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2010

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Desire: Adapting Lope de Vega for a Contemporary American  
Audience

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Citation Details

OSTLUND, D. (2010). THE TRANSFORMATION OF LA PRUEBA DE LOS INGENIOS INTO THE LABYRINTH OF DESIRE: ADAPTING LOPE DE VEGA FOR A COMTEMPORARY AMERICAN AUDIENCE. *Comedia Performance*, 143.

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**THE TRANSFORMATION OF *LA PRUEBA DE LOS INGENIOS* INTO *THE LABYRINTH OF DESIRE*: ADAPTING LOPE DE VEGA FOR A CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN AUDIENCE**

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Women's equality, cross dressing, homoerotic desire—all the makings of a twenty-first-century comedy—were the focus of a seventeenth-century play by Lope de Vega, *La prueba de los ingenios* (1612?-1613?). In the last two decades, interest in this work has increased considerably. Evidence of the rising popularity of the play is an English-language adaptation by Caridad Svich,<sup>1</sup> which she titled *The Labyrinth of Desire*.<sup>2</sup>

The adaptation was originally commissioned and produced by the University of California, San Diego Department of Theatre and Dance in La Jolla, California in November 2006 under the direction of Gerardo (Jerry) Jose Ruiz and developed at New Dramatists in New York City under the direction of Jean Randich. Ruiz was a third-year student in the Directing MFA Program at UCSD, and the produc-

tion served as the culminating experience for his degree. It was subsequently performed by the Ohio State University Department of Theatre in February, 2008, directed by Jimmy Bohr, a member of the faculty. The professional premiere was at Miracle Theatre, in Portland, Oregon, in May 2008, directed by Devon Allen, head of the Portland State University acting program. A second professional production by a theatre company in San Diego was scheduled for an April 25 through May 23, 2009 run but ultimately was done as a staged reading on March 23, 2009.<sup>3</sup> The professional production at Miracle Theatre is the focus of this study.<sup>4</sup>

I am a member of the Spanish faculty at Portland State University, which is just a few miles from Miracle Theatre. Coincidentally, the play was produced during the term I taught a junior-level culture and civilization course focusing on Early Modern Spain. Capitalizing on this coincidence, attendance at the play—as well as a 250-word reaction to it—was one of the assignments of the course. For most of the students, the class was their first exposure to the history, culture, and literature of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spain. Very few of them were familiar with Lope de Vega, and none (myself included) had read *Prueba*. Having never read the original nor the adaptation, I had no idea what to expect from the production, but my intent was to provide the students a first-hand experience with early-modern Spanish culture. This essay will

explore whether or not that actually happened. After a brief discussion of the homoerotic theme of the work and general issues of the translation and/or adaptation of the *Comedia*, I will then examine some of the specific changes Svich made to Lope's original work in her adaptation and will use my class of students as a type of case study of the reactions to the modernization of a seventeenth-century work.

Louise Fothergill-Payne has noted that "*La prueba de los ingenios* . . . holds sufficient emotional moments to turn this play into a truly modern drama" (84). Although to my knowledge, there have been no modern productions of the Spanish-language original, the quantity of recent critical studies of Lope's work supports her assertion. The growing interest in and acceptance of cross dressing and homosexuality have played a role in the growing attention paid to this play, as evidenced by the fact that the primary focus of many of these studies has been the play's treatment of gender issues, particularly homoerotic desire (see Fothergill-Payne and González Ruiz).

The gender and sexuality elements drew Svich to the work:

It is a piece that true to its genre revels in the comedy of love and intrigue, and does so with Lope de Vega's characteristic warmth, wit, and poetry. What raises this play above its genre is its great understanding of the essential mutabil-

ity and fluidity of human desire. Pre-queer theory, pre-feminism and pre-*Sex and the City*, this play challenges the boundaries of prescribed sexual roles, and advocates for the delightful and essential mystery of love. The performance of self, gender identity, and sexual identity is at the core of this comedy, yet it also manages to address issues of class and the heteroglossic play of language. (*In-Translation*)

As Olga Sanchez, Artistic Director of Miracle Theatre Main Stage where *Labyrinth* was produced, has noted, “The homoerotic elements . . . are part of Svich’s exploration as a writer into the fluidity of identity, the spectrum of sexuality and sexual orientation” (E-mail). While they are present in the original work, Svich’s adaptation brings the sexuality and gender issues even more to the forefront, as I will discuss below.

