THE NEGRO IN THE COLOMBIAN NOVEL

Thesis for the Degree of Ph. D.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
BARRY D. AMIS
1970

This is to certify that the

thesis entitled

The Negro in the Colombian Novel

presented by

Barry DeWayne Amis

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Ph.D degree in Philosophy

Major professor

Date March 13, 1970

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ABSTRACT

THE NEGRO IN THE COLOMBIAN NOVEL

By

Barry D. Amis

The Negro has been in the New World since the Spaniards first began the extensive importation of African slaves in the early sixteenth century. However, very little has been written about the participation of the Negro in the development of Spanish American culture and society. In the field of literature there has not been any comprehensive study of the role of the Negro in the prose fiction of continental Spanish America even though he has appeared in many historically important novels (El Periquillo Sarniento by José Joaquín Fernandez de Lizardi, Amalia by José Marmol, María by Jorge Isaacs, La vorágine by José Eustasio Rivera) and figures as the protagonist or as a secondary character in many others.

This study examines the theme of the Negro in the prose fiction of Colombia. The Negro is a strong ethnic factor in Colombia and many authors have chosen to assign a broad and significant role to the black man in their works.

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However, the focus is essentially literary, rather than historical or sociological. The novels examined were chosen on the basis of their artistic merit and because they deal significantly with the Negro. They also represent various stages in the development of the Colombian novel and in the treatment of the Negro as a literary figure.

Manuela (1866) by Eugenio Díaz is a landmark of the costumbrista movement in which the author portrays the Negro as a childlike creature and fails to penetrate the social and political complexity of his characters. María (1867) by Jorge Isaacs is a classic of the romantic movement in which society is idealized and Negro and African characters are stereotyped. El Alférez Real (1886) by Eustaquio Palacios represents the historical-romantic novel and describes the historical setting of slavery but employs the Negro largely for descriptive background. La Marquesa de Yolombó (1928) by Tomás Carrasquilla combines both the historical and costumbrista techniques and represents the first balanced portrayal of black and white characters in Colombian fiction. Risaralda (1935) by Bernardo Arias Trujillo is written in the realistic mood and fully exploits the Negro as a literary subject and depicts him as a complete personality. Naturalistic techniques are utilized in Las estrellas son negras (1949) by Arnoldo Palacios, who delves into the Negro's consciousness in order to discover what his true thoughts and feelings are. Sol en Tambalimbú

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(1949) by Diego Castrillón Arboleda and Corral de Negros (1963) represent the novel of social protest. The former seems to suggest that the Negro cannot overcome the alien social forces which confront him while the latter urges that the black man improve his lot through political organization and solidarity.

These novels present differences in theme, intent and degree of literary craftsmanship and the portrayal of the Negro undergoes radical changes during the nearly one hundred years which they span. In the early novels--Manuela, María and El Alférez Real--the authors appear to be guided by literary conventions and the social mores of their period. Consequently, the portrayal of the Negro is often stereotyped and superficial. In Risaralda the depiction of Negro life is idealized in a manner reminiscent of the post World War I Negro vogues in Harlem and in Caribbean poetry. Most recently, Las etrellas son negras, Sol en Tambalimbú and Corral de negros have attempted to portray the conflict and anxiety of the black man's existence in a society dominated by whites.

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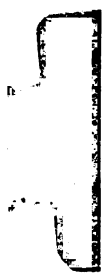

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THE NEGRO IN THE COLOMBIAN NOVEL

By

Barry D. Amis

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Romance Languages

1970

To

To My Black Brothers and Sisters

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INTRODUCTION

The Negro has been in the New World since the Spaniards first began the extensive importation of African slaves in the early sixteenth century.[1] During that time he has had a profound effect upon the development of Spanish America.[2] However, no comprehensive history of his participation in that development has yet been written. In the field of literature, G. R. Coulthard has studied the theme of race and color in the West Indies.[3] Other studies consist primarily of articles dealing with themes such as the reference to Negroes in the poetry of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Alonso de Ercilla, Bernardo de Balbuena and, more recently, Nicolás Guillén and Luis Palés Matos. Yet the role of the Negro in the prose fiction of continental

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[1] See David B. Davis, The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1966), p. 8, who says that "Negro slaves arrived in the New World at least as early as 1502, and by 1513 the sale of licenses for importing Negroes was a source of profit for the Spanish government."

[2] See James F. King, "Negro History in Continental Spanish America," Journal of Negro History, XXIX (Jan., 1944), 7-23 for a discussion of the Negro's presence in the Spanish colonies.

[3] G. R. Coulthard, Race and Colour in Caribbean Literature (New York-London: Oxford University Press, 1962).

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Spanish America has not been investigated, even though, as Professor Richard Jackson says, "an examination of the Twentieth Century novel . . . would reveal not only Negroes in secondary roles but also a number of outstanding Negro protagonists."[4] The Negro has also appeared in many of the historically important novels of Spanish America including El Periquillo Sarniento (1816) by José Joaquín Fernandez de Lizardi, Amalia (1851) by José Marmol, María (1867) by Jorge Isaacs and La vorágine (1924) by José Eustasio Rivera.

This study is essentially literary in its focus and not historical or sociological. I have singled out for examination the theme of the Negro in the prose fiction of Colombia because many Colombian authors have chosen to assign a broad and significant role to the black man in their works. I intend to select for examination only those novels which have literary merit and deal significantly with the Negro. This is not to say that the socio-economic, political and cultural aspects of Negro life are unimportant. We shall find, in fact, that they are closely interwoven into the literature to be discussed and cannot be ignored. However, I believe that literature can offer a dimension of understanding that the supposedly objective

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[4]Richard L. Jackson, "Miscegenation and Personal Choice in Two Twentieth-Century Novels of Continental Spanish America," Hispania, L, No. 1 (Mar., 1967), 86.

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social sciences (sociology, political science, economics) have not fully comprehended. An examination of these novels may indeed reveal facets of life that other disciplines ignore.

Unlike the predominantly white countries of Spanish America (Argentina and Uruguay, for example) or the Indian countries (Guatemala and Bolivia, to cite two) in Colombia the Negro is a strong ethnic factor. Therefore, his presence has been eventually reflected in the Colombian novel. What is the image of the Negro in the Colombian novel? A complete understanding of the unique role that the black man has played in the New World probably cannot be attained until questions such as this have been answered. All too often previous studies of the Negro in literature have been limited to the "social value" of the work under discussion and reflect the social bias of the critic. Certainly this type of evaluation is legitimate and necessary, but it sometimes occurs that supposedly literary studies are, in fact, sociological in nature and their judgments should not be taken as literary evaluations. The primary focus of this study will be to examine novels of literary merit and show how they depict the Negro artistically. Thus, the literary craftsmanship of the author will be analyzed together with the apparent theme, intent and inevitable social content of each novel.

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The novel in Spanish America has long exhibited a preoccupation with social problems. Witness the novel of the land, the Indianist novel, the novel of the Gaucho and the novel of the Mexican revolution. Similarly, a perusal of Colombian literature will reveal an abiding interest in race and color. About 1650 in Cartagena de las Indias the Jesuit Alonso Sandoval proposed the creation of a School of African Studies. His disciple and Colombia's only saint, Pedro Claver, devoted his life to ministering among the African slaves. The rebel José Galán and the "Liberator" Simón Bolivar were both concerned with the Negro.[5]

Dr. Felix Restrepo was an ardent abolitionist and the Negro poet, Candelario Obeso, was a precursor of Nicolás Guillén and Langston Hughes in his use of Negro themes. More recently the Jesuit José Rafael Arboleda and Rogerio Velásquez have published studies on the Negro. To many this enduring concern will not seem manifest because Colombia did not produce a vigorous and polemical anti-slavery

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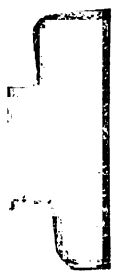
[5]See James F. King, "Negro Slavery in New Granada," Greater America: Essays in Honor of H. E. Bolton (Berkeley: Univ. of California, 1945), p. 314, who says that the rebel leader José Galán was accused by the Spanish authorities, in 1781, of "stirring up the slaves, promising and granting them their liberty as if he were their legitimate owner;" and also Harold Bierck, "The Struggle for Abolition in Gran Colombia," Hispanic American Historical Review, XXXIII, No. 3 (Aug., 1953), 365-386, who points out that as early as 1816 Bolívar had made an agreement with Alexandre Pétion of Haiti to free all slaves in Venezuela.



