

Re-reading Character Archetypes in Luis Valdez's *Mummified Deer*^(*)

Amani Wagih Abd AlHalim

Associate Professor

The Department of English Language and Literature

Faculty of Arts, Cairo University

Abstract

An archetype is generally defined as "a universal symbol that cuts across geographical, cultural and chronological boundaries to present a human experience that evokes a similar response regardless of time and place" (McQuien 8). It is a term that was first coined by Carl Jung, one of the principal founding fathers of modern psychology. He recognized that there were universal patterns in all stories and mythologies regardless of culture, time or place. Joseph Campbell employed some of Jung's ideas and applied them to world mythologies. He contended that the myth provides sufficient access to the unconscious; it is a kind of psychological therapy because it uncovers the secrets hidden in this unconscious to the conscious. Using Jung and Campbell's definitions as a backdrop, this paper argues that Luis Valdez, the leading Chicano playwright, in his play *Mummified Deer* (2000) has twisted common archetypal patterns in Yaqui mythology to urge his audience to reconsider Chicano's socio-political conditions. Generally, Valdez's plays have always been examined from a postcolonial perspective; therefore, this paper adopts a different approach by exploring selected character archetypes in *Mummified Deer*.

Keywords

Luis Valdez, Latin American drama, archetypes, Carl Jung, Yaqui mythology, Joseph Campbell

(*) Re-reading Character Archetypes in Luis Valdez's *Mummified Deer*, Vol. 9, 2020 Issue No.(31,32,33,34).

المخلص

استخدم كارل جوستاف يونج، عالم النفس السويسري ومؤسس علم النفس التحليلي، مصطلح الطرز الأولية مشيراً إلى أن الصور والرموز تختزن في العقل اللاواعي الجمعي وليس العقل اللاواعي الفردي، بمعنى أن هذه المفاهيم حاضرة في اللاوعي الجماعي للبشر. ولذلك أصبحت هذه الطرز الأولية رموزاً عالمية تخطت الحدود الجغرافية والثقافية والزمنية لأنها تعنى في المقام الأول بتقديم الخبرة الإنسانية. استخدم جوزيف كامبل عالم الأنثروبولوجيا الأمريكي نظرية يونج (على الرغم من اختلافه معه في بعض المفاهيم) وقام بتطبيقها على عالم الأساطير مشيراً إلى أهمية الأساطير في حياة الشعوب كجزء من العلاج النفسي كونها تكشف أسرار العقل اللاواعي للعقل الواعي. يقوم البحث بدراسة مسرحية *الغزال المحنط* (٢٠٠٠) للكاتب لويز فالديز، والتي اهتمت معظم الدراسات السابقة بتحليل مسرحياته من منظور مرحلة ما بعد الاستعمار. لذلك يستخدم هذا البحث نظرية الطرز أو النماذج الأولية ليونج ومفهوم الأساطير عند كامبل كخلفية لاثبات تغيير الكاتب المسرحي لويز فالديز للدور الرئيسي للطرز الأولية في أساطير شعوب الياكي في مسرحية *الغزال المحنط* (٢٠٠٠)، وذلك من خلال تأكيد فالديز المستمر لأهمية أحياء تقليد شعوب الياكي لتحفيز الشباب لتغيير واقعهم المرير والتغلب على صعوبات الحياة الاجتماعية والسياسية في أمريكا اللاتينية.

الكلمات المفتاحية

الطرز الأولية- كارل يونج- جوزيف كامبل- أساطير شعوب الياكي- مسرح أمريكا اللاتينية.

Introduction

“Il Indo baila

He dances his way to truth

In a way intellectuals will never understand”

(Luis Valdez *Pensamiento Serpentino* 177)

Luis Valdez is considered one of the most acclaimed and contentious Chicano playwrights. In 1965, he founded the Teatro Campesino (Farm Workers' Theatre) that was dedicated to the exposure of socio-political problems of the Chicano/Mexican communities in the United States. With other Teatro Campesino members he created what is termed as the ‘actos’ which are short satirical sketches that criticize the current conditions and

events aiming at change or improvement:

Actos: Inspire the audience into social action. Illuminate specific points about social problems. Satirize the opposition. Show or hint at a solution. Express what people are feeling...[but] the major emphasis in the acto is the social vision, as opposed to the individual artist or playwright's vision. Actos are not written; they are created collectively, through improvisation by a group. (Valdez, *Early Works* 12-13)

In other words, the acto represents a collective experience of the Chicano community. Since Chicanos, in general, tend to identify themselves collectively as a group, the 'actos' satisfy their desire for group identity and unity. Valdez's play *Mummified Deer* consists of a series of dramatic sketches in which he presented the Chicano experience. These sketches function like the 'actos', but unlike his 'actos' the scenes in the play are not improvised.

The lines from Valdez's *Pensamiento Serpentino* quoted above summarize his vision presented in his play *Mummified Deer*. *Pensamiento Serpentino* is a long philosophical poem based on the Mayan myth of creation in which he analyzes the social, cultural, religious and political conditions of the Chicano community. According to Valdez, those who lost their spiritual human aspect and are completely absorbed in the world of material gain will never understand the meaning of the ritual dance provided by the deer dancer. **In *Pensamiento Serpentino* Valdez** mentions that the dance is an "*Indio balia*", or a Yaqui dance that highlights spirituality and promotes social values such as collaboration, sacrifice, responsibility and collectivity. As examined in the present paper, the aim of the dance in the play is to help the characters achieve salvation. Therefore, revisiting the Yaqui ritual urges the personas to speak the truth, to unfold their hidden secrets and to confess their sins in order to purify their souls and to regain their spirituality. The audience of the play is expected to follow the same path. Valdez encourages his spectators to change their present conditions "for the better, [a] change that can only come through knowledge of one's past" (Huerta in *Mummified Deer* xii). **In other words, he urges them to**

readopt their Yaqui values, mainly community pride, ethnic identity and family reunion, to be equipped with sufficient power to resist social and political injustice practiced against them for a better way of living.

The Yaqui community has always been subjected to imperial policies that aimed to marginalize it. Christina Leza conducted a number of interviews with Yoeme (another word for Yaqui) political and indigenous activists; she reaches the conclusion that “At present the political and ceremonial structures that have secured Yoeme cultural persistence through history are significantly threatened by escalating border enforcement and limitations of U.S. tribal self-governance” (8). In other words, up till now the Yaqui heritage is endangered by biased practices and policies. The ancestor’s legacy comprises a host of moral and social values that are mainly linked to the family or tribe and its welfare such as interdependence, reciprocity towards members of the family or tribe, precedence of tribe interest over personal interest, tribe identity, pride, persistence, collaboration and willingness to self-sacrifice, among many others. Two of the most important aspects of the Yaqui heritage are language and rituals. Therefore, in *Mummified Deer*, Luis Valdez uses the Spanish language used by the Yaqui and highlights the ceremonial deer dance to remind his spectators of the rich heritage of their ancestors. This legacy is to support the young generation to overcome oppressive policies and to claim their rights.