Portland, Oregon, a particularly appropriate choice of venue for the professional production, is a city known for its tolerance and acceptance of alternative lifestyles. In the city itself, there is a thriving gay community which has lobbied for and gained health insurance and leave for partners. For a brief time (March 3 - April 20, 2004), Multnomah County, where Portland is located, issued marriage licenses for same sex couples.<sup>5</sup> Early in 2009, the state itself passed two gay rights bills—one granting same-sex couples domestic partnerships (with the full benefits of marriage) and another outlawing

discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in employment, public accommodations, and housing. The gay community in Portland was targeted as a potential audience as evidenced by the announcement of the production of the play on the Portland Latino Gay Pride events website for 2008.

While the adaptation was not written specifically for a Portland audience, the audience is a factor for any adaptor or translator of the *Comedia*. As Marta Mateo remarks, “a translation depends . . . on the interests and cultural assumptions of the receiving system” (99). Dawn L. Smith notes that a translator works “with a view to making the text resound with an English-speaking audience” (95). Svich clearly had her audience in mind as she transformed *Prueba* into *Labyrinth*:

[M]y intention throughout my conversation with Lope de Vega across the centuries has always been to illuminate his vision for a new audience, one that most likely only knows, if at all, his classic historical play *Fuenteovejuna*. It is an audience, though, that is perhaps familiar with Marivaux’s *The Triumph of Love* and surely with Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*—plays that are clear cousins to this one in spirit, if not in form, and I’ve taken this into account when re-considering this play.

There are two basic approaches that the translator/adaptor can take while considering the relationship s/he wishes to create between the audience and the work in question. One must decide whether the goal is to transport the audience back in time to seventeenth-century Spain by staying “true” to the original work or to modernize the play and thereby make it more accessible to a contemporary audience. Robert Bayliss has addressed this issue previously in *Comedia Performance*:

Does privileging the criterion of “authenticity” lead the twenty-first-century audience to a faithful reproduction of a classic or “classical” text, or does it render it a mere historical curiosity, unable to engage a twenty-first-century audience? Do substantial alterations to a Golden Age play (both as text and as spectacle) breathe new life into a linguistically and culturally fossilized artifact, thus allowing a contemporary audience to access the *Comedia*, or do such changes defraud the original and corrupt its classical aesthetic merit? (122-23)

Bayliss refers to this as a choice between “an early modern and a postmodern staging of the *Comedia*” (123). I acknowledge that I fall into the early modern camp with a preference for textual authenticity; my intent when I organized the attendance of the play for my students was to expose them to a work that captured the “essence of the aesthetic experi-

ence of the original” (Stroud 94). As is clear from her comments above, and as I discovered during the performance, Svich adheres more to the notion of cultural authenticity, and her adaptation is unquestionably postmodern.

The answer to the question regarding an early modern or a postmodern staging informs other fundamental issues facing any adaptor or translator of the *Comedia* to English. These include the use of verse or prose, formal or informal lexicons, two or three acts, the size of the cast, set design, costuming, props, etc. Svich has addressed many of these issues in a brief essay published in the on-line journal, *In-Translation*, announcing the Miracle Theatre production:

In freely adapting this play for the American stage (and this is the first American English adaptation of this piece), I have taken many liberties with the original text: cutting minor scenes and characters, re-assigning some roles and lines, borrowing a very short comedic sequence from Shakespeare’s *Troilus and Cressida*, re-shaping and expanding scenes, and adding text of my own to clarify and deepen emotional moments as well as comedic ones. The ending in particular has a new twist that speaks to what I feel were Lope’s wholistic intentions with this play. In the use of language I have emphasized the colloquial and direct over the baroque. This choice is actually a mirror of the original’s taut



and sharp energy. However, the meter and rhythms have necessarily changed.

