1943

A Survey of the Drama of Colonial Mexico

Edward Aloysius Dwyer

Loyola University Chicago

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A SURVEY OF THE DRAMA OF
COLONIAL MEXICO

A Thesis

Presented to
the Faculty of the Graduate School
Loyola University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Edward Aloysius Dwyer
December 1943
...VITA...

The candidate was born on May 18th, 1904, in Rutland Township, Kane County, Illinois, the son of Edward Dwyer and Catherine Clinnin Dwyer. The paternal grandparents, Richard Dwyer and Ellen Barry Moore Dwyer, were the first to possess the land after the aboriginal inhabitants. Ellen Barry was a cousin of Captain Jack Barry, the first Naval Officer appointed by George Washington after the Declaration of Independence and therefore the founder of the Navy of the United States of America. Richard Dwyer, born in Tipperary, was a political refugee who escaped from Australia and lived in South America and in Canada before coming to the "States." James Clinnin and Margaret Donahue Clinnin, the maternal grandparents came West in the best covered wagon tradition.

The candidate attended Huntley High School, graduating in 1922. During that time he completed two years each of Latin, French and Spanish for college entrance. He attended Loyola University, Chicago; the University of Notre Dame, and St. Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio, obtaining the degree of Bachelor of Science in Education in 1926. In 1931 he attended the Graduate School of the University of Illinois and obtained four units on the Master's degree, two of them in Spanish. After several years of teaching experience he now possesses life certificates in the States of Louisiana, Kentucky, Nebraska, and Illinois.
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PREFAOE

For an understanding of the drama during the colonial period of New Spain, a knowledge of the cultural background of the Indians as well as that of the Spaniards is necessary. Both pagan and Christian elements influenced the development of the theater.

The purpose of this survey is merely to record the state of things as they were, to give the background of the two currents and the development that resulted from their confluence.

The gathering of materials has been no easy task, for the documentation is, indeed, fragmentary. However, the recent investigations of scholars in Mexico and in this country have made available a vast amount of data, and they have led the way for the eventual rounding out of the story with a fair degree of completeness. The present survey is a tentative account based on the scattered evidence now available, and should reveal the present status of our knowledge of the colonial theatre in Mexico, a significant chapter in the cultural history of that nation.

A division of the field into types of drama has been made for clarity and because of the distinctive, although parallel development of various types of the secular and religious drama during the colonial period.
The bibliography has been prepared with special care, since there is as yet no comprehensive, up-to-date bibliography of the colonial theatre in Mexico available.

The following libraries in Chicago and vicinity were consulted: Loyola University Library; Newberry Library; the Northwestern University Library, Evanston; the Gail Borden Public Library, Elgin; the Chicago Public Library; and the University of Chicago Library. The University of Notre Dame Library was visited and the following contacted by correspondence: The Dominican House of Studies, River Forest; St. Rita Library, Augustinian; and the St. Cyril-Mt. Carmel Library of the Carmelites. The Catholic University, Washington, D.C., the University of Florida, Miami; and the University of Texas at Austin, were also contacted.

The writer wishes to acknowledge the patience and long suffering of the following teachers: Miss Emma Park, Crane High School, Chicago; Mr. Gordon Stringer of Northwestern University, Huntley High School; Dr. Hugh Field, Loyola University, Chicago; Dr. Pena, Consul from Santiago, Chile, St. Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio, and Dr. John Van Horne of the University of Illinois.

The inspiration of Dr. Salvador and the direction of Dr. J. M. Espinosa, have made possible the completion of the courses required for the degree of Master of Arts and this survey of the drama in colonial Mexico.
INTRODUCTION

Few events in history have been more fully covered by a written record than the Spanish conquest and colonization of America. The general histories, bibliographies, handbooks, and outlines of Spanish American history and literature list and record all of the known facts. The unpublished documents are almost limitless. A complete bibliography of all such available material would cover many pages and indicate a library of no mean proportions.

The reader is impressed by the number of "firsts" encountered: the first viceroy, the first bishop, the first printing press, the first church, the first school, the first university. One is led to believe that he will eventually read the name of the first author who produced the first play in the first theater, but it is not as simple as that. Drama was going through the stage of "growing pains" in the Old World and was destined to undergo a parallel development in the New World.

Many special studies have been made of the outstanding figures in the drama in colonial Mexico. Biographies of the pioneer Eslava, the well-known Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, and Alarcón abound. Collections of their works and excerpts in anthologies are numerous. Students have contributed to the journals of learned societies the results of their research.
projects on the various inter-relationships of the drama with the church, the local government, the home government, Spanish society, and the natives. Archaeological studies have assisted literary efforts toward a better understanding of the colorful background of the Indians.

What can we say of the background of the Indians and their response to the efforts of their white conquerors to give them European culture and religion? The sources are legion: the correspondence of individuals, the official government records, church records, contemporary or near contemporary chronicles, mostly the work of missionaries, some of which have been republished in recent scholarly annotated editions, thoroughly documented, and the ruins of former pagan civilizations that demand the assistance of the archaeologist rather than that of the modern bibliographical detective.1

The letters or dispatches of Cortés, the True History of Bernal Díaz, the records of the padres like Las Casas and Olmedo who accompanied the conquistadores,2 Fray Díaz, the first pastor of Tlaxcala who baptized the last four kings,

---


Pedro de Gante,¹ and the twelve Franciscans who came over as missionaries after Cortés petitioned the crown, all contain references to the dances of the Indians, their dramatic development, and the state of their primitive theater.

The local government records consist of the actas de cabildo de la ciudad de México, or Resolutions of the Council of the City of Mexico, which are rather complete up to 1643.⁴

The official government records in Spain consist primarily of manuscripts now preserved in the Archive of the Indies in Seville, and in the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid.⁵

The books include the chronicles, histories, and the Indian codexes and manuscripts rescued by such scholars as Fray Sahagún.⁶

The church records include letters and reports sent by the religious to their Superiors in Mexico and Spain.⁷ The extent of the contribution of the missionaries is well stated by Ricard in his La Conquête Spirituelle du Mexique. He


⁷ Johnson, op. cit., p. 5.
says that there is at least a minimum of one hundred, and nine published works covering the period from 1524 to 1572, alone, eighty Franciscan, sixteen Dominican, eight Augustinian, five anonymous, sixty-six Nahua, thirteen Tarasque, and others.8

The archaeological contributions may be found in the publications of learned societies and colleges.9

Of the great horde of writers for the popular taste on Mexico, the less said the better. Too often they show the wrong side of the rug and forget to show the beauty of the figures woven out of the threads of history.

The colonial period in Mexico began before ours and lasted longer, roughly, the three centuries from 1500-1800.

The influence of the geography of the New World upon a people who had led a comparatively orderly, civilized existence for generations in Europe can easily be imagined. The variations from fertile coast land to dense tropical forest growth, then up the majestic mountains to find the vast temperate plateau, must have given them very much the dramatic feeling that "All the world's a stage." So much so that one catches that meaning even in such titles as the historical work entitled Teatro Mejicano by Vetancourt.10

8 Ricard, op. cit., p. 65.
9 Tozzer, loc. cit.
10 Agustin de Vetancourt (1620-1700), Teatro Mejicano, 1695-1698, 2 Vols. (Mexico: Icazbalceta, 1870-1871, 4 Vols.)
A modern writer has recaptured that spirit in his description from the artist's point of view.

The main theater in which the drama of Mexican history was enacted is the Valley of Mexico. It is a great bowl, situated near the exact center of Mexico, of which the "floor" or bottom is 7500 feet above the level of the sea, and of which the rim rises many thousands of feet higher, so that nowhere can one leave the valley without at least ascending above the ten thousand foot line.11

Of the general effect of the thoroughness of the conquest upon the indigenous inhabitants we have the perfect apology in the words of Carlos Basauri who has recently written the history of his own people.

The conquest, first, and the isolation and the abandonment in which the Indians were found later have broken the chains which should unite them to their past, in such a way that the principal traditions and legends that we find in the historical works, and were collected by the first chroniclers who came to the continent are not known by the majority of Indians who are ignorant of history.12

Bertram D. Wolfe, the artist in words mentioned above, gives a more clear-cut and unbiased picture, from our point of view, than his collaborator, Diego Rivera, in pictures.

And if men like Fray Landa were consumed with a fanatic fury to burn all manuscripts and obliterate all traces of indigenous culture, it is to priests like Fray Sahagún that we owe such knowledge of indigenous tongues and cultures and institutions as have come down to us.13

11 Bertram D. Wolfe, Portrait of Mexico (New York: Covici-Friede, 1937), p. 64.

12 Carlos Basauri, La Poblacion Indígena de México (Mexico: Secretaria de Educación Pública, 1940), p. 91.

13 Wolfe, op. cit., p. 94.
Rafael Garcia Granados in discussing the pre-Hispanic manuscripts of Mexico says that today there are only twenty or twenty-two in existence, three or four in Mexico. They are concerned with rituals, astronomy, history, geography and economics. It is interesting to note that Indian maps made after the Conquest with hieroglyphic inscriptions were accepted as evidence in disputes over land titles by the tribunals of the Spanish viceroys until far into the seventeenth century. Two documents of this type were produced in the sixteenth century. The most important, the Mendocino Codex, which was sent to Charles V as an example of Indian writing and culture, is now at the Bodleian Library and the Sierra Codex which contains the records of the Parish of Santa Cata­rina Texupan, is now in the archives of the Academy of Puebla.¹⁴ These early picture writings are classified as pictographs and ideographs as they represent not only persons and places but some symbols were used for syllables and whole ideas, as "running water."¹⁵ According to the historian and first nahuatlista, Sahagún, many of these records were de­stroyed by the Indians themselves at the Auto de Fé de Mani and those burned by King Izoatl "lest they fall into the


¹⁵ Harry H. Dunn, "Now We Can Read Montezuma's Library", Illustrated World, XXXVII (August, 1922), 833-836.
hands of the vulgar and be scorned." During the revolutions
of the nineteenth century undoubtedly some were accidentally
destroyed. We can only conjecture whether or not any of
them were concerned with the drama and theater as such. No
doubt those bearing on the pagan rituals would be most closely
related to the subject. We can presume that since they had
no alphabet, even though they had some phonetic glyphs, that
the picture writing was too cumbersome to record their metrical accounts and that they were handed down orally from one
generation to the next. Dramatic poetry was recorded later
in works such as the Historia Chichemeca by Ixtlilxochitl.

The valiant struggle of Fray Sahagún to preserve for
posterity the evidences of Indian culture is faithfully related by Ricard. The places where he labored and even the names of his assistants are given in detail, the heart breaking experience of having his papers dispersed by a Superior and then the final vindication and approval are recorded. A regional work of the same type is the Relación de Michoacán of Fray Martín de Jesús de la Coruña.

16 Granados, loc. cit.
19 Ricard, op. cit., Chap. II.
The work of the codices begun by Fray Sahagún has found many helping hands during the centuries. Kingsborough includes his *De Moribus* in volume five of the seven volume series on the *Antiquities of Mexico*, 1830. The Mayer edition of the *Codex Tejervary* of Le Duc de Loubat is dated 1901, and the Seler edition of the *Borgia Codex*, Berlin, 1903. The same year Zelia Nuthall of the University of California, Berkeley, published *The Book of the Life of the Ancient Mexicans*, which is based on the codex in the National Central Library of the City of Florence, Italy. The Mayer edition is not colored, the Seler edition, tinted, and the Nuthall edition is in full color. In the Icazbalceta collection, Volume II is the *Codex of the Franciscans*, and IV and V are devoted to Mendieta. The *Antiquities of Kingsborough* include facsimiles of ancient Mexican paintings and hieroglyphics. He lists indebtedness to works in the libraries of Paris, Berlin, Dresden, Vienna, Rome, Bologna, and London. The Vatican and Bodelian Libraries possess the most important of these codexes. Vaillant in his *Aztecs of Mexico* lists twenty five of these collections that have historical value.

20 Lord Kingsborough, *Antiquities of Mexico* (Londres: Ricardo Taylor, 1830), V, 464. This volume contains only the *Historia Universal* of Sahagún.

Most of the material on the origins of the drama in Spain may be found in the general histories of Spanish literature. These give the framework, and are supplemented by the innumerable special studies. Excellent notations on the origins are given in the texts of Merimée and Morley, Romera-Navarro, Hurtado y Palencia, Valbuena Prat, Cejador y Frauca, and Fitzmaurice-Kelly, with copious notes and bibliographical citations. Of the works dealing especially with the origins the special works of de Moratin and Valbuena Prat are outstanding, both in content and organization. J. P. Wickersham Crawford's account of the drama before Lope is the most complete to date. Cejador y Frauca contains a very extensive and useful bibliography. The Valbuena Prat bibliography is selective but refers to more general works on the drama.


23 Leandro Fernández de Moratin, Orígenes del teatro español (Madrid: Real academia, Aguado, impresor, 1830-1831); Angel Valbuena Prat, Literatura dramática española (Barcelona: Editorial Labor, 1930); James P. Wickersham Crawford, Spanish drama before Lope de Vega (Publications of the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1922).
There is no dearth of materials on the origin of the theater in Spain and its development up to the discovery of the New World, and its continuing influence during the period of colonial expansion and settlement. The three centuries from Alfonso el Sabio to Ferdinand and Isabella was to be followed by the flowering of the Golden Age.

How was this phase of Spanish culture to fare upon transplantation to a new environment and what part was it to play in the making of the new nations across the sea? The general sources have already been mentioned. There are three bibliographical works which cover the entire colonial period. The first of these is the valuable *Bibliografía mejicana del siglo xvi* of Joaquin Garcia Icazbalceta, who lived from 1825 to 1894, and published his work in 1886. The second is the *Ensayo bibliográfico mexicano del siglo xvii* of Vicente de Paula Andrade, 1844-1914, published in 1894 and a second edition in 1898. The *Edición de la Sociedad científica "Alzate"* is the most readable for ready reference. The third is the *Bibliografía mejicana del siglo xviii* of Nicolás León, 1859-1929. This was reprinted by F. Díaz de León, 1902-1908. It includes over 3300 titles and includes texts of several manuscripts, reprints of a number of rare books and extracts, annotated. These three works cover the years 1539 to 1800. To these should be added the useful, general bibliography of Francisco Monterde, *Bibliografía del teatro en México*, 1933.
Of the early published works many fundamental chronicles, such as those of the Franciscans, Motolinia, Mendieta, Sahagún, Vetancourt, Torquemada; the works of Davila Padilla, Dominican; Grijalva, Augustinian; Clavijero and Alegre, Jesuits; the many histories of the Indies and local histories, as well as special histories by members of the different religious orders, all contain scattered material for the study of the drama throughout the colonial period. A consideration of the post-Columbian aboriginal writers would require several volumes. The outstanding work is the Historia Chichemeca of Fernando de Alva, Ixtlilxochitl, a lineal descendant of the royal line of Tezcuco, who was employed by the viceroy as an interpreter. This work compares favorably with the Commentarios reales of the Inca, Garcilasso de la Vega, on the native background in Peru. Certain histories were written with a particular bias, as that of Las Casas in support of the Indian, the True History of Bernal Diaz in rebuttal to Gomara's "court" history, and that of Durán in exile, for the Jesuit cause. The rhymed chronicles of Terrazas, Escoiquiz, Gabriel Lasso de la Vega and Francisco Ruiz de León, are literary, historical reflections. One of the most interesting accounts is that of El Conquistador Andinimo, relative to some things of the New World and the great city of Temestitán. This remarkable descriptive account of homes, food, clothing, customs and sepulture, was first included in the compendium of Ramusio.
Histories and histories of literature of Spanish America by citizens of the United States of America are of necessity based on the older works. Some of them are translations and some are adaptations, while others are comparative, quoting several of the original sources on a point. In literature the pioneer effort of Ticknor is still valuable in spite of its lack of bibliography. Coester, Torres-Rioseco, and Moses are comprehensive. The handbooks for the study of the literature of Spanish America give in condensed form outlines that may be used for further study. All of these books contain reliable bibliographical references to the older works and to later researches that have modified former concepts or complemented them by more exact knowledge of the facts. Many valuable contributions have been made by American students to the general fund of knowledge of the theater and drama during the colonial period in Mexico. The relations of the two countries in war and in peace have been governed by the factors of our English and Spanish cultural backgrounds. At times these have seemed to be mutually exclusive. However, in eras of good feeling as evidenced by the present "good neighbor" policy, there is an impetus for the study of the Spanish historical background of our own states which is inextricably bound up with that of our neighbors to the south. To understand Hispanic America we must know its culture, an important part of which is the drama.
EL CONQUISTADOR ANONIMO

RELACION DE ALGUNAS COSAS DE LA NUEVA ESPAÑA, Y DE LA GRAN CIUDAD DE TEMISTITAN MEXICO;
ESCRITA POR UN COMPAÑERO DE HERNAN CORTÉS

STA TIERRA DE LA NUEVA ESPAÑA ES semejante á España, y los montes, valles y llanos son casi de la misma manera, excepto que las sierras son mas terribles y ásperas; tanto, que no se pueden subir sino con infinito trabajo, y hay sierra, á lo que se sabe, que se extiende más de doscientas leguas. Hay en esta provincia de la Nueva España grandes ríos y manantiales de agua dulce muy buena; extensos bosques en los montes y llanos, de muy altos pi-
CHAPTER I

ORIGINS OF THE THEATER IN MEXICO

Looking back to the beginnings of things in America in 1492, we realize the dramatic importance of the historical events. The first decades constituted a period of trial and error. Settlements were founded that did not endure, the Line of Demarcation divided yet unknown lands with Portugal, and since it was believed that outlying isles of the Indies had been reached, the native inhabitants were referred to as "los indios." The interim to 1519 was filled with successful and unsuccessful attempts at exploration and colonization in the islands and along the coasts in fan-like radiation from the first settlements. In 1517 Hernández, and in 1518 Grijalva reconnoitered the gulf coast from Yucatan to Vera Cruz. Some years before eight men had been lost in a shipwreck when going from Darién to Hispaniola. One of these was Jerónimo de Aguilar. When he heard of the presence of Cortés and his men he obtained permission of his master to join them. His aid as an interpreter with Doña Marina later proved invaluable.


