

# **El teatro en lengua inglesa (siglo XX)**

*Máster en Inglés como Vehículo de Comunicación  
Intercultural (MIVCI)*  
**Curso 2007-08**

**Módulo: 'El inglés en los estudios culturales'**

**Prof. Dr. Jesús López-Peláez  
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**Dpto Filología inglesa  
Universidad de Jaén**

# 1. Drama and theatre analysis: An introduction

## 1.1 Drama and theatre.

- Drama and theatre. Dramatic and theatrical. Dramaticity.
- Theatrical communication.
- Theatrical discourse.
- Dramatic vs. Performance texts.

# 1. Drama and theatre analysis: An introduction

## 1.2 Semiotics and semiotization.

- Semiotic approaches to th & dr.
- Theatrical semiosis.
  - \* Semiotization of the object.
  - \* Connotation-connotative semiotics.
- Signs.
  - \* Characteristics of the sign.
  - \* Generative capacity.

# 1. Drama and theatre analysis: An introduction

## 1.2 Semiotics and semiotization (contd.)

- Transformability of the dramatic sign:
  - \* Denotational flexibility.
  - \* Mobility of dramatic function.
- Typology of signs.
- Sign-functions:
  - \* Icon
  - \* Index
  - \* Symbol.
- Metaphor and metonymy (synecdoche).

## 2. Contemporary English Drama: A History

- **Independent Theatre** (London, 1891)
- **Irish Literary [National]/Abbey Theatre** (Dublin, 1899): WB Yeats's *Countess Cathleen*/JM Synge's *Playboy of the Western World*/Sean O'Casey's *Juno & the Paycock*
- Influences and tendencies (until WW2):
  - **Henrik Ibsen's** criticism of middle classes and Victorian morality; **August Strindberg's** expressionism (*Miss Julia*; *The Father*)
  - Bourgeois sentimentality: JM Barry, N. Coward (*A Brief Encounter*).
  - Religious symbolism vs. Reality: **TS Eliot's** *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935) & *The Cocktail Party* (1950).
  - Left wing drama: W.H Auden & C. Isherwood's *The Dance of Death*, and *The Dog Beneath the Skin*.
  - Major non-dramatic figures: S. Maugham's *dramas*, JB Priestley's *Time and the Conways*, *I Have Been Here Before*

## 2. Contemporary English Drama: A History

- In 1946 the **Arts Council** was established: survival of companies like the **Sadler's Wells Ballet** and **Opera** and the eventual establishment of the **Royal Opera**, the **Royal Shakespeare Company** (dir. Peter Hall) and the **National Theatre** as well as supporting theatre in the regions and the work of individual artists and companies.
- The **National Theatre Company** was formed in 1963 (1988) at the **Old Vic** under Laurence Olivier; moved to London's South Bank in 1976 directed by Peter Hall.

## 2. Contemporary English Drama: A History

- Joan Littlewood's **Theatre Workshop**: Brendan Behan's *The Quare Fellow* (1956); Shelagh Delaney's *A Taste of Honey* (1958): Working class, left wing drama.
- Popular theatre: A. Christie's *The Mousetrap* (1952)
- Controversial, critical drama: C. Fry, T. Rattigan's *The Winslow Boy* (1946)

## 2. Contemporary English Drama: A History

- BBC's broadcasting of verse plays: L. MacNiece, C. Fry.
- New Theatre: J. Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* (1956).
- Criticism of the welfare state (**Royal Court Theatre**):
  - J. Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* (1956); *The Entertainer* (1957); *Luther* (1960).
  - Arnold Wesker's *Chicken Soup with Barley* (1958), *Chips with Everything* : Kitchen-sink drama.
  - John Arden's *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance* (1959)
- Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1953), *Endgame* (1957), *Happy Days* (1962)
- New historical drama:
  - R. Bolt's *A Man for All Seasons*; P. Schaeffer's *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*.

## 2. Contemporary English Drama: A History

- End of censorship: 1968. Alternative drama:
- Feminist theatre: **Red Ladder** and the **Women's Theatre Group** (now the **Sphinx**). Caryl Churchill, Pam Gems (*Piaf*, 1978)
- Gay theatre: 1975 **Gay Sweatshop**. Joe Orton, Shelagh Delaney and Brendan Behan.
- Political drama: John McGrath's **7:84: *The Cheviot, the Stag, and the Black, Black Oil***. Mike Leigh.

## 2. Contemporary English Drama: A History

- Directors: Peter Hall, Peter Brook
- Harold Pinter
  - Foreign influence (Ionesco, Camus, Sartre).
  - Violence, language as a primarily phatic (not communicative) element.
  - Leftism
  - Works: *The Dumb Waiter*, *The Caretaker*, *The Birthday Party*, *The Homecoming* (1964), *A Slight Ache*, *One for the Road* (1984).

## 2. Contemporary English Drama: A History

- Edward Bond
  - Drama of social violence.
  - Works: *Saved* (1965), *Lear* (1971), *Bingo* (1974)
- Tom Stoppard
  - Postmodern comedy.
  - Works: *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1966), *Jumpers* (1972), *Travesties* (1974), *Hapgood* (1988).
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  - Works: *Loot* (1967), *What the Butler Saw* (1969).

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- Popular drama: Alan Ayckbourn, A. Christie.
- In the 1980s Max Stafford Clark took over as director of the Royal Court Theatre: new political writing, a reaction to the Thatcher years
- Radical drama of the 70s:
  - David Hare's *The Great Exhibition* (1972)
  - Trevor Griffith's *The Party* (1973).
- Drama of the 80s and 90s:
  - Alan Bennett: *An Englishman Abroad* (1983), *The Madness of George III* (1991).
  - Dennis Potter: *Pennies from Heaven* (1978), *The Singing Detective* (1989).
  - **Caryl Churchill's *Serious Money*** (1987)
  - The RCT actively supports new Black and Asian Playwrights like Michael Abbensetts, Mustapha Matura, Hanif Kureishi and later Jacqueline Rudet.

## 2. Contemporary English Drama: A History

- 'In Yer Face Theatre': normally applied to young writers produced by the RCT in the 1990s. Aggressive, intentionally repulsive, shocking, confrontational theatre. Recent writers include: Mark Ravenhill (*Shopping and Fucking*, 1996), Rebecca Prichard, Judy Upton, Meredith Oakes, Sarah Kane (*Blasted*, 1995), Anthony Neilson (*Penetrator*, 1993), Jez Butterworth, Martin McDonagh, Ayub Khan-Din, Tamartha Hammerschlag, Jess Walters and Simon Stephens.
- Physical and visual theatre: reproducing the experience of contemporary society, inspired by P. Brook, Théâtre du soleil, Japanese Non Theatre, Grotowski, Artaud, Pina Bausch (confusion, blurring of limits...). Combination of theatre with other visual media. Companies: Volcano, Frantic Assembly, DV8.

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