EL NOGALAR

By TANYA SARACHO
Directed by CECILIE KEENAN

Contents

2  Introduction to the Study Guide
3  A Conversation with Tanya Saracho
6  Novelist, Playwright, Short Story Composer, One Author
8  Reports from the Rehearsal Room
9  From The Cherry Orchard to El Nogalar
10 The How and Why of Adaptation
12 The Use of Language in El Nogalar
13 We Take Nothing By Conquest, Thank God
21 Illegal Immigration Matters (Indiana SB 590)
23 Paperless
24 Tales of Two Cities
26 Class and Consumptive Spending
28 The Women of Juárez
30 Theatre Etiquette
32 Reading Your Ticket
33 Writing Your Response Letter

Co-Editors | Dawn Raftery, Willa J. Taylor
Production Manager | Teresa Rende
Designer | Teresa Rende

Contributing Writers | Elizabeth Dengel, Erin Gaynor, Gizzela Gualoto, Michael Manocchio, Amalia Ortiz, Teresa Rende, Willa Taylor, Howard Zinn

SPECIAL THANKS | Albany Park Theatre Project, Elizabeth Dengel, Erin Gaynor, Michael Manocchio, and the folks at Rethinking Schools, Ltd.

This study guide is published by Goodman Theatre’s Education and Community Engagement Department for participants in the Student Subscription Series.

For more information related to EL NOGALAR, lesson plans and activities, please visit our Education website at:
http://education.goodmantheatre.org
Introduction to the Study Guide

BY WILLA J. TAYLOR

Tanya Saracho’s *El Nogalar*, like Regina Taylor’s *Magnolia*, is a cultural adaptation of Anton Chekhov’s play, *The Cherry Orchard*. A story about class and about the inability to recognize and change with the times, it is set against the growing power of the Bolsheviks and the dying gasps of Russia’s Tsarist aristocracy—a harbinger, perhaps, of the 1917 revolution. Chekhov’s cherry orchards were set in the outskirts of Moscow. Transplanted from late 19th century Russia to the contemporary U.S.-Mexico borderlands, Saracho’s adaptation illustrates underlying dangers inherent in the Nogales—the pecan groves—that Chekhov could not have imagined.

The setting for *El Nogalar* could be a stand-in for Ciudad Juarez. A major transit point for illegal narcotics, Ciudad Juarez is used by some of Mexico’s most powerful drug cartels as a beachhead for pipelines of crack and cocaine that flood American streets. Generating more than $1 billion dollars, drug trafficking is a very lucrative and brutal business. Bribery and corruption of officials, politicians and law enforcement is one of its well-known cottage industries, and the murder of rival entrepreneurs—and innocent bystanders who get caught in the crossfire—is just part of the price of doing business. But these drug-related dangers are not the only terrors in this borderland.

Juarez—and the desert border towns—are also home to more than 400 maquiladoras, notoriously exploitative, foreign-owned factories that produce electronics, automotive parts, packaging, medical devices, plastics and other products for such companies as GE, GM, 3M, Amway and Ford. Eighty percent of the maquiladoras workforce are young women from rural villages, most of them between ages 16 and 24. Some are as young as 11, lured by the promise of $3- to $4-a-day wages. In this community—long a hub of drug trafficking—there have been more than 6,000 unsolved rapes and murders, many of them involving young women commuting to and from the maquiladoras.

The murders are vicious. The women have been raped, slashed, strangled, crushed, maimed, dismembered and mutilated. Sometimes the body has been covered with bite marks. Sometimes the skull and face have been destroyed. Some women have been stabbed more than 20 times. Some of the bodies have been burned. Some show evidence of ritual sacrifice.

Amnesty International and families of Juarez victims say little progress has been made in bringing the murderers to justice. There is evidence to suggest that state officials might be negligent in the investigations. This, too, then serves as a backdrop for the class struggle and changing social structure that is Saracho’s adaptation—a backdrop soaked in blood and the silenced voices of thousands of women.

Jump to page 28 to read Amalia Ortiz’s poem, “The Women of Juarez.”

For more information on working conditions and international trade, visit us online at: http://education.goodmantheatre.org
When playwright Tanya Saracho was commissioned to adapt Anton Chekhov’s *The Cherry Orchard* to a Latin-American setting, she found herself grappling with how to stay true to the Russian masterpiece while honestly representing life on the border of contemporary Mexico, where her play was set. The result of that commission, *El Nogalar*—a play that is inspired by Chekhov but deeply grounded in the violence that currently dominates the U.S.-Mexico border—marks the first production in a three-year collaboration between the Goodman and Teatro Vista, where Saracho is a resident playwright. In a recent conversation between Saracho and the Goodman’s Director of New Play Development Tanya Palmer, Saracho explains her initial attraction to Chekhov’s work, and how she found a way to make his world her own.

**Tanya Palmer: What inspired you to write *El Nogalar***?

Tanya Saracho: About 10 years ago, when I was in school, I felt like the most Latino playwright I came across was Chekhov. I was like, “I know this dude. I know these people. These women? They’re my aunts. They’re my cousins.” Especially the women. I remember saying back then, “This guy’s Latino! This is like pre-revolutionary Cuba, pre-revolutionary Chile, Argentina, Mexico.” And also his characters’ behavior—they’re so emotional yet so passive-aggressive at the same time, and that’s so Latino to me. Then when I co-founded Teatro Luna I had a thing called a brown sheet, which was our manifesto. It was a list of things we were going to do—none of which we ended up doing—and we wrote down that we were going to do an all-female *Taming of the Shrew*, and a version of *The Cherry Orchard* set in pre-Castro Cuba. But then I started to doubt myself because I’m not a Chekhov scholar; I’m not a scholar at all.

Then, years later I was sitting around talking smack with Cecilie [Keenan] from Teatro Vista. I’m a resident playwright at Teatro Vista, along with Kristoffer Diaz, and they were asking both of us to think about adapting a classic to a Latin-American setting. I said, “You know, I’ve always dreamt of adapting *The Cherry Orchard*.” Then she showed up one day and said, “I want to apply for these grants. Let’s commission you.” This was Teatro Vista’s first commission. So then, here we are! But the seed was planted back in school when Mr. Chekhov seemed Latino to me.
TP: Once you started delving into your adaptation of The Cherry Orchard, how were you able to ground your interpretation of the Russian classic in contemporary Mexico?

TS: I was scared of the Chekhov at first and was really loyal to the text. I wanted to translate it to this new setting, but I was being too literal. And I was ignoring this big thing that’s happening now, which is the violence and crime and drug cartels in Mexico. So the first draft didn’t have any of that, even though my first instinct every time I would sit down would be to add something about it, but I would slap it away, which is the wrong thing to do. I could feel it missing. I claimed that I was writing about Mexico in 2010, but if I didn’t include what’s been happening on the border, how could I claim that? Because I realized that was why I was writing this now. Because this violence is happening to people I know. My father had to move for two months for his security. My mom can’t go to the doctor the same way she always did—she has to leave in the early hours when she thinks the capos are asleep. I mean, it has changed their lives. It’s scary right now, you know? And going back as an ex-pat, they don’t want my opinion. I’m too far away. I can look at it with binoculars, but they have to deal with it every day. So, instead of sharing my opinion with my family, I wrote this play. It takes the temperature of what’s happening on the border, on the Mexican side.

TP: One of the other big issues in the play, and in a lot of your plays, is class. What interests you about that dynamic between these different classes within the Mexican community?

TS: I look back now and pretty much everything I’ve written deals with class. I didn’t think about it before—but now it makes so much sense and I’m embracing it. When I came to the United States and starting trying to be an artist, the representation of Mexicans here was so simple and two-dimensional. It’s true that the main Mexican population in the States is here because they need work; I get it. But it’s more complicated than that. Especially now that a lot of us have been here for so long—the markers of latinidad are not what they used to be. They used to be religion and language—Catholicism and Spanish. I feel like we need to complicate that. And I became a little obsessed with class because I did grow up privileged in Mexico. So when I came here I wanted that experience counted too, because Mexico is a complicated place. There’s a lot more diversity—religiously, economically, culturally—than we see represented here. What I really want to do is complicate the image of Mexicans in general, and of Mexican women in particular.

TP: One of the characters in the play, Anita, is a Mexican-born girl who has lived in the States for many years, and feels very torn about her identity. Does her struggle represent some of your experience?

TS: Yes; I’m going to be working this out for a while. Because I hate going back home and being told that I’m not authentic, and here, I don’t feel authentic. We have a saying: Ni de aqui, ni de alla. Not from here, not from there. You’re from nowhere, you know? It’s so complicated because we’ve been here in the United States for generations. We go there, we come back. There’s this hybrid nationality—and when you go to Mexico you can get fooled because it’s very Americanized. But there’s a national culture that you can’t foment from here. I have all the Mexican channels I can buy, and I try to keep up with all the pop culture that I can. I read Mexican playwrights. I try, but I’m not there. I’m not living it day-to-day. So there is that kind of imposter thing, but I feel so Mexican. I am a Mexican citizen. I’m not an American citizen. But my accent has gotten fainter. I am American.

I’m going to be working that out for a long time, that hybridity, because hybridity means you’re not pure. And purity is the desired thing. But then what is purity?
TP: But while Anita is struggling specifically with her Americanness and her Mexicanness, all the characters are struggling with their relationship to their land. It seems like they’re all asking, “Who does this land belong to? Who does the culture belong to?”

TS: Yes. And hopefully audiences will be able to see this through the way I play with language the different usage of English, Spanish, Spanglish and Espanglés. Espanglés has a Spanish base and Spanglish has an English base. So Valeria speaks Espanglés because her base is Spanish, whereas Anita speaks Spanglish because her base is English. I’m using language as a way to note hybridity in this way.

TP: Since this was a commission from Teatro Vista—you were writing with specific members of their acting ensemble in mind. Did that impact the way that you were thinking about the characters or the story?

TS: For 10 years I wrote for my own ensemble—Teatro Luna. So it’s something that I’m used to. But this year I’ve been writing for ensembles that are not my own, that I didn’t put together. So that’s new for me. But the good thing about Teatro Vista is that I’ve worked with a lot of them before—particularly the women.

