

## **The Coyote-Scholar in the Doctoral Theatre and Performance Studies Classroom: Reading *Rabinal Achí*, Güegüence, sor Juana, and Rascón Banda**

**Jean Graham-Jones**

Over a decade ago, I opened my first *Theatre Journal* editorial column with the concept of the coyote-scholar as proposed by Delia Poey in her book *Latino American Literature in the Classroom: The Politics of Transformation*. For Poey, we coyote-scholars participate in transporting marginalized texts into academic discourse, which means we must “accept a certain degree of responsibility in how and to what ends we transport texts across borders and boundaries” (93).<sup>1</sup> I encouraged the journal’s readers, in their majority theatre and performance studies scholars, to consider the perturbing, disrupting, and recontextualizing potential of coyote-scholarship. Shortly after writing that column, I joined the faculty at the City University of New York’s Graduate Center, where I work closely with doctoral theatre students, most of whom have limited exposure to what we have codified as “Latin American” theatre and performance.<sup>2</sup> In addition to students from the US, we have a growing international pool of emerging scholars from Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and the Americas. Such welcomed diversity means that, with English as our lingua franca, we must negotiate the challenges of translation of and limited accessibility to important Latin American texts.<sup>3</sup> I therefore often find myself entering a classroom filled with intellectually vibrant students possessing very good general knowledge of US and European theatre and excellent specialized knowledge of theatre from their geographic homelands. It is the rare student, though, with any general knowledge of Latin American theatre, even among students from Latin American countries, and even rarer is the student acquainted with Latin Americanist scholarship and theory. While they may know Pierre Bourdieu, Judith Butler, and Jacques Rancière, they are typically unfamiliar with Walter D. Mignolo, Ángel Rama, and Nelly Richard—all Latin

American scholars whom I consider key to our field of study. How to address these gaps pedagogically for doctoral students of whom only a handful will go on to write a dissertation on Latin American theatre and performance?

To meet this multipronged challenge, I have designed a series of seminars that study Latin American theatre and performance of distinct periods as well as consider these texts and practices from different conceptual places. In doing so, I have sought to put into pedagogical practice the various strategies I attribute to Poey's coyote-scholar. In this essay, I describe two doctoral seminars I have created: "The Borders of Latino American Theatre and Performance" (Borders) and "Transatlantic Theatre and Performance: Golden Age Spain and Pre-Conquest-Colonial Latin America" (Transatlantic). With the appended 2014 syllabus for the Borders seminar serving as resource and example,<sup>4</sup> I explore both seminars' objectives and structures as I illustrate my pedagogical approach through the first two class meetings of each course. I also briefly detail the collective projects that provided additional opportunity for creative intellectual collaboration. The essay ends with reflections on the benefits of this approach after conducting one of the seminars with MA and PhD students at Chile's Pontificia Universidad Católica and witnessing the students' subsequent engagements as coyote-scholars and coyote-artists.

I do not teach theatre in a close-textual fashion. Indeed, I think it is nearly impossible to engage critically with a play without some idea of the context of its creation, performance, and reception, and many of my students come from theatrical practice. I consider it equally crucial that students be aware of the context of the theoretical and critical approaches they employ. Thus, just as historical, social, and cultural readings constitute the majority of my assigned and recommended texts, there is always a theoretical frame for our engagement with these texts. In keeping with my coyote-scholarly project, I strategically planned both seminars to showcase theories with which most of my students would likely be unacquainted, although I am pleased to see their knowledge base expanding with the growing currency of "global south" theories.

With these pedagogical goals in mind, I designed one seminar around multidisciplinary border theories and their critiques to examine the artistic and critical work of various border-crossers throughout what I shorthand as the Latina/o Americas. Our objects of study included: the Nicaraguan Güegüence figure; various "hybridized" dance practices; Dolores Prida's and Carmen Rivera's plays about hyphenated identity; *El Vez*, Carmelita Tropicana, Guillermo Gómez-Peña, and other self-situated "border" per-

formance artists; contemporary Chicana transformations of classical Greek tragedies and theatrical responses to femicide at the US-Mexican border; the internal and external borders of migration, history, and memory in the works of Mapa Teatro, Ricardo Monti, and Guillermo Calderón; plays by Ariel Dorfman, Rafael Spregelburd, and Daniel Veronese that may or may not “travel” elsewhere; the globalized success of *The Kiss of the Spider Woman*; and international theatre festivals and contemporary transnational performance networks.

