

"The critic who no longer enjoys the theatre is obviously a deadly critic, the critic who loves the theatre but is not critically clear what this means is also a deadly critic: the vital critic is the critic who has clearly formulated for himself what the theatre could be—and who is bold enough to throw this formula into jeopardy each time he participates in a theatrical event."—Peter Brook, *The Empty Space*

"I never knew classical theatre could be like that."—audience member for Crisis Point production of *The House of Trials*.

Rough Translations in the House of Trials: Playing with Sor Juana's *Los empeños de una casa*

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Despite boasting a range of ideas and styles easily comparable to that of English or French Classical theatre, Spanish Golden Age drama remains virtually unknown in U.S. university and college theatre departments. The dearth of English editions accounts for only part of the problem. Even after a work has been rendered into stage-worthy English, university artists and professors must present seventeenth-century works informed by *Siglo de Oro* logics like *honra*, *limpieza de sangre*, and Inquisitional Catholicism in a manner compelling to present-day students and audiences. To do so, directors, designers, and actors must confront a number of barriers—historical, cultural, and stylistic—no less daunting than those faced by linguistic translators. The result? Only rarely does a *comedia* find its way into theatre history or dramatic literature classes. Productions of *comedias* on university stages are even rarer. Given American audiences' cultural prejudices against classical drama in general, university theatre departments may well judge Golden Age works as simply too foreign and not worth the trouble. The task before scholars, professors, and practitioners of the *comedia*, then, is one of translating the contributions of critical-theoretical scholarship into ideas productive for the practical-artistic motives fueling

production.

Evidence suggests that *comedia* scholarship is expanding its focus to meet this challenge. Writing in 1991, Charles Ganelin notes that "The *comedia* critic's concept of audience has, until recently, related to colleagues who read words written about a dramatic text viewed from a reader's perspective" (103). Thanks in no small part to contributions from Ganelin and other critics, however, critical attitudes toward the semiotics of live performance are becoming more sophisticated. Scholars can now consult any of a number of recent studies which explore how the requirements of performance impact critical approaches to interpretation (I'm thinking specifically of Louise and Peter Frothergill-Payne's *Prologue to Performance* as well as Ganelin and Howard Mancing's *Golden Age Comedia: Text, Theory, and Performance*). The ongoing interactions between the annual Association for Hispanic Classical Theatre conference and the Chamizal *Siglo de Oro* Festival encourage (and at times challenge) critical views of classical texts (and vice versa). The forthcoming journal *Comedia Performance* promises to provide an exciting space for scholars to examine possibilities for *comedia* production. More and more, this tide of scholarship is breaking down the polarity between theatre scholarship and theatre practice. Scholars are recognizing the director's work in interpreting a play for the stage as the "flip side of a critical perspective brought forth by the critic" (Ganelin 107).

In this article, I discuss some of the choices I made in my own experiment in combining critical and directorial perspectives. During the fall of 2001, I directed *The House of Trials*, David Pasto's English version of Sor Juan Inès de la Cruz' *Los empeños de una casa*, for Crisis Point Theatre at the University of Minnesota—Twin Cities. In bringing Sor Juana's work to a small, low-budget college stage, I found myself negotiating between the exigencies of production and the thematic and stylistic complexities that surround and inform the play. How could I produce an entertaining piece of theatre while still doing justice to the critical sophistication of Sor Juana's work? My process of answering such

questions was for me a means of addressing the translation challenge facing *comedia* scholarship today.

Throughout this discussion, I use *translation* as a guiding metaphor for my project, as I see a resonance between the task of translation and the common ground shared by critic and director. In the growing body of literature on *comedia* adaptation, *translation* is often described in terms of "building a bridge" between two worlds (present-day English-speaking and seventeenth-century Spanish). While I appreciate the implication of back-breaking labor the image conveys, I'm dissatisfied by the connotation of a static connection between two entities that remain alien and unchanged. I begin, then, by suggesting a modification of the term *translation* drawn from the work of interwar German philosopher Walter Benjamin.

