

Generational Transition in Argentina: From Fray Mocho to Teatro Abierto (1956-1985)¹

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Eduardo Pavlovsky, in an interview with Miguel Angel Giella, remarked that "se ve que yo he cumplido un ciclo como autor. Un ciclo que podría tener que ver como política-denuncia, y ahora uno entra en otro período."² Osvaldo Pellettieri, in a recent conference on "Latin America in the '90s,"³ concluded that the theatrical system that had been dominant since the '60s in Argentina, has reached a crisis point in that the latest works by two of the outstanding dramatists--*Morgan* by Griselda Gambaro and *Yepeto* by Roberto Cossa--do nothing more than "[glosar] . . . , sin agregar nada, textos como *El campo* . . . ," in the case of Gambaro, and "[tratar] de concretar un realismo poético que roza el subjetivismo romántico,"⁴ in the case of Cossa.

Our interest in these two quotes centers on two elements: 1) Pellettieri, from an historical perspective, sees the repetitive nature of the works by Gambaro and Cossa as an indication of the phasing out of an entire theatrical system which had its beginning in the early 1960s with works by Ricardo Halac (*Soledad para cuatro*, 1961) and Roberto Cossa (*Nuestro fin de semana*, 1964). From our perspective, this is better viewed as a generational transition that spells the end of the period of creative historical activity ("plena eficacia histórica" in Orteguian terms) of what in Argentina is called the Generation of 1960⁵ and which for us is part of what we have called the Generation of 1956. 2) Pavlovsky, from a dramatist's perspective, feels that his work has entered into a new phase, leaving behind an overtly political type of theatre for an as yet to be determined style.

The combination of the recent upsurge in interest in the area of literary periodization⁶ and the comments by Pavlovsky and Pellettieri would therefore deem it an appropriate moment to propose a new model for generational studies and show how it helps to put in perspective the theatrical events of the past thirty plus years in Argentina.

Briefly stated, the purpose of this study is to show how a reworked generational model for periodization allows us to understand the events pointed to by Pellettieri and Pavlovsky as an example of generational transition. Specifically, it will show that this Generation began in 1956 with the staging of Osvaldo Dragun's "Historias para ser contadas," reached its

first transitional moment between 1970-72, and entered into its third stage at about the same time that Teatro Abierto ended in 1985.

In the following discussion, we first summarize certain portions of our reformulation of the generational method, including an appendix of the data which served as its foundation, and then illustrate it with examples drawn from Argentine theatre between 1956 and 1985.⁷

Our response to the search for a method of periodization owes a great deal to the writings of Ortega y Gasset and to those of the Austrian sociologist, Karl Mannheim,⁸ and lays special stress upon four essential principles of generational theory which, up until now, have not received the attention they deserve, or else have been victimized by a kind of critical shortsightedness.

This reformulation is unique among generational studies for its emphasis on intragenerational conflict, its insistence on the simultaneous coexistence and interrelationships of three distinct generations, and because it provides a statistical basis in twentieth century Argentine theatre for using the age of thirty as a starting point of a generation's historic activity.

1) The method has its starting point in the analysis of the work of art, this latter being understood as just one form of the historical acts of man. Its application is flexible, inasmuch as it bases itself upon the observation of historical acts and not on the superimposition of a rigid model based on any concept of biological determinism, as has been charged by some of its detractors, although, in saying this, we suppose that no one would dispute the almost complete given of our western world that most men die before reaching the age of 80; or the fact that, after 75 years of age, most writers add very little of substance to their artistic production--the exceptions here serve only to confirm the general rule. We also suppose--although with less assurance of general agreement--that human life, in sociological, social and artistic terms, just as much as biological life, goes through certain quite codifiable stages.

2) A generation has a dual nature--abstract as well as concrete--inasmuch as it comprises not only the authors and their works but also the abstract themes that the works encompass.

3) Within each generation there exists a conflict which manifests itself as much in axiological, ideological, political, economic and social spheres as it does in the explicitly artistic. The discovery of this intragenerational conflict serves, on the one hand, to establish the limits of a given generation, and on the other hand, to explain its specific role in literary evolution.

4) The method is as capable of handling the diachronic as well as the synchronic vision, which signifies in part a reaffirmation of the Orteguian thesis that in each historic moment there coexist at least three different generations, each one of which participates according to its distinct stage of

development and its own very particular point of view. Of necessity, one has to take into account here the second principal of the lack of homogeneity of the generation, which leaves us, from the synchronic point of view, with a very complex compound which needs to be separated into its distinct elements. From the diachronic point of view, literary changes, that is to say, literary flow, is explained by taking into account the way in which the different generations overlap in the transition from one stage to another in their trajectory.

We now return in more detail to each one of these four principles:

1) One of the fundamental precepts in the theory of Ortega was that it depended especially upon the "historical acts" of man, among which should be included artistic works. With this in mind, it should be understood that the role of the man/woman within society changes as he/she evolves, and of course, ages. How can one deny the difference in outlook between the 25-year-old student and the 55-year-old professor? Or, in general, the different levels of power and influence between them? Again, the exceptions prove the rule. In any case, based upon his observations of the behaviour and roles of the individual within society, Ortega postulated a life divided into five stages of 15 years, of which the two that comprise the ages from 30 to 60 years were the most important, those of "complete historic efficacy" during which the individual brought to fruition his most important works within society and made his contribution to the historic process. By extension, and for our purposes, it would be also during this period that the dramatist would write the majority of his plays.

