

The spaces of the female body in the *Comedy of the glorious* Magdalene by Juan de Cigorondo and *La lealtad americana* by Fernando Gavila.


Los espacios del cuerpo femenino en la *Comedia a la gloriosa Magdalena* de Juan de Cigorondo y *La lealtad americana* de Fernando Gavila.

DOI: 10.32870/revistaargos.v12.n30.5.25b

Daniel Santillana García

Universidad del Claustro de Sor Juana
(MEXICO)

CE: dsantillana@universidaddelclaustro.edu.mx

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0879-3482>



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).

Received: 02/13/2025

Reviewed: 03/04/2025

Accepted: 05/05/2025

Abstract:

This article will deal with two dramatic works of the viceregal period: *Comedia a la gloriosa Magdalena* by Juan de Cigorondo (1560-1611); and *La lealtad americana* by Fernando Gavila (1764-1830).

In examining both pieces, my focus will be on the spaces of the female bodies of their respective protagonists: how they move, what places they can access, how they are treated, how their sexuality is normative, how acceptable, for them, is their relationship to spatialities: do they question them, do they subscribe to them? My aim is to analyze the links of Magdalena's and Camila's bodies with symbols of power, both spiritual (Magdalena in relation to divinity) and political (Camila's connection to the Spanish sovereign). Since, in both cases, the sites are structured hierarchically, and considering that, in the viceroyalty, hierarchies have a cosmic character, establishing their spatial links will also imply establishing their location not only socially, but in relation to the whole of creation.

The theoretical framework of my study of the two viceregal dramas mentioned above follows the path marked by the reflections of Henri Lefebvre. According to Lefebvre, space is not simply a homogeneous dimension arranged for its appropriation and exercise, but must be considered a historically formed construct determined by the economic relations in which man carries out his life. It is from this theoretical perspective that I will carry out my reading of Cigorondo's and Gavila's dramatic pieces.

Key words: Viceroyal theater. Spatiality. Female body.

How to cite this article (APA):

(Santillana, 2025, p. __)

Santillana, D. (2025) The spaces of the female body in the *Comedy to the glorious* Magdalena. by Juan de Cigorondo and *La lealtad americana* by Fernando Gavila. *Revista Argos*. 12(30). 36 - 61. DOI: 10.32870/revistaargos.v12.n30.5.25b.

Resumen:

El presente artículo versará sobre dos obras dramáticas del periodo virreinal: la *Comedia a la gloriosa Magdalena* de Juan de Cigorondo (1560-1611); y *La lealtad americana* de Fernando Gavila (1764-1830).

Al examinar ambas piezas, mi enfoque se centrará en los espacios del cuerpo femenino de sus respectivas protagonistas: cómo se desplazan, a qué lugares pueden acceder, cómo son tratadas, cómo se norma su sexualidad, qué tan aceptable, para ellas, es su relación con las espacialidades: ¿las cuestionan, las subscriben? Mi objetivo es analizar los vínculos de los cuerpos de Magdalena y Camila con los símbolos del poder tanto espiritual (Magdalena en relación con la divinidad), como político (la conexión de Camila con el soberano español). Puesto que, en ambos casos, los sitios se estructuran jerárquicamente, y considerando que, en el virreinato, las jerarquías poseen un carácter cósmico, establecer sus nexos espaciales, implicará también establecer su ubicación no sólo social, sino en relación con el conjunto de lo creado.

El marco teórico de mi estudio sobre los dos dramas virreinales mencionados sigue la senda marcada por las reflexiones de Henri Lefebvre. Según Lefebvre, el espacio no es simplemente una dimensión homogénea dispuesta para su apropiación y ejercicio, sino que éste ha de considerarse un constructo históricamente formado y determinado por las relaciones económicas en las cuales el hombre realiza su vida. Desde esta perspectiva teórica llevaré a cabo mi lectura de las piezas dramáticas de Cigorondo y de Gavila.

Palabras clave: Teatro virreinal. Espacialidad. Cuerpo femenino.

Space is never a neutral dimension: its interpretation and its assumption, critical or not, presuppose a structural framework of complex ideological relations. Location in relation to centrality, to the superior and the inferior, or to the external and the internal, is experienced on the basis of a complex geographical, historical, cultural and economic axiology. The body that inhabits space is also a problematic construct that demands definition both of itself and of the space in which it circulates.

In the present paper I present some of my considerations on the female body and its space in two viceregal dramas: one from the early seventeenth century and the other from the late eighteenth century. These are *Comedia a la gloriosa Magdalena* (probably performed between 1599 or 1600; Cigorondo pp. 30-35), by Juan de Cigorondo (1560-1611); and *La lealtad americana* (whose debut happened on December 9, 1796; Vera, 2016), by Fernando Gavila (1764-1830).

In my commentary on the *Comedy to the glorious Magdalena*, I intend to inquire into the way in which the spaces are presented, as well as their hierarchy and their relationship with the allegorical characters of the work, but especially with the body of Magdalena, the only human protagonist in this drama, which, for the most part, takes place in a space, in principle, apparently inaccessible to mortals. In this case, my basic question is: what does her link to the space of divinity imply for Magdalena?

In studying *La lealtad americana*, I will focus on the American spaces that frame the play, as well as, according to the play, the real, fictional and ideological links between America, the Spanish Empire and the body of Camila, the main character of this drama. In this study I am interested in resolving the following question (beyond the reworking/combination of two hagiographic legends: that of Saint Lucia of Syracuse, who, curiously, is also patron saint of the city of Santa Lucia in Panama; and that of Saint Rose of Lima): how does the body of Camilla relate to the territorial subjection of the imperial political entity, whose seat is in the court of Madrid? In both cases, it will be essential to critically discuss the spatial dimension.

Theoretical Framework

Space

My study of the two viceregal dramas mentioned above draws on the reflections of Henri Lefebvre, for whom space is not a homogeneous dimension simply arranged for its appropriation and exercise; for him, space must be considered a historically constituted construct determined by the economic relations in which man carries out his life. Lefebvre discerns three ways of distinguishing space, namely:

1. Spatial Practices (Perceived Space). Concrete places where social formation takes place. They ensure continuity and a certain degree of cohesion. In terms of social space, and of each member of a given society's relationship to that space, this cohesion implies a guaranteed level of competence and a specific level of performance.

