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INTER-AMERICAN DESTINY IN GUILLERMO VERDECCHIA'S *FRONTERAS AMERICANAS*

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Abstract: The article scrutinizes the issue of inter-American destiny in the dramatic world of the Argentinian-born Guillermo Verdecchia (b. 1962), whose work was awarded with the prestigious Governor General's Literary Award (est. 1937) in Canada. Verdecchia deals with a subjective cultural history that shapes various destinies through an inter-American space and given time periods. The thespian plot in his *Fronteras Americanas* (1993) is an idiosyncratic story that does not count communal dates or anniversaries but, instead, focuses on the lived experience and the destiny of the individual. Verdecchia's play has a peculiar political relevance in being conceived as a subjective inter-American history lesson on the issue of Latin diaspora in North America and, as such, presents an idiosyncratic history of a Canadian Latinx, created as a monologue reminding one of an oral storytelling of a destiny that is bound in the history web of the Americas.
Keywords: Identity, Border, Inter-American, Guillermo Verdecchia, *Fronteras Americanas*, Latinx.

My essay will scrutinize the issue of inter-American destiny in a slice of Guillermo Verdecchia's world of Canadian ethnic plays. Practically starting to appear in public after the second world war with a brief revival in the 1970s, Indigenous and ethnic drama in contemporary Canada has received "only limited critical and theoretical attention" (Kürtösi 2002, 52) especially in the second part of the twentieth century but lately, with a visible proliferation of ethnic and Indigenous works, this situation seems to change. On the one hand, the change in the creation and production to multicultural playwriting owes its current development to a "significant boost" by the Canada Council for the Arts," Canada's federal arts funding agency that enhances the work and production of "emerging artists and artists from culturally diverse communities," with special regard to the country's historically under-represented Indigenous artists" (Morrow 2017), who currently create the most exciting works for the stage in terms of North-American identity. On the other hand, there is a demand on the part of the audience for writings on multicultural topics in literature and for the production of such plays on Canadian stages.

Moreover, the burgeoning of native and ethnic plays can also be attributed to the dramas' essentially performative, participatory and hence democratic features that can best exhibit intercultural and transcultural items other genres might not fully cover

or not cover in such depth. As Rubén Vega Balbás writes in his work on the performative nature of dramatic imagination, "dramatization is dynamism, a repetitive series of spatio-temporal determinations" with the "dramatic procedure by which the subject presents itself in existence" being one in which identity "can be considered a ritualized virtuality because of its theatrical repetitive condition;" through this condition, the individual can effectively be "differentiated" in a understanding of individuation as a dramatic incarnation (Vega Balbás 2020, 16). As one of the best ethnic drama in Canada, *Fronteras Americanas* (1993) subscribes to these dynamics of "spatio-temporal determinations and subsequent differentiations" of identity by depicting certain ritualized virtualities as a character's destiny perceived as Inter-American identity.

In this context, I will analyze *Fronteras Americanas* by the Argentinian-born Canadian playwright Guillermo Verdecchia (b. 1962), for which he was awarded with the prestigious Governor General's Literary Award for English-Language Drama (est. in 1937). In this drama, which premiered at Tarragon Theatre in Toronto, Verdecchia deals with a subjective cultural history that shapes a specific destiny and, as such, a particular identity through the ritualized virtuality of an inter-American space. The play's plot is an idiosyncratic one that does not count what Martin Heidegger coined in *Being and Time* (1927) as the "vulgar" or ordinary time of dates and anniversaries, but instead, set the scenes on a more abstract level, enhancing the return to the essence of the individual with the means through which this individual interprets historical events as part of his or her destiny, in the frame of a more sacred, individual count of time. This personal interpretation leads to the construction of a distinct personal history embedded within the patchwork of grand narratives, hosted in a trans-American realm. Even within this framework, as Anne Nothof noted, Verdecchia's play resists "objectification effected by naming in terms of race and place through the formation of an 'oppositional consciousness' which challenges simplistic assumptions and attitudes" by being "a type of confession that examines personal angst in the context of cultural constructs" (2011) in North America. Indeed, Verdecchia's *Fronteras Americanas* has a peculiar political relevance since it is conceived as a subjective history lesson on the issue of the Latin diaspora in the Americas, involving the stereotyped Latino but with the voice of the immigrant challenging these stereotypes.

