

# LATIN AMERICAN THEATRE REVIEW

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

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**Abstracts****Ane-Grethe Østergaard, “Dinámica de la ficción en *El beso de la mujer araña*, obra teatral de Manuel Puig.”**

The article intends a semiotic approach to the play, concentrating upon the productive power of narrated fiction in the relationship between the two protagonists. The dramatic development, the gradual changes in both mimetic and diegetic space, is made possible by the fantasmatically invested fiction, which at first seemed to be a sheer pastime. At the same time as mimetic space changes from static to dynamic, diegetic space, first filled up with pure fiction, acquires non-fictional references and reflects the two interlocutors' involvement in each others' lives. The final message of the play is a defense of fiction as a dynamic, creative factor in life. (AGØ)

**Patricia E. González, “Isidora Aguirre y la reconstrucción de la historia en *Lautaro*.”**

Isidora Aguirre was asked by a Mapuche friend to write a play about his people. *Lautaro, epopeya del pueblo Mapuche* is the outcome. Aguirre's *Lautaro* intends to highlight the struggle that the Mapuche indians have had for the last four centuries using the confrontation with the Spaniards, and victory in 1553, as an analogy for the present persecution. The play develops the characters of Pedro de Valdivia and Lautaro as the individuals representing conflicting societies that battle over territories. Mapuche means “earthbound people” and the land they own is an integral part of their identity. When the Spanish conquerors wanted to rule over the Mapuches and their territory in 1536, they provoked great disturbance and war. That battle is not over yet. (PEG)

**Daniel Zalacaín, “El asesinato simbólico en cuatro piezas dramáticas hispanoamericanas.”**

Violence in modern drama has become a complex device used by the playwrights in a multiplicity of functions. One of its most intricate manifestations is the symbolic murder, which takes place during the unfoldings of realities that occur within the play itself. This treatment of violence is evident in *El cepillo de dientes*, *La noche de los asesinos*, *Dos viejos pánicos* and *Segundo asalto*. The inner structures which these plays exhibit make it possible for the murder to be neither bloody nor melodramatic; rather, it is part of the metatheatrical game the characters play as a means of escaping from the confinement of reality. Cruelty here does not take the form of bloodshed, but of psychological torture. Structurally, the symbolic murder serves as a connecting link between subsequent parallel scenes, thus establishing the circular life-death pattern which sets the configuration of the four plays examined. (DZ)

**Larissa A. Schneider, “*Ramona: Quintessential Cuban Drama.*”**

*Ramona*, a Cuban play performed in the United States and Canada as well as throughout the Cuban countryside to commemorate International Women’s Day, embodies the values of the island and its political leaders. By emphasizing hard work, solidarity and women’s rights, this new work by Robert Orihuela furthers the cultural, educational and revolutionary aims of the Castro government. It also demonstrates how effective productions can be staged with a minimum investment in set, props, music, costumes and make-up. Finally, it serves as a model of the guerrilla theatre movement—troupes such as Grupo Teatro Escambray (GTE) that work with local audiences to build understanding of governmental policies as well as of drama. (LAS)

**Isis Quinteros, “La consagración del mito en la epopeya mexicana: *La Malinche* de Celestino Gorostiza.”**

In dealing with the beginnings of the Mexican people, the drama *La Malinche* appears as a collective and ritual experience in which the community to which the play is addressed recognizes its own codes and renews its “destino de ser.” By giving la Malinche the main role in the epic of the conquest of Mexico, the author moves away from the traditional point of view of the historical texts. As a dominant force, it is she who makes possible Cortés’ dreams of power and glory. Gorostiza offers in his drama a poetic vision of history by recreating the myth of la Malinche as the *Mother* of the Mexican people. The consecration of this myth in the text is the affirmation of the feminine principle: a return to the mother womb which symbolizes, in the final analysis, an acknowledgement of origin, a rebirth. (IQ)

**Phyllis Zatlin, “The Contemporary Spanish and Mexican Stages: Is There a Cultural Exchange?”**

In vivid contrast to the cultural exchange between the theatres of New York and London, in the recent past there has been very little contact between the stages of Mexico City and Madrid. Although the classic theatre of the Golden Age and light comedies from Spain are readily produced in Mexico, only a handful of major Spanish dramas crossed the Atlantic in the 1970-83 period. In the other direction, even fewer Mexican plays have reached Spain, where the tendency has been to produce translations of foreign-language plays rather than works from other Spanish-speaking countries. The past several years, however, have witnessed Latin American/Spanish theatre festivals and a special two-month exhibition in Madrid on the Spanish exile in Mexico that open the possibilities for increased cultural exchange in the future. (PZ)

**James J. Troiano, “The Relativity of Reality and Madness in Arlt’s ‘Escenas de un grotesco.’”**

There has been a revival of interest in Roberto Arlt’s theatre. His theatrical fragment “Escenas de un grotesco” (1934) strongly influenced his later play *Saverio el cruel* (1936) and his final play *El desierto entra en la ciudad* (1940). A protagonist of the same name, as well as some identical dialogue, are in “Escenas de un grotesco” and *Saverio el cruel*. The practice of theatre or farce used for therapeutic purposes is apparent in all three works. Arlt’s frightening view of the world is that of a metaphoric madhouse as he continually befuddles spectators and readers who try to distinguish the mad from the sane or fantasy from reality. (JJT)

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—The Editor