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The embodiment of the Negro in the novel may be considered as a highly important step toward the development of an authentically national literature in Colombia. A movement toward national unity has, in fact, been very much in evidence in Latin America during the Twentieth Century. In this respect, Professor Seymour Menton has pointed out that "literature being a reflection of a country's civilization, there is no wonder that [the] anxious search for a nation should be the prime motivating force behind the Twentieth Century novel.[7] He goes on to say that "the preoccupation for his nation is also what distinguishes the Spanish American novelist from his western contemporaries."[8] The population of modern Colombia reflects the intermingling of three racial stocks--Negro, Indian and Caucasian. The Negro is, and has been, an important part of the Colombian nation and his appearance in the literature of that country

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[6]The anti-slavery novel predominated in the United States, Cuba, and Brazil. The epitome of this type of literature is generally considered to be Uncle Tom's Cabin (1852) by Harriet Beecher Stowe which had great repercussion in Latin America. Slavery had ended in Colombia in 1851, however, and had been in a process of extinction since 1816. Slavery was a dying institution and there was no need for this type of novel.

[7]Seymour Menton, "In Search of a Nation," Hispania, XXXVIII, No. 4 (Dec., 1955), 432.

[8]Ibid.

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makes a significant contribution to the establishment of a national identity.

The latest estimates on the racial composition of the Colombian population find 25% white, 42% mestizo, 5% Indian, 20% mulatto, and 8% Negro.[9] The combined mulatto and Negro population is thus more than one-fourth of the total national population. In the New World only the United States and Brazil have a larger Negro population than Colombia.[10] These statistics are cited to emphasize the presence of the Negro in Colombia. His presence has exerted a profound influence upon the development of Colombian society.[11] The complete integration of all the people into the society is still a serious problem, and since literature does reflect a nation's civilization, this attempt to establish a national unity is indeed going to be represented as a "prime motivating force" within the novel.

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[9]T. Lynn Smith, "The Racial Composition of the Population of Colombia," Journal of Inter-American Studies, VIII, No. 2 (April, 1966), 218.

[10]Aquiles Escalante, El Negro en Colombia (Bogotá: Imp. Nacional, 1964), 5-6. There are twenty-two million Negroes in the United States. Forty percent of Brazil's eighty-eight million people are Negro. Colombia's total population is sixteen million.

[11]Escalante, passim, and José Rafael Arboleda, "La historia y la antropología del negro en Colombia," America Latina, Rio de Janeiro: Centro Latinoamericano de Pesquisas en Ciencias Sociales, V, No. 3 (July-Sept., 1962), 3-16.

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Once Spanish American authors began to write novels they generally followed the models of the authors of peninsular Spain and to a lesser degree those of France and England. The novels of the romantic movement and of the costumbrista movement in Spanish America especially reflect this dependence on European literary themes. However, their "search for a nation" led Spanish American authors to turn from European literary themes and culture. Especially after the war of 1914-1918 many writers were receptive to the German historian Oswald Spengler's interpretation of the decline and failure of European culture.[12] In seeking alternative values these Spanish American authors turned to their own indigenous cultures and to the land itself. The "Indianist" novels which have helped to establish the national identities of Mexico, Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador have no counterpart in Colombia where the Indian element is not very significant.[13] On the other hand, the tropical backland regions of Colombia have been excellently described in José Eustasio Rivera's La vorágine (1924).

The Negro, however, has not been exploited as a literary figure in Colombia as he has been in Cuba and Brazil. His portrayal in the novel might, in a way,

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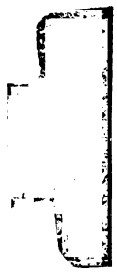
[12]Oswald Spengler, The Decline of the West (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1926-1928).

[13]See Concha Meléndez, La novela indianista en Hispanoamerica, 1832-1889 (Madrid: Monografías de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1934).



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contribute toward the creation of a national literature and identity in Colombia. He has been generally overlooked by both scholars and social scientists. With respect to the Negro in Colombia, there are no counterparts for the excellent studies by Sayers, Rabassa, Freyre, et al. on the Negro in Brazil and the studies by Coulthard, Valbuena Briones, and others on Caribbean literature, especially the "poesía negra."[14] Frank Tannenbaum stated that "the slave . . . has within a relatively short period of time become one of the leading cultural influences among his former masters."[15] This is certainly true in Brazil and Cuba as Freyre and Valbuena Briones have demonstrated. However, Colombia has not shown as much awareness of the Negro as a literary subject as have these two nations.

The Negro population of Colombia is located primarily in three geographical areas:

1. The coastal area of the Caribbean (Guajira, Magdalena, Atlántico, Bolívar, Córdoba, Antioquia).

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[14]Raymond Sayers, The Negro in Brazilian Literature (New York: Hispanic Institute, 1956); Gregory L. Rabassa, "The Negro in Brazilian Fiction since 1888" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1955); Gilberto Freyre, The Masters and the Slaves, trans. Samuel Putnam (New York: Knopf, 1946); G. R. Coulthard, Race and Colour in Caribbean Literature (New York-London: Oxford University Press, 1962); Angel Valbuena Briones, Literatura hispanoamericana (3rd ed.; Barcelona: Edit. Gili, 1967), 413-431.

[15]Frank Tannenbaum, Ten Keys to Latin America (New York: Knopf, 1962), 47.

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2. The Pacific Coast (Chocó, the Cauca Valley, Cauca and Nariño).

3. The inter-Andean valleys of the Cauca and Magdalena rivers.

As previously stated, the history of the Negro in Spanish America has not yet been written, although a number of sociological monographs are available for several individual countries.[16] Going further, it can be said that "the national historians of Northern South America . . . have completely avoided identifying the Negro as a separate element in society."[17] Consequently, most of the information that is available remains uncompiled in various national libraries and archives although there have been occasional brief articles in scholarly journals.[18]

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[16]See, for example, Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, La población negra de México (México, D.F.: Fuente Cultural, 1946); Fernando Ortíz, Los negros esclavos (Habana: "La Universal," 1916); and Ildefonso Pereda Valdes, El Negro en el Uruguay, 1965).

[17]Randall O. Hudson, "The Status of the Negro in Northern South America, 1820-1860," Journal of Negro History, XLIX, No. 4 (Oct., 1964), 226.

[18]Three of the most informative of these articles are: Jaime Jaramillo Uribe, "Esclavos y señores en la sociedad colombiana del siglo XVIII," Anuario colombiano de historia y de la cultura, I, No. 1 (1963), 3-55; James F. King, "The Colored Castes and American Representation in the Cortes of Cadiz," Hispanic American Historical Review, XXXIII, No. 1 (Feb., 1953), 33-64; and Arnold A. Sio, "Interpretations of Slavery: The Slave Status in the Americas," Comparative Studies in Society and History, VII (April, 1965), 289-308.

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Slavery and its abolition have almost exclusively occupied the attention of those scholars who have studied the Negro in Spanish America. Nevertheless, there is sufficient data available to sketch in a broad outline of the history of the Negro in Colombia.

We know that Negroes accompanied many of the early Spanish explorers to the New World and that Spain had lifted its ban on bringing Negroes to America by 1501.[19] Negroes were with Cortés in Mexico and with Pizarro in Perú. Nuflo de Olano, a Negro, was with Balboa when he discovered the Pacific. Pedro de Miranda, a mulatto, accompanied Pedro de Orsúa on the expedition to El Dorado. Estevanico, a Negro, went with Cabeza de Vaca in search of the Seven Cities of Cíbola. King says that "the provinces of New Granada offer excellent examples of the Negro's role in exploration, conquest and colonization throughout the Indies" but he gives no details.[20]

Negro slavery was a predominant characteristic of life in colonial Spanish America. Cartagena de las Indias was one of the great slave ports of America and from there slaves were shipped to other parts of the Spanish empire. The majority of the slaves came from the coastal areas of

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[19]John Hope Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom (3rd ed.; New York: Knopf, 1967), 46-47.

[20]King, Greater America: . . . , 301.

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West Africa but there was no predominance of any one tribal group. Among the many Africans enslaved were Wolofs, Biáfara, Fulupos, Mandingos, Bambaras, Zozos, and Yalongos.[21]

The uses of slaves in Colombia differed significantly from slavery in other Spanish dominions. Agricultural and domestic service predominated in most parts of the empire but in Colombia slaves were used mostly in the gold and silver mines. King has said that the "black, half-naked gold washers constituted a major foundation of colonial society."[22] The majority of the ore mined in colonial Spanish America was extracted by black slaves since the enslavement of the Indian had not proved successful and the Spaniard often refused to engage in physical labor.

