

Rio and São Paulo Theatres in 1970: National Dramaturgy

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Despite the large number of productions dedicated to the foreign playwrights in the theatre season in Rio and São Paulo, it is essential to recognize that a majority of the plays produced in Brazil in 1970 were of national authorship.¹ Furthermore, students of Brazilian dramaturgy will undoubtedly be struck by the plethora of new names to emerge in the last year or two.

Plínio Marcos was a key figure in the evolution of the theatre. His background is unusual for a playwright. He is truly a “popular”—a man of the people who is still close to his origins. The burst of interest in his plays starting with the *Dois Perdidos numa Noite Suja*, can at least in part be attributed to the stir he created with the censors with *Navalha na Carne*.² In his theatre, language has been revolutionized. Through the use of *gíria* and *palavrões* Marcos employs language not for communication, but as a weapon of degradation and aggression. His characters are *marginais* on the fringes of society, not the proletarian heroes of Guarnieri’s theatre. And unlike the latter Marcos does not offer the Marxist solution of class revolution. He portrays his characters as turning on each other rather than working together for constructive change. He had five plays written before his first was seen, but Marcos had been totally unable to interest a producer. It was the late director Alberto D’Aversa who wrote a series of articles on his *Dois Perdidos* (which Plínio himself put on in a cafe—“O Ponto de Encôntro”) that caused the thaw. Fauzi Arap and Jairo Arco e Flexa then rushed to direct his works.³

His purpose is to reveal the injustices as a reporter of a bad time. “Posso pensar numa solução ideal, minha, mas talvez não esteja certa, e por isso me limito a mostrar como o homem se amesquinha diante da vida, porque não tem condições de desenvolver seu potencial humano.”⁴ In the manner of the two dramatists that may have influenced him the most, Nelson Rodrigues and Gianfrancesco Guarnieri, he is a moralist. The choice of seedy situations and power-

ful language grows out of a political "engagement" that Nelson lacks and avoids an idealization of the underdog, as in *Gimba*, that weakens Guarnieri's artistry.

Navalha was still running in January of 1970 with the same group, "União," which had been playing it for the last two and a half years. Jairo Arco e Flexa directed Ruthinêa de Moraes, Edgar Gurgel Aranha, and Odalvas Petti (substituting for Paulo Vilaça).

Marcos has been accused of having only one play in the same style, under several titles. Although his most effective works to date are his first two, *Dia Virá* is an ingenious Biblical play while *Jornada de um Imbecil até o Entendimento* is clearly an effort in the language of the Absurd. He freely admits to being limited by his primary education, and this complete honesty and great intellectual curiosity will enable him to continue to develop. In reaction to the Living and other *influências estrangeirizantes*, Marcos is turning to the national culture for inspiration. His last produced work, *Balbina de Iansã* (January, 1971) is a Brazilian-style *Romeo and Juliet* with the music and musicians of the Escolas de Samba of São Paulo.

Three new dramatists of importance have emerged recently. They share certain characteristics with Marcos and open new areas as well. Of the three, Leilá Assumpção and José Vicente had their second plays produced during the 1970 season. Antônio Bivar's *Alzira Power*, previously called *O Cão Siamês de Alzira Pó . . . Lóca* during its São Paulo run (1969), was presented in Rio in 1971 by Antônio Albuja. The play, largely rewritten, featured Yolanda Cardoso with Marcelo Picchi.⁵

Abre a Janela e Deixa o Ar Puro e o Sol da Manhã Entrar, the first of his three long-titled plays to be produced, was staged by Fauzi Arap in São Paulo in July of 1968. The second, *Cordélia Brasil*, in October of that year, won for Bivar the Molière and the Theatre Commission prizes for 1968. For many, Bivar represents the incorporation of the currents of modern dramaturgy. Critics inevitably mentioned such names as Beckett and Ionesco, but, "Claro que o que Bivar quer dizer é que este mundo, o do Brasil atual, é que não dá para ser vivido. Enche de cor local a sua peça."⁶

Sábato Magáldi beautifully compares and contrasts Bivar and Marcos:

A principio, pode-se pensar numa derivativa de *Navalha na Carne*, em que o cáften e a prostituta são substituídos pelo marido avesso ao trabalho e pela mulher que se prostitui para prover o sustento da casa. A cena da revolta de Cordélia contra a sua realidade tem muito do desabafo de Norma Sueli na peça de Plínio Marcos. Aproxima os autores, também, uma semelhante desenvoltura para enfrentar situações e palavras incômodas. As duas obras, contudo, são totalmente diversas, pelo estilo e pelos propósitos. Plínio inaugura um novo realismo, feito de crueldade e de sadismo, e procura chamar a atenção para as mazelas sociais. Bivar se compraz na poesia da sordidez, e da inocência, e reflete uma angústia de origem mais existencial. Só um talento indiscutível e uma facilidade espantosa para o diálogo consegue mover-se com essa segurança no universo ambíguo de *Cordélia Brasil*.⁷

The key characteristics which are applicable to the young writers are: lyricism, existential themes and surrealism.