Before discussing Svich's changes, a brief synopsis of Lope's plot is warranted.

The central character in *Prueba* is Florela, who finds herself dishonored. Alejandro, the man she must marry in order to recover her honor, has decided to compete for the hand of Laura, the only child of the wealthy Duke of Ferrara. Finding herself abandoned, Florela follows Alejandro and, as Diana, serves as a lady in waiting to Laura. Having been given the right to select her future spouse by her father, Laura finds herself unable to choose between the three suitors: Alejandro, the Infante of Aragon, and París, Prince of Urbino. Diana/Florela suggests a "prueba de los ingenios" to allow the suitors to prove their merit. This tripartite test of wits includes a riddle, a debate, and finally a labyrinth. When Laura begins to show a preference for Alejandro, Diana/Florela announces that she is actually Félix in disguise as Diana and begins her own pursuit of Laura to distract her from Alejandro's attentions. Having been seduced herself, Florela proves herself rather adept at the art of seduction, and Laura begins to fall in love with her. París, the one and only suitor to complete the labyrinth, wins Laura's hand. When Laura announces "que marido tengo" (336), the time has come for Florela to confess her true identity and for Alejandro to acknowledge

Que Diana es mi mujer,  
y todos estos enredos  
han sido para estorbar  
conmigo tu casamiento;  
esta es Florela de Mantua. (337)

With Florela's honor restored, *Prueba* ends on the happy note typical of Lope.

A female character in male disguise was a popular dramatic convention in Early Modern Spanish theater. As Lope himself mentions in *El arte nuevo de hacer comedias en este tiempo*, "suele / el disfraz varonil agradar mucho" (283-84). Indeed, Merveena McKendrick has noted that it became "monotonous in the regularity of its appearance" (52). Not surprisingly, the very appeal to male audiences of a woman in male disguise resulted in efforts by moralists such as the Jesuit priest Ignacio de Camargo to abolish the practice, since it caused female actors to reveal parts of their bodies "que la naturaleza misma quiso que estuviese siempre casi todo retirado de la vista" (qtd. in Bravo-Villasante 154). The twist on this convention found in both *Prueba* and *Labyrinth* is that Florela never actually dons male clothing; rather, she is a woman claiming to be a man disguised as a woman.

Although Svich "is faithful to Lope's architecture" (*In-Translation*) and the basic plot line is the same, there are some significant differences between the two works which are the focus of the bal-

ance of this essay. First is the cast of characters of the original and the adaptation. Svich has eliminated eleven minor characters with speaking parts; the only servants to survive her cuts are the three that are key to the denouement (Estacio, Finea and Camacho, the *gracioso*). In addition, she combines two characters: Ricardo, who she characterizes as a “steadfast friend to Florela and Alejandro” (Svich, *Labyrinth 2*) and who appears in just the opening scene in Lope’s work, and the Infante of Aragon. In *Prueba*, the Infante is a serious contender for Laura’s hand, while in the adaptation the Infante is merely Ricardo in disguise, keeping an eye on Florela and Alejandro. Another change is Svich’s renaming of Florela’s masculine persona Felipe rather than Félix. A final difference is the gender transformation experienced by the Duke of Ferrara, who is now the Duchess. None of the actors was double cast, unlike acting companies during Lope’s day. The one exception noted above—Ricardo/ Infante de Aragón—was a plot twist created by Svich and was not necessitated by the size of the company.

While it could be argued that these character changes are minimal, they did result in a lack of textual authenticity. The audience did not experience multiple actors playing multiple roles, which was very much a part of any seventeenth-century performance of a Lope play. The Duke of Ferrara is an authority figure in the original work, while the Duchess was a comedic character. Félix is phoneti-

cally similar enough to Fénix so as to bring to mind the image of the Phoenix. That play on words is lost with the renaming to Felipe. Most of my students missed the fact that the Infante was actually Ricardo. Those few who noticed reacted differently to the Infante than the rest did.

