

Performance Review

Siempre intenté decir algo de Ofelia Fox y Rosa Sánchez

Recientemente esta investigadora tuvo la grata sorpresa de descubrir, por medio del periódico *The Los Angeles Times*, el *Grupo Teatro Cubano*, que presentó *Siempre intenté decir algo*, obra original de Ofelia Fox y Rosa Sánchez (ambas cubanas), con la dirección de Hecmar Lugo. Se representó (el 6, 7, 13 y 14 de abril, 1991) en el Gallery Theatre (Hollywood), sala teatral subvencionada por la ciudad de Los Angeles, Departamento de Asuntos Culturales, y disponible para el uso de cualquier grupo cultural ciudadano.

Lo más innovador de la obra, cuya puesta en escena sigue los cánones del teatro realista, fue su temática y su público. Lo que "siempre intentó decir" el protagonista Manolo (Aníbal Llende)-un mozo apuestísimo, alto y físicamente muy varonil-es su homosexualidad. La obra gira alrededor de una situación familiar, donde Manol invita a varios tíos y tías para "soltar la bomba": no solamente que es *gay*, sino que tiene SIDA. Las reacciones de los parientes abarcan todo lo esperado: desde la tía Fefa (Coralía Braverman), que inicialmente lo rechaza por "su perversidad," a la más aceptadora Nena (Peria Walter), para quien su sobrino siempre lo seguirá siendo, al solterón tío Héctor (Peppin Valera), del que sospechamos (aunque jamás confiesa) que también tiene "esqueletos en el armario." Posiblemente no podría faltar el estereotipado y cómico empleado de casa "mariquita," Vic (Hecmar Lugo, que también dirigió). Su papel exagerado proporciona la comicidad que alivia la seriedad del tema. La actuación estuvo muy pareja y los personajes bien interpretados. El mensaje fue muy claro: que el enfrentar nuestros esquemas mentales acerca de temas "delicados," como la homosexualidad y la epidemia del SIDA, nos toca a todos.

El público presente durante la matiné dominical a la que asistimos (mis padres y yo) resultó bastante mayor de edad y predominantemente cubano. Según una entrevista con las autoras, el *Grupo Teatro Cubano* presenta su trabajo en conjunto con el Club Cultural Cubano de Monterey Park. Su labor consiste en entretener y además de concientizar. Su elaboración humorística es esencial: "La idea es escribir temas serios, pero divertir. O sea, con el sentido del humor se puede decir mucho más." (entrevista con Rosa Sánchez)

Ambas autoras tienen antecedentes con la comunidad cubana. Han trabajado extensivamente en la radio, televisión y películas tanto en Miami como en Hollywood. Rosa salió de Cuba en 1954 hacia los EE.UU. para estudiar, vivió en Nueva York y luego regresó brevemente a Cuba en 1961. Ofelia vino a Miami en 1960. Se conocieron durante el tremendo éxodo de cubanos de esa época, cuando Ofelia Fox tenía un programa en la radio de Miami, "Patria en lágrimas" (de la antigua W-MIE, ahora es la W-CUBA), en el cual se ayudaba a la caótica masa de nuevos refugiados políticos difundiendo información acerca de servicios públicos y otros beneficios. Ambas se radican en Los Angeles desde 1964.

Lo significativo del *Grupo Teatro Cubano* en Los Angeles es que ellos están presentando problemáticas sociales actuales, de una manera muy abierta y humana, a un público que generalmente es considerado como ultra-conservador, y que este público asiste y apoya su teatro. De esta manera ojalá se rompa un poco el estereotipo del exilado cubano como ente cerrado a corrientes socialmente progresistas.

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Book Reviews

Taylor, Diana. *Theatre of Crisis: Drama and Politics in Latin America*. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1991. 277 pp.

In *Theatre of Crisis* Diana Taylor rewrites the history of Latin American theatre and rereads many of the most important plays written between 1965-70. The lens through which Taylor views her subject is focused on the destructive impact of colonization on both the sociopolitical and aesthetic realms. Taylor's reevaluation of the past leads her to trace how Latin American theatre, from the Indian religious spectacles to the boom of the sixties, has been defined by European terms and cast in the role of "other." Since the 1950s playwrights have become more conscious of the condition of "otherness" and have struggled to find dramatic expressions for their Latin American "selves." By the mid-1960s Latin American countries were undergoing tremendous social upheavals that led to political crisis and violence. At a time of stress to socio-political infrastructures, Latin American dramatists demonstrated their creative independence in plays that both portrayed and questioned the crisis at hand. Taylor identifies the works of Enrique Buenaventura, José Triana, Griselda Gambaro, Egon Wolff, and Emilio Carballido from 1965-70 as examples of theatre of crisis, that is, theatre that makes manifest both the objective historical context of crisis such as political instability and violence, and the subjective context of personal collapse and decomposition (6).

The chapter that best demonstrates the characteristics of the theatre of crisis is the one dedicated to Griselda Gambaro and the plays *Los siameses*, *El campo*, and *Información para extranjeros*. Taylor has already demonstrated her understanding of Gambaro's work elsewhere (see review by J. E. Bixler in *LATR* 24/1). In *Theatre of Crisis*, Taylor discusses Gambaro's treatment of violence in the theatrical relationship of victims and victimizers. She uncovers the strong ties between the horrors of Argentina's death squads and the relationships dramatized in Gambaro's plays. The reading of *El campo* especially is enriched with a comparison to the theatre of the Holocaust.

