

Book Reviews

Men and Angels. Three South American Comedies, trans. by Willis Knapp Jones. Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press, and London: Feffer and Simons, Inc., 1970. 191 pp.

The Quack Doctor (La hermana Josefina) by Fernando Camilo Darthés and Carlos S. Damel

The Fate of Chipí González (El fin de Chipí González) by José Rivarola Matto

The Man of the Century (El hombre del siglo) by Miguel Frank

Men and Angels will be of unusual interest to the dedicated or even casual reader of the South American theatre because none of its three plays is intended as heavy reading. Instead, this collection exposes that side of the theatre which is seen too infrequently—the light-hearted and whimsical which is created solely to entertain. In addition, the thirty-three page “Introduction” will appeal to those yet unaware of the development of this genre in South America. Following an abbreviated outline of the theatre up to the sixteenth century, and of the Mexican theatre up to Usigli, attention is focused on the drama in Paraguay, Chile and Argentina, the three countries represented in the book. There is also a checklist of translations of South American plays as well as some from the Philippines and New Mexico. This list has ninety different titles, and is arranged alphabetically by countries and by the names of the dramatists.

Professor Jones has chosen an interesting title for his 100th copyrighted publication. Even though one play, *The Quack Doctor*, does not incorporate angels as characters, the general theme suggested by *Men and Angels* is maintained in all three works since each combines fact with the supernatural. The plays are also similar in that all are amusing, however in varying degrees. The most humorous is *The Man of the Century*, a fanciful enactment of an angelic intervention in a Chilean household shortly before Judgment Day. *The Quack Doctor* ranks second with regard to its comic appeal. It is an auspicious commentary on the womens’ struggle for equality, and is based on the plight of a female quack doctor who turns out to be a certified physician. *The Fate of Chipí González*, the least humorous play, is a satirical critique of the Paraguayan *raison d’être* as reflected in the tumultuous events in a young soccer player’s life.

In *Men and Angels* Professor Jones has again displayed his extraordinary talents as a translator and an interpreter of the spirit of the South American theatre. There are only a few minor objections which may arise with respect to the translation itself. In *The Fate of Chipí González*, for example, it seems

that an illiterate ball player would use some expression other than "formidable" (p. 77) in an emotional outburst of joy. In *The Quack Doctor* scalpel seems preferable to "bisturi" [sic p. 48], and most American or English speakers refer to a perfect 100, not a perfect "10" (p. 52), on an academic score. Some readers may also object to the omission of a brief outline of the history of the theatre in the remaining South American nations. Even though Professor Jones' aim in the "Introduction" is not to give a detailed history of this genre, a few comments on its recent growth would enhance the over-all appeal of the book. But such objections are of minimum consequence and are cited only to illustrate the care with which the volume has been prepared. *Men and Angels* should be accepted as a welcome contribution to the limited number of commendable translations of South American drama.

Robert J. Morris
Texas Tech University

Frank Dauster. *Xavier Villaurrutia*. New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1971. 155 pp.

This excellent volume—the first book about Villaurrutia's work—will be most useful both for the general reader and for the specialist. The first chapter offers a very fine appraisal of the intellectual background, and one of the clearest evaluations offered on the "Contemporáneos" group; Dauster relates this group's work to the aesthetics of the time and proves that its cosmopolitanism was in no way "anti-Mexican." He goes on to give facts about Villaurrutia which bear on his work.

The next chapter studies Villaurrutia's poetry in chronological order, making clear how its complexity and conceptual nature in no way make it coldly formalistic. Commenting on the early poetry, Dauster notes both its imitative nature and its use of techniques such as concretion, depersonalization, and antithesis—which become even more important later on. He then studies in detail the major poems of *Nostalgia de la muerte*, examining the different techniques through which Villaurrutia embodies the themes of death and of loneliness which dominate the work. He demonstrates that the "conceptista" devices, the paronomasia, and the disemia in Villaurrutia's poems are effective ways of capturing experiences. In these comments and in the ones concerning Villaurrutia's later verse, Dauster makes clear how these works function as original poetry.