In mid-1969 Leilá Assumpção had her *Fala Baixo Senão Eu Grito* presented. Not only does she share the poetic gifts of Bivar, but adds a vital element in the "Nôvo Teatro," feminine sensibility. Just as Bivar strived for ". . . a nova dimensão da realidade: a realidade da mente, os desejos secretos . . .,"⁸ she based *Fala Baixo* on the exploration of the "vida interior" of Mariazinha Mendonça Morais. As in *Cão*, in which Alzira leaves her door open and victimizes the car salesman, a man penetrates the privacy of a woman's room and acts as a catalyst in the existential freeing of the female character. The threat to expose the robber-intruder implicit in the title, and the dynamics of male-female role-playing are present in Leilá's play. Unlike Beckett, the locale is clearly delineated in the plays of Assumpção and Bivar. Elements of Brazilian reality in the topical allusions and "mores" are firmly established. The car salesman in *Cão* of Bivar and the burglar of Assumpção offer an invitation to break with routine—"a recusa da mecanização da vida."⁹

The other writers of the "Nôvo Teatro" share these characteristics and reflect the degree of urbanization which has been produced in Brazil. The level of alienation which inspired the rediscovery of language and the lyric of loneliness of Beckett, Pinter and Albee is now a reality in Brazil as well. In each case, as with José Vicente's *O Assalto*, Consuelo de Castro's *À Flor da Pele* and Isabel Câmara's *As Móças*, the plays above have only two characters (*Janela* and *Cor-délia* have three). This is consistent with the nature of the plays and has certain economic advantages as well.

The "New Theater" is about communication. In most of the plays the subconscious surfaces in such a manner that reality/dream/thought become indistinguishable. As Magaldi said about *Fala Baixo*:

É a busca de contacto entre dois seres, a revelação profunda de suas naturezas, o encôntro milagroso de duas solidões a matéria do texto, até que se rompem os condicionamentos e se promove o diálogo do homem e mulher, despidos de todo liame que não seja a verdade de uma lançada para o outro. O recurso é o da eliminação poética das criaturas, de súbito violadas nas crenças preconceituosas e nos valores sociais meticulosamente impostos pelo instinto de defesa. A construção formal da vida, baseada numa que se aprendeu a adotar, desmorona-se num passe de mágica e se enfrenta a perigosa aventura da liberdade absoluta."¹⁰

Whether one considers the "Homem"—"uma projeção externa dos desejos de Mariazinha, um desdobramento de seu monólogo interior,"¹¹—the oneiric nature of the play marks a great departure from the epic theatre of Jorge Andrade or the neo-realism of Marcos. Playing in Rio for the first several months of 1970, *Fala Baixo* enjoyed the exceptional acting of Marília Pêra and Paulo Vilaça. In the effective staging, Marília destroyed the symbolic reminders of family and tradition as she broke out of these bounds.

José Vicente creates a similar dramatic situation in his first play *O Assalto*, produced in September 1969. It shared the theme of violence that is clear in

Cão and *Fala Baixo*. There is, in the three of them, “. . . sempre um indivíduo que irrompa de súbito na existencia de outro, para modificar ou ser modificado.”¹² *O Assalto*, as the title indicates, is an attack; that of one's man will on another. It was restaged in April, 1970, at the new Paiol Theater with Vítor Neri and Luis Serra, after having been first done in Rio at the Teatro Ipanema by Ivã de Albuquerque and Rubens Correia (April, 1969)¹³ and later (August) in São Paulo by Paulo César Pereio and Francisco Couco.

Roberto Lessa, the producer of the later version, undertook to tour Brazil and other Latin American countries with the play. Twice members of the cast were arrested on suspicion of subversion. Once the sister of an actor sent a congratulatory telegram on the success of the *assalto* only to find herself and her brother at DOPS headquarters. Another time, on tour, a telegram to Goiânia confirming an engagement resulted in the arrest of the entire technical crew and the actors too. Needless to say, there is nothing political, much less subversive, about the play except the title. The title does indirectly create a connection or association between the bank in which the play takes place and the robberies which terrorists have carried out successfully during the last several years. This irrational harassment is quite common in Brazilian theatre today in which censorship and police pressure exercise an inhibiting influence.

In the play a neurotic individual revolts against the system. It is the desperate attempt to establish communication in a world made mechanical and regimented by progress. As the play begins Vítor has stayed after hours to straighten up his work. He had quit his job as clerk earlier the same afternoon. Various elements in the setting are reminders of his insignificance: the huge clock on the wall, the employee's number, the cold opulence of the bank's interior. As Vítor shuffles papers, the *faxineiro* enters and begins to sweep the floor. Hugo is a representative of the lower classes, physical, simple, possessing without consciousness “os sinais espontâneos da presença erótica da vida.” His only wish is to finish and get home. Vítor insists on his attention and woos him. In his reaching out is the desperation of a man on the brink of madness.

