

BYU DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND MEDIA ARTS

SEPTEMBER 21—OCTOBER 8, 2005

FUENTE OVEJUNA

BY LOPE DE VEGA

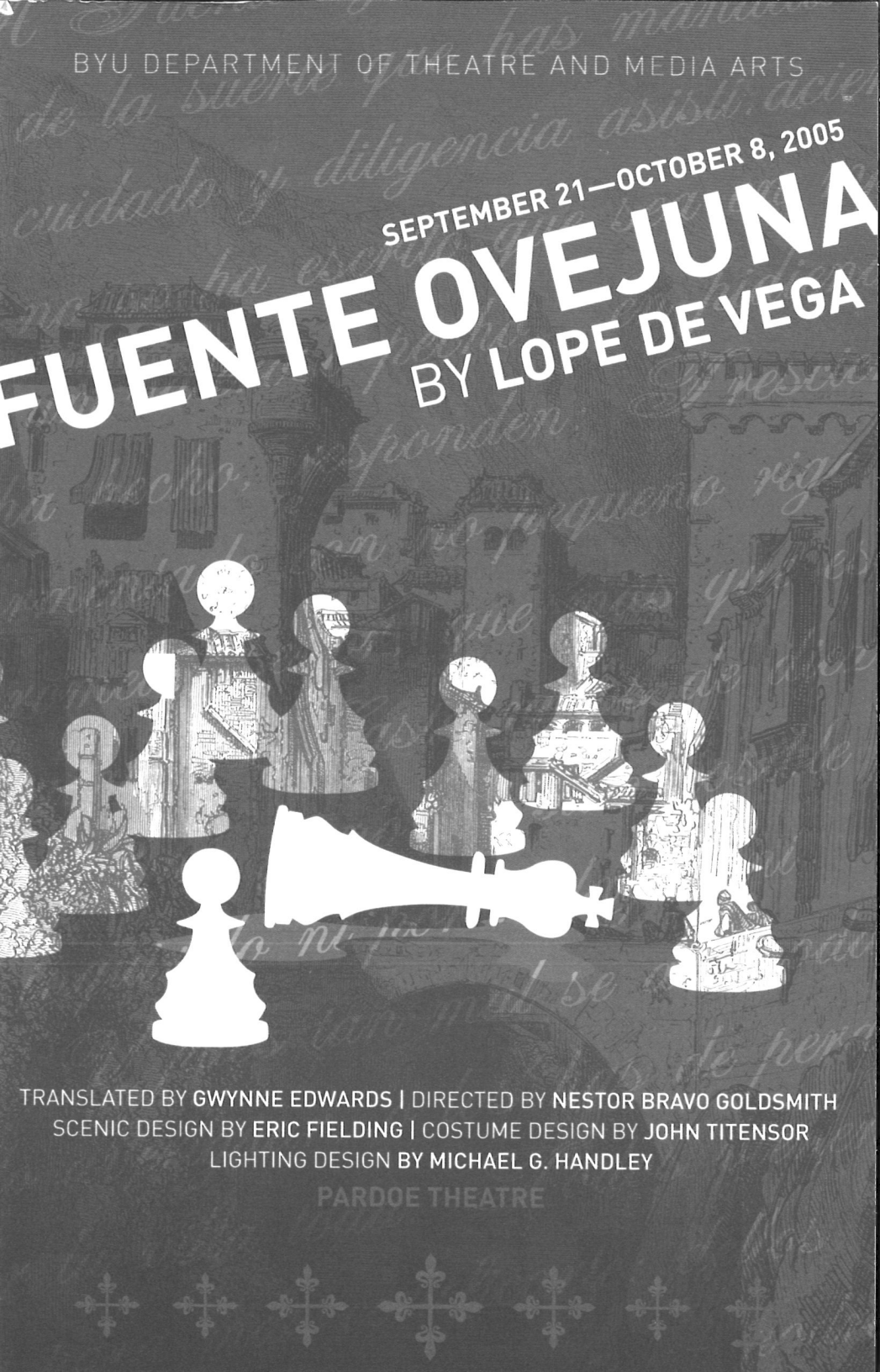
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PARDOE THEATRE