In chapter three Dauster focuses on Villaurrutia's plays. Again he offers us close analyses which reveal their key characteristics. He notes how structures, verbal play, and tensive dialogue account for the effectiveness of the *Autos profanos*; how *Invitación a la muerte* remakes completely the *Hamlet* story to embody Villaurrutia's own themes of loneliness, death, and search for one's identity; how Villaurrutia's "commercial theatre" of 1941-1950 manages to use realistic plots and well-known conventions and still achieve effectiveness. All in all, he proves that Villaurrutia was no radical innovator, but that he brought to Mexican drama approaches and techniques which were then becoming prevalent elsewhere in the world; and that he used them to compose good plays which

surpass the localism and the worn conventions common to the Mexican commercial stage, and which give impact to Villaurrutia's vision of human anguish and tension.

In dealing with the question of influences in his fourth chapter, Dauster defines very well Villaurrutia's literary heritage and the connections between his work and that of Juan Ramón Jiménez, of Tablada, of Quevedo. He also notes an affinity between Villaurrutia's outlook and Existentialism. But above all he makes us see that these affinities only make clearer Villaurrutia's originality, his way of creating artistic works which stand by themselves and convey their own experiences. He links certain traits of these works with Mexican and even pre-hispanic letters, and leaves us with a picture of a writer at once universal and rooted in his traditions. The book contains a very useful selected bibliography as well as a chronological table and an index. It is clearly one of the best volumes published by Twayne on Hispanic literature, and proof that good and profound analytic criticism need not be tedious or pedantic.

Andrew P. Debicki
University of Kansas

Abraham Arias Larreta. *Literaturas aborígenes de América: Azteca, incaica, mayaquiché*. Buenos Aires, Editorial Indoamericana, 9ª edición, 1968.

Professor Arias-Larreta from the University of Missouri at Kansas City has prepared a useful textbook for teaching early American literature. It is in fact the only satisfactory anthology for this purpose that I know of, and I have used it successfully in classes. The three literatures covered are the Aztec, Incan and Maya; it also has a few animal tales from the Aymará of Bolivia.

Since this review is for the theatre, the two plays in the book should be mentioned first: *Ollantay* from Peru and *Warrior of Rabinal* from Guatemala. Neither of these has been translated into satisfactory English; perhaps an adaptation for the stage such as the one made by Carlos Girón Cerna called *Warrior from Kiché* might be attempted. I have seen this staged in Spanish, and it is very interesting.

The great play of the Incas was *Apu-Ollantay* whose text is included in this volume. It shows Spanish influence in the *gracioso* or comic figure and in the interlude. The theme is romantic and makes us wonder from what century it comes. The heroine Ima Sumac had a recent revival in the singing world.

The other play *Rabinal-Aché* or 'Warrior from Rabinal,' from the county seat of Lower Verapaz north of Guatemala City, was rescued by the French priest Abbé Brasseur de Bourbourg in the middle of the last century. This tragedy is staged as a ballet set to the music of the "Son Kiché" or national Kiché dance. Flashbacks occur in the text. Patriotism and sorrow give the drama nobility; it is also romantic, especially when the Kiché prince tries to elude sacrifice and death. Court etiquette and a hint at genetics are found in his symbolic dance with the Rabinal princess.

Literature in the Nahuatl language of the Aztecs comprises the best selection. This describes the Aztecs' militarism, especially as this was expressed in their poetry with its themes that the earth has been lent us and material things are

ephemeral. A barbarous tension runs through this poetry despite their love of beautiful things like flowers. The genres covered are the epic, the theatre (but with no examples), prose and didactic literature. We are given illustrations of old Spanish manuscripts of these poems.

Incan civilization was dynamic and concerned with social planning. The Quechua language is still spoken in the Andean highlands, and it was "written" by means of *quipus* or knotted tassels, mainly for keeping records; formal writing as we know it was unknown. The Incas had *amautas* or philosopher-teacher-priests, and Viracocha was their supreme deity. Manly sadness is expressed in poems which we read in Spanish translation; some lyricism comes through the triple barrier, if we include English as one link in this chain.