The Transatlantic seminar was built around a critical frame that expanded the role of theory for a course that included many standards of the early Euro-American theatrical canon. By reading sixteenth- and seventeenth-century theatre and performance texts from both sides of the Atlantic through various sociocultural, political, linguistic, literary, theatrical, and performance theories of coloniality and transculturation, we repositioned the Spanish-speaking metropole and engaged the two regions dialogically. The seminar was historically inflected, and many well-known texts were read, including plays by Lope de Rueda, Lope de Vega, Tirso de Molina, Calderón de la Barca, Cervantes, Ruiz de Alarcón, and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. However, our critical emphasis remained resolutely on the cultural encounters suggested or seen taking place in the following: performances of *autos sacramentales*, *entremeses*, and *comedias* from both sides of the Atlantic; Corpus Christi processions in Madrid and Cuzco as well as reconstructions of pre-Hispanic performance-scripts in Meso-America and Canada; and the translation of a Spanish play into Nahuatl or the reconsideration of a colonial *loa* intended for a *madrileño* audience. The theoretical shift toward Latin America resulted not only in the class reconceptualizing the so-called Encounter and early colonial periods from a Latin American(ist) vantage point but also in revitalizing encounters with such theatre-syllabus “classics” as *Fuenteovejuna*, *La vida es sueño*, *El divino Narciso*, and *La verdad sospechosa*.

My pedagogical approach can be demonstrated in the first two meetings of each seminar. I began the Transatlantic seminar, as I typically do, with both theoretical and dramatic readings. We first looked at selections from two key recent texts and asked defining questions about coloniality and related terms with which I knew my students were already familiar: postcolonialism, modernity, orientalism, and imperialism. The remaining time was spent applying Mignolo’s directive to think “across” and theorize “otherwise” to Calderón’s historical *comedia* *La cisma de Inglaterra* and the *loa* to Sor Juana’s *El divino Narciso*. I asked the class to consider both texts as cultural

effects and agents of what Mignolo has called the modern/colonial world system.<sup>5</sup> Calderón's "tragedy of errors" is useful for introducing students well acquainted with Elizabethan history and theatre to a different, what might even be regarded as an outsider's, take on the English religious struggle—the perspective of counterreformational Spain through a highly conventionalized and distinctly non-Elizabethan tragedy. As a transition into Sor Juana's *loa*, we read another short work by a Spain-based nun, Lope de Vega's daughter Sor Marcela de San Félix, whose "Loa of the Hungry Scholar" reminded us that even within metropolitan Spain there was theatrical space for critiques of gender and power. We then considered Sor Juana's condition as colonial New Spanish *criolla* and her lack of a clearly defined role within the larger colonial society. I proposed that we engage with her theatrical text, here minimally exemplified in the *loa* (the entire text would be read later in the semester, together with Ángel Rama's *The Lettered City*), not as imitation of Calderonian dramaturgy but on Sor Juana's own geocultural terms. Posing the hypothesis that Sor Juana wrote *El divino Narciso* to be staged in Madrid during Corpus Christi (and that it was thought to have premiered in Madrid eight years after Calderón's death), I asked students to reconsider the *loa*'s intended audience and to think of it as a text written from the colony for and to the metropole, as an example of creole "double consciousness"<sup>6</sup> and the undoing of colonial difference through a local imaginary. Even in that first class meeting we took apart earlier assumptions and began to think critically about now-canonized Spanish and Latin American playwrights.

For our second class meeting, I assigned Dennis Tedlock's translation of his transcribed early 1990s Guatemalan performance of *Rabinal Achí*, a performance text with elements likely dating back to the fifteenth century. In addition to reading essays on pre- and early-encounter performance practices, students also viewed a recording of the 1994 Mexico City production of Sergio Magaña's adaptation of *Rabinal Achí*, *Los enemigos*, as well as read about Montréal-based Ondinnok's 2010 *Xaloj Tun Ravinal Achi* (Burelle). I asked the students to read these contemporary variations on what has been claimed to be the oldest known pre-encounter performance through the prevailing interpretive lenses, but also as potential instances of Mignolo's "border thinking." We interrogated earlier classifications of *Rabinal Achí* as "dance-drama," "tragedy," or even "warrior dance" as the students also engaged in the critical exercise of positioning themselves in relationship to the text before them. We placed *Rabinal Achí* within the larger Mayan performance context, detailed the performances' predominating features, at-

