The End(s) of Representation

Media and Activism in Cherríe Moraga's *Heroes and Saints*

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Abstract: *This essay focuses on the character of Ana Pérez in Cherríe Moraga's 1992 play* Heroes and Saints, *situating Pérez, a journalist, within contemporary US Latina/o literary and media studies. In the play, Pérez functions as a Malinche-like figure as she performs translative acts between the local protesters and her viewing audience. Her character gestures to the important role that Latina/o journalism may play in countering the mainstream Anglo media's often one-dimensional coverage of Latina/o communities and issues. However, Pérez's evolving role from translator to activist also acknowledges the limitations of media access, and in this sense the play illustrates Hector Amaya's concept of the "Latino public sphere paradox," which questions the assumed positive relationship between access to media and access to political power. This essay offers a new perspective on an important piece of twentieth-century Chicana/o literature, focusing on an aspect of the play—media representation—that has received little attention. It demonstrates that research into the portrayal of media, especially journalism, in Chicana/o and Latina/o literature is productive and necessary.*

Near the end of act 1 of Cherríe Moraga's 1992 play *Heroes and Saints*, Father Juan Cunningham and Cerezita (Cere) Valle discuss the importance of visibility for Chicana/o social justice movements. Speaking of a recent rally in support of campesinos protesting pesticide poisoning, Cere approves of Juan's idea to join a fast. "People like to see priests and celebrities sacrificing," she opines. "I'd do it, too, if anyone would notice me. The trick is to be noticed" (Moraga 2005, 45). Juan agrees but insists that mass media create the necessary conditions for being noticed: "that's the very thing that brought me here . . . to the Valley." Cere asks for clarification and Juan explains: "I saw this newspaper photo of Cesar Chávez. He had just finished a thirty-three-day fast. . . . So I came home" (45). Juan references

a landmark moment in Chicana/o history, Chávez's 1968 fast, which ended with the labor leader taking communion next to Robert Kennedy in front of network news cameras. According to Randy Ontiveros, this moment was important for the Chicana/o movement and especially for the movement's relationship with television news broadcasts. Ontiveros calls the coverage that inspired Juan "the most prominent example of Chávez using the camera for the benefit of *la causa*" (2010, 905). While the priest is understandably impressed by this image of religiously based activism—he explains that Chávez "looked like a damn saint, a veritable Gandhi"—he is also affected as a working-class Chicano (Moraga 2005, 45). His reference to this highly circulated image affirms not only the power of media but also the power of media focused on Chicana/os and Chicana/o movements. This exchange between Juan and Cere grounds the characters and their activism in historical events while also establishing a relationship between the play's primary concerns and media coverage.

As I will explore in this essay, *Heroes and Saints* evidences a sustained engagement with mass media through the character of Ana Pérez. Designated in the cast of characters simply as "the news reporter," Pérez is a journalist for a mainstream television station who comes to the San Joaquin Valley of California to report on the protests that have drawn Father Juan to his hometown (Moraga 2005, 2). She is described as "expertly made up" and is soon revealed to be bilingual, facts that allude to her ties both to corporate media and to the townspeople. Her broadcasts often occur at the beginning of scenes, introducing the location and actions of characters to viewers and readers of the play. Importantly, her character develops some of the play's central concerns—namely, visibility and social change. Through her, the play acknowledges the links between media representation and activism and puts forth a vision of community-embedded journalism.

Heroes and Saints premiered on April 4, 1992, at San Francisco's Mission Theatre. Set in the fictional town of McLaughlin, California, the play has dialogue spoken in working-class English and Spanish. It centers around the Valle family, consisting of mother Dolores and her three children, Yolanda, Mario, and Cere. Yolanda is the mother of a baby, Evalina. The family interacts frequently with Father Juan Cunningham, a queer, "half-breed" priest who has returned to his rural hometown to participate in youth-led protests and organizing in response to pesticide contamination

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in the community. Like farm labor activists of the 1960s, the children of McLaughlin often utilize religious imagery in their protests. What originally draws Pérez to the town is a series of ritualized crucifixions; created by the children, these are public displays of the bodies of other children killed by pesticide poisoning. Cere, the main protagonist, is a head without a body; she maneuvers on stage on a "rolling, tablelike platform" referred to as her *raite* (Moraga 2005, 2). We can read her character as a reference to the intergenerational ravages of pesticides and their association with birth defects. Ana Pérez reports on the protests, but after conversations with townspeople and after witnessing the beating of middle-aged protester Amparo Manríquez, she joins the activists. At the play's conclusion, Cere assembles the local people and then martyrs herself while her compañera/os burn the fields.

While issues of visibility and activism are central to the plot and characters, little attention has been paid to one important mechanism by which the town of McLaughlin and its residents gain visibility—the reporter Ana Pérez. This essay examines Pérez and her interactions with the townspeople in order to understand how the play uses her character to develop a nuanced and multifaceted perspective on media representation and visibility in relationship to Chicana/o social justice movements. Pérez's character highlights the paucity and limits of existing mainstream media coverage of Chicana/o communities and issues, in particular the cancer clusters and pesticide poisoning upon which the play centers. Throughout most of the play, Pérez functions as a member of the "Latina/o media": she is a Latina reporter on a show devoted to Latina/o issues and, presumably, Latina/o audiences.[1] At the same time, she challenges ideas about the positive correlation between media representation and power. When Pérez abandons her status as a reporter to join protests in the play's last scene, her character acknowledges that neither media access nor representation ensures political power. Instead, Pérez illustrates what Hector Amaya calls the "Latino public sphere paradox," meaning that for Latina/os, there is an inverse relationship between access to mass media and influence on political processes. Taking into consideration Latina/o access to Spanish-language media, we are forced to confront the fact that although Latina/os have ample access to mass media and the public sphere, this access does not correlate to political power (Amaya 2013, 42). Finally, Pérez's transformation from a journalist to an activist offers a model of a new kind of relationship between communities, publics, and media, affirming the play's insistence on the importance of direct action.

This essay reads the play in relation to its sociohistorical origins, Chicana/o and Latina/o literary scholarship, and Latina/o media studies. I begin with a brief review of relevant popular and scholarly receptions of the play and suggest that Pérez is a critical mechanism through which the work develops themes of visibility and activism. I then situate *Heroes and Saints* within the social, political, and geographic context of its genesis and in particular within its media context to pinpoint how Pérez's reports depart from mainstream media representations of McFarland, California, the real town upon which the fictional McLaughlin is based. In contrast to broadcasts on the cancer cluster in McFarland that aired on major networks, I argue, Pérez's coverage highlights issues of race and activism. The play's Latina reporter, then, fills gaps in terms of representation and content that persist in mainstream news coverage to this day.

The third and fourth sections of the essay consider how Pérez develops the play's themes of voice, visibility, and action. While early scenes, such as the conversation between Juan and Cere, point to the power of media to inspire activism and bring change to the town, as the narrative progresses Pérez moves away from her role as a journalist and explores a different relationship with the townspeople. After initially reporting on the town from the position of an outsider, Pérez begins to interact with town residents, exchanging information with them and eventually joining their protests. This shift is manifested through her changing forms of communication: at first an intercultural and interlingual translator, she becomes an intracommunal source of information and finally a character who speaks not individually but only collectively with other activists. In her role as a translator, the character invokes the historical figure of La Malinche. In this way the play portrays Malinche as an integral member of the community and embeds Pérez, and Latina/o journalists in general, within a larger Latina/o and Chicana/o cultural context.