Vicente is dealing with an existential theme: isolation of the individual, expressed using techniques of the Theatre of the Absurd. The conflict of the mind and body, idealism and animality, in the play are represented using religious symbolism. As in all the “Novo Teatro,” there is a convincing Brazilianization of these universal subjects, not only in the language, which owes a great deal to the contributions of Plínio Marcos in the use of *gíria* (especially with the figures from the lower class), but in the life experience of the characters. Vítor, as with many protagonists in these plays, has come from the interior to sink or swim in the big city. His experiences as a bank employee, a cog in an immense organization, have overtones of Vicente's autobiography. A young mineiro (he is 26), he spent several years with the Banco do Brasil in São Paulo. The new Brazilian theatre is not only concerned with the picturesque *marginais* or the fallen aristocracy. The audience in Rio and São Paulo contains many young men and women trying to get along in the big city. The new theatre is by and for them.

As they exchange confidences Hugo recounts the dreary life of a worker,

always struggling for money, burdened by a retarded child and a wife who spends her few free moments attending television shows. In the ritual assault on Hugo, which swings from vituperative attacks to offers of friendship, the motivating force is homosexual.¹⁴ The desire to be one with the sweeper is carried out by offering him money. The sado-masochistic nature of Vítor's make-up leads to the frustration of any real communication. Afterwards he states, "Eu tentei devorar você por dentro, mas a verdade é que você . . . era uma criação minha."¹⁵ When Hugo pulls the alarm, Vítor will be taken to an asylum. Thus will he succeed in totally retreating from the hostile world. Although the Theatre of the Absurd has had little impact in general on Brazilian dramaturgy there is an undoubted relationship between *O Assalto* and *The Zoo Story* by Edward Albee. Jerry and Vítor no longer engage in a dialogue. Their urge for self-destruction has passed the point at which they can still exchange ideas with another human being.

O Assalto along with *Fala Baixo* and the works of Antônio Bivar opened the way for many of the new dramatists. One who also examines, ". . . a vida presente, com a invasão desenfreada da nossa intimidade"¹⁶ is Isabel Câmara in *As Móças*. She explores the falseness of traditional Brazilian values by using an authentic situation to begin her play. The performance begins with the writer herself, seated on a rocking chair, reading the note from her Aunt Emily to the audience. It was this real letter that provoked her to write the play. In it, her very traditional *mineira* Aunt played on her guilt feelings while soliciting money for a watch: the only goal after a lifetime of abnegation. The play then presents two young women, roommates, who are searching for solutions to their existential questions. The old ways no longer offer any answers. Tereza, unmistakably modeled after the author, cannot accept a wristwatch as the culmination of 74 years, as had her aunt.

Ana is everything Tereza is not: outgoing, promiscuous, scatterbrained, and uninhibited. Throughout the play the girls gradually reveal themselves in a "desnudamento do fundo humano."¹⁷ In this night-long dialogue, there are moments of great honesty and painful revelations. Ana had brought a man to the apartment (the place was Tereza's when unemployed Ana moved in) and made love to him in her friend's presence. As liquor loosens their inhibitions, it becomes apparent that the motive was to make Tereza jealous. The homosexual tie which is implied is merely another dimension in a relationship in which each is groping to reach the other.

Although the work tends toward the literary, Ivã de Albuquerque succeeded (where a previous staging had failed), in showing its dramatically confessional nature.¹⁸ The juxtaposition of the Brazil that was and that which it is becoming, the interior and the capital, the young and the old, creates a valuable document of social change.

In 1970 most of the large number of Brazilian plays produced for the first time were staged in São Paulo. The São Paulo Comissão Estadual de Teatro decided to favor national authors in the distribution of funds for the first semester. The old "two to one" (foreign to national) rule had been a dead letter for two years. Established early in the existence of the CET, it had required each

stable company to make every other show a Brazilian play and not a translation. At the time, it had proved impossible to legislate a dramaturgy equal to the task. For economic reasons, stable companies with full-time contracted actors had in fact been discontinued and this provided a legal loophole. The first and greatest of such companies, the Teatro Brasileiro de Comédia, has not had its own regular group for some eight years. Since each play now requires the hiring of a cast, even in those theatres with certain regularly affiliated people (Oficina, Arena, Studio São Pedro, Teatro Ipanema), the law no longer applies.

Under the leadership of Sábato Magaldi and Renata Pallotini (a playwright and President of the Commission), the CET awarded funds to many new writers with mixed results. Their plays included: *À Flor da Pele* of Consuelo de Castro, *O Cristo Nu* by Carlos Alberto Soffredini, *Rito de Amor Selvagem* of José Agrippino de Paula, *Seu Tipo Inesquecível* by Eloy de Araújo, *1, 2, 3, Oliveira, 4* by Lafayette Galvão, *O Cordão Umbilical* by Mário Prata and *A Vinda do Messias* by Timochenko Wehbi.

À Flor da Pele was the first production at the Paiol Theater and starred the young couple Perry Salles and Miriam Mehler. The play is a study of the relationship between a professor of playwriting and his mistress-student. The tumultuous affair reveals essentially different attitudes toward revolution and social change. Verônica is an anarchist, with no patience for accommodation, while Marcelo has sold out. An intellectual of the Left who makes a living from *telenovelas*, he needs her to keep in touch with his roots. The play is not at the level of those discussed earlier, but Consuelo de Castro's first play certainly is. *À Prova do Fogo*, banned by the censors, is a fine document of the student uprisings of 1968.