Representations of Space (The Conceived Space). They are linked to the relations of production and to the "order" imposed by these relations and, therefore, to knowledge, signs, codes and "frontal" relations. It is the dominant space in any society (or mode of production) and its influence on the process of production of space and on the productive activity of society is fundamental.

3. Spaces of Representation (The Lived Space). They incorporate symbolisms

complex, sometimes codified, sometimes not, linked to the clandestine or marginal side of social life, as well as to art. The spaces of representation generally produce symbolic results (Torres, 2016, p. 245).

Thus, according to Lefebvre, the spaces where life takes place are the synthetic expression of certain socio-spatial relations, of concrete places, as well as of their symbolic valuations. In assuming Lefebvre's proposal, then, in the study of the *Commedia a la gloriosa Magdalena*, and *La lealtad americana* I will underline, in each case, the reproduction of the real spaces, the conceived spaces and the symbolic spaces that are found both within, as well as beyond the stage. Thus, in considering the perceived space of the two plays, Marseilles (with its subspaces: the nearby forest, the cave, the dream) and Panama (and its subspaces: the beach, Camila's house), I will study the social codes imposed by the instances of power; I will analyze the way in which these codes are accepted by the protagonists and highlight the symbols that emanate from the interaction of the aforementioned spaces. Panama, for example, in Fernando Gavila's piece, not only alludes to a recognizable and mappable geography (perceived space), but also to a field of controversy (conceived space) between the codes of the pirate Juan Morgan and the values defended by the representatives of the Spanish Empire. The sum of relations (lived space) of the perceived and conceived space of *La lealtad...*, gives rise, it seems to me, to a series of symbolisms that concur in the valuation of the work.

Territories

Human-space relations are not univocal. Societies work, value, assume and produce a certain interpretation (also socially and historically elaborated) and, while they decipher, imagine, govern, map, work, construct and reconstruct their surroundings, the environment, in turn, marks out boundaries for human life. Mutual determinations establish, therefore, a reality that is neither limited to the geographical nor to the natural. It is from this rejection of the naturalness of space that Fernanda Torres adds, to the taxonomy formulated by Henri Lefebvre, a new approach that deepens the critique made by the French thinker. Torres contributes, in this sense, the notion of territory, the specificity of which, according to this author, comes from

[...] its association with power relations, that is, [the concept of territory] makes it possible to introduce the political variable by thinking of the space constructed as a territory as a product of power relations, of domination and resistance [...]. Under this definition, there can be several territories in the same space, because for there to be territory, the boundary must be used to control its access; in general terms we can say that there has to be a power relation, a relation of domination acting behind the delimitation and exercise of a territory. (Torres, 2016, p. 246)

Territory is thus a concept intrinsically linked to the exercise of power: it limits entry and exit, specifies belonging and exclusion, establishes uses and behaviors and defines hierarchies, from which transit is ordered and regulated; in the territory, Torres adds, "the exercise and reproduction of domination is involved" (Torres, 2016, p. 247). In particular, I am interested in interpreting the spaces of the *Comedia a la gloriosa Magdalena*, and *La lealtad americana* as territories where domination (theocratic in the first work, theocratic/political in the second) is accepted and reproduced.

The Dramas

Comedy to the glorious Magdalene

According to the study written by Alejandro Arteaga for his edition of the *Comedia a la gloriosa Magdalena*, there are 2 manuscript versions of it: that of the National Library of Spain and that of the Library of the Royal Academy of History of Spain, in which some verses were suppressed (Cigorondo, 2016, p. 21). In both versions, he adds, "the acts are called "trophies" and the scenes are called "elogios"."

The subject of the *Comedy...* is the grace of Divine Love (i.e. God) acting in order to preserve for Himself, clean of sin, those whom He has chosen. Divine Love, 6 angels and 5 allegories: Shame, Fear, Temperance, Silence, and Rigor defeat the plans that Profane Love, Gift and Error¹ hatch to seduce Mary and return her to the dissipated life she had led in Magdala before surrendering to Jesus Christ. Amor Profano's ultimate

¹ Very interesting, although outside the limits of the present study, seems to me the possibility of interpreting, from numerology, the figures that are handled here: on the side of good, 12 characters, on the side of evil 3, Mary is, then indispensable to complete mystical sets: 13 and 4. The numbers vary, moreover, throughout the piece.

defeat comes when, after a tournament, Rigor ties him to a post and proclaims that Mary's life is the model for all believers to follow.

Characters and space in the *Comedy to the glorious Magdalene*

The first space mentioned in the *Comedy to the glorious Magdalene* is the metaphysical heaven, which, according to Lefebvre, is a conceived space and a space of representation, since, for the thought based on the worldview of the Catholic Church, heaven constitutes the foundation and the real and symbolic legitimization of all political and religious power. It is not, however, a perceived space, because it lacks the mortar that would allow the social formation to relate to it by working with its substance. But, then, Divine Love expands its proclamation and establishes the general subordination of the total of perceived spaces to the space of representation of the environment that He inhabits, fills and dominates. In the *Comedy...* the symbol is infinitely greater than its meaning. At the beginning, then, of the *Comedy to the glorious Magdalene*, Divine Love appears and pronounces the following words:

For of the good that I am, heaven overflows, 65
and like a river that broke the dam
my ardor goes communicating to the ground
and a spark of my fire,
dam in what is land, such an effect has made
[...]
the voice of Love, which is my name, comes forth,
(Cigorondo I, 1, vv. 65-73).²

In the preceding lines, Amor Divino procures, in a self-referential way, a definition as an allegorical entity that transcends the empirical level of the space perceived within the drama and points to a representation that no longer possesses a material significance, but unfolds in its own universality as a symbol. Divine Love enumerates, according to the quotation I am commenting on, the spaces subject to its will: it begins in the sky and gradually touches the ground. In realizing this recognition of his dominion, Divine Love implies,