The chapters on Triana, Buenaventura, and Wolff offer further evidence to support the idea of representing crisis. The essay on Triana questions previous studies that view *La noche de los asesinos* as ritual or preparation for revolutionary action. Taylor argues instead that Triana's most famous play

"problematizes the revolution's failure to create new roles, new constructs, a new real" (83). The comments on *Ceremonial de guerra* and *Palabras comunes* seem short and incomplete and would benefit from the inclusion of an article published separately in volume 24/1 of *LATR*. The analysis of Buenaventura's cycle of plays *Los papeles del infierno* diagrams the intricate relationships between the plays and their various versions and formats. Throughout the discussion Taylor concentrates on Buenaventura's preoccupation with challenging official history. Egon Wolff's *Flores de papel* is not identified as a play that represents crisis, but rather as one that reflects crisis. Taylor's feminist reading of Eva's destruction by the sickly and perverted outsider argues that Wolff's play "simply replaces one kind of blindness with another; one kind of oppression with the one it ostensibly sets out to overcome" (204).

In the chapter on Emilio Carballedo's *El día que se soltaron los leones* and *Yo también hablo de la rosa* Taylor argues that the plays construct a Mexican cultural identity and discourse in response to the colonizing influences of the West. The essay also contends that Carballedo's theatrical practice is linked to transculturation; Fernando Ortiz's concept of cultural loss and rejuvenation. Although this chapter lacks the obvious references to subjective and objective disintegration, Taylor makes a strong case for its inclusion in the book.

Unlike this review, Taylor did not end her study with Carballedo's "liberating vision of Mexican culture" (148). Nonetheless, I believe she would argue that Latin American dramatic art, from both Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries, has been more successful at responding to colonization than the socio-political sphere. As her study shows, the plays speak about Latin America in their own language and imagery that both reflect and build identity.

Taylor's extensive research background in critical theory, Latin American history, and Latin American and world theatres provides her with impressive resources with which to document her work. Her perceptions of the relationships between theatre and society and theatre and its own theatricality make this study fascinating and complex. Given its critical approach and the plays and playwrights discussed, *Theatre of Crisis* will no doubt become a standard work for both theatre scholars and Latin Americanists.

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Burgess, Ronald D. *The New Dramatists of Mexico, 1967-1985*. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1991. 166 pp.

Scholars and students of Latin American theatre in general, and Mexican theatre in particular, will welcome this study of a diverse but interesting group of playwrights. Burgess has examined exhaustively and in great depth practically all of the plays written by what he has called the "lost generation," those playwrights who were born between 1939 and 1954 and began publishing around 1967. He moves through his corpus chronologically, giving a very accurate account of the appearance of individual writers, groupings among them, and their longevity. I sense a stronger familiarity with, and perhaps interest in, the writers of the "early years" (1967-1974) and the "lull" (1974-1978), the ones who seem to have fallen into the "lost" category; but he has not slighted the 79-85 group which, as we now know, has produced something of a "boom" in Mexican dramaturgy. In fact, this book will probably be most useful as a starting point for critics who write on the playwrights of the eighties, since very little has been published on these authors to date, and they will undoubtedly be the object of numerous studies in a near future.

After introducing the book by defining his idea of literary "generation" and alerting us to the fact that he will be using a variety of critical approaches to the different texts, Burgess divides his material into seven chapters. "The Early Years" focuses on Oscar Villegas and Willebaldo López, "the first two writers in the newest generation of Mexican theater. . ." (14) Next, in "The Generation Gap" we read about the group who studied under Emilio Carballido (as did Villegas and López) in the early seventies and produced a wide range of generally short plays, but "were greeted with such disinterest and even scorn from public and critics that they stopped writing after only a few years, and eventually the entire group turned to other endeavors." (30) In this category he includes Pilar Campesino, Dante del Castillo, Miguel Angel Tenorio, Sergio Peregrina, Juan Tovar, José Agustín, Jesús Assaf, Felipe Reyes Palacios, Leticia Téllez, Enrique Ballesté and José Luna. I might add that the first five of these are currently quite active again, Tenorio in particular.

Between 1974 and 1978 there was what Burgess has called "A Five-Year Lull," the topic of chapter four; here he mainly discusses the plays of Gerardo Velásquez, the most productive of the new generation during these years. Chapter five is called "The Storm Surrounding the Lull: González Dávila and Olmos;" these two playwrights "began their production during the first period and continued writing after the five-year lull; . . . both. . . wrote about escape--futile but incessant attempts to run away from the frightening and often brutal reality that surrounds people." (62)

The next two chapters focus on four playwrights Burgess considers the most important of the "second wave" (1979-1985): Sabina Berman, Tomás Espinosa, Oscar Liera and Víctor Hugo Rascón Banda. He finally glosses plays published or produced by other writers of the "second wave;" and in his

short conclusion he restates some of the common tendencies he has noted throughout the book, mainly, a preference for realism and for historical topics, and a thematic emphasis on the "emptiness all around." (137)

In order to render this large, somewhat amorphous corpus manageable, Ron Burgess has made some choices which, while perfectly valid, may leave his reader frustrated, confused, or with an erroneous sense of proportion, especially since at no time does he clarify what these decisions have been. He has treated all plays as equal, as if they had a value of "one," whether their length is one page or one hundred pages, one-act or five; his quantitative remarks are somewhat misleading because of this. Also, there is an unstated decision to approach the plays from a purely literary perspective and to deal with texts, i.e., manuscripts, published or unpublished, performed or unperformed, rather than with plays which in one way or another would have reached a Mexican audience during this time period. I understand that Burgess must go beyond what was actually staged or published and read widely in order to bring the lost generation to light, but perhaps some additional criteria in selecting the texts of the early years would have been helpful in creating a balance between what was written and stored in the closet and what actually became known. But everything Burgess says in this book is true, and his material is presented in a coherent, accessible fashion, making the book quite readable and enjoyable. It is a valuable book, and I recommend it for anyone approaching the new drama of any of the Latin American countries.

Myra S. Gann

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Tramoya 22. Xalapa y Camden: Universidad Veracruzana y Rutgers University-Camden, enero-marzo 1990. Beatriz J. Rizk, coordinadora especial. 136 pp.