This drama has, in this sense, an obvious civic appeal and results in a dialogic meditation on identity exposed as a personal history in the dramatic ritualized virtuality, bound in the web of Americas' history, in the gusto of a similar North-American monologue found in the Colombian-American actor John Leguizamo's humorously poignant one-man show, the *Latin History for Morons*, presented as a performance first in New York (in 2017 and awarded with a special Tony Award) and then recorded in 2018 for Netflix streaming service. Here "Leguizamo runs through the legitimate history of the Americas, which is a history that has often been

ignored or misconstrued by the educational system" (Davis 2019), when explaining the audience his father-son story on how one constructs identity. Inspired by experience and drawing on the subversive strategy of many influential works, for example that of the Uruguayan Eduardo Galeano's *Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent* (1973), of Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States* (1980) and of Charles C. Mann's *1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus* (2005), this makeshift classroom centering on a wisecrack father-teacher arrives at the conclusion that everyone involved in the making of America, or much precisely, the Americas, for that matter, are similar. "No one can take away our Americanness," concludes Leguizamo, since "we're so American it hurts" (2018).

With respect to this attitude of Americanness, Verdecchia's *Fronteras Americanas* maps the shifts of this identity-construction process by focusing on issues of globalization, multiculturalism, and cultural displacement, all from the vantage point of a Latin American immigrant to Canada. Similar to Leguizamo, Verdecchia claims that "Somos todos Americanos. We are all Americans" (1993, 20), and this sentence best represents the entanglement of the Americas seen even from the point of view of one single individual. Verdecchia's play, interestingly, was "conceived at the time of the five hundredth anniversary of the 'discovery' of the Americas but instead of celebrating the historical jubilee, it points to the paradoxes and contradictions of the 'Americanness' by deconstructing, reconstructing, reproducing and subverting the ideology of multiculturalism" (Kürtösi 2002, 55). However, it does much more than that: it maps the inter-continental playground of the Latinx identity seen from the Canadian context.

For Verdecchia, the ritualized virtuality of (t)his Americanness starts with the concept of the border/*la frontera*, which is conceived more as a "tricky place" (Verdecchia 1993, 20), but not as Gloria Anzaldúa saw it, as an open wound, "una herida abierta" (1987, 3) or "the edge of a barbwire" (13). For the Canadian Latinx playwright, the frontier is both a real (like border checks, no one's lands, and so on) and an abstract construction (an imaginary realm within or outside the play's characters), with border crossings functioning as the "guiding metaphor" (Kuester 2006, 517) throughout the entire play. Similar to many North American contemporary writers –and especially to the US-Puerto Rican Aurora Levins Morales (b. 1954), who claims in her 1986 poem that she is a "child of the Americas" and "a child of many diaspora, born into this continent at a crossroads" (Morales 1986)–, Verdecchia evokes in the scene entitled "The Other America" that he stands somewhere in the Americas but "not in Canada," nor "in Argentina" but "on the border," where he has gained not only an inter-American identity but also an idiosyncratic fate uttered humorously in Canada's both official languages:

> I'm not in Canada; I'm not in Argentina.
> I'm on the Border.
> I am Home.
> Mais zoot alors, je comprends maintenant, mais oui, merde! Je suis Argentin-Canadien! I am a post-Porteño neo-Latino Canadian! I am the Pan-American highway! (1993, 74).

To further emphasize this Pan-American identity, of the border "within himself" (Kareda in Verdecchia 1993, 11), the scene suggests showing a quote-note by Octavio Paz, which says that "No estoy en el crucero: elegir es equivocarse" (Verdecchia 1993, 74), which, odd it might sound, resonates with Anzaldúa's verses, which claim that to „survive the Borderlands," one "must live *sin fronteras*", that is, to become "a crossroads" (194-195). In this sense then, the crossroads as border for the Canadian playwright becomes "Home." Moreover, here Verdecchia reminds of Anzaldúa's concepts of linguistic *mestizaje* from *Bordelands/La Frontera*, when he speaks of the mixed languages of Tex-Mex and Spanglish, incorporating these concepts into the process of his characters' identity construction, making the mixture of these languages his linguistic home as well. In "The Other" part of the play, Verdecchia even says that "[A]ll sides of the border have claimed and rejected" him, while he is still looking for the "precise coordinates of the spirit, of the psyche, of memory" as if "we could somehow count or measure these things" (51).