Pérez's evolution mirrors that of Cere, a transformation analyzed in the penultimate section of the article alongside questions of media production and representation. Cere spends a considerable amount of time exploring the importance of speech and verbal communication but falls silent in several scenes before making one final speech in which she calls to and mobilizes the collective. When Pérez likewise stops reporting and joins the protesters, we can see the play's insistence on exploring the limits of linguistic and visual representation. I analyze Pérez's and Cere's silence in relation to ideas of trauma, language, and representation, arguing that the play gestures to the unrepresentability of trauma while affirming the

possibility and importance of collective voice and action. Returning to Latina/o media studies, this section considers the Latina/o public sphere paradox and reads the play's ending as an acknowledgment that an increase in the quantity of Latina/o-oriented media may not necessarily further Latina/o social justice concerns. Bringing media studies and literary studies together, the article argues that important Chicana/o and Latina/o writers such as Moraga have had sustained engagement with questions of media production and representation. This essay, therefore, is both an example of the productive analysis that can come from a conversation between Latina/o media and literary studies as well as an original perspective on how one Chicana play intervenes in ongoing considerations of Latina/o relationships with mainstream and independent journalism.

Since its premier over twenty years ago, *Heroes and Saints* has generated critical and popular reviews that touch on the play's content and production values. One reviewer lauded the important subject matter but suggested that the play "tackles too many issues too broadly" (Zimmerman 2001). A review of a 1994 performance in Chicago similarly noted that the play contained "a whole handful of possible plays," but it also found the theater company, Latino Chicago, lacking and the play "just not ready to go" (Hayford 1994). The idea that Moraga's work broaches "too many issues" stems from the play's incorporation of multiple struggles and issues, including homophobia within the Chicana/o family, the AIDS epidemic, and US support for death squads in El Salvador, alongside the work's focus on farm labor and pesticides. Moraga's choice to include all of these matters reflects her insistence on intersectional work that simultaneously analyzes race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, and nationality, among other factors. While this may be "too many" issues for some, I agree with Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano that including these themes within a play that is decidedly by and about Chicana/o people allows the work to expand the idea of "Chicano" (2001, 72). At the same time, this essay does not attempt to thoroughly analyze all of the topics addressed in the play. Rather, in focusing narrowly on Pérez I argue for the significance of an additional thematic element in the work, mass media. Furthermore, while this essay takes into consideration stage directions, it only analyzes the text of the play and thus does not engage with productions of the work.

Scholarly criticism of the play has looked at how the text and characters contend with questions of visibility, injustice, and activism. For Yarbro-Bejarano, the visibility of queer individuals in particular offers a heterogeneous portrait of Chicana/o communities (2001, 72). In a similar

vein, Mary Pat Brady foregrounds landscape and labor, noting that the play "makes visible those who labor to produce the landscape, those who work the fields and gather the harvest" (2002, 169–70). Building on their work, I look at visibility in a different context, focusing on the role of Ana Pérez in transmitting the community's protests. Moreover, as Pérez's on-camera interviews occur exclusively with female characters, attention to the journalist allows us to appreciate the extent to which the play amplifies Chicana voices.

My analysis aligns with those of critics who have examined how the work stages social protest. Linda Margarita Greenberg argues that the crucified bodies of children lost to cancer that initially attract Pérez to McLaughlin indicate how the work explores "death and injury as potentially productive of social protest" (2009, 164). Irma Mayorga similarly stresses that the staging of death in the play "theatricalize[s] violence in order to enunciate visibility" and that "visibility and violence work hand in hand to endow and enfranchise" (2011, 158, 163). My reading also foregrounds questions of violence, visibility, and justice while arguing that Pérez must be viewed alongside Mario, Father Juan, the children, and the protesters as an essential figure in developing these themes. Moreover, through Pérez we can trace evolving ideas of speech and visibility and arrive at a more nuanced understanding of how the play encourages direct action. In fact, as my reading of the final lines of the play illustrates, Pérez is integral to the "assertion of individual and collective agency" in the work (Yarbro-Bejarano 2001, 66). Looking at Pérez allows us to see the play's portrayal of media as an important mode of enacting visibility and justice at the individual and group levels. This reading also encourages us to place the work within the context of Latina/o media and see *Heroes and Saints* as part of a longer history of engagement with mass communication on the part of contemporary Chicana/o and Latina/o writers.

Focusing on the text's portrayal of the reporter yields important questions and insights that develop, continue, and challenge ideas about the relationship between media representation, visibility, political power, and social change. The play's inclusion of Pérez serves as a counterpoint to the very limited number of Latina/o reporters or newscasts that focus on US Latina/o individuals and communities in mainstream, English-language media. At the same time, when the play charts Pérez's evolution from journalist to activist, it fails to fully endorse the idea that more media representation by or about Latina/os will further Latina/o social justice

concerns. The play thus asks us to understand and recognize the limits of media representation while affirming the significance of direct action.

McFarland and Media Coverage

The setting of *Heroes and Saints*—the fictional town of McLaughlin, California, in 1988—evokes the real California town of McFarland. Like McLaughlin, McFarland made headlines in the late 1980s when it was designated a "cancer cluster" due to the disproportionate rates of disease suffered by residents. Pérez's description of "the sudden death of numerous children, as well as a high incidence of birth defects" directly references real occurrences in McFarland (Moraga 2005, 4). But while Pérez's coverage of McLaughlin calls to mind the attention given to McFarland and to issues of farm labor and pesticides in the late 1980s and 1990s, her reporting diverges from historical broadcasts.

A brief survey of mainstream media news segments on pesticide poisoning in the San Joaquin Valley illustrates that such broadcasts were primarily composed of two threads.[2] The first focused on the tragedies and losses suffered by residents and their accusations or speculations that the illnesses were the result of environmental factors such as pesticides and pollutants in the water. The second consisted of discussions of "inconclusive" studies and/or interviews with purported experts who did not affirm residents' accusations. Broadcasts typically combined both threads in an attempt to achieve "balance." For example, an *ABC World News Tonight* segment broadcast on December 3, 1987, opened with correspondent Tom Schell explaining, "McFarland, the town of 6,000, is surrounded by fields that are regularly sprayed with fertilizers and pesticides. Residents believe those chemicals have seeped into the community's water supply." Later in the segment, Schell says, "A 1985 study by county health officials failed to come up with any cause of the cancers. And now the state of California is taking a new look, but preliminary reports say they haven't found a cause either." Similarly, the CBS news program *48 Hours* ran a story on the town on April 18, 1990, titled "'Growing Concern'—Did Chemicals Cause Children's Deaths?" Correspondent Erin Moriarty speaks to a town resident, Donna Rose, who lost her son and who states, "It's in our water." Moriarty then interviews Dr. Stewart Segal, who says, "At this point in time, I think we have to say that without knowing what the cause—we don't know whether it's the environment, whether it's other factors outside the environment. We can't answer that question without really having more information that points to a specific cause."