Rito is quite another kind of work. An experiment in mixed media, it combined the excellent direction and choreography of Maria Ester Stockler with her husband José Agrippino de Paula's book, *The United Nations*. With elements of happening, circus, dance, etc. in its seven scenes, *Rito* starred Stênio Garcia and the "Sonda" group, who have worked together for several years. This zany show featured such amusing vignettes as Mussolini speaking in the original Italian, while the cast wandered throughout the audience bleating like sheep, Adolph Hitler marrying Eva Braun and proceeding to do a sensational striptease, and other such "put-ons," to the accompaniment of a rock combo. The play enjoyed a run of almost a year, opening at the TBC and moving to Rio's Cimento Armado Theatre in the Copacabana Shopping Center for the second semester.

O Cristo Nu set out to satirize false piety and hypocrisy in small town Brazil but did not succeed. The production and the play were most disappointing and amateurish.

O Cordão Umbilical is the best example of comedy among the new plays of 1970. Mário Alberto Prata's play dealt with four youngsters in São Paulo, with understanding and humor. His director, José Rubens Siqueira was also a major discovery of the year. A medical student and a writer who room together allow a pregnant prostitute and a homeless actress to move in with them. The play, through excellent dialogue, shows the new generation searching for roots and struggling toward an accommodation with an urban, impersonal society. Despite

some structural deficiencies (a play within the play that is forced), Prata created one of the outstanding characterizations of the year in the figure of the prostitute. Cacilda Lanuza, in that role, was indicated by the Associação Paulista de Críticos Teatrais as among the best of the first semester. Julia Miranda was accorded the best supporting actress award and the play itself was chosen as well.¹⁹ The *Cordão* also marked the launching of a new group in the Teatro Vereda which refurbished the building, and began a series of new plays and other activities.

Seu Tipo Inesquecível was produced by the "Grupo União," and featured Odette Lara, with Odalvas Petti and was directed by Fauzi Arap. A serious, inhibited school teacher is played with mastery by the veteran actress. Then a charming, younger neighbor enters her life and eventually kills her. Although the characterization of the repressed woman was quite convincing the psychological aberrations of the man, and the violent *denouement*, lacked adequate dramatic preparation. Like the other authors, Araújo, nonetheless, is commenting on the lack of communication in the arid atmosphere of the big city. He displays considerable talent in portraying the two lonely people.

A Vinda do Messias is a monologue in two acts, which was beautifully performed by Berta Zemel as the seamstress, Rosa. Its author, sociologist Wehbi, has studied the popular idols of solitary women of Rosa's class. She awaits a man (whether real or imagined is never clear), and unlike "Godot," he is personified by the popular heroes of the media; John Lennon, Leonard Whiting, etc. It is a wordy, repetitive and pretentious first play, which would have benefited from the inclusion of other characters. Although more sociology than theatre, the play offers additional insights into ". . . o drama de uma mulher só, deslocada de seu ambiente social e que, para se compensar do isolamento em que se fechou, cria seus mitos e transfere-se para a irrealidade dos sonhos, inventando um amante inexistente."²⁰

The year 1970 also saw the presentation of second plays by Leilá Assumpção and José Vicente. The former's *Jorginho o Machão* studies the inverse of the theme of the rural youth, adrift in an urban center; a college student returns to his provincial home. The ensuing conflict, which revolves around his choice of the girl next door or a "liberated" and pregnant city girl, creates a hilarious situation. The irony of the title underlines the author's intention of unmasking the false "machismo" of the Brazilian male. "O Homem que desencadeia a aventura de Mariazinha em *Fala Baixo*—prepotente, violento, agressivo e dominador—já traz em germe a fraqueza recôndita, que é o substrato de Jorginho."²¹ Although the monologues with which Jorginho expresses his dreams of conquest and his abortive suicide attempt seem contrived, the play's more complex dramatic construction testifies to the playwright's progress.

Vicente's *Os Convalescentes*, on the other hand, is a step backward. Vicente wrote a talky, untheatrical play which nevertheless benefited from a fine cast (Norma Bengell, Emílio di Biasi, Lourival Pariz and Renata Sorrah) and long runs in Rio and São Paulo. Its major relevance to Brazil, 1970, is in its political content. The four characters assume four different positions vis-à-vis dictatorships, but the liberal professor, the bored *bourgeoise*, the anarchist and the young woman student are stereotyped. There is surprising frankness in discussing such

subjects as torture, and terrorism, in view of the Brazilian censors. The conclusion of the play, that none of the traditional options for political change are valid in today's world, must have enabled its uncensored presentation to take place. The result is the sort of reluctant acceptance of the horrors of statism that the Brazilian authorities must want to encourage.²²

Not all the Brazilian dramaturgy of 1970 came from the pen of new discoveries. Both Lafayette Galvão and Graça Mello came to playwriting after years of acting experience. The former's *1, 2, 3, Oliveira, 4* was presented for the inauguration of the "Areninha" (a pocket theatre upstairs at the Arena). The play, although fairly weak as a text, is an important example of the new dramaturgy. These plays show the struggle of the young person from the interior with the inhuman, destructive city. Not only is the existential question of communication and man's responsibility to man posed in the *Nova dramaturgia*, but governmental authority is seen as the chief oppressor. Caught in the nightmare of a Brazilian "Catch-22," the protagonist typifies the dilemma of the poor rural emigrant. The direction is by Celso Nunes, a graduate of the Escola de Arte Dramática (1966) and a student of Grotowski. Besides the Galvão play, Nunes directed a workshop performance of *O Albergue* in the Teatro Casarão in June, based on the techniques of the controversial Polish genius.²³ He succeeded in making the "Areninha's" frightening play an example of powerful theatre.