tempted a reconstruction of documentary and performance histories through the various “Western” descriptions of five performances dating from the late nineteenth century, and listed the challenges facing us as “readers” of *Rabinal Achí*. Finally, we turned to the two contemporary theatricalized productions. For the 1994 production in Mexico City’s Palacio de Bellas Artes, Mexican playwright Magaña significantly shortened a Spanish translation of *Rabinal Achí* and added a metatheatrical frame involving the text’s French “discoverer” Brasseur de Bourbourg. The production drew laughter and outraged critical response at such additions as Father Brasseur giving Communion to the actors just before they are to reenact the Quiché warrior’s ritual execution, but it also represented the early translator, as Tamara Underiner notes, “not as innocent recorder of the original performance but as complicit in its bloody outcome” (21). The Ondinnok production, self-described as a “contemporary reinterpretation of the great ceremonial Maya dance,” resulted from collaborations with Guatemala-based Grupo Danza Rabinal Achi and included performances by key troupe members (Ondinnok).<sup>7</sup> For the class’s purposes, the Mexican production’s reframing of European discovery neatly contrasted with the pan-indigenizing Canadian performance and led us to our final considerations of border thinking as a theoretical frame for reading plays and performance scripts as situated on a border, as interpreted from the border they inhabit, and as nodes in networks of relations, in critical contradistinction to earlier theoretical lenses employed to interpret these performance phenomena.

The reader will have already noted theoretical and critical overlaps between the two seminars, particularly in the incorporation of Mignolo’s concept of border gnosis (or knowledge) as a critical tool available to scholars of theatre and performance. That said, whereas the Transatlantic seminar sustained a focus on European-American encounter, exchange, and conflict, the Borders seminar ranged broadly across the Americas in its considerations. For the first meeting of the Borders seminar, I assigned texts by authors self-aware of their own geocritical “Americas” positioning. Argentina-based literary scholar Daniel Altamiranda and sociologist Hernán Thomas argue that their location in the “South” determines imaginative and conceptual processes, while Ramón Rivera-Servera and Harvey Young introduce their edited collection with a focus on embodied practices in what they call the US-Mexican “borderlands.” As I always do, I included recommended and background readings for those students wishing to dig deeper into individual class modules. For this particular class, I selected three recommended read-

ings from different disciplines: cultural geography, performance studies, and literary and cultural studies. I also included two additional readings as background—one with an intercultural theoretical overview and the other one of the first publications out of theatre historiography on the topic. I opened our discussion by asking, “What are the theoretical frameworks we use to study and produce theatre and performance?” I then introduced my own very particular relationship to the border and professional engagements with and interventions into border-crossing as a pedagogue, translator, and scholar. In response to a series of images of diverse borders, we attempted to define a “border” and theorize it as a concept as well as engage with the discipline of border studies. With such theorizing firmly in mind, we then turned to a play whose protagonist suffers in the crossing of borders as a consequence of living in and on the border(lands): *La mujer que cayó del cielo* by Mexican author Víctor Hugo Rascón Banda. Based on the experience of a Rarámuri woman from northern Mexico’s Tarahumara high country, the play takes place in a city in Kansas, where authorities find Rita going through some garbage. Bearing no identification and speaking no English and very little Spanish, she is classified as mentally ill and taken to a psychiatric hospital, where she’s involuntarily administered the strong drugs that will eventually cause terrible and irreversible physical and psychic damage. When a Mexican exile recognizes Rita’s indigenous language, she is “rescued” and returned “home” to Mexico.

I assigned the play in its original version. No monolingual English translation exists, and such a translation would undermine Rascón Banda’s critique. *La mujer* is a trilingual text in which the language written is not necessarily a character’s actual spoken language. For example, the almost exclusively monolingual Rita sings to herself in Tarahumara and in Spanish, and her private thoughts are spoken aloud in Spanish. The long dialogue in Tarahumara between the interpreter and Rita is summarized all too briefly in Spanish by the play’s narrator. Each language symbolizes a different sphere—of power, of exile, of dispossession. Confronted by three languages, most readers and spectators experience firsthand Rita’s incomplete communication, and any single-language translation would eliminate the communicative frustration so central to the play. It was fascinating to see my students engage with the trilingual text, all capturing the English, some engaging with the Spanish, and none understanding the Tarahumara. The experience immediately placed us in the borderlands of language, culture, and theatre, as we ended our first class with a discussion of how one might stage the text trilingually in New York.

Would there be supertitles with translations? Would there be no translation, like the approach taken by Tucson's Borderlands Theatre in its 2003 production starring the actress who had originated the role of Rita in Mexico City in 1999? By the end of that initial class, we were all critical border-crossers.

