



# DRUM

Digital Repository at the University of Maryland

DRUM >  
 Theses and Dissertations from UM >  
 UM Theses and Dissertations >

**Please use this identifier to cite or link to this item:** <http://hdl.handle.net/1903/11226>

**Title:** LA THEATRALITE: ANALYSE D'UNE NOTION CRITIQUE A TRAVERS TROIS MEDIA ET EPOQUES (ROMAN, PEINTURE ET CINEMA AU XVIIIIE, XIXE ET XXE SIECLES)

**Authors:** Polanz, Dorothee

**Advisors:** Campagne, Herve Thomas

**Department/Program:** Modern French Studies

**Type:** Dissertation

**Sponsors:** Digital Repository at the University of Maryland  
 University of Maryland (College Park, Md.)

**Keywords:** 0401 Literature  
 0465 Theater  
 0377 Art History  
 libertine novels, movie, orientalism, Renoir, Rohmer, theatricality

**Issue Date:** 2010

**Abstract:** I argue that the notion of "theatricality," though it has been frequently used as an interpretive tool in critical discourse on various artistic and literary forms (novels, poetry, painting, fashion, film, etc.) remains ill defined. Moreover, it appears obvious that theatricality does not, in fact, manifest itself in the same way in all genres and media where critics attempt to use it as an interpretive tool. A double question thus informs my research: how legitimate is the use of a supposedly unique operational notion, expressed in a single term, in reference to a wide variety of forms? Beneath this manifest disparity, what common elements can be identified, at a more fundamental level, to support the claim that theatricality is indeed a viable and fruitful notion in the quest to understand how the creative process works--be it in the form of narrative fiction, drama, cinema, painting, sculpture, architecture, fashion design, etc.? My point of departure is the acknowledgment that the notion of 'theatricality,' while quite commonly summoned in scholarly analysis on diverse topics, is seldom defined with any precision, if at all, by those who employ it. The reader must then infer, as best s/he can, the exact meaning of 'theatricality,' only to discover that it varies from one author to the next. As a result, the term "'theatricality" (and to some extent the adjective "theatrical") refers to such an extremely diverse range of meanings that, in spite of its frequency, its value as operational notion must be questioned. Because the libertine novel of the eighteenth century, orientalist painting of the nineteenth century, and genre cinema of the twentieth century have often been described as eminently theatrical in critical literature, I will make them the basis of my corpus, from which the features of theatricality can be specified. My goal is to arrive at a definition that would truly be relevant in any domain. Ultimately, I intend to show why, in fact, analogy with theater should hold particular interpretive value for a wide array of creative forms throughout history.

**URI:** <http://hdl.handle.net/1903/11226>

**Appears in Collections:** Languages, Literatures, & Cultures Theses and Dissertations  
 UM Theses and Dissertations

**Files in This Item:**

File	Description	Size	Format	No. of Downloads	
Polanz_umd_0117E_11791.pdf	RESTRICTED ACCESS	21.9 MB	Adobe PDF	77	View/Open

[Show full item record](#)

All items in DRUM are protected by copyright, with all rights reserved.

DRUM is brought to you by the University of Maryland Libraries  
University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742-7011 (301)314-1328.  
Please send us your comments. -  
[All Contents](#)