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of Spanish and Portuguese
America

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Abstracts

John W. Kronik, "Usigli's *El gesticulador* and the Fiction of Truth."

The prevalent readings of *El gesticulador* as a political statement require for proper balance an interpretation that takes into account its structure as a play within a play. The metatheatrical fiber of *El gesticulador* erases the frontiers between history and fiction, truth and lie, and echoes the process of its own making as an invention. The interior recreation of César Rubio the general at the hands of César Rubio the professor is a case of mythmaking and fictionalization. Through its self-reflexive design, the play establishes the superiority of fiction over truth; and then, by exposing the ambiguity inherent in language and consequently in art, it concludes that truth is a relative concept. (JWK)

Nelson de Araújo, "Aspects of Brazilian Theatre in the 18th and 19th Centuries."

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were an important developmental period for Brazilian theatre. In the eighteenth century the first theatrical houses with permanent casts appeared, and elaborate commemorative spectacles were publicly performed, encouraged by the programs. The first Brazilian author whose works were regularly performed on the Brazilian stage was probably the Pernambucan Luís Álvares Pinto, who died in the first decade of the eighteenth century. The Romantic movement of the following century conclusively consolidated Brazilian theatre, with the great *comédia* writer Martins Pena and the actor-director João Caetano. At the end of the century the dramatic works of Artur de Azevedo achieved prominence, and, in Rio Grande do Sul, the singular dramaturgy of Qorpo-Santo, an author whose works would not be fully recognized until the 1960's. The author of this article emphasizes the importance which former Brazilian slaves, repatriated to Africa after the abolition of slavery, had in the creation of a European style theatre in West Africa, in countries such as Nigeria. (N. de A.)

David William Foster, "Roberto Arlt's *La isla desierta*, a structural analysis."

Arlt's theatre has received relatively little critical attention; there are virtually no close, structural analyses of his dramatic works. Focusing on one of his well-known one-act plays, this study traces the characteristic elements of expressionistic dramatic structure in terms of the particular *escritura* of the text. The principle of unstable reality, as the basis of text production, and the principles of foregrounded dramatic texture (ritualized speech, interrogatives, exclamations, anaphora) are examined in detail. (DWF)

Matías Montes Huidobro, "El caso Dorr: el autor en el vórtice del compromiso."

The relationship between revolution and the creative process is a fascinating subject, and *El agitado pleito entre un autor y un ángel* (awarded the José Antonio Ramos Theatre Prize by the Cuban National Writers Union in 1972 and published the following year), by Cuban playwright Nicolás Dorr, is a rather representative example of this relationship. Dorr makes a critical analysis of the characters of his previous plays, and judges them within revolutionary terms. In doing this, he is revising his former dramatic and thematic approaches in order to adjust his own creative forces to the principles of present-day Cuba. Thematic and artistic devices are judged and discussed using a play-within-the-play technique and a ritualist fashion. A dramatic and historical phenomena, Dorr's play is above all a document on Cuban drama that should be taken into account in order to obtain a better understanding of the relationship between reality and fantasy within the revolutionary process, and the crisis that a process of this kind means to the writer. (In Spanish) (MMH)

Kirsten F. Nigro, "La noche de los asesinos': Playscript and Stage Enactment."

While published playscripts can lend themselves to a textual analysis alone, their dramatic qualities can be better comprehended when translating them, albeit imaginatively into stage enactment. The careful reading of the text affords not only an understanding of its substance, that is, its unifying image or idea, but also offers cues as to how this substance could be conveyed to an audience of theatregoers. An analysis of José Triana's *La noche de los asesinos* reveals that the play's ritualistic structure, framed in a play-within-a-play, works to construct a central image of alienation, fear, and entrapment. Man is seen as unable or unwilling to communicate with his fellow man. All the systems of signs that compose the theatrical event are orchestrated so as to embody this central idea. The first pages of the text, however, can be seen to build a stage picture in which those signs pertaining to the setting, kinesics (gestures and body language) and proxemics (the spatial relationship of actors on a stage), combined with the dialogue, work together to better communicate to an audience this very image of alienation, entrapment and fear. (KFN)

Judith I. Bissett, "Brecht e Cordel: Distanciamento e Protesto em *Se Correr o Bicho Pega*."

In 1966 Oduvaldo Vianna Filho and Ferreira Gullar broke with Grupo Opinião's tradition of presenting musical anthologies like the review *Liberdade, Liberdade*. Instead they wrote *Se Correr o Bicho Pega; se Ficar o Bicho Come*, a play critical of middle-class values within the limits of Brazilian reality. *Bicho* is a portrait of social decadence and a political protest against repressive government. To achieve the Brazilian spectator's awareness of political injustice and the need for change, Grupo Opinião adapted Brechtian dramatic theory to a Brazilian popular tradition. They based the play's structure on Brazil's *literatura de cordel* adopting its satirical tone. Thematic and structural elements of this popular poetry provided the authors with dramatic structures that they transformed into alienation-effect techniques. The playwrights also used other structures based on Brechtian theory to distance the audience and cause it to reflect on its country's social and political reality. (In Portuguese) (JIB)