

Book Reviews

Herzfeld, Anita, and Teresa Cajiao Salas. *El teatro de hoy en Costa Rica: Perspectiva crítica y antología*. San José: Editorial Costa Rica, 1973. 268 pp.

The authors have expanded their article "El panorama teatral de Costa Rica en los últimos tres años" (*LATR*, Fall 1971), into a critical anthology of contemporary Costa Rican drama. In addition to the three plays discussed in their article (Alberto Cañas' *Algo más que dos sueños*, Daniel Gallegos' *La colina*, and Samuel Rovinski's *El laberinto*), the collection includes two experimental works (*Las hormigas* and *Teófilo Amadeo: Una biografía*), by young playwrights Antonio Yglesias and William Reuben. An amplified and valuable essay tracing the country's theatrical activity from the colonial period to the present introduces the anthology. Biographical and bibliographical information, an interview with the author, and an analysis precede the text of each play.

Limiting their focus to the years 1960-1970, one can find little fault with the authors' choice of works. The dramatists selected also represent practically the sum total of national playwrights producing during this period. Thus, the anthology quite accurately reflects the works of Costa Rican dramatists of the sixties. Although of uneven quality, these plays illustrate an attempt to inject contemporary themes and techniques into a theater long marked by a *costumbrista* orientation. *Algo más que dos sueños* clearly demonstrates the author's predilection for the Pirandellian preoccupation with multiple perceptions of reality. Gallegos' *La colina* (*auto sacramental*) constitutes his most ambitious and complex play to date, as its characters painfully struggle to find direction once God has been officially declared dead. Socio-political themes and the contemporary theatrical devices employed to express them characterize *El laberinto* (scientific discovery versus its destructive application). *Las hormigas* (man's futile efforts to break the bonds of a giant-oppressor), and *Teófilo Amadeo . . .* (man dehumanized and alienated by society's institutions and conventions). If in the main, these plays avoid specific Costa Rican motifs and problems, *La colina*, *Las hormigas*, and *Teófilo Amadeo . . .* reveal affinities with a larger Latin American context.

While the play selection is appropriate, often the analyses lack precision and synthesis. This may be due to insufficient paring of the authors' original article in preparation for an anthology format. Nonetheless, repetitious bibliographical data, extended plot explanations, lengthy comments on obvious symbolism dilute their critical judgements. For instance, the authors consider the naming of the Texan bar in *El laberinto*, "Long Horn" and the prostitute's name, "Honey," an *acierto* in the use of vocabulary. Their analysis of *La colina* is especially unsatisfying because of its contention that the play corresponds to the patterns of absurdist theater. The death of God does initiate the action, but *La colina* presents a structure, language, and characterization entirely at odds with absurdist theater. The authors are much more successful with their analyses of *Las hormigas* and *Teófilo Amadeo . . .* Finally, typographical errors somewhat mar this welcome edition.

On balance, the anthology takes an important first step in acquainting more readers with the history, current dramatists, and plays of the little known Costa Rican stage.

Dennis Perri
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Luzuriaga, Gerardo and Robert S. Rudder (editors and translators). *The Orgy: Modern One-Act Plays from Latin America*. Latin American Studies, Vol. 25. Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center, 1974. 180 pp.

In a "Prefatory Note" Professors Luzuriaga and Rudder state that the purpose of this anthology is to "make available to English speaking readers examples of good theatre from modern Latin America," and to provide "stimulating pieces" which can be performed by "students of theatre and experimental drama." The editors have done an excellent job in selecting eleven one-act plays written by established playwrights, all well-known in Latin America's theatrical circles. By and large the editors have done an adequate job of translation, and have succeeded in recreating much of the original lively and natural dialogue. The plays included in this volume are: *The Orgy* and *The Schoolteacher* by Enrique Buenaventura (Colombia); *The Story of the Man Who Turned into a Dog* and *The Story of Panchito González* by Osvaldo Dragún (Argentina); *R. I. P.* by José Martínez Queirolo (Ecuador); *Romeo before the Corpse of Juliet* and *You Don't Have to Complicate Happiness* by Marco Denevi (Argentina); *Black Light* by Alvaro Menén Desleal (El Salvador); *March* by Alberto Adellach (Argentina); *The Crucifixion* by Carlos Solórzano (Guatemala-Mexico); and *The Eve of the Execution or Genesis Was Tomorrow* by Jorge Díaz (Chile).

