

## Book Reviews

**Bixler, Jacqueline E. *Convention and Transgression: The Theatre of Emilio Carballido*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1997: 256 p.**

One of the oddities of criticism of Latin American theatre, in contrast to poetry and the narrative, is the relative paucity of studies devoted to a single author. Even a giant such as Usigli, twenty years after his death, is the subject of only half a dozen or so studies, and even several of these are collections rather than coherent monographs. This lack is due in part perhaps to the initial need to develop historical parameters for such a new discipline, and more recently to the intense focus on themes like violence, gender, genre theory, postcolonialism and postmodernism. Whatever the reasons, full-length studies of individual dramatists are not common, and the student or scholar researching a single figure must in most cases hunt through brief journal articles and thematic volumes which by their very nature tend to present a deformed or incomplete vision.

Bixler's study of Carballido is an exception to the rule. And high time too; it is only the third full-length study of this elfin giant of Mexican theatre, despite his international reputation, and the first in nearly twenty years. Perhaps one reason for this lack is the quantity and variety of his production. Over thirty full-length works of extraordinary formal and stylistic variety, more than sixty one-acters, a half-dozen children's plays and assorted filmscripts, operas, adaptations, etc., not to mention his importance as influence, teacher and tireless promoter of the work of younger playwrights make for a considerable problem in organizing the sheer bulk for a study. Happily, the author has avoided a chronological format, valuable though that can be. Instead she has chosen to approach Carballido's work from one of its most important angles: the author's absolute unwillingness to be bound by rigid generic conventions and his experimentation with style and technique. Thus each chapter deals with one dramatic form and examines the manner in which he has transgressed its normally accepted parameters in plays from across the span of the near half century since *Rosalba y los Llaveros* altered the face of Mexican theatre. If

this sometimes makes it a trifle difficult to get some sense of the overall process of his theatre, that is largely due to his refusal to follow any linear course of development, preferring to return again and again to themes and styles treated earlier, but always with modifications and variations. At the same time, Bixler never loses sight of the overall homogeneity of his work: the compassionate portrayal of characters, the gentle humor, the roots in Mexican language and attitudes, the structural and stylistic diversity within individual works, and the commitment to freedom, to justice and to the power of the imagination.

Thus Chapter One treats the gradual movement away from realistic comedy to a more condensed form while continuing to use it as a vehicle toward the liberation of women, and Chapter Two deals with what she calls the dark undertones of Carballido's farces and their importance as a means for attacking social inequity, even in such apparently innocuous works as *Te juro, Juana*. Chapter Three, entitled "The cross-genre: From tragicomedy to contextual drama" is a bit of a catchall, dealing with six notoriously unclassifiable plays ranging from *Medusa* to *Fotografía en la playa*. Perhaps the author's most serious plays, they all, in one way or another, are anchored in tragedy while incorporating elements normally considered non-tragic. In Chapter Four Bixler tackles the thorny question of fantasy, which for Carballido usually means the disappearance of boundaries between different levels of reality, and in Five she studies his relatively little-known historical dramas, an important component of his work because of their fusion of history with myth and the originality of their theatrical conception. The next chapter deals with overtly social works like *El relojero de Córdoba* and *Un pequeño día de ira*, treated here as popular theatre, and in Seven she examines Carballido's most provocative and enigmatic and most studied work, *Yo también hablo de la rosa*, as a paradigmatic postmodern mixture of fusion of genres, parody, social criticism and rejection of absolute meanings. The final chapter, "Conclusions and ellipsis," shows the increasing sociopolitical focus of Carballido's production while stressing the oscillating nature of his development, alternating forms while continuously adapting them to a changing Mexico.

The potential difficulty with this format, a difficulty of which Bixler is well aware, is that many of these plays share generic traits only in part, and they are sometimes wildly different from others considered with them. But this is due to the very characteristic which she is stressing, that for their author genres are not rigidly separated forms. Or as she puts it concisely, they are overlapping petals on Carballido's famous rose. Carballido's theatre is a constant reminder of his refusal to abide by preconceived notions, be they political or esthetic, and his ongoing search for freedom, be it literary or political. If his

plays transgress certain authoritarian artistic conventions, it is because they also transgress certain authoritarian social ideas. Recognizing the incongruities and contradictions of life which cannot be smoothed out, they incorporate these incongruities and contradictions into both the thematic and the formal aspects of his plays.

