

## Theatre Notes

### Second Panamerican Theatre Festival

#### PART I

During the Panamerican Theatre Festival, held at the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry on April 14, 15 and 21, 1973, various Spanish American works were presented with the hopes of reaching the large population of Spanish American residents and students in the Chicago area. Professor Efrén del Castillo, formerly the head of scenography for the National Theatre of Cuba, is president of the festival committee as well as director of the Círculo Teatral de Chicago.

In the first week of the festival, the group from Indiana University Northwest, El Teatro Desengaño del Pueblo, was the most successful with one-act dramatic improvisations of life in the Latin "barrios" of the Chicago area and their half-folkloric, half-political review of the cultural heritage of Latins. Directed by Nicolás Kanellos, this was the only well integrated group, in the theme as well as in the make-up of the members: Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, and ther Latins from the Midwest. El Teatro Desengaño del Pueblo was the first to perform in the festival, with the following program: *El hombre y el hambre*, *Escuela*, *Baile*, *El frijol y la habichuela*, *La lechuga*, and *El Alcalde*. In these short and direct skits, besides sure directing and acting, there is an evident desire to communicate an urgent political message to Latins in the United States, a minority that is presently in the process of reconsidering its values and social rights.

The second play of the festival was not as successful, although consisting of three acts. *La familia ejemplar*, by Monserrate Ramos, was supposedly representative of Puerto Rican theatre. The play was performed by the Spanish American Theatre Academy and directed by the author. We do not agree with the inclusion in the festival of this play which is a melodrama in three badly connected acts and a theme of no transcendence whatsoever. The action takes place in Puerto Rico at the end of the nineteenth century and deals with a large family whose children abandon their home and their worried mother in order to develop their artistic and professional talents. They all reunite at their home on Mother's Day to celebrate the holiday with a party and a show of their artistic talents. Thus the play ends in song and dance. The acting and directing of the Spanish American Theatre Academy left much to be desired; they were weak, provincial, and without the minimum discipline necessary to demonstrate a certain degree of respect for the public.

#### PART II

The second week of the festival saw two excellent productions by the drama students of Chicago's Loop City College. The works presented and their performances made for an evening of exciting theatre.

The Colombian play, *Aquí también moja la lluvia*, by Frank Ramírez and Bernardo Romero Pereiro, is a bittersweet consideration of life after death.

Set beneath a graveyard, the play examines the afterlife of a poet, a young socialite, a former paraplegic, and a frustrated housewife who try to compensate for their unfulfilled former lives. The former paraplegic, Eduardo, is one of the few who seems to find new freedom in this life after death where he is no longer confined to a wheelchair. He falls in love with the young socialite, but the love is soon hampered by the old lady who, childless in life, becomes possessive of Eduardo and jealous of his girlfriend. The play ends sadly with the untimely removal of Eduardo's body from the cenetery. The title of the play indicates that even in the afterlife there is pain and sadness. There is no peace after death, no rest for the weary. The fine and confident performance was highlighted by the deft characterization of the poet by Alfredo Vargas and by the expert direction from Henry Balmas, who also took a minor role in the play, besides serving as the chairman of the theatre festival.

Two of Osvaldo Dragún's *Historias para ser contadas* were the final offerings of the festival. The fine and sensitive production of this comically absurd view of modern life was presented through the excellent directing and acting of Roberto Sapier. The understated narration provided dramatic irony as well as a novel perspective for the audience that found itself trapped between the characters' suffering and the impersonal and mechanical framework of the action. Much of the meaning of both one-act plays is to be found in the hectic movements of the characters on stage. Truly these characters seem to run in every

direction in their daily struggle without ever getting anywhere at all. In the first play, an unfortunate street vendor cannot continue his work because of a gumboil which inhibits his advertising his goods at the top of his voice. He proceeds to suffer at the hands of a dentist whose bills cause him to lose house and home. In the next piece, another "poor soul" is forced to literally lead a dog's life in order to earn a living in the unconcerned and dehumanized bureaucracies of modern Buenos Aires. The work ends on a humanistic note, however, when our "dog's" wife cries out her refusal to give birth to a puppy.

The Panamerican Theatre Festival, now in its second year, is a worthy attempt to provide quality theatrical presentations to the Latin residents and students of the Chicago area. From this year's varied and, on the whole, well prepared offerings, one hopes that efforts and interest will continue in the future.

Part I: Teresinha Alves Pereira  
Part II: Nicolás Kanellos

### Teatro en Mexico en 1972

1. El 4 de Septiembre de 1972, el Arq. Luis Ortiz Macedo hace pública la creación de la Compañía Nacional de Teatro de Mexico. Antes fue discutido—en la Sala Ponce, en el Foro Isabelino y el Teatro El Zócalo, durante veintisiete conferencias—el tema: ¿Qué es una Compañía Nacional de Teatro?, por autoridades en la materia que fueron invitadas por los Departamentos de Teatro tanto del INBA como de la UNAM. A lo largo de dichas conferencias fueron proponiéndose las bases orgánicas y también un programa de acción que daría

por resultado la Compañía Nacional de Teatro de México como una corporación estable, de elevada jerarquía y constante en sus actividades escénicas. Se propuso entonces que la Compañía fuera patrocinada, conducida y administrada por el organismo que, por mandato legal, le corresponde proteger y estimular el arte en México: el Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes.

2. El Teatro Universitario de Monterrey fue el ganador del primer premio en el Concurso Nacional de Teatro Clásico de 1972 y seleccionado para participar en el I Festival Internacional Cervantino en Guanajuato. El grupo presentó la obra *El gran teatro del mundo* auto sacramental de Calderón de la Barca, en dirección de Sergio García.

3. El espectáculo de mayor impacto en México fue la actuación del Grupo Cuicacalli con la obra de J. Pavlo Tenorio titulada *Misa en el Año 2.000*. Esa obra se estrenó en la Catedral de Cuernavaca el 8 de Junio, causando desconcierto en muchos periódicos. Después fue nuevamente puesta en escena en el Presbiterio de la Catedral en dirección de Miguel Angel Medellín. Se trata en la obra de un tema fantástico y una repetición ritual: "La guerra se ha cernido sobre el mundo. Una comunidad de sobrevivientes se refugian en una caverna. Entre ellos va un Sacerdote que decide celebrar la Primera Misa de la Nueva Prehistoria." Han tomado parte en esa representación Heक्टर Aceves como Sacerdote, Fernando la Paz como Comunismo, Alberto del Valle como Capitalismo, María Magdalena Blanco como Lucy, Arturo Montez como Mateos, Homero Santiago como Zavala y Amparo Ríos como Filigreses.

4. Fue fundado también en México el Teatro Popular y ya está funcionando la Primera Temporada como una Producción de Aristas Asociados Coop y el Departamento del Distrito Federal. Cada quince días una obra del repertorio mexicano permanecerá en un teatro de barrio y después será llevada a otros barrios hasta que las doce obras del repertorio hayan sido montadas en todos los barrios. Entonces se preparará un segundo repertorio para la Segunda Temporada. El programa de esa Primera Temporada fue:

*Los cuervos están de luto* de Hugo Argüelles, dirección de Adolfo Basi.

*Silencio, pollos pelones, ya les van a echar su maíz* de Emilio Carballido, dirección de Adam Guevara.

*Sonata en miau menor para gato indiferente* de Pablo Salinas, dirección de Ricardo Diazmuños.

*Malditos* de Wilberto Cantón, dirección de Gustavo Rojo.

*Novísimo* de Salvador Novo, dirección de José Antonio Arcaraz.

*Una pura y dos con sal* de Antonio González Caballero, dirección de José Manuel Alvarez.

*Agua y jabón para nuestras ventanas* de Eduardo Rodríguez Solís, dirección de Roberto Eduardo Carbajal.

*Un sombrero lleno de lluvia* de Miguel Gazzo, dirección de Lorenzo Rodas.

*Detrás de esa puerta* de Federico S. Inclán, dirección de Luis Basurto.

