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LAXC252: Event Assignment

November 30, 2023

Event: La bella en su Jaula play

TRABAJO Nro1

I had the privilege of attending a special performance of La Bella en su Jaula, a play written by Argentinian playwright Rubén Mosquera. The play was held in a small theater room in the Forbes Center, and the crowd turnout was impressive, filling nearly every seat in the room. The seating was arranged in a U-shape, creating an intimate atmosphere that drew the audience into the performance. As the lights dimmed and anticipation filled

the air, Dr. McCleary took to the stage to share some opening remarks. She thanked the various individuals who had contributed to the play's production and introduced the play's director, Rubén Mosquera. Mosquera, addressing the audience through a translator, spoke passionately about the play's background and his desire to use his work to educate and inspire societal change. He emphasized the universality of the human experience, regardless of skin color or background, and expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to share his work with an American audience. With that, the play began. *La Bella En su Jaula*, which translates to "The Beauty in Her Cage," tells the poignant story of Felicitas Guerrero, a young woman whose beauty becomes both her blessing and her curse. Confined by societal expectations and the desires of others, Felicitas struggles to find her own voice and assert her autonomy. The play unfolds with just two actresses on stage, with the majority of the performance focused on the captivating portrayal of Felicitas Guerrero by a single actress. The actress embodies Felicitas's complex emotions, from her moments of joy and self-discovery to her struggles with despair and societal pressures. As the play draws to a close, Felicitas's newfound freedom is tragically cut short. A man named Juan, who has been obsessed with Felicitas and desires to possess her, confronts her in a desperate attempt to claim her as his own. Despite Felicitas's clear rejection of his advances, Juan's obsession consumes him, and he resorts to violence. In a shocking twist of fate, Juan fatally shoots Felicitas, uttering the chilling words, "If you are not mine, you will not belong to anyone." The play ends with Felicitas's lifeless body lying on the stage, a stark reminder of the tragic consequences of societal expectations and male control. Her death serves as a haunting testament to the enduring struggle for women's autonomy and the devastating impact of patriarchal violence.

When Rubén Mosquera, the play's director, stepped onto the stage, I was struck by his passion and sincerity. As he spoke through a translator, his words resonated deeply within

me. He spoke of his desire to use theater as a tool for social change, to challenge societal norms and inspire individuals to embrace their authentic selves. Mosquera's words carried a particular weight due to the language barrier. Though he could not directly communicate with most of the audience, his message transcended language. His passion and conviction were palpable, and his belief in the power of theater to bridge cultural divides was evident in every word he spoke. When he spoke about the universality of human experience, regardless of skin color or background, I felt a deep sense of connection. His words echoed the play's themes of freedom, individuality, and the fight for self-determination. They reminded me that despite our differences, we are all bound by a common humanity.

TRABAJO Nro 2

For this assignment, I attended the performance of *La Bella en su Jaula* (The Beauty in her Cage), an Argentine play, at JMU's Studio theater on Monday, November 13 at 7pm. The play was captivating, and it was intriguing to witness the dedication of the actresses and writer who traveled all the way from Argentina to present their work to us. Despite the language barrier, as the play was entirely in Spanish, I was able to comprehend the storyline through the actresses' emotive performances. The play delved into weighty subjects such as rape and murder, and the actresses skillfully portrayed these events. The central character, Felicitas Guerrero, was often referred to as the most beautiful woman in Buenos Aires.

However, she expressed her desire to be recognized for her intelligence or humor instead. The duration of the play was approximately one and a half to two hours long. One aspect of this experience that particularly enjoyed was the opportunity to hear from the playwright himself. Prior to the commencement of the play, he shared his aspirations and

motivations behind his work. Following the conclusion of the performance, Francesca and I had the chance to talk with the playwright. I understand and speak a little Spanish, I am half Cuban on my mom's side and my mom, grandma, and so on all speak the language. Francesca, who is fluent in Spanish, spoke on behalf of both of us with the playwright. We expressed our admiration for the play, and the playwright was genuinely delighted to receive our feedback. Engaging in a conversation with him about his play and its intended impact was truly an experience I could never gain from inside a classroom. Towards the end of our discussion, he even asked if he could give us a hug, which was a deeply touching moment. Despite not actively participating in the event, I gained a lot of knowledge from simply observing. This experience provided me with a deeper understanding and a new perspective on

Argentine history. The fact that only two actresses were able to flawlessly portray the entire story line was truly fascinating. It was a refreshing change to learn outside of a traditional classroom setting, away from the constant assignments and lectures. Attending this event was a nice break from college norms, and I felt that it allowed me to learn things that I would not have been able to in a classroom. What made this show even more captivating was the fact that it was based on a true story, which made the heavy topics and raw emotions even more impactful. Overall, I loved watching *La Bella en su Jaula*, and was honored to be presented with this opportunity.

TRABAJO 3

The event that I decided to go to was the play *La Bella en Su Jaula*. It took place in the JMU studio theater building on the other side of the bridge by the quad. I arrived a few minutes before the play was supposed to begin to meet with a couple people from class. We stood inside for a few minutes before entering the theater. It was smaller than

expected, I had never been in the building before. I imagined a giant theater but I think the size made the play much more personal and possibly even easier to understand.

The director who spoke at the beginning came off as very warm and welcoming. I'm sure the opportunity to come to JMU to share his play was not a normal day to day event for him. He spoke a bit about loving and embracing one another, along with overlooking the color of our skin and all other physical aspects. It makes sense that he feels very strongly about that, considering it was the main point of his play.