Such broadcasts do spend significant amounts of time interviewing town residents and especially inhabitants such as Rose, who have lost children. However, they set up the discussion of the cause of the children's deaths as a disagreement between two sides: town residents, who are primarily working-class farmers, and "experts" such as medical doctors and the organizations and governmental agencies that conduct studies. These broadcasts thus illustrate a strain of "unreflective journalism" that strives to present "'both sides' of a case, even when the merits of the case do not warrant it" (Romano 2010, 231). While the broadcasts may seem to offer a balanced view of the topic in a way commonly accepted as objective, they fail to account for unequal power relationships between the residents and agribusiness, journalists, and government agencies, or the financial ties between corporations and news networks.[3]

In contrast, Pérez does not spend any time interviewing outside experts or citing studies that contradict residents' accusations that pesticides in the water are to blame for the cancers and deaths. Her opening report focuses on the deaths of children and on the subsequent activism. What has drawn her to the story and what makes the scene newsworthy, her broadcast suggests, are not only the deaths but also the town's response to them. She reports: "One of the most alarming recent events which has brought sudden public attention to the McLaughlin situation has been a series of . . . crucifixions" (Moraga 2005, 4). Thus, if there are "two sides" to Pérez's story, they are the deaths and the town's response to them, not differing explanations of the cancers. The religiously influenced protests and Pérez's coverage of them call to mind Chávez's activism during the grape boycotts of the 1960s. Chávez and the United Farm Workers drew heavily on Catholic symbolism and rhetoric in their actions, resulting in landmark media coverage of Chicana/o issues. While the unprecedented coverage of Chávez brought attention to farmworkers, Chávez's religiously tinged activism along with the networks' propensity to offer coverage without much context or depth played into a "media dialectic" of Chicana/o activists as either "suffering saints" or "dangerous revolutionaries" (Ontiveros 2010, 909). When Pérez is drawn to McLaughlin by the crucifixions, she evokes the attention given to the activism of the 1960s and 1970s.

However, her broadcasts differ markedly from those cited by Ontiveros in the attention she gives to women and to a wider number of activists. In fact, while Pérez does interact with Father Juan, her interviews in front of the camera occur exclusively with female characters—Amparo, Dolores,

and Yolanda. These interactions contrast with mainstream journalism that often privileges information from political and economic leaders, so that "women and a range of ethnic and other minorities tend to be overlooked and underutilized as the sources of information or topics for stories" (Romano 2010, 235). The attention Pérez gives to women may reinforce the idea that deaths of children are primarily a women's concern; nevertheless, her interviews with a range of female residents correct the historical record that has downplayed or ignored Chicana activism, and they also move beyond the familiar focus on a single, charismatic, male civil rights leader.[4] Pérez's initial coverage of McLaughlin contributes to the media attention paid to Chicana/o farmworkers while departing from historical coverage in her attention to multiple female activists.

Pérez's reporting also departs from mainstream coverage of the cancer clusters in its foregrounding of race. Remarkably, neither the *48 Hours* nor the *World News Tonight* report mentions this very salient issue. The ethnic makeup of McLaughlin, however, is fundamental to Pérez's broadcast as she announces that she is reporting for the program *Hispanic California*. The program's title alludes to the existence of a stable, sizable "Hispanic" population in the state and suggests that this population faces unique circumstances and experiences. Pérez's role as a journalist for the show would of course not be possible without the existence and interest of a Hispanic constituency, and thus the name of the show reflects how "the creation of a commercially viable Hispanic audience is what makes Latino-oriented journalism possible" (Rodríguez 1999, 5). The name of the show, which utilizes the US government–created term *Hispanic*, supports Arlene Dávila's assertion that, following intensifying global competition in the 1990s, advertising agencies emphasized "the abstract ideal of 'Hispanics' as an undifferentiated totality" (2001, 53). The show's title suggests that it fits in with efforts to create this undifferentiated group, hinting at the economic and corporate interests at play. As Guillermo Gómez-Peña explains, the term *Hispanic* connotes "upward mobility and political obedience" (1988, 132). Working under the generic and assimilationist term *Hispanic*, Pérez engages in creating the audience she purports to report on.

Pérez's status as a Latina reporter working for a "Hispanic" show also establishes a tension between her loyalty to Latina/o people and her ties to Anglo-dominated media interests. She straddles the line between visibility and access: she herself is a discernible representation of Latina/o people while she is also tasked with making such people visible on screen. The play leaves unclear how much access she has to production processes

and decisions. Is the title of the show of her choosing, for example? And even if it were, we would have to evaluate this "choice" as one made within the constraints of an Anglo-controlled, corporate media structure. The show's title also reflects the complex and diverse interests at play within "Latina/o media." While the show abides by the earlier definition of "Latina/o media" as media marketed and packaged to Latina/os, the term *Hispanic* suggests another prominent aspect of "Latina/o media"—the power and control exercised by non-Latina/os. Still, the show is dedicated to recognizing questions of race, and Pérez does so when she speaks with residents who bring up the issue. In her first segment she interviews Amparo, who says that the cancer deaths have brought attention from white folks. "The gabachos, s'cuze me, los americanos always coming through McLaughlin nowdays. Pero, not too much change" (Moraga 2005, 6). Suggesting that the presence of Anglos, or *gabachos*, is notable characterizes the town as majority Mexicana/o-Chicana/o. Amparo's reference to outsiders may also allude to representatives of government agencies or directors of medical and public health studies, the types of experts interviewed in the broadcasts cited above. By only allowing such individuals to appear in the dismissive comments of Amparo, the play privileges the words and perspectives of a Chicana activist and favors marginalized individuals and voices.

Featuring a Latina reporter who calls attention to racial inequities, the play suggests that the identity of journalists is important. Pérez's discussion of race is largely in line with a segment from *CBS This Morning* that ran on December 30, 1997 ("McFarland Farm Workers Struggle to Discover Why Their Children Are Contracting and Dying of Cancer"). The segment was hosted by respected Latino correspondent Manuel Gallegus, based in Los Angeles. Like Pérez, Gallegus foregrounds race, noting that McFarland is "94 percent Latino." Like Pérez as well, Gallegus interviews activists, including Marta Salinas, who explains why the cancer deaths remain unsolved: "They didn't care about how many children died. Why? Because we are just poor brown people." Thus, of the three major national reports on the cancer deaths examined here, only the one with a Latino reporter mentions race and foregrounds the organized community response. Unlike the other two national broadcasts mentioned earlier, Gallegus's report does not attempt to present "two sides." Rather, it focuses on activists, also noting that a new study from the Environmental Protection Agency will examine water, air, and soil samples from the area over the next two years. While the ethnicity of the reporter is significant, so is the time period.

The CBS report by Gallegus aired over a decade after the cancer cluster made national news and several years after *Heroes and Saints* was published. The report therefore may be a product of the kinds of cultural and social intervention that Moraga's play was attempting to make and a testament to the importance of having reporters who appreciate the significance of race and community activism.