Cortés was the first of a line of valiant and courageous men to bring the continent under the rule of the white man. By coincidence he fulfilled the legend of Quetzalcoatl who was born in the year Ce Acatl, one reed, of the Nahua calendar and was to return again in such a year. Even his personal appearance agreed with the prophecy. Those hardy adventurers, the conquistadores, were more concerned with making history than with the fine points of literary expression. Their relacciones and the cartas of the missionaries, which appeal to the more literal and scientific minded reader as more interesting because authentic, furnished the raw material for the scribes of history and the epic, lyric, and dramatic outpourings of scores of the literati, some of them contemporary, but many more of whom were to follow, as the new order in the New World became stabilized. Rarely, as in the case of Ercilla's Araucana, did one of these adventurous spirits tell his story in polished literary form. Not one of them wrote a play but they were all destined to play their parts in the plays written about them by others.


4 Alonso de Ercilla y Zúñiga, La Araucana (Madrid: M. Rivadeneyra, 1866).

5 Margaret Shed, "Conquistadores Conquistados, A Dance of the Guatemala Highlands," Theater Arts, XXIII (May, 1931), 371-377.
Since we cannot look to the medieval knights in armor riding fiery steeds and carrying fire-spitting weapons for the first drama in Mexico, we must look elsewhere to find those who found the drama a more suitable weapon for a much higher purpose.

The religious ideal of the Spaniards which had not only gained a united country for them after eight hundred years of Moorish rule, but made them the dominant power in Europe, also inspired the discovery, and led to the settlement of America. The man of God was to walk with the sword-girt knight and enjoy his protection and benevolence. He was to act as a counter weight, a counter balance, a restraining as well as a directing influence to keep his brother's face toward that ideal.

Unlike the first English settlers of our country who were dissatisfied with the religious and political state of their country and were running away from it all, the men of Spain, fresh from great moral, religious, and military victories at home saw that in the transplanting of their social, political and economic institutions and their Christian faith to a new and undeveloped land, lay unlimited opportunities. A desire for permanence for the future guided them.6

History tells us that Columbus brought with him on his second voyage to the New World thirteen monks. These men established the first church and the first school, and no doubt gave the first dramatic representations in America. The Archivos Históricos de los Pueblos del Mar Caribe and similar efforts will, no doubt, in time give us this first chapter on Spain in America, covering roughly the first half century, in an integrated and thoroughly documented form.

What did the Spaniards bring with them to Mexico? And how were the Indians disposed by their own traditions to accept what the white gods brought?

In the writings of the conquistadores and the first friars there are many references to the state of the drama among the natives. Later scholars and research workers have added greatly to this store of knowledge.

Of the background of the natives Monterde says that the theater among the ancient Mexicans was a form of expression derived from the dances of the sun and elements, spring, death, history, daily happenings, agriculture and the hunt, and the emotions of love, duty, sorrow, and faith. The hymns of Tlaloc and Netzhualcoyotl are dramatic in construction.

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7 Coester, op. cit., p. 2.

It is possible to go farther and point out the existence of a religious theater, one of symbolism, and one of caricature, farse, satire. Improvisations were made by the actors, caricatures of the infirmities and malpractices, of the costumes and customs of other tribes, and the mimicry of nature's birds and beasts.

The dance adapted itself to new modes of expression, men dressed as women, or cuecuecheuycatl, approximated the farse. The dance and the theater were esthetic works celebrated in tribute to Huitzilopochtli, Quetzalcoatl and other divinities.

Carlos Merida in discussing the pre-Hispanic dance and theater says that the first dramatic manifestations concerned the enemy, adverse powers and nature. He gives the deer dance or the Pascola as an example of the nature dance. He intimates that these expressions were no more superstitious than the European custom of burning a puppet as an expression of disgust, sadness, bad humor or death.

We see all of these pantomimes today with other eyes. We do not consider in them the ritual, the religious feeling, their miraculous flavor. We find in Mexico dozens of different and sometimes closely related forms. They are still outside the purely commercial field, and for that reason are not easy to know. The foreigner knows exactly that which lacks deep significance, our touristized Jarabe Tapatio, for example.

To illustrate he gives the pantomime of La virgen de las fieras of the Otomi villages in the State of Hidalgo. In this play which has survived from pagan days, the virgin goes out of her hut and enters the forest, enticed by the trills of the birds and the enchantment of the flowers. When she is deep in the woods she realizes she has lost her way. Her situation becomes dangerous when she is attacked by unfriendly presences. She asks for help from the animals who love her. At her call there appear lions, tigers, wolves, bulls, deer, and all kinds of animals who shield her, beat off the malign spirits and save her.

Of these ancient dramatic forms before the conquest he says, with the authority of a native and student:

It is still possible to find expressions completely lacking any touch of foreign mentality. Nevertheless, the mixture of races has given greater complexity to many of the mestizo dances and make us feel the presence of idols and the flavor of the ancient theogonies.

Some of these survivals are Los Tlocololeros, El Pascola y el Venado, Los Quetzalez, Los Malinches, La Pluma, Los Sonajeros, La Media Luna, the Zapateada or Jarana, Los Concheros, Los Negritos and the Quadrilles of Tlaxcala.

10 Carlos Merida, "Pre-Hispanic Dance and Theater in Mexico", Theater Arts, (August, 1938), 567.
11 Ibid., p. 568.
12 Ibid., p. 561-5.
Abel Plenn, in his account of the theater in Mexico, remarks on the beauty of the native dances:

There is one more theater in Mexico which does not fall within the shadow of the official pittance, called subsidy. It is one which merits the greatest attention of all, the Mexican Indian dramatic dances which are to be seen on every festive occasion in practically every state in the republic. Unlike the asthmatic spasmosis which characterizes the course of the Mexican art and commercial theaters, the Mexican Indian dance-dramas have been performed regularly throughout the years, of course with appreciable changes, since the Conquest, and in numerous cases long before that time. To describe the sheer human nobility, dramatic and plastic beauty of these performances would need a full volume, but a mere list of them brings vividly to mind their inherent fascination. The Moors and the Christians, The Apaches, The Pastores, The Tocatines of the Puebla State, The Tiger Dance of Guerrero, the Mohammedans. The witness of the six-hour Dance of the Conquest in Oaxaca, for example could not ever forget the pulsing drama that flows in formal rhythm through that simple spectacle. 13

Although these dramatic manifestations referred to by Plenn, as well as some of those mentioned by Merida, above, owe much of their character to a fusion of both pre- and post-Cortesian elements, they give sufficient indication that the natives of Mexico were on a much higher cultural level than those of the north and east who were still living a semi-nomadic existence. Neither Cooper's Leather Stocking Tales nor Longfellow's Hiawatha give any indication of a dramatic development beyond the simple religious dance and the attendant ritual.

13 Abel Plenn, "Theater Sprouts in Mexico," Theater Arts, XVIII (April, 1934), 260-270.
In the letters of Cortés we find a description of the platform in the plaza of Tlaltelolco. It was thirteen feet high and thirty paces square. In the majority of cases these platforms served as stages for representations of hunting scenes, enacted in the midst of commotion and shouting. The performers with bows and arrows shot deer, hares, rabbits, weasels, squirrels and snakes, and caught animals by hand. 14

Among the early padres who wrote about the new land and the natives we find P. José de Acosta, 1539-1600. His book, Historia natural y moral de las Indias, contains an account of the performance given annually in Cholula in honor of Quetzalcoatl, which describes the thirty foot square theater as being curiously whitewashed and adorned with branches, arches of feathers, flowers, birds, rabbits and curious objects. The performance itself is described as a burlesque, the actors pretending to be deaf, to have colds, to be lame, blind and mute, and asking the idol for health. The people laughed at the absurdities of the actors. Although not explained here, there is something in the background of Indian religion which forbade one to ask for something for himself, but through an intermediary. The analogy between these out of doors performances of the Indians and those of the Spaniards is now becoming evident.

The "Second Act" was what might be called a masque of animals, beetles, toads, lizards and the like, wherein each actor exaggerated his part.

"Act Three" consisted of the boys from the temple with wings of butterflies and birds of different colors climbing trees and pot-shotting the priests with pea shooters!

In conclusion all of the actors joined in a great dance. This type of drama, frequently followed by elaborately performed human sacrifices, was for solemn feast days, and represents the pre-Cortesian development of the drama. 15

This temple had a medium patio where on feast days big dances and celebrations were held, and very gracious plays for which there was a little theater. 16

Referring to the coronation of Montezuma, the Aztec Emperor of Mexico, Acosta gives details that he could have obtained only from reliable Indian sources. The Emperor ruled that only nobles should serve him in his household and had to make war in order to obtain the crown. The drama played a part in his coronation which was attended even by representatives of his natural enemies from the districts of Michoacan and Tlaxcala! 17

15 Sandi, loc. cit.

16 Edmundo O'Gorman, editor, José de Acosta, Historia natural y moral de las Indias, 1590 (México: Fondo De Cultura Económica, 1940), p. 443.

17 Ibid.
From the ruins of cities of colossal proportions like Uxmal, Palenque, Chichen-Itza and Taíwanacu, "the city of the giants", we know that the Aztecs constituted a theocratic and wealthy monarchy. Bernal Díaz, a soldier of Cortés, and genial chronicler of the conquest of Mexico, mentions the artists and painters among the natives of Mexico. The story of El Dorado, to cite one example of many, which tells how the Chibcha kings painted themselves with gold and scattered precious stones in a sacred lake before submerging themselves as an act of sacrifice, reveals again the link between drama and religion ever present in aboriginal America.18

The finding of the Aztec Calendar in 1790 has helped the indiophiles solve many historical and chronological problems in relation to these manifestations of aboriginal American culture.19

Art, music, and drama were at first inextricably bound up with religious rites. In the urban centers there was greater civilization. However, in the south where there was an agricultural population, the cultural level of the Mayas was approximately that of the people under the Egyptian Pharaohs, the Chaldean kings, or that of the Jewish people under


Joshua and the Judges.\(^{20}\) Arts and crafts were highly developed in various localities. Ancient paintings sent by Mendoza, the first Spanish viceroy of Mexico, were intercepted by a French corsair and fell into the hands of Thevenot, court geographer, and were then purchased by Hakluyt, chaplain of the English Ambassador at the court of France.\(^{21}\) Musical instruments from the simple bone whistle to double sets of Peter Pan pipes and three-toned drums were in use.\(^{22}\)

Events pertaining to the lives of the gods must usually have been highly theatrical. Thus, as with other peoples of the past, religious service fulfilled the function of the drama. No music of the chants survives.

The priests arrayed the dancers, who depicting mythological events, performed a type of mass drama.\(^{23}\)

Important chiefs had their own chapels with chanters and dancers. Some dances were held for the demons and some for the gods in the patios and the plaza.\(^{24}\)

Religion was so integrated with life that some section of the population was doing something everyday. Sahagún gives


\(^{22}\) Ibid., Book VII, p. 398.


\(^{24}\) Luis García Pimental, editor, Memoriales de Fray Toribio de Motolinia (Mexico: Escalante, 1903), p. 41.
us the complete calendar day by day. The first of the indiophiles, he was a most zealous missionary, for he wrote some three hundred and sixty five hymns to counteract the pagan worship.

The reaction of the modern reader to the cruelties of the Spaniards to the natives is modified when he realizes that human sacrifice was an important part of their religion.

The story of Mexico, even before the discovery by the Spaniards, makes a dark and gloomy picture. Its soil was stained from end to end with the blood of innocent people, making one of the most fearful dramas of the world.

In spite of this their intellectual activities should not be minimized.

Dramatic as well as lyric poetry was greatly in repute among the Mexicans. Their theatre, on which those types of composition were represented, was a square terrace uncovered, raised in the market, or the lower end of some temple, and suitably high, that the actors might be seen and heard by all.

The dances with their great variety of expression; the plays ranging from simple portrayals of the hunt through symbolism, caricature, farse, satire, improvisation and mimicry; dramatic and lyric poetry, were all cultural evidences.

26 Cullen, op. cit., p. 396.
28 Cullen, loc. cit.
The drama of the natives at the time of the conquest was the result of these cultural elements. The religious theater and the Christian feast days were gradually substituted by the patient Spanish missionaries for something the Aztecs already had. The transition was slow, the missionaries at first retaining the Indian pageantry and music, gradually transferring the spirit of the festivities from Pagan to Christian.

It is difficult for us today to comprehend the tremendous amount of labor involved in that transition. In upper North America our Indians were decimated by wars, pushed westward by the vanguard of settlers and finally the remnants put in reservations. In contrast to the few Indians schooled at Harvard in New England, literally thousands of natives were entrusted to the friars in New Spain. From their city churches and schools to their humblest missions in what were then the outposts of civilization, Florida, Louisiana, Texas, New Mexico and California, they carried on their work with such self effacement that we regret they did not write more.

The first chroniclers put down what they could from observation and native tradition. In reality very little is known about the purely pre-Cortesian native theater.29

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What part did drama play in the background of the conquerors, what was its origin, and how did it serve, as an expression of their rich cultural inheritance, to give new meaning to the drama in Spanish America? Dramatization of scenes from the Passion undoubtedly existed in Spain since the introduction of Christianity in the Peninsula, but of these early religious presentations we have no written records. However, recorded Spanish literature practically begins with a play, the *Auto de los reyes magos*. Today the main interest in it is historical, its literary value is only relative. It survives as a unique specimen of what Shelley afterwards called the 'starry autos' in their first phase. It has been attributed to Gilberto, Canon of Auzerre who died in 1134. French monks introduced, together with other customs of their native churches, this type of literature which was already flourishing in France, and contained elements easily adapted to the stage. In 1785 the fragmentary manu-


32 Ibid., p. 8.

33 Valbuena Prat, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

script, some one hundred and forty seven verses, was discovered by Vallejo in Toledo and is now in the National Library.35 Merimée and Morley cite Menéndez y Pelayo concerning the technical aspect of the poetry of the Reyes magos. "This polymetry seems to forshadow the copla de pie quebrado, as well as the mixture of verse forms so characteristic of the later comedia.36 Valbuena Prat, also citing Menéndez y Pelayo adds: "It is notable that in such a rude and early epoch the poet accommodated the verses to the situation, initiating the polymetrical tendency that has always characterized the Spanish theater.37 Our knowledge of the drama previous to that is chiefly from historical sources. Legal texts such as the Fuero Juzgo and the Siete Partidas shed some light upon stage performances, often accompanied by mimetic dances, and likewise on the professional performances, the juglares, remedadores, and cazurros, as well as the obscure traces of theatrical traditions of ancient times.38

The term misterios from the French mystère was not used in Spain until the fifteenth century for the cycles.39

35 Juan Hurtado and Angel González Palencia, Historia de la literatura española (Madrid: 1921), p. 96.
36 Merimée and Morley, op. cit., p. 51.
38 Merimée and Morley, op. cit., p. 52.
The dramatic elements of the liturgy, simple recitation in different voices, alternate chant, prose, sequence, dialogue tropes which were interpolations introduced into the responsories for Christmas and Easter and the Introits of the solemn Masses, were the germ of the liturgical drama. These cycles of the Shepherds and the Sepulchre started as early as the ninth century. They were successful and spread rapidly because at that time monastic institutions formed a kind of federation all over Europe and could easily make available to each other any literary or liturgical innovations. The Adoration of the Shepherds, Rachel, The Holy Innocents, and The Adoration of the Magi Kings belong to the former cycle, and The Resurrection and The Travelers or The Disciples at Emmaus to the latter. They were given in the churches from the 9th to the 13th centuries. Then the juegos escolares, similar, but more elaborate, needed more room, part of the cloisters, the court yards and even the cemeteries. Having moved outside they were no longer bound to the liturgy, and soon dramatized episodes in the lives of patron saints. These Latin juegos were the public theater of the twelfth century. The founding of the universities and the development of the romance languages in the thirteenth century brought the vernacular into use and added many more episodes to the cycles. 

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40 Hurtado y Palencia, op. cit., p. 96, et. seq.
Pius legends must also be included in the literary efforts that preceded the drama. In short, secular and religious drama proper grew out of the dramatic elements of the general literary matrix. The Codex of the 13th century has preserved many of these primitives.\textsuperscript{41}

In 1210 Innocent III issued an edict prohibiting religious plays on account of the secular elements which disfigured them, causing more amusement than edification. No examples of these \textit{juegos de escarnio} or caricatures of local men survive.\textsuperscript{42}

In 1328, Don Pedro, brother of Alfonso IV, composed some dramatic pieces with dances and music. In the court of Henry IV the most illustrious persons were \textit{trovadores}. They were sometimes referred to as \textit{voglares} and \textit{voglareseas}.\textsuperscript{43}

In the \textit{Siete Partidas} it is recorded that performances were forbidden for the sake of gain. For some two hundred years after the Magi Kings there is no record of a Castilian play, but there are some in other kingdoms.\textsuperscript{44}

\textsuperscript{41} Gustavo Gili, editor, \textit{Historia de la literatura española}, Angel Valbuena Prat (Barcelona: Calle de Enrique Granados, 45, 1938), I, 59.

\textsuperscript{42} Fitzmaurice Kelly, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 218.

\textsuperscript{43} L. F. de Moratín, \textit{Tesor del teatro español} (Paris: Baudry, 1838), pp. 15-34.

