MASTER'S THESIS

THE FILMS OF LUCRECIA MARTEL

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Report by Ronald Bergan

The thesis sets out successfully to analyse the films of the contemporary Argentinean director Lucretia Martel, making an important contribution to the small amount written about her in English.

The writer focuses on three films: The Swamp, The Holy Girl and the Headless Woman, putting them in context and exploring what connects and what sets them apart. However, what is clear is that all three are products of an original auteur, not excluding the autobiographical elements. The thesis shows what makes Martel's films original, investigating the personal world of the director, placing her in an Argentinean tradition, while seeing her as part of the New Wave. This is explained by an excellent overview of Argentinean film history.

What follows are astute, detailed chapters on each film, dealing with the narrative and image but more specifically, and most interestingly, on Martel's use of sound. The writer explains how Martel constructs her films by, what she calls, "layering narrative and emotional content."

The writer expounds on the latter without getting bogged down too much in academic theory, his remarks always allied to the content and spirit of the films. Martel is a very self-conscious artist and the writer is able to quote from her judiciously. The thesis is helped by Martel's self-analysis, while allowing for the writer's own views on her remarks. This allows him not to take everything she says at face value. In fact, there are certain negative remarks

made about The Headless Woman, which is considered more conventional than the other two films. However, they do make up a trilogy.

The thesis is written with authority by someone who speaks Spanish, which enables him to translate the nuances of the spoken language of the films, but also by someone who understands the practical as much as the theoretical aspects of cinema.

I do recommend this work to be admitted for defence before a FAMU state exam examination panel