Given the really monumental nature of this book, any reviewer is bound to have a minor quibble. Mine are two: one, I like *Felicidad* a lot better than Bixler does, but that is probably a matter of individual taste, and two, I don't really think that Carballido can share a "generational" interest with much older men like Novo and Villaurrutia or be contemporary of Celestino Gorostiza except in a very limited sense. But these are of no importance in a book which is a splendid contribution to the field and which, hopefully, will stimulate the appearance of more studies devoted to individual dramatists.

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**Ramón Layera, ed. *Usigli en el teatro. Testimonios de sus contemporáneos, sucesores y discípulos*. México: UNAM, Instituto de Bellas Artes, CITRU, 1996: 282 p.**

Twenty years after Rodolfo Usigli's death, there is widespread agreement that he is Mexico's most important playwright of the first half of the century. He wrote several of the best plays ever done in Latin America, spoke out against the falsification of the Revolution, questioned the myths that governed Mexican life and attempted to drag the Mexican theatre into what he considered the best of the twentieth century. Yet there are few serious critical studies and no comprehensive analysis of the whole amazing corpus: plays, poetry, essays, novel. Nor is there a serious biography, despite the abundance of anecdotal material, much of which is irrelevant to his work and often unsubstantiated. Ramón Layera's book is not intended to remedy either lack, although it is useful in both ways. Rather it is a collection of responses, gathered over a period of time, to a questionnaire circulated by Layera to theatre people who knew Usigli at various stages of his career for the purpose of determining what Layera calls Usigli's true identity, his role in a crucial period of Mexican literary history. As such, it provides a good deal of biographical material, critical assessments ranging from the acute to the routine, and –although not the intent of the book – revealing insights into the world of Mexican theatre and its sometimes tumultuous relationships.

It is fascinating to read the words of Francisco Monterde and Margarita Mendoza López, who represent a long gone period in the theatre when Usigli was very active, or of some of Mexico's most active theatre people who are still members of the two hostile camps associated with Usigli and Salvador Novo. The differences between these two mythic figures are famous, but this book clarifies the extent to which people who knew them both are still closely identified with one or the other. At times, this leads to what can charitably be called hasty judgments such as the startling declaration that Mexican theatre would have been better off without the Ulises-Orientación group. No one seriously argues that Villaurrutia, Novo, Celestino Gorostiza or their associates were dramatists of the stature of Usigli, but declarations that they were all mediocre or less ignores both Villaurrutia's early work and Novo's later plays, which are worthy of being better known. Nor are all of Usigli's works as outstanding as some would have it. Neither deification nor vilification serves any real purpose.

Layera's introduction is good preparation for the responses that follow, presenting the outline of Usigli's life and the physical and economic difficulties that plagued him, the multiple aspects of his creative life, and the major themes of his dramas, particularly the analysis of the middle class and the effort to create a national mythos in the three Coronas. These are themes that recur constantly throughout the responses. There are also much more personal reminiscences, including Usigli's famously difficult personality. Ultimately, we perceive a complex and contradictory figure: remote yet warm, sarcastic yet often generous beyond his means, the teacher who profoundly influenced some students, yet whom others found uninspiring. Perhaps we have had no biography because Rodolfo Usigli was too complicated a figure to comprehend, as we have had no exhaustive critical study because the quantity of the work is simply too overwhelming, as Carballido points out. Recently, Miami University of Ohio acquired the Usigli archive: innumerable cartons containing important papers from correspondence to early drafts of major plays. Hopefully, this will lead to the critical analysis so ardently desired by all, although Usigli's theatre, like the man himself, may be too complicated and quicksilver to grasp easily. In any event, Layera's book will be required reading for anyone who wishes to know more about this giant, whose finest work will live on, and about the tempestuous world within which he lived and wrote.