In his essay, "The Task of the Translator," Benjamin discusses and rejects the image of translation as a mechanical or utilitarian exercise of substituting words in one language with their analogues in another. Instead, he insists that the translator's duty "consists in finding that intended effect upon the language into which he is translating which produces in it the echo of the original" (76). Benjamin positions translation as a negotiation between two imaginative systems. More often than not, Benjamin elaborates, such a negotiation requires a change in both languages, both systems. Quoting Rudolph Pannwitz, Benjamin asserts that "[t]he basic error of the translator is that he preserves the state in which his own language happens to be instead of allowing his language to be powerfully affected by a foreign tongue" (80). Translation, then, functions less as a bridge between two discrete entities and more as a dynamic encounter between imaginative forces who emerge from the experience transformed. For me, Benjamin's definition elaborates an ethical imperative: If I truly seek to *translate* a work from the past onto the present stage, I must strive for the transformative, for that which challenges and exceeds an audience's expectations and preconceptions.

My history with *Los empeños* introduced me to such transformative possibilities. My first encounter with *Los empeños de una casa*—indeed, my first encounter with any Siglo de Oro drama—came in 1995 when, as a Freshman at Oklahoma City University, I had the great fortune to be cast as Castaño in Dr. Pasto's premiere production of *The House of Trials* (the first English production of the play). The following year, I reprised my role for the Chamizal audience at the XXI Annual *Siglo de Oro* Festival in El Paso, TX. Three years later, Dr. Pasto brought a production of his translation of Alarcón's *Las paredes oyen* (*The Walls Have Ears*) to Chamizal, and again I was cast. During that Festival I saw Sor Juana's play performed by a professional company, the Teatro de Repertorio Latinamericano from Caracas, Venezuela.

Their production style was radically different than that of OCU. Where Dr. Pasto had premiered his translations in the context of a period-specific design concept, the Teatro de Repertorio chose a pared-down, low-tech approach that challenged the Chamizal auditorium's formal proscenium dynamic. Two bands of cloth hanging from the ceiling just off the wings and two high-backed chairs served as their entire set. Actors wore plain black and white outfits and wielded simple, utilitarian stage properties. The minimal design concept created the feel of an impromptu make-believe session, as if children had pulled discarded pieces of clothing from a box and used their imaginations to create the world of the play.

The company's staging reinforced this playful atmosphere. Just before the performance, costumed ushers coaxed a good portion of the audience out of their seats and relocated them to on-stage bleacher seating directly facing the house audience. Spectators on stage and in the house grinned at each other across the narrow aisle playing space; watching others enjoy the show became as much fun as the show itself. Throughout the evening, cast members took full advantage of the lively intimacy between performer and audience. Without the barrier of a raised stage and orchestra pit, expository

asides grew into confidential gossip between characters and spectators. Songs and musical interludes became up-close-and-personal cabaret numbers. Castaño's Act III cross-dressing involved an extended foray into audience seats (and onto one person's lap). These choices, coupled with the craft of the performers, created a joyfully theatrical experience, a playful space quite different from OCU's production, yet somehow absolutely *right* for the piece.

At the *mesa redonda* discussion afterward with the cast, I listened (with Professor Amy Williams' kind assistance) to Costa Palamides, the director, speak about his motivations for producing the play. His troupe, it seems, had made a name for itself primarily as a comic troupe playing modern-day farces. Only recently had they decided to turn to a more classical repertoire. Palamides spoke of the company's trepidation about tackling "classical" theatre, particularly given the expectations of their decidedly non-classical audience base. They felt that a conventionally formal production with period dress and elevated settings would have been alienating. Instead, they crafted a production that would maintain the integrity of Sor Juana's work while being adaptable enough to be played on the streets. For me, Palamides's approach opened my eyes to new possibilities for what "classical theatre" could be and do. I left excited about the prospect of attempting my own theatrical translations.

That following fall, as I started graduate school at the University of Minnesota, I became involved in with a student-run theatre troupe, Crisis Point Theatre, whose setup specifically welcomed such translation projects. Thanks to a yearly grant from the University of Minnesota, Crisis Point operates outside of the auspices of the University's Department of Theater Arts and Dance (though collaborations are frequent). Helmed by a core board of graduate and undergraduate students, Crisis Point describes itself as a "laboratory for artistic experimentation offering students from a variety of disciplines the

chance to be involved in all aspects of making theatre" ("Description"). Every year, the company produces a season of original, infrequently staged, and/or challenging work alongside the University Theatre's own season. Past seasons have boasted premieres of award-winning student-written plays as well as critically lauded productions of canonical works like *Angels in America*.