Overall, the lack of quality and in-depth coverage by and about Latina/os is borne out in studies of national news coverage. For example, Otto Santa Ana has documented the gross underrepresentation of US Latina/os by network news programs, revealing a ratio of one hundred Latina/os to one news story featuring Latina/os. While Latina/os make up 14 percent of the US population, less than 1 percent of network evening news stories address Latina/o issues (Santa Ana 2013, 1). Pérez offers a corrective to this dearth of coverage while simultaneously failing to fully remedy the situation. Her reports are at times complicit with the state and engage in a commodification of "Chicano/a events as mainstream entertainment" (Greenberg 2009, 169). In this sense, the play does not make the facile assertion that an increase in Latina/o media will lead to an increase in political and social power. Rather, Pérez's evolution from a reporter to an activist foregrounds the importance of direct action.

Visibility and Social Change

Throughout the first act, Pérez primarily provides visibility to the townspeople by transmitting information about McLaughlin to her camera crew and, by extension, to her viewing audience. Her newscasts follow a three-part structure consisting of opening, body, and closing (Santa Ana 2013, 27). For example, in the first scene in which she appears (act 1, scene 2), she begins: "Today I am speaking to you from the town of McLaughlin in the San Joaquín Valley. McLaughlin is commonly believed to be a cancer cluster area, where a disproportionate number of children have been diagnosed with cancer in the last few years" (Moraga 2005, 4). She then speaks with Amparo about the latest crucifixion and finally turns back to her camera: "That concludes our Hispanic hour for the week, but watch for next week's show where we will take a five-hour drive north to the heart of San Francisco's Latino Mission District, for an insider's observation of the Day of the Dead, the Mexican Halloween" (7). The three-part structure of Pérez's broadcast establishes her work as following a model commonly utilized by newscasters.

The content of Pérez's broadcast reflects her status as a reporter for a mainstream program but nevertheless opens up an avenue for challenging a hegemonic framing of the events. Pérez translates the crucifixions into media terms when she calls them a "publicity stunt," indicating her inability to see them as a "valid means of resistance" (Greenberg 2009, 169). This language, along with Pérez's employment by a show titled *Hispanic California*, shows her to be firmly within the mainstream and even complicit with state powers that would criminalize Chicana/o protest (169). At the same time, the play's use of Pérez situates audience members as spectators, allowing the play to highlight "reading as a way of enacting citizenship" (168). Considered within the context of the play, the use of Pérez to broach the possibility of enacting a different kind of citizenship calls to mind Tiffany Ana López's concept of "critical witnessing." For López, playwrights engage in critical witnessing when they constitute the audience not just as viewers but as co-witnesses, who may participate in enacting social justice (2003, 33). Pérez's initial framing of the protests references a hegemonic perspective on Chicana/o activism while broaching the possibility of a collaborative transformation involving media producers and viewers.

Pérez affirms the effectiveness of the children's protest and the potential for media coverage to bring some change to the town. The children's dramatic demonstrations, highly visible from the start of the play, exhibit a keen understanding of the power of spectacle as well as the importance of media coverage. The play's opening scene describes the crucifixion of the bodies of dead children, acts that "counter state interpretations of those bodies—as unintelligible, as public commodity, and as invisible" and "make death visible and meaningful" (Greenberg 2009, 164–65). Pérez's first lines confirm that the crucifixions have indeed achieved visibility for the town. She explains that the town is the site of "crucifixions, performed in what seems to be a kind of ritualized protest against the dying of McLaughlin children" (Moraga 2005, 4). This interpretation confirms the efficacy of the actions: Pérez correctly understands the crucifixions as protests against the use of pesticides and as a request for public attention. Calling attention to visibility in this way marks the play as one that is attuned to the importance of visibility insofar as it furthers justice; the work's opening and closing scenes show that *Heroes and Saints* "seeks to make the violence against a community visible through strategic images that stage their violation" (Mayorga 2011, 161). Pérez's presence in McLaughlin confirms that the violence against town residents has been seen, while also contributing to

its visibility. These opening scenes, then, establish a relationship between the protesters and Pérez in which the former are able to communicate effectively to and through the latter.

Of course, Cere and the other protesters want more than visibility: they want visibility that leads to change, and media coverage of the crucifixions does lead to concrete, although minor, changes in the lives of townspeople. In act 1, scene 3, Father Juan and Amparo bring a five-gallon tank of spring water to the Valle home, and Amparo explains that the Arrowhead Corporation donated the water. Juan credits not simply the newscast but the person featured, Amparo: "Thanks to Doña Amparo. Last week's newscast stirred up everyone!" Amparo defers: "It wasn' me. It was la crucifixión. That's what brought the newspeepo here" (Moraga 2005, 14). Here, we see the result of the relationship between the protesters and the media, with the public ("everyone") as an additional actor. Amparo is correct that the crucifixions brought journalists to the town, but the newscasters fulfilled their obligation to the public, who in turn put pressure on the corporation to offer a remedy, albeit a temporary and insufficient one. These two early scenes signal that the coverage of the children's actions by media can result in concrete change in the lives of town residents.

Pérez's coverage of the protests, the donation of bottled water, and Juan's decision to return to the Valley reflect the role that media may have in granting visibility and inspiring action and change. However, the play does not stop there: even as it argues for the relationship between media visibility and change, it shows how characters consider questions of voice and representation in effecting change. Cere and Pérez in particular move from speaking many lines in the play to near silence by the end. The following section reads closely Pérez's interactions with townspeople and charts her change throughout the play, comparing her own relationship to speech and voice with Cere's. I show how she evolves from an intercultural translator to an intracommunal voice and finally to an activist with no distinguishable individual voice. I trace this transformation alongside that of Cere, who also speaks less and less as the play develops until, after one final speech, she silently martyrs herself. This evolution, I argue, allows the play to thoughtfully ruminate on the complex questions involved in considerations of speech, activism, and representation. I consider these questions within Chicana feminist literary and scholarly work, and in particular in relation to portrayals of La Malinche. As I will show, by remaining focused on Pérez we are able to appreciate how the play stages an intervention in ideas about speech, language, and translation and calls on us to consider the ends of representation.

Translation

In her engagement with the townspeople during her first broadcast, Pérez functions as a translator. Her opening monologue, in which she explains to viewers the situation and activism in McLaughlin, can be read as an act of spatial, cultural, and political translation, but she quickly engages in more explicit linguistic translations as well. In this first broadcast she attempts to speak to Dolores, who rebuffs her. Amparo explains Dolores's response: "she says es como un circo." Pérez then turns to the camera and translates: "a circus" (Moraga 2005, 5). Pérez's translative act has a clear purpose—to make Amparo's words intelligible to the presumably monolingual viewing audience. However, for bilingual readers the line offers some humor, as by simply repeating the word "circus," Pérez in fact contributes to the image of unruly noise that Dolores is describing. Moreover, Pérez's translation is not precise; she doesn't clarify that the town "is like a circus" but only repeats the noun, affirming Dolores's description. By functioning as a linguistic translator, Pérez serves a particular purpose within the play and for its readers while also calling forth a longer history of Latina/o journalism. Early Latina/o journalists, such as those who had Spanish-language columns in privately owned newspapers in the period immediately following the US-Mexican War, functioned largely as translators (Rodríguez 1999, 15). Their work was often seen as accommodationist in relation to Anglo cultural and political interests. Pérez's translations may be read as a reference to this larger history of Latina/o journalism and a mechanism by which she is contextualized as a Latina journalist.

