and encouraged the parodic imitations which quickly sprung up on the heels of Iriarte's *Guzmán.* Indeed, in Spain the range of subject was not great and the melologue developed along the two lines which have just been suggested: (1) seriously dramatic or tragic pieces which featured classical, biblical, legendary, or historical figures, which had the air of monologues of lamentation detached from some antique tragedy, and which often ended in suicide; (2) parodic pieces in which ridiculous or petty contemporary figures are presented with an incongruous magniloquence and in which suicide is often replaced by total inebriation.

The melologue vogue initiated in Spain by Iriarte during the last decade of the eighteenth century soon took root in the imitative Latin American theatre. Peninsular melologues which often reflected classical themes and characters, made more accessible through neo-classical French and Italian tragedies and operas, were in turn imitated in the Americas. Until now no attempt has been made to study this particular segment of Latin American theatrical history. My own search of multiple sources has uncovered a sufficient number of titles, texts, and references to presentations of such pieces, both peninsular and local, to indicate that the genre was at least temporarily stylish in several urban centers which boasted theatres and an elite public with a tolerance for such artificial dramatic creations. While they filled the stage with a showy neoclassical spectacle, a closer examination reveals the melologues to be essentially dramatically empty. It should be recognized that their popularity was largely due to the sensational nature of the pieces and that the theatres were filled with curious spectators desirous of seeing how one actor could make a full-length drama or by sympathetic compatriots whose political biases would be underscored. Unlike the preceding minor monologue varieties, the melologues were presented independently and often represented the major feature of the theatrical bill, although by literary standards no Latin American melologue ranks high as a work of art.

Excluded from consideration are the musical scores, even though in the actual presentation of these works, they merited at least an equal footing with the literary element. Complicating the loss of most of the original musical scores is the fact that even more so than in Spain, Latin American dramatists chose to indicate the desired effect or mood to be created and to leave it up to the individual director to select the appropriate music rather than to compose or have composed specific scores to fill in the interludes.

While Latin American dramatists imitated both the tragic and parodic peninsular melologues, concurrent political and historical events prompted the creation of a third type, conspicuously rare on the Spanish stage until after the invasion of Napoleon: the monologue which focused on contemporary events. The attitude which encouraged the use of this type of drama as another arm in the arsenal of the liberators is succinctly mirrored in the May 1, 1818, issue of *El Censor* (Buenos Aires): "El pueblo se educa en el teatro. En nuestras circunstancias especiales, el teatro debe inspirar odio a la tiranía, amor a la libertad." Although in these works classical figures may superficially conceal references to contemporary public figures and events, these patriotically inspired melologues were aimed at spectators emotionally involved with those events and figures and were designed to influence these spectators. The artistic barrier represented by the musical intervals is significantly reduced in many cases in order to shorten the aesthetic distance between the audience and the message incompetently packaged with an artistic wrapping. In several instances, the theatre becomes a public forum where an impassioned patriot attempts to sway the spectators to his way of thinking or to motivate them to follow a particular course of action. Latin American melologues inspired by current events expound the themes of tyranny and liberty while exploring the subjects of Spanish despotism, local political events, and the Napoleonic intervention in Spanish affairs. The

main interest of the Latin American melologue, from a literary standpoint, is due to the adaptation of local concerns to this new genre. That patriotism and politics should be more prevalent than literary quality should not surprise us considering the nature of the genre and the fact that a certain nationalistic spirit had led initially to its diffusion in Spain.

José Agustín de Castro (1730-1814), who composed four single-character *loas,* also published in 1797 a curious transitional work which resembles a parodic melologue but which apparently was not written under the influence of this genre. *El charro,* a simplified *sainete costumbrista* designed for just one player, stands unique in the mono-theatre tradition in that it anticipates by several decades certain characteristics of the romantic monologue. The piece is set near the entrance to a convent in Puebla and involves a typically Mexican character named Perucho Chávez who soliloquizes in a popular, rustic language. Attracted to the gate by the music coming from inside the convent, the confused Perucho humorously describes what he perceives, tells the audience who he is, and insists on singing a *trovo* which was specifically composed for him. The language, dress, music, and character emphasize the costumbristic nature of the piece, doubtlessly influenced by the numerous *tonadillas escénicas* then in vogue.

