denominado "neocostumbrista," o Generación X (Lucía Etxebarría, Ray Loriga, Benjamín Prado, Juan Bonilla); explora la influencia del mercado, la importancia del contacto con los medios y las nuevas formas de comunicación en la realidad global, el nihilismo y la ausencia de sentido, la subjetividad y el mundo virtual, la alta cultura y la cultura de masas. Estos y otros aspectos sirven a Díaz Navarro para iluminar la narrativa actual y conectarla con la cultura y la historia contemporáneas, prestando para ello atención a la importancia que tiene en la lectura de la narrativa la presencia de su propia textura formal. Lejos de renunciar a ella, se hace eco de Gadamer y el libro en su conjunto pone de manifiesto que la comunicación entre el artista y el receptor no es algo evidente (16) y que la propia percepción se proyecta en lo que se va interpretando.

Estamos ante un crítico experimentado y que sabe las reglas de su oficio y, por ello, no sorprende encontrar de nuevo capacidad para cumplir de forma sobresaliente con sus deberes de investigación. Con este libro, una contribución importante a los estudios de la narrativa española moderna, se ilumina nuestro entendimiento, mostrándose la escritura en su compleja multidimensionalidad.

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The Drama of the Portrait: Theater and Visual Culture in Early Modern Spain
The Pennsylvania State UP, 2008
By Laura R. Bass

The first thought that comes to mind when one picks up *The Drama of the Portrait* by Laura R. Bass is how attractive it is: beautifully bound in red cloth and protected by a lovely dust jacket, the book does not automatically look like a critical study of early modern Spanish drama. And, indeed, with 67 illustrations, nearly all in glossy color, one might mistake it for an art book. From these first impressions through the final pages, The Pennsylvania State University Press and its author are to be commended for giving us such a fine book.

If the appearance of the book could lead one to think it examines early modern Spanish art, the title and the theatrical works chosen for critical examination might, too. But, that's just the point. Bass compares Spanish Golden Age *comedias* alongside other visual cultural forms of the period—portraiture, miniatures, etchings, drawings, sculpture, and other art pieces—to demonstrate a complex interconnectedness and interdependence. In Bass' analyses, painting and drama are complex cultural and ideological practices that often circulate within the same socio-political and cultural realm: sometimes art and artists drive the plot of a play, at times there is an off-stage reciprocity between particular artists and dramas (or dramatists and art works), and occasionally dramatists and painters are amazingly similar in their goals—not just in the works they create but also in their search for royal commendation for their professional practice (both Lope de Vega and Diego Velázquez were successful in achieving royal status). Examined within the context of the political history of early modern Spain, *The Drama of the Portrait* provokes intriguing questions about visual culture of the period, and provides ample discussion on the interplay of art and drama that reveals multifaceted power structures and complex socio-cultural expectations.

Using the well-known example of Rosaura's miniature portrait from Calderón's *La vida es sueño*, the Introduction, "Dramas of the Portrait," discusses the rise of portraiture in Spain starting in the fifteenth century. In the play, Rosaura has been been abandoned by Astolfo who still carries her portrait. In an effort to safeguard her own identity, she is determined to recover her likeness so that it does not fall into the hands of her rival, Estrella. As can be garnered from the Rosaura example, portraits can be deemed "social commerce" (7) that were not just "mementos of relatives deceased or living far away and tokens of affection between

friends and family members" (8). Indeed, as Rosaura's case indicates, the portrait is linked to questions of identity and independence since, as Bass points out, having one's portrait painted marked the height of riches and status, but also became a commercial means of sustenance for some unprincipled painters and buyers: "The risks inherent in the painted likeness of a person are what fuel the majority of the dramas of the portrait of the seventeenth-century Spanish stage, as portraits are misapprehended, surreptitiously painted, reduplicated, and often circulated without the sitter's knowing" (8). Just as paintings (both in miniature and full-length) in early modern period could display a negative connotation that detracted from the value of the sitter, so too could they act as a harmful force in the plot of some Golden Age plays.