At our second meeting, we studied the Nicaraguan figure of the Güegüence as an early Americas border-crosser. Class began with several contemporary clips of Güegüence-inspired performances: the UNESCO-protected popular street processions, the Nicaraguan Folkloric Ballet's dance performance, and a contemporary dance interpretation. Students were asked to describe what they saw and heard. This led us into the class's central discussion, bracketed by Daniel Brinton's late-nineteenth-century translation and the viewed twenty-first-century performances of the Güegüence as a site of local histories and global designs, as an object of mythologizing, and as a subversive agent of border knowledge. To do this we continued our reading of Mignolo and included a chapter from Les Field's monographic study of the Güegüence as a symbol of Nicaraguan national identity. As in the Transatlantic seminar's work with *Rabinal Achí*, we traced the documentary history of known versions of the performance text, purportedly set in colonial-era Nicaragua and incorporating Spanish and indigenous languages. We then analyzed Brinton's translation for European, colonial, and non-European precolonial elements, as well as examined the remarkable pluri-language present in the various Spanish-Nahua versions I shared: the near balance between Spanish and Nahuatl; the complexly intra- and interlinguistic paronomasia and the lexical focus on mule-driving and phalluses; and the various characters and their functions. In the process, the Güegüence came into focus as not only a traveling rural salesman of contraband but also a master trickster skilled in the survival tactics of Bhabhian mimicry and Mignolian border knowledge. Class ended with a return to the Güegüence in contemporary performance and the question of how to interpret the Nicaraguan Folkloric Ballet's 2006 performance at Washington, D.C.'s Museum of the American Indian. As UNESCO-style preservation of an intangible cultural heritage? As national appropriation of indigeneity? As a parable for Nicaraguan national identity and its formation? As the staging of an indigenous "subaltern" figure? As a stand-in for the Nicaraguan national self? As proud symbol of Nicaraguan *mestizaje*? We concluded that the colonial-era Güegüence, positioned at the intersection of hegemony and subalternity, neither explicitly mestizo nor indigenous, gestured toward the fissures in the colonial imaginary and, like any adept border-crosser, confounded imperial "boundedness."



In addition to our lively in-class discussions, based on a range of readings intended to provide necessary background and include key theatrical and performance texts as well as student-generated topics and questions posted at our class's Blackboard site, students were asked to participate in group projects. In the Transatlantic seminar, two or three self-selecting students worked together to contextualize the work of an individual theorist/scholar. They were asked to read several short works or a monograph by the theorist as well as the work of an author applying and/or critiquing the theorist's ideas. The students selected the texts and decided whether they would all read the same works or read separate works and compare findings. When the class discussed that theorist's work, the group made a short presentation to provide us with some background on the individual and how our collective reading related to the individual's larger theoretico-critical project. These students were also prepared to answer questions about the collectively read text and its contribution to the day's other readings.

While the Transatlantic seminar's group activities were strictly academic in design, the Borders seminar's collaborative assignment was much broader: Projects could be built around one or more of the assigned readings or other relevant research interests, including the final research paper. I did not predetermine the nature of the activities but rather invited the students to create their own, with some simple ground rules: three to five students per group; no in-class lecturing; handouts and materials to be circulated at least 48 hours before the class meeting; and an in-class length limit of thirty minutes. The results were as varied as the participants. Two Korean students, together with a US colleague, built a presentation around the Korean-Chilean and now Brooklyn-based playwright and director Kyoung H. Park. The three students interviewed Park, edited the interview to under ten minutes as part of their presentation, distributed excerpts from his plays in advance, and in class asked us to engage with the artist's border-crossings and hyphenate experiences rendered even more complex through gay activist performance. Another group took us outside our university building to the intersection of East 34<sup>th</sup> Street and Fifth Avenue, where we were given explicit movement instructions as we traced the intersection's squared-off crosswalk in constantly reconstituting groups. When we returned to the classroom, the students directed a conversation about urban borders and pedestrian engagement. A third group presented us with a series of maps and asked that we identify the cartographic object, its year and place of creation, and its world-view imaginary, while a fourth group created an in-class translation exercise intended



to spur awareness of border tensions between source and target texts. A fifth group imagined the border in terms of cultural and performance currencies by inviting us to design a promotional campaign for a production of the US musical *Annie Get Your Gun* at the fictitious Midwestern Frontiers-Fronteras Festival seeking to attract Latinx audiences. Though divergent in focus and execution, all projects displayed a pedagogical impetus as they pushed us to consider and then reconsider our own roles as border-scholars. The collective projects provided an opportunity for creative intellectual collaboration related to the seminar's interrogation of the border as a useful concept for theatre and performance criticism and historiography.