The enigmatic anti-French work, *La muerte de Murat* (1808), penned by an author who chose only to initial his creation, represents the first piece in the melologue tradition to be published in Mexico. Although included in Monterde's bibliography of the Mexican theatre, the theme of the work together with the possibility that the first edition appeared in Málaga in 1808 suggest that the author may have been Spanish. However, the play was presented several times in Latin America before it reached the Madrid stage on August 16, 1818. The December 7, 1808 edition of the *Diario de México* reports its presentation in Mexico City and the February 3, 1809 copy of the *Gaceta de Caracas* lists the *Impersonal de Murat* as a feature of the dramatic bill for January 16, 1809. A third edition of the play was published in Lima in 1809.[15] The work is of little significance as drama, but because of its timely anti-tyrant theme it filled theatres on several occasions. This "escena trágica o bien sea semi-unipersonal, joco-serio," which the author supposedly wrote in four hours, scathingly attacks Joaquín Murat, who commanded the French forces in Spain for a brief period in 1808. The designation *semi-unipersonal* is used because a mob of angry Spaniards invade the stage at the end of the play. The cathartic work depicts that which the author would like to see happen to all tyrants. Reversing historical fact, the dramatist transforms the aggressor into the beseiged. After several drawn-out scenes in which Murat manifests himself a ridiculous coward, the future kind of Naples attempts to escape by jumping head first into a latrine which because of its shallowness causes his posterior to remain in view. At that moment, the mob enters and after a resounding beating Murat is carried away to be executed. Addressed directly to Murat, the work contains a prologue in the form of a letter in which the author petitions the French commander to take the principal role in the premiere performance. Although written to be read, pressure from friends motivated the dramatist to allow this work of limited dramatic interest to be staged.

The best-known of the Mexican melologues were written by Latin America's first novelist, José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi (1776-1827): the *Unipersonal del arcabuceado* (1822) and the *Unipersonal de don Agustín de Iturbide* (1823). The first work, which represents a modest attempt at mono-theatre, makes no mention of musical intervals in the published text, but several rather abrupt shifts in the direction of the soliloquy intimate that the staged version probably called for such mood-setting interludes. With a jail cell as the setting, the work centers on a young soldier who will soon face a firing squad for having killed an army officer and another person. The piece is based on an incident which caught the attention of the newspaperman, Fernández de Lizardi, who recognized in it the opportunity to advance one of his ideas. In a note at the end of the play, the author states: "Si el infeliz Celestino Ramírez, soldado del regimiento de caballería número 9, hubiera tenido mejor educación, es probable que hoy no hubiera muerto fusilado en la provincia de Guanajuato y perpetrado otro alevosamente en Jalapa, en la persona del sargento de su compañía Guadalupe Mendoza; y si hubiera tenido un talento más despejado, él lloraría la causa de su ruina con palabras más tiernas y enérgicas que las que yo pongo en su boca."[16] Fernández de Lizardi capitalized on the event to create a work in which he could expound on one of his predilect themes, mentioning the responsibility of the state, the church, and society in general in the educational process. An insistence that moral responsibility be inculcated in the very young marks the strongest didactic note. The work also criticizes an inept judicial system and although "El Pensador" defends capital punishment as an exemplary deterrent to crime, he reiterates his thesis that delinquency is a symptom of a defective social organization and a lack of moral consciousness in the society itself. Although the condemned soldier recognizes that his crimes are worthy of the punishment to which he has been sentenced, he utters repeated warnings to priests who failed to teach him moral principles and to judges who failed to correct him while his crimes were still minor. Dramatic tension builds throughout the work as the sound of the drummers who accompany the firing squad draw nearer and nearer.

Fernández de Lizardi's second melologue, a work of more grandiose dimensions, also deals with a contemporary event, the abdication of Mexico's first emperor, Agustín de Iturbide, on March 20, 1823. Taking advantage of this political event to justify placing on the lips of the fallen emperor reflections on the ephemeral nature of glory, power, and honor, Fernández de Lizardi's play premiered on the eighteenth of April, just 29 days after Iturbide abandoned his throne. In an ostentatious and sentimental style, "El Pensador" explains and justifies the reign of Iturbide, with whom he sympathized and whom he had enthusiastically supported.