Graça's play, *Marta de Tal*, is deeply influenced by the technique and themes of Plínio Marcos. Parallels with *Navalha na Carne* are striking, perhaps too much so. Three characters, two men and a woman, are trapped in a storm sewer, waiting for the police to move in. As in Marcos, the woman is a prostitute, and one of the men, Samuel, has homosexual tendencies. However, he is a bank robber who carries a gun (which has the same sort of overtones as the knife in *Navalha*). Olegário, the woman's protector, is an old and infirm beggar who forces her to hand over her meager earnings by the force of his personality. Marta seduces Samuel, and they plot the death of the other. Unfortunately, not even José Rubens Siqueira's good direction, and able actions by Ana Maria Dias, Jonas Bloch, and the author could make the play seem original or transcend its overly melodramatic qualities.²⁴

Despite several encouraging events in the Carioca scene, little new dramaturgy was evident in Rio. Guanabara finally established a State Theatre Commission, thirteen years after São Paulo (in those years the latter city became the center of theatrical activity, in part due to the money provided by the state and in part due to the rise of television). However, the new Commission was born flawed. Its members, besides the usual ex-officio government people, include several producers who do not abstain when their own interests come to a vote. Critics Yán Michalski and Oscar Araripe (*Correio da Manhã*) had fought for a Commission, and blasted it when such injustices occurred. While they gave credit to Vicente Barreto (Director of the Department of Culture) and the late Napoleão Moniz Freire (Director of the Division of Theater who died in 1971) for their role in its establishment, they pointed out several absurdities. The *Tablado*, by its own admission an amateur group, received \$2,000, although the basic requirement for eligibility is professionalism. *A Comunidade*, despite its valuable work, got

nothing. Moniz Freire's *The Constructors of Empire* and Paulo Nolding's *Em Família* were voted \$5,000 and \$7,000, respectively. Both producers are on the Commission. Arrabal's marvelous *Architect* and the Broadway comedy *There's a Girl in My Soup* received the same subsidy, \$3,000. Michalski revealed that Fernando Pamplona, another commissioner, was directly involved with the Frisby comedy.

Besides the Commission, further stimulation to new playwrights and theatre activity was provided by a seminar, organized in August at the School of Theatre of Guanabara by the present critic of the *Jornal do Brasil* and his predecessor, Bárbara Heliadora. The Teatro Opinião offered readings of new plays as well.

Although the new faces in Rio could not be compared with São Paulo's, several dramatists emerged. Fernando Melo presented *Quantos Olhos Tinha o Teu Último Casinho?* (a play about a supernatural creature) under Luis Mendonça's direction. It was followed in September by an abortive effort to stage *Peguem o Binóculo*. The actor Alvin Barbosa's *A Festa* showed strong influences of Edward Albee under B. de Paiva's directorial hand. *Alice no País Divino-Maravilhoso* was an ambitious attempt at a new type of musical show, fruit of a joint effort by Paulo Affonso Grisolli, Luis Carlos Maciel and other talented writers and directors. It was precisely the lack of unity in this group effort that doomed the experiment to failure, albeit an interesting one. The most interesting play by a beginner was the work of the twenty-six year old Almir Amorim, *Depois do Corpo*, done by A Comunidade. The play offers little new in terms of themes and juxtaposes two existential life style options: a hippie anarchist and a career-oriented *bourgeois*. He plays them off against each other as they compete for a young girl in a battle of values. In the production, bodily expression was successfully integrated with a well-chosen musical background by Geraldo Torres, a musician and constant collaborator of Haddad's. Joel de Carvalho's scenography was also quite inventive. The public sat in the scenic space, and actions occurred on several raised platforms and through and behind transparent screens. The performance underlined certain shortcomings of the group.

A interpretação dos atôres da *Comunidade* continua me parecendo limitativa e unilateral: nos momentos que cessam os recursos de expressão corporal e de exacerbação bruta, os atores se mostram bastante indefesos, e o recado sai diluído.²⁵

Several established writers had their works presented last year as well. Veteran dramatist Alfredo Dias Gomes had a well-constructed comedy, *Odorico—O Bem-Amado*, produced in Rio during the first semester. A regional farce (about his native Bahia), it poked fun at a politician whose platform for office was the need for a municipal cemetery. When elected mayor, he is embarrassed by the lack of demand, and sets out to create some. Starring the old-time great, Procopio Ferreira, the play did fairly well, and since the military was not being lampooned (as in his outlawed *O Berço do Herói*), censorship was no problem.