The nature of slavery was the same in Colombia as elsewhere in the Americas. The cruelties, the mistreatment, the violation of the women were all present along with occasional moderation in treatment. Slave revolts, suicide, infanticide, the establishment of rebel outposts (palenques) by "negros cimarones" were all frequent occurrences. Manumission was possible, however, and a slave was often able to purchase his own freedom (the "ley de coartación"). A

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[21]David Pavy, "The Provenience of Colombian Negroes," Journal of Negro History, LII, No. 1 (Jan., 1967), 35-58.

[22]King, Greater America . . . , 296.

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substantial class of free Negroes began to grow but they were often subjected to abuses and the restrictions of their civil rights.[23]

The Wars of Independence which erupted in Spanish America at the beginning of the nineteenth century accelerated the growth of the free Negro class and hastened the eventual abolition of slavery. Both the revolutionary armies and the Spanish troops offered the slaves their freedom if they would join their respective forces. Consequently, a substantial portion of the armies of both parties were made up of Negroes. Two of Bolívar's highest ranking and most capable officers were mulattoes: General Manuel Piar and Admiral José Padilla, the commander of the revolutionary naval forces. Finally, in order to obtain the support of President Alexandre Pétion of the black republic of Haiti, Bolívar promised the emancipation of all slaves in 1816. King says that "the final triumph of the revolution was firmly grounded on the support of the colored population."[24]

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[23]Irene Diggs, "Color in Colonial Spanish America," Journal of Negro History, XXXVIII (Oct., 1953) says that "they were prohibited from being out at night; using carpets in the churches, carrying arms or umbrellas, having Indians in their service; black women were prohibited from wearing gold, silk and certain types of cloaks or pearls." p. 418.

[24]James F. King, "A Royalist View of the Colored Castes in the Venezuelan War of Independence," Hispanic American Historical Review, XXXIII, No. 4 (Nov., 1953), 530.

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Slavery underwent a gradual process of elimination in Colombia from Bolívar's first proclamation until its complete abolition in 1851. Legal restrictions and economic limitations decreased for Negroes after independence had been obtained, and by 1860 "the colored castes received a large measure of political and economic, if not social, freedom."[25] After abolition, many of the former slaves found jobs as woodcutters and oarsmen in the Magdalena Valley. But the history of the Negro since emancipation has been essentially one of exclusion from full participation in the life of the nation (although individual examples of successful businessmen, politicians and writers can be cited). Because of the degrading effects of slavery and the lack of education and training many of the freedmen were not prepared for the liberty suddenly given them and were unable to assume the role of "productive" members of society.

One of the most notable features of the Negro's life from emancipation until the present is his status of "economic marginality." "The marginal existence led by many freedmen helped to strengthen the ethnic prejudice against the Negro."[26] The inconsistent nature of his

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[25]Hudson, 239.

[26]Magnus Mörner, Race Mixture (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1967), 130.

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income often leads the Negro to depend upon others in his struggle to survive. The crucial factor in his life is the white man who dominates the economic resources to which he must recur in order to earn a living.[27] In other respects the Colombian Negro has become highly acculturated and outside the areas of music, dance, folklore and funerary practices African retentions are not great.

At this point the question arises: what is meant here by the term Negro? In the United States we have a seemingly rigid black-white dichotomy. You are either white or non-white. There is no recognition of any intermediary categories such as mulatto. Interracial mixing has never been recognized socially and for many years was prohibited legally. The children of the white master and the black slave woman had status according to the mother's condition rather than the traditional condition of the father. Legally, the father of the slave was "unknown to our law" and the creation of a free mulatto class was avoided.[28] It is difficult to assign a precise meaning to social stratification because of the numerous variables involved (educational, economic, political, occupational)

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[27]Norman E. Whitten and John Szwed, "Anthropologists Look at Afro-Americans," Trans-action, V, No. 8 (July-Aug., 1968), 51 and 54.

[28]Stanley M. Elkins, Slavery (New York: Grosset & Dunlop, 1963), 55.

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but in the United States we approximate a class system economically (which allows vertical mobility) and a caste system racially (which tends to prohibit horizontal interracial mingling).[29]

In Colombia, as in the rest of Latin America, racial differences have not been as accentuated as they have been in the United States. There has always been recognition of the mulatto (the child of one white parent and one black parent), the zambo (the offspring of a Negro and an Indian) and the mestizo (the child of a white parent and an Indian). In addition, there was an extensive nomenclature to categorize a person according to his skin color.[30] Latin Americans have always maintained that the difference between social groups was class and not racial differences. It has been said that "in contrast to the American ethnic caste system, a much more fluid class system operates in Colombia . . ."[31] Yet racial egalitarianism is a myth which has

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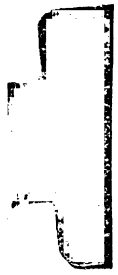
[29]For an analysis of American race relations as a caste system see Norman D. Humphrey, "American Race and Caste," Psychiatry, IV, No. 2 (May, 1941), 159-160; Norman D. Humphrey, "American Race Relations and the Caste System," Psychiatry, VIII, No. 4 (Nov., 1945), 379-381; Kurt B. Mayer, Class and Society (New York: Doubleday, 1955).

[30]Mörner, 58-59 and Diggs, 403-427.

[31]Norman D. Humphrey, "Race, Caste and Class in Colombia," Phylon, XIII, No. 2 (1952), 165. See also Ralph Beals, "Social Stratification in Latin America," American Journal of Sociology, LVIII, No. 4 (Jan., 1953), 327-339.



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grown up in the face of the almost exclusively white elite juxtaposed with the poverty stricken dark-skinned masses.[32]

In a similar context Magnus Mörner has said that "perhaps the emphasis that Freyre and others have put on 'racial tolerance' in the Brazilian environment has come to overshadow socio-racial problems, offering reactionary elements a welcome excuse for dismissing them as illusory."[33] There are enough socio-racial similarities between Brazil and Colombia to lead me to believe that this statement applies equally well to Colombia.[34] Mörner goes on to say that the problem of the Negro and the mulatto is "how to fight prejudice and social degradation."[35] As yet there has not been sufficient investigation of race relations to either affirm or to deny the existence of racial problems in Colombia. It does appear that the Colombian Negro and mulatto share similar problems and in comparison with the white elite their social status is not very high.

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[32]Tannenbaum, 50, says that in some countries (including Colombia) "the pure black man has not and perhaps cannot rise to the highest political post or really be accepted by the 'best' social set."

[33]Mörner, 147.

[34]The Negro is a significant ethnic factor in both Colombia and Brazil. The Negro population of Colombia is 28% of the total population and in Brazil it is 40%. The socio-economic status of both groups is relatively low and in both countries Negroes live mainly in limited geographical areas and are not dispersed throughout the entire nation.

[35]Mörner, 147.

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Contrasted with the white upper class, the Negro and the mulatto are grouped together to form a large portion of the poor lower classes. Although the situation is defined as class difference rather than caste difference, the resultant social stratification is analogous to the situation in the United States; that is, the white population is substantially disassociated from the non-white population. Whitten and Szwed say that "Negroes have a pronounced ethnic identity, so all Negroes in a society are more likely to be treated as members of a single category."[36] Therefore, for the purposes of this study, the term Negro is used to refer to the man of color whether he is Negro or mulatto. It is his relation to the white man which defines his status and not his biological derivation.

The feasibility of the Negro and the African as literary and artistic subjects has long since been established in Europe and the United States. Coulthard has pointed out how a "cult of the primitive" became the vogue in European arts during the years following the First World War.[37] In 1910 Leo Frobenius published his Der Schwarze Dekameron which helped to create an interest in African themes.[38] Yoruba and Congolese sculpture found admirers

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[36]Whitten and Szwed, 51.

[37]Coulthard, 27-29.

[38]Berlin-Ch., Vita, deutsches Verlaghaus, 1910.

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in Berlin and Paris. Picasso and the Cubists incorporated African art forms in their work. Braque, Derain, Vlaminck and Matisse also adapted the new material to their use and the poet Apollinaire used these motifs in his poetry.