*Las madres* de Rodolfo Usigli, dirección de Luis Basurto.

*Cosas de muchachos* de Wilebaldo López, dirección de Wilebaldo López.

*Debiera haber obispas* de Rafael Solana, dirección de Carlos Bracho.

*Las voces* de Federico Steiner, dirección de Germán Castillo.

Teresinha Alves Pereira

### Conferencia en Nueva York

La autora teatral mexicana Maruxa Vilalta leyó recientemente fragmentos de su nuevo libro de relatos *El otro día la muerte . . .* en el teatro Gramercy Arts Theatre en Nueva York. El público se interesó por su pieza teatral *Esta noche juntos, amándonos tanto . . .* que obtuvo el Premio Nacional de Teatro 1970 y que será estrenada en mayo próximo en Nueva York. Su estancia en Nueva York se debía a la contratación que le extendió el Modern Language Association, ante la cual pronunció una conferencia con título de "Adventure in the Theatre: Woman as Playwright."

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### Teatro Leído de UCLA

El grupo Teatro Leído de UCLA presentó en el Centro de Conferencia de la Universidad de California en Lake Arrowhead, para motivo de una conferencia sobre "Multidisciplinary Analyses of Alternatives to Traditional Education in Latin America" un programa de teatro titulado "The Dramatic Arts as Instruments of Education for Change in Latin America." Las obras presentadas fueron: *Le Roi Christophe* de Aimé Césaire (Martinique) en francés; *Ti-Jean and His Brothers* de Derek Walcott (Trinidad) en inglés; *Morte e Vida Severina* de João Cabral de Melo Neto (Brasil) en portugués; *El delantal blanco* de Sergio Vodanović (Chile) en español; y *Panchito González* de Osvaldo Dragún (Argentina) en español. Directora: Susana Castillo.

### Book Reviews

Ernesto M. Barrera. *Realidad y fantasía en el drama social de Luis Enrique Osorio*. Madrid: Ediciones Plaza Mayor, 1971. Rústica, 125 pp.

The theatre in Colombia has had few towering figures. Luis Enrique Osorio comes close to being one of them. Yet despite the fact that at his death in 1966 he was rightly regarded as one of his country's more eminent men of letters, he has received scant critical attention. If Ernesto M. Barrera's concise study of Osorio and his theatre is somewhat less than definitive, it is nonetheless valuable and illuminating.

Osorio's literary activity was multifaceted, his energy boundless. An indefatigable promoter of theatre in Colombia and elsewhere, his career spanned half a century. Like his Spanish master Benavente, he was a prolific playwright, and, all things considered, a successful one. All of Osorio's plays, Barrera informs us, were produced. But, for reasons well known to students of Latin

American theatre, commercial success and international recognition have seldom come easily to South American dramatists. Osorio's professional life was a constant struggle. His professional pursuits (plus an inherent restlessness) took him to many countries. "Pocos escritores," says Barrera, "se han esforzado tanto como Osorio para hacer conocer el nombre de su país en el exterior y para difundir sus figuras y sus obras de valía."

The first chapter of this book deals with the "vida dinámica y trashumante" of the dramatist; it is based largely on Osorio's own memoirs. What emerges is the picture of a writer who, despite frequent setbacks and more than occasional disenchantment with the state of the theatre in Colombia, was supremely confident of his own ability. We find him, for example, in Paris in the 1920's, learning French quickly, writing articles in Parisian newspapers and magazines; later he appears in Madrid, lecturing on the contemporary French theatre at the Residencia de Estudiantes before an audience that included Ramón del Valle-Inclán, Jacinto Benavente, and Jacinto Grau.

Barrera has chosen (in the second chapter) to treat twenty-five of Osorio's plays, classifying them under the following headings: 1) Comedias de sátira política, 2) Comedias de costumbres y crítica social, 3) Comedias de asuntos psicológicos, 4) Teatro de fondo histórico. The choice of plays seems reasonably judicious. The works selected for analysis indicate at once Osorio's thematic variety and his esthetic limitations. Barrera is concerned mainly with plot and theme, but some attention is paid to production history.

The concluding portion of this study deals with the principal components of the Colombian's dramatic technique. Osorio was, of course, a skillful practitioner of dramatic art. He was not, Barrera asserts, a creator of great characters. "Con certeza se puede afirmar que no hay en ninguna obra de este escritor un carácter de gran valor dramático, puesto que los distintos hombres y las varias mujeres creados por el autor surgen por causa de la acción, se desprenden de la acción misma pero no tienen vida propia."

As for influences, the author cites, among others, Antonio Alvarez Lleras and Benavente. More interestingly, he suggests, "por el carácter experimental y combativo de su teatro," a link with Egon Wolff, Sebastián Salazar Bondy, Agustín Cuzzani and Mario Benedetti. Unfortunately, the point is not developed. Perhaps we shall hear more from Professor Barrera on the matter in the future. The bibliography provided by the author should prove valuable to those interested in modern Colombian theatre. All in all, his assessment of Osorio's theatre seems reasonably sound, if perhaps a bit cautious.

John E. Dial  
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Hector Azar. *Una proposición teatral: El espacio*. México: Difusión Cultural, Universidad Nacional de México, 1972.

Acaba de ser lançado pela Difusão Cultural da Universidade Autônoma do México uma publicação por Hector Azar cuja importância está em um plano decisivo na história do teatro moderno: "Una proposición teatral: El espacio." Azar discute aí os problemas da representação teatral, apresentando algumas

soluções para a realização de um espetáculo mais satisfatório tanto para o público como para os atores ou para o autor da peça.

Atacando o plano espacial teatral clássico, que estabelece um cenário de quatro paredes e que obriga ao público a uma atitude passiva de mero espectador, Azar anuncia os funerais do teatro clássico (a Broadway e os boulevares de Paris são os principais cemitérios) com a incorporação do teatro ao cinema. Depois propõe um plano tridimensional, cúbico e espiral, circumpolar, para reorganizar o teatro, dar-lhe outra vez a proximidade do público espectador e acentuar a mágica do espetáculo em vez de perdê-la na ilusão da distância.

Em seu longo estudo dessa transformação do teatro, Hector Azar diz que a cenografia não pode continuar sendo uma fácil imitação das formas da realidade. O poder da sugestão de uma abstração cênica é um dos elementos no qual se deve apoiar a ação dramática. O espaço proposto ao teatro clássico (o que não é nem novo nem antiquado, o eterno) tem que ser simples e exato, calado e eloquente, rítmico, elementar e nu e onde haja lugar adequado para todos os gêneros teatrais (tragédia, drama, tragicomédia, farça, etc.) e mais que isso, que tanto sirva para Sófocles como para Shakespeare ou Pinter, ou Beckett, etc.

Esse espaço C, que é o cenário proposto por Hector Azar, consta de quatro elementos constructivos: uma plataforma retangular, uma rampa e uma estrutura metálica em forma de cubo e de cuja base parte uma escada espiral. A plataforma é a base elementar onde terá de erguer-se a grande coluna da realidade histórica mais evidente. A rampa é um caminho, ponto neutro, trânsito objetivo, sensorial, direção do ser humano, noutras palavras, ruas, caminhos, lugares de transição. É a base de lançamento da obra, diretor e atores.

A estrutura metálica é um cubo de paredes inexistentes mas que tem o significado de uma peça fechada (o espaço fechado) símbolo para os estilos dramáticos e suas conseqüências: a tragédia e a comédia gregas, o teatro religioso medieval, o drama renascentista, o melodrama romântico, a peça documental, o psicodrama e o happening. A escada espiralada atravessa o cubo pelo centro e conduz ao primeiro andar, o teto do cubo que é uma evocação do *foro isabelino* e onde se passam as coisas fictícias. Tem o significado do tempo da obra e o ator ao subir por esta escada segue a direção dos ponteiros do relógio.

Este pequeno cenário, que tem a abertura suficiente para acomodar todos os significados do teatro antigo, moderno e futuro, soluciona ao nosso ver, de uma maneira dialética todos os problemas técnicos das grandes e pequenas montagens de peças, além de auxiliar ao diretor e o grupo na apresentação de um espetáculo cuja análise formal do tema e dos símbolos aparece clara e inteligível.