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**Nigro, Kirsten F., ed. *Lecturas desde afuera: Ensayos sobre la obra de Vicente Leñero*. Mexico: Ediciones el Milagro, UNAM 1997: 286 p.**

The wide-ranging essays in this collection, many previously published, present a representative sampling of Leñero criticism. The title of the collection refers to the authors' position outside Mexico; the book aims to present this work to a community of Mexican theatre artists and critics. Roughly half of the essays treat Leñero's narrative work, the other half his theatre. Many of the essays initially appeared in English and are here translated. In addition, *Lecturas* includes a critical bibliography, a summary of Leñero's work, and a "mapa conceptual" that defines various terms (such as intertextuality and postcolonial theory) for a Mexican audience perhaps unfamiliar with U.S. critical conventions.

Nigro foregoes a formal introduction in favor of the inclusion of a paper, initially presented in Puebla in 1993, that traces her own development as a critic in tandem with the path of Leñero criticism within the U.S. Although written at widely different moments (the earliest dates from 1969) and from varying perspectives, the connections among the essays are fruitful. Common themes include questions of genre and the interpretive role of the audience. Leñero's experimental use of genre is treated in Danny J. Anderson's essay. Leñero's documentary theatre, and the extent to which he departs from the expectations of that form, is treated by Frank Dauster and Jacqueline Bixler. Josefina Ludmer's contribution, the only one by a critic not working in the U.S., establishes the figures of reader and actor as fundamental to the analysis of *Los albañiles*. Lucía Garavito presents a semiotic analysis of focalization within Leñero's narrative. John M. Lipski, David Foster, Dauster, and Bixler all treat, in different ways, Leñero's representation of the search for, and perhaps impossibility of, an objective, authoritative truth. Nigro's two essays address the issue of the translation of text to stage, first Leñero's own rewriting of the novel *Los albañiles* as a dramatic text, and later the changes made to the text in the 1979 production of *La mudanza*.

On one level, the issue of perspective, as presented in the title of the collection, is a straightforward description, for the book's intended audience, of the placement of the critics whose work is here collected. Thus, *Lecturas desde afuera* functions as an introduction to this scholarship, and makes available criticism that might otherwise be inaccessible in Mexico. At the same time, defining these analyses as marginal – the work of outsiders – invites the critic

of Latin American theatre working in the U.S. to reconsider essays and perspectives that may already be familiar. *Lecturas* acknowledges the necessarily distanced view of the U.S. critic writing about Mexican texts and theatrical productions, and the doubly distanced character of this scholarship for readers within Mexico, who work under different conditions, follow distinct conventions, and may or may not place the same importance on issues that here seem paramount. Despite its heterogeneity, Nigro has assembled a coherent collection, one that should be useful to Mexican and U.S. readers alike.

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**Pellettieri, Osvaldo y George Woodyard, eds. *De Eugene O'Neill al "Happening": Teatro norteamericano y teatro argentino 1930-1990*. Buenos Aires: Galerna, 1996: 144 pp.**

El enfoque de este sexto tomo de la serie *Cuadernos del GETEA* (Grupo de Estudios de Teatro Argentino) es la interacción que ocurrió entre el teatro norteamericano y el argentino entre los años 1930-1990. En esta colección de ensayos reunidos por Osvaldo Pellettieri y George Woodyard, diez críticos – cinco norteamericanos y cinco argentinos – discuten desde muy diferentes modalidades obras, puestas en escena, métodos actorales, etc. de EE.UU. y Argentina (en este último caso se limitan a las obras que muestran corrientes e influencias estadounidenses). En el transcurso de este libro los estudios se extienden y complementan, dándonos una idea globalizadora del ambiente vivido en ambos países por medio de sus más destacadas personalidades teatrales.

*De Eugene O'Neill al "Happening"* se organiza cronológica y temáticamente. Los primeros cuatro ensayos del libro se centran en la historia teatral de estos dos países desde los años 30 hasta finales de los 60, donde se apunta la división entre un realismo social motivado por el compromiso político y un movimiento más experimental y vanguardista. En su ensayo "Eugene O'Neill, Thornton Wilder y el Teatro Independiente," Frank Dauster traza paralelos entre el movimiento de renovación al que O'Neill perteneció (los Provincetown Players) y el Teatro del Pueblo en la Argentina. Por su parte, David William Foster indica que Elmer Rice y Clifford Odets se asocian con el realismo social y la emergencia de una corriente populista (27) y demuestra cómo el argentino Elías Castelnuovo se acerca a esta temática. Saltando a la década de los 50, Osvaldo Pellettieri discute cómo la recepción de la obra de

Arthur Miller, mezclada con el realismo argentino ya existente, engendra la corriente del realismo reflexivo de los años 60. Finalmente, Sandra Cypess discute el gran impacto que tuvo Tennessee Williams en la modernización de la escena independiente argentina.

