

**‘¡EL CUENTO NO ES EL CUENTO!
¡EL CUENTO ES QUIEN LO CUENTA!’:
TERMS OF SUBJECTIVITY IN
LUIS RAFAEL SANCHEZ’S *QUINTUPLES* (1985)**

Luis Rafael Sánchez’s two-act play presents a series of monologues delivered by the six members of a fictional Puerto Rican show business troupe, The Morrison Quintuples. Their performance supposedly takes place in front of the participants at a Conference on Family Affairs. Each of the quintuplets presents an improvised speech about his or her experiences of life as a member of the Morrison family. Being the master performer and head of the family, Papá Morrison is the last to speak, as a would-be representative of the consistent paternalism of Puerto Rican culture (Gelpí 1993). Ultimately, the Morrison family comes to represent the Puerto Rican nation, in another manifestation of a metaphor central to Puerto Rican cultural discourse. This metaphor presents Puerto Rico as a family (Gelpí 1993: 1-60, 65, 84-85, 158).

As in Carlos Fuentes’s *Orquídeas a la luz de la luna* (1982), two actors play a series of roles; in this case, the members of the Morrison family. On the back cover of the Ediciones del Norte edition of the play, the reader is informed that each Morrison “*vodevilesicamente improvisa*”. The play itself is described as vaudeville (p. xv), ‘una aventura de la imaginación’ (ibid.), and a parody of ‘una comedia de suspenso’ (ibid.). The Morrisons’ improvisations, as well as the above descriptions, indicate the installation of established models, in the form of stereotypes, which are purloined through parody and imaginative reworking. These latter forms of appropriation are carried out with the histrionic intensity of melodrama (Bianca), and in the mock-heroic tone of parody (Mandrake, Papá) or the frivolously playful tone of the ‘sainete’ (p. xv; Dafne).¹

The foregrounding of performance and inauthenticity raises the following question: How can the Morrisons be said to represent Puerto Rican identity? Indeed, the subjectivity from which an identity may emerge is presented as highly problematic since its integrity is threatened by processes associated with hysteria and abjection (Kristeva 1982). Such a problematic subjectivity inevitably affects the reception of the play as political allegory, especially since socio-political contradictions are observed in terms of the portrayal of individual characters rather than discussed in generalized abstractions. In tracing the Morrisons’ improvised

1. The *sainete*, like vaudeville, relies on satire and the parody of society’s mores.

appropriation, a major paradox arises at the levels of both characterization and the play's very dynamic. On the one hand, there is highlighted a fluid process of open-ended change, in preference to established models. Meanwhile, on the other, change still relies on acknowledgment and identification according to those models. Keeping the above complexities in mind, I have considered both Julia Kristeva's 'subject in process' (1984: ix, 22, 58, 233), or 'open system' of subjectivity (Lechte 1990: 72, 101, 114, 139, 183-84), as well as her examination of abjection (1982), of major importance in this study of the play's problematic search for a Puerto Rican identity. Naturally, in adapting Kristeva's ideas —first applied to iconoclastic and bleak European writers of the past, such as Lautréamont, Mallarmé, Céline—to an accessible, contemporary Latin American writer of comic works, such as Sánchez, differences of tone, perspective, and approach accompany distinct historico-cultural situations and determine separate modes of dependence and appropriation.

Hysteria

El yo imperial, el yo histérico y demás característicos de los personajes, su permanente ebriedad con unas emociones superlativas (p. xiv).

El ritmo escénico tiene un brío cercano a la danza frenética, una irreprimible urgencia (p. xv).

Hysteria —in its popular or stricter psychoanalytical senses —characterizes the tone and performances in *Quintuples* and reaches a crescendo with Papá Morrison's improvisation, "un crescendo formidable, tan histérico como la música de Wagner" (p. 71). Papá's hysteria is the culmination of that of all the Morrisons, also perhaps the expression of a displaced, distorted, and ill-represented identity. The frustrations and dangers of a hysterical subjectivity may be illustrated by examining Dafne's and Bianca's performances.

The first Morrison to perform is Dafne Morrison. The terms of reference used to describe her are cinematic. Catherine Deneuve, Sonia Braga, Jane Fonda's nude scene in *Coming Home* (1978), María Félix, are all cited (p. 1). Outdoing them all, Dafne is a 'cruce mejoradísimo' (ibid.) of the above sex symbols. A note of camp is introduced early on with a reference to Bette Midler's gay following (p. 1). The audience is forewarned that an ironic tone is being established when role models with a camp appeal are cited. This is reinforced by the reference to the queenly image of Diana Ross (p. 1). Thus, a precedent is set for Sánchez's characters to create their personae by poaching from an international repertoire of popular icons, incorporated into Puerto Rican culture. The Morrisons' poaching involves a camp revision of these icons.

Dafne wears the alluring red dress of the scarlet woman, the *femme fatale*, the torch singer and the Latin bombshell in the style of Iris Chacón.² Dafne's name is that of a flower with no true petals but whose sepals resemble petals. The implication is that all identity is a matter of performance and the projection of a credible if illusory image. Dafne is a self-creation rather than an essential and fixed entity. Thus artifice nullifies the importance of her unadorned physical appearance: “Si Dafne Morrison no fuera tan bella —más bella que nadie— no importaría demasiado. Porque la menor imperfección física habría sido, astutamente, combatida por los esplendores del *maquillaje* que luce” (p. 2).

The masquerade identified by psychoanalysis is implied by the above. Masquerade rejects the notion of an essential femininity and involves the assumption of a mask of femininity (Apter 1992; Doane 1992: 25-26). Indeed, Dafne's smile is described as “teatro inolvidable” (p. 2), whilst she is “falsamente adorable” (p. 9). Furthermore, after comparison of her with a whole host of famous actresses and singers, her flirtation with the audience is described as follows:

Dafne Morrison sonríe, uno por uno, a los trescientos espectadores o congresistas. Después, con los manierismos peculiares de las estrellas de cine mudo y las bailarinas flamencas, se vuelve coqueta, juguetona, provocadora. (p. 2)

Dafne's performance seems possessed of “histeria termina” (p. 2). The hysteria of her performance is linked to her anxious desire for the definitive image. She openly asserts this desire: “¡Soy aspirante a mito!” (p. 5). By becoming a myth, she would attain a privileged position in relation to semiotic systems. This position would be achieved through the transformation of herself into an institutionalized cultural entity. For mythology may be seen to stand as a paradigm of discourse and unity, being a symbolic structure of shared beliefs which defines cultures and peoples. If this is so, then Dafne may aspire to the stability of myth with the intention of counteracting the potentially destabilizing nature of masquerade. Masquerade may threaten female subjectivity because it appears to oblige the woman who masquerades to alternate between the active and passive positions of spectator (of her own image) and spectacle (the fetishized female).