\textsuperscript{44} J. P. Wickersham Crawford, \textit{Spanish Drama Before Lope de Vega} (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1922), p. 3.
Crawford mentions the pageants of Valencia, 1355, The Sacrifice of Isaac, The Three Marys, Gerona 1360, a Christmas play of 1432, a dialogue of 1440, and a Corpus Christi play in the early fourteenth century. In the Chronicle of Michael Lucas there is an account of a Magi play in the home of one of the nobles, 1452. In 1463 there was a play about the Moors and a tournament of canes. By the early part of the fifteenth century there were "moving plays", some entremeses, rogues and pageants. Three hundred years after the Reyes the name of the first important precursor appears, Gomez Manrique who lived from 1415 to 1490 and wrote both secular and religious plays. His Nativity and Good Friday Planctus and the two birthday plays are representative. The first of these latter was written for a nephew and the second at royal command. It is the only record we have of any connection with the drama of Isabella who was then Infanta. The play was to honor her brother Alphonso and both of them played parts. The allegorical pastoral dialogue of Rodrigo de Cota, Mingo Revulgo y Gil Arribate, 1464, was entirely in the native language.

Juan del Encina, 1462-1529, wrote in the most finished style up to his time. A Passion play was followed by others for Easter, Shrove Tuesday, and Christmas. Triunfo de Amor, Amadis de Gaula, and the Auto del Repelén are outstanding.45

He is sometimes called the "patriarch of the Spanish theater. His Eclogue of the Three Shepherds, 1507 was the first tragedy. His eclogues were in the style of Virgil. A collection called the Cancionero was published in 1496. It went through seven editions up to 1516. Merimée calls him "the father of the Spanish drama" and says that if he did not actually found Spain's theater, at least he enriched it, secularized it, and released its bonds. One writer goes so far as to say that his founding of the Spanish theater was an event equal in importance to the discovery of America.

Contemporary and following were Lucas Fernández, 1474-1452, Farsas; Gil Vicente, 1470-1539, Don Duardos; and Torres Naharro, Comedia Himenea, for whom, ironically enough, the only available date is that of his marriage, 1531.

The Farsa Sacramental in couplets, of Hernan Lopez de Yanguas is, perhaps, the oldest auto, 1521.

47 Merimée and Morley, op. cit., p. 143.
49 Merimée and Morley, op. cit., p. 146.
52 Fitzmaurice Kelly, op. cit., p. 374.
The secular theater first found expression in burlas and burlescas similar to the mimos and atelanas of the last days of the Roman Republic. These were frowned upon by the authorities. However, the latent dramatic elements in the social and literary lives of the people combined to produce a profane drama. These elements were the choral dances, pastorals, lyric and narrative selections of the juglares, the dramatic monologues of the charlatans, debates, disputes, the comedies called elegiaca and horaciana, and ecclesiastical burlesques such as the locos and obispillo.

The troubadour who recites his monologue or his dispute and has to develop the instinct to imitate diverse voices, in order to portray different characters and to provoke the hilarity of the public, has converted himself into an actor and his poem into a drama, in the manner of the theater; the first step taken, time does the rest. 53

Valbuena Prat divides early Spanish dramatists into primitives and precursors from 1535 to 1600, and the history of the Spanish theater into three epochs, initiation, development, and decomposition which more adequately describes the separation of the elements constituting a type and permits us to hope for the new forms that are to follow. 54 The period of the Spanish conquest in America saw a similar development and complete participation in the Golden Age.

53 Hurtado y Palencia, op. cit., p. 96, et seq.
54 Valbuena Prat, op. cit., p. 6.
As early as 1473 the Council of Aronda had to take action on the New Year revels of the ecclesiastics.\footnote{Crawford, op. cit., p. 7.}

Of the forty-four contributors to the Canticles of the \textit{Blessed Virgin Mary}, the first book printed, in 1474, only four were Castilian.\footnote{Fitzmaurice Kelly, op. cit., p. 129.} From then on, the record of the drama, as of all literature, is more complete.

Translations of classics, the Anfitrión of Plautus by Villalobos, 1515, and those of Oliva, 1527, were perhaps the first Renaissance activities.\footnote{Moratin, op. cit., p. 57.} These were followed by \textit{La Celestina}.\footnote{Barrera, op. cit., p. 16.} Originally the \textit{Comedia de Calisto y Melibea} in sixteen acts, the title was changed to read \textit{Tragicomedia} and the acts increased to twenty one. Because of the excellence of portrayal of the character Celestina who was the prototype of the nurse in Romeo and Juliet, the drama gradually came to be known by that name. Because of its length it could not have been intended for the stage. It is usually attributed to Fernando de Rojas. It marks the change in drama from the allegorical and classical to characters of flesh and blood. The author borrowed freely from others, especially Juan Ruiz. An English adaptation was published before 1536. Perhaps the
Spanish version of Feliciano de Silva, *La segunda comedia de Celestina*, 1534, was used on the stage. At the end of the century interest was revived in the work and a Spanish edition proposed in London in 1591, the year Shakespeare wrote *Romeo and Juliet*.59

As a young boy, fourteen years of age, Cervantes witnessed the Corpus Christi play of Lope de Rueda, 1561.60 Some years later, 1615, in writing of this period he remarked the paucity of stage appurtenances and characters. The comedies were *coloquios* between two or three shepherds and a shepherdess, interspersed with two or three *entremeses* with a negro or a ruffian, a clown, or a bumpkin for characters. In 1551 Rueda was the director of his own company. There were no theaters in those days, the plays were presented in *patios* or in *corrals*, dead-end streets. His plays were based on Italian models. His *pasos* or curtain raisers were clever and original as *The Olives* in which a family bickers over the price they are to receive for olives not yet planted. Alonso de la Vega of the same company wrote the *Comedia de la Duquesa de la Rosa* which was translated by Sir Walter Scott. These plays followed the trend set by Encina.61

59 Fitzmaurice Kelly, *op. cit.* pp. 141-149.
The *Comedia Tidea* of Francisco de las Natas, 1550, was realistic like the work of Torres Naharro of the early sixteenth century but also showed the influence of Celestina and the *eslogas* of Encina. Juan de la Cueva, 1550–1610, used the material of the national epics and old romances. His book on dramatic composition was called *Ejemplar poético*. He was the first to abandon the classic unities and used a mixture of comedy and tragedy as well as a variety of verses. In *La muerte de Virginia* which takes us back to the Roman conquest, the father kills his daughter, Virginia, rather than have her submit to Apio Claudio. An imitator, Rey de Artieda who was a master of continuity wrote a version of *Los Amantes*, 1581. Another, Cristobal de Virues, produced *Atilia furiosa* which has been called a museum of horrors. He also wrote a drama about the queen of Carthage, *Elisa Dido*. The *Numancia* of Cervantes also takes us back to this early period.62

Lope Félix de Vega Carpio, 1562–1635, is often called the Spanish Shakespeare. He increased the number of acts from three to five and improved the drama in every respect.63 Gabriel Téllez, 1571–1648, better known as Tirso de Molina, is best known for his dramas with theological theses, as *El condenado por desconfiado*, the story of the hermit who was

62 Ibid.

63 Ibid., p. 321.
condemned for lack of faith. Las mocedades del Cid, or the Youthful Exploits of the Cid, of Guillen de Castro, 1569-1648, was a step toward psychological study. El rey abajo, ninguno was the masterpiece of Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla, 1607-1648. It was an exposition of democracy. The best character drama of Agustín Moreto, 1618-1669 was El desdén con el desdén. Don Pedro Calderón de la Barca, 1600-1681, the successor of Lope was not as prolific but more polished. He brought the auto to perfection in La vida es sueno, the religious drama in La devoción de la Cruz, the national in El Alcalde de Zalamea, and the "cape and sword" drama in A secreto agravio secreta venganza.

During the centuries about a dozen varieties of dramatic representations had been developed. As the theater moved from church to courtyard to corral, the Introit of the liturgy became the loa of the drama. Monologue to dialogue to eclogue or coloquio illustrates the growth in form.

64 Romera-Navarro, op. cit., p. 332.
65 Ibid., p. 363.
66 Ibid., p. 371.
67 Ibid., p. 376.
68 Ibid., p. 382.
Just as there was a religious drama that grew out of the liturgy of the church and a secular drama that developed from dramatic poetry, the efforts of the troubadours in all Europe, and the Renaissance and Golden Age innovations in Spain, so in America these forms gave direction to dramatic development, for the cultural life of colonial Spanish America was but an extension of the culture of Spain, modified.

From this cursory view of the backgrounds of the conquerors and the conquered we are prepared to think of the drama and theater of the rival Christian and Pagan cultures as diametrically opposed, each representing the highest development of its kind in the world. However, similar elements were to cause a fusion of these vastly different races.

From roots imbedded deep in the native soil the padres were to draw that sustenance so necessary for the flowering of the vine of Christian drama that was to stand as their memorial through the centuries.

As the theater developed at home and the great names of all times, those of the Golden Age, appeared one after another, so the drama unfolded in the New World under its influence until it, too, produced writers who were the compeers of those of the mother country. Censorship helped mold the taste of the colonies, yet produced such literary lights as Fernando González de Eslava, Juan Ruiz de Alarcón y Mendoza, and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz.
CHAPTER II

POPULAR RELIGIOUS DRAMA

It is practically impossible to date accurately or to assign authorship to the first religious plays presented in Spanish America, as these works are clothed with the anonymity inspired by religious zeal for the conversion of the Indians. Perhaps the very first such playet was a translation and adaptation of an auto or a loa into a native language; or perhaps, as seems more probable, it was a skit improvised on the spot to dramatize some biblical event, as a lesson in Christian doctrine.

The year of the rebuilding of Mexico City, 1524, saw the arrival of twelve Franciscans at that place. These "Twelve Apostles" had more or less the same problems to face as Columbus' "baker's dozen" who initiated their work in the islands. Their arrival was made a gala occasion, and thereafter the conquistadores cooperated with their evangelizing program to such an extent that Cortés, as an example to the others, had himself publicly flogged for missing Mass!  

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The problems that these early friars had to face as teachers of the Indians, were drunkenness, concubinage, sorcery, human sacrifice, pulque, peyote, witchcraft, magic, and devil lore. By a happy inspiration they considered the drama one of the best methods of instructing the masses.3

Jiménez Rueda says of the first use of the drama by the Spanish missionaries, "It was one of the most effective means which the missionaries found to instruct the Mexicans in Christian Doctrine."4

Castañeda says that the use of such plays, autos, or theological dramas, and coloquios or dialogues, was to give live representations to the untutored multitude.5

Comparing the theaters of both races, Monterde says, "The religious theater of the sixteenth century is in its beginnings like the native pre-cortesian theater, a tribute to God." He then gives the old quotation, "There is no God like the one who speaks our own language."6 This is the first similarity to be noted in the diametrically opposed cultures.

3 Dorothy Schons, "The Mexican Background of Alarcón", PMLA, LVIII (March, 1942), p. 89.


5 Castañeda, op. cit., p. 6.

The neixcuitilli or lectures on conduct for the young, given after the religious services, should also be mentioned, as the material to be taught was often dramatized. Fray Torquemada initiated these. His Superior, Fray J. Bautista was also a noted nahuatalista, and translated into and composed in that native tongue. These were held in the Capilla de San Juan de los Naturales.

Like the neixcuitilli, which Aztec word means ejemplar, guides, or examples, as the early Christian exempla, the conversations between father and son were referred to as huchuetltlaltolli.

Of the plays for the instruction of the public in general Rueda says, "The dramatic material accompanied the ceremony of the Mass, preceding and continuing at the same time as the Mass. The people themselves took part."

The Stations of the Cross, or the dramatization of the various scenes on the way to Calvary, were an essential part of the Lenten services.

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7 Rueda, op. cit., p. 51.
8 Schons, op. cit., p. 93.
9 Ibid.
10 Rueda, op. cit., p. 50.
On account of the need for space the dramatic presentations moved outside as had been done in Europe, into the courtyard or atrium. As a rule this open space was connected with the living quarters of the religious by a cloister or just a garden wall. These atria by some linguistic twist became known as patios.12

Be that as it may, by 1529 such dramas were part of the order of the day, as the City Council of Mexico City had to pass an ordinance relative to behavior while they were being presented.13

Castaneda claims that the *Coloquio de la Nueva Conversion y bautismo de los cuatro reyes de Tlaxcala en la Nueva España* was the first truly American play. This manuscript was found in a book containing other plays bearing the name of Cristóbal Gutierrez de Luna who may have been a scribe and not necessarily the author. He himself says that three of the plays were copied from others in the City Hall in Mexico City and an old school for boys in Tlaxcala.14

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14 *Ibid.*, p. 434. This book is in the Garcia Collection of the University of Texas, and is dated 1619. The color and texture of the paper of the *Cuatro Reyes* is different from the rest and the pagination changed to fit de Luna's book. It is presumed that the author was one of the first missionaries, possibly Motolinia.
In any event, the author, whoever he might have been, was thoroughly familiar with the details, because "the incidents of the approach of Cortés to Tlaxcala and the negotiations of an alliance are faithfully portrayed."^{15}

Ricard presents the theory that the author really was Agustín de Fuente, the Indian who served as Motolinia's secretary and helper to Fray Sahagún.^{16}

Briefly, the play summarized the resistance of the four kings of Tlaxcala, and the advance of Cortés toward Tenochtitlan to meet Moctezuma. Their idol or demon, Hongol, warns them to fight or meet death and is then mysteriously silent. An angel tells them to deal with Cortés, which they do. In the play stress is placed on the supernatural or miraculous force that brought this about, because if the Tlaxcalans had failed to aid the Spaniards, their way would have been blocked. The Marques del Valle, Cortés, receives an ambassador from the King of Tabasco. Juan Díaz is the cleric, Doña Marina, the interpreter. There is a second ambassador and two angels that sing. The kings receive Baptism, the Blessed Sacrament is explained, and the alliance completed, all in one act.^{17}

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^{15} Ibid.


^{17} Castañeda, *op. cit.*, p. 435.
Castañeda says that the play records the most significant episode in the most dramatic chapter of the history of North America.\textsuperscript{18}

The manuscript of this play in the Chicago Public Library bears the date 1607, corrected to 1707. It is entitled "The Kings, a comedy written in the Mexican idiom, Nahuatl language, in the year 1607 and dedicated to the Father Guardian of Santiago Tlaltelolco, now a military prison."\textsuperscript{19} Ricard supports the date of 1607 rather than 1707 because of references by Fray Juan Baptista in 1606 as to the whereabouts of his fellow workers.\textsuperscript{20}

Monterde quotes Icazbalceta's comment that there is nothing of the comedy about the play except the title.

It is well to note that the piece has nothing more of comedia about it than its title. Attaining its object by its form and the mixture of royal and allegorical personages, it can be considered very well as a great auto de colloquio. It is not free from the defect common to this type of composition, which is the introduction of impertinent jesters: It is well that there is only one scene of this kind; the alguaciles are anachronistic. The versification is unequal, generally poor, and the work, which is anonymous seems to be by several authors. From all points of view it is one of the most notable literary productions of the sixteenth century.\textsuperscript{21}

\begin{itemize}
  \item[18] Castaneda, \textit{ibid.}, p. 434.
  \item[19] Mss. donated by Dr. C. W. Zaremba, 1891.
  \item[20] Ricard, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 239.
  \item[21] Monterde, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 23.
\end{itemize}
Castañeda suggests that Fray Toribio de Motolinia himself was the author.\(^{22}\) In view of the dedication he could not have been so naive. He could, of course, have inspired the work and have been the guiding hand in its formation. Rojas Garcidueñas refers to it as anonymous.\(^{23}\)

An interesting sidelight is thrown upon the subject by Romeike in his article "Tlaxcala, Cradle of American Christianity." He describes the old Church of San Francisco which contains the first pulpit and the first Baptismal font. Among the relics still to be seen today are one of the cloaks worn by one of the four kings, and a standard of Cortés. The conversion and baptism of the four kings took place in 1521.\(^{24}\)

The discovery of this Mexican manuscript of the Cuatro Reyes in recent years in the Garcia Collection of the University of Texas, compares with the finding of the Spanish manuscript of the Reyes Magos by Vallejo in Toledo in 1785. It bears the same relation to the drama in Mexico as "that only example which we possess of a past genre, which is like the corner stone of the Spanish theater."\(^{25}\)

\(^{22}\) Castañeda, op. cit., p. 11.


\(^{24}\) H. Romeike, "Tlaxcala, Cradle of American Christianity", Bulletin of the Pan American Union, LXI (March, 1927) 228.

As an example of these early religious plays Cornyn mentions *The Conversion of St. Paul* in Aztec, by a native dramatist in Mexico City. This is known to have been given in Mexico City in 1530. It appealed to the caciques because it represented the conversion of one of the noble class. It has been stated that by this time one hundred comedies had been given with an audience of ten million people. This is obviously a gross overstatement, but when we recall that most of these religious instructional dramas were given in the church yards or out in the open, and that everyone attended, we realize that the audiences must have been very large.26

By 1535 we have the first datable play in the modern sense, *El juicio final*, *The Judgment Day*. Cornyn recalls that this was ninety years before the Pilgrims and one third of a century before Shakespeare. Twenty such plays are said to exist.27

Antonio de Mendoza, the first Viceroy, entered the capital in 1535. He was the first of a long list of viceroys who ruled down to 1821.28 His arrival was appropriately celebrated. He and the bishop were among the dignitaries who

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27 Cornyn, *ibid*.
attended the performance of *El Juicio Final* in the Chapel of Saint John of the Natives. According to Las Casas there were some eight hundred actors who played their roles to perfection. In regard to all of these early plays, the Indians who were used to taking part in religious festivals, were natural born actors and acted their parts well. There were no women actors, their parts were played by young boys.

The Judgment Day, a mystery play, was presented on this occasion on an open platform before ten thousand faces. Cornyn states that some of these plays were given in what were at that time the former palaces of their former chieftains. This play was well designed to counteract plural marriage, a difficult subject because of the polygamy of the chieftains. Lucy represents those Spanish women who came to the New World in search of fortune and fell by the wayside. Other characters are Holy Church, Time, Penitence, Death, Confession, the Anti-Christ, and St. Michael descending from Heaven. Fireworks were used. The trial of Lucy was the high spot of the drama and in conclusion a *Te Deum* was sung.