The historical relationship between translation and accommodation, however, extends much further back within Latina/o and Chicana/o culture and history, and Pérez's translations also place her in relationship to La Malinche. Also known as Malintzín, Malinalli, and Doña Marina, Malinche translated for Hernán Cortés during his conquest of México. In her essay "A Long Line of Vendidas," Moraga explains the heteropatriarchal understanding of Malinche: she "sold out her indio people by acting as courtesan and translator for Cortéz, whose offspring symbolically represent the birth of the bastardized mestizo/Mexicano people" (2000, 108). While Malinche has long been regarded as a symbol of betrayal, her life and psyche has also become a rich source of Chicana feminist explorations of cultural and linguistic hybridity and the legacies of colonization, sexism, and patriarchy. Chicana feminist writers in particular have offered appraisals of Malinche in her own voice that are otherwise

lacking in historical accounts. For example, in "La Malinche," by Carmen Tafolla (1993, 199), the speaker proclaims:

> But Chingada I was not.
> Not tricked, not screwed, not traitor.
> For I was not traitor to myself—
> I saw a dream
> and I *reached it.*
> *Another world. . . .*[5]

Tafolla's Malinche directly refutes the idea that she has been a passive pawn in men's schemes. She also resists the idea of a translator as mere mimic of information or language, positioning herself as a deliberate and visionary creator (Vigil 2012, viii). At the same time, this and other interpretations do not reduce Malinche to her reproductive role, but rather "[subsume] her reproductive activity into her political and strategic identity" (Pratt 1993, 870). As an evocation of Malinche, Pérez's character calls to mind the complicated role that interlinguistic and interethnic translators have played in Mexican and Chicana/o history. Her translations, which not only re-create but also help to create an activist community, contribute to a significant tradition of feminist reappraisals and appreciation of Malinche's legacy.[6]

Along with her contemporary Chicana feminist writers and scholars, Moraga is deeply invested in Malinche, and this figure appears in several of her works. In her play *The Hungry Woman: A Mexican Medea* (2001), the principal character, Medea, also overtly invokes Malinche. Patricia Ybarra explains that in "layering Malinche's story upon Medea's," *The Hungry Woman* "combines various losses and betrayals between women, men and women, and women and their children" (2008, 69). In both plays, Malinche is invoked within a queer context. In act 1, scene 8 of *Heroes and Saints*, Cere and Father Juan discuss at length—and not without sexual innuendo—the significance of tongues, the body part with which Malinche, as Cortés's translator, is highly associated. This conversation between two queer characters alludes to the fact that Malinche is indicted for being sexually unfaithful to her race in much the same way that queer men and women are perceived as sexually unfaithful to heteronormative *chicanidad*. Moraga's consistent linking of Malinche to queer characters exemplifies her own and her plays' "queer sexual politics" (Ybarra 2008, 69). The connection between Malinche and Pérez, through the latter's translations, places Pérez, and by extension Latina/o journalists, in a complicated but important position. Pérez offers a new understanding of Latina/o media representatives

that situates them in relation to the vexed history of translators while also calling on us to reconsider the historical figure of Malinche. This reconsideration, as I will explore later, is founded on a renewed understanding of the importance of the public: just as we understand Pérez as a cultural worker tasked with creating and contributing to a Latina/o public, so too may we reconsider Malinche as neither a traitor nor visionary, but as a woman whose translations, like Pérez's, inaugurate a social body.

Pérez's Malinche-like status connects her to the larger field of Latina/o journalism while also portraying her as an "in-between" character. Yarbro-Bejarano discusses how several characters are also in between due to questions of race, location, and sexuality. She explains that Father Juan's "'in-betweenness' echoes his own locations and desires (valley/city, white men/brown men)" (2001, 71). Cere's brother Mario is a similarly in-between character whose desires seem to be unrealizable within the space of the Chicano family and the rural hometown (71). Pérez's gender performance and geography also mark her as in-between. She does not live in McLaughlin but frequents the town in order to report on events there. She works for an English-language television station but has clear linguistic ties to Spanish-speaking people. Her gender performance is in between because she presents markers of heteronormativity while simultaneously pushing against the pressures to remain a passive woman on the sidelines of political action and social change.

While these markers of in-betweenness connect her to Juan and Mario, they also reinforce her status as a Latina journalist. America Rodríguez explains that Latina/o journalists of the "1.5 generation" are positioned as "translators and mediators between their audience and the dominant, majority society . . . this 'in-betweenness' is activated daily in tension between objectivity and ethnicity" (1999, 5).[7] Rodríguez's perspective offers us a new way of reading Pérez's early lines, when she interviews Amparo but then remarks to her crew that they will "edit her out later" (Moraga 2005, 7). This moment shows that the journalist has some access to editorial decisions about content, although it also suggests that this access is circumscribed by other interests and pressures. Pérez's desire to silence Amparo may not be due to her reading of the crucifixions as a publicity stunt, but rather may reflect a struggle between her own competing desires—to represent Latina/o people, on one hand, and to display the objectivity valued by her profession, on the other (Greenberg 2009, 169). Rodríguez reminds us that "objectivity is the dominant ideology and practice of U.S. journalism" and that remaining true to ideals and standards

of objectivity bestows legitimacy on ethnic minority journalists (1999, 85). Mari Castañeda similarly notes that "mainstream outlets have criticized Latino media producers for often working as advocates for the community and taking a subjective perspective on stories" (2008, 63). That Pérez is struggling internally at this point is affirmed by the stage directions, which note that she concludes her broadcast, after Amparo has walked away, "with false bravado" (Moraga 2005, 7). This description suggests that Pérez has been moved by Amparo's words, even if she finds them inappropriate for broadcast. The false bravado indicates Pérez's gendered position as a Latina journalist; objectivity is not only associated with Anglo-dominated media but also often depicted as a trait that comes naturally to men. Thus, Pérez's actions in this scene show how she shares a status of in-betweenness with Juan and Mario and reflect the pressures and challenges she faces as a Latina journalist.

These early scenes illustrate that Pérez stands in relation to historical figures such as La Malinche as well as other in-between characters such as Mario and Father Juan. Where Pérez perhaps departs from these other characters is that her in-betweenness has a specific bridge-like function. That is, while Mario's sexuality may place him in between white and brown spaces, sexualities, and desires, he never brings these different sites together. Neither does Father Juan. In fact, as Yarbro-Bejarano points out, Juan, like Mario, "deserts his people in their time of need" (2001, 72). In contrast, Pérez's in-betweenness is essential to her profession as a journalist and to her role in the play. She literally explains and translates what is happening in McLaughlin to viewers of Channel Five as well as to readers or viewers of the play. Furthermore, while questions of fidelity and betrayal haunt all these characters, the play's use of Pérez to evoke Malinche opens up the possibility for a deeper exploration that moves beyond binary understandings of us/them. Martha J. Cutter argues that Malinche's command of several languages (Nahuatl, Maya, and Spanish) means that she herself may help us think outside a "binary opposition between voice and silence, colonizer and colonized" (2010, 2). While *Heroes and Saints* references Malinche early on, Pérez herself does not remain a translator but rather engages in different and more complex forms of communication between herself, the townspeople, and the viewers of Channel Five. While she translates lexically between Amparo and her camera crew, she also, as stated above, engages in visual and spatial translations for readers and viewers. These functions offer up the play itself as a cultural translation, affirming Adam Versényi's (2007) assertion that translation can be understood as a defining

component of theater in the Americas. When Pérez translates for individual characters in both literal and nonliteral ways, she fulfills Cere's urging for visibility while connecting herself and other characters to a larger history and context. The play then places Pérez in relationship to Chicana/o history and literature while also opening up the possibility for different, and changing, communicative and translative acts.