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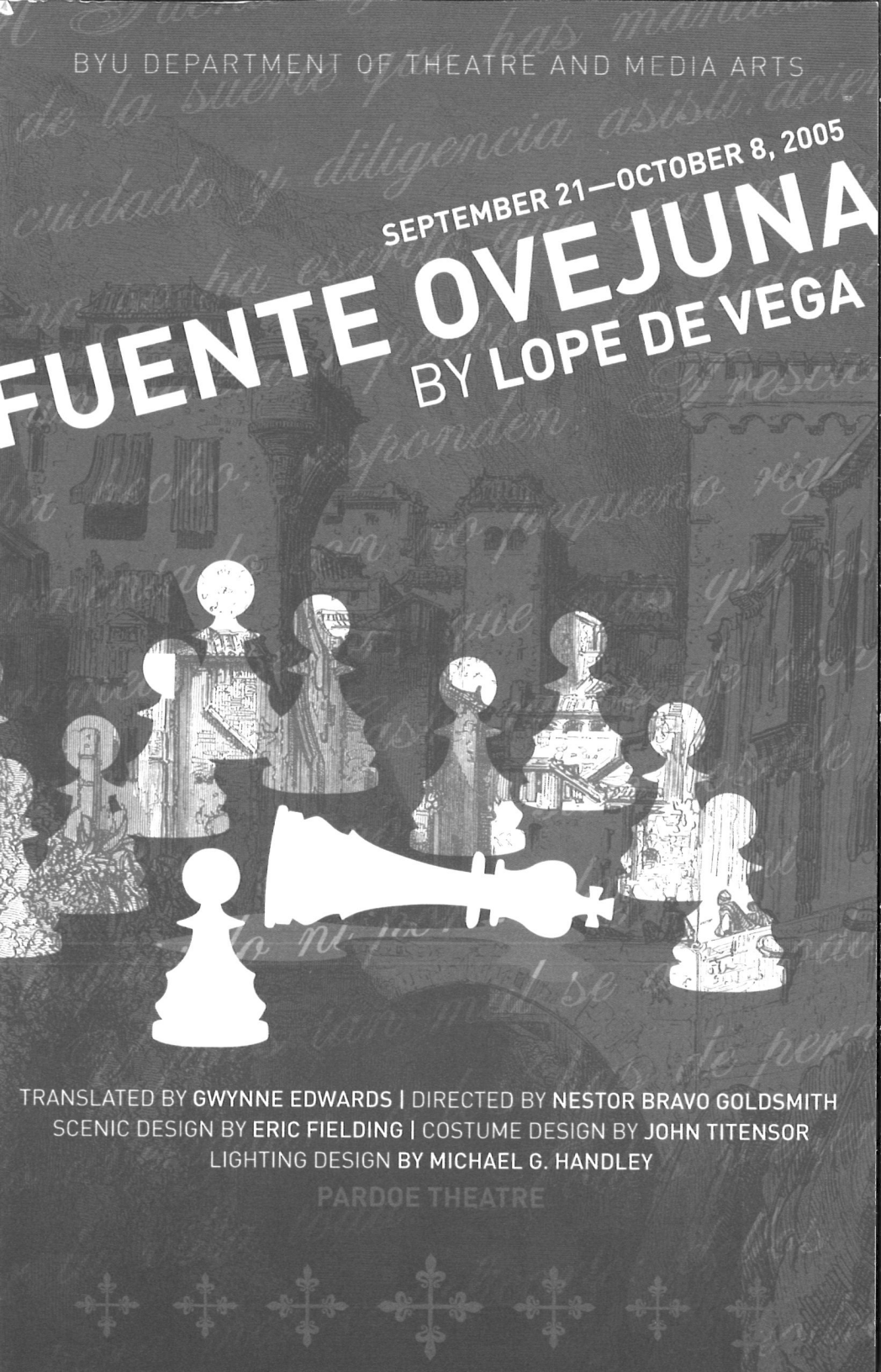
