

LATIN AMERICAN THEATRE REVIEW

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

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From the Editor:

In recent years, *Latin American Theatre Review* has experienced a large increase in editorial submissions, and our journal issues have become longer. This growth has coincided with rising costs. For this reason, in the future we will need to observe the following maximum limits on submissions:

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|---------------------|--|
| Critical Studies | 25 pages, including notes |
| Interviews | 2000 words |
| Festival reports | 1500 words |
| Book reviews | 500 words for critical study 750 words for published play 1000 words for play collection |
| Performance reviews | 500 words plus photos |

Abstracts

Priscilla Meléndez, *Lo uno y lo múltiple: Farsa e incesto en Quintuples de Sánchez*

Framed within a system of contradictions, of structures that are constructed and dismantled in the process of being represented, Luis Rafael Sánchez's *Quintuples* (1984) needs to be examined in relation to genre theory—e.g., the problematics of farce—to the dialectics of unity and plurality in the creation of characters and theatrical techniques, and to the role of incest in the light of mythical discourse. Ultimately, incest and farce in *Quintuples* are deformed, grotesque and exaggerated manifestations of love and art. They both attempt to subvert the traditional formulas of familial and theatrical communication.

L. Howard Quackenbush, *Pugilism as Mirror and Metafiction in Life and in Contemporary Spanish American Drama*

Boxing has been a passion for Spanish American sports fans for many years; and countries like Argentina, Cuba, Mexico, and Venezuela have had their share of champions. In recent years the fight scene, accompanied by all its vicious candor—its ecstasy, its savagery, and its pathos—has set the stage for several Spanish American plays by a few of the area's finest dramatists. The prize fight serves as a referent for political, social, and economic difficulties in those countries. Perhaps more importantly in an aesthetic sense, however, the participatory and self-consciously metadramatic identification of boxers, fans, dramatists, actors, and spectators, on several different levels of interpretation, may expand greatly the public's view of the contemporary human condition.

Richard Callan, *Marqués's La muerte no entrará en palacio and Dionysianism*

The play's well-known advocacy for Puerto Rican independence vs. affiliation with the United States also explores the polar tension between rationalism and feeling with specific reference to the ancient god Dionysus, the mythic expression of freedom, feeling, and life. The revolutionary Rodrigo portrays Dionysus in opposition to governor José's rigid adherence to reason and technology. Teresias, Isabel, Casandra, and Alberto are Dionysiac supporters in an attempt to curb José's extremism. The drama's structure reinforces the thematic conflict of opposites, the irreconcilability of which brings about José's tragedy, so typically Greek in the depth of its human deterioration. With parallels to Euripides's *The Bacchae*, a modern governor, like the Theban Pentheus, rejects Dionysus and dies by the hand of a Dionysian maenad. This denial of one's affective of feminine capacity for life in the myopic belief that reason is the sole reality provides a psychological substratum which transcends political or ideological motivations.

Abril Trigo, *Los límites de la gauchesca y el teatro gauchesco primitivo*

Gauchos literature is a very peculiar cultural phenomenon directly related to the socio-political circumstances of the Platense region during the 19th Century. Traditionally studied as a literary genre (after its early dismissal as folklore and its subsequent ideological and literary appropriation/canonization), *gauchesca* (poetry and theatre) is coming to be read as a transcultural discourse and as an aesthetic artifact regulated by an *ad hoc* mode of production: the product of a fragile alliance between the hegemonic scriptural patrician and the subaltern oral gaucho cultures.

What determined the short-lived flourishing and sudden extinction of the *sainete gauchesco*, clearly the most original theatrical experiment of early 19th Century, at precisely the moment

when gauchesco poetry consolidated itself under the auspices of the first romantic generation? Why did gauchesco theatre virtually vanish until its rebirth, transfigured in *Juan Moreira*, several decades later, under the auspices of modernization? What constitutes, strictly speaking, "lo gauchesco"?