Los siguientes cinco ensayos tienen un enfoque más ecléctico. Ana Ruth Giustachini, Mirta Arlt y Jean Graham-Jones sugieren que en la Argentina de finales de los 60 y principios de los 70 la línea del teatro realista y de crítica social se comienza a borrar y coexistir con una corriente más experimental. Sus ensayos discuten la labor de dramaturgos y directores como Edward Albee, Neil Simon, Julian Beck y Judith Malina (para nombrar a los más importantes) en la creación de un "teatro político" o comprometido "netamente argentino" (105). Sobre el aspecto de la actuación y los espectáculos, Laura Mogliani explica la influencia de "El Método" que Lee Strasberg difundió a base de los escritos de Stanislavski para la preparación del actor realista. Liliana López discute la labor del Instituto Torcuato Di Tella como centro de experimentación y modernización teatral donde los "Happenings" alcanzaron su punto culminante en 1966.

En el último ensayo, el cual funciona a manera de epílogo, George Woodyard habla de la enseñanza del teatro argentino en las universidades norteamericanas y pronostica su difusión y su futuro en ese país. Aunque el libro discute poco la actividad y las influencias teatrales en estos dos países durante los años 70 y 80, sus autores ofrecen una extensa bibliografía. *De Eugene O'Neill al "Happening"* es un estudio beneficioso y bien documentado que aborda la historia del teatro, como espectáculo y escritura, en estos dos países de manera original y embarcadora.

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**Ravetti, Graciela and Sara Rojo, eds. *Antología Bilingüe de dramaturgia de mujeres latinoamericanas*. 144 p. *Antologia Bilingüe de Dramaturgia de Mulheres Latino-Americanas*. 150 p. São Paulo: Armazém de Idéais, 1996.**

This one-volume edition, with two halves that open either to the Spanish or the Portuguese version, offers readers three plays written by womendramatists: *A Beata Maria do Egipto* (1958) by Brazilian Rachel de Queiroz, *Del sol naciente* (1984) by Argentine Griselda Gambaro, and *Cariño malo* (1990) by Chilean Inés Margarita Stranger. Grinor Rojo provides the

prologue, followed by the editors' introduction. Each play is prefaced by a commentary that provides necessary background information, cultural particularities, themes, and a short feminist interpretation. The Queiroz play also includes the introduction written by the author at the time of the play's premiere and the poem by Manuel Bandeira that served as inspiration. The book concludes with remarks by the editors and, on the Portuguese side, a bibliography of the three plays and a four-page critical bibliography of sources in English, Spanish, and Portuguese oriented toward feminist, post-colonial, and postmodern criticism.

At least three different perspectives on women's dramaturgy are presented in dialogue with one another in this collection: the introductory notes by Grínor Rojo, the editorial notes by Ravetti and Sara Rojo, and the three plays themselves. In the prologue, Grínor Rojo outlines three different critical approaches that women can take to insert themselves into language/being. He applies Irigaray's concept of "simulacrum" to the Queiroz play, Kristeva's notion of rewriting/revolutionizing language to the Gambaro play, and the possibilities of performance to the Stranger play. The editors, who share the same concern with language and power as the distinguished Chilean theatre critic, ground themselves in an anthropological approach that prioritizes the socio-historical context of women in Latin America. In fact, they do not even list either Irigaray or Kristeva in the bibliography. Their critical viewpoint focuses on issues such as questioning the hegemonic codes, rebuilding images and voices of women, and projecting strong images of women to contest the marginalized ones already visible in society and literature. As the editors note, the very existence of women dramatists represents a challenge to the traditional division between public and domestic life that places women at the center of the home. Women dramatists also risk being degraded and sexualized because they are women of the theatre. Yet in spite of the precarious nature of women's dramaturgy, the editors present three plays from three generations that question and contest the naturalized expectations that society holds for feminine behavior.