Weiss, Judith. *Calle escenario y escuela / Street, Stage and School*. Washington, D.C.: D.C. Community Arts Council and Centro de Arte, 1989. 61 pp.

Beatriz Risk y Judith Weiss, ambas integrantes de la Asociación de Trabajadores e Investigadores del Nuevo Teatro (ATINT), muestran una ejemplar labor historizadora de la actividad teatral actual de grupos latinoamericanos y chicanos que residen en los Estados Unidos.

Mientras que el número de *Tramoya* se dedica a trazar a grandes rasgos esta actividad durante las últimas tres décadas--con tres obras dramáticas y tres ensayos críticos--la monografía de Judith Weiss enfoca específicamente la actividad realizada por el Teatro GALA, Teatro Nuestro y LatiNegro en los

sectores latinos de Mount Pleasant y Adams-Morgan, Washington D.C. De este modo ambos textos se complementan en este campo de investigación que implica no solamente hacer análisis textual, sino una triple labor: la del periodista, la del cronista y la del literato. Rizk y Weiss se ubican ideológicamente dentro del Nuevo Teatro latinoamericano que propone un encuentro entre el arte y el momento sociohistórico.

El número 22 de *Tramoya* contiene tres ensayos y tres textos dramáticos. Rizk comienza con su panorámico "El teatro latino en los Estados Unidos." Marca la dificultad que implica el término abarcador "la comunidad hispanoamericana en los Estados Unidos," ya que la singularidad de la terminología falsifica la realidad diversificada (política, cultural, económica y geográfica) de los grupos hispanos en este país. En breve espacio logra trazar los desarrollos teatrales de los tres grupos hispanos más numerosos: el chicano, el puertorriqueño/nuyorriqueño, y el cubano. Ofrece diversa información de fuentes de primera mano no fácilmente obtenible (ya que no están publicadas). Compara la producción teatral con la de otros medios de comunicación masiva como el cine. Comenta sobre el acceso del latino a los medios de producción: "si bien hay una pequeña porción de la comunidad que ha alcanzado transcendencia nacional . . . la gran mayoría de los trabajadores latinos de la cultura subsisten penosamente" (Rizk 10). Fuera de un elocuente y comprehensivo análisis, Rizk apoya su trabajo en una extensiva bibliografía.

Alberto Sandoval Sánchez subtitula su ensayo "El trenzar dramático de la asimilación y la toma de posición de la identidad latina en U.S.A." y desarrolla un lúcido análisis del texto de Dolores Prida, donde las identidades de las protagonistas están plasmadas de modo bicultural: "Ella" habla español y se identifica como inmigrante cubana; "She" habla inglés y se identifica con la cultura angloamericana. El cabal análisis de Sandoval tiene como enfoque la tensión y el contrapunto que implica el compartir dos identidades culturales dentro de un mismo "yo." El ensayo de Sandoval está escrito en español mientras que la obra--incluida--de la dramaturga es bilingüe.

La crónica de Arturo C. Flores acerca del Teatro Campesino ubica adecuadamente la trayectoria artística/social del legendario grupo que ha ido cobrando peso a través de los años, después de haber desempeñado un importante papel político-social durante la época de los sesenta. Contiene selecciones de su entrevista con Valdez. Sin embargo, no comenta aspectos más problemáticos, como por ejemplo, el progresivo auto-aislamiento por parte del Campesino en relación al resto de la actividad cultural/teatral en Aztlán. Sigue líneas ya establecidas en otros estudios donde prevalece el culto a la personalidad de Valdez. Esto tiende a distorsionar y marginalizar la actividad comunal del *grupo*. Particularmente ausente en este tipo de historiografía están las integrantes femeninas; Yolanda Broyles-González completará el cuadro con sus investigaciones al respecto.

La calle Simpson de Eduardo Gallardo apunta hacia la política bilingüista del Teatro Rodante Puertorriqueño de Nueva York, el que tradujo el texto al

español y lo montó exitosamente. La acción dramática gira alrededor de personajes cuyas vidas están enmarcadas dentro de las realidades del ghetto del Bronx. Muestra un candente humor caribeño y un desenlace problemático.

El chiflo de oro de Silviana Wood--inclusión oportuna--representa una estética muy chicana en su uso del estilo *acto*. Esta aproximación al montaje proporciona una economía simbólica en la cual en poco tiempo y espacio los tipos logran representar toda una problemática. *El chiflo* expone las humillaciones del trabajador indocumentado (aún por "su propia gente.")

Calle, escenario y escuela (1989) de Judith Weiss documenta un compromiso entre sociedad y trabajo cultural. Weiss se propone y logra "celebrar la iniciativa y la dedicación de los teatristas . . . y . . . reconstruir una trayectoria." Las cronologías del Teatro GALA, Teatro Nuestro y LatiNegro, son elaboradas como trabajo en parte colectivo. Ideológicamente el teatro es concebido como foro comunicativo entre las tres entidades mencionadas en el título. La monografía está escrita en español e inglés. Contiene cuatro secciones: análisis demográfico de la inmigración latinoamericana a los sectores latinos de Washington, D.C. (Adams-Morgan y Mount Pleasant) y un enfoque historiográfico de cada uno de los tres grupos.

En el bosquejo demográfico, se subrayan los grandes cambios en la población de Adams-Morgan y Mount Pleasant, desde sus orígenes con el cuerpo diplomático que llega durante los años cuarenta con el establecimiento de la OEA (1948) hasta los recién refugiados políticos salvadoreños de los '80.

El Teatro GALA (1976-77) es el más establecido y menos político de los tres. Funciona de modo bilingüe y ha desarrollado la "fórmula GALA" que incluye un trabajo en repertorio anual de una obra del teatro clásico español o latinoamericano, una obra de contenido sociopolítico latinoamericano, y una obra artísticamente experimental.