As Urjo Kareda writes in the "Foreword" of the 1993 edition of the play, the playwright actually "urges a new geography of the mind and spirit" to perform a "willed displacement" (11-12) in order to find his inter-American cultural DNA. This displacement goes on not only in the fixed text but also in the author's vigorous performativity potential. He even writes in the "Preface" that the play, that is, the text (and its world) is "provisional, *atado con alambre*" and, accordingly, open to be performed with "(respectful) changes and leaving room for personal and more current responses" (Verdecchia 1993, 13). Later on, in the "El Teatro" part of the play, Wideload actually breaks the fourth wall by talking directly to the audience, telling them that being in the show together can create a common bond, a feature only theater's ritualized virtuality can achieve. Along "El Teatro," the "Crossing Borders" and "Audition" scenes are also heavily metatheatrical parts of the play: in the first, Verdecchia talks with a U.S. border patrol about the premiere of the actual *Fronteras Americanas* at Tarragon Theater, claiming he is an actor between jobs, while in "Audition" the audience can peep into the on- and off-camera process used in an audition the playwright makes for a non-named TV movie.

With these metatheatrical devices (alongside with the employment of slides, screens, video cameras showing on-camera and off-camera recordings, various monitors displaying TV movies plays and a dialect tape), the playwright "confronts the audience with their complicity in the production of difference and the demonization for the 'other,'" which leads to an almost "schizophrenic form

alternating between an autobiographical subject" (the playwright) and a "wildly satiric caricature of the Latino," (Knowles 2005, 129), his alter ego, Wideload, having many interesting features, including his "Exotic Factor" (41). In this respect, *Fronteras Americanas* becomes an abstract mirror of an ongoing flux, a creative mimesis, where Americas meet America in a continuous process of self-rediscovery. This is another type of conquest, a metaphorical discovery that does not start with Columbus but, as Verdecchia puts it, it could have started as well "with the genius Arab engineer who invented the rudder" asking for "a little history" more just "to put this all in order" (1993, 29). This history can thus be a personal one, to start with, as the opening slide of the "History" part of the play says: "An Idiosyncratic History of America" (29).

Apart from the concept of the border, Verdecchia's personal meditation on identity and inter-American destiny starts with another slide quoting the Venezuelan Simón Bolívar, which announces that

> [I]t is impossible to say to which human family we belong. We were all born of one mother America, though our fathers had different origins, and we all have different colored skin. This dissimilarity is of the greatest importance" (qtd. in Verdecchia 1993, 19).

And although the protagonist claims that "Somos todos Americanos. We are all Americans," he suspects that "we got lot lost while crossing the border," which, in Verdecchia's view, is "tricky place" (Verdecchia 1993, 20), a place the Mexican Carlos Fuentes envisaged not only as a "division between two cultures," but one also "between two memories" (qtd. in Verdecchia 1993, 21). These memories amalgamate the identity of Verdecchia('s performer), a figure that combines the real name of the playwright, misspelled once by Miss Wiseman in school as "Gwillyou–ree–moo . . . Verdeek–cheea" (33), with the figure of Facundo Morales Segundo, also nicknamed El Tigre del Barrio and El Alacran. In the scene entitled "Introduction to Wideload," Verdecchia's alter ego identifies with a transnational, eclectic figure, presenting himself as a "direct descendant of Túpac Amaru, Pancho Villa, Doña Flor, Pedro Navaja, Sor Juana and Speedy Gonzales," with the "heads of Alfredo García and Joaquín Murrieta" (Verdecchia 1993, 23), a figure who becoms the Latino Bandido, Verdecchia's Doppelganger. Also going by the more Saxonical name Wideload McKennah, this Latino Bandido thinks he gets "a lot more respect" (24) if he identifies as a young Mexican *pachuco* in this peculiar dramatic plot. The choice of *pachuco* comes handy and seems pragmatic because, the terms of Latino and Hispanic for Wideload are anyway

> inaccurate because dey lump a whole of different people into one category. For example, a Mayan from Guatemala, an eSpaniard from eSpain and a Chicano who speaks no Spanish might all be described, in some circles, as Hispanic. And de term Latino could include people as different as right-wing Cuban living in Miami, exiled Salvadorean leftists, Mexican speakers of Nahuatl, Brazilian speakers of Portuguese, lunfardo-speaking Koreans in Buenos Aires, Nuyoricans (dat's a Puerto Rican who lives in New York) and den dere's de Uruguayans–I mean dey're practicaly European […] (Verdecchia 2013, 27).