As the play progresses, Pérez's broadcasts offer more attention not only to the spectacle of the protests but also to the protesters themselves. Her report that opens act 2, scene 3 foregrounds women who have been organizing to demand an appropriate response to the loss of their children's lives. The journalist names the organization—"the Mothers and Friends of McLaughlin"—and explains the mothers' demands, which she describes as "quite concrete" (Moraga 2005, 77). These demands include federal money to relocate to an environmentally safe community, the closing of the well that has been providing tap water to the town, and the establishment of a free health clinic for those affected. In describing the demands as "quite concrete," Pérez suggests that the requests are reasonable and achievable and that the protesters themselves are an intelligent and organized group. Moreover, she offers brief explanations of the demands, clarifying that the request for federal money to relocate is based on the fact that the protesters currently live on federally subsidized land. This detail again portrays the demands and, by extension, the protesters as rational and reasonable. Pérez's broadcast further develops her early focus on the protests themselves, giving more space to activists, particularly female activists.

While the monologue is in line with her earlier broadcasts, which focused on the protests and protesters and made no effort to give equal time to government or health officials, this scene also includes a transformative moment for Pérez. Following her broadcast, the play stages a moving protest that consists of mothers holding up photographs of their dead children and declaring each child's name, date of death, cause of death, and age at death. A group of protesters nearby shout "¡Asesinos! ¡Asesinos! ¡Asesinos!" (78). A young child who is with the group slips and Amparo steps out of line to pick her up; as she does so, a policeman begins to beat Amparo. Pérez shouts out with shock and concern: "She's been struck! Amparo Manríquez . . . oh my god! the policeman! . . . Stop him! Jesus! Somebody stop him! No! No! Stop him!" (79). Amparo's husband, Don Gilberto, throws his body over his wife's to shield her, the protesters scatter, and the scene ends.

Reading this scene with attention to Pérez, we can see how she has been brought into the community of protesters. She shouts Amparo's

full name, indicating familiarity with the town and one of its prominent figures. Her shouts show her stepping out of her role as a journalist: she is no longer reporting from outside the town but is attempting to change a situation unfolding in front of her. This scene also makes clear Pérez's new understanding of the power of voice. In terms of aiding Amparo, Pérez's verbal protest is ineffectual. Her shouts do not stop the policeman from beating Amparo; only Don Gilberto's body is able to do that. Pérez is confronted with the idea that directing her voice at an unnamed public may not bring about the change that the town needs. Evidence that Pérez slowly accepts this idea can be found in subsequent scenes, in which she speaks less and less to her viewing public in favor of greater communication with and between townspeople. Here the play recognizes the way that translation can transform the translator, as well as the importance of direct action. As Pérez comes to play a more significant role in the lives and protests of the townspeople, her individual voice takes on less and less importance until it finally becomes indistinguishable from the collective voice of other characters. While this movement may appear to undermine the play's emphasis on the importance of voice, I would suggest that Pérez in fact recasts voice as a communal rather than individual project.

Affirming Moraga's dedication to offering complex portrayals and reappraisals of Malinche, the play's Malinche-like figure does not remain static but evolves in her relationship to the townspeople. This change is evidenced through her shifting modes of communication. Whereas at first she offered translations between the townspeople and her viewing audience, in act 2 Pérez begins to communicate more directly with the town. Act 2, scene 11, the final scene of the play, opens with the character operating as a typical journalist: "This is Ana Pérez, coming to you live from McLaughlin, California. Today is the funeral of Evalina Valle, the tenth child to die of cancer in this small Valley town" (Moraga 2005, 103). Here we can see a shift from spectacle to justice: these lines are not focused on a protest or even on the ritual of the funeral, but on the death of Evalina. The characters are observing the funeral of Yolanda's infant daughter and Cere's transformation into a *virgen* and eventual martyrdom. Pérez attempts to speak to Yolanda and is rebuffed; she then justifies her intrusion by telling the grieving mother that "the priest asked to be here," adding, "He said there was to be a crucifixion" (104). This last sentence provides Yolanda with shocking and tragic information as she immediately understands Cere's intent. The scene is notable because for the first time Pérez provides a character in the play with information gathered from another character—that

is, she provides a communicative bridge between the people of McLaughlin, rather than between them and those outside the town.

In conveying information to Yolanda, Pérez begins to move away from her role as a translator and evidence traits of public journalism. Her transmission of information fulfills one of Judith Lichtenberg's descriptions of public journalism as a way to "connect with citizens . . . and not merely provide a one-way flow of information to consumers" (quoted in Romano 2010, 18). What she tells Yolanda does nothing to further the needs of Channel Five or her own job; rather, she is making herself useful within the community. While the actual words she speaks to Yolanda transmit information, her action remains deeply related to the act of translation. That is, we may read the change in Pérez's relationship with Yolanda and Father Juan as one product of translation itself: the ability of translation to change the translator. Rather than translating one character's words to be understood by another, in her act of communication between Juan, herself, and Yolanda she is translated—transformed—from an outsider to a member of the McLaughlin community.

Evidence of this transformation in Pérez's relationship with the residents is clearly seen when, for the first time, she is invited to bear witness and cast a spotlight on the townspeople's tragedies. Dolores, who in the first scene had refused to speak to Pérez, now calls out to her: "Come, señorita. Come see how my baby se vuelve a santita. Come show the peepo" (Moraga 2005, 106). Dolores's words also evidence a shift from a reliance on voice to a request for visual representation, as she demands that Pérez "show" rather than merely tell. She does not want Pérez to translate her words (and Pérez doesn't), but wants her to use her camera and her position to portray the family's situation. In following Dolores's instructions, Pérez illustrates her own ability to decide the content of the show's material, again showcasing the journalist's relationship to both visibility and access.