El Teatro Nuestro (1976-77) y LatiNegro (1984-85) se definen a partir de su rol político-social dentro de la comunidad hispana inmediata. Influencias del Nuevo Teatro latinoamericano definen la función y el carácter de base popular del Teatro Nuestro (y LatiNegro). Traza la participación de ciertos integrantes claves, y muestra el nexo entre Teatro Nuestro y LatiNegro.

LatiNegro, grupo de integrantes juveniles, se preocupa de los problemas de la incomunicación que existen entre dos grupos minoritarios de la zona: los negros angloparlantes y los latinoamericanos.

El teatro latino en los Estados Unidos reside inextricablemente dentro de una red socio-política. La creación de historiografías del quehacer cultural latino resulta importantísima para la labor de constituirnos y darnos a conocer como sujetos histórico-sociales, empeño que aptamente adelantan Judith Weiss, Beatriz Rizk y sus colaboradores.

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Diament, Mario. *Teatro: Crónica de un secuestro; El invitado; Equinoccio*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Fraterna, 1989. 185 pp.

Diament's most important dramatic production over a twenty-year period is brought together in this volume. Although Diament (1942) has not ranked among the most prolific of the younger Argentine dramatists nor necessarily the most touted (I know of no interpretive criticism beyond brief journalistic notices of his work, and Ernesto Schóo's brief presentation is no more than a blurb), he may be considered one of the most representative figures of the dramatists to emerge after the military coup of 1966 that inaugurated almost fifteen years of authoritarian rule. *Crónica de un secuestro* dates from 1971, the beginning of this period; *El invitado* is from 1979, at the height of the Proceso and the *guerra sucia* against alleged subversives; *Equinoccio* was first performed in 1983, virtually on the eve of the transition to constitutional democracy.

All three of these works center on the discourse of authoritarianism, with special emphasis on its installation in a bourgeois mentality of social existence. Concomitantly, all three works are designed to provoke in the spectator a complex inventory of questions concerning the origins, the maintenance, and the survival of this discourse, the relative weight of its eloquence as it moves along various social axes, and what the possibilities are for one to detect its ideological slippages, its internal coherences to a degree adequate enough to begin to deconstruct it. While Diament's characters are as a group incapable of such an undertaking, his theatre can only make sense if the dramatist has faith in the ability of the spectators to disengage themselves from any naturalistic identity with the characters and commit themselves to a repudiation of the authoritarian mentality. In a superficial sense, Diament's theatre is one of despair, and the danger exists that the spectator, even if s/he does not endorse the discourse of fascism and even, in fact, rejects it in an attack of ideological *nausée*, will merely experience angered frustration without being able to contemplate a way out of the labyrinth of authoritarianism. I use "contemplate" here in a metaphorical sense, since Diament's theatre does not provide a dramatic universe for literal contemplation in which tokens of the ideal spectator I am hypothesizing he envisions are able to mount a counterdiscourse that will deconstruct authoritarian discourse and install in its place an alternative social ideology. The aggressiveness of the kidnappers in *Crónica* is not adequate to this purpose, since their social standing is ambiguous (two possible ways of reading them are as free-floating ideologues engaged in acts of spontaneous guerrillaism, or as misfits converting their resentments into antisocial acts). And the brief appearance of Mariela at the end of *Equinoccio* to challenge the acquiescence of her lover with the system of repression is not enough to do more than suggest a counterdiscourse beyond angry negatives. Diament must rely on an audience able from the start to penetrate the dense texture of authoritarianism, to understand immediately its

perverse and cynical reasoning, and be brave enough to disavow any sympathy with either the victims (because of their acquiescence) and the victimizers, without being offered any representation of social behavior.

Despite its being checked at a point prior to any coherent meditation on alternatives to authoritarianism, Diament's theatre demonstrates exceptional dramatic dexterity. Like so many contemporary Argentine dramas executed within severe space constraints and without enough budget for more than a handful of actors and props, these texts rely on the intensity of the dialogue, the inventive use of seemingly innocuous triggers of dramatic confrontation, and abrupt and disconcerting transitions in order to engage the audience with the convoluted nature of the social discourse being configured through the theatrical text.

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Gallardo, Edward. *Simpson Street and other plays*. Ed. John Antush. Houston: Arte Público Press, 1990. 225 pp.

Edward Gallardo's plays are sensitive portrayals of Puerto Rican life on the East Coast. One is tempted to place him in the continuum of Nuyorican writers like Miguel Piñero, Miguel Algarín, and Víctor Hernández Cruz, since he is of the same generation, but Gallardo is clearly of another voice altogether.

The characters in *Simpson Street* face the same concerns of all Puerto Ricans living on the mainland: poverty, racism, substance abuse, colonialism, but Gallardo exclusively employs the genre of the domestic drama to tell their tales. The people in his plays don't kill each other, at least not physically. This author's language is not bombastic, like the bongo drums of a Lucky Cienfuegos (now deceased if memory serves me right); nor is it the nihilistic drug-induced reverie of a Miguel Piñero (certainly most deceased). Neither does Gallardo speak in the sophisticated, literary style of a Miguel Algarín, a professor of English at Rutgers University.

Gallardo writes about Nuyorican families and the women who are at the center of them. The main theme revolves around the conflict between mothers and their offspring. The playwright speaks through the voices of his remarkable feminine roles. There is always a lusty woman in his plays--Elva in *Simpson Street*, Carmen in *Waltz on a Merry-Go-Round*, and Carlotta in *Women Without Men*. There are bossy and opinionated prima donnas like Lucy in *Simpson Street* and Orquídea in *Women Without Men*, who try to run everyone's life, and then there are the shy, sensitive types who observe life and comment on it from a distance.