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29 Ricard, *op. cit.*., p. 236.
30 Castaneda, *op. cit.*., p. 432.
31 Cornyn, *loc. cit.*
32 Cornyn, *ibid.*., p. 263.
Ricard gives Mendieta credit for the account of The Last Judgment. "Mendieta has told us of all the good done by the presentation of the auto of The Last Judgment." Concerning the effect of this play on the people he quotes Fray Luis de Granada, "and this fear disposes many to receive the Faith in their hearts."34

He hints at an older play by Fray Andres de Olmos, but does not pursue that in detail.35 He also mentions that Beristain saw a manuscript of a dialogue between the Blessed Virgin and Archangel Gabriel of Fray Luis de Fuensalida which may have been used before 1535 unless it was written on the author's return trip to Europe.36

Ricard gives the Magi Kings as the special play of the great mass of Indians as it was "the first manifestation to peasants of the Incarnate Word." Then, evidently having the padres and their work well in mind, he hastens to add, "but it was dangerous to let the Indians think that the Incarnation and Redemption of themselves were enough for salvation without their cooperation."37

33 Ricard, op. cit., p. 247.
34 Ibid., p. 243.
35 Ibid., p. 236.
36 Ibid., p. 235.
37 Ibid., p. 246.
By 1538 dramatic representation was common among the Spaniards and Indians. In that year the auto of Adam and Eve of Fray Toribio de Motolinia was presented in Mexico City. This was done very realistically. Eve coyly tempting Adam several times before he succumbs to her blandishments. The results of their disobedience are vividly portrayed and we can well presume that the crowd, accustomed as they were to taking part in these affairs must have wept with our first parents as they left the Garden of Eden.38 It must be remembered that his play was in the native language and that the actors were all Indians.

Ricard tells us in his inimitable fashion of the slow, patient, and painstaking efforts of the missionaries to depaganize the Indians by having them take part in the liturgy and religious drama.

The teaching by means of liturgical ceremonies, the influence of the chants, feast days, and processions, was completed and prolonged by another means of teaching, no less appropriate to attract and retain the puerile spirit of the Indians. It is not a question here, naturally, of the theater that was introduced by the Spaniards for their edification especially, and which was recognized in Mexico as a great good fortune, but the representations organized by the religious for the Indians only, in which only Indians played and the only language used was that of the natives. This theater like the feast days was a substitution, because the Aztecs also had theatrical representations about which, unfortunately, we know very little.39

38 Castaneda, op. cit., pp. 8-9.
39 Ricard, op. cit., p. 234.
An event of great importance happened the same year in Tlaxcala. Motolinia describes the presentations on the Feast of Corpus Christi, June 24, 1538, in honor of Charles V granting a coat of arms and thus making Tlaxcala a city, which are among the first of which we have good records. The first auto presented was the Anunciation of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist to his father, Zacharias. This lasted about an hour and was followed by music. Then the second, The Anunciation of Our Lady, which lasted as long as the first, was given. From the place where these were presented they went to the patio of the Church of St. John where on another platform there was a representation of the Visitation of Our Lady to St. Elizabeth. This "stage" was beautifully adorned with roses. After the Mass the Nativity of St. John was given, but instead of the "Circumcision" an eight day old boy was baptized John. The purposeful misunderstanding of Zacharias, handing him several objects, except the rod which was to be a sign to him, brought in an element of humor. 40

Rueda says that the representations were given in the Mexican language. 41 Castaneda stresses the large audience present by repeating that the plays were held in the open. 42

40 Luis Sandi, "The Story Retold, Chronicle of the Theater in Mexico", Theater Arts, XXII (August, 1938), 611-23.
41 Rueda, op. cit., p. 51.
42 Castañeda, op. cit., p. 8.
Ricard credits Motolinia's *Historia de los Indios de La Nueva Espana* with the best record of the event and adds that these dramas took place on the day of St. John the Baptist. 43

Corpus Christi of 1539 also provided the opportunity to celebrate the tenth year of the rule of Emperor Charles V. The Spaniards put on *The Conquest of Rhodes* for the edification of the Indians. They reciprocated with *The Conquest of Jerusalem*. The dungeon, towers, walls, and masses of roses, lent realism and beauty to the dramas. Among the characters were Holy Faith, the Emperor and the Pope. The clashing of the armies must have made a colorful spectacle. *The Temptation of Our Lord* came next, followed by *St. Francis Preaching to the Birds*. After the Mass *The Sacrifice of Abraham* was given. 44 This is the most notable, if not the only time, when Spaniards and Indians gave plays at the same time.

In *St. Francis Preaching to the Birds* a drunken Indian is one of the characters, and a sorceress with her magic potions for married women is introduced. The drama was realistic and the stage setting far in advance of any used in Spain at the time. 45 This was the contribution of the Indians to the new drama.

43 Ricard, *op. cit.*., p. 27.
45 Schons, *op. cit.*, p. 89.
In the plays given by the natives it was customary to have a *villancico* or verse in Spanish at the end in deference to the Spaniards. Ricard gives the one at the end of the *Sacrificio de Isaac*. "You, all who are here, you have seen this prodigy; therefore conform well your fashion of living to the divine commandments." 46

Castañeda mentions the one on the day of the Incarnation following the above events and quotes Fray Toribio de Motolinia's beautiful description of *The Fall of Our First Parents* that was so well acted that the audience broke into tears. 47

We have seen that in the pre-Cortesian theater of the Indians and in the religious plays of the *padres* that there were elements of humor. The Ordinance of 1529 was intended to produce better decorum in the processions to the places where the various events were held. Different organizations vied with one another to have the honor of being first. In 1533 the gunsmiths were the leaders, in 1537 the silversmiths. As time went on these became so rowdy that the Bishop decided to do something about it. In 1544 he forbade all dramatic productions. 48 This prohibition was in effect

46 Ricard, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
48 Ibid., p. 7.
until he died in 1548 when they were resumed for a short time. In 1565, May 18, the Ecclesiastical Chapter offered a gold and silver prize for the best play to be presented on the Feast of Corpus Christi. Sandi says that the amount was thirty escudos. The Town Council co-operated by making the arrangements with the writers for their plays including the making of the large platforms. Another popular feast day was that of St. Hippolytus, the saint's day on which Mexico was conquered. 50

In regard to the Bishop's prohibition, Rueda records that Bishop Zumárraga used "terminos violentes" and directed that the manuscripts be censored by the Ordinary. 51 This was before the Holy Office, usually referred to as the Inquisition, began to function in the colonies.

In 1574, a comedia, Desposorios espirituales entre el Pastor Pedro y la Iglesia Mexicana, by Juan Perez y Ramirez, son of a conqueror and native of Mexico was presented on the occasion of Don Pedro Moya de Contreras being elevated to an Archbishop. 52 This may have been the first play by a Mexican creole.

49 Castañeda, op. cit., p. 7.
50 Sandi, op. cit., p. 614.
51 Rueda, op. cit., p. 52.
52 Ibid.
The *Conquista de México* inaugurated in 1595, has been given each year since on the thirteenth of August. Bernal Díaz and Fray Toribio de Benevente are characters.53

In regard to all of these sixteenth century plays, we see them as sincere efforts to Christianize the natives and can best appreciate their success as expressed by Fray Juan Bautista.

I have had much experience with comedies like these and others, for example those during the Lenten season that have by the mercy of Our Lord produced great fruit, cleaning and renewing consciences weighted down by sin for many years.54

The autos and coloquios of the Spaniards on biblical subjects were imitated in the Indian languages, Spaniards wrote on American topics with religious themes, and Indians also composed on subjects of interest to them, portraying their comparatively short association with the Christian religion. Beyond a doubt their inherited dramatic forms as well as religious continued in the remote sections.55 As the urban centers developed and schools began to function there were more finished productions. As territory was added and new audiencias established they went through the same experiences as Mexico did in these early years.

53 Rueda, *op. cit.*, p. 52.
55 Sandi, *loc. cit.*
CHAPTER III

THE SCHOOL PLAYS

Immediately following the conquest of arms, educational activities began in Mexico. The first lectures were the sermons instructing the natives in Christianity. Three Friars of the Franciscan Order, personally selected by Charles V arrived in 1523. One of them, Peter of Ghent, founded and directed the school of San José de Belén de los Naturales, St. Joseph of Bethlehem of the Natives, until he died in A.D. 1572. Upon the death of Bishop Zumárraga he was asked to take Holy Orders and succeed him. However, like Thomas More, he preferred to remain with the humble things he knew and loved. The first subject was religion and the first text the catechism. Reading and writing were sources of astonishment to the natives and so intrigued them that they learned rapidly. This foundation of elementary education prepared the way for the secondary schools to follow.¹ A Jesuit educator of today has recommended Brother Peter as the Patron of the American school teacher.²

¹ Francis Borgia Steck, O.F.M., Ph. D., Education in North America During the Sixteenth Century, (Catholic Education Press, 1943), pp. 3 - 11.
The first schools were coeducational. However, separate schools for girls, taught by women, were founded very early. The first beatas or religious, arrived in 1530. The college of Our Lady of Charity for Girls was similar to St. John's for boys. Jealousy, fear and ignorance on the part of those whose greed for power and wealth overshadowed their commonsense, in time stopped this program of education of the natives. This triumph of petty minds was the cause of much of the trouble in the revolutionary period.

The spirit of rivalry swung the pendulum the other way until the Indian schools were left to die of neglect while those for the Spaniards and creoles prospered. Had they been wise enough to nurture both types equally, according to their original high ideals, the story would have been different.

The secondary schools for natives of the Franciscans and Augustinians were highly successful as the achievements of their graduates prove. However, the increase in Spanish and Creole population was sufficient to demand almost exclusively the labors of the Jesuits after their arrival in 1572.

3 Steck, op. cit., p. 4.
4 Ibid., p. 16.
5 Ibid., p. 19.
6 Ibid., p. 18.
7 Ibid., p. 17.
Greek and Latin classics with commentaries were also published and profusely divulged by the Jesuits who used them as text books in their schools, colleges and seminaries.  

In general they inaugurated a systematic study of the Latin language as a vehicle of the humanities. The Franciscans had not neglected Latin but wisely omitted a study of the classics as their charges were too close to paganism. 

Both Bishop Zumárraga and Viceroy Mendoza who worked for the establishment of the University of Mexico, created in 1551 and inaugurated in 1553, died before that time.

The first graduate school in America was St. Mary of All Saints founded in 1573 by Francisco Rodríguez Santos, the treasurer of the Cathedral. One requirement for entrance was the Bachelor's degree. At first it was in charge of the Jesuits, but continued to function until 1843.

The first school in the United States was started by the Franciscans in St. Augustine, Florida. The exact date and persons concerned are shrouded in the mists of time. It must have been shortly after the founding of the city in 1565.

10 Ibid., p. 29.
12 Ibid., p. 33.
Fifteen years after the surrender of the Aztecs, the 
Colégio de Santa Cruz de Santiago de Tlatelolco was inaugu-
rated on January 6, the Feast of the Epiphany. The President 
of the Audiencia, Bishop Ramirez de Fuenleal, and the incumbent 
of the new See of Mexico, Bishop Juan de Zumárraga, with Antonio de Mendoza, the new Viceroy who had arrived just four 
months previous, attended the exercises at the new college. 
Thus, one hundred years before the founding of Harvard, the 
first college was established in America, and it was for the 
natives, exclusively. The curriculum comprised the seven 
liberal arts of the trivium, grammar, rhetoric, and logic, 
and the quadrivium, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music. Painting and Indian medicine were stressed. 13 The 
wisdom of including these latter subjects is apparent. This 
college which in our estimation would be considered a second-
ary school, was the result of the labors of the lay Brother, 
Peter of Ghent, who was a relative of Charles V. Up to this 
time he and his companions had carried on activities that 
would be classed as elementary education, having actually es-
tablished a Primary School for small children. In the colégio which was for Indians only, Fray Arnaldo de Basaccio taught 
the boys a three year Latin course. The lower classes were 

13 Francis B. Steck, "Early Mexico's Indian College", The Commonweal, XXIV (August 28, 1936), 422. 1536.
carried on in the Indian language and the upper in Latin. The discipline was severe and at apparently no time was Spanish taught systematically. Bishop Zumárraga remarked that "the Indian students, the best grammarians, are more inclined to marriage than to continency."14

Friars like Alonso de Molina, Bernadino de Sahagún and Juan Bautista were teachers. Some of the Indians like Antonio Valeriano of Guadalupe became religious and teachers of the clerics. In 1552 his work on herbs was sent to the Vatican. In that year the college was turned over to the Indians with their own Rector. Twenty years later it returned to the jurisdiction of the Order and according to Icazbalceta was functioning as a day school some fifty years later.15

Juan Pablos, the first printer, was in the colorful procession that came on foot with Mendoza from the sea coast to Mexico City in 1535. He was among those who witnessed the Judgment Day which was performed before ten thousand faces.16 The pupils of the college co-operated with this cultural development, contributing material aid to the printing of books by translating sacred texts, sermons, lives of the Saints and

14 Ibid., p. 423.
15 Ibid., p. 424.
even European religious plays, into the native dialects. 17 The first book printed in America by an American author was the *Peregrino Indiano* of Saavada Guzman in 1579. 18

Although Ricard's *Conquête Spirituelle* deals especially with the period 1523-1572, he brings in many items of interest that occurred before 1523 and some after 1572. He recalls the approach to Ulua on Holy Thursday, April 21, 1519, the debarking on Good Friday, and the Solemn Mass on Easter Sunday. He mentions the Angelus and the fascination it had for the Indians. Bernal Díaz recorded the first sermon of Fray Bartolome de Olmedo. 19 He refers to *The Magi* who made their offerings during the Mass, "one can reasonably say that this auto is a Mass preceded and accompanied by theatrical scenes." 20 Of The Adoration of the Kings given on January 6, 1587, before the Franciscan Visitor, Fray Alonso Ponce and more than five thousand Indians, he says it must have originated before 1557, about 1550, as there was an old Indian in this production who had played his part for thirty years. 21

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20 Ibid., p. 243.

21 Ibid., p. 240.
The first Jesuit school play was staged in 1574 in the Seminary of St. Peter and St. Paul to celebrate the Feast of the Apostles. This initial work was so well received that the members of the Order were greatly encouraged in the work that they had undertaken.

Its theme concerned the wrongs done the Church, first by the heretics and later by the bloody Selim and the devastation recently experienced in Africa. The acting by the boys who had studied such a short time in the recently established school greatly stirred the distinguished audience of both civil and religious leaders. Literary contests, prizes and honors also formed part of the program. The archbishop and the bishop of Tlaxcala, who had not been able to attend, requested that the performance of the play be repeated on the following day.22

In 1573-1574 when the Colégio de Patzcuaro was opened a celebration was held on Epiphany. The General of the Order, Francis Borgia had sent some statues to the schools in the New World. A ceremony was held for the installation of one of the Blessed Virgin in the new school. Among the activities there was a diálogo partly in Spanish and partly in Tarascan. Both languages were used in order to please everyone.23

In 1575 the Seminary of St. Peter and St. Paul put on a tragicomedy similar to the one of 1574.24 A distinguished company, including the viceroy, attended.

23 Ibid., p. 10.
24 Ibid.
In 1577 the students of the Colégio Máximo de San Pedro y San Pablo included a tragicomedy concerning St. Luke in their program for Corpus Christi.  

The most important celebration of the sixteenth century took place in 1578. The carta of Fray Pedro de Morales to his Superior gives a very detailed account of the festivities that lasted for several days. The Holy Father had sent relics but as some of them were lost he sent a second collection which arrived September 7, 1577. A year and three months later, November 1, 1578, after much discussion and preparation, the festival began. Triumphal arches, pictures, shields with verses in several languages, rich canopies and ingeniously trimmed windows in the homes made up the decorations. Not only special Masses, but dances, prayers, penitences and sacrifices preceded the formal opening. More than two hundred students of the Jesuit schools went over the route on horseback on October second. A tremendous poster, three yards high and two wide announced in Latin the rules for the literary contests on the relics. Even prisoners were released. Figures were set up representing Spain, New Spain, and other countries and cities. The brilliant procession started on Saturday morning at seven o'clock.  

25 Johnson, op. cit., p. 11

Viceroy Don Martín Enríquez de Almanza and other government officials, Jesuit ecclesiastics, the brotherhoods and the Indians carrying more than two hundred images and crosses and banners, must have made a very colorful procession. Casks of perfumed water were used and the music was furnished by kettledrums, trumpets, and native instruments. A coloquio telling the purpose of the celebration was performed by three youths dressed as angels at the third arch. The second event was a mock tournament and juego de cañas by some students of the Colégio de San Pedro y San Pablo. They were dressed as Roman soldiers. On Sunday evening the Triunfo was given. Monday was reserved for the commemoration of the deceased in the parish churches. Tuesday the Colégio de San Gregorio had charge of the program. A diálogo in Latin and Castilian was performed by allegorical characters and five shepherds. Villancicos, entremeses, a dance, and songs entertained the audience. Wednesday, the Colégio de San Bernardo presented a coloquio dealing with the many places where relics are preserved. On Thursday, the Colégio de San Miguel represented a Coloquio de Angeles and a religious sarao. On Friday, the Colégio Máximo again put on a pageant concerning the relics. Gain and Honor was given Saturday, and prizes distributed; Triunfo repeated Sunday.27

Alegre gives a very detailed description of these events. The power of the viceroy to command and get things done is exemplified in his order for this celebration. "The virrey commanded the chiefs of the neighboring tribes to come with their respective insignias and music." 28

The best summary of the play itself is perhaps that of Rueda. He says that the colleges of San Gregorio, San Pedro and Paulo and San Idelfonso took part in the production of El Triunfo de los Santos. The subject of the play was the persecution of the Church by Dioclesian and the peace that Constantine brought. The characters were historical and allegorical, the Church, the Theological Virtues, Gentility, and Idolatry.