The Yaqui myth of the deer dance links the sketches, in which the deer dancer, Cajeme and the central figure in the play, Mama Chu, are present and are portrayed as representatives of the Yaqui culture. According to Valdez, myths or ‘mitos’ are an integral part of the Chicano’s civilization. In his essay “Notes on Chicano Theatre,” Valdez summarizes the relation between the Yaqui myth, culture, and his theatrical vision. He contends that a Yaqui myth comprises a story that unfolds the significance of the “Indo Vision of the Universe” and “that vision is religious, as well as political, cultural, social, personal, etc. It is total” (“Notes” 7). Hence, the myth carries myriad messages aiming at reform. He explains further that the myth starts as a play with characters, setting...etc. and ends up as a ritual that has to be revived to elevate the spirituality of the Chicano community (7).

This paper explores character archetypes in the play *Mummified Deer*; an approach that has not been adopted before in examining the relation between archetypal criticism and the play. Valdez strongly believes in the power of the theatre to resist oppression. In an interview with Sylvia Mendoza in 2006, Valdez explains that Teatro Campesino or theatre in general is an influential tool which he has used to cause a change, “the *teatro* became a very important source of entertainment and social commentary. It was the heart of what I wanted to do- use the theatre to create social change and keep the integrity” (Valdez in Mendoza 84). Therefore, many critics and scholars have analyzed his plays adopting a political or postcolonial perspective. Jeanne M. Armstrong in “Recovering Ritual in Brian Friel’s *Dancing at Lughnasa* and Luis Valdez’ *Mummified Deer*” compares the two works focusing on the role of rituals in the play as a tool of resistance, “Only after the family learns the horror of the Yaqui genocide that she experienced do they comprehend the trauma that impacted Mama and her adopted family” (7). Similarly, Ariel Tumbaga argues that representation of Yaqui rituals, stories and dance create a link between Yaqui culture and resistance. Jorge Huerta and Peter Caster discuss the theatre of Luis Valdez as an example of social protest. Most of the studies are concerned with two of Valdez’s plays *Zoot Suit* and *The Shrunken Head of Pancho Villa*, but few studies deal with *Mummified Deer*. Linda Saborio discusses the play focusing on the abnormal reality of the 84 old woman, Mama Chu, who carries a 60 year old fetus in her womb. Both Ed Morales and Harry Elam explore Valdez’s theatre and theatrical techniques in general without providing an analysis or an application on his plays. Ed Morales in another study entitled “Shadowing Valdez” highlights the flashback technique used in the plays, “Valdez likes to project the future by reaching back into the ancient past,” but Morales does not provide an analysis of the plays. Whereas Harry Elam pinpoints the theatrical techniques that serve the Chicano’s social perspective concerning gender roles, “theatrical strategies and social protest ideologies were decidedly male-centric, heterosexist, and patriarchal” stressing “male hegemony and female subjugation, which were a significant element in Chicano and black culture nationalism” (Elam 4).

Therefore, the paper aims to prove that Valdez twists the archetypal patterns of the characters in order to cause an unexpected

shift to shock his spectators and force them to reconsider their sociopolitical conditions. The Chicano community has always suffered from oppression and marginalization. Therefore, the Chicano Movement started in 1969 to demand justice and equality. Luis Valdez presents in his play this revolutionary aspect or change that permeates through the different scenes: “the total image includes that change. The spectator goes home with the seeds of change [...] that change will someday reveal itself” (Valentin, and Novoa 45). In other words, Valdez’s work affects his spectators who become charged with the idea of the change for better living conditions.

Archetypes

The term archetype stands for recurrent universal patterns inherent in the human psyche such as character types, themes, symbols or images that are found in myths, dreams, rituals, and are adopted in literary works. The attentive audience of such literary works corresponds to the archetypes presented because s/he shares the same psychic archetypes. James G. Frazer in *The Golden Bough: A study in Magic and Religion* (1915) identifies recurrent patterns of myths and rituals in legends and religions of diverse cultures. Carl G. Jung offers a remarkable in-depth psychological analysis of archetypes. Jung relates these repeated patterns to what he terms as “the collective unconscious” that is shared among human beings since ancient times. In 1934, Maud Bodkin investigated the employment of archetypes in poetry using Jung’s theory in *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry*.

Northrop Frye’s contribution to archetypal criticism is considered a breakthrough. In his works “Archetypes in Literature” (1951) and *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), Frye develops the archetypal approach by breaking from Carl Jung’s theories especially that of the “collective unconscious.” Concerning literary works, Frye proposes that a literary work is in itself “a total order or universe” (*Anatomy* 1443), which includes diverse archetypal forms. The present paper does not make use of Frye’s archetypal theory, despite being an influential one because it confines the interpretation of archetypes to strict categories namely, comedy (birth: revival) and romance (adulthood: culmination of life and marriage), or tragedy (later adulthood: fall or death) and irony/satire (old age: disillusionment and defeat) (“Archetypes” 104-105). Valdez’s play *Mummified Deer*, as a postmodern

work, integrates different elements of comedy, romance, tragedy and satire that re not part of the analysis because the paper focuses on the character archetypes of some characters.

In 1949, Joseph Campbell published his remarkable book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* in which he compares and discusses the journey of the archetypal hero in world myths. Campbell concludes that myths worldwide share a fundamental structure that he terms as the “monomyth”; it is the cyclic journey of the archetypal hero that involves a number of stages starting from the departure and ending with the return. Throughout his journey, the hero gains experience and maturity, in addition to facing dangers and encountering a number of archetypal figures whether allies or enemies, “A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man” (*The Hero* 30). Unlike Frye, Campbell was influenced by Jungian archetypes and the collective unconscious. Campbell combines Jungian theories with Freudian ones and others such as Arnold Van Gennep who discussed three steps of the hero or rather group journey in his book *The Rites of Passage* (1910) namely, separation, liminality and incorporation in relation to social rituals; stages that Campbell re-terms as Departure, Initiation and Return and added sub-steps to each stage.