Dias Gomes has a new play, as yet unproduced, *Vamos Soltar Os Demónios*. Although he has considered staging it on several occasions (Amir Haddad wanted to direct the play), the political problems of censorship have deterred

him. The drama deals with an intellectual of the Left on the day after the "Golpe" of March 31, 1964. He is wanted by the police and it is this aspect of the play which would probably be objectionable to the authorities. The plot revolves around his relationship with his wife, who, as in the Pygmalion myth, has developed from an unformed girl into his intellectual superior. It is this relationship which gives the play substance. Dias displays a sense of humor combined with irony that makes *Vamos Soltar Os Demônios* very engaging. It is hoped that the present situation will not prevent its presentation.²⁶

Comedy writer and director João Bethancourt saw his 1969 hit, *Frank Sinatra 4815*, go on to play for over a year in Rio and São Paulo. It tells the story of the effects on a family after they win a large bet at the horse races. Also during 1970, his short play, *Onde Não Houver um Inimigo* (playing with the *Bald Soprano*), dealt in frank fashion with such controversial subjects as terrorism and torture. It somehow got past the censors (whose unpredictability was truly staggering) and at times elicited ovations from the audience.

Maria Clara Machado, founder of *O Tablado*, and the greatest figure in children's theatre in Brazil, had two plays for adults put on last year: *Miss, Apesar de Tudo, Brasil*, and *Os Embrulhos*. The former was a musical satire of the beauty contest (which obliged her to add the "apesar de tudo" under threat of libel) and the latter, a Beckett-like tale of an old couple who are wrapping up the accumulated objects of a lifetime after their house is condemned.

Oduvaldo Vianna Filho had two plays done during the year: *Em Família* in Rio by director Sérgio Brito, and *A Longa Noite de Cristal*, by Celso Nunes in São Paulo. The Carioca production was a lachrymose, embarrassing play about old age. It does not have the wit or pathos of Jorge Andrade's *A Escada*, and does not seem to be the product of the writer who composed (with Ferreira Gullar) the brilliant *Se Correr o Bicho Pega. . . Cristal*, on the other hand, was one of the only new plays by an established Brazilian playwright to open in São Paulo. It received an excellent interpretation by the Studio São Pedro Group, with Fernando Tórres as the protagonist. In a sense, the play purported to be an exposé of the television world, as his first great hit, *Chapetuba, F. C.*, had been for soccer. The figure of the fading announcer, dependent on his ratings, was effectively drawn and marvelously acted.

O Estranho, by Edgar da Rocha Miranda, was a slightly different case. Although the author was not new to the stage (his *Até a Terra Cresce* and . . . *e o Nordeste Soprou* were produced at the TBC), many years had passed since his last play. Reminiscent of Albee, *O Estranho's* two main characters embodied the wealthy materialist imprisoned by his inhibitions and the mysterious "estranho," a free, earthy opposite, who comes to liberate him despite himself. Homosexual overtones appear here, despite (or perhaps because of) an enormously endowed but mechanically artificial woman-doll. The São Paulo performance enjoyed the fine work of Raul Cortés and Paulo César Pereio, who managed to make entertaining the author's rather amusing overpreoccupation with bodily functions and four-letter words. Another cast played it in Rio later. Despite his use of avant-garde techniques, Miranda's play seemed to be an intellectual exercise which lacked sincerity.

Dias Gomes had already been mentioned but where in this panorama are the other playwrights that have been considered the greats of modern Brazilian dramaturgy: Nelson Rodrigues, Jorge Andrade, Gianfrancesco Guarnieri, Augusto Boal and Ariano Suassuna?

The same group which had done *Marta de Tal* staged *Album de Família* in May. Director Jaime Barcellos placed this classic "300 anos depois da bomba" and inaugurated the Teatro de Bolso, next to the Teatro das Nações of the TBC, hoping to attract the young people. After being banned for twenty-five years, the play had first been done in July of 1967 by the now defunct *Teatro Jovem* in Rio. The theme of incest had prevented an earlier staging. *Beijo no Asfalto* was also given a good staging at the Oficina by an independent group under Antônio Pedro, during the first semester. The daring theatre of Nelson Rodrigues did not receive a warm reception, despite its surprising modernity (it was written in 1945). At a time of ever-increasing censorship, Nelson's works were approved because of his outspoken support of the government in his daily newspaper column. At the same time, it is precisely this fact which alienates his natural audience, students and intellectuals.

Jorge Andrade's work was not seen in 1970, but not for lack of productivity. His highly autobiographical *Rasto Atrás* has never been seen in São Paulo, despite its relevance to his home state. Two new plays were published among his complete works, available for the first time in one volume under the title *Marta, A Árvore e O Relógio* (Ed. Perspectiva, 1970).²⁷ An extremely careful artisan, the publication of these ten works marks a key moment in the development of modern Brazilian theatre. Andrade has overcome his own "demónios familiares," and it is to be hoped that an adventuresome and imaginative director in São Paulo will soon undertake to perform one of his three unproduced plays.²⁸