Chapter One, "Visual Literacy and Urban Comedy," examines Lope's *La dama boba* grounded in discussions of coinage and monetary policy in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Spain. Bass begins her analysis of the play by describing the nature of portraiture among the wealthy in Madrid. As she indicates, portraits were often displayed in the homes of the wealthy, in smaller formats they were exchanged in marriage negotiations before the prospective spouses met, and they also were tokens of devotion between family and friends (13). The analysis of portraiture in *La dama boba* revolves around Finea's misunderstanding about the physical nature of her future husband: when her father gives her a card containing a portrait in half-length, she thinks he is half a man, legless. Bass maintains that Finea's inability to understand the value of art, in this case of the portrait of her suitor, matched what was happening in early modern Spain, particularly commercial centers such as Madrid, Barcelona and Seville. Up to this point in time, portraiture was reserved for the nobility, yet with a burgeoning commercial class all sorts of men and women desired to have their own portraits painted, providing business for all sorts of painters. For the high born, this evolution resulted in a general diminished value of portraiture. As Bass points out, in the case of early modern Spain and in Lope's play "the lesson is that money cannot buy a discriminating eye" (16). While the chapter begins and ends discussing early portraiture and its appearance in *La dama boba*, most of the chapter is devoted to the on-going *vellón* currency fluctuation saga and other monetary issues that played out during Lope's lifetime. And indeed much of the material for this chapter was drawn from a previously published article on the subject. As such, the relationship to portraiture in *La dama boba* can sometimes seem forced. This is not to say, however, that the historical background and analysis of the play are not fascinating. Quite the contrary; the interplay of materialism and royal policy, portraiture as currency is quite interesting.

Chapter Two, "Stolen Identities," features a discussion of Tirso's *El vergonzoso in Palacio* in which a cross-dressing Serafina falls in love with her own portrait which had been secretly painted while she rehearsed for a play. The thrust of the chapter is a comparison between what Bass deems "God's prerogative to create human likeness" (10) and contemporary social fears about the ability of theater and portraiture alike to usurp that capability. Along the way, she draws on writings by period *arbitristas*, essayists and other critics who believed that female-to-male cross-dressing to be contemptible practices, especially since it appropriated the man's right to be "male." Indeed, Tirso is known to have been exiled from Madrid for plays that featured just those sorts of practices. Much of the portraiture analysis in conjunction with Tirso's play is related to questions of dress and costume: "Just as Tirso foregrounds the role of costume in the fabrication of the theatrical persona, so too he gives it a leading role in the composition of the portrait sitter" (59). Subsequent study, then, features a look into the art of depicting dress in royal portraits, and the distance that can result between the subject and the image.

Sometimes paintings make their way into the plot structure of *comedias* and drive the entire argument. Chapter Three, "Blood Portraits," features a contextual discussion of how paintings and other visual object were used in early modern Spain to legitimize and

naturalize the sovereignty of the sitter on the basis of an artistically-created likeness (63). Bass argues that "royal portraits often served to project dynastic continuity" (64) in such a way that even children were viewed as "'portraits of their parents and ancestors, not necessarily as much in terms of physical resemblance as in character" (64). As such, artistic pieces were destined to project a family's specific temperament, nature or disposition as well as point to their future family continuation, all the while looking back at their past genealogy. Within this discussion, Bass inserts an examination of Calderón's *El Pintor de su deshonra*, one of his three so-called wife-murder dramas. When the husband-painter Juan Roca discovers his wife, Serafina, in the arms of a rival, he kills them both in an effort to restore his honor. Bass admits the Spanish honor code has something to do with the final tragic outcome of the play, but she instead looks to the husband's inability to accurately and faithfully represent her image in paint which represents his incapability of actually possessing her physically: "Calderón's drama builds on the same conceptual linkage between portraiture and reproduction (social, economic, and biological) that informed the group portraits included in many patents of nobility. However, the promise of ongoing bloodlines on which those portraits were premised is here shattered in the final 'picture in blood' that Juan Roca 'paints' with his pistols" (77).

In Chapter Four, "The Powers and Perils of Doubles," Bass describes how portraits, especially during the reign of Philip IV, were used as much by the king as by his chief minister, or favorite, to publically "project his omnipotence and summon and buttress the loyalty of his subjects" (79). What is most intriguing is the length to which the Conde-Duque de Olivares went to nearly appropriate the king's power by subscribing his own image into a number of artistic pieces supposedly dedicated to showcasing the monarch's power and prestige. The favorite's misappropriation of power and its effect on the state is not only seen in a series of paintings but also in a number of plays from the period by Lope, Calderón and Tirso. Bass' discussion of the issues regarding royal portrayal centers on Calderón's *El mayor monstruo del mundo* which pits competing suitors, the Roman emperor Octaviano and Herod, his political rival, against one another for the love of Herod's wife, Mariene. Here the miniature portrait coveted by Octaviano foretells a tragic ending and when the two rivals confront each other, it is a full-length painting of Mariene that falls between them, just in time to intercept the dagger thrown by Herod: "The emperor's life is saved, while Mariene's, reflected in the portrait, quite literally hangs in jeopardy" (87). The next time the two men confront one another, Herod's dagger instead finds his wife and her death is held as an affirmation of the sacrificial role played by the queen in early modern Spain: "While the figure of the Queen is sacrificed in the end, a victim of the rivalry born of mimetic excess, in these moments Calderón reminds the audience that she is a legitimate sovereign, the Queen of Jerusalem in her own right, and a perfecting mirror to the true emperor. Like the royal women of Habsburg Spain, she is the necessary pendant to the king" (99).