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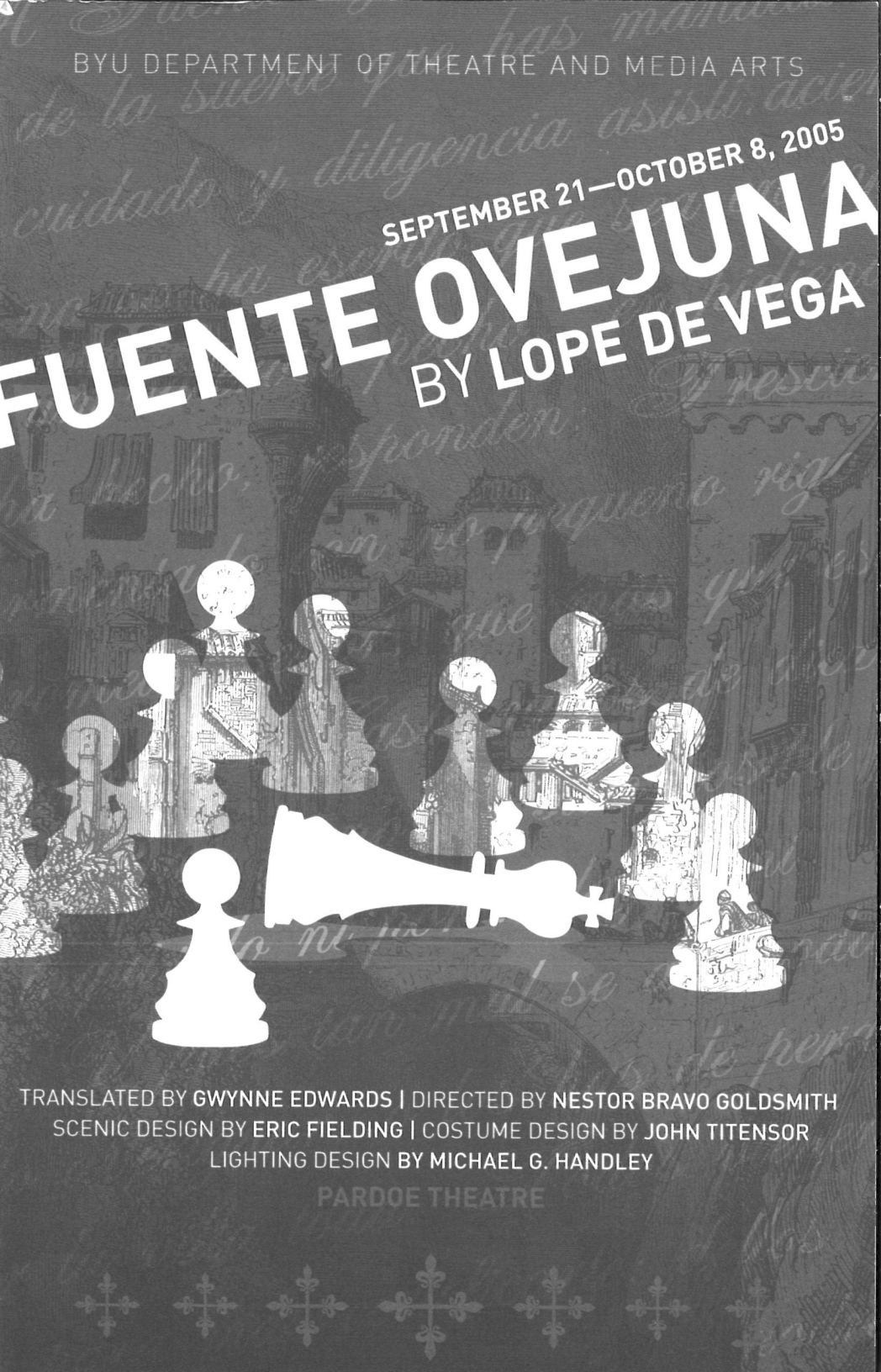
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