The drama had to be repeated by public demand. They enjoyed seeing it and very graciously overlooked the anachronisms and excesses which were common to works of that type. 29

The authors were the Latin and Rhetoric teachers. 30

Decormé regards these well-planned and beautifully executed events as the result of the six years labor of the men of his Order. Commenting generally on their success in

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28 Francisco Javier Alegre, Historia de la Companía de Jesús en Nueva España (Camara, México: 22 de Mayo de 1841), I, p. 137.


30 Alegre, op. cit., p. 141.
teaching and these events in particular, he says that with such teachers and with the competence that was developed in the students of the colleges and seminaries it was almost impossible to believe the ardor and enthusiasm that was shown among the young men to advance in letters and sacred science. The results are evident in their literary endeavors and in public solemnities such as the arrival from Rome of the Sacred Relics in 1578, the arrival of bishops, viceroyes, in the canonization of saints, and other affairs that were celebrated with verses, dramas, and comedias.31

Just as in the case of Fray Sahagán, all of the members of the Order did not approve of the time being spent on the drama. Fray Pedro Marcado opened the school term of 1578 in Oaxaca by giving some plays in Latin verse. In a report of 1582 Fray Plaza reported that two coloquios were given within six months and that the students presented a comedy on the Prodigal on St. John's Day, 1583. He complained that the schools were neglecting spiritual matters and that the studies were suffering from too many Spanish plays.32 Pageants, plays, orations, and poems were given in Castilian.33


32 Johnson, op. cit., p. 17.

33 Ibid., p. 6.
In 1592 the Visitor of the Order made a similar criticism. He said that so many plays and dialogues should not be given in the vernacular, that a few brief, simple dialogues in Latin would be sufficient. 34

The Colegio Máximo put on a Corpus Christi play in 1583 and the Seminary of San Martín, Tepotzotlan, a comedy in Mexican, Otomi and Spanish languages, the same year. 35

The Order petitioned the city to build the platforms for a play in July, 1586, and in January, 1590, asked for financial assistance for the celebration of the new viceroy, Velasco. They were granted four hundred pesos. In 1594 they made a similar petition for the play honoring St. Hippolytus. San Idelfonso presented a play based on his life the same year. 36 The Latin play honoring St. Hippolytus was given in the patio of the Colegio Máximo and prizes were awarded for Spanish and Latin compositions. 37

Viceroy Don Gaspar de Zúñiga y Azevedo attended the opening of the schools in 1596. Inscriptions from his family coat of arms were displayed in the last act. He was so enthused by the acting and pleased by the compliment that he

34 Johnson, op. cit., p. 18.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid., p. 19.
37 Alegre, op. cit., p. 274.
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34 Johnson, op. cit., p. 18.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid., p. 19.
37 Alegre, op. cit., p. 274.
invited actors and teachers to be his guests at the palace the following day. 38

The Dominicans asked the other Orders to assist them in the celebration of the canonization of St. Hyacinth, 1597. The Jesuits co-operated by putting on a magnificent display, canopies, shields, paintings, hymns, epigrams, acrostics, and poems written in Latin, Italian, Spanish, Greek and Hebrew. The same year the advanced students of the Colegio Maximo dramatized events in the life of St. Catherine. 39

The visit of Fray Ignacio de Santibanez, first Archbishop of the Philippines, and Don Bartolomé Lobo Guerrero, chief Inquisitor of Mexico and Archbishop of New Granada was celebrated with a play and appropriate exercises. 40

The turn of the century saw the completion of the new Temple of the Holy Spirit and the placing therein of the relics brought by Morales, celebrated for nine days by literary contests, processions, bell ringing, juegos de cañas, the unveiling of a new image, two plays, one of them accompanied by dancing and music. These events took place in Puebla de los Angeles. 41

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38 Johnson, op. cit., p. 20.
39 Ibid., p. 21.
40 Ibid., p. 22.
41 Ibid.
The building of the church was commenced in the year 1597 and required thirteen years for completion. A letter describing the events from 1600 to 1602 tells of a ceremony bestowing a candle on Juan Luis de Rivera who was the treasurer of the mint and alderman of the city. He and his wife were their benefactors, having made gifts for the House of Profession and the church. A play by the students in their schools expressed their gratitude.

During the same period the Indian boys of the Colegio de San Gregorio gave a Corpus Christi play in Spanish. Their pronunciation and ease of speech astonished the audience so much that they requested that the performance be repeated.

The beatification of St. Ignatius was celebrated in 1610 with nine days of festivities including songs, sermons, masses, simulated pilgrimages, Indian dances, games on horseback, lavish pageants portraying the five triumphs of the saint. These pageants were put on wheels and taken through the streets in the manner of "floats." The Augustinians erected a large tabernacle and presented the crowning of St. Ignatius by St. Augustine.

42 Ibid., p. 23.
43 Ibid.
44 Ibid., p. 25.
45 Ibid., p. 27.
In connection with the dedication of a new altar, the Indian students of San Gregorio staged two *coloquios* in the street, in 1617. The same year the Seminary of San Idelfonso was raised to the rank of a Royal College. The viceroy was presented with a candle. He requested that the play be repeated so that his wife could attend the following day.46

The beatification of St. Francis Xavier was celebrated in 1620 by masks, fireworks, music, bullfights, processions, and sermons. Juan Ortiz de Torres was ordered to present a religious play, gratis. A pantomime consisting of mock duels was held in the *patio* of the Colégio Máximo.47

St. Francis Borgia's canonization was celebrated in 1625. Two plays with scenic effects were provided.48

The Indian boys of the Seminary of San Gregorio put on plays and tragi-comedies in 1643 and 1644.49

The magnificent auditorium of the Colégio Máximo was in use in 1646. There were seats on two levels. Images and precious woods were used in the decoration.50 Literary contests and dramas were presented there for over a century.

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46 Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
The seventeenth century saw a mellowing of the established order that had been cast into specific molds in the early years. Greater ease, luxury and security led to over-development in art, architecture and literature.

Gongorism, that literary movement which started out with niceties of expression and figures of speech, wound up with the literary conceits of obscurantism and conceptism. It even invaded the field of religious writing to such an extent that one writer says that after reading such sermons one realizes that the invention of the title was often the hardest work. The same trend in English literature was called Euphemism.

The eighteenth century continued the pattern set by the later years of the seventeenth. Then it seems that a profound lethargy descended upon colonial life and remained almost unbroken until the upheaval of the revolutionary period in the early years of the nineteenth.

Under the Bourbons, the secular trend, accompanied by such events as the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767, was a fundamental factor in bringing about the change.

Naturally the drama of the schools suffered under such conditions and the havoc wrought resulted in the destruction or dispersal of "originals."

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Couvents franciscains
Couvents dominicains
Couvents augustinens

d'après Robert Ricard:
La "conquête spirituelle" du Mexique.
To appreciate the drama of the seventeenth century and the part it played in the lives of the people, an understanding of the general cultural pattern is necessary. The courts of the viceroys vied with those of the Old World; Spanish was spoken with exquisite perfection, Latin was universally used. There was a high level of culture in the white upper strata. Mestizos who chose military careers were called "Spaniards". The Spanish shopkeepers and technical workers were organized in guilds. Renegade, low Spaniards were called "zaramullos". Activities included cabalgatas or horseback dress parades, mascaradas or costumed masques, comedias in enclosed theaters, besamanos or levees, saraos or dancing parties on the birthdays of nobility, processions to the Royal Palace, receptions, dances, and banquets. Speech, dress, manners and dancing were exaggerated, even praying was florid. Gongorism was creeping into literature and in spite of the noble defense of the learned Juan de Espinosa Medrano, was doing its part to earn for the century the adjective "baroque".2

Especially popular reading were the salacious comedies and romances of chivalry imported from Europe, which the mother countries tried to suppress without success. Comedies, romances, and similar types of prose were generally poor in quality and of little permanent value.3


In spite of a decree of Charles V prohibiting the importation of fiction, "historias fingidas", they slipped through with the books on history, poetry, and philosophy, often with the Inquisition on board. One hundred copies of the first edition of Don Quixote are presumed to have been shipped to the New World. Bills of lading in the Casa de Contratación as early as 1583 list comedias.4

The change in the preference of the public from novels to plays in the seventeenth century was aided by such writers as Juan de la Cueva who brought the old epic material into live representation in his dramas. Lope de Vega "transformed this latent taste for plays into a veritable rage."5

The religious drama of the church and the school plays were not supplanted by the drama of the stage but, in a sense, supplemented by it. Viceregal drama became public.

With the passing of the early struggles and the formation of a social structure we find the ruling class of noble families, hidalgos, criollos, americanos, mestizos, the Negroes and Indians. Those born in America could not hold office. They used such epithets as gachupín, chapetón, and godó for the continually incoming native Spanish rulers.6


5 Ibid.

6 Barrera, loc. cit.
They constituted the majority of the wealthy leisure class and seethed against their injustices until their liberation. Without them the Golden Age would have meant little or nothing to Mexico.

Since Mexico was an integral part of the Spanish Empire, its cultural life a reflection of that of the mother country and its drama undergoing a parallel development, we can safely assume that the first stage plays were of a religious character.

The influence of Lepanto on Spanish literature found its reflection in the influence of the Aruacana in the New World. In Mexico, the outstanding rhymed chronicle is perhaps the Grandeza Mexicana of Bernardo Balbuena, 1604, as it describes the natural beauties of the virgin continent as well as the deeds of valor of the conquerors. The quality of the poetry of both religious and secular plays improved as the great works of the age appeared. The success of these rhymed chronicles and versified plays tended to discourage the use of prose for creative expression during the period.

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8 John Van Horne, translator, Grandeza Mexicana, Bernardo Balbuena (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1930), Introduction and notes.

9 Leonard, op. cit., p. 2.
It may never be possible to secure the name of the first dramatist of the stage, the title of the first play, and the exact location of the first theater.

Two theaters in addition to the corrales provided locations for the drama of the seventeenth century. They offered secular as well as religious productions. The Casa de Comedias of Francisco de León was founded as early as 1597.\textsuperscript{10} The Hippolyte Brothers maintained a theater to help support the Hospital Real.\textsuperscript{11}

Aristocratic society was entertained with comedies in the reception hall of the Viceroy's palace.\textsuperscript{12} "The customs of their gay society demanded much scribbling of verses as well as dramatic representations."\textsuperscript{13} Sometimes the audience was restricted to a particular group as on August 26, 1616, when the officers of the Inquisition and the Viceroy's ministers were served refreshments and then entertained with a comedy.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{10} Harvey Leroy Johnson, \textit{An Edition of Triunfo de los Santos} (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1941, p. 5.

\textsuperscript{11} José Rojas Garcidueñas, \textit{El teatro de nueva España en el siglo xvi} (México: Imprenta Marfil, 1935), p. 11.

\textsuperscript{12} Johnson, \textit{loc. cit.}


\textsuperscript{14} Johnson, \textit{loc. cit.}
In 1620 Juan Ortiz de Torres was ordered to present, gratis, a religious *comedia* in honor of the beatification of St. Xavier. This was given on the Thursday of the nine day celebration. The aldermen voted one hundred pesos for the costumes. The location is not mentioned. Since the Jesuits did not have their auditorium until 1656 and the aldermen had not taken boxes at the theater of the *Hospital Real* until 1627 it would have to be in the *Casa de Comedias* or outside. Such a public event would attract the crowds which could hardly be accommodated in one building. However, it was in the month of December which may have governed the location.

Among the noted literary lights to come to Mexico was the dramatist, Juan de la Cueva, called the author of the first Spanish historical drama, since he was the first to use the national epic material in his works. His comedies and those of his followers together with translations of the classics provided a varied theatrical fare in the 17th century. Luis de Belmonte Bermúdez, another writer of plays,

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15 Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
was among these travelers. In 1609 he wrote the life of St. Ignatius de Loyola in verse. Some works of Lope de Vega arrived in 1599 but his plays first reached the New World in 1605. This marked the beginning of Mexico's participation in the Golden Age.

Bernardo de Balbuena who won a prize in a literary contest in 1585 makes the comment in the 1604 edition of his *Grandezza Mexicana* that "there are new comedies every day." In this work and in the *Viaje al Parnaso* of Cervantes, 1614, and the *Laurel de Apolo* of Lope de Vega, 1630, we find that Mexican dramatists were known in all of the Spanish world.

Bernardo's comment is mild compared to the statement that one of the comic characters in Eslava's sixteenth *Colóquio* made in regard to the numerous *literati* of the time, to the effect that there were more poets than dung, and that one day's labor making adobe bricks brought in greater return than all the sonnets that one might write in a year.

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21 Coester, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
22 Ibid., p. 19.
24 Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
COLOQUIO DE LOS CUATRO DOCTORES
DE LA IGLESIA

Son interlocutores:
SAN AGUSTÍN, SAN GERÓNIMO, SAN AMBROSIO, SAN GREGORIO
y dos pastores, llamados: el uno Cuestión y el otro
Capilla, y entran los dos pastores.

CAPILLA
Cuestión, yo haré una apuesta
Por perder,
Que no alcanzas a saber,
Aunque por sabio te tienen,
Qué es la causa porque vienen
Hoy a hacer esta fiesta.

CUESTION
¡Oh! ruedes por una cuesta
Sin parar;
Fernán González de Eslava produced spiritual and sacred coloquios, comic and even scatological works. The compiler, Fernando Vello be Bustamente, 1610, promised to, but never did publish his secular works. Rueda decries the loss of these works "a lo humano" and questions "whether they were really lost or not." Perhaps Eslava was wiser than Chaucer who lived long enough to regret many of his vulgar works only to find them beyond recall, and saw to it that no copies would be available to possibly scandalize future generations. In 1877 Don Joaquin Garcia Icazbalceta made as complete a collection as possible including several canciones or songs. Of the seventeen autos, six are concerned with historical events, the arrival of Miguel López, explorer of the Filipinas, the consecration of Contreras as Archbishop, the armed forces sent to Zacatecas by Almanza, the arrival of the Count of Coruña, the Pestilence of 1576, and the reception of Velasco in 1590.

Eslava occasionally used an Aztec word instead of the Spanish, as mecate for cuerda, rope. Andalusian idioms lead us to believe that he was a native of that place.

27 Francisco Monterde, "Pastorals and Popular Performances", Theater Arts, XXII (August, 1938), 597.
29 Ibid.
30 Monterde, loc. cit.
The biographical data on this pioneer dramatist are so scanty that only theories and suppositions are advanced as to his natal place. These are based on meager details found in his works. However, we know that he was born somewhere in Spain in 1534, left Seville for Mexico in 1559 as a young man twenty five years of age, and must have written in 1567, 1599, and 1600. His reticence about himself and his life is well illustrated by the fact that nowhere does he mention the compiler of his works and his friend for forty three years. 31 In 1579 he contributed some "versos de elogio" for the book of a friend, Fray Agustín Farfán, A Short Treatise on Medicine. This was advanced by Pérez de Guzmán to uphold his theory that Eslava was the first Mexican poet. However, the Desposorio Espiritual of Juan Pérez Ramírez antedates that by five years, 1574. 32 The first native born poet, Francisco de Terrazas, was the son of one of Cortés' most trusted officers. 33

Icazbalceta's deduction that Eslava was of Andalusian origin and no doubt from Madrid was based on internal evidence. Cuervo, Menéndez y Pelayo, and Icaza, supported this theory. The "campo de Tablada" is mentioned with familiarity, g and z rhymes are used and aspirate h. Amado Alonso disposes of the

31 Amado Alonso, Biografía de Fernán González de Eslava (Buenos Aires: 1939), pp. 3-5.
32 Ibid.
33 Coester, op. cit., p. 17.
theory neatly when he points out that Jerusalem, China, Tunis, and many other geographical references are made, the seseo, or sound of g was common among Spanish Americans from the north, and that aspirate h was common among contemporary writers as well as the Castilians Fray Luis de León and San Juan de la Cruz. 34

The colóquios were written for the people in the popular language of the day. Menendez y Pelayo’s criticism of Eslava’s work would indicate that he was not familiar with the canciones which have literary merit. 35 The historical and literary value of the colóquios for us today is not only in the events commemorated but in the current speech. 36

With the coming of the secular clergy we have a triangle of Viceroy, religious orders, and secular clergy. Contreras was named the first Inquisidor in 1570 and arrived in Mexico in 1571. Don Martin Enríquez was Viceroy from 1568 to 1580. Each was jealous of his own authority and determined to show that he was master in his own sphere. Matters came to a head during the celebrations in December, 1574, when Contreras was raised to the rank of Archbishop. This civil-religious rivalry was traditional. De Anguis had occasion to write of the

34 Alonso, ibid., pp. 4-11.
bickerings to Philip II in 1561. Fray Mendieta, in September, 1574, wrote to the President of the Council of the Indies condemning the despotism of the Viceroy. The bones of contention were the administration of the sacraments by the friars without Episcopal license and their building program. Minor irritations caused by letter writing were aggravated by such things as the removal of the Archbishop's chair on order of the Viceroy. Rather than sit on the same bench with him Contreras passed up the Viceroy and sat in the choir on the day of his elevation. Enríquez and the Audiencia who had to leave when he did, left before the services were over.

This scandalized clergy and laity alike and led up to the affair of the entremeses that were inserted between the acts of Eslava's colóquio presented December 8, as the highlight of the celebrations. The Viceroy was thoroughly ribbed in these skits directed at his proposed new tax. A bearded character in one of them resembled him. A comedian in black-face appeared in another. Three naked children tumbled out of bed while the parents argued with the tax collector.37 The reaction stands out in contrast to our Boston Tea Party. No one would admit authorship. Ramirez said that he knew nothing about them.38 The play was so well received that every

37 Alonso, op. cit., p. 22.

38 Ibid., p. 29.
monastery and convent asked for a repetition. To complicate things some clever verses lampooning the Viceroy and his new tax appeared on the church door on Saturday. They were quickly removed by one Brother Melchor but not before the news had spread. A third *comedia* to be given on Sunday in honor of the consecration of another bishop, the new Bishop of New Galicia, was thoroughly inspected in advance as was the presentation given in the evening by the Jesuits. In the meantime the Viceroy had a letter from the President of the Council detailing the complaints against him. Among other things the Archbishop had accused the Viceroy of treating him like a sacristan. The storm broke Monday. Depositions were taken from the clergy. All suspects were rounded up and jailed. Some were not retained, others a few days, but Eslava seventeen days. Eventually the *entremeses* were said to have been brought from Spain by a mulatto. Juan de la Cueva was strongly suspected of writing the *pasquin* or lampoon. There were so many suspects that it was decided to punish the laymen and not the religious.