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Marilyn Ekdahl Ravicz. *Early Colonial Religious Drama in Mexico: From Tzompantli to Golgotha*. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1970. 263 pp.

The publication of Mrs. Ravicz's book marks a turning point in the study of early colonial religious drama in Mexico. This volume constitutes the first

of its kind, bringing together seven plays originally presented in Nahuatl, now translated into English. Some of the plays included have never been published before, and we are fortunate that Mrs. Ravicz was able to secure permission to publish them. Since few English speaking scholars read Nahuatl, the inclusion of scripts hitherto unavailable in any other language, now makes these plays available to the English-speaking public.

The first two chapters of the book, which constitute the Preface, give a brief introduction to pre-Columbian thought and culture and the Spanish intrusion upon that thought through religious drama. Without making value judgements upon the Conquest, Mrs. Ravicz gives the reader a necessary introduction to the temper of the period in which these plays were first produced. The second chapter is rather lengthy and becomes somewhat confusing in its chronology of theatrical activity during the 16th Century. Mrs. Ravicz might have divided the chapter into two parts, or at least have controlled her tendency to jump from year to year, backwards and forwards in time, thus confusing the lay reader.

It seems evident to this reader that Mrs. Ravicz is not propounding any new ideas about drama in the 16th Century; nor is this her purpose. Her sources are well documented; indeed, she lifts entire pages of information from those sources and presents them to the reader verbatim. She has chosen to present us with a solid background for the better understanding of the plays included, and does so with minimal commentary.

A serious distraction, for this reader, at any rate, was caused by the frequent typographical errors. It seems appalling that a volume of this sort, constituting a great deal of research and concern for the topic should be treated so lightly and presented in such a poor edition. The footnotes are numbered incorrectly, words are frequently misspelled, and long passages from other sources are sometimes not indented to identify them as quoted material. These mechanical errors give the book a sort of "term paper" character which is most unfortunate.

The bulk of the book consists of the seven Nahuatl plays. Mrs. Ravicz gives a minimal introduction to each play and concludes each chapter with a commentary upon the work itself. Her comments are informative, and help the reader to better understand the underlying motives for presenting religious drama in the 16th Century. Although her restraint is marked, Mrs. Ravicz does not fail to point out some of the imaginative changes exercised in the plays by the Spanish friars, changes which had to be made if the natives were to be taught submission to God and the Crown.

The plays are excellent examples of crude, didactic drama. The Church had long known of the educational tool called theatre, and the early Spanish missionaries seem to have been prolific in their methods of employing the stage as a pulpit. Though the translations give us little of the quality of the original language, they serve as a lesson in didacticism. There is no attempt to match the Nahuatl or even the Spanish rhyme or meter; what matters is the message purported.

Whether one agrees with the Roman Catholic message being propounded in the plays is unimportant. What matters to us is the lesson to be gained from the example of the friars. Immediately realizing the indigenous need for ritual

and spectacle, the missionaries reached their converts on their own ground, as it were, through religious drama. The message of Christianity which the friars presented seems a far cry from the words of Jesus—and perhaps that is why the Conquest never really succeeded. The Spaniards needed what we need today: not hate, violence, and defeat, but a message of love.

Jorge A. Huerta

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Jordan B. Phillips. *Contemporary Puerto Rican Drama*. New York; Plaza Mayor, 1972. 220 pp.

Jordan B. Phillips nos ofrece una valiosa aportación con su libro dedicado a trazar y evaluar el desarrollo del teatro contemporáneo en Puerto Rico. Escrito en inglés y por un autor norteamericano, es un signo inequívoco más de la incorporación de Puerto Rico al mundo del teatro.

En el primer capítulo—Introducción—el profesor Phillips presenta a grandes rasgos la situación de la producción dramática a fines del siglo XIX y principios del XX, con su estado general de debilidad y la ausencia de dramas de destacado valor. Son años de crisis espiritual para la Isla, bajo la sombra del cambio de soberanía. Casualmente, será este factor político de vital importancia en el desarrollo del teatro puertorriqueño. Al comentar del año 1938—fecha clave para el teatro en Puerto Rico—en adelante, el libro ofrece con claridad y precisión un cuadro de los factores básicos que contribuyeron a la renovación del teatro; desde el certamen del Ateneo y Areyto hasta el Primer Festival de Teatro Puertorriqueño en 1958. De aquí en adelante el desarrollo artístico del teatro nacional parece asegurado.

Los tres capítulos centrales siguen básicamente un orden cronológico, e intentan proveer tanto un sentido general del desarrollo histórico, como un análisis y comentarios críticos sobre los autores y dramas más destacados. Las tres divisiones establecidas para los capítulos son: 1938-1947, 1948-1959 y 1960-1968. Para la primera fecha el autor parece dar más importancia al manifiesto de E. Belaval (“Lo que podría ser un teatro puertorriqueño”), que al certamen de drama de escritores puertorriqueños convocado por el Ateneo. Considero, sin embargo, que sería éste propiamente el punto de partida y, de hecho, el año utilizado (1938) es el del certamen; el manifiesto aparece más tarde. En el último grupo (1960-68) el profesor Phillips, aunque reconoce que el año 1958 es una fecha de mayor importancia en la historia del teatro puertorriqueño, decide usar el 1960 a base del estilo y calidad intelectual de las obras del festival de ese año. Me parece preferible y más acertado el año 1958 pero esto no afecta básicamente el magnífico estudio que sigue.

En cada uno de estos tres capítulos (II, III, IV), se ofrece un resumen de las características básicas del teatro dentro del periodo comprendido, seguido de la discusión de los dramas. Es de aplaudir la variedad y calidad de los dramas discutidos, desde el grupo de Areyto hasta los jóvenes y prometedores dramaturgos del presente. La mayor parte de las obras son tratadas extensamente con buenos resúmenes de la trama, citas apropiadas y una discusión crítica sobre



los caracteres, temas, técnicas, etc. Frecuentemente se hace alusión a lo que han escrito otros críticos, ofreciendo así un panorama bastante claro para el lector. Ayudaría aún más si incluyera una breve nota sobre los autores y su obra en conjunto, que ayudara al lector a situar los dramas dentro de la totalidad de la obra del autor.

El último capítulo, brevísimo, resulta, sin embargo, claro y directo en sus conclusiones. Al llegar aquí ya el lector ha tenido la oportunidad de observar el desarrollo notable por el que ha pasado, desde el 1938, el teatro en Puerto Rico y el lugar destacado que ocupan en este panorama las figuras de Emilio Belaval, Manuel Méndez Ballester, Francisco Arriví y René Marqués. Los dos aspectos dominantes son, en palabras del profesor Phillips: "First, the drama in Puerto Rico has been and remains essentially a nationalist drama . . . the island, its people, its problems, its history, and its future have been the subject and object of nearly every play written and produced in Puerto Rico since 1938. . . . Secondly, Puerto Rican dramas . . . derive from the deep examination of their people an uncommon universality readily appreciated by those who wish to understand isolation, incommunication, inferiority, the will to survive, the need to have one's own reality . . ."

Una excelente bibliografía e índice de obras discutidas completan el libro. El índice, ampliado para incluir obras y autores, sería de mayor utilidad, sobre todo, cuando varios autores aparecen incluidos en dos o más capítulos.

Este estudio del profesor Phillips provee una visión de conjunto sobre el teatro contemporáneo en Puerto Rico, con juicios acertados sobre un gran número de las obras producidas. Indudablemente será de gran interés y utilidad para los estudiosos del teatro hispanoamericano en general y los del teatro puertorriqueño en particular.

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Jeanine Gaucher-Shultz and Alfredo O. Morales, eds. *Tres dramas mexicanos en un acto*. New York: The Odyssey Press, 1971. xvi, 88 pp.