The monologue, which is intermittently interrupted by "música triste," takes place in a modest room containing only a chair and a desk upon which have been conspicuously placed a royal robe, a crown, and a sceptre. An atmosphere of nostalgia permeates the hendecasyllables, the favorite meter of the composers of melologues. The piece contains a long expository segment during which the fallen emperor reflects on his role as a hero in the struggle against Spain and his initial efforts to build a strong representative government. He laments having listened to false friends, who fanned with adulation

the fires of his ambition and encouraged him to declare himself emperor and dissolve the congress. He finally concedes that although his downfall was brought about directly through the efforts of Santa Anna, it was precipitated by the arrogation of powers not originally granted by those he governed. The work ends with a general warning to leaders with tyrannical ambitions.

An anonymous melologue, *Quintanar en Colima,* which deals with another aspect of the same chain of political events, appeared three years later in 1826.[17] Once again the central figure is a politically ambitious general who had also participated in the fight for independence, Luis Quintanar. Although he had helped to defeat president Guerrero and had become a powerful member of the judiciary branch of the government, Quintanar is also depicted in a fallen state and themes similar to those stressed by Fernández de Lizardi in the *Unipersonal de don Agustín de Iturbide* are reiterated.

Although the Argentine theatre repertoire includes an anonymous "Escena unipersonal" which was presented as early as 1800,[18] the oldest published melologue did not appear until 1815. On the twentieth of December of that year, José Manuel Sánchez completed his *El nuevo Caupolicán o el bravo patriota de Caracas,* an unnaturally contrived work which possibly never reached the stage.[19] Of limited literary value and written in a pompous, affected style, this "escena heroica unipersonal" calls for innovative intervals of dance in addition to those of instrumental music. The central figure "vestido gallardamente de indio" is a descendant of Caupolicán and represents the native spirit of America anxious for freedom and defiant toward the oppressive Spanish yoke. The piece, which includes many players, although only Caupolicán speaks, belongs to the type of theatre in which native *costumbrismo* is combined with political fervor. The scene is set in the country with woods and a large rock flanking the stage and Caracas appearing in the distant background. Bombastic military music accompanies the opening of the curtain which reveals the fleeing Caupolicán who has just escaped from Murillo, the leader of the Spanish forces. Stumbling upon the rock, the fleeing protagonist sits down to rest and meditate as the sounds from the orchestra gradually diminish and die out. After a brief pause, Caupolicán arises and begins his soliloquy which will be interrupted and augmented by a troupe of Indian dancers in full native costume and by two messengers. The protagonist's sadness turns to joy as the first message bearer, together with the troupe of dancers, brings news that the opposition forces have chosen Caupolicán as their leader. However, the exultation is premature for a second messenger, carrying a letter written in blood, brings news that Murillo has threatened to kill the members of Caupolicán's family unless he gives himself up. The work ends with the Indian warrior's promise to follow the example of the Argentine troops and lead his Venezuelan compatriots to victory. Despite the popular theme emphasized in the piece and the colorful innovations introduced, this work remains justifiably buried in obscurity.

On the other bank of the River Plate, several *unipersonales* are attributed to the Uruguayan poet Bartolomé Hidalgo (1788-1822). The ascribed work most in doubt as far as authorship is the "Unipersonal Idomeneo" (1816), which appeared under Hidalgo's name in a list of plays discovered by one of

the poet's biographers.[20] Whether from the pen of Hidalgo or one of his contemporaries, the work represents an adaptation to the melologue form of a Homeric tale upon which numerous eighteenth-century plays and operas had been based and which would probably come to the mind of anyone seeing Iriarte's *Guzmán el bueno* and desiring to imitate it.[21] Although under somewhat different circumstances, Idomeneo was also compelled to choose between his son and honor and allowed his son to be sacrificed.

On January 30,1816 the Teatro de Montevideo presented a melologue definitely written by Hidalgo, *Sentimientos de un patriota.*[22] A dense forest setting provides the background for a young officer, who with the accompaniment of both an orchestra and living tableaux, urges his fellow Uruguayans to continue to support the struggle for liberty and lectures them on the need for unity both before and after the imminent victory. Two years later, Hidalgo essentially repeats himself in *El Triunfo,* except for the fact that the character views the battles for independence in retrospect and adds a pompous eulogy of San Martín.[23] The spectators become directly involved in this victory celebration when the protagonist leads them in one verse of the national anthem. Obviously the dramatic element was secondary in the mind of Hidalgo when he set down the verses of these patriotic speeches thinly veiled under the guise of theatre.