This paper does not deploy Joseph Campbell’s monomyth or stages of the archetypal hero’s journey because it cannot be detected in Valdez’s play. The archetypal hero in the play, Lucas Flores, appears as a dead figure, a memory, and does not undergo many of the stages of the hero’s journey as indicated by Campbell. **However, the paper applies Campbell’s definition of the myth to the Yaqui myth presented in the play; he defines the myth as “the secret opening through which the inexhaustible energies of the cosmos pour into human cultural manifestation” (*The Hero* 3). Campbell relates the myth to culture that conforms to the analysis of character archetypes as the limitless powers of the Yaqui myth are incarnated in the deer dance presented in the play.**

According to Campbell, communities search for myths because they want to attain truth, meaning and significance; they are “stories of our

search through the ages for the truth, for meaning and for significance” (Campbell qtd. Lefkowitz 429). Campbell believes that like dreams, myths comprise messages that need to be decoded. Myths embrace journeys, sacrifices, and rebirth or return (Lefkowitz 429-430). In *Mummified Deer*, Luis Valdez revives the Yaqui myth of the deer dancer and the dance ritual in order to remind his Chicano community of their rich heritage that would enable them to lead a better life. Similar to the Yaqui myth, the play involves the journey of salvation of Mama Chu that qualifies her to the rebirth stage to have another life in the other world, the world of spirituality. Moreover, examples of sacrifice are evident: Cajeme, the deer dancer sacrifices his life for the redemption of the community, and Lucas Flores, the resistance fighter sacrifices his life for the noble cause of resistance. Both Cajeme and Flores are dead but they return to the world of the living to relieve Mama Chu of her burdens and to revive her Yaqui heritage that she has kept hidden for years thinking that by so doing she is protecting her family.

The Yaqui Myth and Deer Dance

In *The Power of Myth*, Joseph Campbell defines the various myths as “bits of information from ancient times, which have to do with the themes that have supported human life, built civilizations, and informed religions over the millennia” (28). Therefore, myths have an essential role in societies because they act as signposts for individuals to understand themselves and their world, in addition to providing them with the spiritual side that is lost in their materialistic societies. Myths “have to do with deep inner problems, inner mysteries, inner thresholds of passage... [they] are clues to the spiritual potentialities of the human life” (Campbell 28, 33). In the play *Mummified Deer*, the Yaqui myth of the deer dancer helps the characters to overcome their inner conflicts (Mama Chu) and personal struggles (members of the family). Moreover, it endows them with the spiritual power needed to overcome oppression.

According to the Yaqui’s beliefs, the world comprises overlapping worlds or *aniam* such as the world of animals, the world of people, the world of flowers, the world of death among many others. The Yaquis believe that the deer comes from the *yo ania* or the enchanted world and enters the *hyua ania* that is the wilderness world and dances in the *sea ania* or the flower world. The flower world is the world of wild free beings. The deer dance as a Yaqui ritual focuses upon fusing these worlds and eliminating the evil done by man. The dance reflects the religious and spiritual beliefs of the Yaqui. It is a celebrated religious ceremony that started

before recorded history. **Participants in the dance are: “Pascola (*pahko'ola*, the old man of the ceremony and the story-teller), the deer dancer (*pahkolam*)”, musicians and the audience (Valenzuela par. 1, 3).** Valdez employs the deer dance representing a second dimension in the play to highlight the evil of the material world represented in hidden secrets, treason and struggles of the characters in contrast to the purity of the spiritual world embodied by the deer dancer. Mama Chu explains his innocence and free spirit unlike human beings: “What do you know of God and sins of flesh? The white Yori priests in their black skirts never taught you. The patrons never worked you as a peon. Loose women never touched you. What do you know of salvation?” (*Mummified Deer* 7). Since Cajeme (the deer dancer) has never sinned, he would not undergo a process of redemption as the other characters, but instead would help them to repent by his sacrifice.

Cajeme performs the dance as a ritual to thank the deer for his sacrifice so that the Yaqui people (the family members in the play) may live in prosperity. His physical description and movements copy the traditional deer dancer in the Yaqui myth:

Upstage center. A Yaqui Indian Deer Dancer bolts in, running half-naked to the waist, deer hooves on his belt, butterfly cocoons on his ankles, and a deer’s head on his white turbaned crown. Rattling his gourds, he vigorously circles the bed, bristling with animal power to the music of flute and drum, never dropping his deer persona. (*Mummified Deer* 4)



Figure 1

A typical Yaqui deer dancer

http://www.socalfolkdance.org/articles/yaqui_easter_duree.htm

The deer dancing is significant and is related to the Yaqui mythology. The rattles that the deer dancer, *pahkolam*, wears around his ankles are made of butterfly cocoons to honor the insect world, while those around his waist are hooves of deer to revere the deer that died for the welfare of the community. The headpiece of the deer dancer is made of large antlers to honor the deer's sacrificial act. The deer dancer moves gracefully and jumps proudly to imitate the movement of the free deer in the *sea ania*. He rattles his gourds throughout the dance to echo the sounds of the forest and to alert of an approaching danger. The musicians in the performance use primitive instruments such as the water drum that gives the sound of the deer's heartbeat and wooden rasp that produces the sound of the deer's breathing (**Shorter 288**).

Moreover, the white turban covering the dancer's head signifies "physicalization of the impossibility of complete transformation into the deer" (Schechner 4). In other words, it reminds the audience that the deer dancer is a human being imitating a deer; by this the spectators dissociate themselves from being engulfed by the performance and accordingly can learn from and evaluate the experience. The same distancing technique is followed by Valdez in his play. The stage is divided into three levels: a passage behind Mama Chu's hospital bed leading to the other reality or the Yaqui myth where Cajeme enters and exists. In this is the level spirituality prevails; it is the passage through which Cajeme leads Mama Chu to the other life according to the Yaqui beliefs at the end of the play. The second level presents Mama Chu in her hospital bed in a coma with her family members around her; this is the real level. The third level reveals the workings of Mama Chu's mind (the subconscious) as she remembers past events in chronological order from the most recent to the oldest. This multi-level setting is reinforced by different periods of time that are fused together: the present is in San Diego, California- Spring 1969 (showing reality), and the past is divided into three periods of time demonstrating past events: Tijuana, Mexico (1939-1950); Tucson, Arizona (1917-1929); and Sonora/Yucatán, Mexico (1906-1911). Thus, "images of the past and the present will make up for the Chicano experience, but as a delineation of

what this experience means takes place, the process becomes less natural and more ideological” (Velasco71). **In other words, from the very beginning the recurrent shifts from one place to the other and from one period of time to another, in addition to the movement from the present to the past and the reverse, create a dream-world experience to be witnessed by the audience. This illusory blend of dreams or rather nightmares, in which the characters unfold the horrors of their past, and reality distance the spectators to urge them to reconsider their social status.**

Larry Evers and Molina Felipe explain the significance of the deer dance in the Yaqui mythology. They state that the deer dance is said to be sacred. In Yaqui mythology, the deer represents goodness and the dancers tell the story of the deer, their little brother *saila maso*, and the flower world, *sea ania*, in which animals and man are friends. It is believed that the deer comes to the Yaqui and they sacrifice him to the gods. The deer songs are used by Yaquis to ask for the permission of the deer to be hunted and to thank him for accepting the sacrifice. To establish this, deer songs celebrate the *sea ania* that is closely associated with the deer. During the hunt, the hunters wear masks and deer skin to disguise themselves. Once they find the deer, they start to imitate his movements in a dance and come closer to him to overhear his speech. During such process, they learn the language of the deer and listen to his secrets. Then the hunters translate the deer language into theirs (47).