Esta colección, compilada y editada con propósito escolar, está constituida por la siguiente trilogía de mini-dramas de autores mexicanos: *Los fantoches*, de Carlos Solórzano; *Un hogar sólido*, de Elena Garro, y *El suplicante*, de Sergio Magaña. La selección de las obras es bastante acertada y la edición de los textos, en general, aceptable. El denominador común que ampara a estos dramas es su tema universalista, aunado a asuntos novedosos y tratamientos originales. Quizá habría que cuestionar la legitimidad de la inclusión de Solórzano, guatemalteco por nacimiento y mexicano por cultura, ya que el propio Solórzano, en actitud dubitante o acomodaticia, se incluye como guatemalteco en su antología *Teatro breve hispanoamericano contemporáneo* y como guatemalteco-mexicano en su compilación *El teatro hispanoamericano contemporáneo*. Sea lo que fuere, su caso ilustra lo arbitrario e inútil de nacionalizar las literaturas de acuerdo con la oriundez del autor.

Un prefacio en inglés inicia esta breve antología, y en él se declaran los

propósitos y destinatarios de la misma. Estos son: estudiantes de español de nivel intermedio, de nivel avanzado, de segundo año, y hasta lectores con conocimientos básicos del español. La antología aparece, en consecuencia, apta para casi todo el mundo. Esta amplia gama de posibles lectores la han quizá facilitado el prólogo general, breve pero denso, sobre "El Teatro Mexicano Contemporáneo," la bibliografía general—mínima y no muy representativa, compilada ecléctica y confusamente, con algunos asientos bibliográficos incompletos—las cuidadosas introducciones a cada autor, las cuales incluyen bibliografía personal y bibliografía crítica, y el vocabulario general. Al final de los dramas, sendos "Cuestionarios" y "Temas de composición y conversación" suministran al estudiante interesantes elementos para discusión y ejercicios escritos. Las piezas teatrales contienen, además, notas explicativas de expresiones coloquiales e inusitadas, de nombres personales y algunos topónimos.

La primera de las obras, *Los fantoches (mimodrama para marionetas)* es una pieza existencialista. Basado en la costumbre popular mexicana de la "quema del Judas" el sábado de Gloria, el drama se despegas del contexto folclórico y presenta a los muñecos—entes de cartón, esqueletos de carrizo—desprovistos de identidad, anonimizados bajo la desesperante ausencia de explicación de la existencia y el pavoroso signo universal de la muerte. Esta, en forma de niña, escoge a su capricho a sus víctimas entre los fantoches, ante la pasividad de un viejo ciego y mundo—¿Dios?—sordo ante las interrogaciones angustiosas de los muñecos, que en vano quieren a través del amor, del arte, de la filosofía, de la libertad, escapar de la explosión que producirá el detonador que todos llevan en las entrañas. El drama termina con el índice de la niña, como flecha de ruleta, apuntando al azar hacia el auditorio. Todos somos fantoches, de vida efímera e idéntico destino, fatal e inexplicable.

*Un hogar sólido* es un drama de difuntos vivos que han llegado en diversas épocas al cementerio y conservan la edad en que fenecieron. Este superrealismo de *post mortem* coloca al espectador—o al lector—ante un juego desconcertante en que se enfrentan no solo vida y muerte, sino realidad e ilusión también. Los personajes viven una muerte signada por la ilusión de obtener "un hogar sólido." Este anhelo se manifiesta por medio de un diálogo a menudo salpicado de humor negro, con una comicidad de tono popular mexicano, junto a un lirismo sutil y mágico, en un ambiente de situaciones absurdas, de espacio cerrado y de tiempo de ultratumba. Ese "hogar sólido," es decir, auténtico, más allá de las apariencias sensibles y la monotonía de la vida, consiste, paradójicamente, en la incorporación en el universo, en la inmersión panteística en el gran átomo por medio de la muerte que, en último término, es la realidad de una ilusión.

*El suplicante* cierra la trilogía. Este drama está germinalmente estructurado dentro del esquema pirandelliano, pero va más allá, puesto que su desarrollo está logrado por medio de múltiples planos de actuación. Al espectador se le frustra intencionalmente al no representársele lo que se le ha prometido y se le obliga a presenciar un sainete de Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, que es interrumpido tres veces por una riña entre bambalinas por parte de otros actores. Estos llevan al escenario su disputa, la cual se complica con la intervención del autor, el director y otros actores colocados entre el público. Carlos, uno de los actores, insiste en representar una obra suya, pero los otros se rehusan a hacerlo.

Finalmente impone su voluntad y, con dos actores más, empieza a representarla. Esta es una paráfrasis del pasaje bíblico del incesto entre Tamar y su hermano Amnón (II Samuel:13). Este argumento coincide, en realidad, con la situación, también incestuosa, que media entre los actores Lucrecia y Carlos, situación que Manuel, pretendiente de aquélla y que representa a Jonadab, ignora. Carlos traslada a la vida real su papel de Amnón y mata en la escena a Manuel, instigado por los celos y por su hermana. En suma, algo que aparecía como substitución inocua se convierte en una situación trágica real (dentro de la ficción escénica). Podría decirse, evocando a Pirandello, que los actores, que andan en busca de personajes, acaban siendo autores y directores de su propia vida.

Como ya lo aseveramos, si se atiende a la calidad de las obras escogidas, la antología es un acierto. Ya se han enumerado los aspectos positivos y los pocos negativos de la edición, a los que hay que añadir cierto descuido tipográfico, quizá no imputable a los editores, manifiesto en la ausencia de varios signos ortográficos, transposición de una nota a página que no le corresponde, y varias erratas.

Satisface ver que la lista de publicaciones de obras relacionadas con el teatro hispanoamericano va alargándose. De manera modesta pero sólida, la presente compilación añade un título más a la bibliografía del género.

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## Play Synopses

THE EVER-TIGHTENING CIRCLE. By Hugo Argüelles (Mexico). Spanish version as "La ronda de la hechizada," in *Teatro mexicano del siglo XX*, ed. by Antonio Magaña-Esquivel (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1970), pp. 328-416.

Hugo Argüelles' *The Ever-Tightening Circle*, a three-act "magic farce," is a special combination of history, humor, mystery, satire, magic, romance, weird characters and events—artistic talent and imagination in full dimension. The setting is sixteenth century Mexico City, where Dominga del Parián and her two albino assistants have arrived to assist the priests theatrically in converting the Indians by reciting mystic poetry.

Magic takes on a humorous aspect in regard to the antics of Dominga and her assistants as they attempt to elude the priests in order to pursue their interest in the Indians, and we can laugh at Ricelo's rattling chains as a ghost and Medoro's imitation of Dominga's giving a lesson in elocution. The interest in the Indians is stimulated by Dominga's encounter with the imprisoned Indian leader Tecatzin whose simple and powerful poetry is an important part of the play as a significant Indian expression—labeled as atheist by the priests—which has at the same time strong ties with the Spanish poets. As Tecatzin explains to Dominga: " 'Only once do we suffer/ only once, here on earth . . . '

And the region where your poet finds 'what is and what has been,' for us is where there lives the 'master of the near and of the united,' 'he who is invisible like the night and untouchable like the wind.'" (Act I)

Dominga's entrance into the magical world of the Nahuatl Indians includes a sampling of their customs and beliefs, progressively mystified and explained by the appearances and disappearances of Tecatzin-Xólotl, particularly following the burning of Tecatzin at the stake, an event whose finale seems to have been diabolically influenced. This magic also penetrates and affects many aspects and levels of life in that day—not only the Indians but also such groups as the nobility and the clergy, providing an opportunity for a presentation of and commentary on the life-style and especially the prevalent attitudes of that time. Then, a rather strange touch is added by Malvina, the earth-eater, who aspires to building the most varied caste collection in New Spain! Or we may also find somewhat bizarre Medoro's and Ricelo's game of toss using Dominga's head—her stage heads, that is!