The men in Gallardo's plays are harder to pin down. *Women Without Men* has no men at all, although the women spend most of the time arguing about them; *Simpson Street* has a very sympathetic male character in Michael, who has survived a stint in a mental hospital, while the men in *Waltz* are composed of a crude Anglo stud, a Puerto Rican jíbaro, a redneck, and an elderly emasculated black man.

The women in my Hispanic Theatre Literature class who read Gallardo's plays and saw *Fantasma*, a rock opera he authored and which was produced by Southwestern College for the American College Theatre Festival, complained that his Latinas seem to be waiting or depending too much on the men. While Gallardo's women do commiserate about males, they are also very much alone, like many single Puerto Rican mothers raising families. But in reality this loneliness makes them less dependent on men and is a source of their strength.

Gallardo is one of the most widely produced Latino writers today whose plays contain strong feminine roles. Groups like Carmen Zapata's Los Angeles-based Bilingual Foundation of the Arts have presented *Women Without Men*, and Miriam Colón's Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre production of *Simpson Street* was hailed as a "milestone" in Nuyorican theatre.

Unfortunately, *Waltz on a Merry-Go-Round* is not in the same league with the other plays in this collection. The forced language, strained plot, and characters who lack verisimilitude rank this piece as a weak melodrama that spins stories of the past, rather than movable drama in the present tense.

I do, however, highly recommend *Simpson Street* and *Women Without Men* to readers as windows into the Puerto Rican soul. Gallardo is an important writer who won the first National Latino Playwriting Contest sponsored by the New York Shakespeare Festival Theatre in 1985 and whose first collection is now published by Arte Público Press. The volume is capably edited by John Antush and suffers only from a lack of illustrations to document the history of these important moments in Puerto Rican mainland drama.

Carlos Morton
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Hernández, Leopoldo M. *Piezas cortas*. Honolulu: Editorial Persona, 1990. 114 pp.

Montes Huidobro, Matías. *Funeral en Teruel*. Honolulu: Editorial Persona, 1990. 95 pp.

Triana, José. *Ceremonial de guerra*. Honolulu: Editorial Persona, 1990. 64 pp.

Piezas cortas recoge nueve obras del dramaturgo cubano Leopoldo Hernández. *En el parque*, *Cheo*, *Mañana*, *el sol* y *Los pobres ricos* son monólogos. *En el parque*, la madre de un niño imaginario se sienta en el banco de un parque, donde cuenta su vida a un hombre desconocido. En su largo soliloquio la señora revela su soledad, desconfianza de los demás y deseo de conseguir un amor limpio. *Mañana, el sol* trata de un hombre recluido en una institución mental, que se siente marginado de todo lo que le rodea y aún de sí mismo. Sufre de un tic nervioso, producido por una sensación desagradable en la nuca. En *Los pobres ricos*, una anciana pobre y quijotesca pretende ser la dueña de un apartamento. A través de este personaje enajenado, Hernández presenta los males que aquejan a Los Angeles. En *Cheo* ("monólogo sin acotaciones," según clasificación del autor) el protagonista es un borracho, que desde un bar americano recuerda su niñez desgraciada, cuando vivía en Cuba.

El mudo e *Infierno* y *duda* son obras de gran tensión dramática, inspiradas en la guerra contra Batista y en el episodio de Playa Girón. *El mudo* fue la primera obra estrenada de Hernández (en el teatro Payret de La Habana, el 19 de marzo de 1961). La acción tiene lugar en un pueblo del interior de la Cuba pre-Castro (1958). El tema principal es la justicia o venganza revolucionaria. *Infierno* y *duda* está estructurada en siete escenas. La acción tiene lugar dos días antes de la invasión de Bahía de Cochinos (abril, 1961) y se sitúa en dos lugares: la Fortaleza de la Cabaña y las oficinas del G-2 (Seguridad del Estado) en La Habana. Espinosa y Ramírez, presos de la Cabaña, mueren fusilados en el fatídico Paredón. *No negocie, Sr. Presidente* es una obra propia del teatro de guerrillas. Trata del secuestro de una figura política. Un grupo insurgente exige la excarcelación de 35 presos políticos a cambio del rehén.

Montes Huidobro es uno de los mejores dramaturgos cubanos contemporáneos. En *Funeral en Teruel* hay tres protagonistas que conservan los mismos nombres de *Los amantes de Teruel*, de Hartzenbusch: Don Pedro de Segura, Doña Isabel y Marsilla. Don Rodrigo de Azagra y Doña Margarita del drama de Hartzenbusch son el Conde Luna y Doña Gertrudis de esta obra. Montes Huidobro incluye a otros personajes, como Calígula, doña Fefa, Eva (la hermana de Isabel), Martina (criada), Paco (mayordomo), Juanito Cosanueva (amigo de Eva) y coros, como los gogós, los yeyés, sangradores y caprichos. Estos personajes añadidos otorgan modernidad y proveen un elemento de farsa (¿iconoclasta?) a la obra: unen la cultura española con la

cubana, muestran las dicotomías y antinomias de la sociedad española contemporánea y revelan el abismo entre generaciones. Las acotaciones de la obra convierten lo que pudo ser una más simple producción dramática en un caos incontenible: el lenguaje es subversivo, las acciones son inesperadas y las yuxtaposiciones temporales estructuran el acontecimiento. *Funeral en Teruel* es una obra abierta: la farsa se impone al teatro y el teatro a la vida. Eva descubre el estado actual de la sociedad española; por ejemplo, la moda desvergonzante y los escándalos de figuras conocidas de la clase alta. Fefa es la receptora o espectadora de estos descubrimientos. Gertrudis encarna las paradojas propias de España (de las dos Españas). El tema más importante de la obra podría ser la vida misma, ejemplificada en el fluir de la sangre, en el contraste entre lo auténtico y lo postizo o entre lo tradicional y lo moderno. Montes Huidobro y el crítico José A. Escarpanter han señalado las fuentes paródicas de la obra: la Avellaneda, García Gutiérrez, Bécquer, Goya, Gil y Carrasco, Ganivet, Zorrilla, Camus y Anouilh. Hay que señalar también el carácter metafórico de *Funeral en Teruel*. La relación no consumada entre Inés y Marsilla es paralela a la situación cubana contemporánea, y el hecho de que Marsilla se encuentre en Cuba y regrese de ella muerto no es fortuito. Más bien invita a crear analogías, a unir mundos diversos, separados por el tiempo y el espacio.