Crisis Point's operating conditions, while exciting from a Student Life "let's include everyone" standpoint, can complicate its goal of producing challenging, quality theatre. Since the terms of its funding grant mandate involving the University community at large, Crisis Point strives to draw actors, directors, playwrights, and designers from outside the Theatre Department proper. Consequently, casts generally feature an uneven range of talent and experience, a mix at odds with the requirements of an average Crisis Point show. Professional actors generally train for years to master classical verse or avant-garde movement styles; tackling Shakespeare or German Expressionism with a cast of undergraduates—some experienced, some brand-new to theatre—borders on the foolhardy. Additionally, Crisis Point lacks a stage of its own, so each production must find and rent performance space. "Found spaces" like art galleries, studio apartments, and empty classrooms serve almost as often as small theatres. Finally, sets, costumes, and props must be drawn from Crisis Point's limited storage supply or purchased with a show's even more limited budget, discouraging high-concept period productions.

While these constraints can often prove frustrating to directors and designers, they also encourage a high level of ad hoc creativity, similar to what director Peter Brook calls "rough theatre." According to Brook, rough theatre is theatre stripped to the bare essentials: performers and spectators combining imaginations. Bypassing formalized conventions, in rough theatre "a bucket will be banged for a battle, flour used to show faces white with fear. The arsenal is limitless: the aside, the placard, the topical reference, the local jokes, the exploiting of accidents, the songs, the dances, the tempo, the noise . . ."

(Brook 66). Crisis Point productions invite such an improvised approach. "How can we block a three-act, multiple-locale play in a space with only one stage entrance?" "How can we choreograph a swordfight when no one has even one fencing lesson to his/her credit?" "Does that actor *have* to have so many lines?" Questions like these crop up with such regularity that *rough* becomes the default style.

Brook's conception of rough theatre dovetails with Benjamin's ethic of translation. Rough theatre revels in a sense of theatrical *play* fueled by a union of imaginative energies: the performers', the audience's, and the playwright's. In such a meeting place, received conventions dictating what a certain text *really* means or how a particular play *ought* to be done—normative preconceptions that ensure listless translations—prove less important than asking the essential question of how to make imaginative encounters vital and engaging. Given that much of the reticence to produce Spanish works derives from the *comedia*'s departures from "classical" (read: Shakespearean) norms, rough translations that operate outside of or against such norms offer a possible space for Spanish classical theatre to flourish in the U.S.

While I knew that Crisis Point's rough production values would have a transformative effect on Sor Juana's text, I sought also for elements in the text could inspire a present transformation. As most Sor Juana scholars will aver, *Los empeños* has more going on than just a convoluted love plot. A recent upsurge of critical attention to the play has contributed valuable insights into specificity of Sor Juana's dramaturgy relative to that of other (male) contemporary playwrights. In modeling the play's title after a Calderonian *comedia* (i.e., *Los empeños de un acaso*), in patterning her plot after a Calderonian *capa y espada* (*Casa con dos puertos mala es de guardar*), and, finally, in having Castaño pray for a specifically Calderonian inspiration, Sor Juana underlines her play's relationship to more well-established (masculine) models. Critical interpretations of Calderón's influence on *Los*

empeños have abandoned the picture of a cloistered Mexican nun imitating the Spanish master (Schmidhuber lists examples of such dismissive commentary) in favor of a portrait of Sor Juana consciously inhabiting Calderónian forms and techniques in order to parody them (Kenworthy). Christopher Weimer goes further to argue that through certain strategic modifications to Calderónian tropes, such as Castaño's sympathetic reflection on women's roles while he's in drag, Sor Juana in fact openly criticizes and overturns masculinist representations of gender and honor (Weimer; see also Freidman and Cypess). Beneath its frothy exterior, then, *Los empeños de una casa* serves as a sharp satire of seventeenth-century Spanish gender roles.