The anthology proper is preceded by an introduction in which the editors attempt to give the American reader a general overview of today's theatrical scene in Spanish America. They discuss political and social problems which are typically Latin American and which, by their very nature create circumstances which dictate a different set of rules for writing theatre south of the border (i.e., the various types of theatrical companies, the role of the playwright vs. society, censorship, exile, Theatre Festivals, etc.). The editors also provide a brief introduction to each playwright, mentioning the main characteristics of their works and placing them within the trend or school to which they belong.

The eleven plays chosen for this anthology attempt to present a variety of tendencies prevalent in contemporary Spanish American theatre. Most of the works selected are plays of social commitment, and unfortunately the playwrights' negative attitudes permeate the anthology with the bitter, pessimistic aura which seems to be the trademark of all the Latin American literature that is translated. The plays, however, are basically well chosen and may prove to be imaginative and challenging enough to interest theatrical groups in this country.

María A. Salgado
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Ripoll, Carlos and Andrés Valdespino. *Teatro hispanoamericano: Antología crítica. Época colonial*. New York: Anaya, 1972. 485 pp.

The selections in this new anthology, complete works rather than fragmented samplings, represent the editors' attempt to critically organize in one volume the most significant existent contributions to the development of Spanish American drama during the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Centuries. Works by Pérez Ramírez, Cristóbal de Llerena, and González de Eslava reflect the early religious, social, and political environments of the colonies. Plays by Ruiz de Alarcón, Valle y Caviedes, Sor Juana, Espinosa Medrano, and Peralta Barnuevo, colonial masters of the baroque, are followed by the anonymous *Ollanta* and *El amor de la sainetera*. Through the critical and biographical introductions which precede each play, emphasis is given to parallel currents in peninsular theater, and to the influence of Spanish authors on colonial drama. At the same time, New World aspects of environments, linguistic forms, characters, and themes are noted, culminating in the intense Americanism of the last two selections, a drama in Quechua, and a *sainete* which marks the beginning of the Argentine gaucho theatrical movement.

For a complete history of the Spanish American theater of the colonial period, the scholar will still be forced to acknowledge incomplete or lost works which have been recorded in various ways, such as *Siripo*. One suspects that the editors have included two plays by Juan Ruiz de Alarcón to enhance the collective value of colonial theatrical production in Spanish America. Instead of the well-known *La verdad sospechosa*, another play by this author (or by an additional dramatist) would amplify the scope of the volume. Numerous footnotes aid in the appreciation of this critical anthology as a text for graduate students in Hispanic literature. In addition to the short bibliography which precedes each introductory study, an extensive general bibliography on Spanish American theater appears at the end of the book.

Sylvia J. Brann
 Auburn University

Snaidas, Adolf. *El teatro de Xavier Villaurrutia*. México: Secretaría de Educación Pública, Sep/Setentas Núm. 73, 1973.

Perhaps the most dazzling and versatile writer of the *Contemporáneos* group, Xavier Villaurrutia has been the object of considerable critical attention in the past decade. Three book-length studies have appeared in the last five years alone: Frank Dauster, *Xavier Villaurrutia* (New York: Twayne, 1971), Eugene Lawrence Moretta, *The Poetic Achievement of Xavier Villaurrutia* (Cuernavaca: Centro Intercultural de Documentación, 1971), and Merlin Forster, *Fire and Ice: The Poetry of Xavier Villaurrutia* (Chapel Hill: U. of North Carolina Press, 1974). Prof. Snaidas' study, published as a part of the impressive Sep/Setentas series, fills an important gap since it is the only book which focuses completely on Villaurrutia's theater.