The sacredness of the deer is further emphasized by the original story of the myth. It is believed that two Yoemes (another term for the Yaqui) Francisco Onamea and his friend Jose Sanava decided one morning to hunt a deer. They equipped themselves with powerful weapons for the hunt and walked in the desert to *Vakateteve* Mountains. Once they arrived, they spotted a small deer a *soutela*, a Yaqui deer. It was standing at a distance watching them curiously. Francisco started the hunt by shooting the deer; he hit it and the deer fell down to the ground. Both men stood watching the deer in his last agonizing movement in the dirt. However, to their surprise the *soutela* staggered on his front legs and lifted himself up, then he started shaking his body to remove the dirt. He stood defiantly watching the two men. Once more, Francisco shot the deer that fell down. This time in his agonizing movement, the deer caused a cloud of dust. When the dust settled,

the deer stood up again and looked curiously at the two astonished men. For the third time Francisco targeted the deer and it fell down causing a larger cloud of dust. Again, when the dust settled, the two dumbfounded men watched the deer stand up and this time he ran away. Francisco realized later that this *soutela* was from the *yo ania* (the enchanted world); he wanted to give them some powers, but unknowingly, they refused (Evers and Molina 45-46).

Mama Chu: The Great Mother Archetype

Mama Chu stands for the *pahko'ola* (the old story teller). First, she is the only living character who can see the deer dancer and communicate with him. Mama Chu, like the traditional *pahko'ola* in the Yaqui ritual, can understand the language of the deer as she says to Cajeme, "You're not an animal. You have a soul. I hear you... even without words" (*Mummified Deer* 17). Second, Mama Chu is the historian of her Yaqui people; she is the one who keeps their history alive through the narrative accounts that she provides in a series of flashbacks. Like the traditional figure of the *pahko'ola*, Mama Chu represents her tribe's beliefs in the cycle of life/rebirth and death. In other words, she has lived for 84 years and has been exposed to a host of burdens and sufferings. Before she dies in the material or human world she is reborn by confessing her guilt, as she is supposed to lead another life in the world of the dead, according to the Yaqui beliefs. Throughout the play, Mama Chu is presented in an intermediate stage of mental awareness between consciousness and unconsciousness. She keeps falling in fits of almost losing her life and of remembering serious past events in which she gives an honest narration of the attempts to exterminate the Yaquis and their culture.

Carl Jung introduces the Great Mother archetype in his book *Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. He stresses the grand status of this archetype as she is "the mother of the mother"; therefore she is greater than the mother. "She is in truth the 'grand' or 'Great Mother'... The transition from mother to grandmother means that the archetype is elevated to a higher rank" (*Archetypes* 188). Reaching such status Mama Chu becomes ready for her salvation and death.

Though Mama Chu as a representative of the Great Mother archetype conforms to Jung's definition and the three essential characteristics of this

archetype, Valdez twists her role. Jung summarizes the key roles of the Great Mother archetype in “her cherishing and nourishing goodness, her orgiastic emotionality, and her Stygian depths” (*Archetypes* 158). However, Valdez subverts her role by focusing on her dark side or rather hidden secrets, when the spectators discover through the flashbacks that Mama Chu does not deserve that status of grandeur because she has been responsible for many faults thinking that she is protecting her family, but in fact she almost ruins their lives.

The figure of Mama Chu’s adopted and dead daughter Agustina confronts her with the truth; now it is time to reveal the hidden secrets in her life, “The truth is buried deep inside you, and it’s time for it to come out, Mama Chu... even if it kills you” (*Mummified Deer* 56). Agustina wants Mama Chu to admit the fact that Armida, her granddaughter, is the child of her adopted daughter Agustina and adopted son Profe. She has always considered them brother and sister and does not want to confess that she has adopted them: Agustina defies her saying “Look at me! You don’t have to look the other way anymore... You know who the father of my baby is. Only you’re afraid to admit it... because if you do, our whole life will be a lie” (*Mummified Deer* 56).

Another hidden secret of Mama Chu, which highlights her negative side, is revealed by Profe in his narrative account to Armida. Because of poverty, Mama Chu is forced to live out of wedlock with Don Guero, who threatens to shoot her if she refuses. Don Guero provides Mama Chu, her two adopted children Agustina and Profe, in addition to his own daughter Oralia with enough money to live. Throughout her life with him, Don Guero constantly despises her calling her an Indian servant, hits Profe and compels him to perform hard tasks despite his young age, and molests young Agustina for years: “Don Guero: Cono! This little one is almost ready for the ...chinguele, chinguele. (*Pulls out a candy cane and whispers*) Agustina...see? For you, mi’jita. (*Agustina runs out. Don Guero follows her. Mama Chu turns away*)” (*Mummified Deer* 41). Mama Chu has sacrificed Agustina for the sake of satisfying the basic needs for living. However, the last straw that blows up her anger occurs when Don Guero tries to seduce his own daughter, “Don Guero: Oralia! Shhh! Venaqui... (*Oralia runs out, chasing after Don Guero and the lollipop, Mama Chu notices she is missing*). Profe: Then she caught him trying to molest little

Oralia" (*Mummified Deer* 41).

Throughout her life, Mama Chu favors Oralia to Agustina because she is fair-skinned, much more beautiful than Agustina and the daughter of a rich man. This act of favoritism leads Oralia to grow up a selfish person who does not care for the others or their feelings. Oralia narrates to Armida the events that took place in the Mexican circus when Lucas Flores took the whole family there; she describes the scene "Agustina's eyes were like saucers that night, but all eyes were upon me... I was glowing like a white dahlia in a bed of manure. (*Agustina is fidgeting and blocking Oralia, who is preening herself, totally aware all eyes are upon her*)" (*Mummified Deer* 47). Moreover, Agustina suffers from this distinction and therefore enshrouds herself in the filth of the circus clown Cosme Bravo who manipulates her. In her first encounter with the figure of her dead daughter Agustina, Mama Chu stresses for her partiality towards Oralia, "she [Oralia] married a tall, handsome guero from Texas. Their children look like beautiful blue-eyed angels" (*Mummified Deer* 12). **Mama Chu favors Oralia for her physical appearance.** Later in the play, the audience is to discover that Oralia's 'handsome' husband ran away with her 19 year old maid, and her 'blue-eyed' daughter Tilly tries to conceal her pregnancy from a boyfriend.