De la misma edad que Montes Huidobro, Triana es una de las figuras estelares del teatro cubano. *Ceremonial de guerra* consta de dos actos. El primero contiene siete escenas, mientras que el segundo, doce. La obra fue escrita durante el período 1968-1973, cuando el autor se encontraba en Cuba. El fondo anecdótico se remonta a 1895, comienzo de la guerra independentista. Los personajes incluyen a siete soldados mambises y a un vendedor ambulante. El protagonista principal es Aracelio Fonseca, un Coronel herido, en peligro de ser capturado por las tropas del general español Garrido. Los demás soldados esperan, sin suerte, que Fonseca les entregue un mapa de gran valor estratégico. El mapa indica la configuración geográfica del mítico fortín de la Candelaria, cuya toma podría acelerar el triunfo de los revolucionarios. Triana recurre a novedosas técnicas, como la distanciamiento de los soldados entre sí, el aislamiento y la tozudez de Fonseca, la constante cercanía de los soldados españoles enemigos, el uso de una carta y la introducción de Eliecer, personaje ambulante, que funge de enlace o puente entre los españoles y los soldados escondidos, entre la guerra y la percepción de la misma. Habiendo escrito esta obra en Cuba, Triana es muy cauteloso y no hace ninguna alusión a la Cuba presente.

Los tres autores cubanos aquí reseñados tienen en común una visión satírica de la sociedad, una apertura a temas universales, un conocimiento o manejo de diversas técnicas teatrales. Pero, aparte de estas coincidencias, los tres representan modos dramáticos distintos y sobre todo, una diferente percepción de la realidad cubana y del exilio. Hernández prefiere el tema de la revolución castrista y de los individuos marginados en la sociedad americana,

Montes Huidobro usa la parodia y la leyenda en su recreación dramática, mientras que Triana recurre al pasado histórico cubano (siglo XIX), presentándolo originalmente a base de elipsis, distanciamientos y situaciones confusas, que requieren la activa participación del lector o espectador.

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Vilalta, Maruxa. *Una voz en el desierto: Vida de San Jerónimo*. Mexico D. F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1990. 241 pp.

This most recent play by Mexican playwright, Maruxa Vilalta, marks a turning point in her dramatic career. Gone are the interpersonal violence and hostility, along with interchangeability of victim and victimizer, that characterized most of her earlier plays. Gone too is the setting of contemporary society which has marked virtually all of her dramatic works. This is not to say, however, that *Una voz en el desierto: Vida de San Jerónimo* is without significance for the contemporary audience. Quite the contrary, for it dramatizes the theatricality of society as well as the circularity of both life and humankind's endeavors at any time and in any place.

Written after numerous years of research on the part of the playwright, *Voz* is set in late 300 and early 400 A. D., a time of turbulence and upheaval in Christendom. It recounts some of the major events in the life of St. Jerome, the monk who would not be Pope and who was noted for his dedication to accurate translation and truth as he struggled against the falsity and theatricality of the Papal court(s). But, truth as Vilalta demonstrates, is not always readily translated nor accepted; nor is theatricality easily avoided.

The play opens in St. Jerome's humble cell, a few months before his death in 419 A. D. In more or less realistically sketched flashbacks, Scenes 2 through 15 depict events from his life between 382 and 416, including his alternating positions of favor and disfavor with various Roman Popes, until his exodus from Rome to Bethlehem and the fall of Rome to the "barbarians." At the start of Scene 16, and the height of the "nightmare" that was the fall of Rome in 410 and the burning of Bethlehem in 416, St. Jerome awakens, as it were, to the "present" of 418-19 and a series of hallucinations, masked actors, who synecdochically and impressionistically dramatize those same events we earlier saw depicted more fully and realistically. Such a technique redoubles and underlines both the theatricality of the work and the deployment of time: we watch Jerome observe the theatre that we have already witnessed (thus conflating present and past, or past and even more past) and, more importantly, accepted, via our willing suspension of disbelief, as reality (thus

conflating reality and fiction, or presentation, re-presentation, and re-representation).

Midway through Scene 16, we are proffered yet another level of fiction/metatheatre when the masked actors remove their masks and reveal themselves as students from the twentieth century who, in a mirror reflection of the mirror reflection, are going to produce a Broadway play based on St. Jerome's life. Their presence on the stage leads to a discussion of the falsity of twentieth-century images about his life--images and legends based, significantly, on other works of art such as paintings and biographies, perhaps more fictional than factual. Before the play returns us to the time frame of the first scene and St. Jerome's death, the modern day students emphasize the circularity (and perhaps futility) of the arts (and perhaps all human endeavors) as they inform St. Jerome that his greatest contribution of all, the Vulgate, his Latin version of the Bible, had been distorted in the centuries after his death until it (perhaps like his life) was no longer recognizable.

The interplay between reality and fiction, present and past, is made even more acute by the fact that throughout the play, the protagonist's speeches include quotes from the existent texts of St. Jerome. In addition, the dramatic work is followed by numerous scholarly notes indicating the sources of the quotes and other factual information. Also included in the volume are a chronology of St. Jerome, a list of his iconography, scenographic sketches, a bibliography of studies on St. Jerome, a bibliography on Vilalta's other works, and a bibliography of studies of her works.