Less inspired by contemporary events, another Uruguayan, Manuel Araucho (1803-1840?), composed two *escenas unipersonales* which exemplify in form the two principal types of single-character melologues cultivated in Spain.[24] The first piece, *Fillán, hijo de Dermidio* (1830), is a serious drama which depicts Fillán's unsuccessful search for the body of his father whose death was brought about because of a jealous rivalry. After an interlude of sleep, during which Fillán hears his father's voice telling him to go home and comfort his mother, the young man prepares to follow this counsel, but departs with a warning concerning the venomous nature of the emotion which led to the destruction of his father.

Araucho's second melologue, *El hombre duplicado o petimetre hambriento* (1835), boasts the same stylish grandeur, but the stature of the protagonist and the nature of his problem suggest comedy rather than tragedy. Having had nothing to eat for several days, Enrique receives an unexpected invitation to dine at the home of a friend. However, as he is dressing he discovers embarrassing runs in his stockings and holes in his shoes and decides to stay at home rather than risk exposing himself to ridicule. His frustration and pangs of hunger cause him to speculate on the probable gluttony of the other guests, who will not notice his absence, and he prays for curses on all of them. Remembering that he has stashed away a bottle of cognac, he locates it and attempts to douse the fires of his anger and hunger with this consoling liquid. The effects of the alcohol motivate a series of comic scenes in which Enrique first sees everything double, next imagines that the pieces of furniture are staring intruders and begins to throw them out the window, and finally falls into a drunken sleep. Although the piece is of dubious literary value, it doubtlessly was more entertaining than many of the patriotic melologues.

The Colombian theatre possesses a variety of unipersonal pieces. While yet a student, José María Salazar (1784-1830), closely followed European models and composed two highly imitative melologues which have subse-

quently disappeared: the "Soliloquio de Eneas" (1803), which is related to the many works dealing with the *Dido-abandonada* theme, and the "Sacrificio de Idomeneo" (1803).[25] A decade later, Salazar turned his attention to contemporary events in a play concerning a Colombian hero in the battle for independence. The exultation of liberty and the denunciation of tyranny represent the principal themes in the "Monólogo de Ricaurte" (1814) which included the traditional pauses to music and was staged several times.[26]

While a continental hero as a soldier, the abilities of Bolívar as a statesman were seriously questioned after he became president of Colombia. Several dramatists, who represented a minority concerned with the misuse of the almost limitless powers which had been granted to Bolívar, chose the melologue form to alert the populace and call for the overthrow of the president. Although the settings and characters were classical, Colombian audiences of 1828 had no problem recognizing that the tirades condemning Caesar and Pausianas in Luis Vargas Tejado's (1802-1829) plays, *Catón en Utica* (1828) and *La madre de Pausianas* (1828), alluded to Bolívar.[27] In the first work, a chorus sings praises to the ideal of freedom while Catón, the author incarnate, denounces Caesar for having usurped dictatorial powers in Rome after so many men had contributed to the winning of her freedom. The author thus expresses his concern that the heroic status of Bolívar would blind the populace to his insatiable ambition and allow him to gain political omnipotence. The play calls for action against this new threat to freedom which, in the eyes of Vargas Tejada, was potentially more detrimental than the Spanish rule had been.

The second piece is even more explosive in its denunciation of Bolívar and dares to advocate open rebellion against him. The figure on stage, the mother of Pausianas, stands before the marble temple in which her son has taken refuge and addresses the insurrectionary mob which has gathered there. Controlling her maternal feelings, she offers to set the first stone in the wall which will entomb her son, who after having freed Spartacus, treacherously attempted to enslave it again. The mother's final cry of "Viva la libertad, muera Pausianas" became the password among the young radicals of Santa Fe de Bogotá.

Although after the death of Bolívar, he retracted what he had written as a youth, Juan Francisco Ortiz (1808-1875) was equally scathing in his criticism of the liberator in a melologue piece called *Córdoba* (1831). A year earlier this same young poet had written a "monólogo con coros musicales en verso" entitled *La virgen del sol o la sacerdotisa peruana*. Presented with a lavish setting and vocal rather than instrumental interludes, the piece represents a shift from strict propaganda. The work centers on the laments of a maiden in the court of Atahualpa who has fallen in love with a conquistador. Love's disappointments are reiterated in the *Monólogo de Lucio* written in 1821 by the enigmatic F.F.R. Here the dirge of the protagonist Lucio is prompted by the infidelity of a woman named Laura.