² In the quotations from the *Comedia...* I indicate with Roman numerals the "trophies", and with Latin the "praises".

within himself, the elements that give form to the cosmos: He is air: from him "the sky overflows"; water: "like a river that broke the dam"; fire: "my ardor", sparkle of "fire"; air, water, fire that have been imprisoned "in that which is earth", that is to say in the humanity of Jesus Christ, thanks to his incarnation. The incarnation is the event that elevates the earth from its material limitation, a degraded and degrading condition, to its infinite significance in the immaterial, which makes the earth worthy of Him, for which he then affirms: "imprisoned in what is earth, such an effect it has made/ that it is already worthy of God so high an undertaking" (Cigorondo I, 1, vv. 69 and 70), that is, something so astonishing, so difficult to achieve: raising the earth to heaven, when accomplished, demonstrates the divine nature of the event. But once this enterprise is accomplished, Divine Love performs another feat, which, in the same way, was only possible and worthy of Him: it is the metanoia of Mary of Magdala. She, who, from her earthly nature, is ascended by Divine Love to heaven, is the evidence of the power of Divine Love, who affirms:

I tried my luck and I had to make nest
once in her bosom, and I have left him
of this time so in another time become
that, already against the raudal snatched 80
of its own tastes in which it is born and grows,
I make him break his raised neck (Cigorondo I, 1, vv. 77-82).

According to these verses, Mary's being is territory (territory is linked to power, which regulates the entrance and exit from it) totally subject to the Divine lordship. Mary's subjugation is such that, as is clear from the above quotation, Divine Love leads her to "break" her neck by confronting her "own tastes". Mary is, then, colonized territory. Her discovery, conquest and colonization belongs to heaven. The broken neck is one of its signs.

Returning to the first verses (65 to 75, with which this section begins), it is necessary to highlight the fact that, in view of the dominion it exercises over earth, water, air, fire, as well as the being and will of Mary, Divine Love is presented as a symbol whose peculiarity consists in giving full meaning to the extra-symbolic universe: from heaven to Mary, everything finds its reason in Him.

On the other hand, when Divine Love affirms, in verses 65-75, that He is that "good" that has rebounded the sky, that "river that [has broken] the dam," He establishes, at a deeper level, two important

ontological assumptions for His self-definition: firstly, the absolute conformity of his being with the space he occupies (He is his space), otherwise a geographical limit would be established (duality Being/space) that He explicitly rejects; secondly he institutes, his progression until integrating to Himself the extradiegetic world, that is to say, the orb of the spectator who observes the staging of this theatrical piece. From its self-placement in transcendence, Divine Love assumes, then, to be the perfect master of the totality, even of this theatrical work, which it transforms into loving plenitude when it orders "let all love be done, for that is my deed". The *Comedy to the glorious Magdalene* is also under his jurisdiction. The procedure of self-identification that Amor Divino uses to present himself to the audience at the beginning of this play is repeated, subsequently, in each of the allegories of good; for example, Silencio, when he goes on stage, recognizes himself in an identity that he assigns to himself, with respect to which he affirms:

From that wood, Love, sparks fly
that, although I am silent because I am Silence, 120
[...]
It is mine to speak demurely
But not to be mute [...] (Cigorondo I, 1, vv. 119-123).

Later, they will do the same Shame (Cigorondo I, 1, vv. 137-139), Fear (Cigorondo I, 1, vv. 143-145), Temperance (Cigorondo I, 1, vv. 155-158) and Rigor (Cigorondo I, 1, vv. 164-168). In each case, each of them will be shown to be overbearing masters of the word that expresses him by sharing his profile. The reason for the sovereignty of their beings will be founded in themselves and in the service they render unanimously to Divine Love, who harmonizes all of them with himself. This is not so with the allegories of evil: Profane Love, for example, from its first lines confesses itself without content in itself, for it affirms:

O Furies! The most wrathful
from you for me come
and the old Error does not stop you,
(Cigorondo I, 1, vv. 355-358).

He is the lie (Cigorondo I, 1, vv. 360-362). An insubstantial being who, driven to action without meaning, is all fury and lamentation; who even, during his presentation, tries to commit suicide, after angrily smashing

to pieces the panpipes he uses for evil. The emptiness of his being becomes evident in the useless proclamation that begins the third Elogio of the second Trofeo:

Is there anyone who wants [says Amor Profano].
of Love that goes out to sell without grace and without interest,
tocas, flares, Portuguese thread? (Cigorondo II, 3, 1347-1350).

Magdalena is not master of herself; since Divine Love possesses her, she acts against her own tastes and tendencies:

I have left [Mary's being]
of this time so in another time become
that, [...] against [his] 80
[...] own tastes in which it is born and grows,
I make him break his raised neck (Cigorondo I, 1, vv. 78-82).

Mary is a being completely stripped of self; she has always been so: in her youth she was of profane Love, later, of Divine Love. For this reason she cannot present herself. Halfway, as the human being that she is, from the symbolizations of absolute good, as well as from those of evil and inanity, she is introduced to the scene thanks to the divine verb that pronounces her, because as a creature, her being depends on another, at the moment of this staging it is Divine Love who gives her content in the following lines:

The same heart that in homage
had the lascivious Love, that the trophy
mine must be and its greatest outrage
[...]
Well, the same one, friends, is on 245
in coming to pour into this desert
of tears and love what remains,
that, although the old disquiet has passed,
does not want to be badly wept,
since the havoc was certain.
And so, with longing for Jesus, her beloved,

250

will surely be found in a dug-out
peña, place to my given trophy,
for thirty-three years prolonged
of a woman's life I will make it 255
only in tastes of nurtured love,
being a mirror to the world where it sees
what is the strength of Divine Love
(Cigorondo I, 1, vv. 206-208 and 245-259).