The editors provide several answers to the obvious question of why they chose to publish these three plays by these three authors. In their conclusion, they suggest that the women represent three distinct historical moments and literary traditions, although they do not argue that there is any relationship among these moments or traditions (142). In the introduction, they argue that "ellas han contribuido al proceso de descolonización y desconstrucción del canon patriarcal; han creado sus propias maneras de reapropiarse del lenguaje y de reescribir nuestra historia, nuestra cultura, restaurando silencios y faltas;

han cuestionado las imágenes de la mujer y han buscado su propia palabra, con todo lo que ello implica dentro de una sociedad con formación cultural postcolonial, y asentada sobre un lenguaje masculino donde la mujer ocupa un lugar ‘subalterno’” (14). The editors do not claim that these are the best plays ever written by Latin American women dramatists. It is clear that their purpose in publishing this collection was not to establish a canon for women’s dramaturgy, but rather to offer alternative paradigms for women’s lives.

Rachel de Queiroz is not known in Brazil as a dramatist, but her play certainly deserves more attention than it has gotten to date. It takes place in Queiroz’s home state of Ceará in northeastern Brazil, a land of messianic movements and charismatic leaders. Although one of the conflicts is obedience to state versus obedience to God, the other conflict that Queiroz emphasizes is man’s expectations with regard to feminine behavior versus women’s rejection of those confining expectations. The Beata Maria refuses to conform to either the clothing or the romantic expectations of dependence that mark femininity in Brazil.

A similar conflict between man and woman occurs in Gambaro’s *Del sol naciente*, which takes place in the home of a geisha during a time of war and suffering. Grínor Rojo suggests that the play’s exotic setting might be the result of censorship in Argentina and that the play can be understood as an allegory (9). As the editors note, Gambaro’s later plays demonstrate her growing concern with gender as part of the complex picture of human rights abuses in Latin America. *Del sol naciente* transports the reader to a land of extremes in feminine and masculine behavior where a geisha waits for the return of her warrior. The world inside the geisha’s house is unchanging, a haven from the deprivation of war. But as the play progresses, she begins to suffer the same fate as those outside.

If death is the only outlet for the geisha, it is regeneration through death that motivates the three women in Stranger’s play *Cariño malo*. The play begins and ends in a desolate, barren setting, where Eva, Victoria, and Amapola question the meaning of their lives as women. As the title suggests, the protagonists examine love in women’s lives and the ties that bind women and men.

All three plays contain strong women characters who challenge existing dichotomies in gender expectations and who act forcefully to end their suffocating lives. Their liberation requires extreme measures, that is, sacrifice of self or of other, to be successful. While we might appreciate the strength of character demonstrated by these protagonists, we might also question if they offer their

audiences viable alternatives. In addition, in spite of the editors' choice of a critical approach grounded in Latin American reality, there is little about any of these plays that speaks to that reality. All three take place in worlds far removed from the domestic and professional worlds of Latin American women. While I am pleased by the bilingual format of this project and by the editors' efforts to make women's dramaturgy more available, I am intrigued and somewhat disappointed by the exceptional nature of the characters, their actions and their worlds. I wonder what women and men in Latin America will learn by reading these plays and how they will apply those lessons to their own lives?

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**Salas, Teresa Cajiao, and Margarita Vargas, eds. *Women Writing Women: An Anthology of Spanish-American Theater of the 1980s*. Albany: SUNY P, 1997: 468 p.**