Apart from preferred choices of names and identities, Wideload and Verdecchia reconceptualize inter-American destiny through a traveler's identity. Travel dramatizes interconnectedness, involving languages, contacts, crossings and memories; it involves local, regional, national, transnational and even transcontinental movements. Travel enhances what Breyten Breytenbach called "nomadic thinking" referring to the fact that when a person becomes a nomad, "even he doesn't move around much" since the "best-seasoned nomads are those who never travel" (1999, 57). This empowering mental process can be an alternative way of living for Wideload/Verdecchia and matters more than a means than an end to both figures of the play's plot because it induces another production within the performance that leads to a new, radical reassessment of a previously constructed identity and, brings in with that, a special dramatic destiny, a dramatic virtuality.

Traveling, both as inter-hemispheric migration and tourist movement, are seen here as itineraries for contact and exchange. In other words, traveling means to see oneself with the eyes of the other culture, the other person, the other language. Traveling in *Fronteras Americanas* is part of the transnational and inter-American flows that present specific ethnoscapes, mediascapes, and ideoscapes (Verdecchia 1993, 33), to use some of Arjun Appadurai's terms as dimensions of globalization, in the specific case of the Argentinian-Canadian playwright-performer. Talking of travels, Wideload mentions he has travel sickness whenever he is in on the road (48), and he believes that this happens probably because previously "all sides of the border have claimed and rejected" (51) him. Despite of this predilection, he is trying to learn "to live the border" (77) mostly through the words he utters on the stage and by observing the performance of his character. Interestingly, however, Wideload/Verdecchia he did not throw up when he was in Buenos Aires, the place of his birth, the "Home" where he longed to be and where he felt like being in a Costa Gavras film (48, 50).

A metaphorical travel starts in the play with a detour on history, where Verdecchia mentions that "[O]ur History begins approximately 200 million years ago in the Triassic Period of the Mesozoic Era when the original supercontinent Pangea broke up and the continents of the earth assumes the shapes we now recognize" (29),

as if quoting from the Australian environmentalist Tim Flannery's *Eternal Frontier. An Ecological History of North America and Its Peoples* (2001). Here, temporarily, the plot sequence turns for a while to the Heideggerian "vulgar" time of historical dates, by focusing, for example, on the first settlements of Mexico's highlands of Mexico and in the Andes, the time of the pyramids of Teotihuacán, on Joan of Arc and the Catholic Spain in the 15th century, on Christopher Columbus and Pedro Cabral, on Spanish Armada and El Greco, on Lope de Vega and Beethoven's Symphonies, on the death of Ernest Hemingway and on the Academy Awards, Cuba, Fidel Castro and Richard Nixon, on the Nobel Prizes and on many other, similar events and places that directly or indirectly helped shaping the great narratives of the Americas. The other metaphorical travel in the play is when Verdecchia plans to go to Argentina and decides to take a detour through Chile but not knowing the place he 'prepares' for it in advance by reading a 1989 *Fodor's Travel Guide* to the country. While reading, he travels in mind and while traveling so, he thinks of himself in another cultural and geographical setting, becoming his own mirror in the American world.

Travel is also invoked in the process of going home which, for the playwright means, returning to Argentina. Verdecchia, who could not travel to his native land because of the fear of military service imposed for long decades on all men, wanted to go home to Argentine for many years and when he finally went back, he decided to travel with a "new Canadian passport," which did not list his place of birth (36). The fear of going home led to the erasure of the native place from his travel documents, even well after the political danger was gone, so when he goes back to Argentine, the border patrols would not trace back his life. If for Anzaldúa, "homophobia" literally and poetically meant the 'fear of going home' in her *Borderlands/La Frontera*, for Verdecchia the capitalized "Going Home" means finally "claiming" his place "in the universe" (36) after almost fifteen years of being away from the native land, even if that means not having the place name inscribed in the passport but simply just by being there.