Charin Alvarez is an actor who has been in almost all of my plays outside of Teatro Luna, and even one in Teatro Luna. And she was the first person I thought of for the role inspired by the character of Lyubov. I was starting to think about this play while we were doing the remount of my play Our Lady of the Underpass, which Charin was in, and she was playing such a completely different character—a meek factory worker. I thought, “I really want to see Charin play a balls-out diva.” Then I thought of Sandra Delgado for the role of the oldest daughter, Valeria, because she has this very earthy, centered essence. Those two I’ve worked with so much, in all capacities. I’ve directed them, they’ve directed me. And then Christina Nieves I had initially thought of for the role of the servant, Dunia, but when she read Anita I really liked it. It is exciting to have the core women that I was writing for, dedicating these roles to, in the play. That doesn’t happen often because of actors’ schedules. Unfortunately, most of the Teatro Vista guys were busy, but we were able to cast an actor named Raul Castillo who I have known since I was 15. He was my first high school love. Now, we’re best friends. So I’m very happy with the cast. I’ve been on the stage with them, or like we say in the Spanish, I’ve been on las tablas with them. So I’m excited to be able to give them this.

Battleground: Mexico

El Nogalar charts a Mexican family’s journey as their way of life is threatened by encroaching drug cartels, violence and economic upheaval. Although the Galvan family is fictitious, the drug war that the play depicts is all too real. While drug trafficking is not new to Mexico, the rapid decline of several Colombian cartels—which had controlled the trade for much of the twentieth century—in the 1990s gave rise to more powerful Mexican cartels. Since then, violence has escalated as cartel leaders compete for the best trafficking routes to the United States, as America’s demand for drugs fuels much of Mexico’s drug wars. Meanwhile, previously peaceful neighborhoods reel as kidnappings and shootings shatter daily life.

A prime example of a community that has undergone rapid changes is San Pedro Garza Garcia, a town that lies just southwest of the city of Monterrey. Until the 1990s, it was an idyllic suburb that often went years in between homicides. In 2001, San Pedro was shocked when two residents were arrested after a shootout with the police—it was reported that the couple had $7 million in cash hidden in suitcases in their home, all from drug sales. Residents hoped this was an isolated event, but it proved to be only the beginning of a deadly pattern. In 2006, the police chief was gunned down. Since then, five other police officers have been killed—and other officers, lured by the promise of financial reward, have quit the force and joined the cartel. Today, the town is largely controlled by the Sinaloa cartel—some of its henchmen have moved there, and more of the town’s residents have begun trafficking drugs. There is no end to the violence in sight, and real-life families that resemble the fictitious Galvans often must make difficult choices in order to preserve not only their lifestyles, but their very lives.
Novelist, Playwright, Short Story Composer: One Author
Reprinted from Goodman’s The Seagull Study Guide
BY ELIZABETH MORK

Anton Chekhov the scholar was also Anton Chekhov the doctor, but perhaps he is best known as Anton Chekhov the writer. Simply put, he was a prolific writer. During his lifetime, Chekhov penned around a dozen plays, several novels and some 200 short stories. His works, often autobiographical in nature, reflect the different career paths and people that made up his life.

His early comedic pieces are a product of his first job scripting low-brow humor for a local newspaper. (Can you imagine grabbing a work by Chekhov that resembles the Sunday comics?) His initial plays also retain this comedic flair.

Surprisingly, Chekhov was not known as a playwright for much of his lifetime. Many of his works for the theater were either outright rejected, or else they were major flops on stage. Chekhov even momentarily swore that The Seagull would be his last theater endeavor; he wrote Uncle Vanya a year later.

Regardless of the form, Chekhov’s creations are rich with literary allusions. His works reference popular literature, pertinent social issues of the day and various pieces done by Shakespeare. This technique of concealing information within the text, known as “Aesopic language,” is essentially a way to avoid blatant censorship but retain relevance for a literate public.

Avid readers of Chekhov also would note elements of his short stories appearing in his plays, thus enriching the action happening upon stage through these connections. For example, The Seagull, written in 1896, has nearly verbatim quotes from his story “Ariadna” written in 1985. “Ariadna” chronicles the life of a young actress whose adventures include fostering a disenchanted love affair with an older man. In a moment of repose, the story’s narrator, a man in love with Ariadna, describes the following scene among himself, Ariadna and Ariadna’s older love interest:

When Ariadna and I were fishing, Lubkov would lie on the sand close by and make fun of me, or lecture me on the conduct of life.

“I wonder, my dear sir, how you can live without a love affair,” he would say. “You are young, handsome, interesting — in fact, you’re a man not to be sniffed at, yet you live like a monk. Och! I can’t stand these fellows who are old at 28! I’m nearly 10 years older than you are, and yet which of us is the younger? Ariadna Grigoryevna, which?”

“You, of course,” Ariadna answered him.

This scene reappears in The Seagull among Masha, Doctor Dorn and Arkadina. While lounging next to an un-played game of croquet, Arkadina instructs Masha to stand beside her before calling on Dorn to name the younger looking of the two. Dorn selects the older Arkadina with a simple “You, of course.”
The gender reversal aids in highlighting the similarities between the two scenes. In both cases, the person with the more vivacious life is chosen as appearing the most youthful. However, it is difficult to deduce if Dorn and Ariadna are honest in their answers, for each wants to stay in favor with Arkadina and Lubkov, respectively.

Below is a chronological list of Chekhov’s major literary works:

**Plays:**

- That Worthless Fellow Platonov (c. 1881)
- On the Harmful Effects of Tobacco (1886, 1902)
- Swansong (1887)
- Ivanov (1887)
- The Boor or The Bear (1888)
- A Marriage Proposal (c. 1888-1889)
- A Reluctant Tragic Hero (1889)
- The Wedding (1889)
- The Wood Demon (1889)
- The Festivities (1891)
- The Seagull (1896)
- Uncle Vanya (1899-1900)
- Three Sisters (1901)
- The Cherry Orchard (1904)

**Novels:**

- The Shooting Party (1884)
- The Steppe (1888)
- The Duel (1891)
- The Story of an Unknown Man (1893)
- Three Years (1895)
- My Life (1896)

**Short Stories:**

- “The Death of a Government Clerk” (1883)
- “A Chameleon” (1884)
- “Oysters” (1884)
- “A Living Chronology” (1885)
- “Small Fry” (1885)
- “The Huntsman” (1885)
- “A Malefactor” (1885)
- “Sergeant Prishibeyev” (1885)
- “Misery” (1886)
- “The Requiem” (1886)
- “Vanka” (1886)
- “The Siren” (1887)
- “Kashtanka” (1887)
- “The Bet” (1889)
- “A Dreary Story” (1889)
- “The Grasshopper” (1892)
- “In Exile” (1892)
- “Ward No. 6” (1892)
- “The Black Monk” (1894)
- “The Student” (1894)
- “The Teacher of Literature” (1894)
- “Anna on the Neck” (1895)
- “Whitebrow” (1895)
- “Ariadna” (1895)
- “An Artist’s Story [The House with the Mezzanine]” (1896)
- “Peasants” (1897)
- “The Little Trilogy” (1898)
- “The Lady with the Dog” (1899)
- “At Christmas Time” (1900)
- “In the Ravine” (1900)
- “The Bishop” (1902)
- “Betrothed” (1903)
Reports from the Rehearsal Room

BY MICHAEL MANOCCHIO

New play development is at the heart of our artistic programming here at Goodman Theatre. This season alone includes five new works as well as our annual New Stages series, which features staged readings of new plays from writers around the nation. One of the new works featured in this season is Tanya Saracho’s El Nogalar, a co-production with Teatro Vista. As the literary intern, I have had the privilege of spending the last few weeks in the rehearsal room for this fascinating play, assisting the playwright as she develops her script.

It is always an exciting ride watching a new play develop from its first draft to its final production. In the case of El Nogalar, Tanya’s work started as a commission to write an adaptation of Anton Chekhov’s The Cherry Orchard. From the onset, she saw many parallels between the changing world of post-revolutionary Russia and the current state of unrest in contemporary Mexico. She also saw a distinct similarity between Chekhov’s characters and Latinos. In a recent interview on the play, Tanya said, “About 10 years ago, when I was in school, I felt like the most Latino playwright I came across was Chekhov. I was like, ‘I know this dude. I know these people. These women? They’re my aunts. They’re my cousins.’ ” With her concept for the play firmly in place, Tanya set out to begin drafting the script. She was assisted by the Goodman’s director of new play development, Tanya Palmer, as well as the dramaturg for the production, Kristin Leahey, a visiting artist from Northlight Theatre in Skokie, Illinois. Tanya Palmer and Kristin provided another set of literary and theatrical eyes for Tanya Saracho as she molded the play into a form that could be brought into the rehearsal room and the hands of actors.

While the script was going through pre-rehearsal drafting, I was busy conducting production research for the director and actors. My work was aimed toward providing contextual information that would allow for a more realistic and thorough depiction of the world of the play. I looked into the current global war on drugs, issues of race and class in Mexico, the Mexican aristocracy, pecan farming and life on the border. The materials were then compiled into a research packet that was made available to the entire El Nogalar team on the first day of rehearsal.

Neither the revising of the script nor my research into the world of the play ended on the first day of rehearsals. In fact, since the first rehearsal of El Nogalar, not a page of the script has gone unedited and I have continued to do on-the-spot research as well. Throughout the rehearsal process, Tanya Saracho has continued to edit the play with the help of Kristin. As the literary intern, it is my responsibility to track all script changes during rehearsals and to keep a log and updated master copy of the play. For El Nogalar, tracking script changes throughout the rehearsal process was imperative, as Tanya came in with a rather sizeable goal: to take her script, which at that point was about as long as The Cherry Orchard, and cut it down to a 90-minute show. This meant cutting almost an hour of the play’s running time. Every day brought new cuts, some large and some small, and my job was to ensure that the actors, director and playwright were all on the same page—quite literally.

In my position as a literary intern, the time I have spent in the rehearsal room is the most rewarding for me. I have been given the great privilege of being able to take part in the development of a new script and witness the work of some of the best theater artists in the country as they premiere a brand new play. The education I have been afforded is invaluable, and I will take this experience with me into my own career as an artist who, hopefully, will continue to work to develop new and exciting plays such as El Nogalar.

Michael Manocchio (left) tracks script changes during El Nogalar rehearsal as Tanya Saracho (right) offers notes. Photo by Eric Y. Exit.
Adaptations are tricky. There is the desire to keep one’s adaptation very much analogous to the original work, yet there is also the yearning to make that new work live and breathe on its own, quite distant from its original inspiration. When one looks at the journey of Tanya Saracho’s new play, *El Nogalar*, this conflict is quite apparent. The first drafts of Saracho’s new play were very much a direct adaptation of Anton Chekhov’s *The Cherry Orchard*, with scenes being directly transferred from one context and set of given circumstances to another. In some instances, Tanya adapted the play beat by beat, or moment by moment. As time went on, however, Saracho started to feel that her play should stand on its own and she began to stray from her original, strict adaptation of the Chekhov classic. The new context of contemporary Mexico and its war on drugs demanded a new play. And so while *El Nogalar* is still very much an adaptation, it is much more loosely so.

