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Multi-Didaxis in the Drama of Lope de Vega, Calderón de la Barca and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz

- The aim of my paper is twofold:
 1. To give proposals for a new theorization of culture as a dynamic net which allows crucial problems of existing theories, in particular the system theory of Niklas Luhmann and the postcolonial theory of Homi Bhabha, to be remedied.
 2. To show that this new theoretical framework is capable of giving new insights into the theatre culture of the Spanish *siglo de oro* as well as into the impact it had upon the dramatic culture of the Spanish colonies in Hispanic America.
- My basic premises are as follows:
 1. In order to grasp the complexity of worldwide cultural networking, it is necessary to conceive of the cultural net as a universal structure consisting of *several* interacting, overlapping nets, as a world of worlds or – as Gotthard Günther said – as a polycontextural structure of structures. The recourse to polycontextural theory allows the multi-directional circulation of conceptual and material forms to be taken into account without neglecting the “location of culture” (Bhabha) which should be borne in mind since it plays a particularly important role in the hierarchical colonial interactions of cultures.
 2. The same complexity governs dramatic texts, which can be re-conceived of as systems that model and evoke a (potentially) polycontextural world: Stemming from polycontextural subjects (their authors) and consisting themselves of a network of several sub-systems (the semiotic structures constituting the text), the dramas are able to refer to a plurality of cultural contexts at any time. One of the aspects of this textual multi-directionality, which until now has mostly been neglected, is its capacity to pursue several pragmatic aims at the same time by spreading them over diverse textual layers or ‘stages’.
 3. Dramatic texts become even more fascinating when they are performed: A single performance is always bound to a concrete (cultural) *hic et nunc* but can, at the same time, depart from this in various ways by means of sheer textuality. This potential superposition enables the creation of a wide range of combinations of propaganda and critical transgression. The drama can address a present diversified audience (social class, cultural background, gender, etc) and extend its range into imagined universal contexts concurrently. As the genre can be seen as an institutionalized social mass medium, I propose to refer to this potential to reach several audiences in a different way as its multi-didaxis.
 4. The dramatists whose works I will analyze make use of this complexity. By recognizing this, it is possible to shed new light on the ambiguities of their texts which have provoked so many diverse and even opposing interpretations. The two main approaches, in particular, (perceiving the texts as counter-reformational propaganda on the one hand and as a subversion of this propaganda on the other) can be reconciled in an interpretation that takes into account aspects of both interpretations. It can be shown that the playwrights use – each one in her/his own particular way – a multi-didaxis in order to realize both a propagandistic affirmation and a critical analysis of the central tenets of their respective (religious and social) contexts. It might further be suggested that the dramatists hint at possible new social orders which can remedy the contemporary shortcomings. All three of them reveal internal conflicts: Lope de Vega because of his social

provenance, Calderón in a more philosophical way, and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz because of her gender and her cultural and historical situation.

5. Against this backdrop, a comparison of selected dramas by these authors makes it possible to redefine the relationships they have with each other as well as the relationships between the Spanish and the colonial Hispano American theatre cultures of their time. The simplifying logic of *actio* and *reactio*, of cultural grafting and 'writing back' can be substituted by a more complex model which emphasizes the existing entanglements of analogies and differences. The texts of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz in particular reveal an independent and constructive *aemulatio*, which announces and anticipates – amid the colonial 'periphery' – the early enlightenment.

- For the purposes of this project, I will focus on the following dramas:
 - Lope de Vega: *Fuente Ovejuna*
 - Calderón de la Barca: *La vida es sueño* and *Los empeños de un acaso*
 - Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz: *El divino Narciso* and *Los empeños de una casa*.