According to Jung the mother always stands for "fertility and fruitfulness" in addition to "hollow objects" such as "the uterus, *yoni*, and anything of a like shape" (*Archetypes* 158). Mama Chu has always been capable of feeding babies as the milk in her breast always flows non-stop, and of raising her adopted children and her grandchildren as well. In his account to Armida, Profe narrates the extraordinary quality of Mama Chu, "The amazing thing is she always had milk. If she wasn't feeding babies, she was bringing them into the world [by working as a midwife]" (*Mummified Deer* 34). When Lucas Flores brings his baby daughter Agustina to her after his wife's death during delivery, "her milk started to flow as soon as she lay down so she fed the child her breast. The child fed and slept in her arms for a day and a half" (*Mummified Deer* 35). Ironically, Mama Chu's uterus is found out to be carrying a mummified fetus for 60 years. In other words, her *yoni* is dry, unfruitful. She is incapable of cherishing or fostering fertility and growth.

Norman Miller discussed archetypal drama presented by Chicano playwrights and poets. Though he does not deal with Valdez's *Mummified Deer*, some aspects in his discussion can be applied to the play, especially the archetypal character Mama Chu. On her death bed in the hospital, Mama Chu appears to be in a state of trance. Though at the beginning of the first scene, she complains to Cajeme, the deer dancer, that her family has brought her to the hospital and that she wants to return home, shortly after that when Agustina appears, they have a long talk, and then she suddenly realizes that her daughter is already dead: "Mama Chu (*suddenly realizing*) Santocielo! Agustina...You've been dead for twenty years/ Agustina: Gone but not forgotten, Mama Chu. RIP. Or, as they say in Spanish, D.E.P./ Mama Chu: Where am I...? This isn't my house! What is happening?" (*Mummified Deer* 13). In fact Agustina has always been present in Mama Chu's unconscious mind because she feels guilty towards her. At the end of the play, it is Agustina who takes Mama Chu to her final destination after healing from her burdens by confession:

LUCAS. Are you ready to go now, mi Chu? (*The entire family, living and dead gathers around*)

MAMA CHU. Look at them, Lucas. Mi familia. We all survived after all.

AGUSTINA. Give me your hand, Mama Chu. (*Mama Chu gives Agustina her hand; Oralia takes the other*). (*Mummified Deer* 61).

The final union of the family asserts Mama Chu' salvation that would enable her to attain the status of grandeur as a Great Mother archetype. She manages to repent her faults that had negative effects on her family. With Cajeme's help, Mama Chu purifies her soul and therefore restores her natural status of the great mother.

At the same time, it can be argued that in this condition Mama Chu is approaching the final stage of reunion with Cajeme or the deer dancer, who stands for her Yaqui culture. In this sense, Mama Chu restores her position as the pahko'ola (the old storyteller) in the Yaqui myth. The deer dancer is proceeding to the self-sacrifice state after eliminating the evilness of other characters: "*Cajeme dances to a climax at the foot of the bed. With his deer head up in triumph, he collapses, lifeless*" (*Mummified Deer* 61). Mama

Chu and Cajeme are linked together; they have a purpose and a task to perform. Once the reunion of the Yaquis is achieved, they are ready to undergo the sacred journey to the other world, and this is why Cajeme holds his head in triumph (as indicated in the stage directions). Huerta Jorge comments on the final scene in his introduction to the play by stating that “Both Mama Chu and Cajeme have endured beyond endurance and will now pass to the next stage of the cosmic Indo vision. They have served their purposes and the revolution will continue” (*Mummified Deer* XII). **Suffering is what binds Cajeme and Mama Chu together. After being relieved from their pains, both are prepared to complete their lives in the other world of the dead, according to the Yaqui beliefs. They succeed in implanting the Yaqui values in the coming generation that has to revolt against their deplorable conditions.** By stressing the inviolable bond between Mama Chu and Cajeme during life and after death, Valdez urges his spectators to re-evaluate their present conditions and to revolt against the oppression practiced upon them, “dance rituals help develop or reinforce bonds among kin and community members. They can empower individuals to understand their own within the community” (Kealiinohomoku 70). Valdez reminds Chicanos of their Yaqui heritage that comprises examples of resistance such as Cajeme represented by the deer dancer.

Cajeme, the Deer Dancer: The Scapegoat Archetype

According to Carl Jung, the Scapegoat archetype stands for a person who experiences pain and suffering for the welfare of others. Accordingly, his “death in a public ceremony removes the taint of sin from the community, more powerful in death than in life” (Jung, *Man and his Symbols* 122). Cajeme represents the life cycle of Mama Chu; he is an integral part of her experiences in life as a Yaqui fighter exemplified in her resistance and suffering, and a companion in her death and journey to the other world. Alma Martinez, the director and actress of the play production at San Diego Repertory Theatre in April, 2000 describes the bond between the deer dancer and Mama Chu as a complementary relation, “His [Cajeme’s] death is my physical death, and his life is the life of the memory of the Yaqui’s way of life as it was” (*Mummified Deer* XI). **The strong bond between Mama Chu and Cajeme is stressed in Martinez’s words;**

they are partners in life and death. When Cajeme is alive, he represents the Yaqui culture and rituals as Mama Chu the pahko'ola (the old story teller), and when he dies he takes Mama Chu with him. Both Mama Chu and Cajeme represent the Yaqui tradition that has to be revived to teach the new generation the worth of this culture. In this connection, Carl Jung explains that "The ritual has a sorrow about it that is also a kind of joy, an inward acknowledgment that death also leads to a new life" (*Man and his Symbols* 122). Though Mama Chu and Cajeme died at the end of the play, a new life is endowed for all of the characters. Members of Mama Chu's family are reborn after accepting and forgiving each other; Mama Chu and Cajeme are going to lead a different new life after her redemption and his sacrifice.

The life and death cycle is indicated through the description of the setting at the onset of the play, "This is a womb of birth and death, full of the memories, fears, and dreams of generations" (*Mummified Deer* 1). The previous sentence provides a host of rich elements. First it indicates the bond between Mama Chu and Cajeme, who are companions in life and death. When they are alive, they preserve the Yaqui culture and when they physically die, they ascend together to the Indio world of the dead. The mummified fetus in Mama Chu's womb is an embodiment of this culture because it is her baby from her first husband, the Yaqui deer dancer, and Cajeme is the incarnation of the Yaqui ritual by performing the deer dance. Second, the quotation offers various connotations relevant to the Yaqui culture and to Jung's archetype discussed in this section of the paper. The "womb" or the *yonis* stands for motherhood, safety and protection; the cyclic movement of life represents the journey towards maturity and realization; the life and death experiences remind the audience of the Yaqui culture. Besides, the juxtaposition between fears and dreams that are inevitable elements in life denotes the characters' experiences of pain and joy; the memories of the past, of the ancestors' heritage, and the hopes of the future belong to the new generation; a generation that has to resist oppression.