As the script stands now, *El Nogalar* and *The Cherry Orchard* are still very similar, and anyone who knows the original Chekhov will quickly see the ties between the two plays. *El Nogalar* is the same story, just set in a different context. Most readily apparent are the character parallels between the two plays. Dunyasha becomes Dunia; Varya, Valeria; Anya, Anita; Lopakhin, Lopez; and, finally, Fiers, Fulgencio. If one is adept in foreign languages (or simply enjoys trivia), he or she also will note how Liubov (Russian for “love”) becomes Maite (Basque for “love”) in the new adaptation. There is also a distinct effort made to mimic the use of nicknames in Spanish as they are used in the original Russian. Just as Piotyr becomes Petya in Russian, Valeria becomes Vale and Guillermo becomes Memo. It is important to note, however, that Saracho is not simply copying a cultural naming phenomenon from Russia and applying it to the Mexican context. Instead, she is taking a similarity that already exists between the two cultures and accentuating it.

The basic plot and structural similarities of the two plays are also quite obvious to audiences who know *The Cherry Orchard*. Saracho’s original beat-by-beat adaptation of the original Chekhov allowed for the structure and plot to remain, even after almost an hour of *El Nogalar* was cut during rehearsals. For example, the play still opens with Lopakhin/Lopez and Dunyasha/Dunia discussing the long awaited arrival of the mistress of the house, Lopakhin/Lopez still falls asleep as Varya/Valeria still holds the keys to the house until the final scene, the orchard is still lost and the working class continues to prevail.

It is not until Saracho embarked on the discussions of the world of the play—contemporary Mexico and its war on drugs—that she began to stray from her inspiration. As she began to realize that she could not write a play that took place in contemporary Mexico without mentioning or highlighting the drug cartels that run much of the territory, she concluded that she could no longer directly adapt *The Cherry Orchard*. Suddenly she was not so much adapting the play as she was adding to it. All of the characters and plot elements from the Chekhov are still very present in *El Nogalar*, but there is now the frame of Dunia and Lopez’ story. The audience now sees the action in the play through their eyes—eyes which have remained in Los Nogales and seen the terror of life on the border. These are not the eyes of the Galvanes, who have been living in America, or Ranevskaya, who has been in France. It’s a small paradigm shift for the playwright, but once the decision was made, the play had more social and cultural bite to it. It was suddenly fresh and relevant. It was dangerous. It was a play we knew so well, but at the same time it was something completely new and timely. That is the genius of Saracho’s new play.
You rush home, eager to tell your family that your favorite artist will perform tomorrow night and that you won a coveted ticket to the show. They are so happy to see you so happy. But then the questions begin: Why do you like this artist? You almost blurt out “the lyrics!” but you pause. Will your loved ones understand the explosive, streetwise and, most importantly, novel nomenclature of your favorite singer-songwriter? You mumble something about “Tik Tok” to a blank-eyed audience. How do you bridge this language gap when you’re both speaking English? It’s not your intention to rewrite the song in your explanation. Deep down, you know that once they understand, they too will appreciate the artist’s bohemian message.

Were you aware that is an issue that playwrights and other writers often face? The trick to preserving the meaning of the original work in a new form is known as adaptation. Different from translating between two languages or creating something entirely new, adapting texts transforms the work into a new form while still retaining the original’s message, structure and tone.

This complex idea may leave many wondering why adapt anything at all? Why not compose a completely original work? Many important works of literature were written in other languages, cultures and time periods. To complicate the situation, language and meaning regularly change from generation to generation. Just as certain family members have no basis for words you use today, they too possess a unique vocabulary that defines their own time. Adaptation is a challenging yet deeply rewarding process, capable of sharing ideas across cultures and time.

Universal Chekhov:

Anton Chekhov’s works continue to transcend time in their relevance to modern issues, characters and themes. Goodman Theatre’s artistic director Robert Falls’ newest adaptation of The Seagull is one of many Chekhov variations done at the Chicago theater. In 2002 Regina Taylor crafted her own adaptation of The Seagull titled Drowning Crow, and in 2009 Goodman premiered Magnorlia, Taylor’s adaptation of The Cherry Orchard. Tanya Saracho’s adaptation of The Cherry Orchard is El Nogalar, which details corruption in modern Mexico.

How is it that these works, such as The Seagull and The Cherry Orchard written in 19th century Russia, carry significance in modern America?

Adaptation in Practice:

Below are excerpts from the same scene in El Nogalar and Magnolia, in which Lopez and Thomas must impress upon the matriarch the weight of her debt. These also provide context for the complicated relationship, in which class and companionship clash, between the formerly poor male and the formerly wealthy woman of the orchard.

Both Saracho and Taylor frame this moment as a monologue, but in The Cherry Orchard, Chekhov wrote this crucial moment in Act I as dialogue. What does the monologue emphasize differently? Visit us at http://education.goodmantheatre.org to compare all three!

LOPEZ in El Nogalar: (Tanya Saracho)

Fucking shit.
(Beat)
I just made no sense. I sounded like a fucking idiot just now. Moron! Maite comes down, looking all... she comes down and I start stuttering. I can look at Chato straight in the face and not stutter once but this woman comes down the stairs and I can’t say consonants all of a sudden. And the way she just looked at me. Like she’s about to pet her little dog. Why am I even here panting, offering my help? Letting her give me those looks that-
(Beat)
But at least she looked at me, right? My God, she hasn’t changed a bit. If anything she’s more beautiful now.

THOMAS in Magnolia: (Regina Taylor)

Been calling Lily Forrest every day for the past week. Catch up a little on the phone but no time. No time to hear what I got to say. Times running out- Two more weeks that land will be sold. What’s it to do with me. Who are they to me. Who owned my great-grandma—Great- great- grandpa-
Who built that estate with their own hands? Those hands owned by Nathan Bedford Forrest’s kin. All that business is past and gone. Got nothing to do with me.
All are dead and gone now. I’m the last of the colored line of Forrests. Every one of them are buried out there in the colored cemetery- just below the river where I was baptized. All of them buried out there under them
God, her eyes. Those lips. A person can’t make sense in front of someone like that. It’s like you’re in front of a...

(Beat)

What if I just go in there and try to explain it again to her. Draw it in crayons for her so she understands that she will lose every-fucking-thing she owns if she doesn’t jump on this because the clock is ticking on their offer. Five years ago this offer might have been ridiculous, but the way things are today, it is as generous as it’s going to get. The fact that she even gets an offer is short of a miracle really! Every other piece of land around here has just been taken by force. I need to paint a picture for her that breaks it all down. And I’m going to need to get Chato something big. iPad. Yeah, I’ll get him a couple of iPads.

(Pause)

Tomorrow. Tomorrow I’ll come and explain it better.

(his blackberry rings)

Ah, fuck me. Fuck me. Hello? Ey, Chato! How are...what? I know, I’m a motherfucker. I’ll come to the next one. You know poker’s not my thing, you guys will just clean me out anyway but... Who? Oh, yeah, she’s here, they’re all back. Yeah, I was going to go get them myself but your boy Pedro gave them a ride. Oh, well, thank you for that. That was very nice of you to send an escort- What? Yes. Thank you.

(Beat)

No, I didn’t get a chance to. Maybe we should give her a little bit of time to say hello and goodbye to things. Ah, NO PLEASE CHATO. Let me. As a personal favor to me. Yes. I’ll get it all sorted out. Thank you, Chato. Oh, hey I know we were talking about those iPads the other day and I’d love it if you let me bring you a couple, you know for you and your kid. Yeah, you know the iPad? Yeah. Come on, after all you’ve... Yeah, I know. You’re right, Chato. I’m a motherfucker.

(Laughs a little too loud)
Yeah, alright. Tomorrow then. Alright then.

(He hangs up)
Fucking shit.

Magnolia trees. My ma. She died pushing me out. My Pa slapped me and I took my first breath. And then- my brother- first born son- Pa’s heart- broke that day- Pa died on that day. It just took years for him to let them lay him in the ground. Still some things never die. Like what he said to me when they cut my brother’s body down. Pa said to me- “It should have been you. Shoulda been you. You ain’t worth the dirt you was born from.” Hm. I walked away from that place the very next day – said I was never coming back.

Yesterday Miss Lilly called- asked me to come out there to meet her this morning. Haven’t been back in over twenty years. I get out of the car and I’m standing in the middle of this place that named me. I remember strong what I hated about it. Don’t remember it being so- The smell – and the earth so black. The servants quarters where I was born- a blue green shade. Worn down. And the east meadow- where my Pa –drunk- he’d beat me good most nights.

Same meadow he taught me to ride my first horse. Funny how some memories can eat up other memories. Some things we forget- like they never happened. Other things harder to shake-like our shadow. Our shadow’s with us till the day we die- I think our shadow lives on way after we’re gone. Like my father’s shadow- dragging me back -Like my father’s voice- I feel the weight of his voice- like hands wrapped around my neck strangling me before I can even yelp. I stand silent in this yard.

Yeah.

I’m walking towards the house when – who do I see- leaning over the vegetable bed- a tall thin woman- white as cotton - flaming red hair. I could swear it was my grandma Minerva. And then my Aunt Bessie – Uncle Theo- Great aunt Clayola- My own mother- she’s there- They’re all of them there surrounding me- their voices rustling the leaves they are falling from the branches like blossoms- Magnolia blossoms grown too heavy with their own scent, secrets and memories. All these ghosts I thought I left behind- surrounding me as I’m walking towards the house – Knocking on the door of the house- I’m standing in the threshold trying to summon the courage to open my mouth to call out my own name- And then I hear this sound- crying- hollers- Voices- rushing like water out of the mouth of that house- Naw.

Hm- I still can’t believe- Mrs. Martha Forrest is dead.
In *El Nogalar*, the director and the designers manage to evoke the interior of a grand house and the expansive grounds surrounding it. They do so using only the play’s staging, lighting, a few props and some simple pieces of furniture. While this stripped-down set might seem at odds with the naturalistic style of the dialogue, theater artists often ask audiences to suspend their disbelief and to take an imaginative leap. When an audience understands a story figuratively rather than literally, a few dolls and cardboard boxes can become a mansion’s abandoned nursery, a bare stage can represent acres of pristine greenery and a simple shift in lighting can transport the action to a different time and place.

