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Special Edition

**The Limits of Representation in Spanish
Theater**

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In This Issue

This issue of the *Arizona Journal of Hispanic Cultural Studies* includes articles from a wide range of critical perspectives. The main section of this issue has five articles. In the first one, “Change or Empathy: Mexico’s #MeToo Between Catharsis and Transformative Performance,” David S. Dalton studies Mexico’s #MeToo movement’s use of technology to persuade on new understandings of sexual violence, create social awareness, and inform policy. This significant and timely essay brings cultural meaning to this defining social movement of our era.

This essay is followed by Juliana Piña’s examination of the ties between race, the reenactment of torture and pain, and the medicalization of the black body in the performance of Cuban artist Carlos Martiel. The essay puts at the center of the archive the naked and motionless body that, as an artifact, evokes the history of colonial violence and, by its reenactment reproduces its own agency. The body’s capacity to mutate, escape, and self-heal conveys what she describes as a history that speaks to us through its wounds.

In “The Enigma of La Malinche: History vs. Ideology,” Sandra Messinger Cypess revisits 75 years of cultural discourses of the enigmatic historical figure of Malintzin “La Malinche.” From dominant patriarchal approaches of Malintzin as the “bad woman” to decolonial, Latinx, and intersectional criticism, she argues that new interventions across cultural discourses have allowed us to separate the invented “Malinche” from the historical Malintzin—a powerful figure and example of “resilience, intelligence, ability for self-preservation, and pursuit of freedom.”

The next essay, Hipatia Medina-Ágreda’s “*Snapshots de la frontera: cotidianidad, religiosidad y violencia en Canícula* de Norma Elia Cantú,” revisits this 1995 novel to examine how cultural expressions of daily life and religiosity can reflect on violence from the space from which is lived and narrated.

Finally, in the last article of this section, “*Latinidad, Melodrama, and Passing* in Tanya Maria Barrientos’s *Frontera Street*,” Abel Arango takes a closer look at this understudied Guatemalan American novelist to examine intercultural crossings among Latinx authors. In his view, these critical crossings allow the writer to thrive as a member of a larger U.S. Mexico borderlands imaginary.

This issue of the *Arizona Journal of Hispanic Cultural Studies* includes the special section “The Limits of Representation in Spanish Theater” with guest editors Esther Fernández, Anton Pujol, and Alejandra Juno Rodríguez Villar. It features essays by Aroa Algaba Granero, Elena Cueto Asín, Pablo García Piñar, Anton Pujol, David Rodríguez-Solás, Katherine O.

Stafford, and Jared S. White. In their introduction, the editors write that their goal is to further explore and expand the concept of the unrepresentable—a central issue in theater and performance studies. In criticism, this preoccupation has been tied to the question of how to perform unspoken social conventions, pain, torture, and other atrocities against humanity. The introduction traces cultural history and critical paradigms that allow us to meditate on the challenge of unrepresentability and the limits of representation for playwrights and actors. With a transhistorical approach, these original essays delve into the issue from *comedia* censorship to contemporary dramatic texts and performance. The authors invite the reader to reflect on the power of representing acts, histories, feelings and emotions that continue to be challenged in contemporary cultural production.

For the cover of the issue, I selected one of José Clemente Orozco's most enduring examples of historical art, *Cortés y La Malinche* (1926). The mural, painted on a wall at the Antiguo Colegio de San Ildefonso, ties these historical protagonists to a patriotic and biblical narrative where Malinche as Eve and Cortés as Adam step over the body of a fallen Indian representing Mexico. As Sandra Messinger Cypess reminds us in this issue, she has been cast as the symbolic “Mother of the mestizo” in a complicated relationship that allowed Cortés “to enter and conquer the American Eden.” Indeed, this moment in Spain's history of imperial expansion prompted a tremor of political, social, and cultural changes that have produced wave after wave of new forms of coloniality across the Americas.

This issue marks a new phase in my career serving as Executive Editor of the *Arizona Journal for Hispanic Cultural Studies*. I want to welcome Emanuelle Oliveira-Monte (Vanderbilt University) and Mariselle Meléndez (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign) to our Editorial Board, and to thank our marvelous group of Senior and Consulting Editors (Benjamin Fraser, Susan Larson, Araceli Masterson-Algar, Juliana Luna Freire, Susan Divine and William J. Nichols), Nuria Morgado for her hard work as Book Review Editor, Agustín Cuadrado for his commitment to the journal as Managing Editor, and Caglar Erteber for his attention to detail in the journal's general administration and editing. I am proud of this volume and grateful for the trust placed in me by Malcolm Alan Compitello and this dedicated editorial team as we put together this first issue together and navigate the many challenges academic journals face today.

Santa Arias
Executive Editor