This collection of eight plays by Spanish-American women writers helps to fill an immense void in the field, as so few anthologies of this kind exist in either English or Spanish. Indeed, the editors/translators note that their intention "was not to ghettoize women but rather to create a space in which their voices could be heard without being easily dismissed by the dominant presence of male authors to disseminate among English-speaking audiences different feminist and feminine visions of Spanish-American reality" (ix). Salas and Vargas selected writers who had produced at least three plays and who had received some measure of national or international acclaim for their work; all are currently active participants in some aspect of the theatre in their countries, which range from Mexico to Argentina. In this representative sampling of the woman-authored theatre of the 1980s, the editors have translated Chilean Isidora Aguirre's *Altarpiece of Yumbel (El retablo de Yumbel)*; Mexican Sabina Berman's *Yankee (Yankee [Bill])*, *The Great USkrainian Circus* by Puerto Rican Myrna Casas (*El gran circo EUkraniano*); Puerto Rican Teresa Marichal Lugo's *Evening Walk (Paseo al atardecer)*; *Dial-a-Mom (Casa matriz)* by Argentine Diana Raznovich; *Waiting for the Italian (Esperando al italiano)* by Venezuelan Mariela Romero; and Argentine Beatriz Seibel's *7 Times Eve (7 veces Eva)*. In addition, they include Kirsten Nigro's translation of Mexican Maruxa Vilalta's play *A Woman, Two Men, and a Gunshot (Una mujer, dos hombres y un balazo)*. A brief biographical note on the author and her literary

and theatrical corpus prefaces each play. When possible, the editors provide information about staged performances of the play as well as the playwright's address.

In addition to the translations, the volume contains an introduction by Margarita Vargas and a bibliography that includes both primary and secondary sources for the eight playwrights, as well as a more general bibliography of works treating Latin American theatre and women's writing. Vargas's introduction outlines the history of writing by women – and the representations of women by male authors – in Spanish America, and offers brief analyses of each of the translated plays. Noting that the playwrights sought to “question the basic gender assumptions grounding their particular cultures” from the perspective of each writer's specific agenda, Vargas suggests three areas explored in the dramas: “the search for a self-created female identity that includes education, the reappropriation of language, and a capacity for writing; the affirmation of feminine subjectivity; and the denouncing of senseless acts of violence committed in and by society” (7). Nonetheless, she also acknowledges the diversity of theatrical techniques, conflicts, and concerns that mark the play texts included in this anthology, illustrating both the similarities linking and the differences separating these women writers and their cultures.

*Women Writing Women* offers a superb collection of plays to an English-speaking audience. The editors allude to the significance of such a collection for feminist literary studies; the publication of anthologies is key to the inclusion of women writers in the canon. Nonetheless, apart from two previous that have appeared in Spanish (Andrade and Cramsie's *Dramaturgas latinoamericanas contemporáneas* and Eidelberg and Jaramillo's *Voces en escena: Antología de dramaturgas latinoamericanas*), this volume represents only the third collection of plays by Spanish-American women writers (not including recent anthologies of U.S. Hispanic women playwrights) and the only one published in English. *Women Writing Women* can promote the dissemination of the works of this octet of important dramatists via literary criticism, the classroom, and the stage. The translated texts are inherently stageable. The translators have adequately captured each character's voice and register, and the dialogue flows naturally, offering some real possibilities for performance.

*Women Writing Women* illuminates the range of women writing for the stage in the decade of the 1980s. The content of the plays is varied; they depict everything from the hiring of a substitute mother in a serio-comic examination of mother-daughter roles to the reenactment of a saint's martyrdom

in order to comment upon political repression. In like manner, each dramatist employs a variety of techniques for expressing her themes. We see the influence of Brecht, Artaud, and the Absurdist, while at the same time we note a pervading interest in theatrical self-consciousness. The variety of topics and approaches found in this anthology grants us a comprehensive view of the state of the theatre for Spanish-American women writers. *Women Writing Women* is a valuable contribution to an expanding field.

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**Villegas, Juan. *Para un modelo de historia del teatro*. Irvine: Ediciones de GESTOS, 1997: 206 p.**

Finding a sense of balance between theory and practice is an issue that concerns many disciplines in contemporary critical studies. Theatre is no exception. In *Para un modelo de historia del teatro*, Juan Villegas attempts to bridge the gap between theory and practice by proposing a model for the re-writing of theatre histories and by providing excellent practical examples of Spanish as well as Latin American theatre to support his theoretical paradigm. This book reemphasizes the initial postulations regarding theatre and histories that Villegas spelled out in his 1990 study, *Ideología y discurso crítico sobre el teatro de España y América Latina*. This recent volume is virtually a recompilation and reevaluation of the ideas established in the nine chapters that comprise *Ideología*. The most salient difference is found in the ninth and final chapter of the present edition, wherein Villegas offers a synchronic study of Chilean theatre between 1975 and 1990 to demonstrate his theoretical constructs.