Masquerade, in the form of Dafne's “improvisación”, may be seen to disrupt fixed positions of gender. As Dafne disingenuously declares, “la improvisación corre el peligro de la dispersión” (p. 6). The dispersion to which she refers may equate with the dissolution of any fixed subject-object dichotomy. According to such a dichotomy, woman as the fetishized female body or film image is subjected to the voyeurism of the masculine spectator. Through her improvised masquerade, Dafne is able to project herself as a deliberate fetish pre-viewed by herself as an

2. The outrageous Puerto Rican singer, dancer, and television superstar, known as *La Vedette* and, in an example of Puerto Rican *Spanglish*, *El volcano puertorriqueño*.

empowered spectator, though she does so only through a reversal, not a remodelling of the semiotic systems on which she depends.

The masquerader's vacillation between the masculine and feminine positions of spectator and spectacle, described above, may be compared to the hysteric's dilemma. The hysteric appears unable to be contained by a totalized concept of gender (Ragland-Sullivan 1992). It is true that Dafne differs from the hysteric in one important respect: her's is the knowing, controlled vacillation of the masquerader. This allows her the confidence to refer to herself as "loca de atarme" (p. 10). Still, the phrase "la improvisación corre el peligro de la dispersión" (p. 6) also refers to the risk the masquerader may run. She treads a fine line between spectacle and spectator, dependence on her masculine audience and autonomy. Firstly, there is the risk of losing control and becoming indistinguishable from the passive object, the fetishized female. Indeed, the success of masquerade may be taken to depend on the reinforcement of fetishized femininity through the latter's projection. In addition to the blurred boundary between fetishism and masquerade, the masquerader's assumed proximity to hysteria constantly threatens her with dispersion or disappearance as a subject (Ragland-Sullivan 1992). For the masquerader's risk of fragmentation is implicit in any simultaneous occupation of multiple positions in relation to systems of knowledge and sexuality. Bianca Morrison's subsequent performance (pp. 31-41) may serve to illustrate the potential dangers of hysterical fragmentation.

Bianca may serve as an example of the inappropriateness of gendered identity. From the outset of her improvisation, she is sexually ambiguous, "quisquillosamente femenina a través de su vestimento masculino" (p. 31). Like the hysterics Breuer and Freud treated (1895, 1905), she is unable to reconcile her experience as a woman with the pre-established cultural discourse that determines sexual roles. Like Freud's Dora (1905), Bianca closely identifies with masculinity. But she is denied access to the privileges of masculinity by the gender culturally assigned to her (Ragland-Sullivan 1989). Bianca's desire for masculinity is manifested through her wearing of a man's suit and her masculinization. Dynamic, coherent communication through language is associated with a masculine position in language. To speak, Bianca resorts to "vestimenta masculina" (p. 31). Thus power-dressed, she steps into her role. In her masculine guise, "dueña aparente de todas las situaciones [...] se dirige exactamente al facistol" (p. 31). She also adopts a manner of speaking, "de oración corta, algo tajante" (p. 32), identified with the masculinely gendered strong, silent type, the tough guy. This masculinized position, however, also cannot contain her, though she desperately clings to it, in "un impulso artificial [man-made] y hasta peligroso [unstable]" (p. 35). Her failure is evidenced by her attacks—of hysteria, the breakdown of masculine self-composure. What cannot be communicated in language is expressed in uncontrollable corporeal symptoms— anxiety, addiction, fits—and loss of linguistic control (Freudian slips).

Bianca's powerlessness arises from the elusive nature of her models. Lacking Dafne's detached control, she is unable to take possession of her prototypes. Sliding between the multiplicity of the models assigned to her —Bianca Jagger (p. 32), Shakespeare's two Bianca's (ibid.)— her vertigo does not allow her a sufficiently stable basis for appropriation. Instead, she remains dependent, a mirror in which others are reflected. As a non-person, she is thus constantly eclipsed, a fact proved by the vehemence of her denial of it: 'no me llamo Dafne', (p. 33).

Bianca's very name suggests the whiteness of an empty, unwritten page. Unable to fill the page of identity, she remains unexpressed, without a language of her own. Her name may be implicated in the failure of language to contain her and in her failure to occupy a stable position in language. Polylingualism, the recourse to more than one language, is manifested in the use of the Italian Bianca instead of the Spanish Blanca (pp. 32, 35). The multiplicity of polylingualism may be compared to the vacillating sexuality of the psychoanalytically defined hysteric.³ Moreover, Bianca's polylingualism may be translated into the conflictive, multicultural history of Puerto Rico (p. 36), which, for the most part, is not directly alluded to in *Quintuples*. Exceptionally, the conflictive nature of this history is touched upon by Bianca, in an undisguised political reference to the shooting, in 1954, of U.S. congressmen by Puerto Rican nationalists (p. 36) (Scarano 1993: 778-79).

Initially alienated from her assigned gender, Bianca dangerously overidentifies with masculinity and pays the price for entrusting herself totalizing models. On the other hand, Dafne detaches herself from the torment of inappropriate models of femininity by manipulating iconic representations of women in a masquerade as well as identifying with her father, the paragon of masculinity, El Gran Semental Papá Morrison (p. 6). Ultimately, however, the complexities of Dafne's course of action are hard to bear. Dafne creatively appropriates established female stereotypes through her customizing of them in her masquerade. But the dangers of masquerade oblige her to seek the stability of enduring myth. Ironically, enduring myths are nowhere to be found. Instead, there is myth as the fetish of mass culture. Film stars embody this type of myth. Far from enduring they are shown—in a performance whose comedy resides in the disparity between aspiration and actuality—to be eminently recyclable commodities.

Bianca's symptoms form part of a pathology revealed by all the Morrison's excessive, even freakish, behaviour in performance. The extreme nature of the Morrison's performance signals constant and transcendental struggle. It is a struggle

3. Hysterical polylingualism was recorded in the case of Anna O (Freud and Breuer 1895: 25). Anna O's polylingualism revealed itself as an inability to understand or communicate in her native German and a tendency to speak in one of more foreign tongues, in sequence or, at times of extreme anxiety, in an unintelligible mixture (Freud and Breuer 1895: 25). Dianne Hunter (1983: 467-68, 476) argues that this disruptive polylingualism may reflect a refusal of the cultural identity inscribed in the order of (coherent) German discourse and an unconscious desire, become conscious in the explosion of the conventions of language in contemporary feminist writing' (Hunter 1983: n43).

for constantly disputed identities.⁴ These identities are subject to the scrutiny of authority. In this case, authority is represented by what I presume to be a specialist audience of experts at the 'Congreso de Asuntos de la Familia' (p. xiv). For Puerto Rico, at a border between the First and Third Worlds, authority is disputed at the level of language and culture. As always, the latter are always implicated in economic and political power relations. These determine Puerto Rico's dependence in relation to an authority that has never wholly been its own.

