University of Groningen

José Ricardo Morales' Dramatic Representation of Media Manipulation and Propaganda from a Contemporary Chilean Perspective

Del Valle Rojas, Juan Alfredo

DOI:
[10.33612/diss.180927351](https://doi.org/10.33612/diss.180927351)

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2021

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Del Valle Rojas, J. A. (2021). *José Ricardo Morales' Dramatic Representation of Media Manipulation and Propaganda from a Contemporary Chilean Perspective*. [Thesis fully internal (DIV), University of Groningen]. University of Groningen. <https://doi.org/10.33612/diss.180927351>

Copyright

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

The publication may also be distributed here under the terms of Article 25fa of the Dutch Copyright Act, indicated by the "Taverne" license. More information can be found on the University of Groningen website: <https://www.rug.nl/library/open-access/self-archiving-pure/taverne-amendment>.

Take-down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Downloaded from the University of Groningen/UMCG research database (Pure): <http://www.rug.nl/research/portal>. For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to 10 maximum.

**José Ricardo Morales' Dramatic
Representation of Media Manipulation and
Propaganda from a Contemporary Chilean
Perspective**

by

Juan Alfredo del Valle Rojas

university of
 groningen

José Ricardo Morales' Dramatic Representation of Media Manipulation and Propaganda from a Contemporary Chilean Perspective

PhD thesis

to obtain the degree of PhD at the
University of Groningen
on the authority of the
Rector Magnificus Prof. C. Wijmenga
and in accordance with
the decision by the College of Deans.

This thesis will be defended in public on
Thursday 14 October 2021 at 09:00 hours

by

Juan Alfredo Del Valle Rojas

born on 30 April 1985
in Temuco, Chile

Supervisor

Prof. P. Valdivia Martin

Co-supervisor

Dr. K. Mierau

Assessment Committee

Prof. F.L. Roig Lanzillotta

Prof. T. Albaladejo Mayordomo

Prof. S. Roberts

Dedicated to the loving memory of my mother
Julia Del Carmen Rojas Gutiérrez (1941-2021)

ABSTRACT

This dissertation analyses and discusses the ways in which the interrelated concepts of media manipulation and propaganda are developed, problematised, and conceptualised in the plays *Cómo el poder de las noticias nos da noticias del poder* (1971) and *Los culpables* (1964) by the Spanish-Chilean playwright José Ricardo Morales. Through an interdisciplinary research grounded in the past and current Chilean contexts, this thesis examines Morales' plays as critical texts that theorise and problematise the conflictive nature of media control and physical repression of social movements in authoritarian regimes, by dramatising their use of rhetorical and discursive strategies of persuasion. The analysis of the plays is complemented by a pilot research that examines and discusses the Learning Objectives (*Objetivos de Aprendizaje*) suggested by the Ministry of Education of Chile that match the topics developed in these plays. The analyses formed the basis for a focus group conducted with secondary school teachers regarding the potential use of the plays as interdisciplinary and contextualised pedagogical learning tools in secondary school courses. The following overarching research questions guide this dissertation: (1) How do the interrelated concepts of media manipulation and propaganda, which are developed, problematised, and conceptualised in Morales' plays *Cómo el poder de las noticias...* and *Los culpables*, contribute to a more profound understanding of social conflicts and societal challenges in the past and today's Chile?; (2) Could the potential implementation of Morales' plays *Cómo el poder de las noticias...* and *Los culpables* in interdisciplinary and contextualised courses provide new interpretations of past and current socio-historical events of Chile in secondary schools?

On the one hand, *Cómo el poder de las noticias...* contains an *avant la lettre* discourse presenting the role of journalism throughout the 20th century as the critical process of producing public knowledge to keep the audience informed about real-world key transformative events. Likewise, this play revolves around the politicians and corporate intervention in the media industry in the 1960s and 1970s, and, in doing so, offers a view of how this conflict is still affecting Chilean society. On the other hand, the case study of *Los culpables* evidences the dissemination of political montage by a strict military government

resulting in the rise of anti-authoritarian contestant voices such as feminist and anarchist movements seeking social justice. The pilot research about the potential use of Morales' abovementioned plays as additional pedagogical resources in the Chilean secondary school curriculum reveals that implementing these plays in interdisciplinary courses may encourage students to critically analyse and discuss specific past and present-day Chilean conflicts from different disciplinary perspectives.

This dissertation highlights Morales' contribution, yet understudied, to the cultural, communication and literary fields for understanding the media function in contemporary capitalist societies. Combining theoretical approaches from the fields of media, communication, cultural, and literary studies, the historical contextualisation of the analysis of the themes in the plays reveals the manner in which the plays dialogued with their historical context, and, in light of the present context, still maintain their power of critique. One of the main take-aways of this dissertation is that Morales' plays present a thoughtful understanding and new insights about the conflicting ongoing problems involving the current power of the media: namely, the use of propaganda to manipulate citizen's world-views and to articulate/execute repressive practices that criminalize contestatory social movements under the rule of authoritarian regimes. Such complex problems are still deeply ingrained in Chilean society today, as observed in the current media manipulation of the Mapuche-Chilean intercultural conflict and the 2019-2020 social protests. This dissertation provides a long overdue visibilisation of the insufficiently studied agency of Morales' plays as actors for social mobilization, engineering and transformation.