Mary's essence depends, then, on the substance given to her by the Other, the Absolute, for whom she is a mere "trophy," an object to be won in a competition. Later, near the end of the drama, an Angel clearly insists that Mary's value is in direct relation to her character as a valuable object; regarding which the Angel points out:

Hey, Love, good riddance
the trophy and the victory,
which thus increases your glory,
the value of the Magdalena! 2625

In the characterization that Divine Love makes of Mary as his "trophy", on two occasions, in verses 207 and 253; and later, the angel in verse 2625, the following aspects also stand out: first of all, that Divine Love is the one who not only puts in Magdalene the desire to leave her home in Magdala (Cigorondo I, 1, v. 211), but who in advance ("For she herself is set/to come to this desert") determines the place for Mary's body to dwell: the desert where Magdalene will not arrive on her own feet. 211), but who in advance ("For that very one, she is set/to come to this desert") determines the place for Mary's body to dwell: the desert, to which Magdalene will not arrive on her own feet, for she will be led by spirits sent by Divine Love:

my sweet Mary to that star 290
night awaits, comfortable in its attempt,
because she's right to come, let's go get her;
that, spirits, wings giving to the wind,
triumphal chariot you will make where safe

come with me to the appointed seat (Cigorondo I, 1, v. 290-295).

Mary, however, is not only destined to the desert, but to a cave that will reinforce her isolation. A cave that will also be guarded by Silence, Rigor, Fear and Temperance. Mary is, then, the booty that Divine Love, jealous, hides for itself.

The cave is the space of retreat clearly identified with the tomb where Christ was deposited after his descent from the cross (St. Matthew, n.d.) and which was later guarded by some sentinels to prevent its possible theft (St. Matthew, n.d.). This is clearly stated by Magdalena in the following fragment:

Mary: That my memories
are the nails; the cross, the hard iron
that, wrapped in its victories,
was the key to the rescue of my error; 1015
and that its burial
me representa aquesta cueva obscura (Cigorondo I, 3, vv. 1012-1017).

Secondly, Divine Love shows his dominion not only over Magdalene's space/body, but also over her time: he controls Magdalene's life cycle: "thirty-three years", like the years of Jesus Christ's earthly life. Simultaneously with such a statement the Chorus announces that, in the hands of Love, time loses its usual significance (Cigorondo I, 1, v. 315-316).

Thirdly, Divine Love adds that its objective in subjugating Magdalena is to instrumentalize her as a "mirror", that is, to transform her into a role model, so that the world can see her divine power and the meaning that time and life acquire when only in "God they are used".

Divine Love is, likewise, master of Magdalene's memories and mind. This is what Amor Profano says when he objects to Regalo's suggestion, when the latter proposes to attack Mary with the memory of her past life:

Gift: make the shot in the memory:
bring him some of the things
in times long past,
[...]

Unholy love: For more layers and coverings
who carries, friends, do not come 655
because they have us, because they have us
taken all the doors;
what happens next
this Love in its attempts,
for even to thoughts 660
puts up diamond walls
[...]

Gift: Fly away from here in cas del Miedo,
that only a finger sticks out
will land with the guards.

And Hunger ill-suffering
we will bring it to you
[...]

Amor Profano: Fear and hunger are worth nothing
against this Love (Cigorondo II, 1, vv. 641-680).

The previous quotation establishes that there is no limit capable of containing the absolute presence of Divine Love; for it keeps taken both the mind and the other "doors" that communicate the body with the boundaries of the spiritual (memories, fear) and the material (hunger). Magdalena, as it becomes palpable in the previous quote, is not the owner of her body: she is a field of dispute where two enemy beings settle their differences by making use of her body, to keep it as colonized territory, or to gain access to its future colonization. Once the competition is over, Maria will be the trophy obtained by the winner.

Spaces for Magdalena

Magdalena is, therefore, in the scene as an illustration of a teaching that Divine Love imparts using the *Comedy to the glorious Magdalena*.

Magdalene driven, in the time before the *Comedy to the glorious Magdalene*, by the will of Profane Love who in her "his lordship proudly dilated" (Cigorondo I, 1, vv. 191 and 92), is, by the time the curtain opens on the *Comedy to the glorious Magdalene*, a woman subject to the will of Divine Love, who wishes to flaunt her success, to the "greater outrage" (Cigorondo I, 1, v. 208) of her enemy. As a servant of the former, Mary had lived paying homage to the space of worldly Magdala, in whose area she instigated an unhealthy "fire in which burned" Jerusalem, and her breast was consumed (Cigorondo I, 1, v. 217). As a servant of Divine Love, Mary goes through different levels of ever deepening isolation: Marseilles, the forest, the cave, the dream. The bridge that leads her from Magdala to the isolation of the dreamer is disillusionment.

Disillusionment marks the moment when, to Magdalena, the split that divides reality in two is revealed: a segment whose nature is primarily material, and another that is contrary to it because of its spiritual nature. Such a separation creates, then, a problem: how can such radically different entities sustain contact with each other? The relationship between them is a question concerning dogma. For the opposite: the assumption that there is no communication between the spiritual and the material constitutes a fundamental section of the doctrine of the docetists, refuted by Tertullian and patristics until its final condemnation by the church at the Council of Chalcedon (5th century) (Prosperi, 2018). Thus, although they are two distinct parts and one, the spiritual, superior to the other, the material, set to be overcome and discarded, it does not constitute, the spiritual, according to the Apostolic Chair, a hypostasis (except in God), as Mary confesses in the following fragment:

[...] these banks,
full of new fruit,
will give the body the natural tribute. 915
Jesus, my trust,
although in your bosom the soul is fed
has a close alliance
with the body and your life is on your account,
and give it to him with what he can 920
to bear the burden without giving up is debt (Cigorondo I, 3, vv. 913-921).

There are, then, two parts that compose reality: the spiritual and the material. The first contains all perfections, which makes science possible, as long as it is understood as a concept. In the materiality, on the other hand, is hidden the error, which consists in attributing to it a definitive character which it lacks.