The constant hysteria of the play may point to the failure of established discourses unable to contain or sustain specific Puerto Rican men and women who struggle with their identities in both the spheres of gender and nationality. In psychoanalytic terms, hysteria may be envisaged as arising from the irresolution of the Oedipal phase. In specific cultural terms, this irresolution may be translated into the instability of Puerto Rico's position between two languages, several cultures and cultural strata, the First and the Third Worlds.⁵

Paradoxically, in addition to being a symptom of displacement, hysteria translates into a possible condition of survival. As well as indicating unease and disorientation, hysteria provides the margin with a means of response and appropriation. As an unsettling excess, it may function in terms of Paul Julian Smith's exhaustive undoing by overdoing (1992a: 26), or even as a precondition of progress, since it may be perceived as a dissatisfaction with current delimitations. Such a view seems to be supported by the important role played by the first psychoanalytically defined hysterics in furthering social causes such as feminism, unionism, and psychoanalysis itself (Appignanesi and Forrester 1992). However, hysteria may be perceived to function positively only as a precondition for transition into a more integrated social role, not as an end in itself. For instance, in Bianca's case, her role as an institutionalized hysteric would ultimately reinforce her marginalization. If she were given the stage of the Conference only in this capacity, her cultural empowerment would be limited and self-defeating. If she were allowed to speak only in her capacity as the subject of a case history who appeals to the privileged, possibly expert audience (of psychoanalysts? social workers?), for recognition and acceptance as a suitable case for treatment she would be dependent on her audience, as on a psy-

4. All the Morrisons adopt names other than their given ones (p. 32). Interestingly, the baptism of the three male Morrisons as Ifigenio evidences the instability of their identity, in an inversion of the hysterical bisexuality I have traced in female hysterics. The foregrounded theatricality of *Quintuples*, suggests that the male characters have been named after the tragic Greek heroine Iphigenia: "Tres distintas personas y un solo nombre verdadero: Ifigenio. No es cómico, es trágico" (p. 32). The bisexual transformation of a woman's name into a man's makes evident the weakness of rigid gender positions and undermines the male Morrisons' masculinity. The adoption of new names implies liberating reinvention. In fact, this reinvention involves dependence since it constitutes an improvisation within a theatrical tradition (classical Greek theatre). Finally, the game of improvisation is a serious one ('no es cómico. es trágico' p. 32) since it challenges identities established as a result of conflict within a network of economic, social, political, and cultural contexts.

5. For the contextualization, in Puerto Rican cultural discourse, of hysteria as one manifestation of the constant theme of colonial dependence as disease, see Juan G. Gelpí (1993), especially pp. 54-55.

choanalyst or confessor. If such were the case, Bianca would be imprisoned by her “histórica pasión” (p. 41), as a woman “aturdida por el abandono y la confesión hecha a retazos dolorosos” (p. 40). However, she is not confined to this role. As an intense performer, she compels, providing “una porfiada liberación” (p. 41) through the pleasure of entertainment. The latter, examined in the conclusion to this paper, provides the means to proceed beyond the neuroses of individual characters who merely provide ephemeral roles for the performer.

Abjection

BABY: ¿Se me oyó? ¿Se me oyó claramente? (p. 29)

CARLOTA: Los microbios nos asedian. A ver quién ríe último, los microbios o nosotros (p. 56).

Paralleling hysteria, abjection seems to provide another manifestation of the disintegration of an unsatisfactory subjectivity. Two of the Morrisons, Baby and Carlota display symptoms that compare to the abjection Julia Kristeva (1982) discusses.

According to Kristeva, the basis of abjection can be traced to a point just prior to the resolution of the Oedipus Complex and prior to the child's separation from the pre-Oedipal mother (Kristeva 1982: 12-13). This intermediate stage supposedly anticipates the establishment of the delimited speaking subject. During this stage, the physical expulsion of defiled body products helps to establish a clean body (inside) in opposition to a defiled outside (Kristeva 1982: 69-72). Moreover, this process of expulsion and delimitation is held to anticipate, as its physical equivalent, the rejection, in the Oedipal phase, of the mother in favour of the father, whose law is assumed to govern family, social, and cultural being (Kristeva 1982: 73-75).

The nausea of abjection is posited as emerging from the failure definitively to complete the process of expulsion and separation. This failure is evidenced by an instability of the boundaries of inside and outside, resulting in the disruption of subjectivity (Kristeva 1982: 13-15). Therefore, certain corporeal elements are considered disorderly and disruptive, since they are perceived as occupying an ambiguous space both inside and outside and thus horrifyingly blur the subject's boundaries. The corporeal elements referred to may all be associated with menstrual blood and bodily waste (eg. cut hair, nail parings, sweat). Being the products of bodily functions, these elements are manifestations of nature, the threatening counterpart of culture. As such, they are evidence of the natural cycle of birth and death which may be associated with a fecund mother who inspires dread through the incest she may provoke (Kristeva 1982: 69-89).

In many cultures these elements have been shown to be subject to ritual acts of cleansing aimed at purifying the body, reinforcing the boundaries between the body and its polluting outside (Douglas 1979), as well as preventing a regressive dissolu-

tion of subjectivity. According to the same terms, disease also threatens boundaries by involving the contamination of a clean body by an outside agent that becomes part of that body (Kristeva 1982: 93, 101-03, cf. 127). Meanwhile, in all cultures the corpse, an ambiguous object, both human and non-human, impure because of its connection with excrement (Deuteronomy 24: 1), is subject to ritual funerary acts. These are aimed at clearly marking the boundaries of life and death and preventing the contamination of the living by the dead (Kristeva 1982: 108-10).

The dissolution of self implied by abjection and its corporeal symptoms may be associated with Baby's shock (he is left "sin alientos") when Mandrake refers to Baby's soiling himself as a child (p. 24), Baby's copious sweating (pp. 24-25), and obsessive shaving (p. 19) which leaves "la piel facial azulena de tanto afeitarla" (ibid.). Baby seems to occupy a liminal space at the threshold of subjectivity, evidenced by his speaking to himself (pp. 19-20). With one foot in the symbolic arena of language, he is able to speak. However, he has not fully taken up a clear position in relation to dialogic relationships. His dialogic incapacity is perceptible in the speech concerning every subject's dependence on others for his identity (p. 26). Instead of engaging in dialogue as a subject he is subjected to others. Baby speaks, but not as an integrated subject to his equal. He speaks to himself, and when he does address the audience he is full of uncertainty (pp. 20, 25, 29).