Keywords: José Ricardo Morales; *Cómo el poder de las noticias nos da noticias del poder*; *Los culpables*; media manipulation and propaganda; authoritarian regimes; contemporary Chilean conflicts; secondary education

Acknowledgement

I want to thank my wife, Carolina Manríquez Zapata, for inspiring me in every single day of my life and standing firmly behind me. Thank you to my dear Thora, too. Thank you to my son, Iñaki del Valle and his sister, Florencia. I will always be grateful to my mother and father for supporting me. Special thanks go to Cecilia Manríquez and Sonia Zapata for their love and understanding. Thank you to my family, Hernán and Cecilia, and friends for believing in me — special recognition to Julia del Valle and Eduardo del Valle.

My sincere gratitude goes to my supervisors, Prof. Pablo Valdivia Martin and Dr. Konstantin Mierau; thank you for introducing me to the field of literature and cultural studies and for always having their doors open for questions and discussions. Thank you to Dr. Alberto Godioli, Dr. Camilla Sutherland, Dr. Hugh McDonnell, Dr. Carlos Reyes and Thomas Grant for their fruitful revisions and suggestions of several chapters included in this dissertation. Also, thank you to my colleagues from the Chair European Languages and Cultures and the Graduate School for the Humanities at the University of Groningen. Special thanks are extended to Rafael Nangari Bade for the cover design and Jannick Scheepstra for the translations (English to Dutch).

I would like to thank the Becas Chile Scholarship Program (Doctorado en el Extranjero-2017, ANID, Chile) and the PhD Scholarship Programme (University of Groningen) for funding and supporting my PhD thesis. Also, I thank the Graduate School for the Humanities and the Chair of European Languages and Cultures for supporting my stay abroad, my publication of papers, and my participation in many national and international conferences.

I want to thank Dr. Claudio Maldonado Rivera and Prof. Carlos del Valle Rojas for introducing me to the many discussions about digital media, communication, and ethnic studies throughout my early career as a researcher in Temuco, Chile.

A warm thank you to Elizabeth Pinilla and Gonzalo Albornoz, with whom I had the pleasure to share an office and, of course, friendship during most of my PhD studies.

Finally, I would like to thank the members of my assessment committee for their fruitful comments on my thesis.

No puedo dejar de agradecer el enorme legado dejado por este tremendo escritor, José Ricardo Morales, cuyas obras y escritos han aportado mucho a mi forma de pensar la vida. Dedico esta tesis a todas y todos quienes han sufrido los horrores de la dictadura en España y Chile, y a todas y todos quienes sufrieron la represión en las manifestaciones del estallido social de octubre del año 2019 en Chile.

Temuco-Groningen, 2021

Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	v
List of Abbreviations	ix
 Chapter 1 – General Introduction	 1
1.1 Introduction	2
1.1.1 The Understudied Theatre of Morales in Chile	8
1.1.2 The Importance of Morales’ Theatre to Understand Present-Day Chile	12
1.1.3 Media Manipulation and Propaganda in Morales’ Plays <i>Cómo el poder de las noticias nos da noticias del poder</i> (1971) and <i>Los culpables</i> (1964)	13
1.1.4 The Potential Implementation of Morales’ Plays in the Educational Context	16
1.2 Research Questions	17
1.3 Structure of the Dissertation	18
 Chapter 2 – Discursive Diversion Strategies in the Media: Discussing Morales’ Play <i>Cómo el poder de las noticias nos da noticias del poder</i> (1971) within the Chilean Context	 21
2.1 Introduction	22
2.1.1 Reception of <i>Cómo el poder de las noticias nos da noticias del poder</i>	23
2.2 A Critique of Media Manipulation	24
2.3 Analysis of <i>Cómo el poder de las noticias nos da noticias del poder</i>	25
2.3.1 Interview: Strategy of Distraction to Divert Audience Attention in the Media ...	25
2.3.2 Objectification and Commodification of Women: Strategy of Distraction to Divert Audience Attention in the Media	31
2.4 Discursive Diversion Strategies in the Media	36
2.5 Conclusion	38

