

Ways of Being Cassandra: Transformation, Liminalities, and a Possible Third Space

This presentation aims to analyze the use of the mythological character Cassandra in two recent literary works to discuss gender, repression, migration, epic, human trafficking, popular culture, and dictatorship in the Hispanic World at the beginning of the 21st century. The two works are the theater play *Kassandra* (2008) by Sergio Blanco and the novel *Llámenme Casandra* (2019) by Marcial Gala.

One of the most relevant bibliographical references for this presentation is “Sergio Blanco’s *Kassandra Complex*” by Sarah Misemer (2017). In this article, the author discusses gender and liminality in Blanco’s play. I will use concepts from the classical reception process (such as cannibalism, Latino, *mestizaje*, *créolité*, trauma, and postcoloniality) presented and debated in the volume *Greeks and Romans on the Latin American Stage* edited by Rosa Andújar and Konstantinos P. Nikoloutsos.

One of the most significant highlights of the editors from the introduction is to problematize concepts like “Latin America,” being called or not “Latinos,” and also the term “postcolonial” when talking about the geographical area in question (Andújar and Nikoloutsos 2-5). This presentation will show how important is to understand and take into account the diverse and multiple roots of every regional culture, including their complexities and intricacies. McConnell explains that “rather than prioritizing Africa as the exponents of *négritude* have done, or adopting Europe wholesale as earlier Caribbean writers had, the Creolists urged a ‘kaleidoscopic totality’” (Andújar and Nikoloutsos 172). It is why we propose to discuss and question the many concepts and contradictions of the process. These contradictions are not put aside but included as part of that “kaleidoscopic totality.” As Chamoiseau explains himself,

“[w]e are at once Europe, Africa, and enriched by Asian contributions, we are also Levantine, Indias, as well as pre-Columbian Americans, in some respects, Creoleness is the world diffracted but recomposed” (Andújar and Nikoloutsos 172).

To that end, I will study the monologue *Kassandra* (2008) by Sergio Blanco and the novel *Llámenme Casandra* (2019) by Marcial Gala. While analyzing these works, we will focus on gender and diversity issues; the division between East and West and/or North and South; the connections and differences between Latin America, Europe, Africa, and Asia; the geographical, linguistic, and cultural liminalities; and the questioning of the traditional concept of “epic hero” to talk about the in-between-ess as possible third space. A third space that is neither Latin American nor European, is neither Spanish nor English, and is neither feminine nor masculine. Or it is all these things at the same time. A new third identity created from mythology, femininity, and transgression against any apparatus of capture.

Works Cited

- Andújar, Rosa and Konstantinos P. Nikoloutsos (eds.). *Greeks and Romans on the Latin American Stage*. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020.
- Misemer, Sarah. “Sergio Blanco’s *Kassandra* Complex”. *Theatrical Topographies. Spatial Crisis in Uruguayan Theater Post-2001*. Bucknell University Press, 2017, pp. 179-93.