Already marked as an immature subject by his name, Baby is similarly made conspicuous by his weak eyesight, signalled by his thick glasses (p. 19). The clean detachment of the spectator from the object of his gaze may be viewed as a consequent manifestation of the dialogic distinction between self and other arising from a resolution of the Oedipal phase and the entry into language. Is Baby's visual inadequacy merely another manifestation of the failure to achieve the prerequisite detachment of the culturally integrated subject/viewer?

In contrast to Dafne's mixing and matching of iconic stars as part of the projection of her masquerade, and her skilful manipulation of language, Baby is a failed postmodernist. He is unable to achieve detachment and is therefore "tierno y cursi" (p. 23) when he takes Papá Morrison's clichés of utopian domestic bliss at face value (ibid.). Baby is a slave to these clichés rather than able to invest them with new meaning and intent. To have been able to do so he would have had to distance himself sufficiently to employ some strategy such as parody, irony, or camp. By these means, he would have been able to remake his terms of reference and the language that defines him to his own requirements, reinvent his family life. Thus, he could have legitimated himself by assigning himself his own made-to-measure family history and identity. The transgressive excess of Baby's infantile tantrums temporarily enables him to assert himself (p. 24), perhaps the only way he is able to do so. Subsequently, however, Baby's standing as a subject is always threatened and undermined since he is generally only able to conform to rather than rework the given terms of his existence.

Baby's liminality as an object, tenuously acculturated subject may be signalled by several elements suggesting blurred boundaries. These elements are: 1) Baby's

grey suit (p. 19). Grey is a neutral colour between black and white.⁶ 2) Baby's mixed emotions: “Se ríe hacia dentro —como si la risa lo entretuviera a la par que lo avergonzara” (p. 21). 3) Baby's inward laughter (ibid.). Baby may be characterized as a borderline case. If this is so, then the empty wire cage he carries may symbolize his haunting and marginalized confinement by a position in language and culture he cannot occupy. Meanwhile, Carlota Morrison's improvisation constitutes a further exploration of pathological liminality.

Whilst Baby is characterized as a wimp, Carlota is defined according to the stereotypes of the good wife (evidenced by her overly solicitous attitude towards her husband) and responsible teacher, her “ordinariedad decente” (p. 55). As an individual woman, Carlota is not fully integrated in or represented in the social sphere determining her social roles and her “compromisos profesionales” (p. 56). Her excessive wifely concern is an attempt to compensate for her alienation from the traditionally male-dominated sphere of public life through a reinforcement of the woman's traditional privilege in the domestic sphere. Her complex displacement underscores the often conflicting nature of individual, sexual, social and national interests. By stating that “soy maestra de español aunque no ejerzo” (p. 57), Carlota expresses her inability to teach a language that cannot represent her socially as an individual woman, even though, as a Puerto Rican, she may have struggled, as many have, to establish Spanish as her national language. Uncomfortable in the social sphere mediated by language, she finds her voice in the marginal.

Carlota finds her place in society through illness and a usurpation of subjectivity undertaken from its unsettling margin. The inscription of her supposed illnesses into language is made possible by the mediation of a tradition of medical discourse. This tradition is one of symptom reading (semiology/σημειολογία), dating back to the medical practice of ancient Greece. By means of her status as a patient, Carlota, like Bianca, enters language. Thus, though she is unable to function in society as a fully integrated subject (“aunque no ejerzo”, p. 57), as the object of medical practice, she finds a voice through the hypochondriac performance of or allusion to significant symptoms. That we are dealing with a problematic coming into being, through a mediating discourse, is evidenced by the fact that Carlota's symptoms seem to have no basis in actual illness. Indeed, later, Papá refers to “enfermedades que los médicos no descubrían” (p. 69). With no basis in an actual pathology, Carlota's symptoms are conjured into language and significance by a hypochondriac well read in mass-circulation health publications. As such, she employs the signifiers of an established popular discourse to reappropriate her authority as a “maestra que va a dictar cátedra” (p. 56). Nevertheless, the fact that Carlota is forced to such an extreme strategy, implies torment as well as legitimation. She is obliged to suffer her manufactured ailments as if they were real, “enfermedades

6. Grey also predominates as the key colour in the attire of the similarly liminal character, Carlota (pp. 55-56).

[...] *verdaderamente suyas porque las padece*" p. 56). Carlota's ailments constitute the symptoms of her painful marginalization as a woman.

By occupying a liminal position in relation to subjectivity, Carlota is exceedingly vulnerable to the abjection described previously. Carlota's abjection takes four main forms. Food and drink, disease, death, and smells may all be envisaged as disrupting the boundary separating the subject's inside and outside. A preoccupation with all four forms surfaces in Carlota's phobic attitude to food, her hypochondria, morbidity, and sensitivity to what she perceives as offensive smells. If narcissism indicates a desire for the detachment and well defined ego of subjectivity, then Carlota is constantly threatened. However, her constant articulation of the illnesses that threaten to assail her preempt their threat. Hence, the statement "*Qué bien estás Carlota Morrison*" (p. 49) is resented, since the integrity of a healthy woman suggests the body's potential vulnerability. Ultimately, a compliment makes Carlota feel "*herida en su amor propio*" (p. 49).

In an example of subjectivity's prerequisite expulsion of disorderly agents, mentioned earlier, Carlota unsuccessfully disavows the body and its needs. Her desire for a detached, well defined identity as a woman and a Puerto Rican, takes the form of a phobia in relation to food (p. 59) and drink (p. 57) —both possible agents of abjection (Kristeva 1982: 75-77, 93, 95-99, cf. 119). As oral objects, food and drink suggest abjection because they highlight the border between the natural and cultural. The mouth's ingestion of nourishment is the natural counterpart of its production of speech. Moreover, such ingestion points back to the infant's breast-feeding and thus threatens a regression from the adult use of language, by means of which s/he functions as a socially integrated subject. Indeed, may the height of abjection not be to talk with one's mouth full of food? Ultimately, Carlota's disavowal can never be successful, however strict her diet. The body's inevitable demands for food and drink exacerbate what has become Carlota's obsession.

Disease —associated with encroaching waste and decay— provokes Carlota's hypochondria by being perceived as representing the threat of being engulfed and made impure by infection from an autonomous outside agent ("*los microbios nos asedian*", p. 56). Meanwhile, Carlota's awareness of the imminence of death ("*total, dentro de cien años todos seremos calvos, todos seremos cadáveres indiferenciados*"), (ibid.) may be related to Kristeva's assertion (1982: 3-4) that death is the ultimate form of abjection.

Carlota feels similarly endangered by smells that threaten to encroach upon her. The blurring of the boundary between clean and impure increases due to the fact that the smell that offends Carlota is cologne. The wearing of perfume is usually a sign of civilized, clean living. Here, may not perfume offend through a typically abject process? could it be that, beneath its guise as an accessory of social(izing) sophistication, lies the threat of the irrepressibly impure? Is it not the latter which perfume seeks to suppress: the bodily processes from which body odour results?