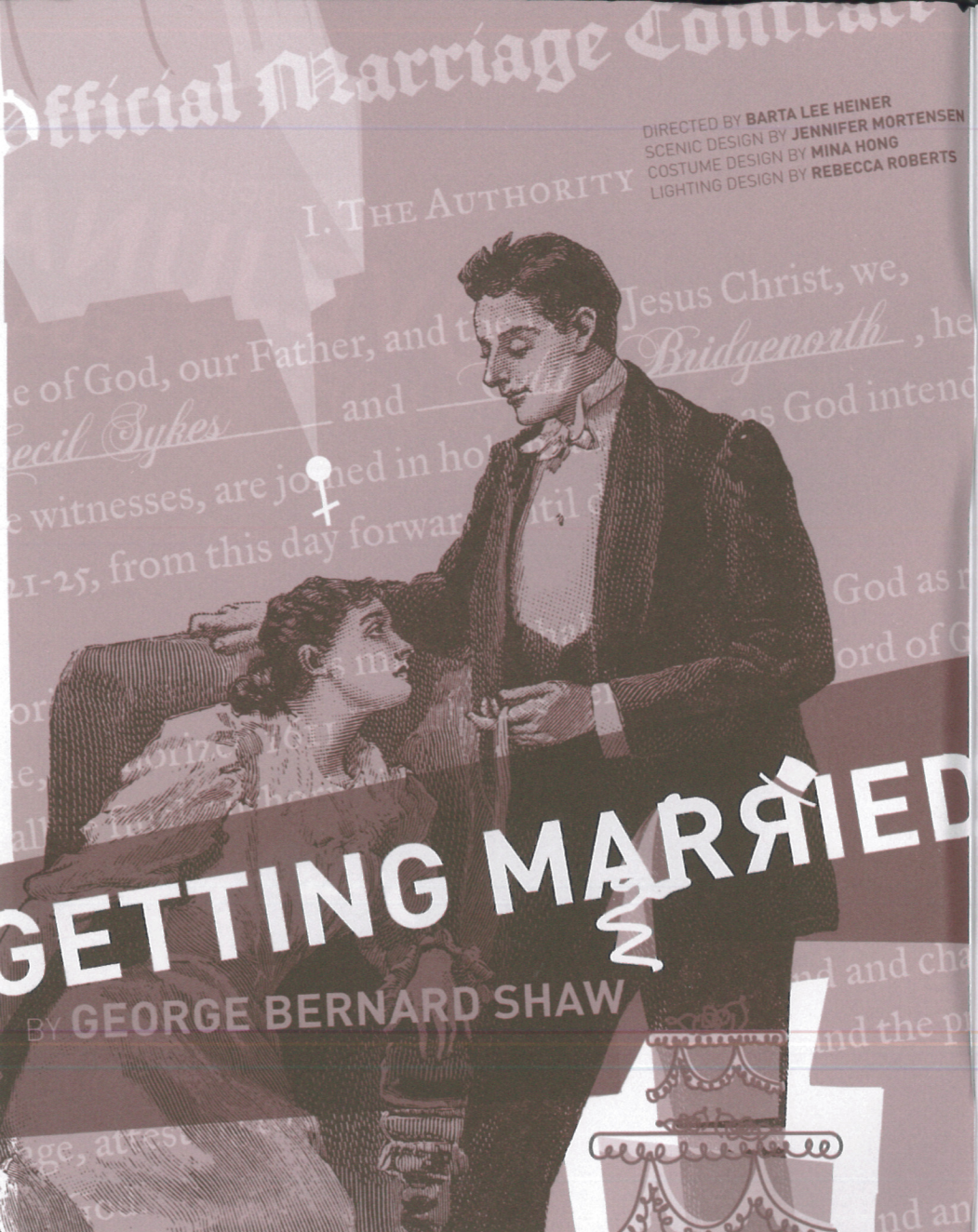
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PARDOE THEATRE