At the same time Negro music had become the vogue in the United States. Jazz had literally become the newest and most exciting musical form of the new century. The blues and spirituals were equally emotive and evocative. The Bohemian composer Anton Dvorák used Negro thematic material in his symphony "From the New World" and Frederick Delius used an old slave song for his "Appalachia." "Boogie-woogie," "bebop," "Dixieland," and "ragtime" all became phrases of the day. In New Orleans Buddy Bolden and King Oliver were laying the foundations for the movement which would culminate in the big jazz bands like Paul Whiteman or the Original Dixieland Jazz Band. And while Bessie Smith was "causing riots" in Chicago, a young man who was later to become internationally famous was just beginning to perform--Louis Armstrong.[39]

However, music was not the only area where Negro themes were accepted. In the theatre Eugene O'Neill used the Negro as the subject of serious drama in The Emperor Jones and All God's Chillun Got Wings. DuBose Heyward's Porgy was another important contribution. But it was in

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[39]LeRoi Jones, Blues People (5th ed.; New York: Morrow, 1968), 142-165.

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the field of literature where a talented group of young men gave brilliant expression to the Negro theme and helped to found the literary movement which is often designated as the Harlem Renaissance.[40] Among these young men were the poets Claude McKay, Countée Cullen, Jean Toomer, and Langston Hughes; the historian Alain Locke; and the critic Sterling Brown. The literary repercussions of this movement were seen in the works of Carl Van Vechten, Waldo Frank and Vachel Lindsay as well as those of writers already mentioned.

In the Caribbean the search for new artistic forms also led to the appropriation of the Negro theme. Tired of the traditional European modes of expression young authors found the black cultures exciting and stimulating. An exultation of the primitive became the new mode and tom-toms, reiterated rhythms, sensuality, and dancing all obtain expression in a new Afro-Cuban poetry. Fernando Ortíz had already laid a foundation in 1906 with his book Los negros brujos. Then in 1924 he published his Glosario de Afronegrismos which helped to provide many of the Afro-Cuban poets a vocabulary for their poetry.[41] Among the most important exponents of this "poesía negra" were the Cuban

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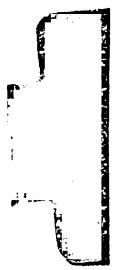
[40]See Alain Locke, The New Negro (New York: Atheneum, 1968), 3-16, for the statement of the artistic and social goals of this movement.

[41]Coulthard, 28-29.



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poets Nicolás Guillén and Emilio Ballagos and the Puerto Rican Luis Palés Matos. Also Alejo Carpentier wrote an Afro-Cuban novel Ecué-Yamba-O (1933).

In Haiti important cultural changes were taking place in the late 1920's and the early 1930's, caused in part by the American occupation of the island in 1915. Disenchanted with the French institutions and the American imperialists they turned to their own folk culture and sought the significance of their African heritage.[42] The theme of Africa was developed by poets such as Carl Brouard and Maurice Casséus. Jean Price Mars founded the Haitian School of Ethnology and was in the forefront of the Africanist movement. This school of Haitian poets paved the way for the aesthetic formulation of Negritude which was first used by the Martinican poet Aimé Cesaire in his poem Cahier d'un retour au pays natal (Paris, 1947). Negritude is an attitude towards life. It is a reaffirmation of the African past and a self-assertion of the black present. It is a statement of cultural unity and in the writings of Léopold Senghor, Langston Hughes, Franz Fanon, and Césaire it has fired movements of national independence in Africa and the struggle for Civil Rights in the United States.

While Negritude has not yet developed in Colombia or the rest of continental Spanish America, at this point

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[42]Coulthard, 62-70 and Richard A. Long, "Negritude," Negro Digest, XVIII, No. 7 (May, 1969), 13.

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there can be little doubt of the legitimacy of Negroid or African themes in the development of a national literature. In Cuba, Haiti, Brazil, and the United States Negroid themes and characters have helped to build the distinctive literatures of each of these countries. I have already established the presence of the Negro in Colombian society. I intend to show also that his presence is reflected in the artistic achievements of a number of Colombian novelists. In the novels to be examined here, the Negro is a significant character. In some of them he is the protagonist and in the others his role is important enough that it shows character development.

The novels under analysis have been chosen for their artistic rather than their social content. As I have already stated, this study will deal essentially with literary questions although some social considerations are inescapable because of the nature of the works examined. I shall attempt to analyze the literary techniques employed by the authors in question. And I shall analyze the portrayal of Negro characters in each novel and attempt to assess the depth of literary insight into an area still unexplored by critics.

These novels present varying images of the Negro in Colombia. It may be an historical depiction of slavery (El Alferez Real) or an idealization of Negro life (Risaralda). It may be the strident cry of naturalism (Las

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estrellas son negras) or the romanticizing of the African past (María) or it may simply be a "cuadro de costumbres" (Manuela). In any case, these novels deal with subjects of human interest and concern. I hope to bring into clearer perspective the several images of the Negro that emerge in the Colombian novels examined here. There has not been any previous study of the Negro in the continental Spanish American novel; therefore, I feel that this present effort is justified.

Various stages can be discerned in the development of the Colombian novel. Although there are many novels which contain Negro characters, I have chosen the following novels as representative of the various stages in the treatment of the Negro as a literary figure. They span a period of almost one hundred years: 1866-1963. The first novel, Manuela (Bogotá, 1866) by Eugenio Diaz is a landmark of the costumbrista movement.[43] María by Jorge Isaacs (Bogotá, 1867) is a classic of the romantic movement. The historical-romantic novel is represented by El Alférez Real (Cali, 1886) by Eustaquio Palacios. La Marquesa de Yolombó (Medellín, 1928) by Tomás Carrasquilla combines both the

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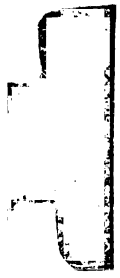
[43] Manuela appeared twenty-two years after the first Colombian novel, Ingermina o la hija de Calamar (1844) by Juan José Nieto. See the following chapter, "Manuela and the Emergence of a National Novel," for an account of the beginning of the novel in Colombia.



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historical and the *costumbrista* techniques. Bernardo Arias Trujillo called his novel *Risaralda* (Manizales, 1935) a "película de negredumbre y de vaquería" and it is written in the realistic mood. The naturalist movement is reflected in *Las estrellas son negras* (Bogotá, 1949) by Arnoldo Palacios, while *Sol en Tambalimbú* (Bogotá, 1949) by Diego Castrillón Arboleda and *Corral de Negros* (Cuba, 1963) by Manuel Zapata Olivella represent the novel of social protest. Although the novels do not reflect a steady or even growth in literary craftsmanship it seems advisable to treat them chronologically in order to show more clearly the development of the Negro as a literary subject over the course of the evolution of the Colombian novel.

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CHAPTER I

MANUELA AND THE EMERGENCE OF A NATIONAL NOVEL

The first Colombian novel was written well over a century ago. It was the historical novel Ingermina o la hija de Calamar (1844) by Juan José Nieto which tells of the trials suffered by the Spaniard, Alonso de Heredia, and the indian princess, Ingermina, before their love triumphed. Nieto also wrote another historical novel, Los moriscos (1845) which deals with the expulsion of a Moorish family from Spain during the epoch of Philip III (1589-1621). Other early Colombian novels include El oidor (1848) by José Antonio de Plaza and El doctor Temis (1851) by José María Angel Gaitán. These early works do not exhibit a great deal of artistic or literary ability and they are mainly of historical interest. They do show, however, the influence of the romantic movement on early Colombian literature. The Spanish authors of the romantic school were very popular in Colombia during the first half of the nineteenth century. Antonio Curcio Altamar points out that Angel de Saavedra, Francisco Martínez de la Rosa and José

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de Espronceda were read along with Mariano José de Larra, Ramón de Mesonero Romanos, Bretón de los Herreros and José Zorrilla.[1] He goes on to say that:

> el ingreso triunfal del romanticismo en la Nueva Granada[2] se llevó a cabo no menos con la tonalidad rebelde o sentimental de la lírica que con la simpatía conmovida por una idea 'medieval' americana, por un supuesto o real espíritu caballeresco y legendario existente en la empresa conquistadora, por una concepción un tanto 'feudalista' y aristocrática de la colonia, y, en fin, . . . por una sublimación poética y hasta filosófica del aborigen de America.[3]

The historical novel in Colombia has chapters and scenes reminiscent of Saavedra, Espronceda and Martínez de la Rosa (Nieto's Los moriscos is similar to Martínez de la Rosa's drama, Abén Humeya 1830 about the revolt of the Moriscos). Other Colombian authors also wrote novels in the historical vein. Felipe Pérez wrote a series of historical novels about Peru: Huayna Capac (1856), Atahualpa (1856), Los Pizarros (1857), and Jilma (1858). Temístocles Avella Mendoza published Los tres Pedros (1864) and Anacoana (1865) in the historical genre. Doña Soledad Acosta de

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[1]Antonio Curcio Altamar, Evolución de la novela en Colombia (Bogotá: Instituto Caro y Cuervo, 1957), 62-63. This scholarly book is the only exhaustive study of the novel in Colombia.