May it not be because of this struggle to stave off imminent corruption that Carlota is able to make the following assertion: “¡Qué perfume más polémico” (p. 57)?

In addition to the above agents of a possible abjection we should add pregnancy, as an agent that imitates abjection's disruption of borders. Elizabeth Grosz (1990: 95) suggests that, in pregnancy, the mother surrenders her subjectivity and autonomy to bodily processes that supersede conscious control: pregnancy “happens to women” (Grosz 1990: 95). Therefore, as mothers, women's fragile identity within language and culture is undermined in favour of her status as natural or “hinge between nature and culture” (Grosz 1990: 96). Her weakening as a subject is reinforced by the blurring of the boundary separating inside and outside. This blurring results from the confusion brought about by the pregnant woman's carrying of that which is of but also separate from her, her baby, and by the intimate maternal nurturance of the infant.

However, as well as possibly threatening her integrity, pregnancy also empowers Carlota through its disruptive force and according to the same terms described above. Asserting a feminine consciousness centred in the female body and tenuously bound to ego boundaries, Carlota is able to undermine phallogocentrism. She does so through a disruption of boundaries between subject and object. But, at the same time, by holding fast to her social role as mother—the assurance of the community's future—Carlota's cultural role is guaranteed.

By negotiating the territory between nature and culture Carlota reshapes the mould of subjectivity and gains in stature. This is achieved by transforming her threatening bodily status as a mother into a discourse of maternity as social welfare. Such a process is evidenced by Carlota's employment of her imminent labour as an emergency to be dealt with by the coordinated network of helpers she enlists from the audience. On the other hand, the disruption of any established and gendered dialogic relationship is apparent in the further dissolution of the traditional distance between actor and audience. This distance has already been minimized by the role assigned to the audience as participants of the Conference (p. xiii) and the previous Morrisons' direct addresses to that audience, “en diálogos para una voz” (p. xiv). Carlota's intensified dissolution is effected by the constant participation of the audience in her improvisation. Such a participation is initiated by Carlota's constant instruction to the audience and when two members of that audience climb up on stage, on the instruction of Carlota, to assist her (p. 64).

Carlota's empowerment does not exhaust itself with or limit itself to her new found authority as a character (“la firmeza de una autoritaria y firme maestra de español”, p. 58). The fact that she is enabled to issue confident orders, which are obeyed by participants of the Conference, is proof of her effectiveness as a performer. Carlota reaches her apotheosis with a consummate recital of poetry, perfectly synchronized with her exit in full labour (p. 65). Similarly and even more radically, though Baby's (assumed) character is pitiful, his ill-executed delivery of a supposedly humorous anecdote concerning a Russian ballerina (p. 21) and his

crazed fantasies concerning his feline friend Gallo Pelón, “el gato más perro que existe” (p. 27), provide (perhaps perverse) pleasure. Through the latter, performance itself eclipses the greyness of theory and the clinical depiction of pathological individuals.

Acknowledgement

‘Los monólogos [...] se convierten, entonces, en diálogos para una voz’ (p. xiv).

BIANCA: Con el relato de sus vidas llenas de sorpresas entretienen a quienes contratan sus servicios (p. 35).

MANDRAKE: Es prestada mi belleza irremediable. No sé si préstamo es la palabra que me vale (p. 52).

The Morrisons seem dependent on their audience for acknowledgment of their identities. Acknowledgment is sought through the projection of approved stereotypes. Meanwhile, paradoxically, autonomy is aspired to through appropriative strategies. This conflictive tension, manifested by the specular form of the Morrison’s relationship with the audience, is central to the play’s fascination. As Dafne states, the Morrisons’ improvisations “corre[n] el peligro de la dispersión” since they vacillate precariously between the privileged centre stage of the improvising performer and dispersion as a consequence of constantly desiring the approval of others. The intensity of this desire is marked by the relentlessly operative tone of the Morrisons’ performances. These are characterized by “una irreprimible urgencia” (p. xv). At the same time, the intersubjectivity of such desire is indicated by its being “cercano a la danza frenética” (ibid.). The quotation used in the title of this paper highlights the intimate coexistence of the conflictive processes at work in the Morrisons’ performances. The quotation underscores the privilege of liberating innovation, dependence of the “cuento” (identity) dictated to the subject, and the value invested in the “cuento” by the Morrisons. A reconciliation of the tension produced by the conflictive processes described above is provided by moments of pleasure issuing from performance; but more of this later. Mandrake Morrison manfully illustrates and navigates the limitations and pitfalls of the specular relationship referred to above.

The exuberant assurance of Mandrake’s improvisation as “un hombre irremediabilmente bello” (p. 43) is rooted in his conviction concerning the artificiality and inessential nature of culture and its products. The cultural commodities on which Mandrake models his improvisation are, like Dafne’s, firstly those of mass culture and show business, in particular cinema, and, secondly, foreign. His role models are Cinecittà’s Steve Reeves (p. 43) and “los grandes gesticuladores del cine italiano” (p. 44). Similarly his gestures are those of “el mejor estilo charro del cine mejicano” (p. 50).

Mandrake is enabled to make these stereotypical models his own by the specificity of the Puerto Rican context in which his performance takes place. Indeed Puerto Ricanization is a major process of all the Morrisons' performances and is inherent in their Puerto Rican accents, turns of phrase, and idiomatic usages; elements more pronounced when viewing the play than when reading it. In Mandrake's performance, specificity is asserted through the translation of foreign role models, such as Vittorio Gassman, into the Puerto Rican dandy Mandrake represents (pp. 43-4). Furthermore, the “desgarrada intensidad que proponen los seis personajes” (p. xiii) and the “wagnerización de las anécdotas” (ibid.) permit Mandrake to distance himself from the stereotypes that define him through exaggeration and caricature.

A cinematic context also enables Mandrake's construction of a Biblical narrative that invokes Fellini (p. 47). The Biblical story of the Flood is recounted in “una larga secuencia que los asistentes al Congreso de Asuntos de la Familia deben cinematizar” (ibid.) which underlines the nature of the original Biblical story of the Flood as a constructed text. This is entertainingly achieved by the Biblical story's banal reduction to a screenplay for a film similar to a version of the “final del mundo” (p. 48) sold to North American television. Moreover, the story of the Flood is presented as a negotiable commodity (a film script) exchanged within a network of economic, ideological, political, and cultural discourses. It is implied that the myths at the centre of civilizations are profitable super productions serving the interests of the above discourses, in this case, Old World values and modern capitalism.