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LIGHTING DESIGN BY REBECCA ROBERTS



Fuente Ovejuna

By Lope de Vega

Translated by Gwynne Edwards

Adapted and Directed by

Nestor Bravo Goldsmith

Fuente Ovejuna, Calatrava, and Valladolid, Spain
Fifteenth century

King Fernando Janine Sobeck
Queen Isabel Elisabeth Ellsworth
Torquemada James Jones

Master of Calatrava,
Rodrigo Téllez Girón Leslie Lewis
The Grand Commander
of Calatrava, Fernán
Gómez de Guzmán Dustin Siler
Flores Gustavo Soares
Cimbranos James Jones
Soldier Rushit Hila

Esteban John-Ross Boyce
Alonso Dennis Myer
Laurencia Megan Pugmire Hinmon
Fronoso Jonathan Pinney
Mengo Arisael Rivera
Barrildo Jorge Chauca
Juan Rojo Rushit Hila
Pascuala Genna Gardner
Jacinta Morag Plaice
Carmen Liliana Corona

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Director	Nestor Bravo Goldsmith
Supervising Director	Megan Sanborn Jones
Dramaturg	Elisabeth Ellsworth
Production Stage Manager	Melani Boren
Scenic Designer	Eric Fielding
Costume Designer	John R. Titensor
Makeup and Hair Designer	Samantha Newman
Lighting Designer	Michael G. Handley
Sound Designer	Reed Cooper
Assistant Director	Sara Moncivais
Assistant Scenic Designer	Liliana Corona
Assistant Costume Designer	Genet Orme
Assistant Makeup and Hair Designer	Tara Willnauer
Assistant Stage Manager	Brian Ramos
Sound Engineer	Sam Schwendiman
Technical Crew	TMA 360
Makeup and Hair Running Crews	TMA 360
Fight Choreographer	Jakob Tice

Fuente Ovejuna as a Personal Touchstone

By Nestor Bravo Goldsmith

I was in the first year of high school in my native Chile when I first read *Fuente Ovejuna*. This and other important plays from the Golden Age were mandatory in our educational curriculum, one which reflected our Spanish heritage. Any theoretical analysis that we could have done in order to understand the villagers' rebellion against their unscrupulous overlord was shadowed by the violent social and political events that our country would begin to live that same year, 1973.

At dawn on September 11 the armed forces by means of a violent *coup d'état* took over the democratic government.

Now, we had our own cruel Commander and we were the villagers. Suddenly current events were contextualizing our youthful reading of *Fuente Ovejuna*, and we had 17 years to understand what it means to live under an unjust ruler. That personal experience is now coloring in many ways this production. Thirty-two years later my directorial approach to the play has pivoted between two intellectual moods: the innocent and playful enthusiasm of a young man when affronting the positive aspects of life, and the cautious perspective of an adult who has seen the wrongs of vicious political leaders. Accordingly, I think that Lope de Vega wrote his play in the same spirit.

Fuente Ovejuna is a brilliant play about love, honor, valiant women, and justice. De Vega knew very well how to entertain and catch his contemporary audience that probably shouted and threw tons of rotten fruit at the Commander from the cazuelas.* But also the play is a deep exploration of the mechanisms of power, rebellion and the consequences of exerting authority unjustly. As members of the Church we have been warned about the consequences of exerting unjust authority. The prophet Joseph Smith wrote the following in 1839 while a prisoner in the jail at Liberty:

We have learned by sad experience that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion (D&C 121:39).

This play illustrates perfectly this statement. Also, I think that the phrase "almost all men" indicates that probably you and myself have, to some extent, such a disposition. If this is the case, we need to learn how to overcome this behavioral tendency in our own sphere in order to fulfill the standards of a child of God. But what are those standards? Joseph Smith clarified these:

No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned (D&C 121:41).