Augusto Boal's *Arena Conta Bolívar* was first performed during the 1970 season. He tried out the play during 1970 on tour when for the second time (they first came in August of 1969), the Arena (on the invitation of Joanne Pottlitzer of the *Theatre of Latin America*) toured the United States. As Henry Ramont pointed out in his favorable review of the show held at the Public Theatre, "No director has done more lately to bring modern Latin-American theatre to United States audiences than Augusto Boal." He described *Bolívar* as "a marvelous musical sung and narrated in Spanish, Portuguese and mockingly accented English. It depicts Simón Bolívar as a disenchanting bourgeois nationalist who finds strength and success only after he enlists the proletariat in his fight against Spain."²⁹

Boal's other activity was the creation of the *Teatro-Jornal*. Using a group of young people, he illustrated various techniques of acting out news items. In dramatic terms, he showed how by placement in a newspaper, by wording, an event can be emphasized, ridiculed, or ignored. The results are more interesting as a medium for communication than as an artistic product. Numerous student and workers' organizations in the São Paulo area have taken up the *Teatro Jornal* as a way of reestablishing the political dialogue crushed since 1964. This is the first glimmer of activity in several years in sectors of the theatre which had once been extremely rich and active. Boal ended 1970 by taking *Zumbi* and the

Theatre Newspaper to Argentina for the *First Latin American Festival of Theatre*, and a run at the *Teatro del Centro*.³⁰

Gianfrancesco Guarnieri had been relatively inactive as a writer. After *Arena Conta Tiradentes* (written with Boal in 1967), he had independently created *Marta Saré*, the saga of a fallen woman and the social injustices which led to her violent end. The Fernando Tôrres-Fernanda Montenegro Company staged it, with very good box office success, especially in São Paulo in 1969. His one act *Animália* in the *Primeira Feira Paulista de Opinião* was also very effective theatre. In the theatre 1970 was a generally good year for Guarnieri. He received very good reviews for the productions of *Don Juan* and *Arturo Ui*, in which he acted.³¹

Ariano Suassuna has just written a picaresque novel which he has been preparing for several years (*Romance da Pedra do Reino e o Príncipe de Vai-e-Volta* [José Olimpio, 1971]), and has no connection with theatre activity in the South. He does attend meetings of the National Council of the Arts (Conselho Federal de Cultura-Câmara de Artes) in Rio as a representative for the theatre.³²

To conclude, the variety and quality of works of national dramaturgy in Brazil's greatest cities is outstanding. Rather than depending on foreign texts, Brazilians are writing about themselves for the theatre. The state governments' support gives a necessary stimulus. Censorship, although a limiting factor in dealing with social themes, has not prevented Brazil from producing the most promising national theatre in Latin America.

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Notes

1. See my "Rio and São Paulo Theatres in 1970: Foreign Dramaturgy," *Latin American Theatre Review*, 5/1 (Fall, 1971), 69-80.

2. See Joel Pontes, "Plínio Marcos, Dramaturgo da Violência," *LATR*, 3/1 (Fall, 1969), 17-27, and *Revista de Teatro*, No. 375 (Maio e Junho de 1970), 17-22.

3. Taped interview with Plínio Marcos, December 21, 1970. Some of the "Sambistas" from his new show, *Balbina de Iansã* (1971), recorded their songs, and he spoke about his intentions of delving into national trends.

4. *Estado de São Paulo*, October 14, 1967. Later he said in an interview with Jefferson del Rios in the *Folha de São Paulo*, "O teatro foi a forma que encontrei para dar um testemunho a respeito do tempo mau que vivemos. Falo de gente que conheci e conheço, gente que está amesquinhada por gente; gente que vai se perdendo. Meu teatro é só isso. Apresento os fatos como um repórter. Conheço os fatos e não sei a solução. O recado que tenho para dar e só este: há gente por aí se danando. Meu ideal é conseguir fazer as platéias pensarem na solução para o problema dessa gente, problemas que deve ser o de todos nós. Não faço teatro para o povo, mas o faço a favor do povo. Teatro para incomodar os que estão sossegados. Só para isso." March 19, 1968.

5. Bivar's *Longe Daqui, Aqui Mesmo* is a sort of fairy tale about a commune, written with his characteristic ambiguity. Antonio Abujamra directed it in the carioca *Teatro Opinião*. See Yan Michalski, "Bivar: Curtição da ambiguidade," *Jornal do Brasil* (August 17, 1971).

6. Paulo Hecker Filho, "Cordélia e o Nôvo Teatro," *Estado de São Paulo Suplemento Literário*, 10 de Maio de 1969.

7. *Jornal da Tarde*, September 18, 1968.

8. *Estado de São Paulo*, August 5, 1968.