The act of singling out the age of 30 as the beginning of this period is a vital point, and it surprises us that no one has taken the trouble to prove or disprove this not on an *a priori* basis, but based upon empirical data of sufficient scope to be able to draw conclusions as to the possible validity of the theory, because, we are in fact dealing with this basic question. That is to say, one supposes that one would have to establish, before anything else, the average age at which the dramatist wrote or staged his first play to see if it corresponded to the first important stage of production, the period of "gestation," as Ortega called it,⁹ which extended from 30 to 45 years of age. This is precisely the step we have taken by establishing a bibliography of some 200 Argentine dramatists of the twentieth century. (See the appendix at the end of this study.)

The result, arrived at by subtracting the year of birth from the year of the writing (or staging) of the first play, was 32.4 years.¹⁰ This figure becomes even more surprising taking into account that, in a great number of cases, the data which we were able to obtain referred to the year of staging, which, if it had been otherwise, would have had the effect of lowering the figure by one or two years, as an average age. Thus we are led

to appreciate the mathematical precision, albeit intuitive, of Ortega's observations.

This, however, was only the first step in what we were planning to develop. The more difficult task still lay ahead: that of verifying whether, after a period of 15 years, significant changes were to be observed in the structure and style of the plays themselves, and whether these changes were reflected by sociohistorical circumstances.

2) In its present state of development, and seen as only one facet of the greater task of periodization, the function of the generational method has been, for the most part, *pedagogic, organizational, descriptive*, and sometimes even *determinist*. But from our point of view, it should constitute one of the possible forms in which the historian, of whatever discipline, "attempts to impart significance to the passage of time."¹¹ It should, springing from an analysis of the dramatic text and after a study of its sociohistorical context, try to discover the underlying causes of the historical "acts of man." At the same time, it should establish reasonable and significant boundaries at appropriate junctures, because only in this way will it be able to gain credibility as an interpretative model of these historic acts which, as we have already indicated, include dramatic and theatrical production.

A literary generation has both a concrete and an abstract component. In order to explain this apparently paradoxical character, we make an analogy between the action and situation of dramatic literary production and the action and situation within the drama, this latter appearing in a definition proposed by Juan Villegas:

... la acción dramática--en cuanto eje organizador del mundo del drama--es un esquema dinámico que se distiende a partir de una situación inicial conflictiva. Se representa como una línea que se desplaza desde un punto inicial a un término, después de experimentar diversas tensiones y distensiones. La consideramos un esquema porque no constituye un hecho concreto, una situación en sí, sino que una abstracción en la cual adquieren sentido y significado dramáticos las diversas situaciones que existen en ese mundo. Es dinámica por cuanto existe en la medida en que se constituye o se va haciendo y tiende siempre hacia un término.¹²

Expanding this analogy to draw a parallel between the way in which a *play* functions and the way in which a *generation* functions, one can say that the situations or incidents within a play (the concrete part) are to the analysis of the dramatic action (the abstract part) as the plays and authors themselves (concrete) are to the generational model (abstract) which we formulate from the study of the component parts. Looked at in this way,

the two dimensions of a generation, the concrete and the abstract, bear the same relationship to each other as do the incidents of a play which are "real" and the dramatic action which is an abstract "pattern" that reveals to us the significance of the individual incidents.

3) Continuing with the same analogy, in the very centre of a dramatic work of art, we traditionally encounter a conflict; and this is also the case within a given generation. This notion of intragenerational conflict as central to any given generation is one of the most problematical points of the whole generational theory, since one of the most common misunderstandings is that a generation constitutes a homogeneous group of persons who share common axiologies expressed in similar stylistic ways. Here, we need to remind ourselves of the statement made by the Cuban critic, Juan José Arrom, during a personal interview in Ottawa, that "a generation is not a monolithic block." In fact, Arrom is only continuing the same reasoning as Mannheim who made reference to what he called "generational units":

In this way, within whatever generation, there can exist various recognizable and even antagonistic generational units. Together they constitute a 'real' generation precisely because these units orient themselves one toward another, even though this may be only by the degree to which they mutually oppose each other. (ESK 313)

It is by ignoring the importance of this concept of intragenerational conflict that many literary historians fall short of the mark, limiting themselves to the description of a dominant spirit or style during a certain period of time. We believe that the conflict surrounding a common problem is at the very core of each chronological unit, and precisely because of this, we emphasize the theoretical distinction that Mannheim makes between *Zeitgeist* and "entelechy," which he uses to criticize the homogenizing practice implicit in the term *Zeitgeist*, by which he understood the tendency to group together under one label all the ideas of a period. This practice tends to become a sort of "gestaltic fallacy":

. . . But from our point of view the true units which must replace the fictitious unit of *Zeitgeist* are entelechies of social currents which create a polar tension within each segment of history. (ESK 313)

According to this, one would need to speak of a "generational entelechy" as a kind of "generational genetic code," which should be understood as both the motivating force and the final result, as the seed and the flower, as the potential and the realization. In other terms, it would be

the central hub of the various generational units (the spokes); or, to be more specific, it is represented through the central problem which impels the members of a generation to formulate their individual responses. Within a literary generation, this manifests itself in ideological as well as in stylistic terms. As Mannheim states:

Thus, in the nineteenth century there is no single *Zeitgeist*, but instead a composite mentality formed by mutually antagonistic impulses which are, on the one hand conservative-traditional, and on the other hand, liberal. . . . (ESK 314)

We stress that the idea of intragenerational conflict is a fundamental component of generational theory and method, and that, up until the present time, it has not been sufficiently taken into account in the applications of literary history. This oversight, in our opinion, is one of the main reasons why the majority of generational studies have languished in the realm of the purely descriptive and formative.