The purpose of highlighting the nature of culture as produced is to show that the integral truths that form the basis of the Catholic and capitalist values of mainstream Puerto Rican society are artificially constructed. As such, they are eminently open to appropriation. Gaining strength from his vision of culture as an ever renewable text, Mandrake is able to state that “¡El cuento no es el cuento! ¡El cuento es quien lo cuenta!” (pp. 50, 53). Here, Mandrake asserts his faith in the power of the individual performance to resituate, renew, and appropriate any pre-established cultural discourse. At the same time, Mandrake's desire to participate, as an insider, in his society's cultural discourse “cuento” is underscored. Such a desire is determined by Mandrake's social awareness of his dependence and his fear of marginalization.

The economic, political, and ideological dimensions of creative survival in society are alluded to by Mandrake's statement used at the beginning of this section on acknowledgment. It is suggested that the materials (language, persona) of mandrake's performance are “lent” to him by the culture in whose processes he participates. He does so as a performer—a culturally formed speaking subject—who interacts with other members (the audience) of a common public space. In return for the privilege accorded him Mandrake is obliged to abide by his society's laws.

The props used in Mandrake's improvisation "los topos" are literally loaned to him by a Puerto Rican street tramp, 'El diablo'. In exchange for the props, Mandrake seems to make a Faustian pact with the tramp. Mandrake's association with El diablo is made possible by the potentially transgressive nature of improvisation, which brings him close to the marginalized position of the aforementioned 'Devil'. Mandrake's uneasy relationship with El diablo is revealed by his fear ('palidece', p. 53) of the ominous knocks on the door (ibid.) His fear is simultaneously that of meeting again and being associated with El Diablo, the outcast, and of punishment at the hands of some sort of totalitarian police acting on behalf of his host society. It is on this society—represented by the authority of the conference's specialist audience—that Mandrake depends for the liberty that allows his improvisation.

Survival as a relatively free individual depends on a careful juggling of the restrictions placed on the individual by his host society. Since Mandrake is a consummate cultural acrobat—cunningly balancing between dependence and innovation—he is able to laugh off any restrictions: 'Falsamente asustado huye, se persigna. Después, sonrío, carcajea' (p. 53). At the same time, the audience is given licence to laugh with him since their identification with him does not involve transgression but only a tantalizing dipping of their toe into the fanciful and tenuously reflective waters of improvisation. By adhering to society's restrictions, Mandrake acknowledges that society potentially threatens to call back the loan of his culturally dependent persona and cancel the freedom of speech he exercises. Well aware that his speech can never be wholly his own but is hired out under social contract, Mandrake highlights his contingent position as a speaking subject and performer.

Mandrake's brilliant negotiation of his dependence makes possible his renaming as "Mandrake el Mago", a show business conjurer of magical resourcefulness ("maña graciosa de mago", p. 51) and deceit ("alevosía", p. 44). The latter quality consists in his refurbishment of what he depends on through an exhaustive adherence to it, through dedicated (too dedicated) mimicry. He cannot be faulted or punished—as a transgressor since imitative performance allows him and his audience an alibi, another approved place—the legitimate space of his stereotypical models. Thus imitation simultaneously wins him acknowledgement through the recognition of established stereotypes as well as diverting attention and blame from the renewable area of liberating and unlegislated possibilities he opens up through extravagant entertainment.

In terms of Puerto Rico's uneasy relationship with the United States, the Morrisons' specular relationship with their audience implies nationalism's simultaneous impulses towards both autonomy and legitimation. The latter is sought by appeal to the privileged power from which the dependency demands acknowledgement and against which it struggles. In fact, the dependency, in struggling for autonomy, or self-government, seeks recognition of the self it seeks to govern. The Morrisons' disparate struggle for subjectivity in relation to a relatively

stable other (their audience) implies Puerto Rico's struggle to achieve coherent nationhood in relation to other established nations.

Affiliation

DAFNE: Un gran tipo Papá Morrison, mundanal, liviano, fiestea, mujerea, a pesar de su impedimento fiestea y mujerea, lleva las finanzas de los Quíntuples Morrison, escribe los libretos que habitualmente representamos (p. 6).

BABY: Papá fue el embelequero (p. 23).

BIANCA: Papá Morrison dijo el que no trabaja no come (pp. 37-8).

MANDRAKE: Ifigenio Dos está prohibido sustantivarme. Un desliz de Papá Morrison que hace rato perdoné (p. 46).

CARLOTA: Sólo a Papá Morrison repito. Ninguno otro de los restantes quíntuples debe enterarse.

The Quíntuples cultural empowerment is founded on their affiliation to Papá Morrison. Without him, their performance would not have been possible. Moreover, he hovers as a constant presence in all his childrens' recollections. For Dafne he is an idealized role model, for Baby an impossible act to follow, for Bianca a Tyrannical patriarch, for Mandrake a male rival to be outdone, for Carlota a dependable parent in whom one confides, and for all a standard against which to be judged.

Papá may be envisaged as an ironic paragon of the disempowered Puerto Rican. Disempowerment is indicated by his confinement to a wheelchair. Yet Papá overcomes disability/disempowerment through masterful improvisation. In effect, his example is the most cogent and liberating since, through cultural hybridization, comic deflation, and exaggeration he appropriates and undoes the archetype of the Oedipal father, the patriarch; perhaps the most binding stereotype in the context of a supposed Puerto Rican paternalism adduced by critics such as Juan Gelpí (1993).

To a large extent, Papá improvises on European, particularly Spanish, models. Romanticism is suggested by association with Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer (p. 70) and the host of popular musical forms (p. 71) influenced by that movement's liberal social criticism (Zavala 1992: 204). Moreover, the protagonists of the songs constituting those musical forms are superimposed over the marginalized outsiders and seductive outlaws of Romantic literature. Other forms appropriated by Papá are romantic fiction (p. 71), and a repertoire of gestures belonging to opera and making possible his "afectación de divo operatístico" (p. 70).

The mixture of popular and high cultural models in Papá's improvisation indicates a *bricolage* inherent in the chosen models themselves. The composers of boleros, such as the cited Agustín Lara (p. 71) or Daniel Santos (p. 74), like those of the tango and earlier danza, reworked both the canonic poetry in high culture and

popular idioms (Zavala 1992: 156-59, 161, 164-67). In addition to Papá's choice of the above figures, the cited (p. 71) Morel Campos's cultural flexibility in both setting music to accompany Bécquer's lyrical lieder and composing jingles to advertise sherries and cognacs (Zavala 1992: 165) should also be mentioned. The choice of all the above figures points not only to the appropriation of European models but also the mixing and matching that characterizes Papá's and all the Morisons' performances.