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Wolff, Egon. *Teatro completo*. Boulder: Society of Spanish and Spanish-American Studies, 1990. 659 pp.

Students of Latin American theatre and lovers of good literature in general will welcome *Teatro completo*. This Spanish-language anthology is the first to include all of the plays (fourteen) written by Egon Wolff between 1948 and 1986. Wolff, a member of the Chilean Generation of 1957, has long been recognized as one of the most talented dramatists of twentieth century Latin America.

The prologue to *Teatro completo*, penned by George Woodyard, is thorough and appropriate to the general purposes of an anthology. Woodyard provides a schematic biography of Wolff, centering on those events which have most clearly had an impact on his career as a writer. The critic avoids political classification of the sort that has sometimes characterized Wolff as nothing more than a bourgeois author writing for the bourgeoisie or, at the other extreme, as a revolutionary announcing the overturn of the capitalist social order. Woodyard takes into consideration the political implications of Wolff's dramas, but his evaluation is not limited by them. In a characteristic comment regarding Wolff's expressive mastery, he states:

No es el lenguaje de Luis Alberto Heiremans, la voz poética del teatro chileno, ni tampoco el de Juan Radrigán, representante de la clase más marginada de Chile, sino una voz que irrumpe desde un conocimiento profundo de los aspectos psicológicos del ser humano, una voz sumamente chilena que tiene una gran capacidad para trascender fronteras nacionales. (viii)

Woodyard accurately points out the constants of Wolff's theatre--thorough technical and structural control, characters who are representative of the poor or the oppressed, an almost universal lack of and need for love, a dramatic space which shows signs of decay, etc. This writer disagrees with him only when he attributes to Wolff an "extraordinaria capacidad para captar un diálogo verosímil y penetrante en todas sus obras" (viii). Although Wolff's dialogue-writing ability is acknowledgeably very strong, I cannot help but think that Woodyard's insistence on "verosímil y penetrante en todas sus obras" is overly generous.

The introductory remarks are followed by a brief commentary on each of Wolff's fourteen plays. The date and locale of original performances are provided, as is a short overview of each work's most significant features. Woodyard guides the reader toward understanding how each particular drama fits within the scheme of Wolff's total output. Lastly, the prologue takes up the three plays generally regarded by critics to be Wolff's masterpieces: *Los invasores*, *Flores de papel*, and *La balsa de la Medusa*. In Woodyard's view, this "trilogy" marks

. . . etapas importantes de experimentación formal en la carrera de Wolff caracterizadas por la búsqueda de nuevas técnicas y formas, y el juego con motivos recurrentes y significantes. [. . .] Y lo más importante de todo es que se trata de obras que captan elementos de diferencias sociales y dejan ver la pared que separa a los desposeídos. (xvii)

Beyond the prologue, *Teatro completo* presents Wolff's dramas ordered chronologically, thus allowing the reader to easily follow the evolution of Wolff's trademark mix of psychological introspection and social commentary. The ensemble confirms Woodyard's assertion in the prologue that Wolff's widely performed *Los invasores* (1963), his admirably wrought *Flores de papel* (1970) and most recently, his anguished and ambivalent *La balsa de la Medusa* (1984), constitute but one plane of a multifaceted corpus. The volume reveals Wolff's oscillation between the quasi-surrealistic quality of these masterworks and the realism of his early plays *Mansión de lechuzas* (1958), *Discípulos del miedo* (1958), *Parejas de trapo* (1960), and *Niña madre* (1962). In fact, realism seems to be Wolff's vehicle of choice whenever his plot centers on family relations and on the conflict between authentic and false or perverted values. He returns to it sporadically in later works such as *El signo de Caín* (1969), *Espejismos* (1978), and *José* (1980). He is also revealed as a master of ritual theatre in *Kindergarten* (1977) and *Háblame de Laura* (1986). Even close followers of Chilean theatre in this country are likely to discover something new in Wolff's incursions into the domain of farce (*El sobre azul*, 1977) and of comedy (*Alamos en la azotea*, 1981).

One noticeable flaw of this volume is the presence of typesetting errors too numerous to be overlooked, and the absence of an errata page to account for them. Implicit in an anthology such as this one is the supposition that the works involved make up a significant body of literature deserving of attention. Careless handling of the text by a compiler or a typesetter detracts from that premise. This writer found the mistakes a source of distraction and some irritation.

A related criticism centers on the absence of notes in places where any reasonable reader would presumably require clarification. A case in point is the lack of opening question marks and exclamation points in the text of *Parejas de trapo*, *José*, *La balsa de la Medusa*, and *Háblame de Laura*. This writer has observed a similar "English-like" punctuation style in copies of some of Wolff's manuscripts. Readers, however, are left to wonder whether this feature is a deliberate attempt on Wolff's part to call attention to the dramatic text or whether the punctuation is truly anomalous--an all too faithful reproduction of a "shortcut" typing style that Wolff never intended to be seen in print.

Upon reading the climactic scene in *La balsa de la Medusa* as it has been reproduced here, scholars who are familiar with Wolff's manuscripts will also long for notes. Near the conclusion of the play, the characters fall to their knees in prayer and Leonardo, their reluctant host, finally makes his appearance. The dialogue and stage business of this critical scene as reproduced in *Teatro completo* differ significantly from a manuscript copy this writer saw several years ago. In *Teatro completo*, Wolff appears to have backed away from requiring Cintia's nude appearance on stage. He also has deemphasized the persecution of Golberg, a Christ-like figure. A brief note would suffice to inform the curious about his transformation.

Flaws notwithstanding, *Teatro completo* is an important contribution to Latin American theatre studies. The Society of Spanish and Spanish American Studies is to be commended for its decision to publish such a volume and for its choice of George Woodyard to prepare its introduction. Above all, of course, Egon Wolff is to be thanked for giving us the gift of his dramatic talents.

