

Myth and Theatricality in Three Plays by Carlos Solórzano

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"Me interesa el sentido mítico que tienen nuestros pueblos, y eso es lo que he tratado de teatralizar." Carlos Solórzano (interview).¹

The plays of Carlos Solórzano dramatize Indo-Hispanic popular worship to reveal what he calls, "la forma tremenda y trágica, el fanatismo de la religión en Latinoamérica" (10/28/83). This Guatemalan-Mexican playwright recreates the stories of Christian mythology with theatrical forms that recall the somber tones of medieval Christianity as well as the blood sacrifices of indigenous worship. According to Mircea Eliade myths are sacred stories perceived as absolute truth which provide models of human behavior and define cultural values (*Myths* 3-7). Theatricality embraces all the non-verbal elements of stagecraft that manifest a physical, visual and auditory reality on the stage: action, mood, spectacle and rhythm. These are the elements identified by Antonin Artaud (who influenced Solórzano's dramaturgy) as the "scenic poetry" of theater.²

Solórzano crafts the narrative structures of his drama by embedding motifs from the Creation, Redemption and Last Judgement into his plots, themes, characters and dialogue. In so doing, he creates powerful images such as the Savior, Cross, Devil, God, etc. Ironically, however, he inverts the moral values associated with these archetypal symbols.³ On stage the myths are re-enacted by means of empty, or even worse, destructive rituals. The inversion suggests that the original values of these myths have been forgotten or corrupted. Once the myth is stripped of its sanctity, the ritual becomes powerless to heal. Solórzano's drama poses the essential human question: What is the responsibility of the individual to himself, to society, to God?

Los fantoches, *El crucificado* and *Las manos de Dios* are models of how Solórzano represents the syncretic legacy of Indo-Hispanic peoples, particularly their obsession with sacrifice and salvation. Mexican religion is a fusion of conflicting beliefs. The evangelization forced a union of two very different systems of belief, which anthropologist Louise M. Burkhart characterizes as the "sacrifice-oriented monism" of the Nahua (Aztec) and the "soteriologically (salvation)-oriented matter/spirit dualism" of the Spanish. To resolve this

fundamental incongruity, Burkhart states, the Indians remained "nepantla" (Nahua: "in the middle") by combining "a Christian surface with a Nahua structure" (188).⁴ Solórzano has a simpler explanation: "Estos países nunca fueron del todo evangelizados. . . . Adoptamos (la religión cristiana) a nuestra manera. Nuestros pueblos siguen siendo fetichistas. Lo importante es reconocer nuestro mestizaje, expresar ese sincretismo que es la base de nuestra formación cultural" (10/28/83). Syncretism, however, never fully reconciled the contradictions between native monism--the belief that the material and spiritual worlds are one reality--and Christian dualism, which saw them as opposing principles. As a result, Solórzano believes, dogma replaced pantheism and religion became a source of anguish instead of communion with the forces of nature:

(A causa de los dogmas) la religión--que puede embellecer la vida con este misterio cotidiano de comunicarse con las grandes fuerzas que están dentro de nosotros--se vuelve opresiva, triste y sobre todo llena al ser humano de una cantidad de culpas por el mismo hecho de vivir y disfrutar la vida. (10/28/83)

During another conversation, Solórzano implied that Mexican Catholicism is steeped in blood and guilt because the evangelization inculcated the worst aspects of both religions. Renaissance humanism had not yet penetrated Spain at the time of the Conquest. Instead, Spanish friars superimposed the medieval conviction of human unworthiness on pre-Hispanic myths that already devalued human life. Thus, the bloody gods of indigenous culture merged with the cruel God of the Old Testament. Solórzano summarized his vision of the origins of Mexican fatalism during one of our interviews:

Para el pueblo Cristo, o el Dios de la religión judeo-cristiana, tiene mucho de contacto con Huitzilopochtli y con todos esos dioses sangrientos. Yo diría que la religión de los países indo-hispánicos está cargada de sangre. Los dioses ancestrales fueron sustituidos por los dioses occidentales, pero el espíritu del hombre frente al dios sigue siendo el mismo: de sometimiento, de culpa, de nulificación de sí mismo, de servidumbre ante ese dios omnipotente y cruel. . . . Estos países se identifican fácilmente con el Antiguo Testamento por la herencia de esos dioses crueles y sangrientos. Los españoles usaron la religión . . . para poner en movimiento una fuerza avasalladora que conquista y domina. Ese dios del humanismo cristiano no lo transmitieron a los pueblos conquistados. Los conquistadores todavía estaban en la Edad Media cuando vinieron aquí. El Renacimiento para España fue la conquista de América. (4/12/84)

In their haste to evangelize the Indians, the friars did not eradicate the old myths; they merely changed the names of gods for those of saints.⁵ The conversion, Solórzano maintains, was superficial.

Recuerdo el sentido panteísta de las ceremonias de los indios frente a los templos católicos. Muchas veces detrás de la imagen católica estaba escondida una prehispánica. Es un sincretismo que se da en los pueblos indios. Para ellos es un momento en que todas las almas se pueden comunicar y sentir que pertenecemos a las grandes fuerzas naturales que nos han creado y que nos mueven. Esto sí es algo que es importante en las festividades indígenas y las danzas populares. Esto sí me impresionó desde niño, y algo de esto creo que está recogido en mi teatro en obras como *El crucificado* y *Los fantoches* donde hay un acento folklórico que proviene de las fiestas populares. (10/21/83)

These words reveal Solórzano's concept of religion: the communion of human souls with each other and with the forces of nature. They also imply that his sense of theatricality derives from indigenous sources. He reiterated the same idea in another conversation and, indirectly, acknowledged a debt to Artaud:

De niño veía las danzas populares e indígenas y las loas con su fuerte sabor corporal. Son pantomimas en las que los actores hablan y actúan por medio del baile. Pienso que el teatro necesita el estímulo visual, las sugerencias del cuerpo. Artaud dice que no hay obras maestras porque el texto necesita vida propia que solamente recoge con los movimientos humanos. Yo busco la plasticidad, el color, el movimiento, personajes vivos y simbólicos, coros y bailarines para lograr más trascendencia. (10/14/83)

Given the correspondences between his stagecraft and indigenous dances, it was surprising to discover that the allusions to pre-Hispanic ritual were not intentional. In the following quote, Solórzano acknowledges the similarities were fortuitous. Nonetheless, the fact that he admires the theatricality of contemporary indigenous dances and of pre-Hispanic theater is significant; it suggests the power of what Carl Gustav Jung has labeled the "collective unconscious," the deepest stratum of the psyche, where the "phylogenetic history" of the whole culture is stored as instincts, myths and archetypes (65-85, 223, 425). Equally important, it reveals the intuitiveness of the creative process.

El estímulo óptico, tal vez, es la búsqueda instintiva de las raíces del teatro. . . . Podría ser un remoto y subyacente deseo de buscar esa

forma expresiva de las danzas prehispánicas, en las que casi no hay argumento pero sí un fuerte estímulo óptico. Tal vez por eso es que siento que el teatro puramente verbal es una herencia directa del Occidente. En cambio el teatro dinámico . . . podría ser una vinculación inconciente--no fue concientemente buscada--con el teatro prehispánico. (10/21/83)

Los fantoches (one act, 1958) exemplifies how Solórzano combines universal myths, the Mexican *Quema de Judas*, medieval motifs, and French existentialist drama to challenge the myth of the Last Judgment.⁶ The play re-enacts Judean-Christian mythology from the Creation to the Apocalypse. It begins in darkness, as do Genesis, the *Popul Vuh*, and many other creation myths. It ends in fire and explosion, as do Revelation, the Nahua "Legend of the Five Suns," and other end-of-the-world myths. In the Sartrean "mundo cerrado" represented here, brilliant life-size puppets pantomime the monotony of ritualized lives in episodes that symbolize birth, work, mating, and death. On the surface, the text is an allegory about life, sin, death and judgement suggesting an *auto sacramental*.⁷ In fact, it resembles Calderón's *El gran teatro del mundo*.⁸ The images, however, are inverted. Instead of confirming God's mercy and the afterlife, in *Los fantoches* God's indifference leads to an existentialist *nada*.

