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Gala, Antonio (1936-)

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World Literature in Spanish

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G

Gala, Antonio (1936–)

This Spanish playwright, poet, novelist, and columnist is one of that country's best-selling authors. Characters in Gala's literature are marginalized by society: they include women, homosexuals, prostitutes, and Muslims, among others. Some works are set in the historical past but represent current national situations. His prose contains lyrical elements, symbols, and references to myths.

Gala started his literary career writing plays. Important pieces include *Anillos para una dama* (1973; Rings for a Lady), which studies Jimena, the historical wife of El Cid, and her vacillation between individual freedom and social responsibility; *¿Por qué corres, Ulises?* (1975; Why Do You Run, Ulysses?), demythifying Ulysses and Penelope's relationship; *Los buenos días perdidos* (1972; *The Bells of Orleans*, 1993), which satirizes contemporary materialism; *Petra Regalada* (1980), an allegory of the struggle against Franco; and *Los bellos durmientes* (1994; *The Sleeping Beauties*), which presents youth without ideals.

Gala has written 11 narratives to date. His successful first novel, *El manuscrito carmesí* (1990; *The Crimson Manuscript*), tells the story of Granada's last Muslim king. *La pasión turca* (1993; *Turkish Passion*) depicts female worship and the intercultural relationship between a

Spanish woman and a Turkish man; it was successfully adapted to film by director Vicente Aranda. More recently, *La regla de tres* (1996; *The Rule of Three*) explores bisexuality.

Poemas de amor (1997; *Love Poems*) shows Gala's command of language and emotional sensitivity. He has also written an autobiography, *Ahora hablaré de mí* (2000; *Now I Will Talk About Myself*). More recently, the novel *Los papeles del agua* (2008; *Papers from the Water*) centers on a female writer who travels to Venice, searching for herself. Throughout his work, Gala exhibits a critical perception of contemporary Spanish society and a talent for psychoanalyzing female characters. He has become a prominent public figure and his personal opinions usually provoke controversy in the media.

Iker González-Allende

See also *Cantar de Mío Cid*; Theater in Spain: 1975 to Present.

Work By:

The Bells of Orleans. Trans. Edward E. Borsoi. University Park: Estreno, 1993.

Work About:

Gilmour, Nicola. "Turkish Delight: Antonio Gala's *La pasión turca* as a Vision of Spain's Contested Islamic Heritage." *Arizona Journal of Hispanic Cultural Studies* 10.1 (2006): 77–94.

Lamartine-Lens, Iride. "Petra Regalada: Madonna or Whore?" *Estreno: Cuadernos del Teatro Español Contemporáneo* 11.1 (1985): 13–15.