Enid Valerie, Una nueva interpretación de *Las paredes* de Gambaro

This analysis of *Las paredes* offers the interpretation that all the action of the play takes place, not in the real world, but within a series of nightmares in which the weak, perpetually submissive *Joven*, is forced into dealing with two antagonistic components of his own personality, the *Funcionario* and the *Ujier*: the former, a repressive figure to whom the protagonist is accustomed to yielding, and the latter, an unheeded and repressed inner voice which seeks to warn, arouse and liberate him. The grotesque life-sized *muñeca* of the nightmare, a "woman" in real life, had brought his psychological crisis to a head by managing to corner the *Joven* into a relationship which threatens to make permanent his already unbearable situation. Will he heed the warnings the *Ujier* and find the courage to free himself before it's too late, or will he passively allow the walls to close in on him?

Susan Isabel Stein, A Woman's Place: Nineteenth-Century Bourgeois Morality and the Spanish American Domestic Comedy

The four nineteenth-century Spanish American plays analyzed in this study have re-worked traditional domestic-matrimonial themes into a dynamic, contemporary prescription for middle class gender identity with its corresponding modes of social behavior. The comedies depict domestic crises precipitated by daughters and mothers, ranging from the loss of promising suitors to the brink of seduction and divorce. Fathers and husbands must realize that it is their responsibility to keep women in their place, placidly fulfilling, in the words of one character, "las dulces obligaciones/ de su estado y de su sexo" (Calderón 195). Wealthy suitors primly back away from girls whose lack of restraint negates this ideal of domestic tranquility and matrimonial bliss. Bourgeois morality demands the utter extinction of feminine spontaneity, curiosity, and desire, traits which pose a serious threat to the middle class's pursuit of economic and social stability.

Christopher Brian Weimer, Sor Juana as Feminist Playwright: The *Gracioso's* Satiric Function in *Los empeños de una casa*

This study proposes the presence of feminist discourse in Sor Juana's *Los empeños de una casa*, focusing on the *gracioso* Castaño's masquerade as the heroine Doña Leonor. This masquerade creates a "double-voiced" discourse, one in which a culturally-dominant, patriarchal voice and a feminist voice manifest themselves simultaneously. Castaño's actions while in disguise serve as a source of broad humor; however, they also function on a level which can be considered feminist. Castaño's inept assumption of female behavior constitutes criticism of the gender-role expectations imposed on women in Sor Juana's time: self-definition based on surface appearance, self-effacing behavior, and acceptance of the passive role in courtship rituals. Furthermore, his specific address of the female audience members not only alerts them to the satiric aspects of his masquerade, but also invokes their sense of community as women.

Francisco Javier Higuero, Incomunicación múltiple en el *Teatro breve* de Solórzano

In the plays written by Carlos Solórzano and included in the 1986 compilation, *Teatro breve*, there is a lack of communicative interaction between the characters. Such an absence of communication is manifested not only in the supposed dialogue, when there is one, but also in the action performed on the stage. The reason for this difficulty in finding a proper communication is that sometimes the characters are in internal conflict within themselves or they are looking for valid answers found nowhere. The culmination of the lack of interaction among characters takes place when a divorce results between the action performed on the stage and the external world to which this action refers. The characters do not have the slightest control of this phenomenon and they are resigned to go on living an anguished existence, where there is a continuous contradiction between the inner feelings, the language by which they are somehow expressed, and the action that occurs.

Beatriz Trastoy, 'La salud de los enfermos' de Cortázar: Notas sobre la ficción teatral

The relationship between fiction and reality, between truth and lie becomes the interpretative key of "La salud de los enfermos", a text which epitomizes some steady features of Julio Cortázar's esthetics, namely his attentive consideration upon the capacity the Reader has of producing new messages. This article analyzes Rolando Malic's adaptation of the short story for the stage, in order to explain the discursive strategies through which production and reception codify and decodify any theatrical performance. Moreover, the author shows how intertextual proceedings increase semantically the dramatic conflict.



¡Ah machos! Teatro Circular de Montevideo.