

# LATIN AMERICAN THEATRE REVIEW

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

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## Abstracts

### Andrea G. Labinger, "Something Old, Something New: *El Gigante Amapolas*."

This nineteenth century Argentine play, one of only two dramatic works by the well-known journalist and patriot, Juan Bautista Alberdi, surprises the reader with its apparent modernity. Written at the height of the Romantic period and dismissed by earlier critics as a clever, but circumstantially limited political *sainete*, *Amapolas*, upon closer inspection, transcends the confines of the time and place in which it was written to address the contemporary reader in familiar terms. The bare stage, constant, futile activity, and anti-heroic stance of the characters seem to anticipate the Theatre of the Absurd. Scrupulously avoiding the bombastic tone of other political dramas of the period, Alberdi creates a world of devalued language, false logic and elegant *non-sequitur* that would not be out of place in a twentieth-century absurdist work. Only at the conclusion of the play does the reader become aware of the piece's nineteenth century orientation. Yet, despite the ultimate demise of the Giant and the restoration of order, the pervasive atmosphere of irrationality and confusion lingers on, making this play extremely accessible to the sensibilities of a contemporary audience. (AGL)

### Matías Montes-Huidobro, "Zambullida en el *Orinoco* de Carballido."

*Orinoco*, by Emilio Carballido, combines the realistic nature that characterizes his theatre with fantastic elements that never completely depart from reality. This blends and emerges in a natural way, since the only two characters in the play, Mina and Fifi, see no real boundaries between reality and fantasy, life and stage. The action takes place on a boat, the "Stella Maris," and a series of minor but peculiar details change the nature of the play from realistic to allegorical. There is no real climax in the action, and the dialogue has a sort of Chekhovian mood in which anguish is an undercurrent. The dialogue moves freely, almost without specific objectives, in the same way that the lives of Mina and Fifi have no specific direction. However, there is an internal force, and by the end of the play we discover its inner meaning and cohesiveness. A constant pendular movement between realistic and metaphorical dialogue creates in the reader an intentional feeling of uncertainty about the true ground on which the play develops. The reader is deceived in the same way than Mina and Fifi are, and at the end we discover that all the time we have been in Charon's boat, and that Emilio Carballido has made a deep dive in the river Styx. (MM-H)

### Judith I. Bissett, "Victims and Violators: The Structure of Violence in *Torquemada*."

As a committed writer, Augusto Boal's stated objective has been to bring about social and political reform through a revolutionary re-structuring of the theatre. *Torquemada* is a good example of Boal's vision of the theatre as a platform for protest and embodies structures based on dramatic theories he believes capable of creating a change in his public's political attitudes. For example, Brechtian structures are present in the text of *Torquemada*. Yet, the theme of this play—repression through torture—requires that its dramatic structures produce not intellectual distance, but empathy with both victims and violators engaged in this horrifying expression of violence. The purpose of this study is to identify and examine the victim-violator oppositions that occur in the play and evaluate their effectiveness as instigators of political awareness in an audience. (JIB)

### Patricia Elena González, "Jairo Aníbal Niño: Un dramaturgo colombiano."

While the dramatic works of Jairo Aníbal Niño are historically based, either specifically in Colombian social and political situations, or more generally in the larger context of Latin American history, the thematic development in these plays tends to follow highly imaginative lines. Through the introduction of mythical and ludic elements, the author succeeds in creating situations that are often surreal and hallucinatory, and which further heighten the socio-critical effectiveness of his works. The process by which a second plane of reality is established which contrasts with and further illumines the harsh (or ludicrous) contours of the reality he wishes to criticize may be traced in *El monte calvo*, *Las bodas de lata o el baile de los arzobispos*, *El secuestro*, *La madriguera*, *Los inquilinos de la ira* y *El sol subterráneo*. (PEG)