Magdalena's disenchantment does not imply, then, only a religious question of rejection of the materiality of the world, but also an epistemological stance. Epistemologically, the disenchantment states the conviction of error as a fundamental characteristic of the human dimension, material, sensorial, diverse and temporal. From the notion of error, the empirical world considered as a faithful mirror of the divine orb breaks down and becomes dislocated from it, in this consists "the old confusion" (Cigorondo I, 1, v. 248) to which Divine Love refers, as already overcome by Mary.

The material dislocation of the universe requires its cancellation insofar as it that truth is conceived only in transcendence and that it is considered the desirable goal for knowledge.

Disillusionment with the world explains the need to leave it. The abyss in the truth demands, then, a path of asceticism, whose end is the beatific contemplation of the divine Unity. The path of asceticism raises the human being from scale to scale to the ontological summit, by gradually eliminating the material particularity of the ascetic, who is thus led to the heaven of universality, where the One dwells.

As she follows the ascetic path, Magdalene approaches Divine Love by rejecting the spaces that admit her. Initially, Mary shuns Magdala, then Marseilles; Divine Love leads her to the desert, where solitude must still be perfected in the cave that the allies of Divine Love do not communicate. The cave, however, is not yet the goal; inside the cave Magdalena escapes from materiality through sleep, but such an escape is insufficient: finally Mary disappears from verse 2272, so that the work continues for 572 more verses, but without her presence.

Prior to her eclipse, Magdalena has a very relevant exit from the cave, not to the forest, but to the angelic sphere, a space where she unwinds without startle, and even engages in a dialogue that is distinguished by its familiarity with some of the angels who had been watching her, unnoticed by her until the moment when her gaze is opened; the praise of the encounter takes place between verses 970 and 1105. At the end of which, the didascalia indicates that the angels leave Magdalena sleeping.

In the cave where she is dreaming, Mary receives a final visit from the angels, who, by Divine Love's instructions, present her with the symbols of Christ's passion: the pillar, the rope, the rods, the crown, the reed, the spear, and the sponge, all spiritual transcripts of material objects that have already expired due to the time that has passed since their objectification; when Mary awakens, she translates these symbols into symbols of her trousseau (Cigorondo III, 2, vv. 2217-2272). 2217-2272), with them she ends her process of spiritualization; at the conclusion of her discourse she disappears.

The Tournament, with which the work culminates, does not require the presence of Mary. In fact, during most of it, Mary does not intervene: her physical, material body keeps her oblivious and ignorant of the crusade she stirs up among the spiritual beings (they move, speak, act without communicating anything to Mary), and of which she constitutes the prize that the winner will obtain.

Thus, the spaces assigned to Mary are: Magdala, Jerusalem (in the work, mere references to the past), Marseilles, the forest, the cave/sepulcher, the dream, the meadow where she talks with the angels. Each of these spaces signals a deeper level of fading of Mary's body; still upon arrival at the port of Marseilles she is susceptible to the requirements of her body, thus Amor profano agrees to take on the task of twisting Mary's course; upon arrival in the forest, Mary asks to be provided with water and food, during the dream Mary's body is already unreachable. Then Mary is extinguished: the purpose of divine Love is thus crowned with success.

American Loyalty

First the didascalias

In this preliminary commentary on *American Loyalty*, and as a reader whose privilege it is to have access to the didascalias of the text, I wish to make a brief observation on the initial and final didascalias of *American Loyalty*.

The following remark appears in the opening notes of the text:

(Discover a palm grove of pleasant prespective, and in the center the city of Panama set on fire; its buildings ruined, pieces of wall demolished, except for one, which in due time will fall, discovering what will be said later [...]) (Gavila, 1997, p. 723).

Then, the different war events between pirates and defenders of the territory take place in front of this panoramic view (because *La lealtad...* is a work totally turned towards the exterior) composed by the palm grove, the burned city, the pieces of walls, the one that remains standing and the beach, although some houses are also mentioned, and the grove from where those who resist the invader lie in wait.

At the end of the play (when the pirates flee defeated by Camila), it is finally discovered what was covering the wall that remained firmly on its foot during the whole play. At that moment, the president of Panama makes the encomium of the victors, a speech whose explanation is completed with the corresponding didascalía, says the president:

When we saw busy
of the infidels the earth, 1450
each one sought to
hide what is most precious,
because it will not be able to reach
of the enemies. I made
what everyone: a jewel 1455
I hid, because daring
hands will not defile it.
The embankment of that wall
has deposited it;
go, knock him down, for I intend to 1460
to all to manifest it.

(All the Spaniards arrive, break down the wall and the portrait of the king on horseback is unveiled, with the inscription of Charles II)

That is the portrait and copy
of the sovereign who loves you.
ALL
Long live the king.
CHAIRMAN
I already knew,
in the burning that inflames you, 1465
would be for you
the most valued garment
the transfer of the viewer
these vast possessions
with traces of gratitude, 1470
when it knows and achieves
to what extent it is sublimated
American loyalty [...] (Gavila, 1997, pp. 777 and 778).

The spaces are superimposed, the hidden, what the eye is not able to see: the Imperial monarch, is, however, present and looks silently at what is happening in "these vast possessions/ with features of gratitude". The presence of the sovereign, on an erect wall, while the world collapsed beside him, demonstrates that, in the confrontation between ephemeral materiality and the immutable spiritual, the triumph corresponds to transcendence.

In this high valuation of what remains hidden beyond human sight, Camila is peculiar (as we will see in the following sections). Camila's peculiarity consists in her conviction that, beyond what is possible to observe, hierarchies exist, people who relate to each other on the basis of their ranks, that such people, regardless of their residence near or far (the notion of distance that Camila possesses is another of the traits that singularize her), face duties of their own; that is, for her the existence of the political-social sphere that imposes forms of behavior from the cradle, and whose acceptance, she feels, is indispensable for social life, is evident.

The American Loyalty Spaces

Panama is the first space mentioned in the work, and constitutes a synecdoche that applies to the entire American continent. In the synecdoche Panama, according to Henry Lefebvre's terminology, we can identify, as I pointed out earlier, a "perceived space", whose material exteriority possesses a flora, a fauna, an orography, a climate, a population. As "conceived space" Panama is defined by social relations which, in accordance with a hierarchy, give order to the spatiality. Finally, in the "space of representation" we recognize the symbolization of the two previous visions of space (Torres, 2016, p. 245). Thus, as a "perceived space", Panama has specific characteristics susceptible to a scientific treatment. In the theatrical work, the scientific discourse on America constructs what it assumes to be the true coordinates of the continent, in the following terms:

Morgan: Attend to me, you will know my thoughts.