Chapter 3 – Hybridising the Media’s Corporate-Political Discourse Through Rhetorical Strategies in Morales’ play <i>Cómo el poder de las noticias nos da noticias del poder</i> (1971): A Critique to Media Industry in Chile	41
3.1 Introduction	42
3.2 The Historical-Political Context of <i>Cómo el poder de las noticias nos da noticias del poder</i>	42
3.3 Corporate-Political Discourse in the Media: The Case of Television	43
3.4 A Critical Approach to the Media’s Corporate-Political Discourse	45
3.5 Examining <i>Cómo el poder de las noticias nos da noticias del poder</i>	47
3.5.1 Political and Corporate Power in the Media	47
3.5.2 Intertwined Relationship between the Media and the Corporate Industry	49
3.5.3 Interference of the Journalists’ Ideology in the Media	51
3.5.4 Mutual Dependency between Politicians and the Media	53
3.5.5 Affects and Emotions Utilised as Strategies in Media Discourse	56
3.6 Confronting Media Manipulation	59
3.7 Conclusion	60
 Chapter 4 – The Mechanisms of the Media for Spectacularising the Public Sphere: Discussing Morales’ Play <i>Cómo el poder de las noticias nos da noticias del poder</i> (1971) within the Chilean Context	 63
4.1 Introduction	64
4.2 Representation of the Media’s Practices in <i>Cómo el poder de las noticias nos da noticias del poder</i>	64
4.2.1 Spectacularisation of the Public Sphere	65
4.3 Analysis of <i>Cómo el poder de las noticias nos da noticias del poder</i>	67
4.3.1 Egocentrism and Friendly Discourses as Mechanisms of Spectacularisation	68
4.3.2 Affinity and Common Sense in Political Discourse within the Media as Mechanisms for Engaging the Audience	70
4.3.3 Sensational News as Mechanisms of Spectacularisation	72
4.4 Spectacularising the Public Sphere	76
4.5 Conclusion	77

Chapter 5 – Analysing Political Montage as a Propagandistic Tool in Morales’ play *Los culpables* (1964): A Critique to Authoritarian Regimes in Chile 80

5.1 Introduction	81
5.2 The Historical-Political Context of <i>Los culpables</i>	81
5.3 Disseminating Political Montage for Propagandistic Purposes	83
5.3.1 Representation of Political Montage in <i>Los culpables</i>	83
5.4 Criminalisation of Social Movements	92
5.4.1 Power and Authority in <i>Los culpables</i>	92
5.5 Disseminating Propaganda in Authoritarian Regimes	97
5.6 Conclusion	98

Chapter 6 – Anticipating and Unmasking Authoritarian Repression of Insurgents and Social Movements in Morales’ Play *Los culpables* (1964): Discussing Present-Day Chile 101

6.1 Introduction	102
6.2 A Critique of the Authoritarian Repression of Insurgents and Social Movements ...	102
6.3 The Emergence of Insurgents and Social Movements Facing Authority Represented in <i>Los culpables</i>	103
6.3.1 The Emergence of Feminist Movements	104
6.3.2 The Emergence of Anti-authoritarian Movements	107
6.4 The Relevance of <i>Los culpables</i> in the Current Chilean Context	111
6.4.1 The Authoritarian Repression of the Insurgents and Social Movements	113
6.5 The Current Criminalisation of Insurgents and Social Movements	117
6.6 Conclusion	120

Chapter 7 – The Potential Implementation of Morales’ Plays as Interdisciplinary and Contextualised Pedagogical Tools in Chilean Secondary Education 123

7.1 Introduction	124
7.2 Morales’ Theatre as an Interdisciplinary and Contextualised Pedagogical Tool in Chilean Secondary Education	125
7.2.1 Secondary School Education in Chile	125
7.2.2 The <i>Ministerio de Educación de Chile</i> (MINEDUC)	126

7.3 Implementation of Performative Arts in Education	127
7.4 Secondary Education: A Contextualised Approach in the Teaching of Interdisciplinary Courses	130
7.5 The Potential Implementation of Morales' plays in Education	132
7.5.1 Morales' Plays in Secondary Schools: An Analysis of the Secondary Education Learning Objectives and the Teacher's Focus Group	134
7.6 Discussion: Implementation of Morales' Plays as a Pedagogical Tool in Secondary Education	141
7.7 Conclusion	144
Chapter 8 – General Conclusions	148
8.1 Introduction	149
8.2 Summary of Main Findings	149
8.2.1 Question One – The Concepts of Media Manipulation and Propaganda in Morales' Plays	151
8.2.2 Question Two – Morales' Theatre in Chilean Educational Context	154
8.3 Contribution of the Dissertation	155
8.4 Ideas for Further Research	157
8.5 Conclusion	158
References	162
Curriculum Vitae	187
Summary	189
Samenvatting	196
Resumen	203
Appendices	211

List of Abbreviations

ABC:	American Broadcasting Company
ACE:	Agencia para la Calidad de la Educación (Chile)
CBS:	Columbia Broadcasting System
CNED:	Consejo Nacional de Educación (Chile)
CNTV:	Consejo Nacional de Televisión (Chile)
CONAR:	Consejo de Autorregulación y Ética Publicitaria (Chile)
FG:	Focus Group
GEXEL:	Grupo de Estudios del Exilio Literario (España)
LGE:	Ley General de Educación (Chile)
MINEDUC:	Ministerio de Educación (Chile)
NBC:	National Broadcasting Company
OA:	Objetivos de Aprendizaje (Chile)
OECD:	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SAC:	Sistema Nacional para el Aseguramiento de la Calidad en la Educación (Chile)
TVN:	Televisión Nacional de Chile
UCTV:	Universidad Católica Televisión de Chile