Dolores's specific desire to utilize the journalist for visibility reflects a stark shift in her understanding of the power of seeing. Not only did Dolores earlier refuse to speak to Pérez, but for much of the play she keeps Cere out of sight. Early scenes, in which she expresses a fear of Cere being seen by a ridiculing public, show that Dolores believes that visibility poses a threat to her daughter. The first time Father Juan visits the Valle home, Dolores "quickly pushes Cerezita out of sight, drawing a curtain around her" (13). Cere protests when her mother removes her from the window, where she was watching Juan distribute pamphlets. "You don't need to see," Dolores insists, and then warns Cere: "You think you're so tough, go on. But we'll

see how you feel the first time some stranger looks at you with cruel eyes" (39, 41). For Dolores, the danger in seeing is in the potential of the see-er to be seen. In order to protect Cere from the scorn of outsiders, she is willing to prevent her from seeing. Cere refutes her mother's fears and links seeing to knowledge, saying "I am smart" and "I'm old enough now to go out!" (39, 41). Yolanda also suggests the futility of Dolores's attempts, saying early on that Cere "sees" (14). When Dolores asks Pérez to film Cere, we understand that the contested issue of visibility has been resolved and that the mother has acknowledged—and has herself been influenced by—her daughter's power of sight. By calling out to Pérez, Dolores indicates her own shifting understanding of visibility in general and of the journalist's role in particular.

The final scene of the work brings together the play's central themes of speech, visibility, and direct action and marks the culmination of Pérez's transformation from an outside observer to a community-embedded activist. After refusing to speak for some time, Cere offers a speech to the assembled protesters. Her speech, however, does not call for more protests or demonstrations. She does not exhort the people to take action but rather affirms them, stating that they are, in one of the most memorable lines of the play, "a miracle people" (106). The young woman's speech provides a deliberative moment in which characters consider their circumstances and possibilities before taking action (Romano 2010, 3). After her speech, Cere turns and enters the fields. Her brother Mario shouts "Burn the fields," and the people echo him in Spanish: "Enciendan los files!" Then: "They all, including Ana Pérez, rush out to the vineyards, shouting as they exit. '¡Asesinos! ¡Asesinos! ¡Asesinos!'" (Moraga 2005, 107). Here we see the culmination of the transformation that began earlier in this act. Whereas before Pérez had shouted for someone to stop the policeman while the protesters shouted "murderers," now she joins her voice and body with those of the people.

The Ends

There are several ways we can read the last lines of the play. From one perspective, Pérez's joining of the protesters may represent the successful culmination of their efforts. The children have caught the attention of the public—represented by Pérez—and the public has joined their cause. Another reading, however, may reflect the opposite, that is, the abandonment of any dialogue with the public. Read this way, Pérez can be seen as

commenting on the failure of news sources to take Latina/o people and issues seriously. Keeping in mind her straddling of the line between visibility and access, we may also read her silence as the recognition of her limited ability to shape journalistic content in ways that would make her work more meaningful to the community. Reflecting on his year-long study of network news, Santa Ana concludes that the single major finding is the networks' "gross disregard of Latinos" (2013, 15). Thus, Pérez may be turning her back on a media industry that has turned its back on Latina/os.

The fact that Pérez ceases to speak during the climatic ending of the play, which involves Cere's martyrdom, also gestures to the vexed relationship between trauma and representation. Scholars such as Dori Laub and Cathy Caruth suggest that trauma is "unrepresentable" and enacts a rupture between representation and language (Kaplan and Wang 2004, 4). In addition, attempts to represent trauma, particularly through language, may mean reliving painful experiences that have scarred or silenced a person. At the same time, scholars and human rights activists acknowledge that trauma often calls out for articulation, particularly in the context of righting historic injustices and working to ensure that large-scale traumatic events, such as the Nazi Holocaust, "never again" occur. Within the play, the early emphasis on speech but eventual turn to silence by Cere and Pérez captures the representational dilemma that trauma provokes. When Pérez stops speaking, she alludes to Laub's and Caruth's linguistic rupture, evoking what I term the "ends of representation," the limit-point of verbal and/or visual articulations of traumatic events such as the deaths of Evalina and Cere.

At the same time, Pérez as a journalist and the play as a whole are deeply invested in an additional "end of representation," the potential outcome that attention to injustice may achieve. Moraga captures the silencing effect of trauma without forgoing speech or its power when she writes that Pérez joins her voice with those of the community. In this action, the journalist suggests what Elaine Scarry calls the "mutually exclusive" potential of the language of agency; for Scarry such language may be benign or "sadistic" but never both simultaneously (1987, 13). Speaking specifically of language used to describe physical pain, Scarry explains that such language may be invoked to assist in the elimination of pain or to assist in its infliction (13). That language may be used for such different purposes suggests not the inseparability of these uses but their complete distinction, and the importance of recognizing these distinctions. Reading Pérez in relation to Scarry, we can see that her final words and actions, which are part of a protest against the imposition of physical, psychological, and

emotional pain, move her out of the space of in-betweenness that she had previously inhabited. The "mutually exclusive" nature of the language of agency means that she cannot speak to corporate interests and citizens' demands at the same time (13).

Within the play, Pérez illustrates the mutually exclusive nature of the language of agency the moment she stops speaking for/to the cameras; in doing so she ceases to participate in even the possibility that her words may be used to further corporate interests. Rather, Pérez's contribution to the collective chants reflects her exclusive participation in the fight against agribusiness and pesticide poisoning and her use of voice only in the interest of alleviating pain and furthering justice. No longer is she speaking to both community activists and a profit-driven network; rather, she is harnessing language for the sole purpose of supporting the townspeople's protests. At this moment she definitively ruptures her relationship with her network and in turn her relationship with damaging speech, fulfilling Scarry's ideas by engaging only in speech that struggles against pain. Moreover, while Scarry's description doesn't outline how one may distinguish between the distinct uses of language, the play offers readers and viewers a signal when Pérez physically joins the activists in the fields: she places her body and her voice among and in solidarity with the protesters. Following Yarbro-Bejarano's discussion of the importance of both individual and collective agency in the play, I argue that this ending stages a specifically Chicana intervention into the problem of representation and trauma. The silencing of Pérez's individual voice means that she joins Cere in evoking discourses of virgin martyrs while also "re-gendering . . . the Christ/communion figure" by taking on "the masculine role of redeemer" (Yarbro-Bejarano 2001, 80). Pérez's individual silence but participation in the collective chants and actions of the protesters captures the complexities of language and representation while also illustrating her insistence, and the play's, on using female-led, community-embedded speech and action to continue a social justice struggle.

Considering Pérez in relationship to Latina/os and media, we may also understand her actions as a cynical acknowledgment of the Latina/o public sphere paradox. The public sphere is the realm in which citizens can come together to deliberate and exert positive influence on the nation-state.[8] Mass media, or the "fourth estate," can help create this space, thus contributing to the public sphere and by extension to greater democracy.[9] The idea undergirding this relationship is that access to media engenders political power—that is, once citizens have access to media they can

participate in the public sphere and help shape political thought, opinion, and processes. Of course, this ideal of democracy is constrained by dominant notions of citizenship that "give preeminence to white, middle-class producers of and contributors to a political body defined in national terms" (Dávila 2001, 158). Moreover, one of the often unquestioned qualifications of public participants is that of citizenship, a status that may be denied to Latina/os and other marginalized peoples in either the political or social sense (Amaya 2013, 18–19).