The character of the *gracioso*, Camacho, generated considerable reaction from my students that saw the play, and the actor portraying him was the most favorably reviewed. Bonnie Tinker of the *Portland Alliance* described his performance as “delightful, providing the speed and glue that hold the production together,” while Holly Johnson of *The Oregonian* characterized him as the “cheekily delightful . . . fool and trickster Camacho.” Svich adhered to the rules of decorum by portraying him as a member of the lower class and reflecting this distinction through his speech. To highlight the fact that he was not noble, Svich opted to have him literally speak with a vulgar dialect. His speech was splattered with sexual innuendo and profanity. Multiple students commented that they felt that the vulgarity and profanity were excessive.

In general, my students perceived the language to be a mixture of past and present word usage. Some appreciated being able to readily follow it, while others found the perceived mixture of linguistic registers to be confusing. Most were grateful that it was in English, although a few of the more

advanced students expressed a desire to have seen it in the original Spanish.

Another issue related to the issue of language is the choice between verse and prose. In a recent essay, Dakin Matthews persuasively makes a case for verse translations of the seventeenth-century Spanish drama, arguing that “verse and rhyme are at the heart of the *Comedia* experience, and that it is . . . necessary for translators . . . to try to capture both its form and its effect” (52). While on paper it appears that Svich has utilized verse in her adaptation of *Prueba*, her text bears no resemblance to Spanish verse style. Rather, it could be categorized as free verse. To be honest, however, the question of prose vs. verse was a non-issue for my students, as they were more focused on the action and themes. Any comments they made regarding the language of the performance were limited to the lexical register choices noted above.

There were multiple references to twentieth-century pop culture, particularly music. For example, in the opening scene of the play, Florela says to Ricardo, “I can’t stop loving him (as the song goes)” and the script is footnoted as follows: “The song ‘I Can’t Stop Loving You’ was a hit for Ray Charles and other singers. Throughout the text there are references to other pop songs that inform the world and emotional register of this piece” (7). Lope is known for incorporating music into his works; Svich followed this practice but rather than

using period music, the audience heard snippets from the popular songs alluded to in the text. When asked what drew her to fill the play with so many pop music references, Svich responded:

Well, I love pop music. I'm not ashamed to say. We live with so much pop music in our brains, even if we think we're inured to it. Phrases from pop songs are part of our cultural language. With this play, I kept thinking especially about a certain period in U.S. pop music: the early 1960s and the kind of pure pop that era evokes, and that in some ways so many of the chart-topping songs from that era reflect in an elemental unadorned but often witty manner the kind of go-for-broke machinations of love and desire in this play. It's an era in pop music also where "veiled" odes to love were inscribed in the voices of singers singing for the general public what seemed like a straight song when it was actually queer. This too is something operative in the gender coded and uncoded world of *Labyrinth*, [. . .] so . . . the references seemed apropos. Moreover, and above all, I wanted to create moments that acknowledged the audience's involvement with the piece—that broke the "wall" between the action and world of the play and the world we live in—winks, as it were, to collective pop music unconscious! (Study Guide 5-6)

Again, some students quite enjoyed the presence of pop culture in the work while others found it distracting and anachronistic.

Costuming, set design and props were authentic in the sense that the actors wore contemporary clothing—just as actors did in Lope’s day—and minimal props were used to suggest changes in scenery. When asked if the fact that the original work was from the seventeenth-century had informed in any way any of the decisions about the production, Sanchez responded:

The production was presented in modern dress, but in a setting that reflected a gentle sense of Spanish architecture. Our goal was to maintain the integrity of the social rules that dominated the play, as they stood in the original work. The action of the protagonists and the machinations of all the characters would not have been nearly as important without the context in which they appeared. (E-mail)

Svich described the setting for her adaptation as follows:

A world of mirrors and transformation.

Simple, elegant and somewhat ornate in design.

A playing area that is open, but can suddenly become obscured.