The Inquisition is not a new theme in literature. However, its treatment in *The Ever-Tightening Circle* is such an absorbing and novel one, including its effective medium of expression, development of both characters and events, and blend of realism-irrealism, enhanced by a surprise "twist" at the finale, that it promises an "enchanting" experience for reader or audience. (Elizabeth I. Balderas)

CUESTION DE NARICES. By Maruxa Vilalta (Mexico). In *Teatro mexicano del siglo XX* [Vol. V], ed. Antonio Magaña-Esquivel (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1970), pp. 162-230. 2 acts, 9 scenes; 17 men, 9 women, 2 children; 4 interiors, 1 exterior, 3 combinations.

*Cuestión de narices*, first played in 1966 in the Teatro Orientación of Mexico City, is a tragic farce about the absurdity of war. Two friends, Ricardo and Roberto, make fun of each other's noses and then gather their families and supporters into hostile bands of "Long Noses" and "Short Noses." The warriors are the craftsmen, technicians, professional men, politicians, churchmen, maids, business men, and office workers of the town, along with their family members; together they represent the bourgeoisie. With their partisan passion blinding them to the harm they will do, the two bands plot and maneuver and eventually put a violent end to the idyllic love affair between Ricardo's young brother Leo and Roberto's sister Cecilia, Romeo and Juliet of this play. They make peace around Leo's corpse but as the play ends have grouped themselves anew for a combat of "Talls" against "Shorts." The symmetrical manner in which Señora Vilalta manages the action of her antagonistic characters and the little armies they form creates the effect of an ordered dance. Outside their pattern and in a sort of contrapuntal relationship to it move Leo and Cecilia, symbolizing the innocent and lovely things that war will destroy, and Ulises, a strange man who is horrified at war but like the consciences he symbolizes can not speak. As background to all this the radio gives reports of equally absurd wars between nations. This work, although its theme is somber, is a spectacle rich in the play of lights and colors and ballet-like movements, amusing, stylized characters,

and moments of light humor. (Robert L. Bancroft, *University of Massachusetts, Amherst*)

LOS DESORIENTADOS. By Maruxa Vilalta (Mexico). México: Colección Teatro Mexicano, 1959. 3 acts, 6 scenes; 3 men, 3 women; 2 interiors, 1 exterior.

This play, the first published by Maruxa Vilalta, is an adaptation of her 1958 novel of the same name. It opened in 1960 in the Teatro de la Esfera, Mexico City. The protagonist, Julia, the sensitive, modern-minded daughter of educated parents, is in love with her schoolmate Diego. Diego, son of a dipsomaniacal mother and of a father with a cynical attitude toward women, can only be her companion because he is fascinated by a 39-year-old prostitute named Carlota. Carlota does not love Diego and she urges him to go on wasting his talent in writing cheap stories that he can sell and even tries to incite him to murder an old woman for her money. In a parallel action, Julia risks *her* welfare by going to bed with Darío, a young office worker who does not love her. The parallel continues as Diego's relations with Carlota come to an end and Darío brusquely refuses to marry Julia, who by now is much in love with him. Diego turns his attention to Gabriela, another schoolmate, and Julia has nobody. The reader will reflect that important causes of Diego's troubles are his dismal family life and his father's poor example, that Julia may have been misled by "modern" notions that were popular with her contemporaries, and that she is particularly unfortunate in fixing her attention successively on two young men who are incapable of appreciating her. However, the two generously conclude that it was their youth that caused their mistakes and sent them into the painful "dance of the disoriented." (Robert L. Bancroft, *University of Massachusetts, Amherst*)

Maruxa Vilalta (Mexico). *5 obras de teatro* (México: Secretaría de Educación Pública, Subsecretaría de Asuntos Culturales, 1970).

UN PAIS FELIZ. 2 acts, 7 scenes; 4 men, 2 women; 1 interior.

This most realistic and technically conventional of Señora Vilalta's plays opened at the Teatro del Granero in Mexico City in 1964. In a setting where contentment ought to prevail—a rustic cottage in a pleasant seaside town—the action reveals the disastrous effects of an unjust and inept government. The owners of the cottage, José and Felisa, have their hopes centered in their son Víctor; they are determined that he shall complete his university studies and shall not be trapped in a factory job. Such an objective requires more income, so they rent a room to Kurt, a foreign tourist who believes at first that he has come to an earthly paradise. His education in the darker realities of life in this "happy country" is an important feature of the ensuing business of the play. Víctor is arrested on suspicion of having participated in an act of protest. The people in the cottage cling to their belief that he will be with them again soon, although they hear that a dissident professor has just been killed in the same jail where the young man is held. They are drinking a toast to his early return

when the message comes—V́ctor is dead. Now Román, the fiancé of V́ctor's sister Mariana, goes off to join an armed rebellion. Mariana follows him, choosing that course over Kurt's offer of marriage and a secure life. Kurt leaves for home after speaking words of encouragement to José and Felisa: He has understood, and perhaps his and other powerful countries will understand that they must not support dictators. José and Felisa, left alone, express without conviction their hope that this is so. It will be up to the audience to decide whether Román and other youths like him should resort to arms, whether the people should support the rebels as Mariana does, how valuable the non-violent attitude of men and women like José and Felisa is, and what possibility exists of disinterested help from abroad. All this has great contemporary applicability, as events in Mexico City in October 1968 and June 1971 have so aptly and terribly demonstrated.

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SOLILOQUIO DEL TIEMPO. 1 act; 1 man; 1 abstract setting.

With *La última letra* and *Un día loco*, this monologue was first played in 1964 at the Teatro Orientación, Mexico City, under the group title of *Trío*. Time in the guise of a young man reviews a mélange of philosophical, artistic, and popular concepts of what he is. With the aid of visual and sound effects and miming, he comments ironically, seriously, humorously, or despondently on these concepts. He longs to be able to stop, to give up, as men do. At last, weary of the world's wars, he decides to die but of course he can not and almost instantly is in motion again, younger and fresher than ever.

\* \* \*

UN DIA LOCO. 1 act; 1 woman; 1 combination interior-exterior.

*Un día loco* is an adaptation of a short story which Señora Vilalta published originally in 1958 in Catalán as "El meu día foll." Together with two other monologues it was first played in 1964 at the Teatro Orientación, Mexico City, under the group title of *Trío*. The protagonist has taken a day in which she is free of the ordinary limitations of time and space and can try to comprehend people, things, and her own desires, and perhaps escape from the anguish and frustrations of her everyday life. As she narrates and reenacts the events and fantasies of her day she keeps remembering a voice that she has heard on the telephone, possibly the voice of someone she might have loved if she had not cut off the call because it was not for her. She paints her own picture of an ideal lover when she pretends to describe the candy-seller's husband. The shadows in the streets and parks of Mexico City lengthen faster and faster and soon the marvelous day with its glimpses of truth and intimations of happiness has ended.

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LA ULTIMA LETRA. 1 act; 1 man; 1 interior.

*La última letra*, first published in 1960, is one of three monologues that had their first presentation before an audience in 1964, with the group title of *Trío*, at the Teatro Orientación in Mexico City. In the same year they also were published together under that title. The single character is the Writer and we

see him one afternoon in his shabby study. He works at correcting some pages of a love scene, then pretends that he is talking with his old friend Juan, a prosperous business man whom he has not seen for years and whose visit he is in fact expecting. He boasts to the absent Juan of his literary triumphs, of publishers who once were indifferent and now are impatient for his new works, and of the steady flow of his inspirations and the ease and joy of writing. But catching a quizzical glance from the friend he imagines is there, he confesses that he has had no large triumphs, that for each modest success in giving something valuable and being understood he also has met disapproval or antagonism, and that he and his wife and child live in poverty. The writer's profession is often desperately difficult. He will write no more. Yet the desk seems to draw him to it and he sits and works again on his novel, once more full of enthusiasm.

\* \* \*

EL 9. 1 act, 4 scenes; 2 men, 1 child; 1 exterior, 1 interior.

