

# LATIN AMERICAN THEATRE REVIEW

*a Journal devoted to  
the Theatre and Drama  
of Spanish and Portuguese  
America*

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## Abstracts

### Peter R. Beardsell, "Insanity and Poetic Justice in Usigli's *Corona de sombra*."

Maximilian and Carlota are treated, on the whole, in a conciliatory manner in Rodolfo Usigli's *Corona de sombra* (1943). Although the dramatist envisages Carlota's insanity as a kind of divine retribution, his purpose is ultimately to attenuate her punishment. While maintaining the essential ingredients of historical fact, Usigli makes certain amendments in order to reduce the empress's culpability and to emphasize the international issues involved. In the final scene he responds to a sense of poetic justice in bringing full lucidity to his protagonist and in allowing her discoveries to provoke a death that is a release from enduring torment; for he has made the audience feel that her suffering is greater than she deserves. Without turning Carlota into a tragic heroine, Usigli arouses cathartic emotions and profits from the notion of poetic justice in order to teach his audience the lessons of national sovereignty and unity. (PRB)

### Tamara Holzapfel, "*Pueblo rechazado*: Educating the Public Through Reportage."

The documentary play is an outgrowth of epic drama and originated in Germany during the 1920's. Forced into exile and extinction in 1933, it reemerged after the Eichmann trial, setting a new direction for the German stage as well as awakening international interest in a theatre whose principal function is to educate the audience to moral and political responsibility. Vicente Leñero's *Pueblo rechazado*, premiered in 1968 as part of the cultural program of the XIX Olympics in Mexico, marks the beginning of documentary drama in Latin America. Based on the reportage of a religious polemic concerning the introduction of psychoanalysis into a monastery, it explores the broader implications of the conflict for the Church and society. The author combines the tasks of scholar and playwright. Using historical data, he shapes it to correspond to his private conception of the event, the creative process being ultimately the reason for the play's effectiveness. (TH)

### Gerald M. Moser, "Artur Azevedo's Last Dramatic Writings: The 'Teatro a Vapor' Vignettes (1906-1908)."

Artur Azevedo's last series of 105 prose sketches or vignettes, published in a Rio newspaper between 1906 and 1908, under the general title of *Teatro a Vapor* ("Theater Under Steam"), was one of the Brazilian dramatist's last efforts to revive the tradition of the Brazilian comedy of manners that had been begun by Martins Pena. Three features are characteristic: their rapid, witty and colloquial style, their dramatic form—seldom adopted by Brazilian writers of *crônicas*—, and their topical contents, reflecting events and the way of life in the Rio de Janeiro of that period. The study is accompanied by a list of the vignettes compiled by the author after searching newspaper files in the Brazilian National Library. (GMM)

### Virginia A. Brownell, "The Eucharistic Image as a Symbol of the Downfall of Modern Man."

A recurrent theme in contemporary Spanish American drama is the Eucharist, the sacrament traditionally considered essential to heavenly salvation. Religious values are inverted, however, in *El Mayor General hablará de teogonía* (1957) by José Triana, *El tuerto es rey* (1970) by Carlos Fuentes, and *Para que se cumplan las Escrituras* (1965) by Agustín Cuzzani. In each work, unfulfilled communion further alienates man from God. In the Triana play, mortal sin, guilt and disbelief lead to the condemnation of all three characters. In contrast, God in *El tuerto es rey* denies his subjects free will, is held responsible and is himself condemned. The tone of Cuzzani's play is hopeful, in that Manuel's death restores free will. The popularity of this theme illustrates the attitudes of playwrights of Roman Catholic tradition who have begun a search for existential meaningfulness. Theatrical questioning of values lends universality to their works. (VAB)

### Dennis Perri, "*La colina* and the Theatre of Daniel Gallegos."

Daniel Gallegos' *La colina* serves as the focus for a study of the dramatic techniques and thematic concerns of one of Costa Rica's leading playwrights. Gallegos' three previous works provide a frame in which to analyze the author's most recent and complex play. *La colina* dramatizes the characters' search for guiding principles once God's death has been announced by the United Nations. Unlike absurdist drama, Gallegos' play proceeds to revitalize man's faith in God and his commitment to his fellow-man. An underlying ritual structure and the use of theatrical images underscore the drama's movement toward order and the reintegration of its artistic world. (DP)

### Harold E. Hinds, Jr. Charles M. Tatum, "José María Samper's *Costumbrista* Play, *Un alcalde a la antigua*."

The literary works of the nineteenth-century Colombian intellectual, José María Samper, have received little attention. In this study, the authors focus on what is generally considered to be his best dramatic work, *Un alcalde a la antigua y dos primos a la moderna*. The predominant theme is that suggested by the title of this *costumbrista* play, the conflict between traditional and modern values. Samper's contrast between change and tradition is sharply drawn in the major and minor characters. The second major *costumbrista* theme deals with government in a rural Colombian parish. Other *costumbrista* features discussed are the language, customs, values, celebrations, dress, local types, and relationships typical of rural village life in mid-nineteenth century Colombia. (CMT)

## Theatre Symposium

An Hispanic Theatre Symposium and Festival was held at Queensborough Community College (The City University of New York) on April 24, 1976. Papers were presented by Emilio Gonzalez López ("Valle-Inclán y los nuevos géneros dramáticos: el nuevo melodrama"); George Wellwarth ("The Theatrical Theories of Augusto Boal: A Commentary"); George O. Schanzer ("Usigli, Calderón, and the Revolution"); and Max Ferra ("El teatro actual en Nueva York: temas y técnicas"). In addition, Mini-conferences on Spanish Theatre and Latin American and Luso-Brazilian Theatre were held. Several theatrical productions were offered for the evening entertainment including *La madre y la guillotina* by Matías Montes Huidobro and *El convidado* by Martínez Mediero.

## Latin American Plays in New York City

The Theatre Off Park, New York City, performed three Latin American one-act plays as part of its Playreaders' Theatre Series on March 22, 1976. The plays were *The Man Who Turned Into a Dog* by Osvaldo Dragún, *Ladies at Play* by Julio Matas, and *Crossroads* by Carlos Solórzano. All three of these plays had been published in the anthology, *Selected Latin American One-Act Plays*, edited and translated by Francesca Colecchia and Julio Matas, and published in 1973 by the University of Pittsburgh Press.