In a timeless setting, an omnipotent Puppet Maker creates beings in his image and programs them for specific roles. Driven by these impulses the Woman loves, the Young Man works, the Artist dreams, the *Cabezón* thinks, the Old Man counts his wealth and Judas suffers in silence. Stoically, they play out these rituals as they wait to be selected to go to "la libertad" outside of their prison-like warehouse. When Judas is chosen, the puppets form a "human pyramid" to peer out a small window. They discover death: "Judas . . . Ya no era nada. . . ." "Nada, polvo, cenizas . . . nada." (109)⁹ The pyramid tumbles. Their fall, a *desengaño*, visualizes the awakening of consciousness that follows knowledge both structurally and thematically.

Los fantoches develops the themes of creation, fall and judgment with minimal language and maximal theatricality. Drawn directly from the graphic arts of indigenous popular culture, the puppets are intended, in the author's words: "para sugerir con ellos la existencia de un mundo, que, tras su brillante colorido aparente, encierra un fondo desgarrado y cruel." (95) Visible flaws contradict their physical beauty. The exaggerated head of the *Cabezón*, the muscles of the Young Man, the painful spikes of the Woman's skirt are visual images that suggest human failings. The Puppet Maker is linked to the image of Jehova by his omnipotence, white flowing hair and robe. In the play, ironically, the Creator is blind, deaf, dumb and senile. He is, in fact, a *deus otiosus*, a creator god who becomes progressively estranged from his creations and fades away, "quite indifferent to human affairs" (Eliade, *Quest* 47). He also limps, like Oedipus or Christ in *King Jesus* by Robert Graves (264), and

must be supported by his daughter, Death. His defects imply that an imperfect creator could hardly create a perfect world.

The puppets, however, do not focus on the Puppet Maker's flaws; they fear and honor him. When he enters the room, "quedan estáticos en actitud de ofrecerse" (106). Their awe and endless rituals between his visits recall the duty of reciprocity among ancient Mexicans. Alfonso Caso affirms that both the Nahua and Quiché gods insisted on "un culto constante" because "la creación no es un don gracioso hecho al hombre por el dios, sino un compromiso que implica la obligación de una adoración continua." (28) This obligation is expressed by the Old Man, the voice of tradition: "Hay que dar gracias a ese viejo que nos ha puesto aquí." (111)

The climax is apocalyptic; it uses Mexican and medieval images to represent the fear of the *dies irae* (Judgment Day). The Puppet Maker's Daughter wears a skull mask that resembles the "calaveras de la muerte catrina" by Mexican artist José Guadalupe Posada. Accompanied by the cacophony of screams and dissonant music, she spins like a wheel of fortune to claim her next victim, an allusion to the medieval dance of death. The puppets cower to evade the menacing *memento mori*; their terror recalls Saint Paul's warning to Christians, "Work out your own salvation in fear and trembling." (Philippians 2:12) Suddenly, she stops, points to the audience and the curtain drops. The shock is cathartic; it is the "Theater of Cruelty" invoked by Artaud: a communal ritual that activates the metaphysical fears of spectators by undermining their beliefs. In a 1989 New York production I saw, bewilderment resonated in the pause between the final curtain and the applause of the audience. As in the medieval play *Everyman*, each character in *Los fantoches* suffers the fear of death individually; the audience, however, confronts that fear collectively.

As the name implies, *El crucificado* (one act, 1958) is based on the Passion: "La acción, un Viernes Santo, en una población donde se escenifica todos los años, por esas fechas, la pasión de Cristo." (72) It is structured as a play within a play. The inner story follows the outlines of the Gospel according to St. Matthew; the outer form, "una farsa trágica," degenerates into a Black Mass as a result of the collective drinking and carnival atmosphere.