The Yaqui people suffered a lot since the beginning of the twentieth century. They were subjected to a series of genocides and expulsion to Mexican plantations for slave work. Many of the Yaquis

migrated to the United States and settled in Arizona hoping to escape their deplorable conditions. However, they were marginalized in their new home. “Pascua Yaqui lives were transformed by the Western colonial structures of tribal governance, U.S.–Mexico border imperialism, and dominant nationalist and regional ideologies about Mexican citizens” that contributed in observing them as the ‘Other.’ (Leza 5). They were treated as outsiders who were deprived of claiming their civil rights. The forces of colonialism and imperialism attempted to demolish the Yaqui identity. Therefore, writers like Valdez are concerned with reviving the Yaqui pride in its heritage.

All of the elements mentioned above encapsulate the objectives of Teatro Campesino in the sense that it politicizes the Chicano audiences to overcome the oppressive tactics practiced upon them, and implants in them pride of their ancestors’ culture that would inevitably supply them with enough power to deal with sociopolitical dreary conditions. “For many Yoeme, however, with communities in both northwestern Mexico and in the southwest of the United States, the deer-dancer image speaks to issues of cultural continuity, tribal sovereignty, and ritual sacrifice” (Shorter 282), and this is the same perspective that Valdez adopts in his plays. He believes that raising social and spiritual consciousness is the key role of the theatre. In 1967 he held an interview with Beth Bagby in which he explained this vision of the theatre, “The idea that really excites me about the future of teatro, and American theatre is a theatre of political change. ... I am talking about really influencing people, and I sense hunger in art for this. We're into a political age, we're going to go further into it because social problems are increasing” (Valdez and Bagby 79). **This kind of theatre that Valdez presents is the one that aims at a change, in which the spectators regain the pride in their ancestor’s heritage and will eventually become ready to revolt against their present conditions.**

The deer dancer is named after Cajeme, the leader of Yaqui rebels who is said to have arranged his troops and fought against the Mexican government in the 19th century, “The Yaqui wars began in 1533 and lasted until 1929 when the Yaquis were finally subdued by Mexico” (Armstrong 1). Many massacres were committed against the Yaqui people because they refused to surrender to the oppression of the Mexican government or the white invaders. They use the term Yaqui or Yoeme to distinguish

themselves from the Mestizos or Yori, who are non-Yaquis and joined forces with the enemies.

Cajeme brings the dead figure of Lucas Flores (Mama Chu's third husband, deer dancer and fighter) to Mama Chu because like Cajeme, Flores stands for higher values. He appears in his thirties wearing "overalls and a fedora, but no shirt" and carrying "a bow and arrows" (*Mummified Deer* 19). His physical appearance relates him to the Yaqui heritage: he used to be a farm worker and a deer dancer. In other words, he is a representative of the typical Yaqui or Yoeme. Mama Chu describes his hands as "hot and heavy. The hands of a troublemaker" (*Mummified Deer* 19). The introduction of Flores as a young man to the spectators stimulates their expectations that he is a man from the resistance. **During their dialogue, Flores tells Mama Chu that he did not die as a deer dancer, but he was killed in the revolution while he was resisting the oppressive Yori, "LUCAS: I did what I had to do [...] So the Yoris would know we are not animals. / MAMA CHU: They shot you dead like a dog in the dust. / LUCAS: It was the price to be paid" (*Mummified Deer* 19). Lucas Flores was completely aware of his role as a resistance fighter. He is conscious of the fact that he had to sacrifice his life for the welfare of the Yaqui people. Flores kept his ethnic pride till the very end by refusing to surrender to the Yori or to join forces with them and betray his people.**

Then Flores starts to accuse Mama Chu of neglecting his daughter Agustina whom he left with her. Mama Chu defends herself and tells him that his daughter has chosen her own life; she has gone to live with Cosme Bravo and it is not her fault. Yet, deep inside her, Mama Chu knows that she has always manipulated Agustina, a thing that has driven the girl to abandon her. However, she still refuses to confess her fault. Flores tells her that she is going to die soon, but she cannot die in peace except after redemption, after reconciling with the dead, including his daughter, "by making peace with your muertitos" (*Mummified Deer* 20). This is why Cajeme brings Flores to help Mama Chu attain salvation. Before leaving her, Flores escorts Cajeme "to the wilderness world. Resurrection. (*He shakes a rattle. Cajeme enters swiftly rattling his gourds*)" (*Mummified Deer* 20). In other words, both Flores and Cajeme have sacrificed themselves for the welfare of the Yaqui community: Flores as a fighter resisting the Yori and Cajeme as a deer trying to purify others from their sins. Hence, they deserve to be

rewarded by belonging to the Yaqui world of purity and spirituality. Though both of them are already dead, they keep entering and existing in the world of the living to accomplish their task of leading the community to prosperity, “The sacrificial scapegoat: the hero, with whom the welfare of the tribe or nation is identified, must die to atone for the people's sins and restore the land to fruitfulness” (Guerin 231). **Both Flores and Cajeme are considered scapegoat heroes because they sacrifice their lives for the welfare of their people. However, the analysis provided in this paper focuses on Cajeme because he is strongly related to the Yaqui myth of the deer dance and the Yaqui culture. The blend between the myth and the culture is the core of Campbell’s definition of myth as stated earlier in the paper and on which the analysis rely.**

In Act Two, Scene Six, Lucas Flores reappears with Cajeme trying to dissuade Mama Chu from following her illogical excuses. He confronts her with the fact that she has been responsible for the disintegration of the family and that she keeps lying to herself that they are unified. When Mama Chu stares at Flores “incredulously, with residual anger, Cajeme enters without his deer head” (*Mummified Deer* 54). Appearing in such a state, the deer dancer uncovers his human side because Mama Chu is taking her first step to redemption. She needs the power of logic more than the act of sacrifice. In other words, her process to salvation requires arbitration to confront herself and to resolve her inner conflict. In this scene Valdez shocks his spectators on purpose because the deer dancer in Yaqui rituals does not take off the deer head. He wants them to think of the reason for such unusual appearance. Distancing the spectators by altering their expectations would drive them to reconsider the events to follow. By the end of the scene, Cosme Bravo appears with his Yori soldiers; they shoot Flores dead and killed the deer as Lucas Flores said. Identifying himself with the deer side of Cajeme, Flores stresses the fact that the Yori’s aim has always been to demolish the Yaqui heritage, “The Revolutionary Government was promising to return our lands to the Yaqui nation. Who knew it was a plot to wipe out the leaders of the resistance?” (*Mummified Deer* 54). The audience now is ready to grasp the importance of preserving their Yaqui heritage to overcome oppression. Resistance is the only path to attain freedom and justice.