Initially, I wanted to use this critique as a point of departure for my stage translation. As I played out various stagings along this line, however, I ran into difficulties. While as a critic I appreciate the political significance of Sor Juana's citing and modifying Calderón, as a director I had to confront the hard fact that such significance will be lost on a Crisis Point audience wholly unfamiliar with Calderónian dramaturgical models and seventeenth-century gender norms. Moreover, Sor Juana's handling of gender—subversive as it was for its time—remains hopelessly antiquated from the perspective of a twenty-first-century audience. Potent as Doña Ana is, her ultimate submission to her "master" Don Juan galls modern sensibilities. Leonor's exceptional combination of intelligence and beauty—probable autobiographical references to Sor Juana herself—get upstaged in the play as she becomes the helpless object of a male tug-of-war. Even Castaño's famous cross-dressing scene loses something of its shock value when presented to an audience inured to plots like *Tootsie*, *Mrs. Doubtfire*, and *The Birdcage*. In fact, insofar as the humor of Pedro's clumsy overtures toward Castaño/Leonor relies on a tacit assumption of the absurdity/undesirability of same-sex desire, the scene suffers from what is in the present a potentially homophobic undercurrent. I had to admit, then, that a vision of the play as potent gender satire would not translate easily in a small-scale present-day production.

Luckily, Sor Juana's comic sophistication isn't limited to a play of gender norms, and her lively dramaturgy suggests other modes of subversion. The two previous productions I had encountered had already made use of Sor Juana's heightened metatheatrical consciousness, an understanding of the theatrical form as an inside joke between stage and audience. In the introduction to his translation, Pasto notes that characters in *Los empeños* display an unusual awareness of themselves as being in a performance (16-17). The *criados* in particular repeatedly point out their being in a play, as when Celia bemoans Leonor's lengthy exposition: "A monologue in the middle of the night, by candlelight? God forbid!" (43). Or, as Castaño cross-dresses, he excuses himself, "Please remember, ladies, [that this] is a play. Don't think I hatched this scheme myself" (117). Though only the servants exhibit such an overtly metatheatrical consciousness, every character enjoys his or her special relationship to the audience thanks to the unusually high number of asides in the play (one scene, for example, features five asides in a row). Noting Sor Juana's frequent use of this device, Catherine Larson argues that, in a comedy driven by misunderstandings, hidden agendas, and deceptions, the constant check-ins with the audience do more than clarify plot twists. They draw the audience in as every character's confidant and accomplice, creating another level of meaning-making during performance (Larson 193). Dramaturgically, *House of Trials* can be read as a play about *playing* with reality, about manipulating conventions of stage, plot, and audience.

This critical inroad, meshing nicely with Crisis Point's rough style, guided some initial production choices. To begin with, I sought to distance the production style from the popular image of "classical theatre." I began by seeking out an explicitly non-theatrical venue uncontaminated by bad memories of compulsory high-school Shakespeare productions. I found the perfect setting in a vegetarian café/liberal religious bookstore called Saint Martin's Table. Located across the street from campus, St. Martin's Table

served as a popular spot for lunch meetings, book signings, and community workshops. The managers were happy to rent the space to us for a very reasonable price. Of course, since the café had to operate during the day throughout our run, we were responsible for transforming the space from dining area to theatre and back again each night. Each evening, the cast and I would move the twenty or so tables out of the dining area, re-arrange the chairs into a makeshift audience, hang lights, and delimit a playing area.

The nightly load-in and strike dictated an extremely simple production design. The set consisted of hanging sheets, two wooden blocks, a chair, and some floor pillows. Even so, the playing area and audience space just barely missed being qualified as "cramped." Spectators were never seated more than six feet from the stage. To light our show, stage manager Jonathan Kranzler came up with a fairly ingenious system of clip-on lights, power strips, and extension cords which threaded to on-off switches at his control table. Specials (such as spotlights for black out scenes or back-lighting for shadow effects) were the result of powerful handheld flashlights wielded by cast members backstage or squatting in the audience. Emily Hansen, our costume designer, complemented the set's minimalism by choosing inexpensive, loose outfits that suggested a time and place remote from the present and avoided tying the production to a specific period or locale. Simple color choices indicated links between characters, such as green for Ana and Pedro or white for Carlos and Leonor.

Though partially the product of necessity, the intentionally bare-bones design served—and, to a certain extent, was redeemed by—the text's metatheatrical sensibility. Precisely because no element was slick or complete, the production required audience members to invest a good bit of imagination and good will to make the show work. Audience members simply had to accept a slit in a hanging sheet as a locked door, a hastily re-arranged set of blocks as a street, and a young man in drag as a passable copy of the lead actress. Unapologetically incomplete, the design elements invited a generosity

of spectatorship, freeing audience members from expectations and anxieties associated with high culture or formal theatre. Completing the picture and filling in the blanks left by makeshift props and sets became part of the show's fun for the audience.