Playwright Tanya Saracho takes this theatrical convention one step further. In the script for *El Nogalar*, Saracho uses changes in lighting and sound to indicate shifts in the play’s language. For example, Dunia and Lopez are Spanish-speaking characters. The play opens with them speaking to one another in Spanish, but with one swift change in light and sound, Saracho brings the audience into a “translated world” where Dunia and Lopez’s dialogue occurs in perfect English. Although we have heard Dunia’s lines in English, we are reminded later in the play that her character is not actually Fluent in the language. When Dunia practices her English with Anita, her lines are full of grammatical errors. By using light and sound to note a shift in the world of the play, Saracho allows a primarily English-speaking audience to understand Spanish-speaking characters.

Saracho’s use of language also has thematic implications. Saracho is interested in exploring the intermingling of American and Mexican cultures. Language is one place where that hybridity is easily recognized. The audience of *El Nogalar* will not hear scenes in only Spanish or English. Valeria, who was born in Mexico but studied in England, speaks primarily Spanish with some English, a mixture called Espanglés. Anita, who is a Mexican citizen but has spent most of her life living in the U.S., speaks primarily English with some Spanish, a combination that we call Spanglish. The consequences of this hybridity become evident near the end of the play, when Anita confesses to Valeria: “There are so many things I know halfway. Like I know the beginning or the ending, but I don’t know the middle. I’m a half person, Vale. I walk around incomplete. My tongue is a half tongue, my brain too. I’m a half thing.” The same confusion that Anita feels about her identity is manifested in the play’s use of multiple languages.

A bilingual play does pose a certain challenge for audiences. Perhaps those audience members who are fluent in both Spanish and English will catch every word. But the meaning of language in *El Nogalar* transcends the individual words themselves. Saracho uses language to make a larger statement about the increasingly integrated nature of our world—a statement that hopefully every audience member will be able to understand.
We Take Nothing by Conquest, Thank God

This chapter is excerpted from Howard Zinn’s classic book, A People’s History of the United States. Between 1846 and 1848, the United States fought a war with Mexico. Zinn explores the war’s main causes and examines the effects on people’s lives.

Col. Ethan Allen Hitchcock, a professional soldier, graduate of the Military Academy, commander of the Third Infantry Regiment, a reader of Shakespeare, Chaucer, Hegel, Spinoza, wrote in his diary:

Fort Jesup, La., June 30, 1845. Orders came last evening by express from Washington City directing Gen. Taylor to move without any delay to... take up a position on the banks of or near the Rio Grande, and he is to expel any armed force of Mexicans who may cross that river. Bliss read the orders to me last evening hastily at tattoo. I have scarcely slept a wink, thinking of the needful preparations. ... Violence leads to violence, and if this movement of ours does not lead to others and to bloodshed, I am much mistaken.

Hitchcock was not mistaken. Jefferson’s Louisiana Purchase had doubled the territory of the United States, extending it to the Rocky Mountains. To the southwest was Mexico, which had won its independence in a revolutionary war against Spain in 1821. Mexico was then an even larger country than it is now, since it included what are now Texas, New Mexico, Utah, Nevada, Arizona, California, and part of Colorado. After agitation, and aid from the United States, Texas broke off from Mexico in 1836 and declared itself the “Lone Star Republic.” In 1845, the U.S. Congress brought it into the Union as a state.

In the White House now was James Polk, a Democrat, an expansionist, who, on the night of his inauguration, confided to his Secretary of the Navy that one of his main objectives was the acquisition of California. His order to Gen. Zachary Taylor to move troops to the Rio Grande was a challenge to the Mexicans. It was not at all clear that the Rio Grande was the southern boundary of Texas, although Texans had forced the defeated Mexican general Santa Anna to say so when he was a prisoner. The traditional border between Texas and Mexico had been the Nueces River, about 150 miles to the north, and both Mexico and the United States had recognized that as the border. However, Polk, encouraging the Texans to accept annexation, had assured them he would uphold their claims to the Rio Grande.

Ordering troops to the Rio Grande, into territory inhabited by Mexicans, was clearly a provocation. Taylor’s army marched in parallel columns across the open prairie, scouts far ahead and on the flanks, a train of supplies following. Then, along a narrow road, through a belt of thick chaparral, they arrived, March 28, 1846, in cultivated fields and thatched-roof huts hurriedly abandoned by the Mexican occupants, who had fled across the river to the city of Matamoros. Taylor set up camp, began construction of a fort, and implanted his cannons facing the white houses of Matamoros, whose inhabitants stared curiously at the sight of an army on the banks of a quiet river.

‘Our Manifest Destiny’

The Washington Union, a newspaper expressing the position of President Polk and the Democratic party, had spoken early in 1845 on the meaning of Texas annexation: “Let the great measure of annexation be accomplished, and with it the questions of boundary and claims. For who can arrest the torrent that will pour onward to the West? The road to California will be open to us. Who will stay the march of our western people?” It was shortly after that, in the summer of 1845, that John O’Sullivan, editor of the Democratic Review, used the phrase that became famous, saying it was “our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions.” Yes, manifest destiny.

All that was needed in the spring of 1846 was a military incident to begin the war that Polk wanted. It
came in April, when Gen. Taylor’s quartermaster, Col. Cross, while riding up the Rio Grande, disappeared. His body was found 11 days later, his skull smashed by a heavy blow. It was assumed he had been killed by Mexican guerrillas crossing the river.

The next day (April 25), a patrol of Taylor’s soldiers was surrounded and attacked by Mexicans, and wiped out: 16 dead, others wounded, the rest captured. Taylor sent a dispatch to Polk: “Hostilities may not be considered as commenced.”

The Mexicans had fired the first shot. But they had done what the American government wanted, according to Col. Hitchcock, who write in his diary, even before those first incidents:

I have said from the first that the United States are the aggressors. ... We have not one particle of right to be here. ... It looks as if the government sent a small force on purpose to bring on a war, so as to have a pretext for taking California and as much of this country as it chooses. ... My heart is not in this business... but, as a military man, I am bound to execute orders.

On May 9, before news of any battles, Polk was suggesting to his cabinet a declaration of war. Polk recorded in his diary what he said to the cabinet meeting:

I stated... that up to this time, as we knew, we had heard of no open act of aggression by the Mexican army, but that the danger was imminent that such acts would be committed. I said that in my opinion we had ample cause of war, and that it was impossible ... that I could remain silent much longer ... that the country was excited and impatient on the subject.

The country was not “excited and impatient.” But the president was. When the dispatches arrived from Gen. Taylor telling of casualties from the Mexican attack, Polk summoned the cabinet to hear the news, and they unanimously agreed he should ask for a declaration of war. Polk’s message to Congress was indignant: “Mexico has passed the boundary of the United States, has invaded our territory and Congress was indignant: “Mexico has passed the boundary of the United States, has invaded our territory and shed American blood upon the American soil.”

Congress then rushed to approve the war message. The bundles of official documents accompanying the war message, supposed to be evidence for Polk’s statement, were not examined, but were tabled immediately by the House. Debate on the bill providing volunteers and money for the war was limited to two hours, and most of this was used up reading selected portions of the tabled documents, so that barely half an hour was left for discussion of the issues.

The Whig party also wanted California, but preferred to do it without war. Nevertheless, they would not deny men and money for the operation and so joined Democrats in voting overwhelmingly for the war resolution, 174 to 14. In Senate there was debate, but it was limited to one day, and the war measure passed, 40 to 2, Whigs joining Democrats. John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts, who originally voted with “the stubborn 14,” later voted for war appropriations.

Abraham Lincoln of Illinois was not yet in Congress when the war began, but after his election in 1846 he had occasion to vote and speak on the war. His “spot resolutions” became famous – he challenged Polk to specify the exact spot where American blood was shed “on the American soil.” But he would not try to end the war by stopping funds on men and supplies. Speaking in the House on July 27, 1848, he said:

If to say “the war was unnecessarily and unconstitutionally commenced by the president” be opposing the war,
then the Whigs have very generally opposed it. ... The marching an army into the midst of a peaceful Mexican settlement, frightening the inhabitants away, leaving their growing crops and other property to destruction, to you may appear perfectly amiable, peaceful, unprovoking procedure; but it does not appear so to us. ... But if, when the war had begun, and had become the cause of the country, the giving of our money and our blood, in common with yours, was support of the war, then it is not true that we have always opposed the war. With few individual exceptions, you have constantly had our votes here for all the necessary supplies.

A handful of antislavery Congressmen voted against all war measures, seeing the Mexican campaign as a means of extending the southern slave territory. One of these was Joshua Giddings of Ohio, a fiery speaker, physically powerful, who called it “an aggressive, unholy, and unjust war.”

After Congress acted in May 1846, there were rallies and demonstrations for the war in New York, Baltimore, Indianapolis, Philadelphia, and many other places. Thousands rushed to volunteer for the army. The poet Walt Whitman wrote in the *Brooklyn Eagle* in the early days of the war: “Yes: Mexico must be thoroughly chastised! ... Let our arms now be carried with a spirit which shall teach the world that, while we are not forward for a quarrel, America knows how to crush, as well as how to expand!”

Accompanying all this aggressiveness was the idea that the United States would be giving the blessings of liberty and democracy to more people. This was intermingled with ideas of racial superiority, longings for the beautiful lands of New Mexico and California, and thoughts of commercial enterprise across the Pacific. The *New York Herald* said, in 1847: “The universal Yankee nation can regenerate and disenthral the people of Mexico in a few years; and we believe it is part of our destiny to civilize that beautiful country.”

The *Congressional Globe* of Feb. 11, 1847, reported:

Mr. Giles, of Maryland – I take it for granted, that we shall gain territory, and must gain territory, before we shut the gates of the temple of Janus. ... We must march from ocean to ocean. ... We must march from Texas straight to the Pacific oceans, and be bounded only by its roaring wave. ... It is the destiny of the white race, it is the destiny of the Anglo-Saxon race.

### Anti-War Sentiment

The American Anti-Slavery Society, on the other hand, said the war was “waged solely for the detestable and horrible purpose of extending and perpetuating American Slavery throughout the vast territory of Mexico.” A 27-year-old Boston poet and abolitionist, James Russell Lowell, began writing satirical poems in the *Boston Courier* (they were later collected as the *Biglow Papers*). In them, a New England farmer, Hosea Biglow, spoke, in his own dialect, on the war:

Ex fer war, I call it murder –
- There you hev it plain an’ flat;
I don’t want to go no furder
- Than my Testymnt fer that. ...
They jest want this Californy
- So’s to lug new slave-states in
To abuse ye, an’ to scorn ye,
- An’ to plunder ye like sin.