Previously, even from far away, Verdecchia has 'traveled' as an Argentinian expatriate by buying "maté and dulce de leche," by practicing Spanish and befriending former "Montonero and Tupamaro guerrillas," by "reading newspapers, novels and every Amnesty International report on South America" and by "tracking down a Salvador Allende poster," along some "postcards of Che and Pablo Neruda," while drinking Malbec wines (37), but all these activities were just a substitute for "Going Home," these were virtual travels in his own dramatized virtuality.

The evolving flux of alternating personal histories thematizing identity, that is, of Verdecchia and Wideload, finally merge when the performer breaks the fourth wall, in a powerful metatheatrical reference from the episode on "El Teatro." Here the venue of the theater, the scene of performance functions not only as a Pan-American highway but also as an abstract thespian borderland, a space of encountering diverse stories and histories, becoming a thriving space of

performativity, where inter-American destinies are under scrutiny by a "bunch of strangers" who "come together and share an experience" of the "Other" America (Verdecchia 1993, 53). This experience of the Americas, of the "Other" America means performing the subject in the hypodiegetic "El Teatro" and in the monologue-flashbacks of Wideload as well as in the soliloquies of Verdecchia, in a similar manner as the American literary figures discussed by Enikő Bollobás do in *They Aren't, Until I Call Them. Performing the Subject in American Literature* (2010). During the theatrical monologues turned stand-up comedy here, the performativity of the performer is involved "not only when particular identities are affirmed or stabilized" as a detailed destiny Verdecchia narrates but also "when identities are transgressed, changed, or destabilized" (Bollobás 2010, 17) as the transgressively humorous Wideload's inter-American destiny. This playful metatheatricality cuts across the borders of artistic genres and leads to a slide announcing Carlos Fuentes' thoughts from *Latin America: At War with the Past* (1985), which claims that "[E]very North American, before this [twentieth] century is over, will find that he or she has a personal frontier with Latin America," which is a "living frontier" that can be "nourished by information, but, above all, by knowledge, by understanding, by the pursuit of enlighted self-interest on both parts" (Verdecchia 1993, 54).

The idea of inter-American destiny in *Fronteras Americanas* is also represented by the Argentine tango, which, according to the playwright "was born of the gaucho's crude attempts to waltz" and despite of its controversial background, "es un sentimiento que se baila" (58), is a danced feeling. Along with the tango, which is the most important of Verdecchia's musical forms, various other dances and musical inserts give the text not only another metatheatrical dimension but also a lively intertextuality. In the playwright's own selection, this musical canon is the audible form of a(n auto)biographical experience stimulating memory and which carries considerable information on various contexts that help building and rebuilding identity and thus, forming a specific dramatic destiny in a drama that is devoid of a visible plot.

The first musical instance in *Fronteras Americanas* is "Aquí Vienen los Mariachis" (famously interpreted by Pedro Infante) that sets up the tone of the discourse Verdecchia introduces in presenting Facundo Morales Segundo on the basis of Steve Jordan's "La Cumbia Del Facundo." Then, when Verdecchia 'travels' to Chile, Carlos Santana's "Jingo" lights up the atmosphere leading to the "dancing" part of the drama that exposes unnecessary stereotypes and the subsequent machismo, the "Exotica Factor" and the "Latin Lover Fantasy" (40, 41) of the Latino machos (Antonio Banderas, Rudolph Valentino, Fernando Lamas, Ricardo Montalban, Desi Arnaz, Anthony Quinn, and Armand Assante /sic!/) and Latin Lover Latinas (Carmen Miranda, Delores del Rio, Maria Montez, Rita Moreno and Sonia Braga) but also of the non-Latinx with Ramiro's Latin Orchestra playing "Navidad Negra." Verdecchia talks of the Salsa Dance Party Extravangaza (34) he

organized along that of the Saxon's Morris Dance Festival conjointly mentioning a number of Latin dances that run across the American continent, regardless of geography, time or people, such as mambo, rumba, cumbia, son, son-guajiro, son-chagui, charanga, merengue, guaguanco, tango, samba, salsa (42). In "The Other" part of the drama, the playwright invokes the most important Argentinian folk musician Atahualpa Yupanquí's "El Mal Dormido" alongside Los Lobos's "La Guacamaya" following in the "El Teatro" sequence at the end of Act I. Act II begins with the French group Mano Negra's "Peligro," trailed by Milladoiro's "Muiñeira de Violanova" and Astor Piazzolla's "Verano Porteño." Later on, Placido Domingo's "Cielito Lindo," Dino Saluzzi's "Mojotorro" and Anibal Troilo's "A Mi Barrio" point to "The Other America," which materializes in the sounds of "El Jako" by Manu Negra concluding the play/show.