While I do speak a bit of Spanish, I did not understand most of the play since the actresses were Argentinian and spoke fairly quickly. Even though I was only able to pick up a few words, the dramatic body language such as falling to the floor and tone of voice portrayed by the main actress helped me follow along. I did not expect there to only be two actresses, I pictured a much larger, more grand play. Despite this, she seemed to truly capture the emotions of her character, which I can imagine was very difficult to do considering how the character jumped back and forth between excitement and extreme discontent. Both the actresses also seemed very happy to be there, outside of their characters.

We left around 8:30, due to a short backup at the beginning before the play started. I think the actual act itself was just a little longer than an hour, not including the director speaking. When we stood up to leave, I signed the extra credit sheet and spoke with the director for just a moment. I thanked him for his work and left before the crowd could catch up.

Even though I did not understand most of the play at the moment, I did read the English translation afterwards. After doing GSO, I gained much better understanding of the main idea of the act. I realized that the main character, Felicitas, was only known for her beauty, and that she had a prior husband that passed away from Yellow Fever. I saw

some themes that we've discussed in class and that I've learned about from other classes in high school. I was able to relate it to another play I've read that took place a couple hundred years ago, and women were forcefully stripped of their innocence. Overall, I really enjoyed the play. Generally I do not attend plays or other similar functions so it was a different experience that provided me with a new perspective on the perception of women during that time period. After reading the English translation, I was a bit surprised by the detail the main actress went into when describing her relationship with her first husband. I think the added touch of raw detail was necessary to show what these women went through and how it affected them mentally throughout their lives. This reminded me of some of the topics that we've discussed in class, such as how women were seen as a property right only accessible through their fathers or husbands rather than people who were deserving of basic human rights. This still extends into today and can be seen through the patriarchy that has consistently upheld certain gender roles and ideologies through stereotypes.

I found that attending an event outside of class rather than sitting through lectures or reading on line provided a much more enriching learning experience. Even it was through a fictional play, being able to sit directly in front of the main actress who portrayed her feelings so vividly allowed me to become immersed in the story, as if I was actually there. While it is impossible to fully understand what these women were going through, the play provided visual and emotional aspect that could not have been emphasized through other means, and truly helped me gain knowledge of what these women were forced to endure.

Sophie Berger

TRABAJO Nro 4

The event that I attended was La Bella en su jaula [The Beauty in her cage].

This play was written by Rubén Mosquera. It was about an hour long and it was honestly so beautiful. This play is based on a true story that happened in Argentina during the yellow fever. It touches on the role of women in a society ruled by patriarchal values. The play is about this woman named Felicitas who is around the age of 25. She starts off the play by talking about how from a young age she was identified as being beautiful. But is what she was only known as. They would call her La Bella or the beautiful one.

She complained as to why she couldn't be known as anything else.

I feel like in some sort of way she felt insecure about having a beautiful face. She didn't know as if when a man would approach her it would be for a very true desire or because they just wanted to claim her beautiful face. At a very young age her parents forced marriage on her because they said that it would benefit the family. Felicitas was very opposed to the idea but her parents carried on with the marriage. Her mom would

tell her that her new husband will mold her to the way he wants to and that she should follow all his orders so that she will be his. She then became Lady Felicitas Guerrero de Alzaga, the beautiful. She was just a child, but her husband made her a woman.

At one point she felt happy because she was the lady of the house. But that was only for a second because she felt like she couldn't really make any of her own decisions because Don Martin didn't like it. She was still under him, so she had to oblige to what he wanted.

In the second part of the play, it switches scenes. In this timeline Don Martin had already passed away and she was about to get married to someone else. During this time in

Argentina the yellow fever pandemic was going around. Don Martin was certain that he wouldn't contract the disease but in fact he did. Her son, Felix

Francisco Solano Alzaga, also contracted the disease. He was barely three years old and he also had passed away from yellow fever.

After grieving both her husband and her child she found out that she was expecting another child. But it was a very tragic story. This is so because as soon as her son was born he didn't live for very long. Since Don Martin contracted the disease it then transferred to the fetus. So now she was mourning her late husband and her two children. She hid from the world. She couldn't possibly think as to why she was still alive.

After a while things were starting to look up for her. She finally felt like she could experience true love. Samuel really did come out of nowhere in her life. She said that it was like an angel coming out of the rain. Samuel welcomed her into his home with a warm smile. She felt so much protected and with more value than she did with Don Martin. Samuel is the one who introduced her to what real love is supposed to look like. She finally got her color and happiness back with being with him. She felt like she was finally able to choose something for herself and not because other people wanted her to. But that also didn't last very long. Right before she was going to marry Samuel, she gets murdered by Enrique Ocampo who was another man interested in Felicitas. He said that if he couldn't have her no one could.

I found that this was an amazing play. This was my first time attending a play and I thought that it was an amazing experience. I felt like with the play being in Spanish, it made it 10 times better. I applaud the actress that played Felicitas because she was amazing at her role and she really showed all the emotions her character was going through. I feel like in

society, a lot of people are always labeled as something. In the play Felicitas is labeled as the beautiful one. But out there in the world there are a lot of people going through the same thing. They feel caged up because of this. It made me so sad that when Felicitas finally was able to choose something for herself, it was taken away from her.

I feel like a world shouldn't be lived where you can't make decisions your self and always be under someone.

Or just being labeled for something because a person has so much more to offer than that one thing. Again, I just want to say that this was a very beautifully written play.