The war had barely begun in the summer of 1846, when a writer, Henry David Thoreau, who lived in Concord, Mass., refused to pay his Massachusetts poll tax, denouncing the Mexican war. He was put in jail and spent one night there. His friends, without his consent, paid his tax, and he was released. Two years later, he gave a lecture, “Resistance to Civil Government,” which

**Portrait by Benjamin D. Maxham (daguerreotype), of Henry David Thoreau in June 1856.**
It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law so much as for the right. ... Law never made men a whit more just; and, by means of their respect for it, even the well-disposed are daily made the agents of injustice. A common and natural result of an undue respect for law is, that you may see a file of soldiers... marching in admirable order over hill and dale to the wars, against their wills, ay, against their common sense and consciences, which makes it very steep marching indeed, and produces a palpitation of the heart.

His friend and fellow writer Ralph Waldo Emerson agreed, but thought it futile to protest. When Emerson visited Thoreau in jail and asked, “What are you doing in there?” it was reported that Thoreau replied, “What are you doing out there?”

The churches, for the most part, were either outspokenly for the war or timidly silent. The Rev. Theodore Parker, a Unitarian minister in Boston, combined eloquent criticism of the war with contempt for the Mexican people, whom he called “a wretched people; wretched in their origin, history and character,” who must eventually give way as the Indians did. Yes, the United States should expand, he said, but not by war, rather by power of her ideas, the pressure of her commerce, by “the steady advance of a superior race, with superior ideas and a better civilization.”

The racism of Parker was widespread. Congressman Delano of Ohio, an antislavery Whig, opposed the war because he was afraid of Americans mingling with an inferior people who “embrace all shades of color... a sad compound of Spanish, English, Indian, and negro bloods... and resulting, it is said, in the production of a slothful, ignorant race of beings.”

As the war went on, opposition grew. The American Peace society printed a newspaper, the Advocate of Peace, which published poems, speeches, petitions, sermons against the war, and eyewitness accounts of the degradation of army life and the horrors of battle. Considering the strenuous efforts of the nation’s leaders to build patriotic support, the amount of open dissent and criticism was remarkable. Antiwar meetings took place in spite of attacks by patriotic mobs.

As the army moved closer to Mexico City, the antislavery newspaper The Liberator daringly declared its wishes for the defeat of the American forces: “Every lover of Freedom and humanity, throughout the world, must wish them [the Mexicans] the most triumphant success.”

Frederick Douglass, a former slave and an extraordinary speaker and writer, wrote in his Rochester newspaper, the North Star, Jan. 21, 1848, of “the present disgraceful, cruel, and iniquitous war with our sister republic. Mexico seems a doomed victim to Anglo Saxon cupidity and love of dominion.” Douglass was scornful of the unwillingness of opponents of the war to take real action (even the abolitionists kept paying their taxes):

No politician of any considerable distinction or eminence seems willing to hazard his popularity with his party... by an open and unqualified disapprobation of the war. None seem willing to take their stand for peace at all risks; and all seem willing that the war should be carried on, in some form or other.

Where was popular opinion? It is hard to say. After the first rush, enlistments began to dwindle. Historians of the Mexican war have talked easily about “the people” and “public opinion.” Their evidence, however, is not from “the people” but from newspapers, claiming to be the voice of the people. The New York Herald wrote in August 1845: “The multitude cry aloud for war.” The New York Morning News said “young and
ardent spirits that throng the cities... want but a direction to their restless energies, and their attention is already fixed on Mexico.”

It is impossible to know the extent of popular support of the war. But there is evidence that many organized workingmen opposed the war. There were demonstrations of Irish workers in New York, Boston, and Lowell against the annexation of Texas. In May, when the war against Mexico began, New York workingmen called a meeting to oppose the war, and many Irish workers came. The meeting called the war a plot by slave owners and asked for the withdrawal of American troops from disputed territory. That year, a convention of the New England Workingmen’s Association condemned the war and announced they would “not take up arms to sustain the Southern slaveholder in robbing one fifth of our countrymen of their labor.”

Some newspapers, at the very start of the war, protested. Horace Greeley wrote in the New York Tribune, May 12, 1846:

We can easily defeat the armies of Mexico, slaughter them by thousands. ... Who believes that a score of victories over Mexico, the “annexation” of half her provinces, will give us more Liberty, a purer Morality, a more prosperous Industry, than we now have? ... Is not Life miserable enough, comes not Death soon enough, without resort to the hideous enginery of War?

The Recruits

What of those who fought the war – the soldiers who marched, sweated, got sick, died? The Mexican soldiers. The American soldiers. We know little of the reactions of Mexican soldiers. We know much more about the American army – volunteers, not conscripts, lured by money and opportunity for social advancement via promotion in the armed forces. Half of Gen. Taylor’s army were recent immigrants – Irish and German mostly. Their patriotism was not very strong. Indeed, many of them deserted to the Mexican side, enticed by money. Some enlisted in the Mexican army and formed their own battalion, the San Patricio (St. Patrick’s) Battalion.

At first there seemed to be enthusiasm in the army, fired by pay and patriotism. Martial spirit was high in New York, where the legislature authorized the government to call 50,000 volunteers. Placards read “Mexico or Death.” There was a mass meeting of 20,000 people in Philadelphia. Three thousand volunteered in Ohio.

This initial spirit soon wore off. One young man wrote anonymously to the Cambridge Chronicle:

Neither have I the least idea of “joining” you, or in any way assisting the unjust war waging against Mexico. I have no wish to participate in such “glorious” butcheries of women and children as were displayed in the capture of Monterey, etc. Neither have I any desire to place myself under the dictation of a petty military tyrant, to every caprice of whose will I must yield implicit obedience. No siree! ... Human butchery has had its day. ... And the time is rapidly approaching when the professional soldier
will be placed on the same level as a bandit, the Bedouin, and the Thug.

There were extravagant promised and outright lies to build up the volunteer units. A man who wrote a history of the New Your Volunteers declared: “Many enlisted for the sake of their families, have no employment, and having been offered ‘three months’ advance,’ and were promised that they could leave part of their pay for their families to draw in their absence. ... I boldly pronounce, that the whole Regiment was got up by fraud.”

By late 1846, recruitment was falling off, so physical requirements were lowered, and anyone bringing in acceptable recruits would get $2 a head. Even this didn’t work. Congress in early 1847 authorized 10 new regiments of regulars, to serve for the duration of the war, promising them 100 acres of public land upon honorable discharge. But dissatisfaction continued.

The Reality of Battle

And soon, the reality of battle came in upon the glory and the promises. On the Rio Grande before Matamoros, as a Mexican army of 5,000 under Gen. Arista faced Taylor’s army of 3,000, the shells began to fly, and artilleryman Samuel French saw his first death in battle. John Weems describes it: “He happened to be staring at a man on horseback nearby when he saw a shot rip off the pommel of the saddle, tear through the man’s body, and burst out with a crimson gush on the other side.”

When the battle was over, 500 Mexicans were dead or wounded. There were perhaps 50 American causalities. Weems describes the aftermath: “Night blanketed weary men who fell asleep where they dropped on the trampled prairie grass, while around them other prostrate men from both armies screamed and groaned in agony from wounds. By the eerie light of torches the surgeon’s saw was going the livelong night.”

Away from the battlefield, in army camps, the romance of the recruiting posters was quickly forgotten. The Second Regiment of Mississippi Rifles, moving into New Orleans, was stricken by cold and sickness. The regimental surgeon reported: “Six months after our regiment had entered the service we had sustained a loss of 167 by death, and 134 by discharges.” The regiment was packed into the holds of transports, 800 men into three ships. The surgeons continued:

The dark cloud of disease still hovered over us. The holds of the ships... were soon crowded with the sick. The effluvia was intolerable. ... The sea became rough. ... Through the long dark night the rolling ship would dash the sick man from side to side bruising his flesh upon the rough corners of his berth. The wild screams of the delirious, the lamentations of the sick, and the melancholy of the groans of the dying, kept up one continual scene of confusion. ... Four weeks we were confined to the loathsome ships and before we had landed at the Brasos, we consigned 28 of our men to the dark waves.

Meanwhile, by land and by sea, Anglo-American forces were moving into California. A young naval officer, after the long voyage around the southern cape of South America, and up the coast to Monterey in California, wrote in his diary:

Asia... will be brought to our very doors. Population will flow into the fertile regions of California. The resources of the entire country ... will be developed. ... The public lands lying along the route [of railroads] will be changed from deserts into gardens, and a large population will be settled.

It was a separate war that went on in California, where Anglo-Americans raided Spanish settlements, stole horses, and declared California separate from Mexico – the “Bear Flag Republic.” Indians lived there, and naval officer Revere gathered the Indian chiefs and spoke to them (as he later recalled):

I have called you together to have a talk with you. The country you inhabit no longer belongs to Mexico, but to a might nation whose territory extends from the great ocean you have all seen or heard of, to another great ocean thousands of miles toward the rising sun. ... Our armies are now in Mexico, and will soon conquer the whole country. But you have nothing to fear from us, if you do what is right. ... if you are faithful to your new rulers. ... I hope you will alter your habits, and be industrious and frugal, and give up all the low vices which you practice. ... We shall watch over you, and give you true liberty; but beware of sedition, lawlessness, and all other crimes, for the army which shields can assuredly punish, and it will reach you in your most retired hiding places.

Gen. Stephen Kearny moved easily into New Mexico, and Santa Fe was taken without battle. An American staff officer described the reaction of the Mexican population to the U.S. Army’s entrance into the capital city:
Our march into the city... was extremely warlike, with drawn sabers, and daggers in every look. ... As the American flag was raised, and the cannon boomed it glorious national salute from the hill, the pent-up emotion of many of the women could be suppressed no longer... as the wail of grief arose above the din of our horses’ tread, and reached our ears from the depth of the gloomy-looking buildings on every hand.

That was in August. In December, Mexicans in Taos, New Mexico, rebelled against American rule. The revolt was put down and arrests were made. But many of the rebels fled and carried on sporadic attacks, killing a number of Americans, then hiding in the mountains. The American army pursued, and in a final desperate battle, in which 600 to 700 rebels were engaged, 150 were killed, and it seemed the rebellion was now over.