For the Mayan section, the *Popol-Vuh* or 'Book of the Council' was the sacred scripture of the still-existent Kiché nation of the Guatemalan highlands. Their ancestors came from Tula, the shadowy metropolis of the Tul-tecs or Toltecs north of Mexico City. In the text itself, the initial myths are vague; there is a parallel between Samson's pride and that of the divine twins Hunahpú and Ish-Balanké. Hurakán or Hurricane, almost our wind god too, is the one-footed deity of destruction; his mate was Cabracane, the two-footed god of earthquakes. Legends include a confusion of tongues similar to ours at Babel. Pioneering times brings us a more historic mood; imperialism appears with the invading Toltecs, who warred from the hilltops on the people in the valleys. Gumarcaah, "well built and marvellously strong" with its twenty palaces or clan lodgings, was renamed Uatatlán by Alvarado's Tlaxcalan soldiers who stormed the place in 1526; it still waits to be studied in the ravines north of Chichicastenango. Francisco Ximénez, the Franciscan curate of the latter town recorded this collection in the early XVIII century, and thus preserved it for Abbé Brasseur in the 1850's. Some of this writing achieves sublimity, and its rediscovery in the Newberry Library of Chicago is one of the overlooked stories of this century.

The *Adivinanzas del Chilam Balam* or 'Riddles from the Book of the Jaguar Priest' of Yucatan relate the despair of the Mayas after the Spanish conquest. The *Annals of the Cakchiquels* might have been included to give the viewpoint of a nation rival to the Kiché; but no reviewer can really indulge in the luxury of revising an anthology.

This literature needs study, especially since the Nobel prize winner of Guatemala, Miguel Angel Asturias, has made it important. The nagual or totem figure which protects each man is found as a theme in *El hombre que parecía un caballo* ('The Man Who Looked Like a Horse') by the contemporary dean of Guatemalan letters, Rafael Arévalo Martínez, and in "El brujo de Chitzajay" ('The Wizard of Chitzajay') by Carlos Samayoa Chinchilla. Glossaries and wordlists in the various languages are useful, but only partially so since they are not coordinated; a description of the chief legends or the names of the principal figures would have been better for the student. At times the book is badly proofread. Latin and foreign quotations are particularly bad: on p. 24 we find *homus* for *homo* [*americanus*]; on p. 31 *kaikais* for *haikais* (or *haiku*); p. 119 "adonté" for "adonde"; and on p. 182, Edwar with no final *d*. The list of errata

is not sufficient, and would probably be shorter if the editor had done his own proofreading at the press in Buenos Aires.

T. B. Irving
University of Tennessee

Recent Publications, Materials Received and Current Bibliography

[The following items may prove to be of interest to readers of the *Latin American Theatre Review*. Inclusion here does not preclude subsequent review.]

- Rengifo, César. *Esa espiga sembrada en Carabobo* (funeral a un soldado del pueblo). Caracas, 1971. 34 pp.
- Teatro*, No. 5 y No. 6 (1970-1971), revista de la Escuela de Teatro, Medellín, Colombia.
- Martínez, José de Jesús. *Enemigos*. Panamá: Ediciones Tareas, 1962. 38 pp.
- Rodríguez-Sardiñas, Orlando and Carlos Miguel Suárez Radillo. *Teatro selecto contemporáneo hispanoamericano*. Madrid: Escelicer, 1971. Tomo I. Contiene: Carlos José Reyes, *Metamorfosis*; Egon Wolff, *Flores de papel*; José Martínez Queirolo, *Los unos vs. los otros*; Andrés Morris, *Oficio de hombres*; Maruxa Vilalta, *Cuestión de narices*; Josefina Plá, *Historia de un número*; Gregor Díaz, *Los del cuatro*.
- Baeza Flores, Alberto. *Tres piezas de teatro hacia el mañana (Shakespeare Siglo XXI)*. Costa Rica: Ediciones Multicopiadas, Epoca y Ser, 1971. 131 pp. Contiene: *Romeo y las brumas*, *Otelo y la soledad*, *Hamlet y las galaxias*.
- Cisneros, Luis Benjamin. *El pabellón peruano*. Lima, Perú: Servicio de Publicaciones del Teatro Universitario de San Marcos, 1971. 13 pp.
- "Chabot." *La independencia del Perú*. Lima, Perú: Servicio de Publicaciones del Teatro Universitario de San Marcos, 1971. 8 pp.
- Román, Sergio. *Un extraño en la niebla*. Ecuador: Editorial Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1970. 89 pp. Subtítulo de "Farsa violenta en un desorden único." Esta pieza ganó el 2do premio en el concurso promovido por el grupo experimental de la universidad de Guayaquil. Representada el 16 de mayo de 1969 por el teatro universitario "Agora."
- Iglesias, Roberto F. Programas de la Temporada Cultural 71 que incluyen *El caballo de Troya* y *Segundo asalto* y también la revista "Participación—Poesía."
- Revista *Alero* de la Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala, No 2.1 (octubre, 1970). Incluye una pieza teatral de Hugo Carrillo, *Un sueño profundo y vacío*.
- Mapocho*, No 21 (1970). Contiene: Salvador Reyes, *La redención de las sirenas* (teatro). pp. 183-242.
- Fotos from a Curaçao "Tolla" play in the Papiamentu language written by Pacheco Domacassé and directed by Tone Brulin.
- CBA (Comentarios Bibliográficos Americanos)*, Vol. II, No 10 (noviembre-diciembre, 1970).

