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### “Los Vendidos” and Economic Pretext

The unusual and captivating one-act play of the Mexican American playwright Luis Valdes may impress both amateurs and critics of the high sort. In fact, the work and production of Chicano director is an ironic and parody manifestation of social and cultural tensions between exactly Mexican-American and authentic Mexican population. The author of the play does not fear to illustrate quite fantastic setting in typically usual Mexican-American society. Despite the fact the story incorporates social, demographic and cultural issues as a core, there are also some financial and economic contexts that can be actual today.

In general, the title “Los Vendidos” illustrates the conception of the play – it means “The Sellouts”, “The Sold Ones”; i.e. the economic products that have been already sold (Vogelmann 3). The depiction of genuine and human-like robots with stereotype Mexican behaviors is the illustration on how American society, in fact, views the Mexicans, with their special and distinctive culture and traditions. Miss Jimenez, one of the main characters of “Los Vendidos”, is a secretary and deputy for Governor and presidential candidate Ronald Reagan, comes to the robotic store of Honest Sancho to purchase a robot of a Mexican image (Valdez 40). The officials intend to use the Mexican-American android in own political purposes to obtain a big amount of Mexican voters during their pre-election campaign. Sancho seems like a usual owner of small-size store and his economic situation is quite evident: he should sell robots in order to make his business flourishing. However, when it turns out in the end of the play, that Sancho is a robot, while the robotic models he

introduces are the real human beings, the economic pretext of the situation becomes clearer: Sancho is a product of the smart cheaters who use the seller as a bait. The verisimilitude of the living men and robots impresses and embarrasses at the same time. As a result, Miss Jimenez becomes a victim of the situation. However, looking at her social and official status, it is possible to see that she incorporates the typical traits of a greedy secretary. Obviously, Miss Jimenez possesses the monetary and financial resources necessary for political campaign of Governor Reagan; however, she is very reluctant to pay \$15,000 for a well-dressed robot Eric (Valdez 19).

Indeed, the unwillingness of a secretary to buy any robot is fitting her political behavioral and morality. The economic situation of usual people, 'non-politicians', is not her concern. The character of Honest Sancho is an image of middle of even small socio-economic class of people who own a business. Their business is a unique form of money-earning for them. Everything is simple for such kind of people, and they have easier vision of life. Miss Jimenez, in turn, looks quite dull and ridiculous with her actions to be higher than Sancho, although her activities are more complex, in fact. However, it is not a surprise that the advancement of technologies allows four manipulators to cheat Miss Jimenez who leaves a robotic store with cry and fear. "Pseudo-robots" are the typical Mexican-Americans as well – a Mexicans who want to earn the money by any possible way. Miss Jimenez is a symbol and embodiment of economic mainstream that makes her 'stranger' to her own people and culture (Vogelmann 8). Honest Sancho, in turn, is still socially and culturally similar to other Chicanos, even though he is a natural robot. Economic possibilities of characters seriously distinguish them, illustrating the serious differentiation of cultural and socio-economic views in current Mexican-American community.

## Works Cited

- Valdez, Luis. *Luis Valdez – Early works: actos, bernabe, and pensamiento serpentino*. Houston, Texas: Arte Publico Press, 1990. Print.
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