In Act Two, Scene Nine, Cajeme speaks for the first and last time with

Mama Chu. One more time Valdez twists the common role of the deer dancer. During the ritual dance, the deer dancer moves, causes a lot of sounds by rattles, but never speaks. The audience is invited to reconsider the significance of the dialogue between the deer dancer and Mama Chu. Cajeme is bewildered because he has taken off his deer head and so he loses part of his identity. Therefore he asks Mama Chu “Who am I?” and she answers “You are the son of a Deer Dancer” (*Mummified Deer* 57). In this state, Mama Chu identifies Cajeme with her mummified fetus, calling him “my son” (*Mummified Deer* 57). This fusion between Cajeme and the unborn child of Mama Chu from her first husband Pedro Coyote, the deer dancer, highlights the metaphorical identification of the mummified fetus as the embodiment of the Yaqui heritage that she has preserved in her womb, while Cajeme is the living incarnation of this heritage. It is time now to release the long kept Yaqui culture to be revived and readopted by the Yaqui community. This point of view is reinforced by Mama Chu’s following acts when she “ties the deer head back on Cajeme’s head with tender but forceful resolve” and then Cajeme responds by undergoing a “powerful transformation back to the deer. He begins to dance faster and faster” (*Mummified Deer* 58) because now Mama Chu is ready to unveil her secrets. Cajeme has performed his task in helping Mama Chu to redeem by overcoming her inner struggles and in turn to revitalize the seemingly lost heritage. Accordingly, his dance brings hope and self-reconciliation to the members of the community. While observing the deer dance closely Anselmo Valencia describes its sacred power as a source of “divine light” that is provided for the audience; it has the power of healing and endows the spectators with a sense of spirituality. To this effect he states that “A few minutes of the deer dance, about three minutes, is enough to bring them a light, a divine light” (Valencia and Spicer 97). **This light of spirituality and knowledge of the Yaqui culture would provide the community with the power needed to resist. Spirituality is considered an essential cultural value for the Yaqui. Cajeme comprises both the spiritual aspect and the cultural heritage of the Yaqui exemplified in the myth of the deer dance that he performs. Therefore, he is the one who brings the light of spirituality and knowledge of the Yaqui culture. The spectators are endowed with these superior values and spiritual experience.**

Cosme Bravo: The Trickster Archetype

According to Carl Jung, one of the main traits of the trickster archetype is changing his appearance and role. **Jung clarifies that the** “Ability to change his shape seems also to be one of his characteristics... he has on occasion described himself as a soul in hell” (*Four Archetypes* 135). His constant change serves his purpose of deception and villainy. Cosme Bravo appears in three different shapes, places and periods of time: first as the clown matador who has lured Agustina in Tijuana, Mexico (1939-1950); second as the traitor who has joined forces with the Mexican government and killed Lucas Flores in Tuscon, Arizona (1917-1929); third as the bloody *torocoyori* who has committed a number of massacres against the Yaqui, killed Pedro Coyote (Mama Chu’s first husband), slaughtered Mama Chu’s children and raped her in Sonora, Mexico (1906-1911). Because he lacks honesty and a sense of belonging, he keeps shifting between “different masters, inventing clever ruses, or wearing a variety of masks during [his] peripatetic life” (Scheub 10). The trickster figure is dominant throughout the play because he incarnates evil that Cajeme fights and Mama Chu resists to save the Yaqui community. Mama Chu describes Cosme summarizing his villainy; he is “a turn-coat Yaqui, who was slaughtering his own people like a rapid dog at the service of his Yori masters” (*Mummified Deer* 59).

Act One, Scene Four introduces Cosme; he appears as a memory that comes from the other reality. His first appearance concurs with Wilfred Guerin’s definition of the trickster, including his occupation as a clown: “The Trickster [is] the joker, jester, clown, fool, fraud, prankster, picaro” (Guerin 230). His other character traits of being a malicious person who exploits others and destroys their lives for his own advantage are demonstrated throughout the play.

His first appearance marks his evil nature. Cosme enters stage as a clown matador enticing Cajeme to the circus ring; he treats the deer dancer as an animal calling him “Toro...torito” (*Mummified Deer* 8). His attitude towards Cajeme reveals his derision and irreverence to the Yaqui culture that Cajeme represents. The deer dancer does not respond to his acts “leaving Cosme befuddled” (*Mummified Deer* 8). And then, he substitutes Cajeme with a donkey and starts narrating an obscene joke. Cajeme does not respect the Yaqui spectators or their culture; his devious nature is revealed

in his successive attempts to eradicate their tradition. In his introduction to the play Jorge Huerta contends that Cosme represents the foil character to Lucas Flores and the enemy of Cajeme: “the Mexican Circus clown, Cosme Bravo, appears as counterpoint to Lucas Flores, the resistance fighter, and as adversary to Cajeme” (*Mummified Deer* XI). Valdez employs this trickster figure to contrast the pure Yaqui, represented by the characters in the play including the deer dancer, and the Mestizo or that of mixed races (Spanish and indigenous Indian) who support the persecution by the Mexican government. His wickedness is further highlighted by Mama Chu when he appears accompanying Agustina and forcing her to sing. Mama Chu rebukes her adopted daughter for blindly following this trickster. She accuses him of seducing Agustina and exploiting her: “Thief! You stole my daughter and abandoned her to a life of sin and wickedness” (*Mummified Deer* 12).

The second appearance of Cosme Bravo takes place in Act Two, Scene Three, when Oralia narrates more past event to Armida. She tells her that Lucas Flores returned after fifteen years and took the whole family to the Mexican circus that Cosme owned, and that Mama Chu was worried and felt pessimistic: “I hate this chingado rascuachi circus [fucking low class]. Too many machos [males]...verijones [idles]. Vamonos! [Let’s move on]. (*Mama Chu gets up to go, as family members resist.*)” (*Mummified Deer* 47). When Cosme arrives, he introduces himself as the “Caveman” from the Stone Age; he even brags about being a Mestizo and not a pure Indo. His savage deeds to obliterate the Yaqui culture are reflected in two successive scenes on stage: first when his men beat Mama Chu’s biological son to death “scatter[ing] his short huesos [bones] to the four winds” (*Mummified Deer* 50), and second, when he humiliates her two young daughters and then starts to smooch Agustina shamelessly, (Mama Chu named her adopted children after her biological children who were Pedrito, Oralia and Agustina. In the scene above she remembers the massacre of her biological children).