This brings us to what Hector Amaya terms the "Latino public sphere paradox," in which the situation of Latina/os contradicts the idea that more access to media translates into more power. He points out that Latina/os have great access to mass media, particularly Spanish-language media, but they struggle to gain access to English-language media. This requires us to rethink the relationship between access to media and access to the public sphere: "With Latinas/os, more access to a public sphere equals less political power" (2013, 42). Moreover, within Spanish-language media the "range of what is accepted and promoted as 'Latina' on the airwaves" may be as limited as it is in English-language media (Dávila 2001, 177). As a bilingual reporter for an English-language, Latina/o-oriented show, Pérez's character reflects the complexity of "Latina/o media" and her own role within it. She is constrained by the title of the show itself, which uses the neoliberal term *Hispanic*, as well as by the English-language format of the broadcast which excludes monolingual Spanish viewers. These dual constraints on Pérez contribute to the inverse and unequal relationship between Latina/o media presence and Latina/o political and social power. Pérez's abandonment of her role as a journalist can thus be read both as an acknowledgment of this paradox and as a refusal to continue to perpetuate the situation.

Read within Latina/o literary and media studies, *Heroes and Saints* has much to offer our understandings of the relationship between media access and political power. As the focus of several broadcasts of a show devoted to "Hispanics," the characters in *Heroes and Saints* do not lack access to media, even English-language media. At the same time, the use of code-switching, bilingualism, and non-standard English by the townspeople indicates how issues of bilingualism and multilingualism affect their efficacy: as marginalized people, they are not easily able to convert their cultural capital into political capital (Amaya 2013, 49). Where Pérez most firmly reflects the Latina/o public sphere paradox, and where I'd like to suggest she intervenes, is in her turn away from journalism. She and the townspeople recognize

that more media access will not create more access to the public sphere or help them achieve their political goals.

Here the play coincides with Chon A. Noriega's exhortation to be wary of "the numbers game." Noriega warns that "the statistical substantiation of discrimination [will not] reform the film and television industries" (2000, 103). We must keep in mind that representation does not equal power: "What numbers 'mean'—that is, the impact they have—depends on the power relations within which they are asserted" (103). Moreover, in a neoliberal environment in which multiculturalism is "reduced to issues of representation," we can see that diversity and numbers have little to do with empowerment (Dávila 2005, 153). Pérez's apparent turn to silence reflects an acknowledgment of this reality. It gestures toward the existence of Amaya's public sphere paradox as well as Noriega's analysis of the fallacy of assuming that more media will engender either more comprehensive coverage or more access to the public sphere and political power. This silence connects Pérez to her role as a journalist as well as her relation to Malinche, bringing to mind Moraga's explicit reference to Malinche as a translator and to the potentially sinister effects of intercultural translations (Moraga 2011, 150). Here Pérez fulfills the doubts many have about translation, bringing this skepticism to bear explicitly within the realm of media and communication.

Conclusion

While we may read Pérez as a caution against assuming that media representation can enact political change, Latina/os and other constituencies and communities continue to produce, consume, and advocate for quality and "representative" media. Such calls recognize that media participate in "giving meaning" to social discourse and that the control of discourse is political capital (Amaya 2013 170, 165).[10] *Heroes and Saints* gestures to the importance of media while complicating the relationship between media and power. Here I'd like to suggest that the play offers not a solution, but perhaps a consideration of a process. My reading, as the title of the essay suggests, has focused on the "end(s)" of the play, on Pérez's abandonment of her role as a journalist. I have suggested that this action reflects the culmination of her acknowledgment of her own lack of power. However, we might also consider not only the ends but also the means, the process through which Pérez's transformation has occurred: community engagement. At the end of the play, Pérez has come up against her own

powerlessness as a journalist, but she has done so by listening to, hearing, and responding to the community of activists. The journalist, therefore, is an example of the power of community activism to influence and change media workers. Read this way, the play offers a hopeful illustration of the ability of public pressure to alter our media landscape.

The play astutely recognizes the difficulties inherent in a strategy by which Latina/os use access to the public sphere to achieve political goals, but it does not find journalism or media ineffective or unnecessary. In fact, when the final stage directions specify Pérez by name as joining the other protesters, they highlight her role as an important member of the community. What the play presents, rather, is the idea that media access in and of itself is not sufficient; it calls on us to let go of the too facile, and I would argue andro- and Anglo-centric, idea that access equals power. The play grants attention to Latina/o media and encourages us to understand the challenges they face. When Pérez joins the protesters she acknowledges the Latina/o public-sphere paradox while also modeling a community-embedded journalism. Her character and the play overall, then, point to the power of Latina/o media while encouraging the further development of Latina/o media that remain connected to and supportive of direct community engagement.

Notes

1. Dávila and Rivero caution that the traditional conception of Latina/o media as media "supposedly marketed and packaged to Latin@s" ignores the consumption of a wide variety of different media by Latina/os. Nevertheless, they consider Latina/o media that is "marketed, packaged, and circulated as 'Latino media'" (2014, 3), a definition this essay follows in considering Pérez and her program, *Hispanic California*, as part of the Latina/o media landscape.

2. Of the three broadcasts I discuss, two—*CBS This Morning* and *ABC World News Tonight*—reported directly on and from McFarland. The third, *48 Hours*, named the San Joaquin Valley, of which McFarland is part, as its location. I discuss these broadcasts to offer a context for the newscasts featured in the play, not to argue that they represent the coverage of McFarland in general, which is beyond the scope of this essay. Furthermore, since readers do not have access to the visual staging of Pérez's broadcasts, I analyze only the broadcast texts.

3. For more on the ways in which corporate control compromises media networks, see Croteau and Hoynes (2006). Randy Ontiveros also points out that the relationship between news networks and the government is fraught: "Television

has historically been highly sensitive to executive power, largely because it is FCC [Federal Communications Commission] appointees who grant licenses to private interests seeking access to public airwaves" (2010, 917).

4. Ontiveros explains that television coverage tends to "exacerbate what is always a danger in social movements, namely, the establishment of top-down leadership structures centered on a charismatic individual" (2010, 907). These lone charismatic figures, such as César Chávez and Martin Luther King Jr., are invariably male.

5. "La Malinche" was first published in *Canto al Pueblo: An Anthology of Experiences*, edited by Leonardo Carrillo (San Antonio, TX: Penca, 1978).

6. For more on Chicana feminist reappraisals of Malinche, see, among others, Del Castillo (1977) and Alarcón (1989).

7. Mario T. García likewise describes Latina/o journalists as "translators" when he applies this term to pioneering journalist Ruben Salazar, situating Salazar in between community and corporate interests (1995, 30).

8. Nancy Fraser describes the public sphere as a "discursive realm that allows for making the state accountable to the citizenry" (quoted in Amaya 2013, 44).

9. Along with the legislative, judicial, and executive branches of government, the mass media are considered to be a fourth domain also essential to the formation of policy within liberal modern democracies. The concept of the fourth estate holds that the media play a fundamental role in regulating the three branches of government.

10. Amaya (2013) suggests that any change to the marginalization of Latina/os must be politically grounded and simultaneously radical and restrained in its expectations. On the one hand, he cautions that a "radical rewriting of our political imaginaries" will be necessary to shift the power inequities he describes. On the other, he speculates that Latina/o access to the public sphere, something necessary to change the racial balance operating within the United States, may only happen "minimally" (67, 66).

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