[...]

the province of Wales was my homeland

[...]

I crossed the gulf,

being in the Caribbean islands -the Barbada-

the first American climate where,

expatriate at last, I figured the plant.

200

Acquiring reliable news,

facilitated to my facts the Jamayca,

[...]

We take

to Santa Catalina, a nearby island

of the great Costa Rica, on the mainland.

[then] [...] Cuba [...] 225

Port-au-Prince [...] Maracaybo, coast of Venezuela.

[...]

Penetrate determined on the mainland, 255

and, although the president

Panama presented us with a battle,

[...]

We remain absolute owners
of the city, surrendering its walls.

Already the Pacific sea groans at my sight (Gavila, 1997, pp. 732-734).

The preceding lines are part of the dialogue between the pirate Brodely and Captain Morgan, the Welsh victor of different American armies in the territories belonging to the Spanish crown. As can be observed, it corresponds to the Englishman to make a reconnaissance with a high degree of cartographic precision, so that, after taking Panama, he proceeds to subdue Peru and New Granada with the help and support of London (Gavila, 1997, p. 735). The words that Morgan pronounces in the speech we are considering are exact and corroborative, free of emotion.

The precision of Morgan's knowledge responds to his plans for the future colonization of the continent, since he plans to snatch America from the Spanish ruling house, in order to transfer its dominion to the English monarchs. His intrigue includes, as allies of his cause, the Spaniards of America who, in the dramatic piece we study in these pages, are distinguished from the Spanish Europeans (Gavila, 1997, p. 735). According to Morgan's designs, the American Spaniards should be sheltered under a new dominant order, as he states in the following quote:

French bucamies, dissatisfied
to see the English flag flying,
are hidden ribald; they only think 280
to share out the plunder and do not treat
to preserve what has been acquired [...];
but I try, my friend, to keep them.
I will try to attract the neighborhood 285
with persuasion, with entreaty and threat;
put to my devotion, I am not afraid
to the Spanish caudillo [...]
I [...] will [...] make [...] the [...] natural
are inclined to admit, without repugnance,
English customs and dominance;

for this very reason that beautiful lady
is pardoned from the force. I am forced 305
affect virtue with elegance.
(Gavila, 1997, pp. 734 and 735).

Allying the Spanish-Americans to their flag, supposes, as can be seen in the above quotation, that these peoples, content with a colonization and with belonging to a kingdom seated in a distant seat, now contribute and participate in a process of recolonization, and that they themselves carry out the whole affair, in order to place themselves in English hands.

After this dialogue, the Spanish-Americans are presented on stage. By taking the floor, the Spanish-Americans reconstruct their history, which they imbue with a certain degree of subjectivity, the product of an emotional treatment. America is interpreted, then, from a subjective and emotional angle, which constitutes a reason contrary to rigorous scientific logic:

Panama was founded 415
by hand and dexterity
of Pedrarías, Castilian,
whose clear descendants
of the Dávilas honored
many families that populate 420
its neighborhood, in which
can hardly be found
blood, which in part I did not achieve,
with Castilian, mixed.

425

The Spaniards planted
holy faith, belief
of a gospel, of a god,
[...]

Most of us descend from these
illustrious men; our
laws are also its laws; 440

the same customs;
its monarch is our king,
who, like children, cherishes us,
being so satisfied
of our love and obedience, 445
that by center of loyalty
to America confesses.
We speak your language;
nurtured in their schools
in more than a century, we learned
to despise others. 450
(Gavila, 1997, pp. 739-740).

Amador la Roca, the male voice that pronounces these words, points out as the starting point of his story, the moment of the arrival of the Spaniards. For him, for his mandates (because he speaks for the rest of the Spanish Americans, who have delegated their representation to him), before the arrival of the Europeans, the continent does not exist: it is not even possible to refer to this before emptiness. Only Europe gives meaning to the emptiness of these lands. In part, the meaning acquired by America, according to Amador's voice (although he simultaneously holds a plural point of view), has to do with social institutions: religion, school and language; and in part, with political institutions: laws, customs, monarchy. The establishment of these social and political bodies created a "civil" America, with "affable" settlers accustomed to "European culture" and "European virtue" (Gavila, 1997, p. 739).

The sum of social institutions and political institutions form, according to Henry Lefebvre's terminology, the "conceived space", which includes social codes imposed from the instances of power (Torres, 2016, p. 245); as well as the way in which these codes are accepted or questioned by the protagonists. Panama (and its subspaces: the beach, Camila's house, the grove, at its limit) also possess a symbolic aspect, "space of representation", which emanates from the interaction of "perceived space" and "conceived space".

Panama, in Fernando Gavila's piece, not only alludes to a recognizable and mappable geography (perceived space), but also to a field of controversy (conceived space) between the codes of the pirate Juan Morgan and the values defended by the representatives of the Spanish Empire.

Camila's Social Networks

Camila relates mainly to two men: Morgan and Amador. Morgan is the masculine voice that enunciates America from the scientific cartography of the European colonizing "I". Amador is the word that adduces codes of behavior and social and political institutions. Morgan and Amador live in a concrete world of objective social relations.

Camila's voice, on the other hand, reflects on the intangible. She enunciates the hierarchical levels of space, lives and practices a series of ideological values such as honor and courage, and although Amador la Roca mentions religion and the Virgin Mary as co-creators of the continental reality (Gavila, 1997, p. 746), it is Camila who specifies which religious contents are relevant to the situation she lives within the work.

The cartography through which Camila travels is not reduced to empirical data, as it happens to the Englishman; she knows that behind the physical materiality there is an abstract reality made of political relations, that is why she refers back to Morgan in the following terms:

Barbarian, shut up.