In Los Angeles, too, there was a revolt. Mexicans forced the American garrison there to surrender in September 1846. The United States did not retake Los Angeles until January, after a bloody battle.

Gen. Taylor had moved across the Rio Grande, occupied Matamoros, and now moved southward through Mexico. But his volunteers became more unruly on Mexican territory. Mexican villages were pillaged by drunken troops. Cases of rape began to multiply. As the soldiers moved up the Rio Grande to Camargo, the heat became unbearable, the water impure, and sickness grew – diarrhea, dysentery, and other maladies – until a thousand were dead. At first the dead were buried to the sounds of the “Dead March” played by military band. Then the number of dead was too great, and formal military funerals ceased. Southward to Monterey and another battle, where men and horses died in agony, and one officer described the ground as “slippery with ... foam and blood.”

The U.S. Navy bombarded Vera Cruz in an indiscriminate killing of civilians. One of the Navy’s shells hit the post office, another a surgical hospital. In two days, 1,300 shells were fired into the city, until it surrendered. A reported for the _New Orleans Delta_ wrote: “The Mexicans variously estimate their loss at from 500 to 1000 killed and wounded, but all agree that loss among the soldiery is comparatively small and the destruction among the women and children is very great.”

Col. Hitchcock, coming into the city, wrote: “I shall never forget the horrible fire of our mortars ... going with dreadful certainty ... often in the centre of private dwellings – it was awful. I shudder to think of it.” Still, Hitchcock, the dutiful soldier, wrote for Gen. Scott “a sort of address to the Mexican people” which was then printed in English and Spanish by the tens of thousands saying “we have not a particle of ill-will towards you ... we are here for no earthly purpose except the hope of obtaining a peace.”
It was a war of the American elite against the Mexican elite, each side exhorting, using, killing its own population as well as the other. The Mexican commander Santa Anna had crushed rebellion after rebellion, his troops also raping and plundering after victory. When Col. Hitchcock and Gen. Winfield Scott moved into Santa Anna’s estate, they found its walls full of ornate paintings. But half his army was dead or wounded.

**The Battle for Mexico City**

Gen. Scott moved toward the last battle – for Mexico City – with 10,000 soldiers. They were not anxious for battle. Three days’ march from Mexico City, at Jalapa, seven of his 11 regiments evaporated, their enlistment times up, the reality of battle and disease too much for them.

On the outskirts of Mexico City, at Churubusco, Mexican and American armies clashed for three hours and thousands died on both sides. Among the Mexicans taken prisoner were 69 U.S. Army deserters.

As often in war, battles were fought without point. After one such engagement near Mexico City, with terrible causalities, a marine lieutenant blamed Gen. Scott: “He had originated it in error and caused it to be fought, with inadequate forces, for an object that had no existence.”

In the final battle for Mexico City, Anglo-American troops took the height of Chapultepec and entered the city of 200,000 people. Gen. Santa Anna having moved northward. This was September 1847. A Mexican merchant wrote to a friend about the bombardment of the city: “In some cases whole blocks were destroyed and a great number of men, women and children killed and wounded.”

Gen. Santa Anna fled to Huamantla, where another battle was fought, and he had to flee again. An American infantry lieutenant wrote to his parents what happened after an officer named Walker was killed in battle:

Gen. Lane ... told us to “avenge the death of the gallant Walker” ... Grog shops were broken open first, and then, maddened with liquor, every species of outrage was committed. Old women and girls were stripped of their clothing – and many suffered still greater outrages. Men were shot by dozens ... their property, churches, stores, and dwelling houses ransacked. ... It made me for the first time ashamed of my country.

**Desertion grew. In March 1847 the army reported over a thousand deserters. The total number of deserters during the war was 9,207 (5,331 regulars and 3,876 volunteers). Those who did not desert became harder and harder to manage. Gen. Cushing referred to 65 such men in the First Regiment of Massachusetts Infantry as “incorrigibly mutinous and insubordinate.”**

On the night of Aug. 15, 1847, volunteer regiments from Virginia, Mississippi, and North Carolina rebelled in northern Mexico against Col. Robert Treat Paine. Paine killed a mutineer, but two of his lieutenants refused to help quell the mutiny. The rebels were ultimately exonerated in an attempt to keep the peace.

The glory of victory was for the president and the generals, not the deserters, the dead, the wounded. The Massachusetts Volunteers had started with 630 men. They came home with 300 dead, mostly from disease, and at the reception dinner on their return their commander, Gen. Cushing, was hissed by his men.

As the veterans returned home, speculators immediately showed up to buy the land warrants given by the government. Many soldiers, desperate for money, sold their 160 acres for less than $50.

Mexico surrendered. There were calls among Americans to take all of Mexico. The treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, signed February 1848, just took half. The Texas boundary was set at the Rio Grande; New Mexico and California were ceded. The United States paid Mexico $15 million, which led the *Whig Intelligencer* to conclude that “we take nothing by conquest. ... Thank God.”

One Pennsylvania volunteer, stationed at Matamoros late in the war, wrote:

We are under very strict discipline here. Some of our officers are very good men but the balance of them are very tyrannical and brutal towards the men. ... [T]onight on drill an officer laid a soldier’s skull open with his sword. ... But the time may come and that soon when officers and men will stand on equal footing. ... A soldier’s life is very disgusting.

**Mexico surrendered. There were calls among Americans to take all of Mexico. The treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, signed February 1848, just took half. The Texas boundary was set at the Rio Grande; New Mexico and California were ceded. The United States paid Mexico $15 million, which led the Whig Intelligencer to conclude that “we take nothing by conquest. ... Thank God.”**

*Used by permission of Howard Zinn. This reading is excerpted from A People’s History of the United States (teaching edition), by Howard Zinn (New York: The New Press, 1997).*

To see a timeline of the Mexican-American war visit us online at: [http://education.goodmantheatre.org](http://education.goodmantheatre.org)
Most Americans have descendants from other countries. Immigration has been prevalent in American culture since Christopher Columbus’ arrival (in the Bahamas) in 1492. Our Thanksgiving tradition is based on a peaceful event—the Pilgrims and indigenous North Americans finding harmony over food. But Columbus’ voyage across the ocean concluded with diseases wiping out almost the entire indigenous Bahamian population. When it wasn’t disease, war was killing most of the indigenous North American people. And then came the slave trade.

Immigration unfortunately is often followed by persecution, which today takes form in immigrants’ inability to speak for themselves, whether about housing concerns or basic employee rights. Making the situation even more difficult and problematic for immigrants is Arizona’s Senate Bill 1070 and Indiana’s Senate Bill 590. Arizona’s SB 1070 is now law, and Indiana’s SB 590 has passed through the House, meaning its passing into law is imminent.

Both bills deal with illegal immigration in terms that are broader and more severe. The U.S. Constitution states someone who “(1) enters or attempts to enter the U.S. at any time or place other than as designated by immigration officers; (2) eludes examination by immigration officers; or (3) attempts to enter or obtains entry to the U.S. by a willfully false or misleading representation is guilty of improper entry by an alien,” and it’s an offense punishable by federal law. It is important to note neither SB 1070 or SB 590 refutes these stipulations, but make troubling addendums.

In the Indiana bill, English is the required language, with “certain exceptions” (which are never clarified), by all officers and state employees while performing their duties. A common argument when people immigrate to the U.S. is that they need to learn “our language.” Although English is the predominant language in the U.S., our country has no official language. The U.S.
is unusual in the respect it doesn’t have an official language. English is taught in many countries, but the “convenience” of being able to converse with everyone in English is nonexistent. Think about the last time you were in another country—do all travelers speak a country’s official language the entire time or learn each country’s official language? Indiana’s SB 590 would essentially legalize confusion and miscommunication by disallowing people to use Spanish when needed.

The main issue with both these senate bills is they legalize snap judgments, such as racial profiling. Both the Arizona immigration law and the Indiana SB 590 permit law officials to “verify the citizenship or immigration status of individuals in certain situations” (Indiana SB 590). If the individuals are incapable of proving their citizenship, they can be arrested and deported. In the Arizona law, a law enforcement officer can arrest an individual without a warrant, if the officer has probable cause to “believe the individual has committed any public offense that makes the person removable from the U.S.” By legalizing unfounded suspicion of individuals, law enforcement officers can legally get rid of anyone they don’t want in the U.S.

Which brings us to GIITEM, or the Gang and Immigration Intelligence Team Enforcement Mission. GIITEM is a stipulation of the Arizona immigration law that sets aside money for gang and immigration enforcement, in addition to county jail reimbursement costs related to immigration. Jails across America are overpopulated and already impose an enormous burden to taxpayers. Through such programs as GIITEM, fiscals rewards are incentives to bring in more illegal immigrants and catch more gang members.

But GIITEM is not the only manner in which money has factored into the legal treatment of illegal immigrants. Under SB 1070 and SB 590, employers face severe financial persecution for knowingly hiring illegal immigrants. For instance, in Indiana’s SB 590, the Department of Workforce Development can obtain the reimbursements of amounts paid as “unemployment insurance benefits from employers that knowingly employed unauthorized aliens.” Unemployment benefits are keeping many families afloat in this recession economy. By intimidating employers to lose a substantial amount of money for “knowingly” hiring one illegal immigrant, an entire population can be deemed risky.

Indiana’s SB 590 also includes legal ramifications for harboring illegal immigrants. Anyone found “... transporting, concealing, harboring, or shielding from detection of an alien or aiding, abetting, or engaging in conspiracy to commit one of those acts knowing or in reckless disregard of the fact that the alien has come to, entered, or remains in the United States in violation of law,” or “encouraging or inducing an alien to come to, enter into, or reside in the United States knowing or in reckless disregard of the fact that the alien coming to, entering into, or residing in the United States,” is in violation of Indiana state law. This legislation also requires law enforcement officers to “... impound motor vehicles for violations of crimes related to transporting, concealing, harboring, or shielding from detection aliens.” With such a broad approach to the “harboring” of an illegal alien, simply driving a friend home could be reason for your car to be impounded and for you to be in violation of Indiana state law.