Chucho, the protagonist, is an absurd hero: miserable, morbid, morose and thoroughly incapable of any significant action. The author overtly identifies him as an Indian: "hombre del pueblo de 30 años. Débil. Aspecto febril, rasgos indígenas." (72) The character's behavior and confused understanding of Christian dogma confirm the observation by Octavio Paz that the Church provided a refuge for the Indian, but "redujo la participación de los fieles a la más elemental y pasiva de las actitudes religiosas." (95) The disparity between the archetype of the Redeemer and this grotesque parody disparages the belief that suffering comparable to that of Christ leads to salvation. The blood images support Paz's assertion that, "el mexicano venera al Cristo sangrante y humillado . . . porque ve en él la imagen transfigurada

de su propio destino." (75) The sacrifice of the drunken actor/peasant who imagines himself a messiah ends in bitter irony. Shedding his blood does not alleviate the villagers' misery. It nourishes their faith, and worsens their feelings of collective guilt: no one tried to stop Chucho. Now his loved ones will starve because he is not there to work the fields. Instead of salvation, his sacrifice brings death.

The disparity between religion and reality is projected by a pattern of imagery with ironic connotations. The set, a dreary hut with sooty walls and dirt floor, dissolves into blue fields and sky. The contrast may suggest an elevation of nature over culture, but the sun, contrary to its usual depiction as a symbol of life, "le seca a uno las entrañas y lo deja hecho cenizas." (75) The illumination becomes "irreal" and the parody more acute as the light of reason succumbs to the dark passions of the day.

Costumes are critical to theatrical effect: they help to delineate and develop character by visual means. In *El crucificado* the costumes are symbolic and derisive. The main characters play dual roles. Visible underneath the robes of the "Apostles" are the dirty, everyday garments which divulge their true natures as drunken peasants. Moreover, the men carry their biblical garb poorly ("pelucas torcidas, mantos mal prendidos"), implying that they are unfit for their roles. Their vulgar speech and gestures confirm this impression. Likewise, Mary's halo keeps sliding off her head. The role of mother of the Savior is more than she can handle. Magdalena, fiancée of the protagonist, also presents contradictory images. Her "Passion" outfit and flowing hair accentuate her sensuality more than her spirituality. "Los vestidos se pegan a su cuerpo dejando ver sin disimulo sus formas redondas, llenas y apetecibles." (84)

In drama a change of costume often indicates a change of personality. Backlighting by "una claridad irreal," Chucho becomes "transfigured" as liquor dulls his faculties and he allows the women to dress him. The scene functions on several levels of dramatic irony. It is openly cynical. Instead of affirming Christian doctrine, the scene blasphemes it. Structurally, it forms the peripety, the pivotal point where the action turns. Chucho's drunkenness reinforces his unheroic smallness. Culturally, Mateo's remark: "Claro, hombre. Claro. Eres el Salvador. Bebe más y te sentirás el hijo de todos los dioses de la tierra," (80) reveals a latent polytheism beneath a Christian veneer. Finally, the scene is a rite of passage signaling a change of spiritual state. With the costuming complete, fear of an absurd death is replaced by a new vision: Chucho is deceived by the illusion of his role. Ironically, while a true rite of passage leads from ignorance to knowledge, this one leads from instinctive self-preservation to mass-induced suicide.

A procession symbolizing Christ's *via crucis* closes the scene. The mournful music implies a dirge; its lack of tonality underscores the inadequacy of the redeemer and the rites. The gradual dimming to darkness signals the

moment of death. Once more, Solórzano juxtaposes myth and ritual, language and action to examine popular worship from an existential perspective.