[2]Nueva Granada is the name that the discoverer Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada gave to the present day territory of Colombia around 1540. It was used throughout the period of Spanish domination until it was changed to Colombia in 1819. It was also used briefly between 1831 and 1858.

[3]Curcio Altamar, 64.

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Samper also began her long series of novels in the 1860's using the works of both Sir Walter Scott and Benito Pérez Galdós as models.[4]

In contrast to other Spanish American countries, the historical-romantic novel in Colombia is notable for the few novels that deal with the indianista theme.[5] The indian appeared in only a few novels and Curcio Altamar says that he was rejected as a literary symbol because "su figura, ni social ni culturalmente, ha ganado prestigio."[6] A significant exception is El último rey de los muiscas which deals with the Muisca indians.

In this early phase, the Colombian novel frequently evoked European settings and related the exploits of those who had discovered the New World. As this period drew to a close, about 1865, writers like Doña Soledad Acosta de Samper, José Antonio de Plaza, José Caicedo Rojas and Eustaquio Palacios began to describe the customs of colonial life and the manners of the people. This new way of writing about one's own society was given the name of

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[4]Among Doña Soledad Acosta de Samper's many books were Las dos reinas de Chipre (1878), Teresa la limeña (1868), La holandesa en America (1876) and Episodios novelescos de la historia patria. La insurrección de los comuneros. (1887).

[5]Concha Meléndez in her book La Novela Indianista en Hispanoamerica, 1832-1889 (Madrid, 1934) defines the indianista theme as "todas las novelas en que los indios y sus tradiciones están presentadas con simpatía," p. 9.

[6]Curcio Altamar, 83.

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[7] *Ibid.*

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costumbrismo. It was often an idealization of past values and indicative of the social stratification of colonial society. The "hidalgo" who brought his lofty deals from Spain was contrasted with the lowly indian and Negro. Curcio Altamar comments that:

> se recibe la impresión . . . de que sobre las colonias españolas se venía vertiendo . . . no el pueblo español, sino la aristocracia nobiliaria de la Península, y nos parece asistir a la formación de una sociedad escalonada en clases aún más separadas que las europeas.[7]

This costumbrista epoch was one of the most generative in all of Colombian literature. José J. Ortega has called it the "edad de oro" of Colombian letters and it was highlighted by the formation of several literary magazines.[8] The most eminent of these magazines, and perhaps the most important literary journal in Colombian history, was El Mosaico. Among the collaborators in the El Mosaico group were José María Vergara y Vergara, José María Quijano Otero, Ricardo Carrasquilla, José Manuel Marroquín and, less frequently, Salvador Camacho Roldán, Jorge Isaacs and José Manuel Groot. José J. Ortega says that the writers of this group "dieron impulso a la buena literatura; estimularon las aficciones artísticas de muchos jovenes de talento, y en los cuadros de costumbres regionales combinaron el más

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[7] Ibid., 85.

[8] José J. Ortega, Historia de la literatura colombiana (Bogotá: Cromos, 1935), 195.

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sano y auténtico naturalismo con el idealismo más noble."[9] El Mosaico was founded in 1858 by Eugenio Díaz and José María Vergara y Vergara. One of its major accomplishments was the publication of Díaz's costumbrista novel, Manuela (1866).

Eugenio Díaz was a member of an old and noble family from Bogotá. He was born in 1804 and raised on the family estate of Puerta Grande in Soacha. He began his studies at the Colegio de San Bartolomé in the capital but he was unable to complete them because of his poor health. He returned to the family estate where he spent several years dedicated to the tasks of country life. Although he spent the majority of his time in rural areas he was an astute observer of current events. He kept a journal of his observations which resulted in a series of costumbrista sketches[10] and in Manuela.

Manuela is a cuadro of mid-nineteenth century Colombia. It was a period when the youthful nation was undergoing profound social changes. During the two hundred and seventy years of Spanish rule the political life of the colony had been characterized by a somnolent languor and

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[9] Ibid., 196.

[10] In addition to Manuela Eugenio Díaz wrote: Una ronda de don Ventura Ahumada (1858), Pioquinto, o el valle de Tenza (1873), El rejo de enlazar (1873), Los aguinaldos en Chapinero (1873) and Bruna la carbonera (1878).

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the only events that disturbed this atmosphere were the birth, death or marriage of any in the series of royal princes. Political activity, elections, books, magazines and literary clubs were virtually unknown. This situation was to be changed radically by the Wars of Independence.

Large landowners who had formed part of the Royalist cause were exiled and their places were taken by men who tended to be less aristocratic and more attuned to the concepts of the Enlightenment. These new attitudes were engendered in part by the circulation of the writings of such men as Voltaire, Montesquieu and Rousseau. A new constitution was written in 1851 and in a very short period of time newspapers were founded, a system of schools was established, roads were improved, postal services were made more efficient and general elections were established. Also, in 1851, slavery was abolished. Life in the small villages and rural areas became more animated and a feudal-like existence was opened to outside influences.

The domination of the priest and of the political boss (el gamonal) was challenged by the school teacher, el tinterillo,[11] and by the newly elected officials, such as the mayor and the elections officer. This is the atmosphere in which Manuela was written; the setting was the period 1856-1857.

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[11] El tinterillo is a cheap lawyer who defends unjust causes and botches up law suits.

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Although Manuela is not well known outside of Colombia many critics have praised its literary value. The distinguished Chilean critic, Mariano Latorre, has written that in Manuela "hay algo que rara vez se encuentra en los pulidos estilistas de la hora actual . . . hay una novela."[12] Curcio Altamar says that Manuela "fue la primera gran novela con aliento de vida actual, con observación directa, y con un movimiento de simpatía hacia las clases menos favorecidas."[13] Antonio Gómez Restrepo has called it "la más extensa e importante obra de imaginación que produjo el movimiento realista de entonces."[14] The American scholars Wade and Englekirk write that "puede afirmarse con entera seguridad que tiene muchos de los elementos de una buena novela."[15] However, the highest encomium has been that of Tomás Rueda Vargas who, in 1942, affirmed that "la 'Manuela' es no sólo una gran novela de costumbres, sino la obra máxima en lo que toca a los problemas sociales que ocupan en el día de hoy la mente de sociólogos y estadistas."[16]

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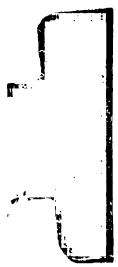
[12]Mariano Latorre, "Primera glosa sobre la novela americana," Atenea (Concepción, Chile), XXXIV, 131 (mayo, 1936), 158.

[13]Curcio Altamar, 138.

[14]Antonio Gómez Restrepo, "La literatura colombiana," Revue Hispanique, XLIII (1918), 145.

[15]Gerald Wade and John E. Englekirk, "Introducción a la novela colombiana," Revista Iberoamericana, XV, No. 30 (enero, 1950), 234.

[16]Tomás Rueda Vargas, Escritos (Bogotá: Antares, 1963), vol. III, 172.



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This critical approval of Manuela is not unwarranted. Díaz's description of the customs and the manners of mid-nineteenth century Colombia is detailed and extensive. He depicted the ideological struggle going on within Colombia and symbolized it in a small village. His characters include a broad spectrum of Colombian society, from the poor and downtrodden to the socially elite. He focused his vision on Colombian society and recorded the distinctive features that he saw. He was the first author to describe Colombian society realistically.

Díaz sketches a panorama of rural customs that is interesting even today. He introduces characters from the elite and the working classes so that we may see the gulf between these two worlds. The political turbulence of the epoch is embodied in the major characters. Don Demostenes is a gólgota; don Tadeo is a draconiano; and the village priest represents the retrógrado party.[17] As stated by Rueda Vargas:

> La alta política de aquellos días agitados . . . está tratada por don Eugenio de mano maestra.[18]

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[17]There were three major political parties in Colombia in the 1850's: the gólgotas or the new liberals who were mainly younger people; the draconianos or the older liberals who opposed the abolition of the death penalty which the younger group favored; and the retrógrados or conservatives.

[18]Rueda Vargas, 173.