4) In another way, our own conceptual approach to literary history coincides with that of Ortega y Gasset, in as much as it embraces the horizontal perspective as much as the vertical. Our vision of literary history includes the static image (*freeze frame*) as much as the flowing image (*motion picture*); that is to say that such a vision has to be static as well as dynamic--a phenomenon that occurs, in our opinion, when, in the intersection of the synchronic and the diachronic, we stop to examine the "state of things" in a certain period of time which would be delimited by the discovery of the intragenerational conflict, and which we accept, for the moment, as thirty or so years. It is what Ortega calls the stage of "plena eficacia histórica." Within this static image, we can, in the first place, examine the development of the conflict within the major units under consideration; that is, it permits us to follow--returning to the analogy of dramatic action--that "esquema dinámico que se distiende a partir de una situación inicial conflictiva [. . .] se desplaza [. . .] a un término, después de experimentar diversas tensiones y distensiones."

Also in this same static image, we must understand--from the point of view of historic acts--that there are three distinct generations functioning, producing, creating at different stages in their development. From this, it should be clear that, on this point, we accept *grosso modo* the Orteguian division of human historic activity into phases of fifteen years, the most important of which are, obviously, the last three: initial (from 30 to 45 years of age); dominant (from 45 to 60); and final (from 60 to 75). An analysis and description of the interaction between the different age groups constitutes a second level in the "vertical" or "synchronic" history of that period. But the situation is much more complex, and this is what literary histories, in the name of simplification, have avoided; because of this, we

believe that this is the moment to reintroduce the element of intragenerational conflict.

During our research, once we had established the average age of the first play, we proceeded, following Ortega's indications, to choose the outstanding dramatist of the period. With very little historical perspective and at least four outstanding writers to choose from, we decided to settle on two: Roberto Cossa and Eduardo Pavlovsky. Since they were born less than a year apart (1934 and 1933 respectively) the calculations would not be more than minimally affected. Using 1933-34 as the central point in a fifteen year period, we established 1926-1940 as the range within which the members of the generation would have been born. From there we added thirty years to arrive at the period during which these writers would be between thirty and forty-five years of age. This period from 1956 to 1970 would be their initial stage of significant dramatic activity. The second stage of their generational activity would then run from 1971 to 1985; and their final stage would begin in 1986. In this way, we established the time frame of 1956-1985 as that corresponding to the period of "plena eficacia histórica" in Ortegian terms.¹³

We then turned to the rather more difficult task of determining if, in fact, one could ascertain with any degree of artistic and historical validity, that these periods did constitute discernible units with characteristics that would set them apart from each other. This was accomplished by answering the following questions:

- 1) Was there a significant change in the dramatic structure and style around the times that we had selected, i.e., 1956, 1970-71, and 1985?
- 2) What was the relationship between the social and political circumstances and the plays being written and/or staged at that time?
- 3) Did it make sense if we applied the system backwards throughout the 20th century? That is, did it create any obvious distortions or clarify any previously nebulous areas?¹⁴
- 4) What advantages or disadvantages did this particular chronological "arrangement" have when compared to previous ones?

To answer our first question, we analysed the dramatic action of as many plays as possible and found that there was indeed a definite change both in the dramatic structure and style of the period and that it centered around 1970-72. The period from 1956 to 1971 showed predominantly passive protagonists. However, and in addition to other changes, about 1971, the protagonists began to take on an active role. *Dar la vuelta*, by Griselda Gambaro, is one of the key plays which exemplifies this development.¹⁵ Variations in the existing theatrical system included a move away from the polarization between realistic and non-realistic styles that had

developed after 1956, towards a unifying, eclectic theatre that represented an amalgam of the previously incompatible approaches.¹⁶

To respond to our second question, we examined Argentine history and found that we could once again see how this supported our previous findings. Politically, the thirty year period of this generation is bounded by the fall of General Juan Perón in 1955¹⁷ and the fall of the Videla military dictatorship in 1983, with the corresponding return to democratic rule in the figure of Raúl Alfonsín. The midpoint of the thirty years, 1971, comes just after the "Cordobazo" of 1969, at the beginning of the Onganía regime, and corresponds with the increase in both Guerrilla activity and government repression. The second half of the period is marked by the return of Perón, his death, the disastrous presidency of his wife, Isabel, and particularly by the entrenchment of the military dictatorship from 1976 to 1983 during the so-called Process of Reorganization. It is precisely these events and their repercussions ("desaparecidos," tortures, Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo) that gave rise to and are depicted--with metaphors that many times leave little to the imagination despite the heavy censorship¹⁸--in the plays of that period: the plethora of grotesque characters such as brain-damaged boxers, victims of physical and mental torture, the deformed and the maimed of all types who become the victim-protagonists of these plays.

With reference to our second question and in terms of the history of the theatrical movement in Argentina, we once again see clear and definite points which correspond to these two stages of the generation: 1956 marks the end of the creative period of the Independent Theatre Movement¹⁹ begun in the early '30s and the emergence of Osvaldo Dragún who brings with him the accumulated experience of the Movement. Throughout the period, he continues to experiment with various theatrical styles that range from the Grotesque to Expressionism to Epic Theatre. Eduardo Pavlovsky and Griselda Gambaro are leaders in the introduction of experimental techniques into the Buenos Aires theatrical scene. In contrast, Roberto Cossa, along with Ricardo Halac, Germán Rozenmacher, Ricardo Talesnik and Carlos Somigliana, develop their own particular style of critical realism. In this way, we see, in stylistic terms, the establishment of the intragenerational conflict between the so-called experimentalists and the critical realists.