There is the possibility of magic here and of getting lost. (*Labyrinth 2*)

Students noted that the play felt Spanish and that the setting of the production had the feel of being from the early twentieth century, yet characters used cell phones and blue-tooth technology. The lack of a clearly defined time period was confusing to some, while others were intrigued by the anachronistic use of twenty-first-century technology.

Like the original play, *Labyrinth* ends with the union of multiple couples: Florela and Alejandro, Laura and Paris, and Camacho and Finea. But Svich altered the ending in two significant ways. First, the “new twist” mentioned above, is the pairing of Ricardo and Estacio. While this can be seen as a continuation of the homoerotic theme, this union would have never occurred in Lope given the difference in their social classes; Ricardo is noble and Estacio is a servant. This union was nonsensical to some students, coming out of nowhere as it did; there was nothing in the play to suggest a possible relationship between the two. The second alteration is Laura’s palpable grief in the final scene. Her final words in *Prueba* after learning that Florela is not in fact Félix are: “París, perdonad; que creo / que un ingenio de mujer / es prueba de mil ingenios” (337), and there are no stage directions to indicate any physical manifestation of grief on her part. In *Labyrinth*, however, while her final words do not reveal her heartbreak—“Paris, you must forgive me. / . . . / I’ve been a fool”—there are clear instructions as to Laura’s state of mind: “Laura faints. A mo-



ment. Duchess revives her, helps her up. Laura is weeping; she is devastated” (117). She does not speak again, but the final stage direction reads: “Laura cannot stop weeping as her eyes meet Florela for what may be the last time” (120). What was not entirely clear, however, is if her sorrow stemmed from discovering that Diana was really Florela and not Felipe or from her realization that everything Florela had done and said to her was part of her attempt to get Alejandro back and not a reflection of any feelings towards Laura herself.

The comments of the reviewer for *The Portland Alliance*, the city’s oldest alternative progressive newspaper, regarding the denouement reflect the sentiments of many of my students:

It is easy to see why the original play could not end with Florela and Laura leaving stage as a happy couple, but the logic is harder to follow in today’s world. Given that Florela is shallow and deceitful, if also witty and charming, from the beginning, it is entirely reasonable that she should reject the woman she has courted throughout most of the play to return to the man who didn’t want her in the first place. It is, however, disheartening to have one more sweet lesbian romance end with the jerky boyfriend getting the girl. True, she isn’t worthy of the girl she rejects, and it is also true that the play is about the transgressions and foibles of human love and attraction. It is still disconcerting to see two of the boys go off happily with each other,

and several of the straight couples find their appropriate matches while the smart lesbian seductress leaves her lady love for an incompetent man who evidently never loved her in the first place. (Tinker)

Sanchez describes the ending as “challenging . . . , not exactly happy at all, it’s a victory of the smart/ruthless, not necessarily the wise or the kind” (E-mail). Even with the pairing of the Infante and Estacio, students perceived this to be a very traditional ending, primarily because Laura and Florela did not end up together. Several felt that the post-modern elements of the adaptation suggested a less traditional denouement.

While reactions to modernizations of the production among my students ran the gamut, most connected on some level with the underlying theme of love in its multiple manifestations. The homoerotic tensions manifest in the relationship between Laura and Florela/Diana/Felipe were intriguing to some and uncomfortable to others because those students were made to feel like voyeurs in the seduction scenes. The small, intimate space of the theater accentuated this feeling.<sup>6</sup>

The very naming of the adaptation is symbolic of the changes made. The Spanish title *La prueba de los ingenios* is generally translated to be *Trial by Wits* or *Test of Wits*. Svich’s choice of *The Labyrinth of Desire* reflects her decision to emphasize the metaphor of the labyrinth. Much of the ac-

tion of Act III takes place in the labyrinth that is the third of the tests created by Florela to help Laura choose among her suitors. The penultimate line of the play is “el labertinto de amor” (27), and the substitution of desire for love reflects the shift in focus of the adaptation. One student commented that the work was indeed a labyrinth of not just desire, but also love, honor and deceit. Svich affirms this observation: “The play is a labyrinth and desire is its compass” (Interview 4-5). When asked to describe the layered definitions or functions of the labyrinth, Svich responded: “There’s that place emotionally when you’re in love that is a labyrinth from which you cannot see the beginning or end, only the endlessly joyous and fraught circumlocutions of desire itself. But then again life in and of itself is a labyrinth: a journey and test of contemplation, discovery, and the self meeting itself” (5). The choice to make the labyrinth the central metaphor of the adaptation de-emphasizes the tripartite nature of the test, which is reiterated over and over in the original with repeated use of the word *prueba*.