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40 Ibid., p. 30.

41 Ibid., p. 36.

42 Ibid., p. 31.

43 Ibid., p. 37.
This colóquio of Eslava's is the number three in the collections. The complete title is Eclogue on the consecration of Doctor Don Pedro Moya de Contreras, first Inquisitor of New Spain and Archbishop of the Holy Mexican Church...Dealing with the contract made between them this day. Some hold that this heading was arranged by Bustamente, the compiler, and that the original was the same or similar to the one of Ramirez of spiritual contract between Pastor Peter and the Mexican Church, in pastoral garb. They are both in the best traditional form initiated by Encina. The plays were given on a stage erected before the high altar of the Cathedral. The actors were choir boys, acolytes, and seminarians.

Of the other works of Eslava the auto concerning the sending of troops to Zacatecas to protect the mines is perhaps the best worked out on an American theme with religious connotations. It compares the earthly mines to the wealth of the mines of spiritual things in Heaven. The stage directions are very explicit for all of the colóquios. Innovations in stage properties included three levels of action and scenery.

44 Ibid., p. 12.
46 Ibid., p. 21.
47 Ibid., p. 22.
48 Monterde, op. cit., p. 597.
In 1563 several writers took part in a poetic debate on the theological subject of the fulfillment of the Law of Moses. Fernán González defended the Mosaic Law. The Archbishop, Alonso de Montufar, who was interested in the scholastic controversy, suggested to Francisco de Terrazas that he reply. He did so and Eslava wrote an answer to which he replied again. Terrazas interested Pedro de Ledesma to write a reply also. "As Jesus said He came to fulfill the law, not to destroy it, to reject it would be a contradiction." Such discussions were for the literati and not the vulgar. Printing of these efforts was forbidden. Terrazas gave a copy to his printer, Sebastián Vásques, but permission to print was refused. Eight years later Pedro Moya de Contreras, the first Inquisidor decided to investigate. This threw a shade of suspicion on the orthodoxy of Eslava. As a refutation he wrote the eighth colóquio, Of the New Testament which Christ made for our good. In this play parts are played by Natural Law, Good Instinct, an Angel, the Old Law, Fear, the Law of Grace, the Gospel, and a Jew. The New Law gains a more categorical victory than the poetic answers of Terrazas and Ledesma.49

Another of the literary group to suffer as the result of this discussion was Juan Bautista Corvera, the first dramatic author of New Spain for whom we have a definite name and

49 Alonso, op. cit., p. 41.
date. A soldier of fortune, born in 1530, he came to Peru and later to the mining region of Guadalajara. In 1561 he composed a pastoril in which there were three shepherds and three shepherdesses. The Viceroy, Velasco, and Archbishop Montufar attended. It is supposed that while visiting Mexico City for the Christmas season of 1563 or at Corpus Christi, he wrote down what he heard of this debate and used it in his declamations. He was an artist in recitation, using all the phases of the art, gestures, intonation, posture, and so on. Although advised by others to desist, he recited these verses whenever he had an audience. It was forbidden to discuss such matters before women, common people, or the lower clergy. Inquisitorial action was taken against him on April 7, 1564, by the Bishop of Guadalajara. He fled to the Archbishop for protection. Oddly enough this whole pseudo-mosaic controversy is included in the work *The Jews in New Spain*.

There is but one record that Eslava was ever paid for his labors. He received twelve hundred pesos for the Corpus play of 1588. Alonso García was granted fifty pesos for acting the part of an Angel. As there is no such character in the published works, it is presumed that the play is one of possibly many that were never collected.

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50 Alonso, *op. cit.*, p. 43.
Eleven of the known colóquios were sacramental. They were all didactic in so far as they taught religion. Their staging demanded an extensive wardrobe for the several actors and bows, arrows, knives, and swords among the weapons. Ordinary stage properties, chairs, benches, and tables, were meager, thus placing greater emphasis upon the costumes and action. The incidental properties were in many cases unusual and even astonishing. In Colóquio I there is a horse with many trappings; a workshop showing many samples of cloth, brown sack cloth outfits for pilgrims, a beautifully embroidered cape with a patched lining and a basket of kittens. In VI Mars is fully armed and a deck of cards is needed for the extremes. In VII there is a ship and a gangplank for Jonah. In XV there are documents. In III there is an earthen jar, two plates with light repasts, a pair of spectacles, a guitar, insignia for the Archbishop, windows through which all of the characters had to pass, a door with a Latin inscription, and two dogs. In V there were forts for the sacraments. The multiple stage was used. In VIII the vision, as seen by St. John in the Apocalypse demanded a sword for the Judge's mouth, seven stars, candles, the Book, seven seals, a crown, a scepter, golden clothing, a strong box and three keys for the Trinity. In IX the earth opens and Truth comes forth, a cloud parts, and Justice appears. In XI the opening of the wine press makes visible the scene of the Crucified Christ.
In XIII Riches wore a corslet covered with demons while the one worn by Poverty was adorned with stars and a crucifix. Self-Love has a purse with reales. The Gift of Grace offered for sale a plate of lunch. In XIV Pestilence wore a skeleton corslet and rode a basilisk; a human-skull was used. The last colóquio, XVI demanded seven settings. It was really a parade of stunts. There was a door for each sacrament with a view for each. Verses explained the figures which in some way represented the different attributes of Christ. The three powers of the soul wore forest guard suits. Two Indians carried Gossip in a great pie to Worldly Rulers. There are animal-bird snares and traps. The conclusion is a great procession. The cleverness of all these stage devices made great demands upon the ingenuity and skill of the carpenters. An account of the manner in which these plays were organized, the actors picked and trained, dress rehearsals, and anecdotes, would make a most interesting story. There must have been some clever side play, as in IX, where the five senses display insignia befitting their functions, there is a farmer asleep among the flowers. There must have been some rather tight spots for the actors in some of them. In one of the entremeses in IX, a ruffian dangles from a rope. Bows and arrows, billhooks, and pruning knives were certainly the adjuncts of realism. 52

DON JUAN RUIZ DE ALARCON
Toward the end of the first colonial century when the spirit of adventure still led to new conquests, the new American born generation was beginning to assert itself. This generation still knew the rigor of pioneer living and were schooled in their religion in the strict and thorough manner of the first Friars.

These people saw the great religious and secular plays of the church and stage. The dramas of Eslava and Ramirez who had come to stay in the New World were as well known as those of the distinguished travelers like Juan de la Cueva and Belmonte Bermudez who returned to Spain.

Creoles and natives entered into the cultural life of Spain in America to the fullest extent of their capacity to do so. They took part in literary competitions and wrote dramas as well as acted in them. Contributions of Americans increased in number and importance. Contemporary works like that of Balbuena testify to the numbers of literati and the extent of intellectual endeavors.

A creole reared in such an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and militant, puritan religion, and schooled with the finesse of the Jesuits, was bound to prove a reactionary bombshell against decadent trends when transplanted to Spain in the midst of the Golden Age activities. An individual with such a background and European training and experience in the legal profession found cultural expression in the drama.
Ruiz de Alarcón was born in 1581 in Mexico City. The family removed to Taxco where his father was interested in the mines.\footnote{1} He received the licenciate in law from the University of Mexico.\footnote{2} He went to Spain, 1600, studied at Salamanca, practiced law for two years and returned to Mexico in 1608. He was not satisfied with the prospects before him at home and returned to Spain in 1613.\footnote{3} These five years of disappointment in a minor position constituted a period of trial that fitted him for better things. His career as a dramatist for the next twelve years was short, brilliant and clamorous.\footnote{4} He deserted his literary career when he received an appointment as a member of the Council of the Indies in 1626, at first temporary, and then permanent in 1633.\footnote{5} This business man who wrote plays for amusement rather than for gain became unpopular with his rivals. Unfortunately he was a hunchback. Out of their brutal mockery he developed the attitude of self-defense and perhaps from this came the

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{1} Dorothy Schons, "Alarcón's Reputation in Mexico", \textit{Hispanic Review}, VIII (1932), 139-144.
\footnote{4} Romera-Navarro, \textit{loc. cit.}
\end{footnotes}
thesis play. His proud, sensitive nature brought him into conflict with Lope, Quevedo and Gongora. Perhaps these personal tiffs have been stressed too much in the accounts of the time. Returning from the five lean years during which time he did little more than try pulque cases he was determined to succeed, and succeed he did. Don Niceto Alcalá Zamora has confirmed Alarcón's effect on the legislation of his time. There is a possibility that two of his dramas containing Mexican references were written before he went to Spain. Mention of people and events in New Spain occur only in a few of his works, especially in El semejante a su mismo and Mudarse por mejorarse. In fact he was practically unknown as a dramatist in Mexico. Corneille, in his play Le Menteur, an imitation of Alarcón's La verdad sospechada, was under the impression that he was imitating a Spaniard. Although not familiar to the Mexican masses, in the role of dramatist, he was no doubt, known to scholars like the Tenth


8 Schons, loc. cit.

9 Francisco Monterde, "The Drama of Viceregal Mexico", Theater Arts, XXII (August, 1938), 597-601.

10 Coester, op. cit., p. 32.
Muse, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. Mexico gave Alarcón to Spain in exchange for men like Eslava and Juan de la Cueva. He was so thoroughly accepted by Spain that he is always included in works on literature and drama as a Spaniard. He was punctilious in his speech. This was no doubt due to his legal training. Henríquez Ureña maintains that he reveals his Mexican quality by something more than his fastidiousness and sensitivity. This extranéza, not so much oddity as exotic savour, gained for him his share of popularity in his day, especially among women, and may account for his stronger appeal to foreigners today. The soberness, and epigramatic quality of his style were due no doubt to the somewhat puritanical efforts at censorship of the Inquisition, which efforts may be compared to those of the Legion of Decency today. This was fortunate for him and for us as it put his work on a higher moral plane than that of most of his contemporaries. As a boy he most likely attended

11 Monterde, op. cit., 601.
12 Ibid., p. 597.
13 Mariano Cuevas, Historia de la iglesia en México (México: 1921), II, 424.
14 Monterde, loc. cit.
15 Fitzmaurice Kelly, op. cit., p. 319.
16 Coester, op. cit., p. 32.
the neixcuitilli, youth lectures of Fray Juan Bautista in the Chapel of St. Joseph of the Natives. His dramas are clean, free from objectionable elements. The serious moral purpose and very practical code of morality differentiates his best work from others of his time.\(^{17}\) Although he was a contemporary of Lope de Vega, his plays compared with those of the Spanish Shakespeare show a greater care for form and a more careful psychological analysis of the characters.\(^{18}\) What we might call his formula or method was to introduce a type of character and develop his thesis around that individual.\(^{19}\)

Although overlooked and practically unknown in his own country during his time, he has at last come into his own.\(^{20}\) La verdad sospechosa was chosen to open "the world's finest theater" in 1934.\(^{21}\) His place among contemporaries is best understood when we read that Gonzalez de Eslava was the most popular of the Mexican dramatists of the colony, replacing Ruiz de Alarcón who was "absorbed" by Spain.\(^{22}\)

\(^{17}\) Schons, op. cit., p. 89.

\(^{18}\) Coester, op. cit., p. 32.

\(^{19}\) Northrup, op. cit., p. 287.

\(^{20}\) Schons, op. cit., pp. 139-144.


\(^{22}\) Sánchez, op. cit., p. 108.
By the time another half century had passed the oncoming generation lived in a well established society. Churches, schools and convents were functioning for the benefit of the Spaniards, creoles, natives and mestizos. More and more of the American born were being represented in the professions. A person born of a Spanish father and a native mother had a double inheritance.

A child born under such circumstances in the quiet of a country village and transplanted at the age of eight or nine to the big, empty home of grandparents in the metropolitan center, was bound, out of natural curiosity, to find out what was in that house. Once treasured possessions of the children who had left the home to go out and make homes of their own remained. Books on many subjects, mathematics, religion, philosophy, and music, intrigued the interest of the child who had already mastered the elementary processes of education. Reading, natural intelligence, and a minimum of tutoring provided what we would estimate as a good secondary foundation which later served to facilitate the expression of remarkable talents, as well as the acquirement of greater knowledge, and greater perfection in religion. Admitted to court circles because of such intellectual brilliance, romantic disappointment led the young creole to renounce the advantages that such a life would obviously give her and pursue literary activities, including the drama, as an avocation.
Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, born Juana Inés de Asbaje y Ramírez de Cantillana in 1651, became a nun at the age of seventeen. A precocious child, she learned to read at the age of three by the simple ruse of telling her sister's tutor that she, too, was to take lessons. She desired higher education to the extent of planning to attend the University of Mexico in male attire, but could not, naturally, obtain parental consent. Instead she became a favorite at the vice-regal court, much admired for her beauty and intelligence, and sought after by men. Some think they can discern in her writings the effect of an unreciprocated love as the cause of her giving up the world to enter the convent. The Viceroy, Mancera, was so impressed by her learning that he called a committee of some forty learned men to examine her. His wife was so pleased with the outcome that she invited the young Inés to become a lady-in-waiting. Her failure to accept the position and her decision to leave the world seems to lend weight to the theory of unrequitted love. Later poetry seems to add further support to this presumption.

4 Ibid., p. 106.
Her renunciation of the world was so complete that she entered the very strict order of barefoot Carmelites, but the change was so great after the luxurious life of the Court that her spiritual adviser, Fr. Nánez, S. J., counselled her to enter the Convent of San José of the Jeronomite nuns. She followed his advice and remained there twenty seven years. During those hours not spent in religious duties she followed intellectual pursuits. Denied the higher education for which she longed she learned Latin from a tutor, Olvidas, in comparatively few lessons. An insatiable reader, her cell at one time contained four thousand volumes. She must have been familiar with the best in Spanish literature. "If Alarcón, 1581-1639, influenced Spaniards and Frenchmen, the Mexican poetess Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, who lived from 1651-1695, could not have escaped his influence."7

Her reputation as a dramatist is based on three short plays, Los empeños de una casa which shows the influence of Lope de Vega's Descreto enamorado: Amor es más laberinto that was written in collaboration with Fray Juan de Guevara; and El Narciso Divino which is really a Spanish auto with an

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7 Monterde, op. cit., p. 601.
American Indian theme. The Narcisco was written five years before she died, for the Condesa de Paredes. The first of these is a comedy of manners. There are eleven characters and two choruses for music. The second, in which there are fourteen characters and music for accompaniment, is really a Greek classic done in the renaissance style. The former has been translated as The Obligations of Hospitality and classified as a "cloak and sword" drama. The literary value, if any, is in the language of the author, for the speeches are many times far above the characters. As the Spanish title, Los empeños de una casa, suggests, the play is a reflection of the social-cultural relationships of a Spanish family of the time. In the latter, the Spanish title, Amor es más laberinto, does not do justice to the classical nature of the subject. However, three acts, or jornadas, follow the classical form. The second of these acts was written by Fray Juan de Guevara.

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8 Ibid.
9 Coester, op. cit., p. 28.
10 Lee, op. cit., p. 106.
11 Antonio Elías de Molins, Poesías Escogidas de Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (Barcelona: Casa Editorial Araluce, n.d.), p. 104.
12 Malone, loc. cit.
13 Molins, op. cit., p. 137.
The third of her better known plays is the auto of the Narciso Divino, which is usually conceded to be the best of all her works and certainly the most highly developed. The action starts with a loco, or prologue. Western World, representing America, in Indian dress, is preparing to make the sacrifice to the god of seed time. Zeal, a Spanish soldier, and his companion try to stop him. Religion, a virgin, tells the story of Narcissus, the youth who disappeared in the fountain only to reappear again, just as the seed is planted and comes forth again in nature. The Hebrews are portrayed by Synagogue and the Gentiles, by Gentility. There are nymphs and a chorus. Two songs, one to the Divine Narcissus, and the other to the spirit of fountains and flowers are beautiful but lengthy. Human Nature, a nymph, begs them to reconcile their songs and declaims the divinity of Narcissus. Grace has an echo, Angelic Nature. Pride and Self Love are shepherds. Echo, as Angelic Nature, sues in vain for the love of Narcissus and Human Nature comes to the grove to seek him. Narcissus is supposed to die in the fountain and resurrects. Human Nature and all of the nymphs and shepherds bewail his death. Grace enters and bids them not to weep. Narcissus brilliantly dressed and crowned enters with rejoicing shepherds. The allegory to Our Lord's life is evident. 14

14 Malone, op. cit., p. 9960.
A glimpse of the convent life of the day may help us understand why a seventeenth century Mexican nun should write a drama concerning the obligations of hospitality rather than imitate Santa Teresa's *Perfecta Casada*. There were many visitors from the Court, the socially elect, and the literati. Spiced wines, chocolate, and honey cakes were served on embroidered cloths weighted down with gold fringe. Special cakes or pastries, called "nun's sighs", were enjoyed. There were six servants to every sister. Conversation was learned and witty. The parlors were large enough to put on a play.15

Such incidents as her critique of a sermon by Antonio de Vieyra, S. J., "the Portuguese Cicero", and the reply of the bishop, pretending to be Sor Philotea, 1690, and her reply in defense of the rights of women, are evidences of the zest with which intellectual life was lived in those days.16 We can also appreciate the anecdote told of this remarkable woman, who was a painter and musician as well as a writer. Her Superior counselled her and received the reply, "Don't be silly, mother." On appealing to their spiritual advisor, the Mother was told that Sor Juana would be reprimanded when the Superior could prove that she was not!17

15 Lee, *op. cit.*., p. 106.
17 *Schons, op. cit.*., p. 105.
Other dramatic efforts, less well known, are El ángel de la catedral, San Hermengildo; and El Cetro de José.18

When we consider that she was a mature person, thirty-eight years old, when her poems were published, we are somewhat astonished at the title, but must remember that it was an expression of that baroque or ginger bread style in vogue: the Unique Poetess, the Tenth Muse who in various meters, languages, idioms, and manners, enriches various matters with elegant, subtle, limpid, ingenious, and profitable verses.19 However, she did write verses in Spanish, Latin, and Aztec.19

At least one poem was published under her name in the world, Doña Juana Inés de Azuage. This appeared in the Descripciones of Diego de Ribera, published in 1668, commemorating the dedication of the Metropolitan Cathedral, December 22, 1667.20

The theater is nothing more than an ornament in her poetic work.21 Menéndez y Pelayo evidently takes this into account as he says that the greatest beauty of her poetry is in the lyrics like those interpolated in her sacred play, The Divine Narcissus, in which she follows the Song of Songs and

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18 Schons, op. cit., p. 15 A manuscript copy of El Cetro de José has been found in the García Collection of the University of Texas.