One may discover a new truth in this interpretation of the Passion or reject it categorically, but *El crucificado*, like *Los fantoches*, is rooted in Mexican popular worship.¹⁰ Both plays use theatrical images to convey rituals of self-annihilation; both culminate with sacrifices in which mortals look to their myths for salvation, or at least solace, and find a meaningless death instead. Citing the author again:

Estas tres piezas (*Los fantoches*, *El crucificado*, *Mea culpa*) escritas en épocas distintas tienen como principal objetivo el de ilustrar una preocupación siempre constante para mí: el vacío que halla el hombre de hoy al buscar la resolución de todas sus dudas en una doctrina que me parece cada vez más ineficaz y que responde a la angustia racional con una invariable y rígida forma de evasión: la fe.¹¹

Solórzano's best known play, *Las manos de Dios* (1954), dramatizes the sacrifice of Beatriz, a young woman who, encouraged by what seems to be a demonic possession, steals the jewels from the hands of God in the village church to buy her brother's freedom. The quest to save her brother becomes messianic when it evolves into "la salvación del Hombre."¹² The theft, however, is discovered; she is tried, condemned and punished, and her brother is executed. Nevertheless, her defiance of God and the village *cacique* symbolizes the moral triumph of the individual over the conventions of religion and society. By stealing the jewels from the hands of *el Padre Eterno*, Beatriz leaves the wooden image as empty as the religious values it represents.

Like *El crucificado*, *Las manos de Dios* re-enacts the myth of Redemption and the ritual of human sacrifice; the tone, characterizations and denouement of the two plays, however, differ markedly. Chucho is a false messiah; he allows his peers to delude him with liquor and adulation, then begs to be crucified. Beatriz, on the other hand, rises above the spiritual complacency of her peers to become a messianic rebel when a demonic inner voice convinces her to challenge the moral values and civil laws of her community.

Beatriz is a complex character with several mythical and literary predecessors. Initially she personifies the Unamunian struggle to reconcile faith and reason; she feels abandoned by God, but continues to pray to the icon. As it was with her native ancestors, she sees God and his image as one being. Enraged by the silence of *el Padre Eterno* (he is another manifestation of a *deus otiosus*), she listens to the advice of the Devil inside her. The Devil is not another character, but the active half of her divided soul: "Yo no puedo hacer nada por mí mismo. . . . Yo estoy dentro de ti," he asserts (338). He is Lucifer, who brings healing and illumination; Prometheus, who raises mortals above gods; Quetzalcoatl, who rejects propitiatory sacrifices. Beatriz

fails to save her brother, but like Antigone, she conquers her political and metaphysical fears: she regains her soul, her individuality. Her character culminates with an allusion to Christ: she suffers a passion, humiliation and crucifixion on the shriveled tree of life, a distorted image of the *axis mundi*. The frenzy of her female attackers recalls the fury of the Euripidean bacchantes. Yet Beatriz remains defiant. Her serenity suggests that by confronting her fear of God, the heroine frees herself from the fear of death; that true salvation is achieved through self-affirmation and compassion, not ritual sacrifice.

The theatricality of *Las manos de Dios* blends the *plasticidad* of Mexican images with dramatic forms from the *auto sacramental*, as well as techniques from expressionist drama. The setting is contemporary: "una pequeña población de Iberoamérica, hoy" (303), yet stylized to express the timeless sources of despair for the peasants: Church, State, Nature. A massive stone church dominates stage left, the sinister side. The author's set-design specifies: "En medio de las chozas que la rodean, ésta debe tener un aspecto fabuloso, como palacio de leyenda" (303). In front of the church, a well from which the villagers occasionally draw water. It is significant that water, a symbol for life in Mexico, is outside and in front of the Church. On the right side of the village plaza is a small, dirty jail. Its "letrero torcido" implies tortured justice. The relative size of the twin bastions of power in Latin America indicates where Solórzano places the greater power. The background shows a stony wasteland of "árboles secos y montes amarillos y muertos" (304): a place desperately in need of renewal.

The play's visual imagery weaves a tapestry of modern life textures with the somber shades of ancient traditions. The mood is medieval; the Church wields awesome power. It justifies the rule of a feudal lord who owns the land, makes the laws, and controls the commerce. The *Amo*, like *el Padre Eterno*, is an absent force: a "Señor Todopoderoso," omniscient and omnipotent. He recalls Mexican tyrants from Motecuhzoma (Montezuma) to Porfirio Díaz. The *campesinos*, dressed in the costume of José Clemente Orozco's painting, "Los zapatistas," live as serfs. Their silent choral interludes of pantomime and dance express the cosmic wonder and submissiveness of pre-Hispanic worship. Their ballet-like movements during the climactic debate between the Devil and the Priest manifest their confusion visually as they unwittingly judge the struggle between good and evil. The stylized movements of the chorus are techniques of modern drama, but the theological struggle recalls the *autos sacramentales* of missionary drama: the form by which most Indians learned the Creed.

