

LATIN AMERICAN THEATRE REVIEW

*a Journal devoted to
the Theatre and Drama
of Spanish and Portuguese
America*

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Abstracts

José Juan Arrom, "Cambiantes imágenes de la mujer en el teatro de la América virreinal."

This article deals with the changing images of women projected on the Spanish American stage by authors of the colonial period. Ordered chronologically by generation and style, the following authors are discussed: Fernán González de Eslava, Juan Ruiz de Alarcón, Matías de Bocanegra, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Pedro de Peralta Barnuevo, Jerónimo de Monforte y Vera, Santiago de Pita and José Agustín de Castro. Through the work of these authors and their portrayal of women, one can appreciate a gradual movement toward greater acceptance of feminine rights and equality. (JJA)

Richard J. Callan, "Juicio final: A Definition of Human Existence."

This one-act play deals in Existential terms with the problem of being. At the instant of death a man, typical of our time, appears before a judge. He is scrutinized and found wanting, not on moral grounds, but because he has not developed a capacity for eternity; he is not and never was truly alive. His family duties, his function in society, and other accomplishments have filled his life but he himself is empty. Having avoided commitment to any ideal and skirted the risky business of emotions, he knows nothing about the essence of life. With many different examples, the Panamanian playwright Martínez advances his argument that man's essence lies in being truly alive and open to the mystery of life, not in accumulating accomplishments, for these do not define us unless life has passed through them into us. (RJC)

Eva C. Kaiser-Lenoir, "La particularidad de lo cómico en el Grotesco Criollo."

If in the Argentine *sainete criollo* the comic effects are centered on the characters who adhere to the established order, in the *grotesco criollo* they are centered on those who move away from that order. In the *grotesco criollo* the laughter is directed towards all that the ruling social system imposes as seriousness. In these works we apply the term "comic distance" to the abyss created between the values that the characters appeal to and the reality in which they move. We analyze the use of laughter as "unconscious comic distance" (the character is comical by symbolizing that abyss) and as "conscious comic distance" (the character manipulates that abyss as a form of mockery). In "the fall as renunciation of the serious" we analyze the way that the tragedy of the denouement (which would be validating the principles of the social order) is lessened when the characters themselves refuse to assume it "seriously." Laughter, used as a strategy, reveals the *grotesco criollo* to be protest theatre. (In Spanish) (ECKL)

Daniel Zalacaín, "René Marqués, del absurdo a la realidad."

Evident in the works of René Marqués is a clash between two cultures, two ways of life, that struggle to live in the same place and time. The colonial, the old, symbolizes the authentic Puerto Rican values, and the machine, the new, is a symbol of an artificial and dehumanizing reality. The author, in his search for the identity of the Puerto Rican, tries to find in the past the secret of his soul, a past which appears logical and contrasts with the present—absurd and without meaning. For the author, the present vital condition of the Puerto Rican is absurd because it does not allow the authentic being to develop. Once the Puerto Rican regains full control of his destiny, however, such reality would offer hope. This characteristic differentiates his plays from another kind of theatre that also treats the absurdity of the human condition, the "Theatre of the Absurd." But while the dramatists of the absurd look at reality as a closed chaotic circle, Marqués sees in it an opening. His plays, thus, follow a path that extends from the exploration of an absurd reality to a possible logical solution. (In Spanish) (DZ)

Ramón Layera, "After the Coup: Four Dramatic Versions of Allende's Chile."

Víctor Torres' *Una casa en Lota Alto* (1973), Sergio Vodanovic's *Igual que antes* (1972-

73), Jorge Díaz' *Mear contra el viento* (1972-74) and Alejandro Sieveking's *Pequeños animales abatidos* (1975) represent the most forceful dramatic representations of this problematic moment in Chilean history. They also illustrate, from different angles, the all too familiar dilemma of the Latin American playwright who attempts to infuse a modicum of socio-political significance into his work while trying to follow a strictly artistic set of principles. Although these playwrights are all Chileans dealing with a very difficult subject-matter, the outcome is a balanced mix of ideological substance and effective dramatic expression. (RL)

Daniel López, "Ambiguity in *Flores de papel*."

Ambiguity is the principal device used by Egon Wolff in *Flores de papel* (1968) in portraying character and involving the reader/spectator in the proceedings of the drama. The language, behavior, and character of the antagonist, El Merluza, are all infused with ambivalence as he invades the closed world of Eva, the play's protagonist, inexplicably intent upon the literal destruction of the apartment, and the psychological destruction of its occupant. The ultimate ambiguity of *Flores de papel* is that no explanation is given for El Merluza's actions. Instead, the reader/spectator is forced to arrive at his own conclusions as to why the invasion and psychological persecution of Eva have taken place. (DL)

Roy A. Kerr, "La función de la Intermediaria en *Yo también hablo de la rosa*."

An understanding of the role of the Intermediary is vital for the comprehension of Emilio Carballido's *Yo también hablo de la rosa*. An analysis of her four appearances in the play reveals a function on both thematic and structural planes. Her monologues establish the significance of the rose as the principal symbol in the work, and relate the scenes that precede her appearance with those that follow. Additionally, the Intermediary's comments and actions contribute to the total effect of the play in three specific areas. Her actions reconcile many Brechtian and Artaudian principles of drama. Her interpretation of the play's events reveals a philosophical position reminiscent of Bergsonian vitalism, Zen-Buddhism and Taoism. Aesthetically, as author-character, the Intermediary presents us with a concept of the function of art which is reflected in the very artifice of the play itself. (In Spanish) (RAK)

Elliot S. Glass, "The Existential Theme in the *Teatro mayor* of Max Aub."

Although critics underscore the lack of thematic cohesiveness in Max Aub's *Teatro mayor*, an existential theme—an outgrowth of concentration camp experiences—unifies these plays. Like Sartre, Aub recognized that preoccupation with abstractions in a senseless world leads to a paralysis of will. Aub's *Teatro mayor* emphasizes resistance as a means to liberation. His protagonists strive to achieve a sense of dignity and a measure of freedom, no matter how small. Aub, like Camus, expounds an ethic revolt. Carlos in *San Juan*, Samuel in *La vida conyugal*, Margarita in *El rapto de Europa*, Juan in *Morir por cerrar los ojos*, Molina in *Cara y cruz*, and Hermann in *No* regain their freedom by confronting their "circunstancia" with the will and commitment necessary to overcome it. *Teatro mayor* is both a condemnation of fatalism and a paean to those who call for action and show the way to personal liberty. (ESG)

Scheduled Latin American Theatre Conference

A Symposium in Latin American Theatre is being planned for April 19-21, 1979, at Florida International University, Miami. The following topics have been tentatively selected for discussion: Women in Latin American Theatre; Brazilian Theatre; Current Trends in Latin American Theatre; Existentialism, Cruelty and the Absurd; The Critics and the Dramatists; Hispanic Theatre in the U.S.; and Caribbean Theatre. Among the many Latin American critics and dramatists expected to attend are Griselda Gambaro, Carlos José Reyes, Alonso Alegría, Osvaldo Dragún and Orlando Rodríguez. Besides the panel discussions and scheduled individual addresses, there will also be performances of Latin American plays during the three-day event. Although titles have yet to be announced, plays will be performed by The Bilingual Theatre Group PROMETEO (Miami Dade Community College, New World Campus) and the Florida International University Theatre Group, under the direction of Alonso Alegría, Visiting Director.

For more details concerning this symposium, contact Prof. Maida Watson, Dept. of Modern Languages, Florida International University, Tamiami Trail, Miami, Florida 33144.