- Textos*, No 1 y 2 (febrero y marzo, 1970). Revista mensual del festival latinoamericano de teatro y del centro latinoamericano de investigación e información teatral. Manizales, Colombia, Apartado Aereo 0665.
- Penélope*. Cuadernillo bimestral, con material de poesía. No 3 (junio de 1971). Madrid Malo, Néstor. *Guineo verde*. Medellín: Editorial Bedout, 1966. Contiene doce cuentos y un drama en tres actos, *El fugaz retorno*, representado en Barranquilla en junio de 1957.
- Oliver, William I., editor and translator. *Voices of Change in the Spanish American Theater*. Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1971. Contains: Emilio Carballido, *The Day They Let the Lions Loose*; Griselda Gambaro, *The Camp*; Carlos Maggi, *The Library*; Enrique Buenaventura, *In the Right Hand of God the Father*; Luisa Josefina Hernández, *The Mulatto's Orgy*; and Sergio Vodánovic, *Vina: Three Beach Plays*.
- Marqués, René. *David y Jonatán; Tito y Berenice* (Dos dramas de amor, poder y desamor). Río Piedras, Puerto Rico: Editorial Antillana, 1970.
- Ortega, Julio. *Faces of Summer*, translated by Michael Bawtree. Ms.
- Expediente*, No 1. Incluye una pieza teatral de César Rengifo, *Una medalla para las conejitas*.
- Luzuriaga, Gerardo. *Del realismo al expresionismo: El teatro de Aguilera Malta*. Madrid: Plaza Mayor Ediciones, 1971. 204 pp.
- Mace, Carroll Edward. *Two Spanish-Quiché Dance-Dramas of Rabinal*. New Orleans: Department of French and Italian and Department of Spanish and Portuguese, Tulane University, 1970. 221 pp.
- Rudolph, Donna Keys and G. A. Rudolph. *Historical Dictionary of Venezuela*. Metuchen, New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1971. 142 pp.
- Salas Cajiao, Teresa. *Temas y símbolos en la obra de Luis Alberto Heiremans*. Santiago de Chile: Editorial Universitaria, S.A., 1970. 256 pp.
- Monsanto, Carlos H. *La protesta social en la dramaturgia de Acevedo Hernández*. México: Talleres de B. Costa-Amic, Editor, 1971. 160 pp.
- Lamb, Ruth S., editor. *Three Contemporary Latin-American Plays*. Waltham, Massachusetts: Xerox College Publishing, 1971. 203 pp. Contains: René Marqués, *El apartamento*; Egon Wolff, *Los invasores*; Emilio Carballido, *Yo también hablo de la rosa*.
- Suárez Radillo, Carlos Miguel. *13 Autores del nuevo teatro venezolano*. Caracas, Venezuela: Monte Avila Editores, C.A., 1971. 535 pp. Contiene: Ricardo Acosta, *Agua linda*; José Ignacio Cabrujas, *Fiésole*; Roman Chalbaud, *Los ángeles terribles*; Isaac Chocrón, *Tric Trac*; Alejandro Lasser, *Catón y Pilato*; Elisa Lerner, *En el vasto silencio de Manhattan*; José Gabriel Núñez, *Los peces del acuario*; Gilberto Pinto, *El hombre de la rata*; Lucía Quintero, $1 \times 1 = 1$, pero $1 + 1 = 2$; César Rengifo, *La esquina del miedo*; Rodolfo Santana, *La muerte de Alfredo Gris*; Elizabeth Schön, *Intervalo*; Paul Williams, *Las tijeras*.
- Huanay, Julian. *El retoño*. Lima: Casa de la Cultura del Perú, 1969. 107 pp.
- Poma de Ayala, Felipe Guzmán. *Nueva crónica y buen gobierno*. Lima: Casa de la Cultura del Perú, 1969. 105 pp.
- Peña, Horacio. *El sepultero-teatro-monólogo*. León, Nicaragua: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Nicaragua, n.d. 83 pp.