*El 9*, which opened in the Teatro del Granero of Mexico City in 1965, shows us the last day in the life of factory worker number MM099, called Nueve, from the moment he comes to work in the morning until the final whistle blows and he is dead. The setting is stylized; the dialogue and action are at times farcical and at other times realistic. Nueve plays his flute in the patio and then talks with his fellow worker Siete, expressing a rather passive pessimism and referring without much emphasis to the "opportunity" that he is waiting for. The two play a word game to pass their last free minutes. The morning work period follows; they spend it making routine movements at their machines as the loudspeaker plays snatches of Debussy's "Clair de lune" in the intervals between announcements and exhortations to work hard. The lunch hour finds them in the patio again, their conversation now sketching their life histories and Nueve expressing his love of nature and liberty and his bitterness at slavery to the machine. A child enters bringing his father's lunch; Nueve and Siete would like to dissuade him from becoming an apprentice factory worker but will not be able to. Nueve talks more insistently about the "opportunity," which is the opportunity to die. In the final scene the work day is nearly over and Siete is in the patio with the child, telling how Nueve has let the machine seize and kill him. Siete begins to take on Nueve's character and the child repeats sentences that Siete has spoken earlier. The closing whistle sounds, the child, carrying Nueve's flute, goes inside to find his father, and Siete obeys the loudspeaker's summons to the manager's office. This play can be taken to suggest that there is no escape for the slaves of the factories (or perhaps for the slaves of life), since Nueve's only solution was suicide, Siete does not dare to escape, and the child although he loves the flute is drawn more strongly still to the machines. (Robert L. Bancroft, *University of Massachusetts, Amherst*)

*HEY, MEX!* Teresinha Alves Pereira (Brazil). Manuscript. 3 acts; 18 men, 11 women, 4-5 children; 5 interiors, 3 exteriors. (played by 5 men, 4 women, 4-5 children).

This play within a play examines the dramatist in the creative process of converting a social reality into an artistic experience. The plight of Chicano

migrant labor in the United States is studied from the point of view of a playwright, a member of the intellectual elite, attempting to communicate to a perhaps unconcerned audience the human suffering that she has witnessed among the Chicanos. At a cocktail party for some avant-garde types whose interest is piqued by the Chicano issue, she discusses her experiences among migrant farm-workers while she was doing fieldwork for her "drama of the Chicanos." Act II is a dream sequence that transpired in the author's mind while she was recuperating in a hospital after living in the Chicano milieu. Here she sees herself assisting the director of her play at a rehearsal. Scenes depicting a Chicano birth in the fields and orange harvesting in Florida are marred by bad actors who are accustomed to playing the Mexican as a *sombreroed*, mustachioed bandido. These stereotyped visions contrast with the more humane and realistic scenes taken from Chicano writer Tomás Rivera's . . . *y no se lo tragó la tierra*, where modern-day migrant children are seen confronting prejudice in the schools and deprivation at home. After a poetic resumé of the Chicano political movement, the act ends with the director calling the rehearsal to a close and deciding to cut some of the more poignant scenes from the play. The final act brings us back to the intellectual set which is now being informed by an angry young Chicano lawyer of his people's life and culture. After slides of migrant farm-workers are shown, the director comes on stage to suggest that the play end here with the playwright marrying the lawyer or, at least, with the playwright sitting down to write the drama that has just been enacted. However, she decides to write nothing and concludes that the preceding was all "irrelevant"; the theme of Chicano misery and anger is of interest only to Chicanos and they already know all there is to know about that subject. Thus resigned, she calls for the curtain. (Nicolás Kanellos)

LA CUEVA. Alejandro Lasser (Venezuela). Caracas: Zodiaco, 1967. 88 pp.  
2 parts—5 scenes; 5 men, 1 woman; 1 interior varied with props, 1 exterior.

This play explores the complexities of man's finding his place in the world by unravelling the threads which bind his life to others. Farfán, a conscientious civil servant, and his wife Silvia enter a cave to search for a child. Lost in the depths of the cave, they meet Tineo who lives there in order to be free. Tineo is the exact counterpart of Farfán. He is a former civil servant who is planning a popular movement against the governor. In flashbacks the governor tells Tineo that perhaps the cave exists so that people get lost and government guides have work. He also says that sooner or later all have to go to the cave to live the terrible test of liberty. Although Tineo had worked as an official guide rescuing lost persons from the cave, Farfán is reluctant to have Tineo lead him and Silvia to the cave's exit. The situation of the lost people becomes absurd. Tineo is reluctant to guide Farfán and Silvia because a newsman has said on the radio that the governor has sent an official guide to rescue them. When the guide arrives, he ignores Farfán and tells Tineo that he has been pardoned and that the governor wishes him to return as his executive assistant. Farfán becomes convinced that the governor wishes him to return for the promotion and goes off alone to search for the exit. Silvia decides to look for the exit with



Tineo, whose courage she admires. Both Farfán and Silvia realize that the infinite threads of their lives will never again intertwine. (Noel Patterson)

LAS AGUAS SUCIAS. Esteban Urruty (Argentina). Buenos Aires: Talía, 1969. 54 pp. 1 act; 2 women, 6 men; 2 interiors.

Faustino Paredes, a milkman in Buenos Aires who is motivated by his desire for respectability and material success, is the focal point of this play's conflict between two family factions. He is obsessed with his work and the mediocre renown it has brought him, finds solutions to family hostilities in material goods, and has made his entire family financially dependent upon him. Cholo, his youngest son, mirrors Faustino in nearly every aspect. Not only does he echo his father's wishes and commands, but he also shares Faustino's desire for money and position. The exact counterpart of Faustino and Cholo is presented in the character of José, the other son. His desire for truth and integrity complements his disinterest in material success. Faustino constantly attacks him verbally for his lack of enthusiasm in delivering milk. Also living with Faustino are his daughter, Carmen, her husband, Francisco, and their infant son. Faustino and Francisco disagree more often than not, thus placing Carmen in a precarious position between her father and husband ever since her marriage. These family disputes become more complex with the death of Carmen's child due to the poor-quality milk distributed by Faustino and his sons. José insists that his father report the death to the company although neither Faustino nor Cholo want to do so. He explains that he does not hate his father but rather that he wants him to defend himself against the distributor, Carmen, and the neighborhood. Carmen and Francisco have already decided to move away when Faustino finally speaks to the distributor. However, his action serves as a first step in restoring José's respect for his father and is an impetus for him to continue working for Faustino. In this manner, the play offers a partial solution to the universal problem of false respectability and materialism vs. personal integrity as manifested here principally in the characters of Faustino and José. (Barbara Patterson)

EL ASFALTO DE LOS INFIERNOS. Ricardo Acosta (Venezuela). Maracaibo: Universidad de Zulia, 1967. 42 pp. 1 act; 1 woman; 1 interior.

This very brief work, which is the dramatic monologue of an aging prostitute, depicts the contemporary theme of loneliness. As Ella talks to her reflection in the mirror—her "sister"—, various events of her past are evoked, thus developing her present emotional state. There is very little action and very few theatrical elements are employed in the staging of this play (occasional lighting and musical techniques do appear, and the presence of the mirror affords an interesting dialogue-like monologue to be used). The emphasis in this play falls on the exposition of the anomic state of this woman, rather than on dramatic action and external conflict. The play seems to be what is called a showcase or sketch in which the actress may give a virtuoso performance in the interpretation and creation of this character. Several emotions appear—ranging from tenderness and nostalgia to rage and almost mad ravings. As a

result of the portrayal of her emotions, one sees Ella as a woman without love and companionship, completely and pathetically alone. (Mike Mudrovic)

EL UMBRAL. José Chesta Aránguiz (Chile). Santiago: Ediciones Alerce, Editorial Universitaria, S.A., 1962. 94 pp. 2 acts; 8 men, 3 women; 1 exterior, 2 interiors.