At the midpoint in the period, the four leading dramatists begin to evolve in different directions. The previously passive victims/accomplices of Griselda Gambaro's plays start to rebel. Her works become less metaphorical, more easily decipherable. Eduardo Pavlovsky, a practicing psychotherapist as well as actor and dramatist, is deeply affected by the psychological effects resulting from the political situation and moves away from the metaphysical bent of his earlier absurdist plays to convey these emotions through his newly-found "exasperated realism."²⁰ In 1970, Roberto Cossa, with his participation in the anti-peronist play, *El avión negro*,

departs for the first time from the neo-realistic style that he had used in *Nuestro fin de semana* (1964) and other plays of this period. In 1977, after a seven-year silence, he returns with *La nona*, a grotesque expressionistic portrayal of Argentine society that marks his abandonment of the critical realistic style.²¹

The end of the period is signalled by the paradoxical success/failure of the socio-theatrical phenomenon known as Teatro Abierto. Started in 1981, it helped to coalesce the theatre world and the general populace into an effective opposition to the military regime, thereby participating in the downfall of the dictatorship and the return of democracy. That victory, which culminated in the presidency of Alfonsín, gave rise to new questions and new problems for both the society and the dramatists so accustomed to having a ready-made theme at hand. Two or three years after the end of the dictatorship, it was no longer possible to focus exclusively on the oppression of the military regime; and so, approximately in 1985, we witness the arrival of a new generation which begins its approximately thirty-year presence on the Argentine stage.

The responses to our questions, then, were that our conclusions justified speaking of the Generation of 1956, which begins with the performances in 1956 and 1957 of two plays by Osvaldo Dragún whose importance has been very lucidly and convincingly defined in a recent book on the Independent Theatre Movement by David W. Foster.²² Dragún serves as a transitional figure between this and the previous generation, bringing with him the experience of the Independent Theatre Movement. During the fifteen year period from 1956 to 1970 the different ideologic and artistic stances between the opposing proponents of experimental theatre and critical realism become evident. This division constitutes the specific manifestation of the central generational conflict which finds its outlet, if not its resolution, in the realization and theatrical expression of the genetic code of the generation, i.e., its generational entelechy, in Teatro Abierto.

Thus, beginning in 1971, we see important changes in all four of the representative dramatists:

- 1) The dramatic structure suddenly returns to more "normal" patterns: the protagonists are no longer passive victims; they regain their will power, their capacity to desire and to act. In a sense, the apathy, abulia or incapacitation of the protagonist has passed. (*Griselda Gambaro, Dar la vuelta*)

- 2) The critical realists begin to experiment theatrically with non-illusionist plays and thus move closer to the members of the so-called vanguard. (*Roberto Cossa, El avión negro*)

- 3) The previous followers of experimental theatre are affected by the overwhelming impact of the social situation and develop a more realistic

style, thereby moving them closer to the critical realists. (Eduardo Pavlovsky, *El Sr. Galíndez*)

4) The neo-grotesque, with roots in the Argentine *grotesco criollo* and branches in Expressionism, Epic Theatre and Theatre of the Absurd, establishes itself as a common meeting ground for the members of the generation: the theatrical synthesis or resolution of the central generational conflict. (Osvaldo Dragún, *Hoy se comen al flaco*; Eduardo Pavlovsky, *Cámara lenta*; Roberto Cossa, *La Nona*.)

5) The phenomenon of Teatro Abierto (1981-1984²³) becomes the shared experience in which the entire theatrical community participates and unites, in both a real and metaphorical sense, and expresses the essence of the generational entelechy. Coming as it did in the final years of the thirty-year period, Teatro Abierto should be seen as the culminating act of the Generation of 1956 since it represents both the fulfillment of the generational task and the resolution of the generational conflict. Teatro Abierto stands as an objective correlative of the generation, the fusion of its desire for freedom from socio-political repression and its concomitant search for freedom and identity in a unique theatrical style.²⁴

Thus, in the light of our reworked generational theory, recent events in Argentine theatre, as witnessed in the comments by Pavlovsky and Pellettieri at the start of this study and as mentioned throughout the second part of this study, should be seen as indicative of a generational transition. The dominant figures of the last thirty years have begun to give way to the new voices of the Generation of 71, which includes Ricardo Monti, Mauricio Kartun, Eduardo Rovner and Roberto Perinelli among many others.

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ARGENTINE DRAMATISTS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY
AVERAGE AGE AT TIME OF FIRST WORK

AUTHOR	FIRST PLAY	YEAR	BIRTH	AGE
Acquis, Germán	Tragicomedia chusma de Don Prolita y . . .	1964	1938	26
Acuña, Juan Enrique	Viajeros	1937	1915	22
Adeliach, Alberto	Historia de desconocidos	1958	1933	25
Aguiar, Daniel	Dibujemos un dibujo	1976	1948	28
Aguiar, Hernán	Extraña trilogía	1965	1950	15
Agustoni, Luis	Vida y milagros	1977	1943	34
Alladio, Omar	La cruz del sacrificio	1956	1918	38
Alpargato	Sin rótulo	1967	1943	24
Andrade, Nora	Vida y milagros del pobrecito Mateo	1978	1947	31
Antín, Manuel Carlos	La desconocida en el bar	1955	1926	29
Antonietto, Elena	El silbador	1965	1931	34
Ardiles Gray, Julio	Egloga, farsa y misterio	1948	1922	26
Arit, Roberto	La isla desierta. Fabricante de fantasmas.	1932	1900	32
Aroldi, Norberto	Un triste fabricante de alegrías	1953	1931	22
Aules, Roberto	El monigote de la pared	1954	1924	30
Baccaro, Julio	Escondamos a las visitas	1966	1940	26
Bal, Santiago	¡Qué sofocón!	1968	1936	32
Balla, Andrés	El trapo de piso	1959	1921	38
Baracchini, Diego	Medio Mundo	1966	1936	30
Barcia Gigena, Fernando Jorge	Amarga despedida	1978	1923	55
Barud, Nemer	El tercer amor	1965	1925	40
Ben Hassan, Guillermo	Hoy ensayo con todo	1966	1935	31
Beoletto, Juan José	Cartas para el fuego	1951	1922	29
Berenguer Carisomo, Arturo	La noche quieta	1941	1905	36
Betti, Atilio	La edad del hambre	1952	1922	30
Bianchi, Sara	Una peluca para la luna	1960	1922	38
Blanc, Jorge Anibal	Conquistadores conquistados	1962	1937	25
Bortnik, Aida	Soldados y soldaditos	1972	1938	34