The three times I have taught the Borders seminar, I have concluded with a return to Poey's coyote-scholar to reflect upon our own critical border-crossings and to encourage the students to carry forth their own practices of coyote-scholarship. Teaching a version of the seminar at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile's Magister en Arte program productively resituated my own geocritical and cultural borders. In that seminar, the students unanimously chose as their collective project participation in an ongoing theatre course taught by a classmate at Santiago's penitentiary. For the in-class presentation, the students created a fascinating audiovisual installation reflecting on their work with the inmates, and the experience even led one student to shift thesis projects and devote herself to teaching theatre in prisons. She now leads ongoing workshops and recently defended her MA thesis on the topic.

In similar fashion, one Graduate Center student was involved in a production of Chilean theatre artist Guillermo Calderón's *Villa* in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Reading this one-act play (typically paired with another Calderón one-act, *Discurso*) in the 2014 Borders seminar had sparked great classroom debate about how Calderón's work might travel to other countries, especially, but not exclusively, countries recently emerging from or perhaps still undergoing authoritarian regimes. Some students imagined productions in their native countries, while we considered performance possibilities for the US. The student in question suggested Sri Lanka as a necessary locale, given the country's recently concluded twenty-six-year civil war. Later that semester, when Calderón presented a staged reading of an English translation of *Villa* (with the first lines from *Discurso*) at the PEN World Voices festival, my class turned out in full. The student came with his Sri Lankan partner, who approached Calderón afterwards about doing the play in Colombo. The English-language production, directed by Calderón and produced by my

student and his partner, premiered in the summer of 2015 in the auditorium of a Colombo NGO. Word-of-mouth publicity spread and the house filled. The producers now face challenges not unknown to other contemporary border-crossing theatre artists: Will they reprise the original production in English at local arts festivals, or will they translate the text into Sinhala and Tamil in order to take the play to other settings and reach other audiences?

I must confess a very deep pleasure at seeing our hemispheric theatre traveling broadly, but I'm even more pleased to see my students carrying it across these multiple and multiply complex borders. Through these various classroom projects and their afterlives in other classrooms and on other stages, I hope that new communities of theatre coyote-scholars and artists are being created.

*The CUNY Graduate Center*

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> See Graham-Jones, "The Theatre Scholar as Coyote."

<sup>2</sup> It is worth remembering that while we can think of "Latin America" as composed of some twenty countries, those national borders obscure other networks (geographical, cultural, religious, political, and socioeconomic), linguistic multiplicities, and intersecting histories.

<sup>3</sup> I would note, though, that teaching in English translation has allowed me to include Portuguese- and indigenous-language texts that my Spanish-only classes cannot accommodate unless the texts are translated into that language.

<sup>4</sup> I have included the abbreviated syllabus to provide the reader with an idea of the seminar's structure and reading/viewing assignments. It does not include information regarding grading, evaluation, or internal information about text availability, and it has not been updated since the spring 2014 semester, when the seminar was last offered.

<sup>5</sup> The assigned reading was Walter D. Mignolo's "Introduction: Coloniality—The Darker Side of Western Modernity" in *The Darker Side of Western Modernity*, but the concept comes from Mignolo's earlier *Local Histories/Global Designs*. Bibliographic references to the Borders seminar readings can be found in the appended syllabus.

<sup>6</sup> The reference is to W.E.B. DuBois's term as set forth in his *Souls of Black Folk* and taken up by many scholars, perhaps most notably for my course's purposes by Paul Gilroy in *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*.

<sup>7</sup> Don José León Coloch Garniga and his son José Manuel, considered "keepers" of the tradition and directors of the troupe, performed.

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**Spring 2014**  
**CUNY Graduate Center**  
**Ph.D. Program in Theatre**  
**THE BORDERS OF LATINO-AMERICAN THEATRE AND PERFORMANCE**  
**Jean Graham-Jones**

This course responds to recent trends in US latina/o and Latin American theatre and performance studies that re-examine, if not erase, the arbitrary and highly contested geopolitical and geocultural borders separating the United States from Latin America. Is it productive to construct a “Latin American” theatre in contradistinction to theatre produced by US- and Canada-based latinas/os? How might we study “national” theatres in the age of transnational globalization? Theorize *panlatinidad* and *mestizaje*? Think about theatre and performance from a hemispheric perspective? To engage with these questions, we will look at the multiple borders—geopolitical, historical, cultural, linguistic, disciplinary, and aesthetic—of Latino-American theatre and performance.

<b>28 January: Theorizing the border, conceptualizing the Latin/o Americas</b>
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Readings:

- Daniel Altamiranda and Hernán Thomas: “Cultural Topologies” (*Latin America Writes Back: Postmodernity in the Periphery*)
- Ramón H. Rivera-Servera and Harvey Young, “Introduction: Performance Moves” (*Performance in the Borderlands*)
- Víctor Hugo Rascón Banda, *La mujer que cayó del cielo* [please engage with the text even if you’re confounded by its polylingualism!]