This is a social play that focuses on the coal miners in Lota, Chile, to present a problem and suggest a Marxist solution to it. The action takes place during a strike in which the workers do not have any money or food. The coal company functions as the invisible capitalistic power that exploits the workers, and the dramatic conflict develops in terms of the failure or success the miners may achieve through the strike—their only legal means to better their situation. The first act takes place after 2 months of striking and we see the characters take a position toward the problem. They are divided into two groups: the idealists who fight for justice and the materialists who become informers for the company. Hernán, the young idealist, decides to sacrifice a better future in the city with Berta on behalf of the workers, and becomes the leader of the strike. When Berta's father, Anselmo, threatens Hernán with a gun, she tells him she will marry Pedro, a storekeeper, to save Hernán's life. In the second act most of the workers have become discouraged about the strike. They are cold and hungry and decide to steal some coal from the company. Anselmo betrays their plan to the company, the police kill several men and Anselmo kills Ratonera, a young boy who is the only support for Luis, an old man who functions as a premonitory element in the play. Berta, who has been working in a hospital, becomes aware of the social situation and now shares Hernán's ideals, encouraging him to go on. The conflict is solved with the help of the copper miners, and this action constitutes the message of the play: only through solidarity can the workers of the world win in a capitalistic society. Although the play deals with a compelling problem in Chile, Chesta Aránguiz was not able to develop the conflict or the characters in a consistent way, the dialogue is awkward and the naturalistic elements intended to represent the poor economic conditions of the workers are not convincing. (Lucía G. Cunningham)

EL APARTAMIENTO. René Marqués (Puerto Rico). *Three Contemporary Latin-American Plays*. Ruth S. Lamb, ed. Waltham, Massachusetts: Xerox College Publishing, 1971. pp. 6-71. 2 acts; 4 men, 3 women; 1 interior.

Before the curtain rises two central themes of this play are expressed through auditory devices. The first is the mixture of two cultures, pre-columbian and modern, as heard through the simultaneous playing of a modern overture and an Andean Indian tune played on a flute. The second is the theme of alienation, as heard in the four lines announced over a loudspeaker, emphasizing man's confinement and separation from the rest of the world. The curtain rises and the atmosphere for the entire play is established through the "cloistered" feeling of the apartment. Carola and Elpidio, the two old people who live a routine or "ordered" life in the apartment, do not talk about anything of importance. They even look deathlike and their only hobbies consist of Carola's measuring

ribbon and Elpidio's putting puzzles together. They reject the modern world, and do not seem to wish any contact with reality. When their creative past is brought to them in the form of two young people who remind them of Elpidio's symphony and Carola's poetry composed in their younger days, they totally reject any contact with it. The younger people do not understand the mental docility and stagnation of their elders. Even the pre-columbian heritage, as seen in the appearance of Tlo the Indian, shows the elders to be oblivious to reality. They cannot imagine what a "conciencia histórica" could be. The play ends with the elders walking towards infinity (the rear door), not knowing whether death or liberation awaits them. Although rather plotless, there is a strong message contained in this play: we must not be led into nothingness by mental stagnation. (Mark Finch)

THESEUS. Emilio Carballido (México). *The Golden Thread and other plays*. Margaret Sayers Peden, trans. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1970. pp. 211-37. 1 act, 4 scenes; 12 men, 7 women; 1 exterior, 1 interior.

Classical mythology offers the modern playwright a wealth of adventures which can be put into dramatic action. Carballido centers this play around the myth of Theseus and the episode in which he slays the Minotaur. The play begins on the docks of Athens where a ship is being readied for sail. In a brief conversation between Theseus and his father, King Aegeus, we learn that the father will commit suicide if Theseus' mission to kill the Minotaur is a failure. We also observe a young girl being forced to board the ship, an action which follows the myth as the Minotaur has to eat the flesh of seven Athenian girls and boys in order to be appeased. In the second scene we are taken to the entrance of the Labyrinth, the building of "many passages," where the Minotaur lives. Theseus speaks with Ariadne, King Minos' daughter, who requests that he fasten the end of a ball of thread to the entrance of the Labyrinth so as not to become lost in the maze. She leaves and her sister Phaedra, informs Theseus where he can find a sword with which to slay the monster. Both sisters love Theseus and we can feel competitive jealousy between them. The scene ends with Theseus symbolically raising the sword in a triumphant manner. The third scene takes place in the Labyrinth where the Minotaur is slain by Theseus; we then see his subsequent return to safety following the thread given to him by Ariadne. The last scene takes place on the docks of Crete where we observe the bold independence of Theseus. He purposely orders the black sails of defeat raised on the ship, knowing that his father, the king, will commit suicide by jumping into the sea. Theseus will then become the new king upon his return to Athens. This rebellion against the gods places this mythological figure in the twentieth-century and is Carballido's manner of reworking a classical myth. (Mark Finch)

LA CAMPANA. Julio Ortega (Perú). *Teatro breve hispanoamericano contemporáneo*. Carlos Solórzano, ed. Madrid: Aguilar, 1970. pp. 71-6. 1 act; 2 men; 1 interior.

The ambivalence of human existence is brought forth in this short allegory.

The two men, Vor and Rov, are dressed as prisoners against a background of black and white. They are surrounded by an imaginary prison or "circle" from which they cannot escape. Vor is very aggressive and anxiously wants to find an exit from the prison. He is not even sure that an exit exists, and this only compounds his frustration. Returning from one of his many searches for an exit, he stumbles across Rov who is sleeping in the middle of the stage. He tells Rov that he has found some fruit, and Rov gladly accepts the meal, considering this an improvement over the continual searching for escape. Vor, rather emphatically, chastises Rov for his total lack of interest in trying to find an escape. Rov insists that Vor should realize that they are caught, and cannot do much to relieve their plight. Vor considers the problem to be one of great importance and seriousness, while Rov is more interested in eating. Suddenly Vor has an idea. He has looked for an exit in almost every direction, except "hacia arriba." The exit could perhaps be above and Rov climbs atop Vor's shoulders to reach out for the exit. Vor climbs Rov's shoulders in an attempt to find the exit, but he falls to the ground exhausted and disillusioned at his failure. Nothing is found, but Vor will not give up. The play ends with Rov sleeping, and Vor as frustrated as ever. This short "existential allegory" presents the human situation in terms of conflict, anguish and disappointment. Both characters represent something inside all of us: the desire and anxiety to escape the abyss in which we all are, yet the realization that this is impossible. (Mark Finch)

## Works in Progress

Martin, Eleanor Jean (New York University)

Article: Carnaval Afuera, Carnaval Adentro: Síntesis del pensamiento social de René Marqués.

Colecchia, Francesca and Julio Matas (University of Pittsburgh)

Anthology: Selected Latin American One-Act Plays. Will include introduction and translations. To appear in August, 1973.

Cypess, Sandra M. (Point Park College)

Article: Physical Imagery in the Plays of Griselda Gambaro.

Kanellos, Nicolas (Indiana University Northwest)

Article: Mexican Theatrical Production in a Midwest Industrial Center.

Schanzer, George O. (State University of New York at Buffalo)

Article: Vicente Leñero's Non-Fiction Theatre.

Galvan, Max (City University of New York)

Book: The Influence of Bertolt Brecht in Latin American Theatre.

Alves Pereira, Teresinha (Indiana University)

Book: Ensayismo de teatro latinoamericano.

Articles: Sobre un drama de Manuel Galich and sobre *Los cuervos* de Hugo Argüelles.

Foster, Virginia R. (Phoenix College)

Article: Variations of Latin American Third World Drama.

## Works by Students

University of California, Los Angeles

Susana Castillo. *El teatro venezolano contemporáneo, 1945-1972*. Ph.D. dissertation. Advisor: Gerardo Luzuriaga.

New York University

Eleanor Jean Martin. *The Society in the Drama of René Marqués*. Ph.D. dissertation. Advisor: Humberto Piñera.

University of Pittsburgh

Oswaldo López. *Criticism of Mexican Reality in Selected Plays of Emilio Carballido*. Ph.D. dissertation. Advisor: Alfredo Roggiano.

New York University

Esther Babiskin. *The Department of Theatre of the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes under the Ministry of Education: An Assessment of Government Subsidized Theatre in Mexico City 1947-70*. Ph.D. dissertation. Advisor: Jean White.