Bosch, Jorge	Yok	1925	35
Bosco, María Angélica	La noche mil dos	1917	45
Bravi, Carlos	Algoandabién	1938	32
Bredston, Guillermo Juan	Ensalada de ternura y tomate	1933	43
Bressan, Alma	... Y serás una sombra	1928	26
Briski, Norman	El niño envuelto	1938	28
Buchin, Mirko Rafael	La caja del almanaque	1938	30
Bueno, Pablo Antonio	Bettina	1923	38
Bufano, Ariel	Amor de Don Perimplín	1931	45
Carella, Tulio	Don Basilio mal casado	1912	28
Carey, Bernardo	El sillico de alivio	1934	37
Carlino, Carlos	Tierra del destino	1910	41
Carrera, Clara	Q.E.P.D.	1950	29
Carreño, Virginia	La amansadora	1912	44
Casablanca, Adolfo	Pacto para una memoria	1927	35
Castillo, Abelardo	Israfil	1935	26
Chulak, Armando	Los elefantes rosados	1927	27
Cibrián, José	Mundo pobre querido	1954	22
Cocca, Aldo	Diálogo con la otra culpa	1924	34
Cochia, Dagoberto	Ranquel el vengador	1919	32
Cochia, Orlando	El romance de una joven pobre	1915	36
Conte, Hebe	El corazón de crema batida	1929	31
Coronatto, Miguel Luis	Ra-ta-ta-ta	1938	26
Cortázar, Julio	Los reyes	1914	35
Cossa, Roberto	Una mano para Pepito	1956	22
Cuzzani, Agustín	Dailiah	1934	28
D'Elia, Jorge Eduardo	No dejes de venir a visitarnos	1977	39
De Cecco, Sergio	Durante el ensayo	1949	18
Del Peral, Carlos	Mens sana in corpore sano	1966	42
Denevi, Marco	El gran Khan	1955	33
Diamant, Mario	Crónica de un secuestro	1970	28
Drago, Alberto	Sábado de vino y gloria	1976	39
Dragun, Osvaldo	La peste viene de Melos	1956	18
Espina, Roberto Julio	[?]	1967	39

Esteve, Patricio	¿Probamos otra vez?	1970	1933	37
Fabiani, Víctor	El cordero	1954	1937	17
Ferrari, Juan Carlos	Medio siglo	1950	1917	33
Ferretti, Aurelio	Farsa del héroe y el villano	1946	1907	39
Gallipoli, Elio	¡Hola, hermanito!	1975	1944	31
Gambaro, Griselda	Las paredes	1963	1928	35
García Alonso, Jorge	Morir en familia	1959	1930	29
Gasalla, Antonio	Abajo Gasalla	1975	1941	34
Gavensky, Marta	El gran soñador	1973	1930	43
Gentile, Guillermo	Vení que hablamos de vos	1969	1942	27
Gené, Juan Carlos	El herrero y el diablo	1954	1928	26
Ghiano, Juan Carlos	La puerta al río	1949	1920	29
Giovine, Héctor	Los vendedores	1964	1936	28
Goldenberg, Jorge	Argentine Quebracho Company	1972	1941	31
Gorostiza, Carlos	El puente	1949	1920	29
Grasso, Jorge	Historia de los Aldao	1955	1934	21
Gutmacher, Benito	[?]	1972	1950	22
Habegger, Roberto Eduardo	El espantoso regreso de Drácula	1968	1938	30
Halač, Ricardo	Soledad para cuatro	1961	1935	26
Hase, Paco	Ping...pong... ¡fuera!	1973	1950	23
Hayes, Jorge Ricardo	Erosión	1970	1945	25
Hermé, Juan Carlos	Color de ciruela	1963	1924	39
Hernández, Fausto	El inventor del saludo	1955	1938	17
Imbert, Julio	La lombriz	1950	1918	32
Izovich, Carlos	Amo	1971	1930	41
Kacs, Mauricio Claudio	Cabeza loca	1974	1951	23
Korman de Sterman, Dora	Callejeando	1978	1941	37
Kraly, Néstor	Marfiles desnudos (Junio 16)	1956	1936	20
Krimer, Jorge	Visiten el museo	1962	1918	44
Kush, Rodolfo	Credo rante (con subtítulo de Misa Parda)	1956	1922	34
Kuyumdjian, Felisa	Salon de té chino	1957	1927	30
Lafauci, Jorge	Y la fama es una herida absurda	1977	1943	34
Langsner, Jacobo	Liegan lo' artistas	1953	1927	26
Larriera, Teófilo	El inquilino	1954	1916	38