Recommended readings:

- Anssi Paasi, “A Border Theory: An Unattainable Dream or a Realistic Aim for Border Scholars?” (*The Ashgate Research Companion to Border Studies*)
- Diana Taylor, “Hemispheric Performances” (*The Archive and the Repertoire*)
- John Beverley, “Introduction” (*Latinamericanism after 9/11*)

Other, background readings:

- David E. Johnson and Scott Michaelsen, “Border Secrets: An Introduction” (*Border Theory: the limits of cultural production*)
- Michal Kobińska, “Introduction: Of Borders and Thresholds” (*Of Borders and Thresholds: Theatre History, Practice, and Theory*)

**4 February: Early border-crossers: the Güegüence**Readings:

*The Güegüence* (Brinton translation)

Les W. Field, "A Class Project: *El Güegüence*, Masaya-Carazo, and Nicaraguan National Identity" (*The Grimace of Macho Ratón*)

L. Elena Delgado and Rolando J. Romero, "Local Histories and Global Designs: An Interview with Walter Mignolo" *Discourse* 22, no. 3 (Fall 2000): 7-33

Recommended readings:

Walter Mignolo, "On Gnosis and the Imaginary of the Modern/Colonial World System" (*Local Histories/Global Designs*)

Ilan Stavans & Lalo Alcaraz, "Introduction" (*Latino USA: A Cartoon History*)

**11 February: Theatre on the hyphen: Dolores Prida and Carmen Rivera**Readings:

Gustavo Pérez Firmat, "Introduction: The-Desi-Chain" and "Spic'n Spanish" (*Life on the Hyphen: The Cuban-American Way*)

Ilan Stavans, "Introduction: la jerga loca" (*Spanglish*, esp. pp. 12-27, 38-47)

Dolores Prida, *Coser y cantar*

Carmen Rivera, *La gringa* (also recommended: Spanish translation)

Recommended reading:

Lowell Fiet, "New Tropicalism: Performance on the Shifting Borders of Caribbean Disappearance" (*Performance in the Borderlands*)

**18 February: Performance on the hyphen: Carmelita Tropicana, Guillermo Verdecchia, and Denise Stoklos**Readings:

Carmelita Tropicana, *Milk of Amnesia / Leche de amnesia* (I, Carmelita Tropicana: *Performing between Cultures*)

Guillermo Verdecchia, *Fronteras americanas*

Denise Stoklos, *Casa* (*Holy Terrors: Latin American Women Perform*)

Recommended readings:

- David Román, "Carmelita Tropicana Unplugged: An Interview" *TDR* 39, no.3 (Fall 1995): 83-93
- Elspeth Tilley, "Staging a 'Plurality of Vision': Diasporic Performance in Polycharacter Monodrama" *Modern Drama* 55, no. 3 (Fall 2012): 304-28; OR Jerry Wasserman, "Bombing (on) the Border: *Ali and Ali and the axes of Evil* as Transnational Agitprop" *Modern Drama* 51, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 126-44
- Leslie Damasceno, "The Gestural Art of Reclaiming Utopia: Denise Stoklos at Play with the Hysterical-Historical" (*Holy Terrors: Latin American Women Perform*)

**25 February: Of borderlands and mestizaje: El Vez, Gomez-Peña, and Lucha Libre**

Readings:

- Rafael Pérez-Torres, "The Critical Mixture of Race" (*Mestizaje: Critical Uses of Race in Chicano Culture*)
- Gloria Anzaldúa, "The Homeland, Aztlán / El otro México" (*Borderlands/La Frontera*)
- Josh D. Kun, "The Aural Border" *Theatre Journal* 52 (2000): 1-21
- Kerri Allen, "Drama on the Border" *American Theatre* (December 2006): 28-31, 53-56
- José David Saldívar, "In Search of the 'Mexican Elvis': *Border Matters*, 'Americanity,' and Post-State-centric Thinking" (*Trans-Americanity: Subaltern Modernities, Global Coloniality, and the Cultures of Greater Mexico*)
- Guillermo Gómez Peña, "On the Other Side of the Mexican Mirror" and "Crosscontamination" (*Ethno-Techno: Writings on performance, activism, and pedagogy*)

Viewings:

- [www.YouTube.com](http://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=QEO_AEhUg3I): "El Vez – The Mexican Elvis" [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QEO\\_AEhUg3I](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QEO_AEhUg3I), "En el barrio" by El Vez, "El VEZ for Prez 10/1/00" (6 parts, "El Vez Gospel Show," "El Vez Merry MeX-mas 12/10/02," "El Vez, the Memphis Mariachis & the Lovely Elvettes," "El Vez for Prez – 2008 tour")
- Guillermo Gómez Peña's digital archives (Hemispheric Institute): <http://hidvl.nyu.edu/search/?fq=collectionId%3AFFromAztecoHighTechtheperformanccevideocollectionofGuillermoG%C3%B3mezPe%C3%B1aLaPochaNostra19852004&q>

“Border Patrol Body Slam” (*NY Times* “op-doc” by Kevin Gordon):  
<http://www.nytimes.com/video/opinion/100000002314352/border-patrol-body-slam.html>

Other, related readings:

Josh Kun, “Playing the Fence, Listening to the Line: Sound, Sound Art, and Acoustic Politics at the US-Mexico Border” (*Performance in the Borderlands*)

**4 March: Queering mestizaje: Anzaldúa, Arrizón, and Moraga**

Readings:

Gloria Anzaldúa, “Entering into the Serpent” and “La herencia de Coatlicue / The Coatlicue State” (*Borderlands/La Frontera*)  
 Alicia Arrizón, “Introduction” and “Imaginary Spaces: Aztlán and the ‘Native’ Body in Chicana/o Feminist Cultural Production” (*Queering mestizaje: Transculturation and Performance*)  
 Cherrie Moraga, *The Hungry Woman: A Mexican Medea*

Recommended readings:

Three contributions to *PMLA* Forum on Gloria Anzaldúa (*PMLA* 121, no. 1 [January 2006]): Linda Martín Alcoff, “The Unassimilated Theorist”; Debra A. Castillo, “Anzaldúa and Transnational American Studies”; and Silvia Spitta, “The Contingencies of Life and Reading: Para Gloria”  
 Gloria Anzaldúa, “On the Process of Writing *Borderlands/La Frontera*” (*The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*)  
 Elizabeth Jacobs, “Theatre on the Border in Cherrie Moraga’s *The Hungry Woman: A Mexican Medea*” *Journal of Adaptation in Film & Performance* 1, no. 3 (February 2009): 177-89

**11 March: Theatre and the border city: las mujeres de Juárez**

Readings:

All:

Rubén Amavizca Murúa, *Las mujeres de Juárez*  
 Christina Marín, “Staging Femicide/Confronting Reality: Negotiating Gender and Representation in *Las mujeres de Juárez*” *Gender Forum* 17 (2007)



To be assigned to one or more readers:

- Humberto Robles, *Mujeres de arena: testimonios de mujeres en Ciudad Juárez / Women of Sand*
- Angélica Sánchez, "'...y si no te oyen grita, grita fuerte,' obra en un acto para radio-teatro callejero"
- Antonio Zúñiga, *Estrellas enterradas*
- De Fuente Ovejuna a Ciudad Juárez*, version by Sergio Adillo
- Coco Fusco, *The Incredible Disappearing Woman*
- Marisela Treviño Orta, *Braided Sorrow*

General information:

<http://www.mujeresdejuarez.org> (and there are many other sites)

Sergio Gonzalez Rodriguez, *The Femicide Machine*, esp. "Introduction:

Border and Vector," "Border Town/Backyard," and "Femicide Machine"

Andrés Guzmán, "Fetichismo y estereotipos en Juárez: The Laboratory of Our Future" *Divergencias. Revista de estudios lingüísticos y literarios* 7, no. 1 (verano 2009): 37-46

Optional viewing:

*El traspatio* (DVD) [Spanish screenplay by Sabina Berman, "Backyard," available *Gestos*]

**18 March: Border dancing: areíto, danzón, negrito, and tango**
Readings:

- Ana M. López, "Of Rhythms and Borders" (*Everynight Life: Culture and Dance in Latin/o America*)
- Paul A. Scolieri, "On the Areíto: Discovering Dance in the New World" (*Dancing the New World: Aztecs, Spaniards, and the Choreography of Conquest*)
- Jill Lane, "ImpersoNation in Our America" and "National Rhythm, Racial Adulteration, and the Danzón, 1881-1882" (*Blackface Cuba. 1840-1895*)
- Jorge Salessi, "Medics, Crooks, and Tango Queens: The National Appropriation of a Gay Tango" (*Everynight Life: Culture and Dance in Latin/o America*)
- Anita González, "Chapter 3: Archetypes of Race" (*Afro-Mexico: Dancing between Myth and Reality*) [González's glossary is appended]

Viewings:

[www.YouTube.com](http://www.YouTube.com): key words—"Danzón Cuba," "Danzón Mexico," "Tango Argentina"