Augusto Pinochet was in power from 1973–1989

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Laurencia: Reinforcement through Revolution

By Elisabeth Ellsworth

In a society where men's honor* is bound up in defending the chastity of their women, the character of Laurencia is an anomaly. In her pivotal speech she declares, "I'll take up arms, pursue my cause myself" (3.100–101), as she chastises the men of the town for passivity in defending the women from the abuses of their overlord, the Commander of Calatrava. This subversion of the code of honor is paralleled by the collective uprising of the town of Fuente Ovejuna. Within the 15th century Spanish social framework, the hierarchies are clear cut, and the expectations for remaining within them are rigid: peasants do not rise against nobles, and women do not assume the position of men in taking up arms to defend themselves. While the actions of both the town and the women within that town are highly revolutionary, de Vega ultimately contains the subversion of the social hierarchy of nobility through the reinstatement of the Catholic monarchs, Fernando and Isabel, as sovereign lords. In like manner, the playwright also contains Laurencia's subversion of the male-female hierarchy, since she steps out of those norms only in an effort to right a system she sees as having been turned upside down. Despite this ultimate reinforcing of the accepted social order, Laurencia's strength and resolve is never subdued. She remains a powerful presence and an example of female independence and courage.

With her declaration that "women alone shall be responsible for their honour, for their blood" (3.113–114), Laurencia falls into a popular character type of Golden Age drama, the *mujer varonil*. Literally meaning "manly woman" this



Manuela Sancho Bonaforte, a real-life *mujer varonil*, fought at Zaragoza in 1809 against the French during the Peninsular War.

term is defined by Merveen McKendrick as "the woman who departs in any significant way from the feminine norm of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries" (ix–x). But Laurencia's acting out doesn't represent a permanent subversion of the social order because her objective in berating the men is to induce them to take action and to fulfill their duty to avenge their women's honor. At the same time that she undermines their manhood and threatens them with the idea that women will become Amazons (3.116–132), she is, in effect, issuing a challenge for them to rise to their potential. Laurencia's "manliness," in this case, is a compensation for the men's lack of manliness. She otherwise

concedes to the male authority in her life. When Frondoso offers marriage, she expects him to get her father's approval, and likewise, she wants her father to be the one to say yes on her behalf. Her later inversion of the social order that she already sees crumbling down around her is done only so she can help to reestablish it. Interestingly, as Laurencia, a woman, takes on more "masculine" traits, she reestablishes the standard of masculinity for men at an even higher level.

Laurencia sets the standard for men at a higher level in another way—in her lack of romantic interest for them until they meet up to their role of defending her honor. In this way, Laurencia falls into a subcategory of the *mujer varonil* character—the *mujer esquivia*—defined as a "woman who, for some reason, is averse to the idea of love and marriage" (McKendrick 162). According to the ideology prevalent in the Golden Age, such women were acting against their true nature. In support of this ideology, Lope almost always has his *mujeres esquivas* marry (McKendrick 163). Laurencia is no different. Although at first she continually rejects Frondoso's professions of love, she softens toward him when he defends her honor against the Commander. She confides to her friends, "I hated men, as you well know, but since that day I see them differently. Frondoso was so brave" (2.244–247). Therefore, Laurencia's disdain of men is not because she unequivocally dislikes them, but because she hasn't found anyone good enough yet. When she finds a man who matches her in strength and assertiveness, able and willing to guard her honor, she falls for him. In this way, though Laurencia's *esquivéz* at first seems to subvert the ideologies of the time, Lope uses her to reinforce both the

idea of the natural order of marriage as well as the high standard for manly chivalry.

Although Lope ultimately contains the subversion inherent in the *mujer varonil* character, Laurencia still remains a strong, compelling, representation of female strength. She accepts the social order of her time, but on her own terms. Her refusal to marry until she finds someone who meets her expectations shows her self-determination and fortitude, as does her rousing speech against the men of the town. Even when she has succeeded in inducing the men to respond to her challenge, she doesn't stop there, but continues in her avowal to lead the women against the Commander. And despite the perception in the Golden Age that the *mujer varonil* was stepping out of the norms of femininity, the very fact that Laurencia is able to step out belies the perception that assertiveness, proactivity, and autonomy are naturally masculine traits, as opposed to being traits that both men and women can possess (Allatson 268). Laurencia, though complicit in the hierarchical chivalric code of the time period, still espouses greater female ability and participation within that code. Her commanding assertion echoes throughout the play: "If a woman has no vote, she has a voice!" ✦

Sources

- Allatson, Paul. "Confounding Convention: Women in Three Golden Age Plays." *Bulletin of the Comediantes* 48, no. 2 (1996):261–73.
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 Vega, Lope de. *Fuente Ovejuna*. Gwynne Edwards, trans. New York: Oxford U.P., 1999.