Manuela is the story of a beautiful mulatto village girl who spurns the advances of the local political boss, don Tadeo. Angered, don Tadeo decides to exact vengeance upon Manuela and her boyfriend Dámaso. Manuela is unjustly accused and jailed. Through the sympathetic interest of don Demóstenes she is set free but don Tadeo is persistent. He sets fire to the church where Manuela and Dámaso are being married and Manuela dies shortly afterwards.

The story revolves around the protagonist, don Demóstenes, and his interaction with the other characters. His friendship with Manuela is one of the key relationships of the story because the two characters are juxtaposed in order to satirize don Demóstenes' political philosophy. Don Demóstenes is a caricature of the idealistic and well-meaning liberal who is unable to achieve any realistic goals. The author, whose political leanings were conservative, exploits don Demóstenes as a social type and satirizes his political position. The satire is made more forceful by contrasting the urbane and sophisticated city dweller with the ingenuous and sincere country girl. Thus, while don Demóstenes continually espouses "el dogma de la igualdad entre todos los ciudadanos," it is actually Manuela who practices this philosophy.

Don Demóstenes is satirized most effectively in the conversations that he has with Manuela and with the village priest. The secondary characters often serve to rebut or

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refute his arguments. On several occasions they reprimand him by telling him that "una cosa es cacarear y otra poner el huevo."[19] The following situations illustrate the pharisaic position which the author draws for don Demóstenes. The first is on the subject of religious tolerance and involves the village priest:

> El cura rezó una oración en latín, de que don Demóstenes no quedó amostazado, porque era tolerante, y en el hotel de San Nicolás, de Nueva York, le había soportado la oración del mediodía a un mahometano que vivía con él, por un mes entero. (p. 87)

On the other hand, don Demóstenes has a misunderstanding with his fiancée and she reveals that don Demóstenes:

> ha vituperado mi sumisión al gobierno teocrático del Pontífice de Roma, explicándose de una manera que no me ha gustado con respecto al matrimonio católico; en fin me ha prohibido que me confiese. (pp. 147-148)

The satire is evident throughout the novel and is sometimes overdrawn as on the occasion when don Demóstenes naïvely claims that:

> Yo creía candidamente que todas esas leyes que se dan en el congreso y todos esos bellísimos artículos de la constitución eran la norma de las parroquias, y que los cabildos eran los guardianes de las instituciones; pero estoy viendo que suceden cosas muy diversas de lo que se han propuesto los legisladores; por lo menos, en donde haya un don Tadeo. (p. 218)

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[19]For this study all of my references are to the edition of Manuela published by the Editorial Bedout (Medellín, 1965), 124. Hereafter all references to this edition will consist of a page number in parentheses immediately following the quoted material.

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The reiterated contradictions between what he says and what he does, the overdrawn naïvété and his constant reference to the United States as "¡la República modelo . . .!," no matter how inappropriate the occasion, all combine to detract from the portrayal of don Demóstenes. The cumulative effect of his constant bumblings and contradictions is the negation of any belief in him as a real personality. He is recognized as a caricature of the young liberal and as the object of the author's satire. A less direct attack would have made him more credible and would have given better balance to the novel.

In addition to the satirization of political liberals there are a number of related themes in Manuela. One of these is a plea for equality and equal rights for all the people. The differences between the rich and the poor, between the haves and the have-nots are a fundamental question. This is reflected in the contending forces both claiming to represent the true interests of the people. Don Demóstenes and don Tadeo are caricatures of inept and unscrupulous liberals who masquerade under a banner of equality for all.

Don Tadeo's espousal of equality is patently false because of his position as a gamonal. However, don Demóstenes, because of his semblance of true liberality, is not unmasked until he is caught in the web of constant contradictions between what he says and what he does. We have

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already seen Manuela's rebuff of his pretensions. On another occasion a hunter and guide, ñor Dimas, pointedly asks don Demóstenes about the question of equality:

> ¿Y por qué no me saluda su persona primero en los caminos y se espera a que yo le salude? ¿Y por qué le digo yo mi amo don Demóstenes y sumercé me dice taita Dimas? ¿Y por que los dueños de tierras nos mandan como a sus criados? ¿Y por qué los de botas dominan a los descalzos? ¿Y por qué un estanciero no puede demandar a los dueños de tierras? . . . ¿Y por qué los ricos se salen con lo que quieren, hasta con los delitos a veces, y a los pobres nos meten a la cárcel por una majadería? ¿Y por qué los blancos dicen a un novio que no iguala con la hija, cuando es indio o negro? (pp. 241-242)

Manuela admonishes don Demóstenes that:

> Ya verá cómo ni usted . . . ni don Tadeo son tales liberales, porque del decir al hacer hay mucho que ver. (p. 325)

The questions of equal right and equal opportunities for all the people still remain unanswered today in Colombia but the wisdom of Díaz lies in the fact that he asked these questions when most Colombian authors were still adhering to the tenets of nineteenth century romanticism. Tomás Rueda Vargas says that:

> La 'Manuela' caída a un barbecho mejor preparado para recibirla habría dado lugar a una revolución tan definitiva como la que determinó en los Estados Unidos 'La Cabaña del Tío Tom,' o habría abierto a lo largo de la historia nacional un surco tan prolongado y hondo que admitiera comparación con el labrado por Tolstoi y sus seguidores en la conciencia rusa.[20]

This assessment is lavish and extreme but it has the value of recognizing the social import of Manuela which

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other critics have glossed over. This is the first application in the Colombian novel of native material and Díaz deserves credit for not reacting in a sentimental manner. Although a provincial, Díaz was not a romantic. He was well aware of national problems and he incorporated them into his novel. This is done through the characters and the questions they raise. We have already seen the political stance of the various characters. In addition don Demóstenes raises questions about the nation's roads, guest houses, and modernization of farming and industrial techniques. Díaz has his characters raise and discuss questions of national import and it was to this aspect of the novel that Ruede Vargas reacted so enthusiastically.

The debasement and abuses to which women were subjected is another question that Manuela raises. Manuela herself is the victim of the persecution of don Tadeo. Other women in rural areas were subject to seduction and abuse by the landowner, by the gamonal, by the military official or by the tinterillo. The women had few, if any, rights and almost no one to protect them for her. She was the constant prey of those invested with power. As Manuela says to one of her friends:

> Comadre, es muy difícil que se escape una muchacha de catorce años de las asechanzas de los amos, y de los peones, y de los mayordomos . . . ¡Pobres muchachas! ¡Se echan a la peonada sin miramiento de salud, de religión, de conveniencia de ninguna clase . . .! (pp. 209-210)

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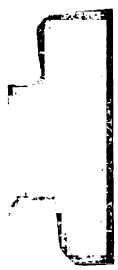
Manuela was one of the first novels to raise the question of protection of women from the abuses of men. It was raised because Díaz was sensitive to the problems of his time. Not only sensitive, however, but also acutely aware of the difficulty in correcting some of these problems. An example would be that of good government for the village but when the townsmen were asked to help apprehend don Tadeo they all refused:

> lo cual indica que en aquella parroquia, y quién sabe en cuántas otras, el medio más aparente de gobernar al pueblo es el terror y no la justicia y la moderación. (p. 401)

In addition to the subjects of equal rights for both the poor and the rich and the protection of women's rights, Díaz also touches on other questions. Problems briefly dealt with include: the condition of the nation's roads; the failure to employ the most modern agricultural and industrial techniques; the artificiality of the upper social classes (represented by the young ladies of the estates of "El Retiro" and "La Soledad"); and popular customs, such as the exciting and enjoyable holiday of San Juan or the burial practices following the death of a young child.

The latter is interesting because instead of being an occasion for weeping and mourning the death of a baby is looked upon as a happy occurrence. Happy because the child is considered an angelito and it is believed that the child



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was born to go to heaven without suffering the trials of this world. Don Demóstenes is scandalized at what he considers a profanation of respect for the dead. This is one of the most interesting customs that Díaz has recorded in his book.