Laske, Perla			1942	34
Leal Rey, Indalecio Pedro	La nena y la mucama		1927	31
Lehmann, Marta	Las trompetas y las águilas		1922	28
Leo, Orlando Francisco	Los próximos		1940	28
Levinson, Luisa Mercedes	El telegrama		1914	49
Lizárraga, Andrés	Tiempo de Federica		1919	39
López Troisi, Susana	Desde el '80		1931	36
Maestro, Jorge	Pausa para una taza de café		1951	25
Mahieu, Roma	Tiempo de bronca y barrilete		1937	39
Malamud, Héctor	Juegos a la hora de la siesta		1943	30
Maichiodi Piñero, Velia	El gran soñador		1923	36
Manauta, Juan José	El paquete		1919	47
Marechal, Leopoldo	La tierra		1900	51
Marechal, Malena	Antígona Vélez		1942	26
Mariscal, Inés	Juguemos de Cézanne a Miró		1938	29
Martini, Vito de	Los cuentos de Tim-Tan		1928	27
Martínez, Marcos	El Dios indiferente		1925	41
Marvisi, Ricardo	La tortilla escarlata		1927	38
Masciangoli, Jorge	Milagro en el sótano		1929	32
Maur de Segovia, María E.	Safón y los pájaros		1929	46
Mauricio, Julio	¿Jugamos al gallo ciego?		1919	45
Medina, Roberto Nicolás	Motivos		1935	23
Mileo, Diego	Próxima estación		1946	24
Mombrú, María	Mimo-flash		1922	34
Monti, Ricardo	El andén y dos monólogos		1944	26
Moset, José	Una noche con el Señor Magnus e hijos		1948	34
Mosquera Eastman, Ricardo	Rebelión en la playa de estacionamiento		1918	45
Mosquera, Beatriz	El vendedor de barquillos		1936	33
Murena, H.A.	Mira lo que te está pasando		1923	30
Muñoz, Alicia	El juez		1940	37
O'Donnell, Pacho	La fiera		1941	34
Operto, Walter	Escarabajos		1937	31
Ordaz, Luis	La bicicleta		1912	25
Orgambide, Pedro G.	Maternidad		1963	34
	Concierto para caballero solo		1929	

Oteiza, Alberto M.	1919	33
Palant, Jorge	1958	16
Palant, Pablo	1938	24
Paolantonio, José María	1959	27
Pavlovsky, Eduardo	1961	28
Paz, Lilitana	1959	39
Pais, Carlos	1971	37
Pelay, Guillermo	1950	34
Pelay, Marcela	1978	62
Percivalle, Carlos	1966	25
Peyrou, Alberto	1953	37
Pibernat, Carlos	1966	44
Pinti, Enrique Alejandro	1970	30
Ponferrada, Juan Oscar	1943	36
Portales, Javier	1972	35
Portillos, Alfredo	1957	29
Portillos, Luis	1957	27
Potenze, Jaime	1970	52
Preset, Armando	1958	37
Presta, Norberto José	1976	23
Puig, Miguel	1965	51
Pérez Carmona, Juan	1962	32
Pérez Guerrero, Daniel	1979	34
Pérez Pardella, Agustín	1954	26
Quesada Zapiola, María Inés	1965	24
Ramonet, Conrado	1973	42
Raznovich, Diana	1968	23
Rey, Gilberto	1964	28
Riva, Humberto	1954	30
Rodríguez Moglia, Alicia	1975	33
Rodríguez Muñoz, Alberto	1955	40
Roitman, Bernardo	1956	27
Rovner, Eduardo	1976	34
Rozenmacher, Germán	1964	28
La doctora Dosset	1919	
Barranca arriba	1958	
Diez horas de vida	1938	
Siete jefes	1959	
La espera trágica	1961	
El país de mi infancia	1959	
Agua fuertes portenas	1971	
Qué noche de casamiento	1950	
Un nombre para una cruz	1978	
Help Valentino	1966	
Asesinato legal	1953	
Hoy sin mañana	1966	
La tartamuda	1970	
El carnaval del diablo	1943	
La sartén por el mango	1972	
Teatro de títeres	1957	
Teatro de títeres	1957	
Si sí, si no, no	1970	
Junto al lago	1958	
La pequeña historia de Juan Díaz	1976	
Farsa del poeta	1965	
Ningún tren llega a las trece	1962	
Tiempo de descuento	1979	
Judas	1954	
Microsucesos	1965	
Historia de Orestes	1973	
Plaza hay una sola	1968	
Proceso al inocente	1964	
El convidado	1954	
El sayo envejecido	1975	
El verde camino	1955	
El timbre	1956	
Una pareja, qué es mío, qué es tuyo	1976	
Réquiem para un viernes a la noche	1964	