On one level, Romanticism is an appropriate reference point for Papá's improvisation. Papá's grand gestures resonate with the excessive rhetorical flourishes of Romanticism and, as will be seen later, deliver the coup de grâce on his models. Papá's adoption and reworking of Romanticism is anticipated by the choice of Bécquer as his major role model (p. 70). Bécquer should actually be classified as a post-Romantic poet who distilled Romanticism's excesses into a sparer, more intimate style. Hence Papá's appropriated model is not strictly speaking Romanticism. Rather, it is Bécquer's precedent, later followed by the composers of danzas, boleros and tangos, of relaborating—admittedly in vastly differing ways—exhausted antecedents. However, the reworking of antecedents can never be definitive but implies a constant process of renewal. Hence, the Don Juan figure Papá cuts in his younger days (pp. 75-77) is a Puerto Rican version of José Zorrilla's Romantic Don Juan Tenorio (1844), who, in his turn, remodels Tirso de Molina's Don Juan, in his *Burlador de Sevilla* (1630). On the other hand, Papá's statement that "de Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer me cuido" (p. 70) is significantly inflected by Papá's later mention of figures such as Morel Campos, and materializes in a highly bombastic contrast to Bécquer, in the form of Papá's performance. In the same way that high culture merges with the popular in the bolero and in figures such as Morel Campos, literature is appropriated (don't all performances of plays effect such an appropriation?) in Papá's performance of a cabaret.

Papá's only alternative to a passive acceptance of pre-established roles is "la locura de improvisar" (p. 71). Improvisation is maddening because it offers no true escape. Dependence persists in improvisation, since improvisation always takes place in relation to an established given. It is as impossible to be emancipated from the given as it is for Papá to rise from his wheelchair. But, in the same way Papá idiosyncratically decorates his wheelchair (p. 67), turning his handicap into "una deportividad guasona" (ibid.), his improvisation provides some release. Through the exercise of the "destreza espectacular" (p. 68) of the "fantaseador" (ibid.), he empowers himself sufficiently to transform himself from a victim into a survivor.

Ultimately, employing necessarily dependent improvisation, the actor playing Papá is enabled provisionally to renounce his role (p. 77). He is enabled to do so through the release ("gloria suprema", ibid.; "euforia", ibid.) afforded by an exhaustion of his models in a final, excessive frenzy of ham acting and overblown passion ("no pude más, no pude más" ibid). However, Papá's release is not absolute. Dependent itself, as a conditionally functional dramatic absolute, it operates

to propel the play into a wider exploration of the interplay between dependence and appropriation. As the culmination of Papá's performance, the two actors who have portrayed the Morrisons ostensibly relinquish their roles. Onstage and out of character, as it were, they deliver their thoughts of the nature of theatre as a manifest artifice (pp. 78-9). Set up between consenting interlocutors, theatre is “una mentira que es como una maroma entre ustedes, el público y nosotros, los actores” (p. 78). They also reflect on the dependent nature of theatrical improvisation as the balanced interaction of a given script (“premeditación”, *ibid.*) and individual performance (“alevosía”, *ibid.*). This exploration will lay bare the mechanics of theatre, the strings and levers of performance. Thus a brilliant coup de théâtre serves to foreground the particular artifice of theatre and, beyond that, implicate the broader mediation of culture as the ideological and discursive framework of specific intersubjective relations.

Conclusion

“La locura instalada en la cordura, la wagnerización de las anécdotas”
(p. xiii).

The creative reworking of individual and political identity is founded on the very tone and form of *Quintuples*. The humorous hollowing out of stereotype effected by the burlesque style of the play suggests new possibilities in excess of the given and beyond the depiction of individual neuroses.

The energy produced by the irruption of “locura” in conventional representations and issuing from the tantalizing counterpoint of established discourse and performative release results in moments of rapture. At these moments, music, rhythm, pose, poetry, humour, and seduction predominate over the denotative aspects of the performance. These euphoric moments constitute a disruption since the narrative is not furthered by them, but merely provides the pretext for pleasurable spectacle that, in effect, freezes the progression of that narrative. In *Quintuples*, the timelessness of such moments of rapture is highlighted by frequently effecting them at the interstices between the Morrisons' individual improvisations, the gaps in their storytelling. Therefore, the apotheoses of Dafne, Bianca, Mandrake, Carlota, and Papá take place on their entrances and exist from the stage.⁷

Artistic practice, in the form of theatre, provides a privileged metafictional model of appropriation by means of its demonstration of an “open system” of subjectivity. This system is made possible by the loosening of hegemonic representations through the latter's carnivalization in performance. Through performance, these representations are employed in a masquerade, as elements open to playful

7. Baby's performance is the exception; its pleasure residing in his very failure to achieve any kind of exaltation.

reworking, rather than as inevitable reflections of essential truths (Zavala 1992: 61-62). Indeed, the activity of the artist may be envisaged as functioning as the perfect "open system". In his excellent study of Julia Kristeva's work, John Lechte (1990) illustrates the above process of negotiation by referring to Jackson Pollock's painting, "Blue Poles" (1952). Lechte highlights (1990: 140-41) the typically postmodern installation of established, codified forms, in this case straight lines, which are then "attacked" (ibid.: 140). This attack is effected by overlaying the lines with improvisatory forms and "explosive" (ibid.) colours that create a tension between the rhythms that arise in the process and materiality of painting, and symbolically significant pre-established forms. As Lechte writes, the artist's attack represents an 'expenditure' (1990: 140) that:

produces stasis, or 'un arrêt éphémère' ('an ephemeral stop'). Expenditure thus presupposes stasis —the breaks in 'Blue Poles', the 'explosiveness' of yellow, etc.— which, in Pollock's work, or the work of any artist, is semiotized and becomes 'art' as it emerges in the social sphere. In this way the destructiveness of the drive (it attacks the symbolic) is made to serve creative ends. Through rhythm Pollock provides an analytic insight into the basis (the materiality) of painting, and possibly into the basis of art itself. (pp. 140-41)

We may assume that the "ephemeral stops" mentioned above parallel the moments of rapture to which I refer earlier. As I have already asserted, these 'stops' constitute sites and moments where the materiality of performance intersects with and exceeds the established forms and stereotypes on which the Morrisons' improvisations are based. In their turn, these established forms and stereotypes, in their capacity as symbolic manifestations, dialectically interact with the pleasure of performance, providing it with "the means of entering into a set of social and subjective relations" (Lechte 1990: 145).

By orchestrating the above process of production, the artist acts as a channel of "unproductive expenditure" (Bataille 1986; Lechte 1990: 74).⁸ This is translated into a socially recognized entity: art. Art may be considered to mark the dependence, difference, and heterogeneity of the relationship between established representation and its excess. The artist, like the hysteric, or the abject, seems to simultaneously occupy both sides of this disjunction. But the artist hysteria must be a controlled flirting with hysteria if artistic practice is to remain anchored in the symbolic dimension of culture rather than the bodily drives. This is necessarily so if the artist is to communicate within and through a cultural discourse. Therefore, as artists, the Morrisons cannot be viewed as hysterical victims. Rather, they are able to

8. I take this term to indicate a commitment to pre-linguistic, non-social, unsymbolizable, and non-utilitarian forces associated with the physical drives. These may be experienced through a nullification of identity and language, and are envisaged as incommensurable with the goals of society and the 'logic of means end rationality' (Lechte 1990: 75).

distance themselves sufficiently from their inherent hysteria, albeit to varying degrees, so that they are able to creatively interact with and communicate through their specific cultural environment.