We have seen that the characterization of don Demóstenes is stereotyped. So too is that of the other major characters. Don Tadeo is cast as the authoritarian and corrupt political boss. Beneath the hypocritical banner of "defensor de los derechos del pueblo" don Tadeo is a tyrant who reigns supreme in the village. His persecution of Manuela and her boyfriend provides most of the action of the novel and when he finally exacts retribution for Manuela's rejection of his advances, the novel ends. He is a symbol, albeit a minor one, of the ruthless gamonal that has plagued Colombian political history. There are no limits to what he will do to impose his will, even to the extreme of setting fire to a church. When he is finally removed from power the author writes that:

> había caído la república ficticia de don Tadeo, que no era otra cosa que la tiranía encubierta con el velo de la democracia, porque tal había sido la astucia de aquel gamonal, que por desgracia no es el único en nuestros pueblos. (p. 286)

The village priest is the embodiment of the author's own political posture. He is discrete, forthright and astute. He uses don Demóstenes as a foil for the espousal of his own beliefs and, because of the role given don

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Demóstenes, his arguments seem much more logical and feasible. For example, when don Demóstenes is prattling about the merits of "la República modelo" the priest retorts:

> no será mejor denunciar a la vergüenza pública a nuestros legisladores, a los tribunos, a los jefes de escuelas sociales, a nuestros políticos en general, por tener el país en postración, a pesar de las loas de progreso, estando pisando los metales preciosos, y tantas fuentes de riqueza. . . . (p. 31)

The priest is exceptionally levelheaded and to the point. However, Camacho Roldán has made the observation that:

> No todos los curas alientan la modestia y el buen sentido, estrecho a las veces, del que aparece en esta novela.[21]

The characterization of Manuela is better executed than those of don Demóstenes and don Tadeo. It is still stereotyped, because she is intended to be the antithesis to don Demóstenes, but she has some life and substance which the other characters do not have. She is depicted as an intelligent, witty and proud person. When don Demóstenes suggests that the girls of the village are different from those of Bogotá and that possibly he wouldn't even speak to them in the city, Manuela tells him:

> Pues me alegro de saberlo, porque desde ahora debemos tratarnos en la parroquia, como nos trataremos en Bogotá; y usted no debe tratarnos a las muchachas aquí, para no tener vergüenza en Bogotá, porque como dice el dicho, cada oveja con su pareja. (p. 39)

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[21]Salvador Camacho Roldán, Estudios. Selección Samper Ortega. vol. XLIV (Bogotá: Edit. Minerva, 1937), 90.

But, Manuela is more than witty and proud. She is a cook and a nurse, she is a washerwoman and a dancing partner, she is a confidante and an advisor:

> Ella era compasiva en las desgracias, así como era burlona en las que se trataba de chanzas y palabras ociosas. (p. 133)

or as don Demóstenes tells her:

> Hay en ti una mezcla de candor y malicia que mantiene en perpetuo éxtasis a tus . . . amigos. Tienes el abandono y la inocencia de una niña junto con la dignidad de una reina. (p. 439)

The portrait of Manuela contrasts vividly with that of don Demóstenes. Manuela is warm and generous and truly friendly while don Demóstenes is only able to speak of these qualities, which he believes in in principle, but does not exercise. Although this contrast is intentional it reveals one of the author's few lapses into the romantic tradition. It was part of that tradition that goodness and virtue were more likely to be found in the country and in the so-called common man than in the city with its sophisticated and liberal inhabitants.

We know that Díaz did not have a very extensive education. Neither is there any evidence that he read a great deal or that he was familiar with the Spanish, French or English <u>costumbrista</u> writers. Díaz's <u>costumbrismo</u> seems to be predicated upon his own observations which he recorded copiously and descriptively. Referring to the fact that Díaz did not have an extensive education Antonio Gómez Restrepo has said that Díaz:

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> debió más a su ingenio nativo que a sus conocimientos y escribió en medio de ocupaciones rústicas, por inclinación imperiosa de su talento perspicaz y observador, pero sin la menor pretensión de obtener fama como literato.[22]

Characteristic of his attention to details is the following description of a chair:

> La edad de la silla, hasta de ochenta años, está bien comprobada por las muchas heridas que muestra en los brazos, hecha con alevosía las más (y con navaja) y por la firmeza de su constitución, pues sirviendo de andamio, o puente, o receptáculo para pesados cuerpos, suspensa entre el ángulo de la pared y el suelo, no han logrado desarmarla, como a muchos taburetes raquíticos y delicados, que yacen en los zarzos o en los ceniceros por no haber resistido a esa cruel operación. (p. 16)

This attention to minor details is prevalent throughout the novel. On more than one occasion Díaz gives an intimate description of an insignificant object and momentarily loses track of the story. Plot development, character delineation and psychological penetration are practically nonexistent. The story, as we have seen, is simple and straightforward. There is no element of suspense or of a building to a climax. There are too many minor characters (ñor Dimas, Rosa, Cecilia, doña Patrocinio, Pía, Marta, José Fitatá, Clotilde, don Eloy, Matea and Paula) who do not add substantially to the story. None the less, on the subject of <u>costumbrista</u> literature José Manuel Marroquín, a contemporary of Díaz, wrote that:

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[22]Gómez Restrepo, 146.

> Un artículo de costumbres es la naración de uno o más sucesos, de los comunes y ordinarios, hecha en tono ligero, y salpicada de observaciones picantes y chistes de todo género. De esta narración ha de resultar o una pintura viva y animada de la costumbre de que se trata, o juntamente con esta pintura, la demostración de lo malo o de lo ridículo que haya en ella; mas esta demostración han de hacerla los hechos por sí solos, sin que el autor tenga que introducir reflexiones o disertaciones morales para advertir al lector cual es la conclusión que debe sacar de lo que ha leído.[23]

Manuela is in accord with this assessment in that Díaz satirizes a political type which he considers ridiculous. Also he allows the novel to reveal those qualities which he considers bad or ridiculous in the various characters. The story is not animated but for a man of Díaz's limited education it is an outstanding achievement. His social and political insights are greater than his artistic ability and in lieu of characterization he relies upon a wealth of details to hold the reader's attention.

The novel is built around don Demóstenes. As he visits the various other characters or goes from one place to another he records the things that he sees. Many of the chapter headings point out the object to be described in that chapter, for example: Chapter I, La Posada de Mal-Abrigo; Chapter II, La Parroquia; Chapter V, El Trapiche del Retiro; Chapter VIII, La Casa de un Ciudadano; and Chapter XX, Ambalema. Along with the description of houses

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[23] José Manuel Marroquín, Retórica y poética. Selección Samper Ortega. vol. IV (Bogotá: Edit. Minerva, 1935), 99.

and buildings and towns, Díaz also describes the dress of the people, their jobs, holidays like San Juan, the forests and flowers, and even includes a little history:

> Les oía referir muchos casos que habían sucedido durante la esclavitud, de esclavas muertas por venganza de sus señoras; de cadenas arrestradas por los esclavos; de peones despedazados por los caballos de los mayordomos; de esclavitas perseguidas por sus amos; de grillos, rejo, palizas. . . . (pp. 205-206)

The description of the people in Ambalema shows how observant the author is and how he is able to make a passage interesting as well as informative.

> los proletarios y mercachifles de todos los cantones, y de todos los colores, y de todas las razas, con excepción de la anglosajona, y entre ellos los afamados bogas, llenaban la calle . . . los rostros eran morenos en la generalidad . . . es notable cómo se han cruzado las razas en estos pueblos. Ya no se veía sino uno que otro tipo de las tres razas madres, la blanca, la indígena y la africana. (pp. 261 & 268)

The triple repetition of the pronoun <u>todo</u> has a pleasing alliterative effect as well as accumulating modifiers for the two nouns, <u>los proletarios</u> and <u>mercachifles</u>. After creating the accumulative effect of <u>todos</u>, <u>todos</u>, <u>todas</u> he counteracts it with <u>con excepción</u>. Then, instead of going on to say that only a few pure whites, indians or Negroes are seen in Ambalema, he expresses the same idea more poetically by speaking of the "tres razas madres, la blanca, la indígena y la africana."

Another passage which reveals the poetic capabilities of the author is the scene where don Demóstenes first meets Manuela:

> El sitio era pintoresco . . . las ondas azules matizadas por la espuma de jabón, como el cielo por las estrellas en una noche de diciembre, se movían en arcos paralelos . . . se veían las sombras de las tupidas guaduas que circundaban el chorro, con sus cogollos atados por las bejucadas de gulupas y nechas, cuyas frutas y flores colgaban prendidas de sus largos pedúnculos como lamparillas de iglesia en tiempo de aguinaldos. (p. 34)

This passage reveals the full scope of Díaz's creative ability. Not only does he show originality in speaking of the "ondas azules matizadas por la espuma de jabón" (blue waves and soap suds are not a usual association) but he goes on to complete the metaphor by comparing the ondas azules with "el cielo por las estrellas en una noche de diciembre." This is very expressive writing for a person who had the limited education of Díaz. He speaks of the "sombras de las tupidas guaduas" rather than the guaduas themselves, thereby creating the illusion of the shadows on the water. And he completes the passage with another metaphor comparing the hanging frutas y flores to lamparillas de iglesia en tiempo de aguinaldos.

