Title: The character of the mother in Spanish contemporary drama (1980-2008)

Key words: drama, Spain, twentieth century, character, “inter-character”, mother, motherhood

Abstract:

The drama character of the Mother is on one hand connected to its surrounding characters in the dramas, – mostly family members –; and is on the other hand linked to many archaic traditions and motherhood stereotypes. Therefore, the concept of “inter-character” (“interpersonnage”) might be a powerful tool for the multidisciplinary study of our selected sample of forty-five mothers in contemporary drama.

Some of the mothers we studied do not fit in the Mother stereotypes and rather appear as more complex characters, sitting at the threshold between two classical drama figures: the Mother and the Woman.

Studying the interactions between the “Mother “inter-characters” and their family “web” will shed some light on several phenomena: the decay of the father figure, the rejection of grandparents; and the thinning of the links with neighbors. However, the “mother-child” duo seems to remain unaltered; although often loaded with violence and neurosis.

Eventually, the study of the most atypical mothers – adoptive, surrogate, father-like and ghostly –, leads us to take into account their symbolic dimensions. They belong to an ancestral tradition – profane or mystical –, and seem to remain haunted by the urge to connect to mankind.

The dramatic representation of the traditional Mother as a dedicated housewife, seemingly a timeless feature, is now losing ground to other representations of mothers and relations. In contemporary Spain, shattered by the rapid political, social and scientific changes of the previously unchallenged “Mother institution”, the mothers are now making History; this evolution is witnessed in Drama.