Swayed by the Devil's words, the villagers haltingly begin to consider alternatives to their condition. Then the North Wind howls. Instigated by the Priest, they interpret the raging wind as God's punishment for listening to the Devil. The villagers cower, pray, and flail themselves with "chicotes imaginarios." They attempt to expiate their sin with a *Quema de Judas*. These

distortions of time, space and action convey a mythical dimension capable of affecting the spectators intuitively. They respond to the "movimientos angustiosos" and "pantomima grotesca" of the flagellants (357), and feel the despair of "este pueblo de hombres mudos del que Dios se ha olvidado" (337). As the audience processes the images, it completes the thwarted passage to discovery of the villagers: it recognizes that God sends despair: "Dios hace la eternidad con la sucesión de muchas vidas vacías." (336)

The ability of gifted playwrights to unmask human motivations by exposing disparities between language and action is essential to the appeal of theatre. Distinguishing Solórzano's mythopoetic narrative from his theatrical imagery reveals how they complement and contradict each other on the stage. The convergence/divergence of the myths and their corresponding rituals suggests that the old beliefs are now corrupt. Solórzano's characters can sense the spiritual world, but are cut off from the sacred because Christianity separated it from the material world. Now the myths are enigmatic; the rituals destructive. God's indifference impedes communication. Instead of being a source of solace and communion, religion promotes fatalism. It rationalizes sorrow and injustice in this "vale of tears;" it encourages resignation to protect the "status quo." This is particularly true in Latin America because of the Church's historical alignment with the oligarchy. Solórzano elaborated on the latter point in conversation:

Creo que la religión católica y la moral burguesa nos han hecho creer que es malo lo que es bueno. . . . Nos han hecho creer que pertenece al demonio lo que toda religión atribuye a Dios: el amor a la vida, el amor a la libertad, el amor a sí mismos, el deseo de disfrutar los bienes de la vida, el horror a la miseria. Todo esto pertenece a Dios, y nos han hecho creer que son elementos que el Diabolo ha infundido entre nosotros como manera de corrompírnos (11/11/83).

Solórzano's drama draws from his dual cultural legacy to re-create reality. The true goal of theater, wrote Artaud, is to create myths: "to translate life in its immense, universal aspect and extract from that life the images in which we would like to find ourselves again." (116) The plays, however, do not propose solutions. They decry the bloody rituals of popular worship and present images of moral, physical and social decay so that the audience might seek values that satisfy human needs instead of serving divine imperatives. The Devil articulates this idea when he implores the villagers: "No se flagelen más. No se odien de esa manera. ¡Ámense a sí mismos más que a Dios!" (357)

The Devil's words suggest the primary responsibility of individuals is "a sí mismos": to oneself and to each other, more than to God. To achieve this human-centered ethic, Indo-Hispanic religion needs a total renewal: a mythical rebirth that reconciles the Christian belief in the oneness of all in

Christ/God, with the autochthonous belief in the oneness of human beings and nature. The pre-Hispanic tenet that healing the spirit requires healing the physical and social worlds is implicit underneath Solórzano's Christian symbolism of salvation. In short, what is good for the body is also good for the soul.¹³

New York

Notas

1. Personal interview, October 28, 1983. From September 1983 to April 1984, Solórzano and I met regularly at his home in Mexico City. We discussed his life, plays, family and ideas about the creative process. Henceforth, the date of the interview will appear in parentheses in the text.