19 Lee, op. cit., p. 105.

20 Schons, op. cit., p. 9.

21 Monterde, op. cit., p. xxii.
 other Biblical models.\textsuperscript{22} Continuing further, he says that they are so beautiful and generally free from affectation and barteranismo that they seem to us the sixteenth \textit{th} century.\textsuperscript{23}

Of the influence of Lope de Vega which is well stressed by some writers, Delano, who made an exhaustive study, comes to the conclusion that she had access to his works, and that her non dramatic compositions bear the imprint is undeniable.\textsuperscript{24}

In regard to the influence of Gongora the case is different. Gates says that many images are distinct and echo others from the poems of Gongora. Lee says that at her dramatic work shows the influence of Gongora to some degree, at times becoming a glittering tapestry of inversions.\textsuperscript{25} This imitation was wholly conscious, was the thing to do, the accepted fashion of the moment.

She avoided those conflicts that Juan Ruiz de Alarcón faced in discovering a new theatre continent, and left to be written, her most interesting, profound, and novel drama, the story of her own life.\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{22} Torres-Rioseco, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 39.

\textsuperscript{23} Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, \textit{Antología de la literatura hispanoamericana} (Madrid: University Press), I, I, 5-58.

\textsuperscript{24} Lucille K. Delano, "Influence of Lope de Vega upon Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz,"\textit{Hispania}, XIII (1930), 79-94.

\textsuperscript{25} Eunice J. Gates, "Renaissance of Gongora in the Works of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz,"\textit{PMLA}, LIV (1939), 1041-58.

\textsuperscript{26} Lee, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 106.

\textsuperscript{27} Monterde, \textit{op. cit.}, p. xiii.
Toward the end of the century, at the death of Calderón in 1681, "no one was left to wear his mantle." The last of the Hapsburgs died in 1700 and was succeeded by Philip of Anjou, a grandson of Louis XIV. The activities of the Golden Age began to wane and changes in government took place. Religious drama continued in spite of such unfortunate occurrences as the tragic end to the presentation of the Dominicans at the Convent of Etla in 1575 when the platform fell, injuring over one hundred spectators. In 1622 Villalobos was recompensed for his *Joya, Obedencia de México. The transfer to the stage of religious as well as secular dramas brought a most complete set of rules and regulations by the viceroy, Gálvez, who was a patron of the arts, about 1785.

What was apparently a lull in productivity of literary effort found a recompense in scholastic activity. The same scholarly spirit was to find an outlet in the plays for the schools as well as in erudite works of history. As early as 1554 there were noteworthy Latin dialogues.


31 Rojas Garciduenas, *loc. cit.*
By 1753 the Coliseum was the leading theater. It compared favorable with those in Madrid. Light Opera took the public fancy. El Extranjero of Manuel Aranzana, the Chapel Master of Puebla, was given on November 25, 1805. By royal edict all performances were in Spanish. El Diario, the first daily, carried the programs. The didactic dramas of Iriarte, La Señorita mal criada, and the problem plays like El si de las ninas of Moratín, were in vogue. Lope, Calderón, Moreto, and Alarcón were represented.32

The irrepressible Lizardi, 1776-1827, was always at the point of having plays produced and failing because of trouble with the censors over his revolutionary views.33

Manuel Eduardo Gorosista, 1789-1851, much like Alarcón, lived in Spain and to some extent was an imitator.34

At the end of the century the folle, a program of dances and songs was popular. The songs, tonadillas, were sung by a canterina and chorus. One of the popular numbers was La Solterita in which a young girl thinking of entering the convent mentions every convent in Mexico.35

34 Ford, op. cit., p. 25.
35 Manón, op. cit., p. 45.
BIBLIOTECA DEL ESTUDIANTE UNIVERSITARIO

FRANCISCO CERVANTES DE SALAZAR

MEXICO

EN

1554

EDICIONES DE LA UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL AUTONOMA

MEXICO 1939
CHAPTER V

DRAMA IN THE OUTPOSTS

The march of empire was incredibly rapid once the possibilities of the New World were understood. By 1503 the House of Trade, Casa de Contratación, was established in the city of Seville. The Consejo de Indias, formed from a committee of the Casa began to function in 1519. It established the first audiencia or supreme court. Antonio de Mendoza received his Royal Commission on April 17, 1535. After fifteen years of service he moved on to Peru in 1550. Such a transfer in a government position was then considered a promotion as much of the wealth from the Philippines was coming across the Pacific and the mines of Peru were producing fabulous fortunes.

Settlements followed expeditions to the north and the west and along the gulf, Nueva Galicia on the Pacific, 1544, Nueva Viscaya, 1562, Nuevo León on the gulf, 1579. Luis de Carabajal, a jew, was governor of Nueva León until he became involved with the Inquisition.


By the end of the sixteenth century eighteen provinces had been established, including Venezuela, Panama, the West Indies, and the Philippines.4

The gold rush of '49 kept the spirit of adventure alive. Alarcón's father was interested in the mines.5

Even settled regions were not entirely converted. There were occasional relapses of individuals or groups and there were still idols of gold and *chalchihuitl* in the mid years of the sixteenth century.6

Franciscans and Jesuits went fearlessly into the river valleys of Sonora and Coahuila, building churches and suffering martyrdom in retaliation for the crimes of military adventurers.7

Land and sea expeditions spread the empire south through Central America and the Isthmus to the southern continent and north to the far flung outposts of civilization in territory now a part of our country. From Florida to California forts and missions were built.

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4 Wilgus, *ibid.*

5 Dorothy Schons, "The Mexican Background of Alarcón" *PMLA*, LVII (March, 1942), 89-104.


In Mexico, in spite of political, military and social upheavals, there have been periodic revivals of the works of the early writers, and in some places annual performances of the inherited secular and religious forms have continued uninterruptedly through the years.\(^8\) Not only have the biographies, but even pictures of some of the early writers and adapters of the religious plays.\(^9\) Survivals of the primitive forms have been adequately described by many writers and travelers. Ricard mentions the work of Dr. León Tarascos and quotes a French woman traveler, Mme. de Toor, who witnessed episodes of the Passion at Tzinzuntzan on the shores of Lake Patzcuaro as saying, "I am beginning to understand why the most ignorant of the Indians respond with such profound feelings to the episodes of the drama."\(^10\)

The Guadalupe cycle has contributed to the drama of religion in Mexico what the Lourdes cycle has to France.\(^11\) In addition there have been the sacred dances of the natives at the Mexican shrine since 1648.\(^12\)

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\(^8\) Francisco Monterde, "Pastorals and Popular Performances," *Theater Arts*, XXII (August, 1938), 602.


New events demanded new plays. The wars for independence brought about such presentations as The Embrace of Acatempan which commemorates the meeting of Guerrero and Iturbide to complete the independence of Mexico. Drama is such an integral part of life that one observer writes that the real theater life in Mexico is in its festivals.

The theater has not always been able to pass from one generation to another, from one century to another, by the broad highway of books, but by those country roads of tradition and memory. Neither canvas, nor marble, enclosed in poor books like surprise packages, possessing the secret of the movement of life, it has more than marble or color, the magic quality among the arts: it appears and disappears, dies and is reborn.

Because of the similarity of the names pastores and pastorales it must be remembered that the former is religious, referring to the shepherds at the stable of Bethlehem, and the latter, secular, referring to those delightful dialogues and eclogues between shepherds and shepherdesses. As a dramatic form they dominated the stage to such an extent that Cervantes was afraid that if he did not write a play in that style that he would not be remembered.

12 Monterde, loc. cit.
In Guatemala we still have more of the ancient pagan rituals than in any other section. At Chichicastanango the natives still swing their censors on the church steps to placate evil spirits. The voladores can be traced back to before the beginning of the Aztec calendar. These things today are performed in connection with the church and not as purely pagan expressions.

The dance of the Guatemaltecos, Conquistadores Conquistados, hints that after all one of their gods was more powerful. The dance is representative of many that by means of masks, bright colors, and rhythmic, terpsichorean patterns interpret some phase of Spanish history or the Conquest. The medieval knights' costumes are remarkably accurate in detail. The facial masks with blond hair and beards and blue eyes are strikingly gothic. The story of the conquerors of Guatemala and the native point of view that they in turn were conquered because they stayed, is one of the best dramatic expressions of the people that has been preserved. 16

One of the most unique preservations is a purely pagan play of the little Aztec colony that fled from Mexico to Nicaragua at the time of the Conquest. 17


The history of the drama in each of the twenty-one Spanish speaking countries, as we know them today, runs parallel to that of New Spain, the first colony on continental America. In all of them the religious and secular drama of Spain inspired the recording and preserving of local drama.

In the outposts in the northern continent this same general pattern was followed and has given us an important part of our priceless Spanish heritage.

In the southern continent, the Ollanta drama of Peru was thought for some time to be a survival of the native theater. "Much printer's ink has been shed over this play and its authorship." It has been traced to Antonio Valdés, the parish priest who presented it successfully from 1770 to 1780. The story concerns Ollantay, a chief of lowly birth, and Cusi Collyvir, Joy Star, the daughter of the Inca. Her father forbids marriage. The Andean mountaineers make Ollantay their king. The old Inca dies and his son, Ima Sumac, reigns. The ten year old daughter of Ollantay and Joy Star is found in the convent of the elect virgins of the temple of the Sun in Cuzco. The mother is a prisoner. By treachery Ollantay is brought in chains. The Inca pardons him, the daughter rushes in and both men go to the convent and recognize Joy Star, who is then properly given in marriage by her brother who, as the supreme ruler of the Incas, has power to do all things. The conventional happy ending suggests
European influence. 18 This drama has been made an opera. 19

Perhaps the earliest extant drama by a native in this region is the *Auto Sacramental del Hijo Prodigio* of Juan de Espinosa, a pure-blooded native genius. He also wrote a defense of Don Luis de Gongora, 1694. 20

In Upper Peru, now Bolivia, the drama *Usca Pauca* in the Quechua language, still remains anonymous. Calderón's *La aurora en Copablanca* celebrates the Chapel of Copablanca on the shores of Lake Titicaca in drama, as the *Primavera Indiana* of Don Carlos Siguenza y Gongora commemorates the events of Guadalupe in Mexico. 21

In Argentina, the drama *Siripio* of Manuel José Labardén, 1754-1809, concerns the capture of Lucia Miranda by the Indians. She preferred to die rather than be separated from her husband and become the wife of one of the Indian chiefs. Labardén was a student at Chuquisaca and a friend of Valdés, writer of the drama of *Ollantay*. In Juan Baltazar Maziel, 1727-1788, rector of San Carlos, Buenos Aires, he found a friend and patron who prevailed upon him to produce his play

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18 Coester, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

19 Copies of various songs from this Opera are in the Elizabeth Ayers Kidd collection of the Latin American Museum of the Evanston Township High School. New York publishers.

20 Coester, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

some years after it was written. 22 The origins of the theater in the Argentine are adequately treated by Beltrán. 23

The first theatrical company in America was that of Francisco Pérez de Robles. In 1598 they decided to try their fortune in the New World. Their articles of partnership were signed June 28, 1599, in Lima. 24

In 1701 French ships were granted the right to trade in Spanish America. 25 In 1720 Pedro de Peralto Barnuevo Rocha y Benevides gave an adaptation of Corneille's Rodrigue. The accompanying entremeses showed French influence. Feijod, the Benedictine critic, 1676-1764, remarked that Barnuevo, the author of Lima Fundada, was "equal to the most erudite men of Europe." French works containing revolutionary doctrines and rational philosophy seeped in. 26 In 1797 a set of encyclopedias was smuggled in with ecclesiastical names. 27 A new influence was to affect Spanish colonial policy.

22 Coester, op. cit., p. 35.

23 Oscar R. Beltrán, Los orígenes del teatro Argentino (Buenas Aires: Editorial Luján, 1934).


27 Coester, op. cit., p. 40.
The early Spanish drama in those parts of the United States of America with Spanish historical background is best known through the survivals of those forms brought by the first padres and settlers. In the settlements that followed the first explorations, life was lived according to the pattern of the age. It was a difficult and sometimes dangerous thing to keep in contact with civilization. Nevertheless, within the settlements the stamp of Spanish culture was put on the land of our inheritance. Pioneer activities were of necessity somewhat crude. However, the spirit of zeal for King and Faith not only gave us those familiar Spanish place names, but preserved the cultural traditions in the hearts of the people. Both Southwest and Southeast sections were explored and settled long before the control of the central region at the mouth of the Mississippi became a matter of contention with the French.

Chronologically, Florida is first. The historical accounts of Cabeza de Vaca, the Florida of the Inca, and the names of de Soto and Ponce de León are generally known. The Franciscan friars accompanied all of the early expeditions. Alegre records that the Jesuits set sail from Havana to Florida, June 28, 1566. 29 It was not until 1567 that the

28 Carlos María Bustamente, editor, Historia de la compañía de Jesús en Nueva España, Francisco Javier Alegre (Mexico: Camara, 22 de Mayo, 1841), i, p. 5.
first governor arrived. In 1573 the Franciscans replaced the Jesuits who were ordered to Mexico. No doubt they followed the same type of program that had been so successful in Mexico. This would include the teaching of religion by the dramatization of biblical incidents. No records, epistolary or otherwise seem to be available. Even though Drake destroyed the city of San Agustin in 1586 subsequent official cartas and personal letters now in some dusty archive, will reveal in time more of the details of these early years. However, it is known that a school was in operation in 1587 in the parish for the white settlers in St. Augustine. In reporting his canonical visit to La Florida in 1606, the Dominican bishop of Cuba, Fray Juan de las Cabezas de Altamirano, suggested that the king send a master for the education of the creoles as it would economize in the sending of the religious from Spain. By the turn of the century, 1600, the Franciscans were laboring in what today are our states of Florida, South Carolina, and Georgia.


32 Steck, *op. cit.*, p. 35.
As early as 1536 Cabeza de Vaca passed through the country that is now New Mexico on his return from the ill-fated expedition to Florida. The marvelous tales of the Indians about the seven cities of Cíbola and his recollections led to the expedition of Marcos de Niza in 1539 and that of Coronado in 1540. The first colonizing expedition, organized in 1597, was headed by Cristóbal de Oñate a man of good mind and keen judgment. They crossed the Río del Norte or Río Grande, also called the Río Brazo, about fifteen miles below where the city of El Paso is now located, the thirtieth day of April, on the Feast of the Ascension of Our Lord, in the year 1598.

Captain Gaspár de Villagrá, then a young man with the expedition, was inspired to write a history of the territory in epic form some years later, 1610.

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34 Aurelio M. Espinosa, España en Nuevo México (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1937)

35 Gilberto Espinosa, translator, History of New Mexico by Gaspar Pérez de Villagrá (Los Angeles, 1933), p. 56. This work is a prose translation.

36 Ibid., p. 136.

The governor then ordered a large chapel built under a grove of shady trees. Here the priests celebrated a Solemn High Mass, after which the learned commissary preached an excellent sermon. Then some soldiers enacted a drama written by Captain Farfán. This drama pictured the advent of the friars to New Mexico. We saw the priests coming to this land, kindly received by the simple natives, who reverently approached on bended knee and asked to be received into the faith, being baptized in great numbers.38

After that a rough and tumble version of the Moros y Cristianos relieved the feelings of all concerned.39 This incident of 1598 seems to be the first record of religious and secular drama in New Mexico.

Villagrá's epic was published in Alcalá de Henares in 1610, only five years after the publication of the Primera Parte of Don Quixote of Cervantes. New Mexico is the only one of our forty eight states whose history has been written in verse.40

We can presume that the first regular expressions of drama were at the mission of the first capital, San Juan de los Caballeros, the result of the labors of Fray Agustín Ruiz and his companions.41

38 Villagrá, op. cit., Canto XIV, p. 129.
39 Ibid.
40 A. M. Espinosa, op. cit., p. 9.
The *Memorial* of Fray Alonso de Benavides, 1630, gives us the story of the struggles of the early missions. Some of the customs of the Indians before the arrival of the Spaniards are described. As part of the ritual to become a leader, the candidate was flogged with thistles! Afterward he was entertained with farces and other jestings.\(^{42}\) One of the dances at Santa Fé is recorded.\(^{43}\) The padres in New Mexico found something upon which to build their drama in the traditions of the natives.

The Indian revolt lead by Popé, 1675-1680, and the reconquest by Vargas, 1692-1696, interrupted but did not destroy the Spanish background of New Mexico, although the Indians destroyed every vestige of Spanish rule, possible, in the fury of their reprisal.\(^{44}\)

The fact that Spain reached the height of her cultural grandeur during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries at the time when the American colonies were an integral part of the empire accounts for the continuance of the drama even in what was then such a remote outpost.\(^{45}\)


\(^{43}\) Ibid., p. 23.

\(^{44}\) A. M. Espinosa, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

\(^{45}\) Ibid., p. 19.
HISTORIA
DE LA NUEVA
MEXICO, DEL CAPITÁN
GASPAR DE VILLAGRA.