## Plays in Performance

Texas A & I University

*La fiaca* by Ricardo Talesnik (Argentina). Presented in Spanish by the Department of Speech and Drama in the regular season's program, February 15-17 and 22-24, 1973. Directed by Joseph Rosenberg.

Indiana University

*Estudio en blanco y negro* by Virgilio Piñera (Cuba) and *La orgástula* by Jorge Díaz (Chile). Presented by the Asociación de Estudiantes Latinoamericanos on March 25, 1973. Directed by Adela Tarnavievski Alonso, played by Miguel Alonso and Teresinha Alves Pereira. Discussion directed by John Dyson of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese of IU.

El grupo de Teatro Chicano de Gary, Indiana, Teatro Desengano del Pueblo presentó, en Bloomington, varios "skits" del folklore chicano: *Dios, el Diablo y la Muerte*, y del teatro de protesta social: *El alcaide, El consejero, Primer día de escuela*, y *La historia de papá México*. La presentación tuvo lugar en Fine Arts Auditorium, 30 de marzo de 1973. Director: Nicolás Kanellos.

University of Denver

*Janus is a Girl (Jano es una muchacha)* by Rodolfo Usigli (Mexico). Presented by the Mexico in the 20th Century Studies Program of the Humanities Department on March 1, 1973. Translated and directed by Annabel B. Clark.

Southern Illinois University

*Topografía de un desnudo* by Jorge Díaz (Chile). Sponsored by Southern Players in collaboration with the Kutana Players. January, 1973.

New York

*The Dangers of Great Literature* by Gabriela Roepka (Chile). Presented by the WPA Theatre, March 30-April 15, 1973. Directed by Terence Quinn.

## Visiting Personnel

University of Cincinnati

Rodolfo Usigli (Mexico). Spring quarter, 1973.

University of California, Los Angeles

Rodolfo Santana (Venezuela). Spring quarter, 1973.

## Recent Publications, Materials Received and Current Bibliography

[The following recent publications noted or received by the Editors of the *Latin American Theatre Review* may prove of interest to the readers. Inclusion here does not preclude subsequent review.]

*Revista EAC*. Organo de la escuela de artes de la comunicación de la Universidad Católica de Chile. Contiene artículos sobre montajes de obras para teatro y televisión, artículo sobre la organización de la TV en latinoamerica, y una obra de teatro colectivo en torno a *Obra gruesa* de Nicanor Parra.

Snaidas, Adolfo. "Las dos mulatas de Xavier Villaurrutia," *Revista de la Universidad de México*, XXVII, 2 (octubre de 1972), suplemento.

*Revista Galaxia 71*. Organo del Grupo Escritores de Venezuela. Año 1, No. 7 (noviembre-diciembre 1972). Contiene reseñas de libros, noticias sobre todos los géneros literarios y además trae poemas originales.

Yauri, Alberto. "El diseño del vestuario teatral." *Estudios de Teatro* (San Marcos), No. 50.

Chejov, Anton. "El canto del cisne." *Piezas de Autores Extranjeros* (San Marcos), No. 21.

Vázquez-Amaral, Mary. "Yo también hablo de la rosa: Emilio Carballido," *Revista de la Universidad de México*, XXVII, 2 (enero de 1973), 25-29.

Matas, Julio. "Tres antologías de teatro," *Revista Iberoamericana*, No. 79 (April-June 1972).

Woodyard, George. "Toward a Radical Theatre in Spanish America." *Contemporary Latin American Literature*. Houston: University of Houston, 1973.

Rojo, Grínor. "Estado actual de las investigaciones sobre teatro hispanoamericano contemporáneo," *Revista Chilena de Literatura*, Nos. 2-3 (Primavera 1970), 133-161.

Moock, Armando. *Teatro [Natacha and Rigoberto]*. Santiago de Chile: Editorial Nascimento, 1971.

Suárez Radillo, Carlos Miguel. "El teatro chileno actual y las universidades como sus principales fuerzas propulsoras," *Revista Interamericana de Bibliografía*, XXII, No. 1 (enero-marzo 1972), 18-29.

Yauri, Alberto. "El diseño del vestuario teatral," *Estudios de Teatro* (San Marcos) No. 50.

- Saldias, José Antonio. "Rivadavia en el teatro," *Estudios de Teatro Latinoamericano* (San Marcos), No. 46.
- Villafañe, Javier. "La guardia del general," *Piezas de Títeres* (San Marcos), No. 4.
- Orbegozo, Manuel Jesús. "Pasión y muerte de un titiritero: Amadeo de la Torre," *Estudios de Teatro Peruano* (San Marcos), No. 92.
- Ortega, Julio. Mesa pelada. Ms.
- Ovidio Benítez Pereira, "Dónde Está?" (panfleto grotesco). Ms. of play performed in the 3rd Concurso de Obras Teatrales de Radio CHARITAS, de Asunción, en 1971, obteniendo una mención especial del jurado.
- Boal, Augusto, "Elógió Fúnebre do Teatro Brasileiro Visto da Perspectiva do Arena," Reprint of introduction to the edition of *Arena Conta Tiradentes* (Editôra Sagarana).
- Alves Pereira, Teresinha. *Hey, Mex!* Ms.
- "Principales actividades del TUSM en julio de 1972" Serie X, No. 36. Actividades del Teatro Universitario.
- Natella, Arthur A., Jr. "The New Drama of Peru," *Books Abroad*, 42, No. 2 (Spring 1971), 256-259.
- Tenaz* (Teatro Nacional de Aztlán), Vol. I, No. 5 (Spring 1972).
- Gombrowicz, Witold. *Yvonne, princesa de borgoña*. Argentina: Editorial Talía, 1972, 76 pp.
- Antonietto, Elena. *Mea culpa*. Argentina: Editorial Talía, 1972, 48 pp.
- Esteve, Patricio. *La gran histeria nacional*. Argentina: Editorial Talía, 1972, 44 pp.
- Diamant, Mario. *Crónica de un secuestro*. Argentina: Editorial Talía, 1971, 45 pp.
- Kraly, Néstor. *Balada maleva*. Argentina: Editorial Talía, 1972, 55 pp.
- Talía revista de teatro y arte*. Año X, No. 36. Año XI, Nos. 37, 38, y 39/40.
- Teatro latinoamericano de agitación*. Contains: *El asesinato de X*, creación colectiva de Lindor Bressan, Cristina Castillo, María Escudero, Graciela Ferrari, Luisa Nuñez, Francisco Quinodoz, Oscar Rodríguez, Roberto Robledo; Augusto Boal, *Torquemada*, and Julio Mauricio, *Un despido corriente*. La Habana, Cuba: Casa de la Américas, 1972, 310 pp.
- Tres obras de teatro*. Contains: Roberto Cossa, Germán Rozenmacher, Carlos Somigliana y Ricardo Talesnik, *El avión negro*; Egon Wolff, *Flores de papel*; and Eduardo Pavlovsky, *La mueca*. La Habana, Cuba: Casa de las Américas, 1970, 364 pp.
- Torrence, Miguel. *El castillo o La historia de un hombre sólo*. Valencia, Venezuela: Universidad de Carabobo, 53 pp.
- Centro de Investigación Sociológica de Teatro*. No. 2 (July, 1972). Valencia, Venezuela: Universidad de Carabobo.
- Montes Huidobro, Matías. *Persona: Vida y máscara del teatro cubano*. Miami: Ed. Universal, 1973. Preliminary essay by Julio Matas.
- Green, Joan Rea. "Character and Conflict in The Contemporary Central American Theatre," *Contemporary Latin American Literature*. Houston: University of Houston, 1973.

Larreta, Antonio. *Juan Palmieri*. La Habana: Casa de las Américas, 1972.  
[Premio Teatro 1972.]

Martínez, José de Jesús. *Segundo asalto*. Panamá: Ediciones de la Revista Tareas, 1971.

Mazzara, Richard. "From Essay to Theatre in the Northeast of Brazil,"  
*Academics* (Oakland University), 1972/3.