Based on an exploration of the many paintings of dwarfs and the mentally handicapped by Velázquez and other painters, Chapter Five, "Framing the Margins on center Stage," studies the stage performances by Juan Rana, the most celebrated comedic stage actor in seventeenth-century Spain alongside his only known portait: "Protagonists in a complex dynamics of margins and center, plays of contrastive and deforming reflections, the multiple workings of the dwarf and jester paintings—most especially Velázquez's—are also those of the Juan Rana portrait interludes" (112). Bass examines Rana's performance in Agustín Moreto's *El retrato vivo*, in which the actor appears on the stage holding up a picture frame, believing he is a live painting. Bass first shows how life-like portraiture was used as a stand-in for the king and other nobles at particular socio-political events suggesting how the absent can become present. But, as Juan Rana plays it, the entremés makes the present become completely absent, creating a literalizing but carnivalesque situation (112) that is both comedic but also quite telling of how

Spain's empire had grown to such a geographical expanse that the real king could never be present.

There is much to like about *The Drama of the Portrait*. Bass expertly explores the political culture and economics of painting and painters and integrates interesting lessons on early modern Spanish history to show how painting and drama can often have reciprocal effects. If there are any drawbacks to the study, they are minor: sometimes the author stretches details of the plays under study to fit the argument she is making and often the analysis of the plays get a little lost in the historical material. But, these are truly minor infractions in what is otherwise a well-written, interesting, and beautifully presented book that will surely open up additional avenues of inquiry into early modern visual culture and its interplay with politics, culture and society.

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***The Spiritual Journey of Alejandro Jodorowsky: The Creator of* El topo**
Park Street Press, 2008
By Alejandro Jodorowsky
Translated by Joseph Rowe

Few artists have had as strong a message to be delivered in as many mediums as Chilean born Alejandro Jodorowsky. After exploring his various works one can see that he never truly adopted society's norms and his marginalized existence served to facilitate his personal quest and exploration of questions of identity. Now at eighty years old and living in Paris, Jodorowsky has developed a lucid understanding of who he is and who we all are. His search has sent him down many paths including that of the Tarot card, martial arts, shamanism, psycho-shamanism, many of the world's great religions, and the development of his own brand of therapy called Psicomagia (*Psychomagic*)—all of which are represented in his work.

Best known in popular culture for his movie *El topo* (*The Mole*) (1970), which started the midnight matinee movie phenomena in New York, Jodorowsky is difficult to classify or order into one or a group of mediums or genres. In his early years he worked alongside Marcel Marceau and wrote the mimodramas "The Cage" and "The Maskmaker" for the world-renowned French mime. Later, while living in Mexico City, he directed more than 100 plays and began his film career. However, this is far from being the extent of his work. His written body of work has been a diverse, abundant, and accurate reflection of his journey in the search of the true self. Many of his works take on occult topics such as Tarot: *La vía del tarot* (2004); *Yo, el tarot* (2004). Others such as *Sombras al mediodía* (1995), *No basta decir* (2000), and *Solo de amor* (2008) present us with lessons of Zen Buddhism in the form of poetry. He explains the importance of genealogy in the formation of identity in *Donde mejor canta un pájaro* (1994), and he continued his exploration of the self in *La danza de la realidad* (2001) where he explains parts of his spiritual foundation. Jodorowsky complemented this contextual sort of autobiographical work with *El maestro y las magas* (2006). In 2005 he published *Psicomagia* which is a series of interviews where the author answers questions about his ideas, history, and experiences that converged to spur the creation of his method of therapy, psicomagia.

More recently in *The Spiritual Journey of Alejandro Jodorowsky: The Creator of El topo*—translation by Joseph Rowe of *El maestro y las magas* (Madrid: Editorial Siruela, 2005)—brings his philosophy of life to an English speaking audience. The title hopes to remind the potential reader of his most well-known previous work in the English speaking world: his film *El topo*. To this end the book includes color photos from the production of two of his movies (*El topo*, *The Holy Mountian*) that the original publication does not include. The text seems to want to bridge the gap in time between *El topo's* release in 1970 and the current endeavors of the author. Although the title and extra photos capitalize on his previous success in the English market, the