Joseph Maurone in “The Trickster Icon and Objectivism” asserts the deceiving nature of the trickster, “[he] has many incarnations... He is a mischievous troublemaker... both clever and a shameless fool” (229). The trickster is the one who creates chaos out of order and brings confusion to the lives of others. In *Trickster Makes This World*, Lewis Hyde defines the trickster figure in the light of his chaotic trait, “we constantly distinguish -

right and wrong, sacred and profane, clean and dirty, male and female, young and old, living and dead - and in every case Trickster will cross the line and confuse the distinction" (Hyde 7). Cosme assumes different shapes or occupations and appears in different ages: as a clown, a soldier, a leader of militia, in his 20s and 40s...etc and these shifts produce confusion. One of the most significant scenes is when Cosme "comes rolling onstage, pushing his legless torso [trunk] on a low cart and carrying a small bundle in his arms" in which he puts his dirty laundry (*Mummified Deer* 52). Cosme appears singing the song of the deer which creates further confusion because he identifies himself with his opponent, Cajeme. Cosme Bravo is not an innocent and spiritual creature as Cajeme. Moreover, he is not a resistance fighter as Lucas Flores or an honest deer dancer as Pedro Coyote; he is a traitor. Mama Chu confronts him with his truth that he tries to conceal: "Enough of your lies. Demonio desgraciado [unfortunate demon]! Killer of your own people. TOROCOYORI!" (*Mummified Deer* 53). Through lies and deception, Cosme tries to distort events that actually took place. Instead of being accused of slaughtering Mama Chu's children, he charges her of murdering them because of fear. Moreover, he distorts the truth of Pedro Coyote's bravery and accuses him of treason: "Deception is their [tricksters'] trade, and they are often characterized by their dissatisfaction with the established social order, which they seek to disturb." (Tikkanen 15). Lucas Flores also refers to Cosme's deceit. He blames Mama Chu for not telling his daughter Agustina about the truth of Cosme:

LUCAS. You never told Agustina the truth, did you, Chu? You let her believe Cosme's ridiculous lies about you.

MAMA CHU. She married him! To spite me, don't you see? Who else was she going to believe! She was in the hands of the demonio.
(*Mummified Deer* 54)

At the end of this scene, Cosme enters leading a group of soldiers who they shoot Lucas Flores. Mama Chu calls him Pedro because he reminds her of the murder of her first husband. Both Flores and Pedro Coyote die for noble purposes. Flores was a resistance fighter who stood against the persecution of the Mexican government and supported the cause of the

Yaqui community. Similarly, Pedro was a deer dancer who kept the Yaqui tradition and refused to give it up. He revived the Yaqui rituals and was therefore shot by the Mestizos.

Throughout the play and till the end, Cosme has not changed. He remains the same deceitful and brutal character. From this perspective, Cosme can be described as the trickster devil. Lewis Hyde differentiates between the devil and the trickster: “The Devil is an agent of evil, but the Trickster is amoral, not immoral. He embodies and enacts the large portion of our experience where good and evil are helplessly intertwined. He represents the paradoxical category of sacred amorality” (Hyde 10). By ‘amorality’ Hyde means that the trickster is a representative of neither the good nor the evil. Despite the fact that he lacks moral or social values, his actions bring these values forth. **However, Cosme is evil incarnate like the devil. He does not represent or present any values throughout the play; therefore, he shifts from Hyde’s definition of the trickster as he does with Jung’s. This twist in his role defies the spectators’ assumptions, and in turn challenges them to re-think.**

As a representative of the oppressive Mestizos, Cosme is incapable of altering his behavior- a quality that contradicts the Jungian definition concerning the development of the trickster archetype. Jung explains that “instead of acting in a brutal, savage, stupid, and senseless fashion, the trickster’s behavior towards the end of the cycle becomes quite useful and sensible. The devaluation of his earlier unconsciousness is apparent even in the myth, and one wonders what has happened to his evil qualities” (*Archetypes* 465). Cosme maintains his villainy and acts savagely till the last scene when Mama Chu unveils her last secret. He killed her husband while performing his Yaqui ritual, slaughtered her children and raped her: “it was noon on Easter Sunday...in the middle of the fiesta. The Pascolas were dancing when soldiers arrived without a warning. They set up their machine guns. At first we thought they were there to protect us...but they aimed at the crowd [...] we knew it had begun...the war to exterminate the Yaqui!” (*Mummified Deer* 58). **It is obviously stated that the purpose of the Mexican government and its allies was to annihilate the Yaqui culture which Luis Valdez is determined to revive, and therefore he keeps challenging his audience’s mental faculties in order to remind them of their heroes’ sacrifices and of their ethnic values.**

Conclusion

Luis Valdez believes that the role of the theatre is to expose sociopolitical conditions of the societies. **In an interview with Sylvia Mendoza, Valdez summarizes his theatrical mission. He states that he “was angry at the injustices, angry for my people. The *huelga* (strike) gave me a place to reconnect. The Chicano Movement gave me a means to exist; a place where I could breath. I decided to be an explainer of my people to my own people first” (84). Valdez takes it upon himself to help the Chicano community relieve from oppression by urging it to revolt. Therefore, he dedicates his plays to criticize and analyze the deplorable standard of living of this community.** Valdez intertwines the Yaqui myth of the deer dance with the storytelling process in his play *Mummified Deer* to revive the Yaqui heritage and assert its vital role in the progress of the society. The play portrays the trauma of Mama Chu and her family as representatives of the Yaqui people who suffered from, and resisted imperialism. Through their process of storytelling they counteract their collective trauma and reaffirm their pride in their Yaqui heritage. The play follows the same pattern of the Yaqui myth in achieving salvation or rebirth through the sacrifice of the deer. Mama Chu is reborn after purifying her spirit from the burden of sins. Similarly, the members of her family are reborn after realizing the truth of her sufferings and forgiving each other. Cajeme, the deer dancer, stands for the act of sacrifice that helps the personas to regain their spirituality.

The dramatic sketches, in which the personas are involved, do not present individual characters, but rather types, or what Valdez himself terms ‘archetypes.’ The portrayal and twisting of traditional roles challenge the spectators’ mental faculties and urge them to reconsider their Chicano conditions. These archetypes “symbolize the desired unity and group identity” of the Chicano community (Valdez qtd. in Valentin and Novoa 43). Valdez aims to bring the members of his community to a unified entity that would confront oppression and improve the present dreary conditions. This sense of resistance would be invigorated by restoring the heritage of Yaqui ancestors and preserving it for the coming generations.

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