

Representations of the Neocolonial Order in the Theatre of Spanish Speaking Africa and Afro-Latin America

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Popular theatre developed in Equatorial Guinea and in Afro-descendant communities in Spanish speaking Latin America can be seen as a space that signals concurrent processes of nation-building and decolonization. While not abundant, Equatorial Guinean and Afro-Latin American popular theatres remain a practice that provides insights of the political perspectives of marginalized communities. Furthermore, since popular theatre has the “added value” of having the potential to reach out to audiences that have little access to formal education and to books; it allows the possibility to appreciate how political dialogue and civic participation are presented in these communities.

“Representations of the Neocolonial Order in the Theatre of Spanish Speaking Africa and Afro-Latin America” takes a Trans-Atlantic perspective by delving into plays written and performed in Costa Rica, Uruguay and Equatorial Guinea. The objective is to examine the challenges and strategies of Afro-Hispanic dramatists to preserve their communities’ non-material culture, to protect collective memory and to promote civic participation. By using the concepts of “Heterarchic structure” (Kontoupoulos, 1993), and “Transversal performance” (Reynolds, 2003), this presentation will describe the theatrical responses to simultaneous mechanisms of population subjugation that come from economic neoliberalism, racialization, and epistemological surveillance as they are dealt with by playwrights and by theatre companies in the above mentioned countries. The presentation will also draw on Postcolonial and Transnational theories to understand the impact that the long standing economic international interests on “Third World” countries have had on the development of theatre among afro-descendants in Spanish speaking Latin America and among the population of Spanish speaking Equatorial Guinea.