Villega's theoretical model revolves around the conception of the text (theatrical and dramatic) as a means of communication. According to Villegas, theatrical codes serve to communicate messages pertinent to particular historical and social circumstances. One of his main points is that Hispanic theatre needs to be studied within its own historical, cultural, and artistic context and not evaluated within the parameters set by Eurocentric, hegemonic discourse. Thus, Villegas advocates the necessity for a theoretical model for theatre histories that values a plurality of discourses and reveals the uniqueness of theatrical productions in their historical moment rather than one preoccupied with "universal" standards. In Villegas's model, the annals of theatre histories would

include theatre traditionally considered marginal and excluded from the dominant discourse. He promotes the exploration of such theatre always from a contextual standpoint. His ideas are *apropos* for contemporary criticism, for his perspective offers a consideration of diversity as the crux for documenting and understanding theatre as a product of society, history and culture.

Villegas proposes a series of categories to be considered when outlining a history of theatre. Systems, subsystems, macrosystems, and megasystems form the foundation of the organizational structure of his model. Critical and theatrical discourse is explored in relationship to its ideological position relative to the dominant or hegemonic discourse and in conjunction with the triad *productor, texto, destinatario* of different social sectors as integral components. Within these parameters, Villegas investigates Chilean theatre from 1975 to 1990 and in so doing reasserts his reputation as a master of textual and performance interpretation. Of particular interest is his discussion of Jorge Díaz's *Oscuro vuelo compartido*, Isidora Aguirre's *Tía Irene, yo te amaba tanto*, and his analysis of plays presented at the Cuarto Festival de Teatro Poblacional de la Granja. Yet, the categorical nomenclature used throughout the historical outline becomes a bit tedious; there is an over-abundance of subtitles relating to the position that each theatrical manifestation carries in relationship to the discourses of power. Such subtitles as "El sistema del productor hegemónico para los sectores hegemónicos antes de 1983," "El subsistema del discurso del autoritarismo dirigido a los sectores no hegemónicos," and "El discurso teatral alternativo dirigido a los sectores hegemónicos" are only a few examples. In addition, these categories demonstrate an ironic twist in Villegas's model. Although the author decries the biased role that hegemonic discourse has played in the preparation of past volumes of theatre histories, he himself cannot escape reference to "hegemony" as one of the main points of departure for documenting theatre. One cannot help but wonder if Villegas's project is too vast for even him to undertake in a practical sense. The beauty of Villegas's writing lies in the fact that he does not pretend to have found a cure-all for the ailments surrounding theatre histories. To the contrary, he admits that his model has its limitations and that his attempt to document Chilean theatre between 1975 and 1990 can only be a partial reading of an elaborate totality. He states from the beginning that the investigation of elements surrounding his model "implicarían volúmenes en sí o tareas de grupos de investigación" (15). Villegas's aptitude for problematizing the process rather than claiming to have found any ultimate solutions makes *Para un modelo de historia del teatro* a mandatory text for understanding the intricate complexities

involved with theatre, both theoretically and practically, as a historical phenomenon.

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**Teatro y territorios  
España e hispanoamérica  
1950-1996**

Los trabajos reunidos en este volumen proponen, mediante metodologías diversas y el análisis de una gran variedad de autores y obras, explorar los itinerarios recorridos por el teatro contemporáneo español e hispano-americano a lo largo del último medio siglo. En función de las nociones de territorio y de frontera, se analizan las relaciones entre teatro y nacionalismos, la cuestión de una identidad nacional y regional, la del exilio (exterior e interior), la relación del individuo con la sociedad y el Estado así como la censura. La problemática abarca también los espacios textuales e intertextuales, los territorios de la lengua y del género, las tradiciones culturales populares y su reelaboración "cultura" así como el paso del texto al escenario. Este libro permite apreciar la gran vitalidad del género y propone nuevas perspectivas para el análisis de los textos dramáticos y de su realización escénica.

ISBN: 2-909596-18-4. 150 FF (más los gastos de envío, 30 FF). Pedir a: CID, 131 boulevard Saint-Michel, 75005 Paris (France). Tel: 331 43 54 47 15 o fax: 331 43 54 80 73.