Both reviewers of the play commented favorably on the alterations Svich made to Lope’s work, one noting she had “made it palatable for today’s audiences” (Johnson) while the other commented that the work was “updated to be accessible and relevant to modern English speaking audiences” (Tinker). Neither had access to the original play and therefore based their comments on the adaptor’s

own assertions in the essay from *In-Translation* that was also published in the study guide Miracle prepared for the production:

[T]his is a free adaptation. It is faithful to Lope's architecture, but it is very much suffused with my own artistic sensibility as a playwright, which also centers on the crossing of normative social and sexual boundaries, women in society, the carnival-esque play with language and genre, and interculturalism. . . . So call this a hybrid text, a fusion, if you will, of Lope de Vega and Svich.

Perhaps it was the very hybrid nature of the *Labyrinth* that was so disconcerting to some of my students and, due to the intent of my assignment to them, to me. I had intended for them to see a play by Lope de Vega, yet parts of the work were obviously by Caridad Svich. The complexity of the question of authorship of an adaptation is evident in a comment by Gerardo Ruiz, director of the original student production:

Transformation stands out as one of the most intriguing thematic elements of Lope de Vega's play, specifically transformation via love. The playwright also unsentimentally explores the mutability of the self and of desire. Every character in *Labyrinth* falls in love with more than one person; to a certain extent, they fall in love with the aspects of themselves they see reflected

in the object of their passion. Our production focused on this theme, and actively heightened Lope's dazzlingly rich handling of it. (v)

He refers to Lope as the author of a work billed as "A play by Caridad Svich adapted from Lope de Vega" (v).

If, as A. Robert Lauer asserts, "[a]ny translation suggests an act of violence, transfer, or change" (202), then an adaptation does this to an even greater degree. In spite of the fact that I had not yet read *Prueba de los ingenios*, I had a strong reaction to what I perceived as "violent" departures from the original work. As a professor of Early Modern Spanish literature and culture, I felt the need to discuss with my students what I had perceived as the unauthentic elements of the production. This was done in a post-performance class session, following the submission of the students' written responses to the play. During the course, we had discussed the importance of honor in Early Modern Spain. The postmodern elements of the play—and the sense that it was not reflective of seventeenth century values—de-emphasized the honor issue central to the original work. One of the few advanced students in the class, who was concurrently taking a senior-level course on Early Modern Spanish women writers,<sup>7</sup> commented that the de-emphasis of the theme of honor, while intended for a "modern audience, who may not fully understand the complex and intense role that honor plays in Spain during this Gol-

den Age of writers, poets and playwrights. . . , undermines the intelligence of the audience, and essentially assumes too much” (McConnell). Only upon understanding why Florela was required by society to marry the man that had seduced her in order to regain her honor did the students in general comprehend why it was so important that she ended up with Alejandro. Without that context, the fact that Florela does get Alejandro back made less sense, especially since she had connected with Laura in a way that she never did with him.

When asked if the fact that *Labyrinth* was based on a Lope de Vega work had played a factor in her decision to produce the piece, Sanchez responded,

Absolutely ~ one of our goals at Miracle is to share works that reflect the diversity of the Latino experience, and this includes its history. That the play is based on Lope de Vega allowed us the opportunity to present a play that presented a historical background (and social structure) of the 1600s, while the adaptor through her adaptation held a dialogue with the original work.