All these are, Verdecchia says, "music for exile, for the preparations, the signification of departure, for the symptoms of migration," basically a soundtrack mix for "picking through your belongings and deciding what to take;" this is even more: it is also "[M]usic for final goodbyes for one last drink" and for "the things you left behind," for "cold nights under incomprehensible stars," making up for something which overarches all these, the "music for your invisibility" (58-59). This thespian invisibility is also a marker of identity, erasing geographical coordinates and time, and allowing for a new inter-American identity to be born out of the pieces of former cultural puzzles. Music helps accessing memories, assembling and disassembling the pieces of the past together in a way in which Verdecchia's "auditory sound coloring of South and Central American music serves as a linking element on his spiritual journey and identity search between his two 'homes', Argentina and Canada" (Zorc-Maver and Maver, 2011, 125). This intricate process of memory assemblage counts as a marker of a special, inter-hemispheric destiny involving the Americas in *Fronteras Americanas*, where it has a major role in the formation of the characters –and the play itself.

Verdecchia uses the dramatic destiny of himself-as-Wideload in presenting a special case of inter-American identity fused with the subjective history of the playwright and embedded with the oral storytelling of a fictional character. Verdecchia and Wideload are two faces of the same semi-autobiographical coin, the immigrant Latinx in North America. Their identity scheme overlooks the "vulgar" time of history and focuses on a personal timeline presents as main markers the idea of the border(s) and memory, of names and travel, of music and dance, all through humorous verbal games that construct this monologue as an observational stand-up tragi-comedy with flashbacks into the heterogeneous history and culture of trans-hemispheric Americas, with special focus on the Latinx as *mestizos* (the way Gloria Anzaldúa defined the term), involving a special kind of dramatic meditation on what inter-American destiny can, accordingly, be. Moreover, Verdecchia's play is a static meditation on this type of identity and destiny presenting a personal history of a man

caught in the borderlands of the Americas: it is actually an oscillating, politicized inner monologue between Verdecchia and Wideload, two faces of the same coin, employing many languages and cultures in their tango on identity, opening up challenging spaces of performativity that supersede, at points, even political correctness.

After the premiere of the play, Verdecchia "wrote and starred in a short film adaptation of *Fronteras Americanas* called *Crucero/Crossroads*, which was shown at international film festivals and received several awards" (Zorc-Maver and Maver 2011, 123), an indication the of play's powerful effect beyond the stage. Moreover, in December 2020, the actor-playwright shared on YouTube images and stories about the original Tarragon Theatre production of Fronteras Americanas emphasizing that in the play he represented the lived, felt and imagined experience (Verdecchia 2020, 14:45-14:51) of the Canadian Latinx. While the drama deals, as Mayta Gómez (1995) pointed out, with various borders, including those within the American continent and also within the individuals, Verdecchia's strategy that Guadalupe Escalante Rengifo (2020) sees as dialogic autofiction of critical interculturality, manages to catch the perfect dramatic setup to locate his inter-American identity by pinpointing its strong North-American, Canadian Latinx features (Adams 2009, 219-240). Verdecchia's play transcends thus not only physical and spiritual borders of inter-American nature but has also the capacity to exceed genre borders as well in presenting and challenging North-American, more precisely, Canadian Latinx identity.

Whatever its form of presentation including reading, performance or recording, *Fronteras Americanas* represents an intriguing form of trans-hemispheric, inter-American identity that can be best mapped by the dramatic genre allowing complex creative operations on the perception(s) of identity seen as individual destiny. In this context thus, the Verdecchia-the-playwright and Wideload-the-character offer various parodic and even allegoric versions of the Canadian Latinx, which never cease to cross American borders or let borders cross him. As Faye Hamill observed, Canadian literatures –and also other current literatures of the Americas– nowadays resist "the notion of a single, definable national identity" by exhibiting "resistance through parody and allegory" (2007, 2) but mostly through more general humor. Verdecchia, pragmatically and successfully subscribes to this strategy of overall humor, allowing characters (performers, readers or the audience) to conceive identity as destiny through the transgression of borders even after the drama is over.

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