

# LATIN AMERICAN THEATRE REVIEW

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

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## Abstracts

### Catherine Larson, "Recollections of Plays to Come: Time in the Theatre of Elena Garro."

Elena Garro's overwhelming interest in the notion of time is examined in this study of eight representative plays, each of which treats in a different manner the coalescence of past, present, and future. The conflation of synchronic and diachronic elements in Garro's theatre, presented through recollections of the past, cyclical repetitions, and projections into the future, leads to the creation of temporal realities that underscore the tenuous line separating appearance from reality. Alternative ways of perceiving reality are expressed through Garro's presentation of temporality as a constantly-shifting thematic and structural device; this study of *La señora en su balcón* and seven of the plays from her anthology, *Un hogar sólido*, explores Garro's unique use of time and its fundamental role in her dramatic opus. (CL)

### David William Foster, "Jose González Castillo's *Los invertidos* and the Vampire Theory of Homosexuality."

Viewing the bourgeoisie as a source of the corruption and perversion of an inherently noble working class, early twentieth-century anarchism, as exemplified in José González Castillo's 1914 thesis play *Los invertidos*, viewed homosexuality as an especially dreadful example of this social threat. By focusing on the morally righteous wife of a distinguished lawyer who turns out to be at the center of a homosexual ring, *Los invertidos* offers to its middle-class spectators the revelation of a specific social problem, a proper morally salutary stance toward it, and a formula of corrective and wrathful indignation to fight its perverse influence. The first Argentine dramatic work to deal forthrightly with homosexuality, González Castillo's play is a coherent dramatic elaboration of one prevalent attitude toward the subject. (DWF)

### Myra S. Gann, "Meaning and Metaphor in *Flores de papel*."

The canary in Egon Wolff's *Flores de papel* has in the past been seen as symbolic of Eva, whose psychological destruction at the hands of El Merluza is similar to El Merluza's treatment of the bird. But the canary also symbolizes El Merluza and his sense of being entrapped and helpless. In this study the author analyzes the metaphorical content of all of the scenes which deal with the canary, showing how Wolff's message is more accessible when the metaphor is interpreted in this more complex way. (MSG)

**Fernando Reati, "Y nos dijeron que éramos inmortales: La experiencia iniciática en el texto y en la historia."**

Through the story of a young soldier who returns home after traumatic events in the Army, Argentine playwright Osvaldo Dragún presents the military experience as an initiation rite which contains elements pertaining to primitive *rites de passage*. The temporary feminization of the character, the transformation of his language, his newly acquired sexual drive and drinking habits, the physical scarification represented by a bullet wound and the temporal and spatial divisions between pre-and post-initiation worlds indicate the ritual aspects of his experience. The text itself is part of a cultural and political code which constitutes its extratext and thus it refers to other levels of initiatic meaning. First, it has a didactic (political) intention and becomes itself an initiatic experience for its audience. Secondly, the military institution to which it refers has a strong initiatic (socializing) nature in contemporary Argentina. Finally, it is written in a period of social turmoil (post-Peronism) when society as a whole experiences an initiation into a new political era. (In Spanish) (FR)

**Sharon Magnarelli, "Dramatic Irony and Lyricism in Historical Theatre: *El pobre Franz* and *Falsa crónica de Juana la Loca*."**

This article examines two contemporary plays, *El pobre Franz* by Argentine Alicia Muñoz and *Falsa crónica de Juana la Loca* by Mexican Miguel Sabido, as historical theatre which depends upon dramatic irony for its lyrical quality. Since by definition historical theatre presents characters and events already known to the audience, it is necessarily structured by both dramatic irony and a movement to reveal what is presumed hidden. Both plays are informed by the tension between their narrative frame plays which present the official versions of the historical events and their internal plays which depict the unofficial versions, the covered or hidden, the artistic, lyrical view of how things might have been. (SM)