Plus this work was in English, which made it accessible to a greater number of people. Through this production more people would become familiar with Lope de Vega and his work. We've found that these older texts are challenging for our English and Spanish-speakers to fully enjoy . . . . (E-mail)

Perhaps ultimately this is the real issue. As much as I would love to be able to take students from Portland State University to early modern productions of the *Comedia*, it is not in Miracle Theatre's economic best interest to produce such works. If they are to perform works from seventeenth-century Spain, they must do so in a way that guarantees an audience.

While for adherents to textual authenticity like me an adaptation of a *Comedia* may not be the preferred vehicle for teaching Early Modern Spanish culture, the truth is I am grateful for any chance to expose my students to the drama of seventeenth-century Spain. Most of them commented that they would have not attended the production if it had not been a class assignment. Live theater was simply not an activity in which they had participated, and many thanked me for exposing them to the experience. *Labyrinth* engaged the students and left them wanting more: more Lope, more live theater, more visits to Miracle. That, for me as a professor of the *Comedia*, made it a success, and I look forward to the opportunity to take more students to future productions of the *Comedia*—translation, adaptation, or Spanish-language original—at Miracle Theatre.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> “An artist of Cuban-Spanish-Argentine-Croatian descent, Ms. Svich is the recipient of New Dramatists’ 2007 Whitfield Cook Prize for New Writing for her play *Lucinda Caval*, and the 2003 National Latino Playwriting Award for *Magnificent Waste*. She’s also received a Harvard University Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study Bunting fellowship, and a TCG/Pew National Theatre Artist Grant. Caridad is currently on commission from Spanish Rep/Repertorio Español in New York City and Marin Theatre Company in California. She is an alumna playwright of New Dramatists, contributing editor of *TheatreForum*, on the editorial board of *Contemporary Theatre Review* (Routledge/UK), affiliate artist of New Georges, and founder of the international theatre alliance and publishing press NoPassport.Caridad” (Study Guide 6).

Among her many credits is the translation and publication of multiple works by Federico García Lorca. The production of *Labrynth* was her first collaboration with Miracle Theatre.

<sup>2</sup> The play was translated before, also with the title *The Labyrinth of Desire*, by Michael Jacobs and was published by Oboron Books in *Plays Two* (along with a translation by John Osborne of *La fianza satisfecha* as *A Bond Honoured*) in 2002. In association with The Globe Theatre in London, OUT OF THE BOX had a staged reading of the play directed by Gerry Mulgrew in December 2002. I cannot speak to any awareness Svich may have had of this translation.

<sup>3</sup> “In early 2009, ion theatre de-installed its home-base, the Lab, when the company learned that the owners of the property were the largest supports in the state toward the passage of Prop 8—a measure that the company considered a formidable obstacle to its mission of inclusiveness and diversity. Though ion is flourishing despite the hardship of a new itinerant phase, it struggled to find homes for its remaining productions and completed Season 3 with a staged reading of *The*



*Labyrinth of Desire* by Caridad Svich (in a co-production with MOXIE Theatre) . . .” (ion theatre company website).

<sup>4</sup> I have written previously in *Comedia Performance* about Early Modern Spanish productions at Miracle Theatre Group.

<sup>5</sup> In November 2004, Oregonians voted 57% to 43% in favor of Ballot Measure 36, a constitutional amendment defining marriage to be between one man and one woman. Although Multnomah County had argued that the state constitution violated the rights of same-sex partners, in April 2005 the Oregon State Supreme Court decided *Li & Kennedy vs. State of Oregon*, ruling that Multnomah County did not have the authority to remedy a perceived violation of the Oregon Constitution. The ruling voided all same-sex marriages; as a result of the passage of Ballot Measure 36, the court further ruled that the Oregon Constitution now expressly limits marriage to opposite-sex couples.

<sup>6</sup> The theater seats 120. It is an intimate space whose configuration—the stage area is approximately 20' x 24' in a 3/4 thrust configuration—results in an unobstructed view of the stage for each audience member. Audience members are often within touching distance to the actors.

<sup>7</sup> Students from this more advanced class were encouraged to attend the production and many did, but it was not a course assignment.

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