The organizational framework of this book reflects an essentially chronological approach in spite of thematic labels given to the three main divisions: I. *Período Experimental*, II. *Segundo Período: Conflictos Generacionales*, III. *Conflictos*

Matrimoniales. Under the first heading Snaidas groups the five one-act *autos* (*Parece mentira, ¿En qué piensas?, Ha llegado el momento, Sea Ud. breve, El ausente*); the second division treats longer plays such as *Invitación a la muerte, La hiedra*, and *El yerro candente*, while the third division includes both screen plays (*La mulata de Córdoba*), one-act (*El solterón*) and three act plays (*El pobre Barba Azul*). There is a noticeable effort, however, to stress the relationship between the plays through reference to thematic constants (the conflict between generations, the use of myth, etc.) and to recurrent theatrical techniques (the use of comic elements). In a brief *Conclusión* Snaidas summarizes the major thematic and stylistic features of Villaurrutia's work and considers the relationship between his theater and poetry.

El teatro de Xavier Villaurrutia is a useful and informative book but not one which says anything particularly new about Villaurrutia. Its major flaw lies in the manner in which the author presents his material. The book begins somewhat abruptly without a statement of purpose or a word about Villaurrutia's place in Mexican literature and moves on at that pace. At times it seems as if the author has attempted to telescope too much information into a relatively small framework. But in general *El teatro de Xavier Villaurrutia* is factually sound and will no doubt contribute to a better understanding of the evolution of Villaurrutia's theater.

E. J. Mullen

University of Missouri—Columbia

Sten, María. *Vida y muerte del teatro nahuatl*. México: Sep/Setentas, 1974. 216 pp.

Esta obra se divide en doce capítulos con una introducción y un apéndice, y ofrece un estudio bien documentado. En la introducción nos da una explicación de la significación, importancia y uso del teatro para evangelizar a los indios durante la conquista y el período colonial de México. Los capítulos tratan de los siguientes asuntos: I. la estructura del teatro nahuatl; II. el carácter simbólico del teatro prehispánico, poniendo énfasis en que el teatro nahuatl no era meramente un "espectáculo" sino un "acontecimiento" del que todos los presentes eran participantes. Este capítulo es, quizá, el más dramático del libro de María Sten, puesto que nos hace presenciar un "acontecimiento" en tres actos, a la manera del teatro del Siglo de Oro español, incluyendo un prólogo en el que se presenta el escenario que es todo un poblado; la acción es simultánea en varios barrios (pp. 37-49). También en este capítulo II se explica el simbolismo de los colores usados en las danzas y ceremonias religiosas: azul, verde, amarillo, rojo, etc., así como el simbolismo de las flores en relación con los actos del drama (p. 67); III. sincretismo evangelizante; IV. González de Eslava y su actitud hacia el mundo indígena; V. el teatro híbrido: el ídolo (Hongol) como personaje; VI. la presencia indígena en las manifestaciones culturales del siglo XVIII; VII. la mitología mexicana en *El Divino Narciso* de Sor Juana; VIII. el siglo XVIII en el que tampoco se hace la luz en el teatro mexicano; IX. Vela y las exigencias de la época; X. cristianismo y paganismo: ayuda y obstáculo en la creación dramática; XI. período intermedio y el retorno a las raíces; XII. "El Olimpo sin Prometeo," frase que sirve de subtítulo a *Vida y muerte del teatro nahuatl*.

María Sten juzga una imposibilidad la existencia actual del teatro nahuatl basada en su tesis de que los dioses aztecas no se mezclan con los hombres ni tienen pasiones humanas. Esta tesis es acertada en cuanto a la tragedia, pero ¿y la comedia? ¿y los lances de humor y de risa? (p. 23), porque además María Sten cita varios tipos de espectáculos (p. 30). Por otra parte, después de leer el segundo capítulo de esta obra quedamos convencidos del vigor del dicho teatro. Pero, como todas las cosas, al nacer ya llevaba en sí la semilla de su destrucción que se descubre a través de la obra en, cuando menos, siete pasos: 1. sincretismo (p. 82); la llegada de clérigos materialistas que substituyen a los misioneros humanistas de la conquista (p. 85); 3. la Inquisición se convirtió en censura del teatro (pp. 86, 109); 4. el teatro catequizante ya no se traduce al nahuatl. Eslava mismo no tuvo interés en los indios (p. 88); 5. las prohibiciones que culminaron con la de Palafox en 1644; 6. las festividades profanas suplantaron a las religiosas en las cuales los indios podían participar (p. 140), así "se priva a los indios de los medios para plasmar su religión y cultura en el teatro." (p. 141); 7. el fatalismo de los indios los hace aceptar la derrota de sus reyes y de sus dioses por los españoles y los santos cristianos respectivamente (p. 162).