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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 the readers. Inclusion here does not preclude subsequent review.]

ADE 18 (oct 1990).

Aguilú de Murphy, Raquel. *Los textos dramáticos de Virgilio Piñera y el teatro del absurdo*. Madrid: Editorial Pliegos, 1989. 190 p.

Casateatro 6 (mayo 1991) Incluye: *Carrito de mano* monólogo de Adolfo Mier Rivas

Cicchini, Susana Aida. *Teatro: 1982-1989*. Argentina: Talleres Gráficos Ricardi, 1990. El texto contiene tres partes que incluyen trabajos sobre dramaturgos latinoamericanos y españoles que la autora ha presentado en diferentes congresos: 1982-1983, 1984-1985, 1986-1989.

Conjunto 83 (abril-junio 1990). Contiene: Rosa Luisa Márquez, "Conferencia dramatizada sobre teatro puertorriqueño."

Conjunto 84 (jul-sept 1990). Contiene: Rine Leal, "Mi credo teatral" y Robert Bauduy, "El teatro haitiano contemporáneo."

De Córdoba, Pedro Tomás. *El triunfo del trono y Lealtad puertorriqueña*, PR: Ateneo Puertorriqueño. 1990. 110 p.

De la Parra, Marco Antonio. *King Kong Palace o el exilio de Tarzán y Dostoievski va a la playa*. Chile: Pehuén, 1990. 171 p.

De la Parra, Marco Antonio. *King Kong Palace or Tarzan's Exile*. Trans. Charles P. Thomas. ms. 73 p.

Espacio. 9 (abril 1991). Contiene: Fernando de Toro, "Hacia una nueva teatrología"; Perla Zayas de Lima, "Mito, teatro y posmodernidad"; Osvaldo Pellettieri, "El grotesco criollo" y Alfonso de Toro, "Cambio de paradigma: El 'Nuevo' Teatro Latinoamericano".

Gestos. 11 (abril 1991, año 6). Contiene: Juan Villegas "Alternative Models: Est nihil novum sub sole?"; Hernán Vidal, "The notion of Otherness Within the Framework of National Identity"; Sharon Magnarelli, "The Female Other: From the Visible Absence to Recasting the Other in Leñero's *La carpa* and *Señora*" y Enrique Buenaventura, *Proyecto Piloto*.

- Halac, Ricardo. *Teatro*. Tomo II. Buenos Aires: Corregidor, 1990. 173 p.
Incluye: *Estela de madrugada*, *Tentempié I*, *Tentempié II* y un estudio preliminar por Osvaldo Pellettieri.
- Hispania*. 74:1 (mar 1991). Contiene: Catherine Larson, "Lope de Vega and Elena Garro: The Doubling of *La dama boba*".
- ICTUS Informa* (abril 1991).
- InterMEDIO de Puerto Rico*. (números 3 y 4). Contiene: José Luis Ramos, "Génesis y desarrollo del teatro popular en Puerto Rico" y Bonnie Hildebrand Reynolds, "Ese punto de vista: El teatro puertorriqueño de Roberto Ramos-Perea".
- La Escena Latinoamericana*. 5 (dic 1990). Contiene: Entrevista a Egon Wolff.
- La Escena Latinoamericana*. 6 (mayo 1991). Número especial dedicado a: El tercer teatro y El teatro de Antunes Filho.
- Martínez Querielo, José. *Teatro 3*. Guayaquil: ESPOL, 1990. 194 p.
Contiene: "La dama meona", "Los naufragos" y "Ha llegado un exorcista".
- Martínez Querielo, José. *Teatro 4*. Guayaquil: ESPOL, 1990. 214 p.
Contiene: "La conquista no ha terminado todavía" y "Puerto lejos del mar".
- Pellettieri, Osvaldo, compilador. *Radiografía de Carlos Gardel*. Buenos Aires: Abril, 1987. 119 p. Contiene trabajos de Guillermo Ara, Jorge Miguel Consuelo, Jorge Gottling, Héctor Negro, Luis Ordaz, Osvaldo Pellettieri, Rubén Pesce, Graciela Scheines, Luis A. Sierra y Noemí Ulla.
- Primer Acto 232* (ene-feb 1990). Contiene: José Gaitán Durán, "Manizales: Escenario para la memoria vital" y Miguel Angel Giella, "Soy un saqueador de influencias": Entrevista a Rodolfo Santana.
- Primer Acto 235* (sept-oct 1990). Contiene artículos sobre el teatro en Argentina, Colombia, Cuba, México y Venezuela.
- Primer Acto 237* (ene-feb 1991). Contiene: Salvador Tavora, Texto de *Crónica de una muerte anunciada*; Miguel Angel Giella, "Aportaciones a la lectura de *La nona*"; Leonardo Azparren, "*La revolución*" y Felipe Navarro, "Teatro iberoamericano en Francia".
- Primer Acto*. Separata 237 sobre El teatro en el marco de las artes contemporáneas.
- El Público* (mayo-jun 1991). Incluye: José María Sulleiro, "*La revolución* de Isaac Chocrón" y Moisés Pérez Coterillo, "Rajatabla cumple veinte años".
- El Público* (jul-ago 1991). Incluye: Edgar Heriberto Quiles Ferrer, *Teatro puertorriqueño en acción: Dramaturgia y escenificación (1982-1989)*. PR: Ateneo Puertorriqueño. 295 p.
- Ramos-Perea, Roberto. *Perspectiva de la nueva dramaturgia puertorriqueña*. PR: Ateneo Puertorriqueño, 1989. 93 p.
- Ramos-Perea, Roberto. *Teatro de Luna*. San Juan: Gallo Galante, 1989. 121 p. Contiene: "Llanto de luna" y "Obsesión".
- Ramos-Perea, Roberto. *Censurado*. San Juan: Gallo Galante, 1988. 42 p.