In Cuba, Manuel de Zequeira y Arango's (1764-1846) "monólogo trágico," "El Marco Bruto" (1807) inspired a more serious piece, *Marco Curcio* (1809?), written by Manuel María Pérez y Ramírez (1781-1853).[28] The former was also author of a unipersonal work which premiered in Havana on May 21, 1809, and which dealt with José de Palafox y Melzi's heroic resistance to the

French siege of Zaragoza: "Palafox en el campo de honor" (1809).[29] Although delirious and ill, Palafox is able to emphasize coherently the theme of liberty.

Although the piece appears several decades after the monotheatre had shifted its course of development, *Hero* (1869) by Alejandro Tapia y Rivera (1827-1882) evidences the tenacity with which the melologue genre held on in Latin America.[30] Highly conventional in form, yet influenced by the melodramatic romantic dramas where passion obscured reason, the work was composed specifically for Adela Robreño who presented it on October 20, 1869. The scene represents a deserted spot near the sea with a forest on one side and a rocky cliff on the other. After an appropriate instrumental prelude, Hero emerges from a forest carrying a torch which she deposits on one of the taller rocks, thus signalling Leandro that she has arrived and that he should begin his swim across the bay. In hendecasyllabic verse, Hero addresses the moon whose untimely appearance threatens to betray their secret rendezvous and prompts the temporary concealment of the signal. When the welcome clouds return, Hero replaces the torch only to discover that Leandro has already entered the water and that the clouds are even more threatening than the moon because a violent storm accompanies them. Anxiously peering into the waters below her, she reports the unsuccessful struggle of Leandro to cross the storm-tossed waters. The turbulence is brief and the moon soon reveals itself again, a change which is aided by the instrumental interlude. Unaffected, however, by the solace of nature, the disconsolate Hero jumps off the cliff to join Leandro.

Doubtlessly, audiences of other regions of Latin America witnessed the presentation of unipersonal pieces during the early nineteenth century, but details and texts are not available in sufficient numbers to permit a complete evaluation of those presentations. It seems certain that at least one melologue made it to Peru as is evidenced by the publication there in 1809 of *La muerte de Murat,* and we do know that José de Herrera presented some type of theatrical monologues in Chile in 1806.[31] We also know that in Montevideo at the Casa de Comedias melologues alternated with *tonadillas escénicas* as a kind of *fin de fiesta* until 1850.[32]

Although the melologue maintained a precarious hold on the stage for several decades and manifested some variation in theme and form, its basically imitative, artificial, and patterned nature had set a self-destructive course from the very beginning. The genre encouraged limited experimentation, but these hybrid dramas based on the forced juxtaposition of instrumental music and poetry did not reach a level of permanent literary value and gave way during the middle decades of the nineteenth century to the revival of the *zarzuela.* The novel experiments in unipersonal theatre did, however, set a solid precedent upon which dramatists could establish the monologue as an independent and fully legitimate theatrical genre.

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Notes

1. Written about 1762, premiered in France in 1770, and presented in Spain in French and in Spanish in 1788. Jefferson Rea Spell, *Rousseau in the Spanish World before 1833* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1938), pp. 117-121.

2. Spell, p. 118.

3. Rafael Mitjana y Gordón, "La Musique en Espagne," in the *Encyclopédie de la musique et dictionnaire du conservatoire* (Première Partie: Histoire de la musique), Vol. IV (Espagne-Portugal) (Paris: Libraire Delagrave, 1920), p. 2178 incorrectly gives the author's name as Juan Ignacio García del Castillo, an error which is repeated in the works of José Subirá.

4. Throughout this article the titles of published plays will be italicized and those of unpublished plays will appear in quotation marks.

5. Justo Pastor Fuster, *Biblioteca valenciana de los escritores que florecieron hasta nuestros días* (Valencia: Imprenta y Librería de Ildefonso Mompié, 1830), II, 277-295.

6. Kirsten Gram Holmström, *Monodrama, Attitudes, Tableaux Vivants,* Stockholm Studies in Theatrical History, Vol. I (Stockholm: Almquist and Wiksell, 1967), pp. 45-46.

7. Although this work is often listed as anonymous, at one point José Subirá concluded that it belonged to Laserna: *La tonadilla escénica* (Madrid: Tipografía de Archivos, 1928), I, 362. There is strong internal evidence in the play to support this conclusion.

8. Mitjana y Gordón, p. 2179.

9. This trend would accelerate as the genre entered Spain's American colonies, many of whom were, at that very moment, contemplating ways to effect a political independent national identity.