9. Osman Lins, "Tres Pecas Atuais," *Estado de São Paulo Suplemento Literário*, December 6, 1969.

10. Sábato Magáldi, "A Condição Feminina no Teatro," *Estado de São Paulo Suplemento Literário*, July 26, 1969.

11. *Ibid.*

12. Lins, *op. cit.*
13. A film was made of this version by Walter Lima Junior.
14. George Woodyard underlines the liturgical character of the play. "The strict order represented by the bank constitutes a religious creed or dogma. Vitor attempts to find in the Varredor a Messiah . . ." *Homosexuality and The Brazilian Theatre*. Paper presented at the Luso-Brazilian section of the Northeast Modern Language Association meeting (Philadelphia, Penna., April 2, 1971).
15. *O Assalto* (Ed. Tapa—Arena de Porto Alegre), 63-64, and *Revista de Teatro*, No. 375 (Maio e Junho de 1970), 59.
16. Lins, *op. cit.*
17. Yan Michalski, "As Sobrinhas da Tia Emilia (1)," *Jornal do Brasil*, Oct. 13, 1970. See *Jornal do Brasil*, September 20/21 and October 4/5, 1970, as well as "Fábula dos Vermes," *Veja*, No. 116, November 25, 1970.
18. The Rio production starred Leyla Ribeiro and Maria Teresa Medina, while the original show, with Célia Helena and Selma Caronezzi, under Maurice Vaneau's direction, opened in October of 1969. See Sabato Magaldi's fine study, "As Môças," *Estado de São Paulo Suplemento Literário*, November 15, 1969.
19. See *Estado de São Paulo*, 15 de Julho, 1970. Sábado Magaldi, Review, *Jornal da Tarde*, May 7, 1970, and Sergio Viotti, "Um Quarteto Bem Afinado," *Jornal da Tarde*, May 10, 1970.
20. Jefferson del Rios in the program notes.
21. Sábado Magaldi, "O Homen e seus mitos," *Visão*, 26 de abril de 1970, p. 203.
22. José Vicente's *Hoje é Dia de Rock* was presented in an outstanding production under the direction of Rubens Correia at the Teatro Ipanema. See Yan Michalski, "Moto Continuo, com Paz e Amor," *Jornal do Brasil*, October 26, 1971.
23. Participants in the workshop visited hotels, shelters and flophouses and then retold their experiences dramatically.
24. Brazilian theatre of the nineteenth century made its appearance as well during the 1970 season, especially in school and popular productions. In May, at the Teatro Anchieta, one of the newest and best places in São Paulo, an excellent production of two Martins Pena plays was offered free to students by the Serviço Social de Comercio (SESC). Similar to the SESI (See Schoenbach, 75-76), but sponsored by commerce instead of industry, the organization provides many services to the Paulista public. Rental of its magnificent theatre is usually for a nominal fee. *Os Ciúmes de um Pedestre* and *O Dileitante* were done with enthusiasm, incorporating music and dance, and the director introduced and later discussed the plays with the children. SESC gave prizes for compositions on the plays, including a round trip ticket to Buenos Aires. The group "Teatro da Gente" did *O Macaco da Vizinha* by Joaquim Manuel Macedo and Dulcina de Moraes led the cast and directed a musical version of an adapted *Comprador de Fazendas* by Monteiro Lobato. *Memórias de um Sargento de Milícias* played at the SESI for the balance of 1970 in Francisco Pereira da Silva's adaptation of Manuel Antônio de Almeida's novel. Restaging of recent works was fairly rare last year. The Casarão did a short run of Guarnieri's *Gimba* in March at the Teatro Vereda, and in Rio, Luis de Mendonça revived *Casa Grande e Senzala* in Cavalcanti Borges' adaptation of Gilberto Freire's book.
25. Yan Michalski, "Primeira Critica," December 5, 1970. For more on the Comunidade, see Schoenbach, 73-74. We have chosen not to discuss secondary shows such as: "O Desembestado (A Escolha)" by Orivaldo Matos, "O Evangelho Segundo Zebedeu" by César Viera, "Os Desquitados" by Aurimar Rocha, "SD e o Contrato Azul" by Pedro Bloch, and "O Homen do Principio ao Fim" by Milôr Fernandes. Others were simply bad: "O Impacto," "Neurose," "O Rei David," "Os Anjos."
26. Taped interview on December 7, 1970.
27. For a study of the cycle, see Gerald Moser, "Jorge Andrade's São Paulo Cycle," *LATR*, 5/1 (Fall, 1971).
28. A. Rosenfeld, *Palco + Plateia*, 3, 48-50, discusses the absence from the stage with Jorge Andrade. I also obtained information from a taped interview with Andrade on December 10, 1970.
29. *New York Times*, March 31, 1970. The cast was made up of Lima Duarte, Renato Consorte, Fernando Peixoto, Benê Silva, Cecilia Thumin (Boal's wife), Zeze Motta, Hélio Ary, Isabel Ribeiro and three musicians. Boal also visited the United States in July, 1970, to participate in a conference in Waterford, Connecticut, at the Eugene O'Neill Foundation.
30. Boal was jailed on his return to Brazil and only released after international pressure was brought to bear. See Schoenbach, 71, fn. 11.
31. For an evaluation of these productions, see this writer's article, *op. cit.*, 74-75. In 1971, however, Guarnieri made his return as a major playwright with *Castro Alves Pede Passagem*, a sort of "This Is Your Life" (documentary biography) of the Romantic poet. It shared the award of best of the year (of the prestigious Associação Paulista de Críticos Teatrais) with a

production of *Peer Gynt* directed by Antunes Filho, and earned the best dramatist prize for Guarnieri. See *Jornal do Brasil*, January 4, 1972.

32. In 1971 Agir published his *A Pena e A Lei* (completed in its present form some ten years before), and *O Santo e A Porca* enjoyed a long run by the new company founded by actress Cleyde Iaconis.