Wishing to capitalize further on such "fill in the blank" jokes, we took a cue from old-time radio plays and set the stage manager's table and lighting controls just off stage in full view of the audience. Jonathan's position made his conventionally back-stage participation part of the main show. For instance, in act three, competing suitors Carlos and Juan burst in fighting with swords. Jonathan clattered two butter knives together as the on-stage actors leapt about waving their wooden dowel rods at each other. The audience loved it. Panicking at the chaos, Castaño (who is at this point in drag as Leonor and affianced to Pedro) initiates a strategic black-out by reaching over to Jonathan's table to hit the master lights-out switch.

(Video Clip 1 [High Bandwith](#) | [Low Bandwith](#))

The clip also demonstrates my tactic for handling asides. While conventional in seventeenth-century Spanish drama, a character's aside can appear awkward or quaint in present-day performances. Directors have a variety of options at their disposal to handle such moments. A common choice involves justifying why other characters on stage do not hear various asides (establishing side conversations, stage business, etc.). For my production, however, I decided to steal an idea from Dr. Pasto and dead-stop all stage action for asides. Given the frequency of asides, this stop-and-go choice affected the overall tempo of the show and led to several hilarious moments, as when Juan and Carlos freeze in mid-sword battle. At other points I pushed the convention of freezing even further. Late in the play, Leonor, desperate to leave Pedro's house, attacks Pedro's servant Celia to get her to unlock the door. Finding herself on the receiving end of a stranglehold, Celia steps back from a frozen Leonor to discuss her options with the

audience. Once she has a plan, she clammers back into the "being strangled" position before continuing. The comic timing of actors Emily Bethke and Talia Gallowich makes the moment work.

(Video Clip 2 [High Bandwith](#) | [Low Bandwith](#))

As rehearsals progressed, the production's stylistic sense of rough play between levels of reality led me to note how play of reality informs the text's themes as well. Though most *comedia* playwrights display a fondness for lengthy expository speeches, Sor Juana seems determined to outdo them all *Los empeños*. For example, the show begins with a three-page-long "as you know..." discussion between a mistress (Doña Ana) and her servant (Celia). Soon, however, the heroine Leonor appears and launches into a speech that is easily twice as long. While no other monologue quite equals this monster oration in length, the rest of the play brims with characters explaining what *has* happened, what they *think* happened, and/or what they *want* others to think happened. The characters' retellings of events take up almost as much stage time as the events themselves. A standard reading of the text tends to divide the characters and their stories into three basic groups: the truthful stories of the virtuous characters (Don Carlos, Doña Leonor), the deluded stories of the ignorant characters (Don Rodrigo, Don Juan), and the self-serving stories of the deceitful characters (Doña Ana, Don Pedro, Celia, Castaño).

Such readings affect how a director chooses to stage the monologues. In OCU's production, for instance, Dr. Pasto supplemented Leonor's massive exposition with a live-action re-staging of the events she describes, including a fully choreographed sword fight. In addition to keeping the audience's interest in what is otherwise at least five minutes of uninterrupted background information, Pasto's choice lends strength to Leonor's version of history. Since the audience sees the events she describes re-enacted (with the actor playing Carlos as the hero), it gathers that the virtuous couple's take on reality is to be trusted in contrast to the machinations of Ana and Pedro. Since my concept revolved so

much around the idea of playing with reality, I wanted to deny any character the right to an objective monopoly on truth. After all, as Larson points out, even the virtuous Leonor's story is mistaken on some points (the "police" arresting Carlos are not actually police)—a discrepancy the audience is aware of thanks to exposition by Ana (Larson 193-4). Whether they are confused or simply scheming, no character's "take" on reality quite matches what the audience knows to be true. To highlight this fluidity of reality, every time a character launched into a memory (either "real" or fabricated), their retelling was supplemented—and commented upon—by some other form of representation.