Los capítulos XI y XII son una especie de apéndice para ligar el siglo XVIII colonial con el presente siglo XX, pasando por las actividades escasas del siglo XIX, en cuanto se refiere al teatro. Al fin de la obra se incluye un apéndice de datos y fechas importantes para el desarrollo del teatro en la Nueva España.

No cabe duda que *Vida y muerte del teatro nahuatl* es una valiosa contribución para el mejor entendimiento del teatro mexicano contemporáneo y de las razones por las cuales no se ha revivido el teatro nahuatl. María Sten indica, con acierto, que la cultura nahuatl tiene sus mejores exponentes en la pintura, la música y la novela.

Joseph F. Vélez
Baylor University

Plays in Performance

Wayne State University

Rosalba y los llaveros by Emilio Carballido. Presented by the Department of Romance and Germanic Languages Spanish Laboratory Theatre, March 9-10, 1975. Directed by Alyce de Kuehne.

Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre, New York, N.Y.

The Guest and *The Innocent* by Pedro Juan Soto, *Pipo Subway* by Jaime Carrero. *Ceremony for an Assassinated Black Man* by Fernando Arrabal opened February 12, 1975 under the direction of Miriam Colon. *The Two Executioners* by Fernando Arrabal opened February 12, 1975 under the direction of Norberto Kerner.

University of Houston

Los invasores by Egon Wolff and *La última letra* by Maruxa Vilalta. Presented by the Department of Spanish and Other Languages, through the cooperative efforts of Dr. Pedro Bermúdez, Dr. Marjorie Bourne, Dr. Harvey Johnson, Dr. Carlos Monsanto and Dr. Karl Reinhardt. Also performed: *El*

perro del hortelano and *La discreta enamorada* by Lope de Vega and *El gran teatro del mundo* by Calderón de la Barca.

Universidad de Carabobo (II Festival Internacional de Teatro)

El castillo o *La historia de un hombre solo*, Franz Kafka y Miguel Torrence. Presentado el 2 de agosto, 1974, bajo la dirección de Miguel Torrence.

Indiana University

Ternura by Menén Desleal and *Historia de un número* by Josefina Pla. Presented by the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, April 20, 1975. Directed by George Jacobsen. Tres Actos: *Will the Real Conqueror Please Stand Up?*, *Good to the Last Chicano* and *Un acto de importancia*. Presented by the Chicano-Riqueño Theatre, April 20, 1975. Directed by Raymond R. Leal.

Ralph Freud Playhouse, University of California at Los Angeles.

The Splendor and Death of Joaquin Murieta by Pablo Neruda. Presented by the UCLA Department of Theater Arts in cooperation with the Summer Sessions and the Committee on Fine Arts Productions, July 10-13, 1975. Directed by Douglas Campbell.

Pima Community College, Tucson, Arizona.

Te juro Juana que tengo ganas . . . de Emilio Carballido fue presentado por el Grupo de Teatro de Actores Unidos del Departamento de Bellas Artes de Guadalajara, Jalisco bajo la dirección de Roberto Vázquez. Se presentó el 15 de abril y formó parte de las actividades de la celebración de la Semana Internacional.

University of Arizona

La revoltosa una zarzuela de Ruperto Chapí fue presentada el 14, 15 y 16 de marzo por The University of Arizona Opera Theatre bajo la dirección de Eugene T. Conley. Se presentó como homenaje a los americanos de origen mexicano en ocasión del 200^{mo} aniversario de la fundación del Presidio de Tucson por los españoles.

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 readers. Inclusion here does not preclude subsequent review.]

Román, Sergio. "El teatro y el desarrollo: Ciegos y entre enemigos," *Alero* (Guatemala), No. 10, 3^a época (ene-feb 1975), 7-14.