This district belongs to my august king;

his subject I was born, his vassal

full of honor in being one; you, a tyrant 115

Usurper. Don't you tremble at the threat

of the crowned lion? [...]

The surprise,

evil, greed and distance 120

could give you a momentary triumph (Gavila, 1997, p. 728).

Camila, on the other hand, by encouraging her husband to lead the resistance against the usurper, projects onto Amador the weight of the political relationships that give sustenance to this struggle, hence she states:

Spouse,
such extremes moderates.
King and country call 870
your arm. Not your blind rage
what I sacrifice to them
usurp them (Gavila, 1997, p. 728).

In the above quotation, v. 872, Camilla uses the relative "lo", "les" to modify "sacrifice"; "lo" refers to her body, her place in society, her freedom etc.; "les", to the king and the homeland. In such a way that, between the uncertainty of the intuited king and the abstract of the homeland, Camila places her own body as a bridge that connects this beyond with the physical reality that surrounds her.

From this way of interpreting her own corporeality as a link with realities that transcend her, Camila can unravel the aporia posed by Morgan, namely: either Camila gives her life into the hands of the pirate, or Amador will lose his (on the understanding that Amador's death, due to the absence of the caudillo, would lead to the destruction of Panama). In order to detach her being from the trap set by Morgan, Camila detaches herself from her body, thus explaining the self-inflicted violence against her face:

What is troubling you? What is troubling you?
If of slavery give signs 1210
has offered you my constancy,
the error of my destiny
has moved to my face.
You led me to risk
where the soul was in danger; 1215
I did not find, to defend it,
path that would secure me,
and so I erased forever
the image you idolized.

Look at the human beauty! 1220
Behold well what you loved!
Honor and virtue
these signs stamp
on my face, which, wounded,
or Morgan! disenchant you 1225
that you will never get
the triumph you meditated.
All the rest of my life
I will pass you accompanied
with this azero tongue 1230
that opened mouths to my fame,
where it runs through
the humor that enamels them (Gavila, 1997, p. 769).

In the above quotation, we see Camila who, as a territorialized body, that is, as a human person who accepts and reproduces in herself the process of conquest-colonization, with its adjacent values, is located in a phase in which, having already admitted, on her part, self-denial as a way of life, she proceeds to exercise praxis on the perceived space. In her context, praxis, the liberation of Panama, which the president of the country will then commend as an act that the monarch will thank with his benevolence, demands the surrender of her material being, an act that for Camilla is normalized.

Ordering the Cosmos

Camila performs the following ordering of the spatial hierarchy:

Unhappy Panama! Terrible fire!
The sacred temples! The divine aras!
My absent husband! sad dwellers! (Gavila, 1997, p. 723).

In this initial speech, Camila works with dual aspects, in the first and second lines she follows the general-particular order; in the third, the opposite current: particular-general. Shortly after, she insists on this dual

vision and returns to give it a general-particular treatment (keeping this order, verses 56 and 60 acquire particular relevance, which by rhyme form a couplet):

This rich colony, plundered;
their temples ruined; their homes,
fire pabulum; their dwellings,
converted tombs; its famous
capital, between flames flooded 60
(Gavila, 1997, p. 726).

Once the spatial order is established, Camila begins to reflect on values: first on compassion (Gavila, 1997, p. 726), then on decorum, and then on the courage-freedom pair (Gavila, 1997, p. 730).

As we have seen in the preceding lines, Camila regularly moves along dual paths. Morgan, the Englishman, possessing a precise, logical and exact vision given his scientific character, manages a discourse from which ambiguity has been banished. Morgan can defeat Camila, then, by placing her in front of a univocal conflict, and irresolvable in terms of its univocity: her love or Amador's death. Camila, whose gaze always possesses greater depth than that of the two men in the play, then pronounces the proclamation that will later be on the lips of all her compatriots: "virtue triumphs, long live the king of Spain" (Gavila, 1997, p. 731). This statement, by the way, is also pierced by a caesura.

Hagiography

An Important Date

In the Christian saints' calendar, December 13 is dedicated to the feast of Lucia of Syracuse (a saint curiously accepted by the Roman, Anglican, Lutheran and Orthodox churches) (Ortiz-Hidalgo, 2021). This day is relevant to the present study, since the premiere of *La lealtad americana* took place very close to her onomastic: "the afternoon of December 9, 1796, in the context of the Anglo-Spanish War (1796-1802)" (Vera, 2016). If, somehow, we can venture that, for the general public, the Anglo-Spanish war was not only a conflict between ruling houses, but also between enemy churches, the passages of the play where loyalty acquires religious overtones would be fully justified.

Las Santas

As a protagonist, Camilla is dual. She synthesizes two hagiographic legends. One, that of St. Lucy; the other, that of St. Rose of Lima. There are, since the fourth century A.D., different accounts of the martyrdom of St. Lucy: in one of them, Lucy herself would have plucked out her eyes and sent them in a dish to a certain man obsessed by the beauty of Lucy's eyes, to whom, however, Lucy could not reciprocate due to the vow of perennial virginity she had taken (Ortiz-Hidalgo, 2021). In another version, it is the Roman procurator who condemns Lucia to work in a brothel, due to the perseverance of her testimony, because having made a vow of perennial virginity, she had refused to marry a nobleman. Knowing the procurator's sentence, Lucia would have answered: "The body is contaminated only if the soul consents". This response was praised by St. Thomas Aquinas (Ortiz-Hidalgo, 2021).

These two traditions about Santa Lucia were used by Fernando Gavila for the creation of Camila. In *La lealtad americana*, Morgan harasses Camila (Gavila, 1997, p. 727), while she, faithful to her husband Amador, rejects the pirate's harassment. Finally, Morgan, frustrated by Camila's firmness, decides to force her to witness Amador's torture and death. Camila prays for her husband's life and warns the pirate, in a clear allusion to Saint Lucia: "Oh you, Morgan, /My sad eyes observe,/Unleashed in bloody streams/" (Gavila, 1997, p. 750). But, given Morgan's intransigence, Camila ends up giving in to his demands, but pointing out, like Saint Lucia, the purity of the soul that does not consent to the infamy of the body (Gavila, 1997, p. 753). As soon as Amador is freed, the episode occurs in which Camila, emulating Saint Lucia, self-mutilates herself and with this act defeats the evil one.