Rubertino, María Luisa	El silencio	1926	1946	1926	20
Rulli, Jorge	Personario	1946	1973	1946	27
Santa Cruz, Abel	Esta noche filmación	1942	1915	1942	27
Shand, William	La cultra del látigo	1961	1961	1902	59
Silberstein, Enrique	Necesito diez mil pesos	1961	1961	1920	41
Silbert, Juan	La raíz y la tierra	1966	1966	1926	40
Somigliana, Carlos	Amarillo	1959	1959	1932	27
Sáenz, Dalmiro A.	Qwertyuiop	1961	1961	1926	35
Talesnik, Ricardo	Cien veces no debo	1967	1967	1935	32
Teisaire, Graciela	Ráfaga	1942	1942	1919	23
Thomas, José de	La locura del Rey Federico	1952	1952	1922	30
Tidone, Jorge	Blasón de tierra	1948	1948	1924	24
Tilli Beban, Domingo Miguel	Shock	1948	1948	1918	30
Trafic, Carlos	Tiempo de fregar	1969	1969	1939	30
Trejo, Mario	No hay piedad para Hamlet	1960	1960	1926	34
Tálice, Roberto	Ciudadano del mundo	1941	1941	1902	39
Urondo, Francisco	Sainete con variaciones	1966	1966	1930	36
Urruty, Esteban	La red de pescar	1956	1956	1933	23
Varela, Jorge Luis	Sálvame Baby	1968	1968	1924	44
Vernier, María Cristina	Job o el día que cortaron las rosas	1959	1959	1939	20
Viale, Oscar	El grito pelado	1967	1967	1932	35
Wainer, Alberto	El hombre y el bosque	1957	1957	1939	18
Walsh, María Elena	Los sueños del rey Bombo	1959	1959	1930	29
Walsh, Rodolfo Jorge	La batalla	1965	1965	1927	38
Wernicke, Enrique	Festival en Buenos Aires	1963	1963	1915	48
Zarfenga, Ethel	En una reunión del estrecho mundo	1961	1961	1935	26
Zavallía, Alberto de	El corazón extraviado	1955	1955	1911	44
Zemina, Alfredo	El gran show internacional del ...	1975	1975	1936	39
Zima, Ariel	Dropaj	1969	1969	1930	39

Total Number of Authors = 193

Total of Years = 6252

Average Age = 32.4

Notes

1. Research for this article was carried out during a fellowship granted by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

2. Miguel Angel Giella, "Entrevistas con Eduardo Pavlovsky," *LATR*, 19.1 (Fall 1985), p. 62.

3. "El teatro latinoamericano del futuro," round table organized by the International Institute of Theory and Criticism of Latin American Theatre (IITCTL) within the parameters of the "Conference on Latin America in the 90s," hosted by Carleton University (Ottawa) and organized by The Canadian Association for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CALACS), Oct. 5-8, 1989. Later published in *Cuadernos Getea. Cuadernos del Grupo de Estudios de Teatro Argentino*, Año I, 1 (1990), 3-16. Published by Girol Books Inc. (Ottawa) and *Revista Espacio* (Buenos Aires), 1990. Our quote is from page 6.

4. *Cuadernos*, p. 6.

5. In reality the term is used as a synonym of decade and seems only to refer to the fact that these authors coincided in staging their initial works during the same 10 year period. One of the many anomalies that emerges from this practice is to have Julio Mauricio, born 1919, in the same generation as Roma Mahieu, born 1937, or Aída Bortnik, born 1938. This was the topic of a paper we presented on November 24, 1990 during the II Jornadas de Teatro Latinoamericano y Argentino organized by the Grupo de Estudios de Teatro Argentino of the Instituto de Literatura Argentina of the Facultad de Filosofía y Letras (Universidad de Buenos Aires) in conjunction with the Centro de Investigación del Teatro Iberoamericano (CITI) and the Instituto Nacional de Estudios de Teatro (INET).

6. The Spring 1989 issue of the *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* devotes an entire section to this topic: Weldon B. Durham, "History Like Theatre: An Introduction to Three Essays on New Theatre Historiography," pp. 215-217; Rosemarie Bank, "The Theatre Historian in the Mirror: Transformation in the Space of Representation," pp. 219-228; Bruce A. McConachie, "Reading Context Into Performance: Theatrical Formations and Social History," pp. 229-37; and Michal Kobiałka, "Theatre History: The Quest for Instabilities," pp. 239-252. In Hispanic criticism, we note the article by Fernando de Toro, "Reflexiones en torno a una historia del teatro hispanoamericano," *Gestos*, Año I, 1 (abril 1986), pp. 101-119; and the study by Juan Villegas, *Ideología y discurso crítico sobre el teatro de España y América Latina*, Minneapolis, Minnesota, The Prisma Institute, Inc., 1988.

7. For a further discussion of these points, see our "Impresiones de un investigador 'gringo' en Buenos Aires," *Latin American Theatre Review*, 24.2 (Spring 1991), 133-42.

8. Born in Budapest in 1893, Mannheim studied at universities in Berlin, Budapest, Paris and Freiburg before receiving his degree as Privatdozent in 1926 at the University of Heidelberg. From 1930 to 1933 he taught in Frankfurt and later at the London School of Economics. He is perhaps best known for his *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, one of which is "The Problem of Generations".

9. For the sake of simplicity, we will refer to the three stages as "initial", "dominant", and "final".

10. Wherever possible, we used the earliest date, that is to say the date when the play was completed as a dramatic text. To use the date of staging as a principal basis in these calculations would have significantly falsified the figures for the following reasons: 1-the number of cases in which the play never achieved the staging process; 2-often there is a significant lapse between the date when a play was written and the date it was staged, for whatever reason: economic, aesthetic or political. To those who would argue that a play is not completed until it is produced, we reply that this is not an opinion without merit, but not from the perspective of our study. The object of our study is the dramatic text and not the theatrical text. Besides, carried to its extreme, this would mean that *Hamlet* still continues to be written, which is true from the theatrical point of view, but not from within the parameters of a theoretical study of periodization.