As such states as Indiana and Arizona take a harder stance against illegal immigration, questions of class, culture and the value of human capital are raised. In deeming English a requirement in a nation that lacks an official language, we encourage people, illegal or not, to stop expressing themselves in Spanish. This exact mentality is the reason so many indigenous American languages have been lost. An estimate from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology lists 74 of 165 indigenous American languages as near extinct. In a nation where young indigenous Americans were punished—often physically—in schools for speaking their native tongue, it is sad that we would legalize a one-language mentality. As we continue to squash culture under the guise of “legality,” we do a disservice to our own nation and, indeed, the world.
Waited for the moment with so much anticipation—
the moment to escape and run to the arms of my father.
Escape from a world that I didn’t choose.
The moment to run away from rotten bread crumbs and
the hunger I’ve come to know so well.
As if that had formed my daily routine.

I wonder what Papi is doing.
I bet Mami is yelling at my brother or sister, to eat the few
miseries she was able to find yesterday.
From my eyes, tears of anger are born ...

No, I didn’t choose my race or my flag or that piece of
muddy land we lived in.
It was given to us by the choice of God, or fate or a sad, sad mistake.
I’m afraid—very afraid. We are ALL afraid actually.
But we deny to admit it.
“That’s not how brave people feel,” Mami would say.

In this land of the rich, seems like time is playing a trick
with me.
And the ticker of the clock failed to go on to the next number.
I was no longer Ecuadorian.
I was now “THE PAPERLESS.”

My knees are scarred.
The entire journey seems hopeless.
But I must continue,
For my Papi: Who keeps wearing out his calloused hands
to keep me alive.
For my Mami: Whose tears I’ve witnessed shed, as she
knelt in front of Jesus Christ.
For my sister: Whose bravery radiates through her light
brown eyes.
And for my brother: Whose unique personality can make
a bloodless corpse shake with laughter.

If I were to fail ...
IF I WERE TO FAIL.
I’d fail with certainty that I never gave up because He
held my hand through it all ...

Pray for me, because my freedom is also our future.
I want to change the world, but THE PAPERLESS can only
do so much.

Gissela is a Chicago teen who shared her poetry with
the Albany Park Theatre Project via their Facebook wall.
What do you think of Gissela’s experience? Do you know
other teens in Chicago who identify with the persona
attached to being paperless?
Tales of Two Cities

BY LIZ DENGEL

Where two countries meet geographically, their cultures, politics and social dynamics also clash and meld. This process gives border regions a unique identity. The borderlands between Mexico and the U.S. are no exception.

The border itself is simultaneously arbitrary and absolute. When the Treaty of Hidalgo established the modern U.S.-Mexico border in 1848, the Rio Grande became the dividing line between the two countries. At the time, the Rio Grande flowed through the middle of a Mexican province called Nuevo Santander. According to Dr. Américo Paredes, “Friends and relatives who had been near neighbors—within shouting distance across a few hundred feet of water—now were legally in different countries. If they wanted to visit each other, the law required that they travel many miles up- or downstream, to the nearest official crossing place, instead of swimming or boating directly across as they used to do before” (Paredes 26).

Today, the borderline that must have puzzled the people of Nuevo Santander carries great significance for both residents of Mexico and the U.S. On the U.S. side of the border, per-capita income is more than $30,000. On the Mexican side, it is less than $4,000. Spread out along the 2,000-mile border, there are 42 ports by which people can pass legally between the two countries. A fence measuring 700 miles long, called “The Great Wall of Mexico” by U.S. Homeland Security, reinforces the border. Along the border between Mexico and the U.S. are dozens of twin port cities. Despite their regional similarities, close proximity and frequent intermingling, these pairs present different economic, social and political realities. Such twin cities allow us to glimpse the difference that a border makes.
San Diego, California, lies directly across the Otay Mesa border-crossing from Tijuana, which is the largest city in the Mexican state of Baja California. Otay Mesa is an extremely important port for regional trade. In each month of 2001, about $1.6 billion worth of products were shipped through Otay Mesa. As large cities, both San Diego and Tijuana have beautiful cityscapes, museums and centers of culture. In 2006, both cities had populations between 1 million and 1.5 million, though Tijuana’s population is significantly younger than San Diego’s. Roughly one-third of Tijuana residents are younger than age 14. Another third are between ages 15 and 29. San Diego’s economy is built on defense, technology and tourism industries. Tijuana’s economy is based in tourism and manufacturing. In 1999, the median annual household income of a San Diego resident was $45,733. In Tijuana, a resident who makes more than the equivalent of $6,240 annually is considered an “upper earner.” Tijuana has twice the national average of “upper earners,” which results in a higher quality of living but also puts the city’s economy at risk.

American companies including Sony, Kodak, Levi Strauss and Sara Lee own and operate factories in Tijuana. These companies can have their goods manufactured in parts of Asia or Eastern Europe without having to pay wages as high as those in Tijuana. Another crucial difference between San Diego and Tijuana is the occurrence of violent crime. Statistically, San Diego is one of the 10 safest cities in the U.S. In contrast, despite an increase in military presence in 2007, a turf war between drug traffickers has made Tijuana one of Mexico’s most violent cities. According to a Reuters article last year, 1,400 drug killings took place in Tijuana from 2008 to 2010. Its tourism industry has suffered as a result.

Farther east along the border, the much smaller cities of Nogales, Arizona, and Nogales, Sonora—outside which El Nogalar takes place—also demonstrate a unique relationship. Named for the walnut trees that used to cover the mountain pass, both cities share a name derived from the Spanish word for “walnut.” At a population of just more than 20,000, Nogales, Arizona, has about one-tenth as many residents as Nogales, Sonora. While the economy of Nogales, Arizona, is dependent on agribusiness, the economy of Nogales, Sonora, is based in manufacturing and in tourism. According to the Nogales International, Nogales, Arizona, depends on the residents of Nogales, Sonora, to keep its stores open: More than 60 percent of the U.S. city’s sales tax comes from Mexican shoppers who cross the border daily. In turn, Nogales, Sonora, also offers certain gift shops, restaurants and even medical facilities that cater to Americans coming across the border.

Like Nogales and Nogales, the cities of El Paso, Texas, and Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, also once shared a name. Until late in the 19th century, Ciudad Juárez was called El Paso del Norte, the north pass, and modern-day El Paso was simply the underdeveloped outskirts of El Paso del Norte. Today, Ciudad Juárez has the larger population of the two cities—an estimated 1.5 million people to El Paso’s 800,000. El Paso’s economy involves business, defense, education and manufacturing. Ciudad Juárez is growing rapidly as a manufacturing city for such companies as Bosch, Boeing and Cardinal Health.

But when it comes to crime, the gulf widens between these side-by-side cities. In 2004, El Paso was named third among the safest large American cities. In comparison, Ciudad Juárez has been called “the most violent zone in the world outside of declared war zones” (Olsen “Ciudad Juárez passes 2,000 homicides in 2009, so far”). While we might discount this assessment as merely the fearful exaggeration of an American publication, the numbers corroborate the Chronicle’s shocking statement. In 2010, 3,075 homicides took place in Ciudad Juárez. Sadly, the city also has become infamously known for the number of young women who have disappeared there—at least 3,000 since the early 1990s. Along with the city’s murder rate, the danger that young women face in Ciudad Juárez explains why in El Nogalar, Lopez insists so adamantly that Dunia not go work on the border with her friend Neli.

The border between Mexico and the U.S. has become a familiar subject in modern American politics. Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer cited “border-related violence and crime due to illegal immigration” as a compelling reason for the state’s recent controversial crackdown on immigration. But Brewer failed to note that cities on the American side of the U.S.-Mexico border have some of the lowest violent crime rates in the country. Meanwhile, their twin cities on the other side of the border suffer through poverty, police corruption, drug trafficking and violence.
Oftentimes, we think of “consumption” in terms of eating or drinking something, but it also can be used to describe our relationship to a non-food item. In economics, consumption often refers to the use of a “final good” by a “consumer.” A final good is any product we might buy, such as an automobile. By comparison, an “intermediate good” is something one company might sell another company to make said automobile. In this example, the battery, windows or seat padding is an intermediate good, and you or I purchasing the car is considered consumption of a final good.

Economic scholars make many attempts to rationalize and explain how we as consumers, or buyers of things, spend money. Frequently economic theories start with the phrase: “Assume that ...” There are a number of ways consumers completely throw off economic theories and the assumptions beneath them. A basic tenet of consumption theory long assessed that, given two items of the same purpose, structure and quality, consumers would choose to buy the less expensive item—but we know this is absolutely not true.

A cup of coffee, brewed from Starbucks beans in a non-Starbucks location—such as a hospital cafeteria—might be priced differently than the same sized coffee in a Starbucks retail location. A visitor, nurse or doctor may be more likely to buy a single cup of coffee from a nearby Starbucks than a cafeteria serving coffee brewed from Starbucks beans, even if it is slightly more expensive at the retail location. Packaging, advertisements, environment and habit could affect where you buy your coffee, but my favorite economic phenomenon also comes into play in this scenario: conspicuous consumption.

Conspicuous consumption was first coined by University of Chicago scholar and economist Thorstein Veblen in his 1899 book, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institution*. Veblen believed that the leisure class, or business elite, spent money on expensive items for the sole purpose of displaying wealth. Presently, conspicuous consumption refers to buying a nicer option among many for show, either to oneself or others. Commonplace examples of conspicuous consumption in American culture include the increase in house size since the 1950s, SUVs and high-priced fashion items.

Conspicuous consumption is not only an economic phenomenon, but a social one too. Buying for show is as much a burden for some folks as a joy; such phrases as “keeping up with the Joneses” are common ways to express the need to own, wear or drive what other people in a particular class can afford. Examples of these social implications occur throughout *The Cherry Orchard* and *El Nogalar*, as the matriarch in each story is desperately trying to sustain the lifestyle she once enjoyed, while also hiding the fact that she’s lost the ability to actually do so. Furthermore, new money is flaunted by those coming into it.

Only a few pages into *El Nogalar* Lopez asks Dunia, “... you like these boots? I just got them last week. You like these boots, don’t you?” only to be followed mere sentences later by a conversation about Lopez’s Blackberry.

Lopez: “It says here it won’t land for two more hours.”

Dunia: “Showoff. You see how you are? Always showing
Lopez: "Oh this? You like this, huh? You want one of these, don’t you?"

Dunia: “Showoff.”

Although a smartphone is becoming less an example of conspicuous consumption because it provides services other cellphones cannot, Dunia points to the very concept we’re illustrating. Lopez didn’t buy it because he needed it—he bought it to show off. Lopez’s money, however, is newer, and outlandish purchases with new money are common. To find an even stronger parallel to Veblen’s original concept of conspicuous consumption, let’s look at a line of dialogue from *The Cherry Orchard*.