Arce, Manuel José. *¡Viva Sandinol!* *Alero*, No. 12, 3^a época (mayo-jun 1975), 25-61. [A one-act play]

Prieto, Carlos. *Partida falsa*. *Revista EAC* (Chile), No. 4 (1974), 48-71. [A one-act play]

- Láscaris, C. Review: "Andrés Morris, *Trilogía Istmica*, Tegucigalpa: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras, 1969, 145 p." *Revista Histórico-Crítica de Literatura Centroamericana* (San José), I, No. 1 (jul-dic 1974), 133-135.
- "ICTUS y la creación colectiva." Entrevista de Delfina Guzmán, Nissim Sharim y Claudio di Girólamo con Sergio Vodanovic. *Revista EAC* (Chile), No. 4 (1974), 7-18.
- González-Cruz, Luis F. "Virgilio Piñera y el teatro del absurdo en Cuba," *Mester* (UCLA), V, No. 1 (nov 1974), 52-57.
- García Lorca Review, ed. Grace Alvarez-Altman (State University College, Brockport, N.Y.), III, No. 1&2 (Spring-Fall 1975).
- Blanco Vilariño, Pedro. *Pocute, III Parte*. Barquisimeto: Litho Rex, [1975]. 151 p. [A collection which includes: "A manera de prólogo"; "Locutandia"; "Juan el Salvador"; "The Progress Congress of the Facts"; "El fin de los mensajes a García"; "El negro Miguel"; "Don Lope."]
- Sten, María G. *Vida y muerte del teatro nahuatl: El Olimpo sin Prometeo*. Mexico: SepSetentas, 1974. 214 p.
- Quackenbush, L. H. "Theatre of the Absurd, Reality, and Carlos Maggi," *Journal of Spanish Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Spring 1975), 61-72.
- Neglia, Erminio G. "El teatro comprometido en Hispanoamérica," *Chasqui*, IV, No. 2 (feb 1975), 35-43.
- Noticias del teatro húngaro*. Budapest: Instituto Húngaro del Teatro, No. 1 (Primavera 1975).
- Teatro Universitario de Carabobo* (Carabobo, Venezuela), No. 3 (agosto 1973). [Includes: "Significado del teatro en la vida universitaria de América Latina" by Carlos Solórzano, p. 34-38. Also includes *El apocalipsis* by Miguel Torrence, a one-act play.]
- Santaliz, Pedro. "Teatro Pobre de America," *Zona* (San Juan, P.R.), 3, No. 8 (enero 1975).
- Escena 3* (Caracas), No. 2 (feb-mar 1975). [Includes: "El desafío del teatro banal" by Pablo Antillano, p. 12-15 and "El teatro infantil en Venezuela," p. 50-67, a selection of commentary on the subject.]
- Monsanto, Carlos. "La estructura dramática de *Funeral Home* como obra de personaje," *Revista Interamericana de Bibliografía* XXIV, No. 3 (Jul-Sept 1975), 278-286.
- Dauster, Frank. *Ensayos sobre teatro hispanoamericano*. México: SepSetentas, 1975. 197 p.
- Carrillo, Hugo. *La herencia de la Tula*. Guatemala: Editorial José de Pineda Ibarra, 1974.
- Rama, Angel. "Ariano Suassuna: El teatro y la narrativa popular nacional," *La Palabra y el Hombre*, Nueva época, No. 13 (ene-mar 1975), 7-13.
- Waren, Stanley A. "In Search of Contemporary Theater in Mexico," *Review 75*, No. 14 (Spring 1975), 48-53.

Francovich, Guillermo. *Teatro*. La Paz-Cochabamba: Editorial "Los Amigos del Libro," 1975. 362 p.

[An anthology which includes: "El monje de Potosí"; "La sombra"; "Los apóstoles"; "La gitana"; "Como los gansos"; "Un puñal en la noche"; "Reunión improvisada"; "Empresario de sueños"; "El reencuentro"; "Soledad y tiempo"; "Monseñor y los poetas."]

Pereira Salas, Eugenio. *Historia del teatro en Chile desde sus orígenes hasta la muerte de Juan Casacuberta (1849)*. Santiago de Chile: Ediciones de la Universidad de Chile, 1974. 440 p.