10. Vicente Rodríguez de Arellano y el Arco, *El cochero Domingo* (Madrid: Imprenta de García y Compañía, 1810), p. 1.

11. Jan Van der Veen, *Le mélodrame musical de Rousseau au Romantisme* (La Haye: Martius Nijhoff, 1955), p. 2.

12. See José Subirá, *El compositor Iriarte y el cultivo español del melólogo* (Barcelona, 1949). Subirá decided to use the term because of its use by Mitjana y Gordón in his widely acclaimed monograph on music in Spain which was published as part of the *Encyclopédie de la musique.*

13. A. Dwight Culler, "Monodrama and the Dramatic Monologue," *PMLA,* XC, 3 (May, 1975), 372-373.

14. Culler, p. 372.

15. Published in Antonio de Capmany, *Centinela contra franceses* (Lima, 1809).

16. José Joaquín Ferández de Lizardi, *Obras,* Vol. II (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma, 1965), p. 269.

17. Un Ciudadano que le acompaña en su desgracia, *Quintanar en Colima* (Guadalajara: Imprenta de Urbano Sanromán, 1827).

18. Mentioned in Mariano G. Bosch, *Historia del teatro en Buenos Aires* (Buenos Aires: El Comercio, 1910), p. 29.

19. José Manuel Sánchez, *El nuevo Caupolicán o el bravo patriota de Caracas,* in *Los orígenes del teatro argentino,* Vol. I (Buenos Aires: Imprenta y Casa Editora Coni, 1925), pp. 231-239.

20. Mario Falcao Espalter, *El poeta uruguyo Bartolomé Hidalgo,* 2nd ed. (Madrid: Gráficas Reunidas, 1929), p. 89. Lauro Ayestarán ["El melólogo; a propósito de los unipersonales de Bartolomé Hidalgo," *Número,* III, 12 (Montevideo, 1951, 9] argues that Hidalgo did not write "Idomeneo." As evidence he lists two peninsular works of the same period which have the same title. However, he fails to note that both of these works are multipersonal while the piece attributed to Hidalgo is definitely unipersonal.

21. Hidalgo was not the first to discover the melologue possibilities of this well-known classical theme. Other works in Spanish include Comella's *Idomeneo* (1792), Tapia's *Idomeneo* (1793), and José María Salazar's "El sacrificio de Idomeneo" (1803).

22. Published in the *Parnaso oriental o guirnalda poética de la República Uruguaya,* Vol. I (Montevideo: Instituto Histórico y Geográfico, 1927), pp. 28-37.

23. Published in *La lira argentina.* 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: Librería La Facultad, 1924), pp. 216-222.

24. Manuel Araucho, *Un paso en el Pindo* (Montevideo: Imprenta de los Amigos, 1835), pp. 92-99, 100-108.

25. See Isidoro Laverde Amaya, *Ojeada histórico-crítica sobre los orígenes de la literatura colombiana* (Bogotá: Banco de la República, 1963), p. 112.

26. José Vicente Ortega Ricaurte, *Historia del teatro en Bogotá* (Bogotá: Ediciones Colombia, 1927), p. 45.

27. Emilio Rodríguez Demorizi, *Poetas contra Bolívar* (Madrid: Gráficas Reunidas, 1966), pp. 65-69, 104-108. Although he includes the two works by Vargas Tejada, Rodríguez Demorizi fails to mention *Córdoba,* the anti-Bolívar melologue written by Juan Francisco Ortiz.

28. Edwin Teurbe Tolón and Jorge Antonio González, *Historia del teatro en la Habana* (Santa Cruz: Universidad Central de las Villas, 1961), p. 59.

29. Although this work is listed as anonymous in Fermín Peraza y Sarausa's *Indice del "Aviso de la Habana"* (1809-1810) (La Habana: Ediciones Anuario Bibliográfico Cubano, 1944), I find evidence that it likely came from the pen of Zequeira y Arango, a military man who wrote at least one other melologue and who composed a poem ("Primer sitio de Zaragosa") similar in title, theme, and language.

30. In the peninsular theatre, León Pujaz wrote a melologue with the same theme and this piece might have influenced Tapia y Rivera: *Hero y Leandro* (Madrid: Casa de Ortega y Herederos de Ibarra, 1793).

31. José Luis Trenti Rocamora, *El teatro en la América colonial* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Huarpes, 1947), p. 276.

32. Ayestarán, p. 5.