**25 March: The borders of theatrical reception: translation, adaptation, cross- and –interculturalism**

Readings:

Ariel Dorfman, *Death and the Maiden*

Rafael Spregelburd, *Stupidity* (recommended: *La estupidez*)

Recommended readings:

Adam Versényi, “Translation as an Epistemological Paradigm for Theatre in the Americas” *Theatre Journal* 59, no.3 (2007): 431-47

Rafael Spregelburd, “Life, of Course” *Theatre Journal* 59, no.3 (2007): 373-77

Ric Knowles, *Theatre & Interculturalism*

**1 April: Intra- and international borders: history and memory**

Readings:

Ricardo Monti, *The Obscurity of Reason* (Graham-Jones translation)

Guillermo Calderón: *Villa + Discurso* (Gregory translations) *Theater* 43, no. 2 (2013): 65-97, 99-119

Recommended readings:

Jean Graham-Jones, “A Broader Realism: The Theater of Ricardo Monti” (*Reason Obscured: Nine Plays by Ricardo Monti*)

Joanne Pottlitzer, “Forgetting Filled with Memory” *Theater* 43, no. 2 (2013): 56-63

Diana Taylor, “Trauma, memoria y performance: Un recorrido por Villa Grimaldi con Pedro Matta,” *e-misférica* 7.2 (Winter 2010)

Paola S. Hernández, “Remapping Memory Discourses: *Villa+Discurso* by Guillermo Calderón” *South Central Review* 30, no. 3 (Fall 2013): 61-82

Recommended viewing:

Guillermo Calderón in conversation with Jean Graham-Jones [Symposium on Performance and Human Rights, John Jay College, 2013]

**8 April: Transnational-global borders 1**

Readings:

Manuel Puig, *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (Feingold translation)

David Román and Alberto Sandoval Sánchez, “Caught in the Web: Latinidad, AIDS, and Allegory in *Kiss of the Spider Woman, the Musical*” (*Everynight Life*)

Viewing:

Mapa Teatro: *Witness to the Ruins* (<http://www.mapateatro.org>) & <http://hidvl.nyu.edu/search/?start=0&fq=collectionId%3AMapaTeatroLaboratoriodeArtistascollection&q=&facets>

**29 April: Transnational-global borders 2: international theatre festivals; Group Project 1**

Festival reports: look at website and critical writings --journalistic and scholarly—on one of the following Americas-featured festivals (others may be suggested and added):

1. Festival de Manizales: <http://www.festivaldemanizales.com/>
2. Festival de Théâtre des Amériques (Montréal): <http://www.fta.qc.ca/en>
3. Festival Internacional de Teatro (Caracas): <http://fitcaracas.blogspot.com/>
4. Festival Internacional de Buenos Aires: <http://www.festivaldeteatroba.gov.ar/> or <http://festivales.buenosaires.gob.ar/fiba/home/web/index.php/en/index.html>
5. Teatro Avante: Festival Internacional de Teatro Hispánico (Miami): <http://www.teatroavante.com/>
6. Festival Santiago a Mil: <http://www.santiagoamil.cl/?lang=en>
7. Festival Iberoamericano de Teatro de Cádiz: <http://www.fitdecadiz.org/>
8. Festival Théâtre les « Translatines » (Bayonne): <http://theatre-des-chimeres.com/wordpress/les-translatines/translatines-2013/>

Reading:

Daniel Veronese, *Women Dreamt Horses* (Graham-Jones translation)

**6 May: Transnational-global borders and contemporary performance networks: Lola Arias and Stefan Kaegi, *Ciudades paralelas / Parallel Cities*; Group project 2**

Viewings:

“Ciudades Paralelas 2/8 - Hotel - (Lola Arias) Split Screen” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rdcdBzltehc>

“Ciudades Paralelas” <http://www.ciudadesparalelas.com/>

I strongly recommend you watch the uploaded YouTube videos of the other seven “Ciudades Paralelas” installations.

Optional viewings:

“Ciudades Paralelas: Teatro portátil en Buenos Aires” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6A9-huWEVew>

“Ciudades Paralelas (2/8) – Hotel (Lola Arias)” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VCt9zSWS8F4>

“Hotel Ciudades Paralelas Buenos Aires” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j0fQP-MijLc>

**13 May: Group Projects 3 & 4; reflections on the border-crossing coyote-scholar**

Reading:

Delia Poey, “Border Crossers and Coyotes” and “Conclusion” (*Latino American Literature in the Classroom: The Politics of Transformation*)

Recommended reading:

“Performance in the Borderlands Roundtable” (*Performance in the Borderlands*)

**20 May: Group Project 5; final reflections**