**Carlos Jerez-Farrán, "Un análisis diferenciador del teatro de Virgilio Piñera: el teatro satírico burlesco y el teatro absurdista."**

Virgilio Piñera's dramatic work may be divided into two periods: that which was written prior to 1957 and that which was written after. His first period is characterized by a type of satirical theatre which avails itself of the grotesque in order to criticize the extravagances of a social class and an epoch easily ridiculed. It is not until Piñera changes and transcends this socio-historical context and gives his theatre a more metaphysical and reflexive nature that his theatre fits into the broader category of Latin American theatre of the absurd. (In Spanish) (CJF:DJC)

**Julio Matas, "Vuelta a *Electra Garrigó*, de Virgilio Piñera."**

Contrary to the usual interpretation of Piñera's early play as a satire of Cuban high middle class mores, this essay advances the idea that *Electra Garrigó*, through its leading character, Electra, presents an existential kind of rebellion. It is the rebellion of a mind which aspires to the absolute power of intelligence vs. all of the "reasons of the heart." Electra wants to break all emotional ties and violate the principles and laws of the community, in search for what she calls "all the light." If she encourages Clitemnestra and Egisto to get rid of Agamemnon, "the old rooster," and incites Orestes to kill his mother, it is not because she hates them or feels the need for establishing a new and better order, but such actions represent, in her words, "a mere matter of sanitation." Ultimately, the play deals with the plight of the intellectual who has chosen to live in "coldness," away from life's comfortable "warmth." (In Spanish) (JM)

**Charles A. Perrone, "Dissonance and Dissent: The Musical Dramatics of Chico Buarque."**

The celebrated Brazilian songwriter Chico Buarque has also distinguished himself as a playwright, having authored or co-authored four important works. Musicality is fundamental and pervasive in his dramatic efforts, which reveal key preoccupations and problems of recent Brazilian dramaturgy and stagecraft. For textual, compositional, performative and historical reasons, each of Buarque's dramatic productions was a significant moment in the trajectory of the theatre during the military dictatorship of 1964-1985. Through his musical and dramatic art, Buarque was one of the regime's most vocal critics. The author's track record with federal

censors reveals the extremes and absurdities of their practices. Song is a central presence in Buarque's plays and a primary vehicle of satire and social criticism. (CAP)

**Judith I. Bissett, "La función semiótica del protagonista en *El extensionista* y *Eles Não Usam Black-tie*."**

The goal of politically committed theatre is to elicit a particular response from each spectator. It is therefore necessary to consider the structural elements that might affect the audience's "reception" of a work which seeks to deliver a message. Felipe Santander's *El extensionista* and *Eles Não Usam Black-tie* by Gianfrancesco Guarnieri, although written in different decades, protest the same social injustice. By using hermeneutics as defined by Patrice Pavis this article examines the dramatic structure in each play that communicates the characters' social function within the drama and their significance in the audience's world. The analysis represents an attempt to understand the process of "theatrical reception." (In Spanish) (JIB)

**Maria del Carmen Sillato de Gómez, "Lo carnavalesco en *Saverio el cruel*."**

The present study analyzes the carnivalesque elements in *Saverio el cruel* by Roberto Arlt. The rites of the carnival, whose origins go back to ancient pagan festivities, are recaptured by Arlt in order to set forth the themes of the frustration of unrealized dreams and the conflict between being and appearance in a society that alienates the individual. The nasty trick prepared for Saverio corresponds step by step to one of the principal pagan rituals: that of electing and subsequently dethroning a false king. The interchanging of roles, the inversion of the established order, the participation of the characters in the farce that they themselves planned and the use of disguises are other characteristics of the carnival that are seen in *Saverio*. The studies of Julio Caro Baroja on the origin and development of the carnival and those set forth by Mikhail Bakhtin regarding carnivalization as part of the literary tradition of all genres serve as points of reference for this analysis. (In Spanish) (MSG: DJC)