Anya: “She already sold her villa near Mentone, and she had nothing left, nothing. And I hadn’t so much as a kopeck left, we barely managed to get there! But Mama doesn’t understand! When we had dinner in a station restaurant, she always ordered the most expensive dishes and tipped each of the waiters a ruble ...”

Similarly, we see Maite in *El Nogalar* unwilling to accept her new position as a woman in debt. Despite her increasingly concerning position, she gambles, offers beer and tequila to guests, and even throws a party, all while her “stingy” daughter Valeria protests, citing bills for labor, power and the interest as reasons they need to save.

This is the sad reality to conspicuous consumption. Like any habit that brings you pleasure, it is difficult to curb spending after a life of not worrying about funds. Think about famous actors, singers and athletes who have gone bankrupt because of their spending habits. Perhaps they had income like Lopez and the desire to have new “show-off” toys, but what happens when the money runs out? Similarly, we know of many corporations that continued to award bonuses to high-level executives, despite legal and financial issues after the 2008 housing crash. Whether the money is new or old, it is easy to get caught up in showing others you posses it.

Wondering how Lopez got that fancy American cell phone? Or how we acquire our delicious Ibarra state side? Learn more about consumption, and the North American Free Trade Agreement, online at: 

http://education.goodmantheatre.org

Hummers are one of many high priced, high gas consumption, utility vehicles. Originally developed as military vehicles, they turn heads, but their usefulness to the average person is questionable. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons user, Usien.
The Women of Juárez
BY AMALIA ORTIZ

Over 600 crosses set up in front of the student union at the University of Utah in remembrance of women who were killed near the U.S./Mexico border. Signs by the crosses say “Since 1993, 600 girls and women have been killed in Cuidad Juárez and Chihuahua City, Mexico. Most of the victims were young and poor, and many were sexually assaulted prior to their deaths. The authorities have done little to investigate or prosecute those responsible. In her film “Senorita Extraviada” Dolores Portillo explores the world of Juárez Mexico in order to bring to light those deplorable acts of violence against women.” This picture was taken on Dia de los Muertos, 2005. Photo courtesy of Paul Fisk.

AT THE WEST TIP OF TEXAS
a line divides us from them
and on the other side
they all look like me
yet on my side we sit passively nearby
while the other side allows a slow genocide

500 missing women
some claim more
some less
some dismissed as runaways
against parents’ protest
hundreds found dead
hundreds still missing
the exact count is a mystery
and those disappearing daily
they all look like me

I am a dead ringer
for an army of the dead
Mexico’s slaughtered sisters
all slim
long dark hair
petite
some say pretty

my family would in my absence
all young
all lost
or dead
and they all look like me

some foolishly search for one serial killer
when bus and cab drivers
even cops are under suspicion
while the ever growing numbers reflect an entire society
where young women are expendable
young women like me

mothers recognize raped and mutilated remains
daughters’ clothes with mismatched human bones
DNA that doesn’t match
those are her shoes
but that’s not her hat
that shirt is my sister’s
but those aren’t her slacks
dumped like trash
burnt to ash
in the desert that keeps its secrets
one body found in the middle of the street
in a neighborhood not unlike mine
on this side of the line
I am alive
and my rather reclines
in his retired military easy-chair bliss
of Ft. Bliss

Mom and Dad warn to be careful
but aren’t overly concerned
when my brothers and I
cross from El Paso to Juárez
for late-night cheap college drink-a-thons
as long as we stay on the touristy paths
that may exploit
but do protect Americans and our American dreams

we are different
and even my parents don’t seem to see
all those missing women
they all look like me

but I am told I am different
less Mexican
less poor
American thus worth more
different
similarities
they all worked like I do
so many last seen
going to or coming from work
at U.S. corporate-owned maquiladoras
but I’m told this isn’t an American issues
and I’m lucky I’m here on the safe side

safe
yet not quite out of earshot of distant cried
of families searching ditches and roadsides
bearing snapshot after snapshot
of my brown eyes
Have you seen this girl?
She is my sister
La has visto?
Es mi niña
my baby
mi hermana
my wife
Have you seen her?
This face? Esta cara?

When you fit the profile of a predator’s prey
you can’t help but take the crimes personally

I am a symbol of those who survive
mouth open in defiance of their silence
spared by a line in the sand
drawn between their grandfather
and mine
and if that line had fallen closer to home
somewhere between you and I
who would I be?
what would my worth be then?
and if silenced who would speak for me?

Amalia Ortiz grew up on the border and is now a performance poet,
actor, director, and activist in San Antonio. She has performed
throughout the United States and on HBO’s Def Poetry Jam. Ortiz also
is reprinted from “The Lines Between Us: Teaching About the Border
and Mexican Immigration,” with permission from Rethinking Schools,
Ltd.
Theatre Etiquette
With Artistic Director Robert Falls

What should I wear?
Definitely dress nicely but comfortably; try business casual. No tank tops, ripped jeans, etc. Baseball caps or hats must be moved once you enter the theatre. The Goodman is air-conditioned so be sure to bring an extra sweater or dress warmly.

What should I bring?
Only what you really need. Electronic devices such as **PSP, Nintendo DS, smart phones, and laser pointers** are not permitted during the show. If it makes noise or is distracting, please refrain from having it out in the theatre. A purse, bag, or backpack is fine. School supplies are not necessary. Remember that you are here to sit back, watch and enjoy, so don’t bring anything you don’t need.

(Please remember):
**No smoking, and no eating or drinking** while inside the theatre.

What if I need to leave the theatre during the show?
Only if it is an **emergency**. Otherwise, it’s very disrespectful. Make sure to use restrooms before the show, or wait until intermission.

Have respect for other audience members. This means **no talking during the performance, no feet on seats, and no kicking.** (For your safety and others’!)

Don’t forget to check out more resources on our website for upcoming materials and competitions:
http://education.goodmantheatre.org
How should I respond to what's going on on the stage?

Honestly but appropriately. If you find something funny, then laugh—but don’t laugh for five minutes straight or laugh so hard that you need to leave the theatre. Theatre is very different from watching a movie at home. Always remember that you are in a room full of people who are there to watch the performance. They can hear your responses just as well as you can hear theirs. Most important, the actors can hear and see you. They will appreciate any appropriate feed back but might be extremely offended if it is inappropriate. Whether you enjoy the play or not, you owe respect to the actors for having given it a try.

What to do during intermission:

Most plays have a 15 minute intermission. This gives you time to stretch your legs, walk, use the restroom, get water and discuss the play with your friends.

We do ask that if you are sitting on the main floor that you remain downstairs and if you are sitting in the mezzanine that you remain upstairs. There are restrooms on both floors. When intermission is over, the lights in the lobby will flash several times; that is your cue to get back to your seat because the performance is about to begin!

What to do after the show:

There will be a post-show discussion immediately following the performance. Members of the cast will come out on stage and answer your questions. Feel free to ask anything that’s on your mind about the show, but please remember to be respectful.

What to do before the show:

When your class arrives, your teacher will let the Education staff know how many people are in your group. It is a good idea to arrive at least 15-20 minutes before the performance.

If you are late, often you will not be allowed to enter the show until after intermission. Once your group is called, an usher will lead you to your seats and hand you a program.

Please promptly sit where you have been assigned. Remember that the show needs to begin on time and everyone needs to be seated.

And remember the Golden Rule of Theatre-going:

Theatre artists are paid professionals. When you enter a theatre, you are entering their work space. Respect their work as you would have them respect yours.

Enjoy the Show!
Reading Your Ticket

As a patron of the theatre, it is important to know how to read your ticket and find your seat. Generally, seats for all performances in the Goodman’s Albert Theatre are assigned seating, so be sure to know how to be able to find your seat. When you come with your school, you will be ushered to a section where you and your fellow students can sit and enjoy the play together.

Below is a seating chart – a map of all the seats in the Albert Theater – and an explanation of how to read your ticket. If you have any problems, ask an usher for help. They’re here for you!

---

**Goodman’s Albert Theatre**

Albert Ivar Goodman Theatre—Main Floor

Albert Ivar Goodman Theatre—Mezzanine

---

32
Writing Your Response Letter

After you have seen the show and discussed your responses in the classroom, it’s time to let us know what you thought! Your response letter plays an important role at Goodman Theatre. All of the letters we receive are forwarded to our artists, and you may get a response!

Pick one of the artists involved with Candide whose work was particularly memorable to you—an actor, designer, the playwright or the director—and write that artist a letter describing your experience at the show and your feedback about his or her work. Be honest and ask any questions that are on your mind.

Send us your letter within one month of seeing the show, and we’ll forward it on to that artist!

Here is a great student letter we received in response to Animal Crackers last season:

Dear Cast and Crew,

I would have to say that every single one of you have done a superb job in this play. All the effort you have put forth into this play has resulted in a memorable experience for all of us. I thought it was clever that the actors, actresses and the orchestra interacted with the audience. From viewing the original film of Animal Crackers, I think the cast played in the play and the original cast of Animal Crackers very similar! This play might have been the first encounter of the Marx brothers for many teenagers and children and I believe that the crew and cast of Animal Crackers proved that early comedy can also be entertaining and memorable!

The director’s vision of the play was a rather conscious one. Exposing the Marx brothers to the vast majority of people who never knew about them and bringing back nostalgic memories to the older audience was a great idea. This play was actually my first play and a first trip to Goodman Theatre. I myself, as a young adult, finally realized that plays are enjoyable and gratifying. The play had all the elements of emotion and slapstick comedy which made it a great one. The technical aspects as well as the props were amazingly set to follow each scene. My favorite scene had to be the scene where Harpo and Rivelli tried to clear up the misunderstanding of “The Flash.” I though the script was very flowing and comfortable. Was there any improv involved? I did not find any negative aspects of this play. I have found the play and the ambiance of Goodman Theatre very positive. I give Animal Crackers two thumbs up.

Sincerely,
A CPS student

Send your letters to:
Education and Community Engagement
Goodman Theatre
170 North Dearborn Street
Chicago, IL 60601
Or email us at: education@goodmantheatre.org

Goodman Theatre’s Education & Community Engagement is also online! Check us out on Facebook:
http://www.facebook.com/goodmaned
Or Twitter:
http://twitter.com/GoodmanEd
Or on our blog at:
http://education.goodmantheatre.org/blog/

We love hearing your thoughts, so don’t be afraid to drop us a line, comment, tag us in a note, @reply, or retweet us. Also check out our online educational resources for more information regarding the play you’ve seen, or anything else you’d like to know about how our programs (and theatre!) work.

Keep checking in for updates!