2. Artaud created the "Theater of Cruelty," a theater of "intense stage poetry" designed to provoke the religious fears of the audience through action, music, images and incantation, not words (Artaud 63-90). The "cruelty" was to remind us: "We are not free. And the sky can still fall on our heads. And the theater has been created to teach us that first of all." (79) See also Martin Esslin, *Antonin Artaud* (New York: Penguin, 1976): 83-105.

3. Many critics have signaled Solórzano's inversion of religious symbols and forms. See Frank Dauster, "The Dramas of Carlos Solórzano," *Modern Drama* 7 (1964): 89-100. Peter J. Schoenbach, "La libertad en *Las manos de Dios*," *LATR* 3.2 (1970): 21-29. L. H. Quackenbush, "El antitradicionalismo en el teatro centroamericano actual," *Chasqui* 11.3 (1980): 13-22. John R. Rosenberg, "The Ritual in Solórzano's *Las manos de Dios*," *LATR* 17.2 (1984): 39-48.

4. The degree of evangelization continues to foment scholarly debate. Robert Ricard theorizes that the Indians were easily Christianized (*The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico*, Berkeley: UP, 1966). Miguel León Portilla asserts that the conversion was not profound (see note #5). For an analysis of the issue, see Burkhart, particularly Ch. 7 "Christianity Conquered" 184-193.

5. Miguel León Portilla: "Actitud muy frecuente también fue acoger sólo de manera externa las creencias y prácticas católicas." "Testimonios nahuas sobre la conquista espiritual." In *Estudios de cultura náhuatl* XI (1974): 33. For an analysis of how Quetzalcoatl and Guadalupe, the major Mexican deities, exemplify Mexican syncretism see Jacques Lafaye. *Quetzalcoatl and Guadalupe: The Formation of the Mexican National Consciousness: 1531-1813*. (Chicago: UP, 1976): 2.

6. The *Quema de Judas* is a communal cleansing ceremony popular throughout Mexico. On Holy Saturday the people explode large, paper-maché figures to symbolize the expulsion of death and evil. For two analyses of the puppet motif in the play, see Douglas Radcliff-Umstead, "Solórzano's Tormented Puppets," *LATR* 4.2 (1972): 5-11; and Robert K. Anderson, "Los fantoches, un drama expresionista," *Hispanic Journal* 2.2 (1981): 111-117.

7. Bruce Wardropper: "The two key principles of sacramental art (are) allegory and timelessness." "The Search for a Dramatic Formula for the *Auto Sacramental*." *PMLA* 65 (1950): 1198.

8. For comparisons to Calderón's drama, see Esteban Rivas, *Carlos Solórzano y el teatro hispanoamericano* (México: Anáhuac, 1970): 127; also Radcliff-Umstead, note #6, 9.

9. All citations from and references to both *Los fantoches* and *El crucificado* are from Solórzano's *Teatro breve*: 93-118 and 71-92, respectively. This anthology also includes his plays: *El zapato*, *Cruce de vías*, *El sueño de un angel*, and *Mea culpa*.

10. Anthropologist Frances Toor reports that "formerly the entire story of the Passion was so realistically dramatized that it is said a living Christ was nailed to the cross in some villages." *A Treasury of Mexican Folkways*, (New York: Crown, 1947): 212. Anthropologist Victoria R. Bricker discusses the crucifixion of an Indian peasant in Chamula, Chiapas in 1868,

in *The Indian Christ, the Indian King*, (Austin: UP, 1981): 155. Novelist Rosario Castellanos recreates the same incident in *Oficio de Tinieblas* (1962).

11. Solórzano, cited by Miguel Guardia, "Las tres obras de Solórzano." *México en la Cultura*, (agosto 1958): 8.

12. All citations from and references to *Las manos de Dios* are from *El teatro hispanoamericano*: 301-358.

13. Solórzano's belief in the unity of body and spirit appears in his first drama, *Doña Beatriz, la sin ventura*, (México: Editorial Helio, 1954). Pedro de Alvarado, the conqueror of Guatemala, rejects his wife's (Doña Beatriz) contention that it is necessary to deny the body to save one's soul: "Lo que es bueno para el cuerpo, lo es también para el alma." (32)

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