For example, to present Leonor's six-page speech, I asked the actor playing Leonor to create a series of stick-figure cartoons, each illustrating a scene from the monologue's story as the character might have remembered it. Thus, after Ana asks for her back story, Leonor takes a deep breath, snaps her fingers, and *ding!* A slideshow projection appears above her head. Referring to the slideshow throughout her story as a politician might refer to a chart, Leonor emphasizes various pathetic points of her hectic existence to win Ana's sympathy: how beautiful-yet-lonely she is, how manly-yet-feminine Carlos is, how frightening-yet-exciting the elopement is, etc. Later in the play, after a confusing series of events and revelations during a blackout, Carlos struggles to catch Castaño up to what has happened. Crude shadow-puppets projected on the sheet behind him illustrate his story.

(Video Clip 3 [High Bandwith](#) | [Low Bandwith](#))

Such additions served several functions. Aside from garnering a chuckle from the audience, the slide show and puppet shows enhanced the expository functions of the speeches, helping to clarify the complex plot and characters. Yet the informal dynamics of stick figures and hand-puppets added a subjective dimension, implying, respectively, Leonor's self-aggrandizing tendencies or Carlos' confusion and urgency.

At other points, this choice underlined characters' tendencies to re-write history.

When Leonor's father Don Rodrigo confronted Pedro (whom he believes to be his daughter's kidnapper), Hernanda—here re-imagined as Rodrigo's personal/legal assistant—whips out a chalkboard diagram laying out their case against him. Pedro, painfully aware that the story is false but wishing to secure a future as Leonor's husband, snatches the board from Hernanda and, during the course of his monologue, literally re-draws their picture of history to support his own agenda.

My most overt intervention into the text involved staging Sor Juana herself. At the top of the show, as the audience settled into restaurant chairs arranged in rows or on pillows scattered on the floor, I began a standard pre-show speech. Two actors dressed in nun's habits stepped out and silently indicated that I should clear the space for them. Once I was gone, they showed a series of signs to the audience. "I'm Sor Juana," stated the first sign, "and this is MY play." Subsequent signs reminded spectators to turn off cell phones and pagers. The last sign read, "Caution: Objects on Stage May be Less Real than they Appear." This generally got a chuckle from the audience. The Sisters then signaled Jonathan, and the show began.

The Sisters—I declined to clarify exactly *which* one was actually Sor Juana—continued to pop up throughout the production, usually during scene changes, where they lip synced to recorded music (played obviously from a small boom box on the stage manager's table). At one point, one of the Sisters invaded the audience, shooing people aside to squeeze into the first row. During the blackout portion of the subsequent scene, she acted as a spotlight, shining a flashlight beam onto the faces of characters as they spoke asides. In a way, the Sisters' presence(s) embodied the spirit of rough translation I strived for. On one level, they acknowledged the production's indebtedness to its author, reminding the audience that another imagination besides that of the audience or the performers was at work. At the same time, the doubled presence marked the production's refusal to lay claim to being the "true" or "correct" representation of Sor Juana's imaginative

work. Is this the *real* Sor Juana or just an interpretation? I wished to preserve plausible possibilities instead of supplying final answers.

Directing *House of Trials* under rough conditions proved to be a rewarding experience for me, and in the future I would like to put such techniques in conversation with other Golden Age plays. I would not suggest, however, that rough translations represent the only or even the best way of producing *comedias* in general. As many other productions (including, I believe, OCU's premiere production) at the Chamizal festival have shown, more conventional styles can and do succeed admirably. Indeed, the conventions of formal and/or professional theatre possess their own attractions—craft, polish, and professionalism—that rough theatre often finds difficult to attain. And although *Los empeños* proves hospitable to a bare-bones staging, other texts would suffer from such an intentionally unrefined approach. As Brook argues, the flaw of bad productions (or, in a Benjaminian vein, bad *translations*) of classical theatre isn't their level of formality but their presumption to have found and achieved the final answer to "how the play should be done" (14).

Comedia texts—and particularly *Los empeños de una casa*—are inexhaustibly rich with interpretive possibilities. A corollary of Benjamin's ethic of translation is that no act of translation is ever definitive or final. New imaginations in the present will give rise to new and unexpected possibilities for transformative encounters with the past.

As homage to that interpretive humility in my own rough translation, I gave Sor Juana the last laugh of the play. In the final scene, every couple has paired off and exited the stage except for the hapless Don Pedro. Spying Sor Juana sitting in the audience, he offered his hand to her in condescending invitation, as if saying, "See? You are alone as well. *I can complete you.*" Sor Juana stood up, looked him over, and belted out a *you've-got-to-be-kidding* guffaw before exiting the space.

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