The artist may be seen to represent the pulverization of the unitary subject brought into operation by the functioning of symbolic discourse. Accordingly, subjectivity is pluralized in a constant negotiation and redefinition—at the limits of subjectivity—according to the artist’s status as a “subject in proces”. Therefore, if one accepts the above, the multiple roles of the two actors dissolve unsatisfactory models of subjectivity into hysteria and abjection. This dissolution is effected through a series of creative, funny, liberating, but also tormenting, dependent, and precarious performances. The constant search for identity, represented by the above symptoms and frenetic switching of roles on the part of the two actors, leads to the problematization of any model of stable identity. The latter is interrogated as the provisionality and process of being, in the form of crisis and improvisation, are highlighted.

Crisis takes the form, significantly in the fifth scene of the play, of cyclical repetition with Carlota’s pregnancy and imminent birth of quintuplets, whose historical legacy under colonialism might be to relieve the crisis of Puerto Rican identity experienced by their forebears. A historical continuity/contiguity is suggested by an incestuous blurring of generations and relationships on the part of Carlota. Her instructions are that it is Papá who is to be informed first of her incipient labour (p. 61). He takes priority over, even substitutes, her husband, who, by being pampered, is treated more like a child (p. 62). Thus, Carlota comes to occupy the place of her own mother and, in pregnancy, retrogressively repeats her own as well as all the quintuplets’ births. Thus the possible perpetuation of Puerto Rico Rico’s historico-political situation is suggested.

But repetition, as the play’s only constancy, also takes the form of the quintupled repetition, on the part of the characters, of aspiration in the form of wishful thinking, dynamic asertion, fantasy. Dafne dreams of stardom (p. 5), Baby of life as a lion tamer (p. 28), Bianca yearns for a strong persona (pp. 31, 34), Mandrake’s exudes a self-confidence based on his conviction that the individual may predominate over socio-cultural restrictions (p. 50), Carlota labours for authority (p. 58), and Papá fantasizes about Casanovan conquests (pp. 76-7). In addition, there is repetition in the moments of release to which I have referred, the sharing of hackneyed catchphrases (a standard language requiring renewal) by different characters (e.g. pp. 2, 16, 68; 4, 68) or their repeated use by the same character (pp. 50, 53). All the above repetitions take place in the context of constraining, historically contingent identities.

The urgent return of repressed and unfulfilled dreams (of autonomy? of nationality? of freedom?), in the face of the traumatic dependence that underlies daily life in a virtual colony, supersedes the personal histories recounted, supersedes the history of the Puerto Rican nation. The dependence of the latter is overtaken by the

body's material pleasure and dreams beyond accountability to a fixed historical form of hegemonist nationhood, the "cuento" that weighs heavily and insistently on Puerto Ricans, in the form of colonialism or dogmatic nationalism. These historical discourses become a burden if their traditional terms remain unchallenged, if they constitute the only "cuento" available. If that is the case, then appropriation of the latter through franchisement, or even emancipatory revolution, only constitutes a partial victory, on unsatisfactory terms. However, in *Quintuples*, this is not the case. Instead, the possibility of profoundly new configurations is suggested, at the personal, socio-political, and national levels. On all levels, the characters are ephemerally empowered by an appropriative self-representation that seduces the audience into acknowledging an excess beyond established forms. The search for new and liberating spaces motivates such a relationship with the past. Through this reconditioning, Puerto Ricans can question the terms of their particular form of Latin American dependence. Indeed, it is the pursuit of creative redefinition, at the level of the individual man and woman, society and nation, that propels Luis Rafael Sánchez's *Quintuples*.

John Perivolaris
Trinity College

WORKS CITED

- Appignanesi, Lisa, and John Forrester, 1992. *Freud's Women* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson).
- Apter, Emily, 1992. 'Masquerade', in *Wright* (1992: 242-44).
- Bataille, Georges, 1986. 'The notion of expenditure', in *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927-1939*, trans. by Allan Stoekl, Carl R. Lovitt, and Donald M. Leslie Jr. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota), pp. 116-29
- Doane, Mary Ann, 1992. *Femmes Fatales* (London: Routledge).
- Douglas, Mary, 1979. *Purity and Danger* (London: Routledge).
- Fletcher, John, and Andrew Benjamin, eds. 1990. *Abjection, Melancholia, and Love: The Work of Julia Kristeva* (London: Routledge).
- Freud, Sigmund, and Josef Breuer, 1895. *Studies on Hysteria*, in the *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. by James Strachey, 24 vols (London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psychoanalysis; 1966, repr. 1978), ii (1955; repr. 1978), pp. 1-251.
- Freud, Sigmund, 1905. 'Fragment of an analysis of a case of hysteria', in the *Standard Edition*, vii (1953; repr. 1978), pp. 7-122.

- Gelpí, Juan G., 1993. *Literatura y paternalismo en Puerto Rico* (San Juan: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico).
- Grosz, Elizabeth, 1990; repr. 1991. 'The Body of Signification', in *Fletcher and Benjamin* (1990: 80-103).
- Kristeva, Julia, 1982. *Powers of Horror. An Essay on Abjection*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press).
- _____. 1984. *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. by Margaret Waller (New York: Columbia Press).
- Lechte, John, 1990. *Julia Kristeva* (London: Routledge).
- Ragland-Sullivan, Ellie, 1989. 'Dora and the name-of-the-father: the structure of hysteria', in *Discontented Discourses*, ed. by Marleen Barr and Richard Feldstein (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press), pp. 208-40.
- _____. 1992a. 'Hysteria', in Wright (1992: 163-64).
- Sánchez, Luis Rafael, 1985. *Quíntuples* (Hanover, New Hampshire: Ediciones del Norte).
- Scarano, Francisco A., 1993. *Puerto Rico: cinco siglos de historia* (San Juan: McGraw Hill Interamericana). (Río Piedras: Editorial Cultural).
- Smith, Paul Julian, 1992. *Laws of Desire: Questions of Homosexuality in Contemporary Spanish Writing and Film* (Oxford: OUP).
- Wright, Elizabeth, ed., 1992. *Feminism and Psychoanalysis: A Critical Dictionary* (Oxford: Blackwell).
- Zavala, Iris M., 1992. *Culture and Colonialism: Hispanic Modernisms and the Social Imaginary* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press).