- Saroldi, Luiz Carlos. *Suave é a bomba*. Rio de Janeiro: Ministério da Educação e Cultura, 1968. 99 pp.
- La cabra*. Periódico del teatro universitario de la UNAM. Año 1, números 1-6. *Cadernos de teatro*, No 47 (oct.-dic. 1970). Articles dealing with Brazilian and world drama.
- Conjunto*, revista de teatro latinoamericano (La Habana, Cuba: Organo del Comité Permanente de los Festivales), 3, No 10. Contiene artículos sobre el teatro universitario de Manizales por Hector Azar, *El menú*, obra teatral de Enrique Buenaventura, artículos por Collazos sobre el teatro de Buenaventura y sobre el teatro de protesta social por Isidora Aguirre.
- Batista, Juarez da Gama. *O protagonismo do Fausto*. Paraíba: Universidade Federal da Paraíba, 1968.
- Acosta, Ricardo. *El asfalto de los infiernos*. Maracaibo, Venezuela: Universidad del Zulia, 1967.
- Agüero Gómez, Gilberto. *Ciclón sobre los barcos de papel*. Maracaibo, Venezuela: Universidad del Zulia, 1967.
- Lasser, Alejandro. *La cueva*. Caracas, Venezuela: Zodíaco, 1964.
- Pinto, Gilberto. *La noche moribunda*. Caracas, Venezuela: Venediciones C.A., 1966.
- Rengifo, César. *Teatro: Buenaventura chatarra; El vendaval amarillo; Estrellas sobre el crepusculo*. Caracas, Venezuela: Universidad Central de Venezuela, 1967.
- Salas, Roldofo Santana. *El ordenanza* [2do. Premio VII Concurso Literario]. Maracaibo, Venezuela: Universidad del Zulia, 1969.
- . *La muerte de Alfredo Gris*. Maracaibo, Venezuela: Universidad del Zulia, 1968.
- . *Los hijos de Iris*. Maracaibo, Venezuela: Universidad del Zulia, 1968.
- Schön, Elizabeth. *La aldea*. Maracaibo, Venezuela: Universidad del Zulia, 1968.
- Williams, Paúl. *A toda velocidad*. Maracaibo, Venezuela: Universidad del Zulia, 1967.
- . *Coloquio de hipócritas*. Maracaibo, Venezuela: Universidad del Zulia, 1968.
- Playscripts from Teatro de los Barrios (INCIBA), Caracas, Venezuela. Submitted by Carlos Miguel Suárez Radillo: Nicanor Bolet Peraza, *A falta de pan buenas son tortas*; Simón Barceló, *Cuento de Navidad*; Leopoldo Ayala Michelena, *La taquilla*; César Rengifo, *La sonata del alba*; Rafael Guinand, *El rompimiento*; Victor Zavala, *El gallo*; José Martínez Queirolo, *Los unos versus los otros*; Jorge Tidone, *Las hadas viajan en carrusel*; María Clara Machado, *Pluft el fantasmita*; Osvaldo Dragún, *Tres historias para ser contadas*; Ricardo Güiraldes, Juan Carlos Gené, *El herrero y el diablo*; Emilio Carballido, *Un pequeño día de ira*; Simón Corral, *El cuento de don Mateo*; Gabriela Roepke, *Una mariposa blanca*; José Gabriel Núñez, *El largo camino del Edén*, and *Tú quieres que me coma el tigre. . . !*