The legend of Santa Rosa de Lima, as I said earlier, is also present in the construction of Camila. In the play, it is the protagonist herself who explains her extreme act in reference to the saint of Lima; Camila says: "una gloriosa limeña/ me sirvió tal vez de pauta" (Gavila, 1997, p. 770), not because of the self-attack itself, but because of its positive implications for the freedom of her nation. According to the story of St. Rose of Lima, she would have defeated the pirate Joris Spilgerben, through her prayers in the church of Our Lady of the Rosary. For this reason, the saint is sometimes represented carrying the city of El Callao with an anchor (Di Fazio, 2021). Camila, then, as the glorious limeña defeats a company of pirates that the Spanish army could not defeat, and does so by offering her body, like the saint of Syracuse.

Despite the distance of 2 centuries, *La comedia a la gloriosa Magdalena* and *La lealtad americana* have several coincidences, particularly concerning the space of the female body.

Both works, as we have seen in the present writing, wield two opposing cartographies: one material and identifiable (Marseilles, Panama), the other spiritual, of greater relevance. The bodies of Camila and Magdalena are trapped in this conflict. In the dramas, they sense (to different degrees) a certain presence invisible to their eyes and elusive to their senses, but which controls their behaviors and emotions, and to whose requirements they give full consent and satisfaction.

In the preceding pages we have been able to verify that, based on their conformity to the demands of the Absolute Being (for Magdalena, God; for Camila, the Monarch), an identity has been constructed that defines them from the point of self-rejection. Such self-rejection forces them to exert extreme violence on themselves in order to remain in the desired place, even if it exists by expelling them. Their self-denial is the price to pay in order to be included. Only to the extent that they cancel themselves will they achieve the approval of the male figure who, from mystery, secrecy and emotional remoteness, exercises all the control, all the power and force he possesses as God or as State.

Magdalena and Camila are portrayed in these two works as territorialized bodies, that is, as human persons who accept and reproduce the terms of their conquest and colonization, although this necessarily culminates in their own cancellation.

In the case of Magdalena, the process of conquest-colonization is provided by Divine Love in great detail, as a previously concluded story. He gloats in front of his partisans, with the detailed description of the path along which he has led Magdalena's transit with the aim of achieving her full servitude, her disappearance. In *La comedia a la gloriosa Magdalena*, this disappearance is interpreted as the fruit of love. Magdalena comes out triumphant, according to such exegesis, when she receives from Divine Love the maximum reward to which she aspired: the suppression of her limited being by the absolute preponderance of the Eternal.

Camila is different. In her case, we are witnessing a later moment: she is at a higher stage, when, having already admitted, on her part, self-denial as a way of life, she proceeds to exercise praxis on the perceived space.

Finally, both dramas coincide in the fact that they reduce their protagonists to the level of mere pretexts for the development of their respective plots. Neither Magdalena nor Camila are the center of articulation of what happens in them: in both plays there is a male entity that silently observes them and establishes a pattern of life for them.

References

- Arteaga, A. (1999). *Comedia a la gloriosa Magdalena, de Juan de Cigorondo (1560-¿1609?) Edición y estudio* [Tesis]. Obtenido de repositorio de Tesis DGBSDI/TESIUNAM. En línea: https://ru.dgb.unam.mx/handle/DGB_UNAM/TES01000269699
- Cigorondo, J. d. (2016). *Comedia a la gloriosa Magdalena*. Bonilla Artigas/UACM.
- Di Fazio, G. (2021). Un ataque de piratas y una salvación milagrosa: por qué atribuimos a Santa Rosa la tormenta que anuncia la primavera. *Infobae*. <https://www.infobae.com/sociedad/2021/08/28/un-ataque-de-piratas-y-una-salvacion-milagrosa-por-que-atribuimos-a-santa-rosa-la-tormenta-que-anuncia-la-primavera/>
- Gavila, F. (1997). La lealtad americana. *Literatura mexicana* (México): 8(2), 695-779. <https://revistas-filologicas.unam.mx/literaturamexicana/index.php/lm/article/view/294/294>.
- Ortiz-Hidalgo, C. (2021). Santa Lucía: patrona de las enfermedades de los ojos. *Revista mexicana de oftalmología*. 95 (1), 28-34. https://www.rmo.com.mx/files/rmo_21_95_1_028-034.pdf
- Prósperi, G. O. (2018). Y el verbo se hizo fantasma. La (anti) Cristología docetista en el *Adversum Marcionem* de Tertuliano. *Memoria académica*. 9 (2), 128-145. https://www.memoria.fahce.unlp.edu.ar/art_revistas/pr.9891/pr.9891.pdf
- San Mateo. (s/f). El Santo Evangelio según San Mateo. En *Nuevo Testamento de nuestro Señor Jesucristo con Salmos y Proverbios*. Los Gedeones Internacionales.

Torres, F. (2016). Henri Lefebvre y el espacio social: aportes para analizar procesos de institucionalización de movimientos sociales en América Latina –La Organización Barrial Túpac-Amaru (Jujuy-Argentina). *Sociologías*. 18 (43), 240-270.

<https://www.scielo.br/j/soc/a/TzhQcPSSjT6HNWdftcJ4wkF/?format=pdf&lang=es>.

Vera, R. F. (2016). Fernando Gavila, poeta neoclásico: consideraciones preliminares para su biografía intelectual. *Dieciocho: Hispanic enlightenment*. 18(2), 177-190.

<https://dieciocho.uvcreate.virginia.edu/39.2/1.Vera%20Garc%C3%ADa.39.2.pdf>

Vera, R. F. (s/f). Otro drama novohispano: *La bella poblana* de Fernando Gavila. P. 135.

https://www.academia.edu/7146787/Otro_drama_novohispano_La_linda_poblana_de_Fernando_Gavila.