*See p. 16 for a discussion of honor in Golden Age Spain.

John-Ross Boyce (Esteban), Baraboo, WI, is a junior majoring in English. Acting credits include the title role in *Professor Taranne*, the narrator in *Dogville*, and Kuligyn in *The Three Sisters*.

Jorge Chauca (Barrildo), Lima, Perú, is a freshman studying microbiology. Acting experience includes Magnet in *Holes*.

Elisabeth Ellsworth (Queen Isabel/Dramaturg), Austin, TX, is a senior majoring in theatre studies. Acting credits include Ana in *El Caballero de Olmedo* and roles in *Professor Taranne* and *Our Town*. She recently received a Mary Lou Fulton Student Support Grant to do research in Spain for *Fuente Ovejuna*.

Genna Shepherd Gardner (Pascuala), Orem, UT, is a junior studying theatre education. Acting credits include Narrator in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, Maria in *West Side Story*, and ensemble roles in *Oliver!* and *Les Misérables*.

Liliana Corona Guerrero (Carmen), Ensenada, Mexico, is a senior majoring in theatre arts studies. Acting credits include Anna in *Sonnets for an Old Century* and Doña Josefa Ortiz de Dominguez in *El Grito*.

Rushit Hila (Juan Rojo/Soldier), Tirane, Albania, is a junior in civil engineering.

Megan Pugmire Hinmon (Laurencia), Shoreline, WA, received a BA in humanities/comparative literature, and is working on her master's degree in theatre history and criticism. Acting credits include Rachel in *Nathan the Wise* and roles in *Flight* and the student film *Point Me at the Sky*.

James Jones (Cimbranos/Torquemada), Clarks Summit, PA, is a sophomore studying psychology and music. Acting credits include Armpit in *Holes* and chorus member in *Parley P. Pratt's Great Escape*.

Leslie Lewis (Rodrigo), Little Rock, AR, is a sophomore majoring in acting. Film credits include several student film projects and television spots.

Dennis Meyer (Alonso), Shingle Springs, CA, is a junior studying linguistics and French. Acting credits include chorus member in *The Mikado*, Reuben in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, and the title role in *Dracula*.

Jonathan Pinney (Fronadoso), Granite Bay, CA, is a senior majoring in media music and contemporary vocal performance. Acting credits include *Smokey Joe's Café* and Orson Pratt in *Parley P. Pratt's Great Escape*. He was a member of The Young Ambassadors in 2003–2004.

Morag Plaice (Jacinta), Nottingham, England, received a BA in theatre studies and is doing graduate work in critical studies. Credits include

writing *Tell the Heather* and directing *Hysterical Blindness*, and she was the assistant director for *Handing Down the Names*. Acting credits include *Dogville*, and *The Beggar's Opera*.

Arisael Rivera (Mengo), Bronx, NY, is a junior studying theatre arts. Acting credits include X-Ray in *Holes*, Mr. Slinger in *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse*, Egeus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and multiple roles in *Bang, Bang, You're Dead*.

Dustin Jay Siler (Fernán), Farmington, UT, is a senior majoring in theatre studies. Acting credits include Cliff in *Cabaret*, Benvolio in *Romeo and Juliet*, Trout Walker in *Holes*, Tiger Brown in *Three Penny Opera*, and Perry in *The Royal Family*. He is a member of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars and is on the Dean's List. He was an American College Theater Festival nominee and participant.

Gustavo Soares (Flores), Bountiful, UT, is a sophomore majoring in accounting.

Janine Michelle Sobeck (King Fernando), Clovis, CA, received a BA in theatre studies, and is doing graduate work in theatre critical studies. Acting credits include Marte in *Three Mormon Women* and Martha in *Dogville*. She was dramaturg for *Family* and *Three Mormon Women*.

Continued on p. 23

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