DIRIGIDA AL REY D. FELIPE
nuestro señor Tercero de este nombre.

Año 1610

CON PRIVILEGIO:
En Alcalá, por Luis Martínez Grandes,
A costa de Baptista López mercader de libros.
Campa, who has made a study of thirty-two of the survivals, mentions some that are common to all of the Spanish colonies and in addition he lists some that do not appear elsewhere. Among these are Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ab solom, and El Colóquio de San José. Los Pastores, Las Posadas, Moros y Cristianos, and Matachines, are mentioned by Espinosa who also gives the local adaptations, Los Comanches, 1778, and Los Tejanos, 1843.

The two remarkable characteristics of these simple religious and secular dramas are the preservation of so much that was really good in the language and the adaptability of the subject matter to the American scene.

The study of Miss Hannah Busk, San Rafael, New Mexico, 1899, discloses that names and entire passages are identical in many versions of plays on the same subject. Her version of New Mexico Pastores gives us an insight into the possibilities of oral tradition. The influence of the vicissitudes of time and fortune on these inherited treasures, usually written in verse, is pointed out in her comment that the style ranges greatly from doggerel to the distinction of good Spanish models.

46 Campa, op. cit., p. 12.
47 A. M. Espinosa, op. cit., p. 45.
The survivals of the Nativity and Passion cycles, or Christmas and Easter plays, still give evidence of master works like Lope de Vega’s Los pastores de Belén, despite of the accretions of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The names show the viewpoint from which these plays were written and indicate the contribution of the author. Other plays based on biblical incidents other than those belonging to the two main cycles, as El Niño Perdido and La primera persecución de Jesús follow the liturgical year. Las nueve posadas de la Virgen was sometimes given before Los pastores. Los desposorios de San José y María Santísima, a dramatic narrative, was sometimes recited as a prologue before Las posadas.

Los Comanches, dating from about 1777, was presented as a jousting tournament in the manner of the imbued Moros y cristianos. The details of these dramatic spectacles or mock battles, referred to as autos, entradas, and juegos, vary greatly. Las matachines, a masked mock battle dance, was accompanied by music, usually for Carnival, but once held in church. If the mock bull fight with the grandfather was held before, the abuelo or abuelos also went into the church, but not the bull. 49

49 J. M. and Aurelio M. Espinosa, manuscript, Folk-Drama of New Mexico. Unpublished. Chapters XII and XIII.
The Franciscan Missions of California were established in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Among them, the mission of San Luis Rey was founded in 1798 under the direction of the Marquis de Branciforte and the guidance of Fray Peyri. An incident regarding the administrator of the mission, Don Pio Pico, illustrates the important part that drama played in the lives of the Spaniards wherever they went. Gorgeously dressed in black velvet and silver lace, he once took part in a bull fight and carried off all the honors! He also distinguished himself as an actor in a pastorela written by Padre Florencio Soledad.50

Since these missions which were established at the distance of a day's journey apart, were the centers of life in all of the settlements, there must have been innumerable secular plays.51 Fiestas were held on the slightest excuse. Sports also had their place in these activities.52

A witness of one of the survivals of Los Pastores on the Noche Buena, Christmas Eve, describes the play in detail and credits the origin to the Franciscans. The celebration began with Midnight Mass and lasted until six the following

50 Adeline Stearns Wing, "The Mission of San Luis Rey," The Land of Sunshine, III (October, 1895), 209.

51 Charles Frederic Holden, "The Cordon of the King's Highway," The Land of Sunshine, III (June, 1895), 273.

52 J. M. and Aurelio Espinosa, Mss. loc. cit.
morning. 53 Another writer describing a similar occasion told of the difficulties of the actors to attend rehearsals and the preference of the younger generation for Las Posadas. A character who took part as a child in Mexico said that it was customary for the children to start the tunes in every house in September. The love of the people for these simple religious dramas is well expressed in her exclamation, "I love pastores. It is better for me than ten operas. It belongs to the Mexican people." 54

The record of the early drama and theater of California is written in the manuscripts in the missions, public, private, and University Libraries. Many such records were, no doubt, destroyed or taken elsewhere at the time of the occupation of the Americans. As an illustration of the dispersal of such documents, the baptismal records of Fray Junipera Serra are now in the Library of the University of Notre Dame, Indiana. The collection, obtained by Diocesan authority, may contain priceless manuscripts. Studies of the available original manuscripts will give us a more complete story. 55

53 Dorothy Hirshfield, "Los Pastores," Theater Arts, XII (December, 1928), 903-911. Los Angeles.


Cole’s study of the survivals in Texas is based upon the work of Bourke, begun in the 1890’s in Rio Grand City, Texas. He traces the current dramatic forms back to the early works such as the Adam and Eve of Motolinia and refers to the Historia crítica de la literatura y de las ciencias en México of Pimentel and México a través de los siglos, the history of Riva Palacio which is so outstanding in color illustrations. He says that even after the discontinuance of Corpus Christi plays, the more objective religious dramas remained long in public favor, especially in the smaller communities. 56

The influence of seventeenth century autos is traced to such works as El auto sacramental al nacimiento del hijo de Dios of Antonio del Castillo, 1675, and El coloquio de nuestro Señor of Antonio Mira de Merena. 57 Three short entremeses have been found to be by Calderón, 1600-1681. 58 A song, Aprended flores de mi is known to be one of Gongora’s. Among the old nameless and dateless manuscripts, one entitled The Good Thief was brought to light in 1866. 59


57 Ibid., p. 17.

58 Ibid., p. 20.

59 Ibid.
The Reminiscences of a Texas Missionary, Fr. Farisot of San Antonio, 1899, gives the story from the viewpoint of one who had first hand experience with the survivals.60

Some of the descriptions of these present day performances are good in so far as they have made an attempt to record what was seen and heard, but most of them are lacking in that sympathetic understanding of the Spanish, genius and Christian religion so necessary for an authentic account. One writer gives an excellent description of the nacimiento, shepherds, hermit, realistic devils in black, Lucifer in red, with sparklers in their caps, St. Michael descending on wings, hell on canvas with a bonfire in front of it, and the battles between good and evil, but confuses the Christmas and Easter cycles in the prefatory remarks: "Los pastores, that hybrid Spanish, Indian, medieval, and contemporary mixture of a passion play."61 The same error has been expressed by saying that "this play is suggestive of Oberammergau."62

The music has been recorded, but we can presume that it was as much like the original as the text.63

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60 Cole, ibid., p. xii.


63 Cole, ibid., p. xii
LUZBEL  Astros, lluvias y elementos
Desde el Norte hasta el Poniente,
Planetas de Sur á Oriente,
Atended á mis lamentos.
Ya los engrandecimientos
Se acabaron para mí;
Yo á los cielos no volví,
Pero con justa razón,
Amarte pluta y plutón,
Aprended flores de mí.

CANTO

Aprended flores de mí
Lo que va de ayer á hoy;
Que ayer maravillas ful,
Y hoy sombra de mí no soy.

LOS PASTORES
Hermanos, no es tiempo
De estar en conversación,
Cántenle de una vez,
Y que valla ha hacer su adoración.

CANTO

Tocó Tulio su bandola,
Y bailó con gran contento,
Porque va á ver ese niño
Que de Joaquín y Ana es nieto.

CANTO DE TULIO SOLO

1. Pas-to-res con re-goci-jo
2. Es-ta es la cau-sa que á to-dos
a-lu-den me á fes-te-jar... A un niño Dios que ha
nos es pre-ci-so el de-jar... La ca-baña don-

na-ci-do, En Belén en un por-tal,
de a-bit-amos Por ve-nir-te a do-rar.
SUMMARY

The drama in colonial Mexico had its origins in the culture of the indigenous inhabitants and the European civilization brought by the Spaniards. The conquest of arms and the crusade of religion were so thorough that paganism was replaced by Christianity while the native rulers were being exchanged for viceroys and governors. Pre-Cortesian records were not available until the conquerors learned the native languages and the natives by means of the alphabet from the Spanish language were able to put down their past history from oral tradition, glyphs, and pictures. Tezozomoc, Hernando de Alvarado, wrote such a Mexican Chronicle about 1598.1 The several accounts of this type are presumed to be colored by the desire of the Indian writers to impress the Spaniards with the high degree of pagan civilization in the arts, crafts, sciences, and religion, that the Indians had achieved.2 The rituals of the ancients were their first dramatic forms. Music, rhythm, and dancing were the primitive elements. "The art of a people begins with music."3


2 Carlos María Bustamente, editor, Historia General, Bernardino de Sahagún (Mexico: Galvan, 1829) II, p. 270.

Spain, from the prehistoric times of the Iberians, was the cross roads of adventure for Europe. The Phoenicians, the Greeks, Carthaginians, Visigoths, Arabs, Jews and Romans, all left remnants of their culture and evidences of their influence on the drama and theater in the peninsula. Spain became a Roman colony about 200 B.C. Ruins of the theaters of that era still remain. Rabbi Don Sem Tob at the time of Rey Pedro, 1356-1360, composed a Danza General requiring 75 actors. The dialogs of San Isidro as El hombre y la razón, Man and Reason, and the elogios of Cisneros are among the earliest Christian works containing dramatic elements. Before 1492 the histories of the separate kingdoms give accounts of the efforts of the troubadors, the religious cycles and the initial profane drama. Then came the Golden Age. Spain brought a rich cultural inheritance to America.

Among the many dramatic forms that had been developed during the centuries the autos for the cycles of Christmas and Easter, and Corpus Christi found their counterparts in adaptations with American themes in the New World. Secular forms continued the old pagan pastoreales as well as the coloquios and comedias with Christian subject matter.

4 Narciso Díaz de Escovar y Francisco de Lasso de la Vega, Historia del teatro español (Barcelona: Montaner y Simón, 1917).

5 José Arjona Sánchez, El teatro en Sevilla en los siglos XVI y XVII (Madrid: 1887).
The history of the drama in colonial Mexico may be briefly summarized as follows. The first plays were the religious dramas presented by the first missionaries. Proof of the first author and title is still a matter of research. Fr. Andrés de Olmos is known to have written a version of El Juicio Final. Clavijero refers to the play of Andrea d'Olmos about the "universal judgment." Another says that a representation of the "end of the world", similar to the Last Judgment, was given in Santiago Tlatilulco in 1533. Ricard says that the Las Casas version of the Last Judgment was dedicated to Bishop Zumárraga and printed by Mexico's first printer in 1546. This is evidently the Judgment Day given in 1535 before ten thousand faces in honor of the arrival of the first viceroy and also attended by the first bishop and the first printer. Usigli makes the same reference to the printing as Ricard. Garcidueñas bases his reference on the Simeon translation of Chimalpín's history.

7 Clavijero, op. cit., Bk VII, p. 398.
8 José Rojas Garcidueñas, "Los Primeros Misioneros y el teatro de evangelización", Divulgación Histórica, I, 475-62.
The popular religious drama continued even after the establishment of the schools. The various orders not only gave plays for scholastic exercise in their own schools, but co-operated with other orders in the celebration of religious and secular events. The Spaniards had their own "teatro de palacio" or viceregal drama and religious plays. The Indians translated the religious plays of the Spaniards, but not only translated composed some of their own. They also translated secular plays. At least three plays of Lope are known to have been translated into Nahuatl. It is to be presumed that the alumni of the schools having had better training, improved the public celebrations by their participation and direction. The plays given by the students in their own schools were a source of edification to students and parents alike. Some of the colegios were for Indians only, some for Spaniards only, some for both, and others for those of mixed race, the mestizos. It is to be regretted that reliable records of the girls' schools under the direction of the beatas are not more complete on their participation in the drama. The Latin, Spanish, and Indian languages were used in these school plays.


12 Mariano Cuevas, Historia de la iglesia en México (México: 1938), IV, p. 60.
Dramas were presented in the churches, patios, and the corrales before theaters were built. The idea of giving plays on a stage built before the high altar of a cathedral astonishes the modern reader. It is still customary even in rural parts of Mexico. Plays were presented for Court circles on a stage in the hall of the viceroy's palace. The first actor of whom we have record, Navijo, was not mentioned in connection with the stage but the great outdoor spectacle of the Conquista de México, 1595. The earliest record of a secular dramatist is that of Corvera, 1561. Although a cédula was issued for the building of the Hospital Real theater in 1553, it was not built until 1671. In the meantime Francisco de Ledn had built the Casa de Comedias in 1595. The first theatrical company to come to the New World came to Lima.

The author and title of the first drama to be given on the first stage, and whether it was a religious or secular production, under whose auspices it was held, and for what purpose, are still matters of conjecture and research.


14 Alonso, Amado, Biografía de Fernán González de Eslava (Buenos Aires, 1940), p. 43.

15 Mañón, loc. cit.


The career of Mexico's first ranking playwright in both religious and secular dramas for the stage was as stormy as that of the Mexican dramatist who, denied recognition in his own country, won both fame and fortune in Spain. The works of Eslava that have been preserved suggest that his secular plays would make most interesting reading. Alarcón, on the other hand, has been described as "a classic in the romantic theatre." His star shone with equal brilliance with those of Lope, Tirso, and Moreto.

The ballads, romances, farces, and verses of occasion of the literary nun of the seventeenth century were witty, realistic, and pertinent. For her, drama was merely another vehicle for the expression of the poetic muse. In the end she sold her books and devoted herself to nursing the victims of the plague from which she also died. In the Diary of Padre Juan Antonio Rivera we find this simple statement—"Today died the famous Mexican nun, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz." Until very recently nothing had been written about her in English.

18 Torres-Ríoseco, op. cit., p. 32.
19 Sánchez, op. cit., p. 107.
20 Torres-Ríoseco, op. cit., p. 39.
21 Rivera, Padre Juan Antonio, "Diary," Bulletin of the Pan American Union, LXI (March, 1927), 1191-1199. This covers the period of the last twenty years of her life.
22 Schons, op. cit., p. 8.
The finding of manuscripts and the collecting of previously inedited cartas and documents has rounded out the story of the early years. A manuscript of the Adoración de los reyes, found in 1760 and translated by the scholar Paso y Troncoso, is believed to belong to the sixteenth century. His collection of cartas was later edited by Zavala. The collection of Cuevas included unpublished letters of Bishop Zumárraga. Because of the expense and the government red tape some of the best "books" of the early years were the "most worthless literature." These manuscripts, cartas and documents have been a goldmine for the reconstruction of the colonial period, its Golden Age culture, and the part played by drama even in the lives of those in the most primitive outposts.

As new provinces were added to the Empire, military conquest was followed by government and church. The colonial drama of our own states with Spanish background, like the Indian primitive dances, is best known to us through its popular survivals.

23 Usigli, op. cit., p. 63.


25 Manuel Cuevas, Cartas inéditas (México: 1949)

26 Coester, op. cit., p. 5.
AN ACCOUNT OF THE WRITERS ON THE ANCIENT HISTORY OF MEXICO.

In the Sixteenth Century.

Erdinand Cortes. The four very long letters written by this famous conqueror to his sovereign, Charles the Fifth, containing an account of the Conquest, and many valuable particulars respecting Mexico, and the Mexicans, were published in Spanish, in Latin, in the Tuscan, and other languages; the first of these letters was printed in Seville in 1522; they are all well written, and discover both modesty and sincerity in the relation; as he has neither made a boast of his own actions, nor thrown obscurity on those of others. If he had had the rashness to deceive his king, his enemies who presented so many complaints at court against him, would not have failed to reproach him with such a crime.

Bernal Díaz del Castillo, a soldier and conqueror; A True History of the Conquest of New Spain, written by him, was printed in Madrid in 1632, in one volume, folio. Notwithstanding the miscarriage of his undertaking, and the coarseness of the style, this history has been much esteemed for the simplicity and sincerity of its author, which is everywhere discoverable. He was an eye-witness of all that he relates; but, from being illiterate, he was unqualified for the task he undertook; and frequently shews himself forgetful of facts, by having written many years after the conquest.
ACCOUNT OF THE WRITERS ON THE

Alfonso de Mata, and Alfonso d'Ojeda, both conquerors, and writers of commentaries on the conquest of Mexico, which Herrera and Torquemada have made use of. Those of Ojeda are the fullest and the most esteemed. He was more acquainted with the Indians, being the person appointed to attend to the auxiliary troops of the Spaniards.

The Anonymous Conqueror. This is the name given to the author of a short, but very curious, and esteemed relation which is found in the collection of Ramusio, under the title of The Relation of a Gentleman who attended Ferdinand Cortes. I have not been able to conjecture who this gentleman may have been, as no author makes mention of him; but, whoever he was, he is candid, accurate, and curious. Without troubling himself with the events of the conquest, he relates what he observed in Mexico concerning the houses, the sepulchres, the arms, the dresses, the manner of eating and drinking, &c. of the Mexicans, and describes the form of their temples. If his work had not been so much confined, there would have been no one comparable to it respecting the antiquities of Mexico.

Francisco Lopez de Gomara. The history of New Spain, written by this learned Spaniard agreeable to information received from the mouths of the conquerors, and the writings of the first religious missionaries who were employed in the conversion of the Mexicans, and printed in Saragossa in 1554, is curious and well drawn up. He was the first who published the festivals, rites, laws, and the method by which the Mexicans computed time: but there are many inaccuracies in it on account of these first informations which he obtained not having been altogether exact. The translation of this work in the Tuscan language, printed at Venice in 1599, is so full of errors it cannot be read without disgust.

Toribio de Benavente. A most celebrated Spaniard of the order of St. Francis, and one of the twelve first preachers who announced the gospel to the Mexicans, known commonly from his evangelical poverty, by the Mexican name of Motolinia, wrote, among his apostolical works, The History of the Indians of New Spain, divided into three parts. In the first, he explains the rites of their ancient religion; in
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Approval Sheet

The thesis submitted by Mr. Edward A. Lwyer has been read and approved by two members of the Department of Modern Languages.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

Dec. 9, 1943
Date

J. Manuel Espinosa
Signature of Adviser