11. Marvin Rintala, "Periodization," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Vol. VI, David L. Sills, ed. (New York: The Macmillan Co. and The Free Press, 1969), p. 581.
12. *La interpretación de la obra dramática*, Santiago, Editorial Universitaria, 1971, pp. 35-36.
13. This differed from previous generational studies (by 2-3 years when compared to Juan José Arrom's *Esquema generacional de la literatura hispanoamericana: esbozo de un método*, 2da ed., Bogotá, Instituto Caro y Cuervo, 1976; and by 6-7 years in the cases of Cedomil Goic, *Historia de la novela hispanoamericana* (Valparaíso: Ediciones Universitarias de Valparaíso, 1972) and Frank Dauster's *Historia del teatro hispanoamericano: Siglos XIX y XX* (México: De Andrea, 1973). It was, however, supported, as we will see, by analysis of the works themselves, the pervasive changes in dramatic structure and content after 15 years in the case of the representative dramatists, and by the correlation of these analyses to their theatrical and historical context.
14. The answers to questions 3 and 4 require more extensive development and will be the subject of a separate study. For our present purposes, it is sufficient to state that they will lend further support to our proposed generational period of 1956-1985.
15. For a more detailed discussion of this point, see our "Griselda Gambaro: de la voz pasiva al verbo activo," in Diana Taylor, ed., *En busca de una imagen: ensayos críticos sobre Griselda Gambaro y José Triana* (Ottawa: Girol Books, 1989), pp. 43-52. Col. Telón, Teoría, 1.
16. This change has been noted by several Argentinian theatre critics. Among them is Antonio Rodríguez de Anca who states that ". . . creadores que, en sus comienzos, aparecían como situados en polos opuestos--tal el caso de Griselda Gambaro y Roberto Cossa--hoy no se ven tan distanciados en sus búsquedas." "Un nuevo lenguaje dramático," *Revista Teatro*, Año III, No. 10 (feb de 1983), p. 30.
17. A statement from 1979 by Osvaldo Dragún gives an indication of just how much of a direct effect the fall of Perón in 1955 (and by extension other similar events) had on dramatists of the period:

En el año 55, cuando cae Perón . . . recuerdo que yo y otros jóvenes como yo, estábamos en la calle Santa Fe . . . viendo desfilar a las tropas 'libertadoras.' En ese mismo momento, comenzó a nacer en nosotros una sensación que ya no nos abandonó nunca: que la realidad se movía bajo nuestros pies, que dejaba de presentarnos una imagen coherente, aprehensible, explicable. Cuando regresamos a nuestro teatro, tratamos de continuar con las improvisaciones sobre una obra de Máximo Gorky que estábamos ensayando. Y de pronto sentimos que la obra se nos había alejado. Todo en ella era tan . . . coherente, lúcido, racional, tan ligado a la relación causa-efecto, que no supimos por qué, pero sí adivinamos que acabábamos de divorciarnos de ella. En ese momento histórico era una relación imposible.

"Nuevos rumbos en el teatro latinoamericano," *LATR*, 13.2 (Supplement, Summer 1980), p. 11.

18. For an account of censorship during the period, see Vivian Brates, "Teatro y censura en Argentina," in Peter Roster and Miguel Angel Giella, eds., *Reflexiones sobre el teatro latinoamericano contemporáneo* (Buenos Aires: Galerna, 1989), pp. 219-240. Col. Serie Crítica, 1.
19. Jorge Cruz, in "La generación del 50: una etapa de transición," asserts that 1955 marks the beginning of the decline of the movement: "A partir de entonces se inicia la declinación de la expresión canónica del teatro independiente, orientado ahora hacia las cooperativas y las empresas regentes de pequeñas salas." *Revista Teatro*, Año III, núm. 10 (feb 1983), p. 22.
20. "A mí me interesó el teatro de vanguardia de Beckett, de Ionesco o de Adamov. . . Después se me fue transformando en una necesidad de utilizar el absurdo para

los problemas de Latinoamérica, en problemas más políticos. . . ." Miguel Angel Giella, "Entrevistas con Eduardo Pavlovsky," *LATR*, 19.1 (Fall 1985), pp. 63-64.

21. Cossa himself points to his participation in *El avión negro* as a moment of change in his writing:

—Creo que la experiencia de trabajar en equipo para escribir *El avión negro* fue una maravilla. . . . Por primera vez comencé a plantear situaciones límite, a incursionar en el humor, el humor lanzado, y eso me ayudó a liberar toda una zona mía que estaba contenida. . . . Creo que las zonas que comenzamos a explorar mientras escribía *El avión negro*, me sirvieron mucho para *La Nona*.

Sergio Morero, "Es cuestión de tener buen oído," *Revista Teatro*, Año V, 20 (mayo de 1985), p. 40. [Entrevista a Roberto Cossa con fotografías de Martín Siccardi.]

Earlier, he had recognized the same phenomenon: ". . . en *El avión negro*, que fue una experiencia compartida con Rozenmacher, Somigliana y Talesnik, se produce un gran cambio. . . . No es una búsqueda consciente de nuevas formas. Simplemente, ya no quiero escribir como antes. Las imágenes se van modificando y adquieren un lenguaje diferente." "Mesa redonda con Griselda Gambaro, Roberto Cossa y Ricardo Monti," *Revista Teatro*, Año III, 10 (feb de 1983), p. 37.

22. "Narrative Strategies in Osvaldo Dragun's *Historias para ser contadas*," in *The Argentine Teatro Independiente, 1930-1955* (York, So. Carolina: Spanish Literature Publishing Co., 1986), pp. 124-34.

23. "La presentación de Teatro Abierto 1984 fue postergada. Para algunos es consecuencia del cuestionable nivel de los textos elaborados, mientras que otros lo fundamentan en la necesidad previa de discutir el destino de Teatro Abierto. El punto en común fue la decisión de no mostrar, antes de la reflexión, un trabajo que no conformaba." "El grito abierto," *El Periodista de Buenos Aires*, No. 17 (5 al 11 de enero de 1985), p. 31.

From a different perspective, it appears as one more specific indication of the generational transition that we are describing.

24. We do not, for the moment, claim that a synthesis of this nature takes place in every generation. We do suspect, however, that a similar process will be found in many cases.

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