There are other passages which reveal the author as humorous, sentimental, satirical and caustic. The metaphor is his most frequent figure of speech and it is used liberally, as in this sentence:

> Tal es el prestigio de los tiranos, que aturden la cabeza de sus víctimas con la astucia, el engaño y el terror, como los gatos a las avecitas que persiguen y como el boa a los cuadrúpedos que se ponen a su alcance. (p. 223)

Here Díaz uses two similes to reënforce the triple stratagems of astucia, engaño and terror which tyrants use to bewilder their victims. And the allusion is enhanced by comparing it with cats that attack avecitas rather than pájaros, making the contrast greater, and it is skillfully completed by conjuring up the crushing and inescapable power of the boa. As these passages illustrate, Díaz was able to write creative and artistic prose.

The tone of the novel is satirical in its treatment of the protagonist don Demóstenes but the author does not become polemical. His approach to the novel is composed and serious. The language is temperate. The narration is straightforward and is a sober study of the author's environment. It is a study which reveals a society in flux, a society in which primitive and feudal ways were receding before the encroaches of civilization. At times the picture becomes animated (such as the description of the festival of San Juan) and the description of nature, of the forests and rivers, can be compared with the descriptions found in Jorge Isaac's Maria (1867) and José E. Rivera's La vorágine (1924). For example:

> Los cedros y nogales, los botundos y los ocobos de tan bellas flores, levantándose al cielo daban al bosque un aspecto de agradable melancolía, que lejos de aterrar embelesaba, porque es un hecho que entre la naturaleza animal y la vegetal existen relaciones . . . en algunos sitios se hallaban como almacenados los montones de la fruta llamada castana, cubierta de una cáscara parecida a la del cacao, que tiene la consistencia y el sabor del haba. (p. 66)

In this passage we again see that Díaz seldom relies on just one noun and one modifier to make his point. He often uses two or more subjects and modifiers to reënforce his image. Here he writes of cedros and nogales and botundos and ocobos in order to create the impression of the forest. He then describes these trees as "levantándose al cielo" which creates an image of great height and majesty. He then furthers the impression of a forest by making the unusual association of agradable and melancolía which is a very effective conceit in this context. Another usage of the author's is the juxtaposition of opposite ideas in order to enhance the value of the thought that he is expressing. Thus, lejos de aterrar counteracts with embelesaba thereby intensifying the significance of embelesaba. He completes the passage with a description of other objects found in the forest.

Eugenio Díaz is important because he was one of the first novelists in all of Spanish America to use autochtonous material. When he wrote Manuela in 1866, other Spanish American novelists had not yet begun to write about the indigenous themes of the land, the forests, the people, the political problems or about the civil wars. Only the distinguished Chilean author, Alberto Blest Gana, had begun a realistic portrayal of Spanish American society before

Díaz wrote Manuela.[24] Other authors had written about the South American indian in a largely romantic vein (archetypal of this genre is Cumandá, o un drama entre salvajes, 1871, by the Ecuadorian author Juan León Mera). Also the noted Argentine statesman, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, had written about the gaucho and the clash between what he called civilization and barbarism in his study of the tyrant Facundo Quiroga (Vida de Juan Facundo Quiroga, o Civilización y barbarie, 1845) but he is not generally considered a novelist. Thus, while Blest Gana was writing largely about urban areas, Díaz focused his attention on rural life. Curcio Altamar has stated that:

> hay que abonarle al costumbrismo el haber puesto su mira, con entusiasmo patriótico, en captar las notas distintivas de la nacionalidad.[25]

Díaz does not dwell in the past or recreate legends. He takes the society around him and describes it. It was his dictum that "los artículos de costumbres son el suplemento de la historia de los pueblos." (p. 314) Such an approach to writing was completely new in Colombian literature. Consequently, many of the characters portrayed in Manuela appear for the first time as literary subjects in Colombia. For example, el gamonal, the plantation workers and the Negro.

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[24]Alberto Blest Gana, following the models of Balzac and Stendhal, wrote his first novel, Una escena social, in 1853.

[25]Curcio Altamar, 129.

These are some of the elements which help to constitute Colombian society and it is upon these elements, along with the use of the land and the people's customs, that Díaz builds his novel. It is a novel firmly based on the realities of mid-nineteenth century Colombia. The tinterillo and the priest, the peasant and the Negro were all part of the national reality. It was the incorporation of all of these elements into his novel which laid a foundation for a national novel in Colombia. In this regard, it is significant that Díaz chose a Negress as the heroine of his story.

Yet, the theme of race and color is not seriously developed in Manuela. The characterization of Manuela is quite different from that which was customarily given to Negroes in the nineteenth century.[26] Except for an infrequent reference to her color there is nothing that would make us suspect that Manuela is not white. The author has portrayed Manuela just as he would portray any other character. He avoided the all-too-frequent stereotypes into which Negro characters were cast.

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[26]In the American ante-bellum South the Negro had already been stereotyped as faithful but lazy, happy-go-lucky but prone to lying and to stealing by the first half of the past century. See Swallow Barn (1832) by John P. Kennedy, Recollections of a Southern Matron (1836) by Caroline H. Gilman or Mellichampe (1836) by William Gilmore Simms.

This is important because in writing a national novel Díaz wanted to depict the reality of the nation and not foster racial propaganda. He also wanted to emphasize the similarity between people and not the differences. From his point of view the Negro was so obviously a part of Colombia that he did not need to be singled out for special attention. It is equally important that as a white author writing about Colombia he did not overlook the Negro.

Díaz probably inherited the tendency to idealize rural characters and landscapes from the romantic movement. However, Manuela's role could just as easily have been assigned to a white character; therefore, it is still literarily significant that he chose a Negress. She could very easily have been portrayed as the "exotic primitive" or especially as the "tragic mulatto" as a consequence of her suffering. Fortunately, the author avoids these pitfalls.

All too often the Negro character has been treated from a polemical point of view, whether it be pro or con. In this regard Díaz resisted the predominant trend of his era--an era during which the Civil War was being fought in the United States (with slavery as a key issue) and when abolition was being hotly debated in both Cuba and Brazil.

Undoubtedly, Uncle Tom's Cabin (1852) by Harriet Beecher Stowe was the greatest anti-slavery novel ever written but it had the unfortunate secondary effect of

strengthening the stereotyped roles assigned to Negroes.[27] In Brazil, Pinheiro Guimarães wrote O Comendador (1856), Xavier Eyma published Francina (1861) and Vicente Felix de Castro authored Os Homens de Sangue ou os Sorimentos de Escravidão (1873) all of which follow Mrs. Stowe's lead. In Cuba, Francisco: The Plantation, or The Delights of Country Life (1839, but not published until 1880) by Anselmo Suárez Romero, El Negro Francisco (1873) by Mario Zambrana, Cecilia Valdés (1839, 1882) by Cirilo Villaverde and Sab (1841) by Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda are all in the same tradition. In Colombia the novel was able to develop without the polemical pro and anti-Negro controversy.

It is quite obvious that Díaz was attuned to his times. We have already seen that the questions he raised were all major problems of the day. Thus, historical circumstance and his political theses (equality) would make it unlikely that he would dwell on racial differences but rather the absence of the same. The Negro is there because the themes of nationalism and localism call for him to be there. Otherwise, there is no attempt to understand or to explore the black psyche.

As a realistic portrayal of Negro life the absence of racial differences is a shortcoming of the novel. The

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[27] See, for example, Thomas Nelson Page's In Ole Virginia, or Marse Chan and Other Stories (1887) or Thomas Dixon's The Clansman (1905) which is the vicious culmination of this racist literature.

realism of Manuela is not real by reason of omission of the question of race relations. Equality as a central theme loses most of its merit by the paradoxical evasion of the most important area of potential equality--that of whites and non-whites. It is admirable that the author should want to present his Negro characters merely as constituent members of the society, however, it is a fact that the person of African descent is not merely another citizen. He was brought to America to be a slave and for approximately three hundred years he was a slave. His presence in Colombian society has been stigmatized by his past history. Manuela fails to deal with this important subject.

Just as don Demóstenes fails to come to grips with the central problems of the village and find a solution for them, Díaz fails to come to grips with the fundamental question of racial equality. There is a great deal of potential in this theme that the author could have developed without turning his novel into a polemic or a panegyric. Even the effectiveness of Manuela as a foil for don Demóstenes is lessened somewhat because it is obvious that she too is a stereotype and that she does not reflect the true position of the Colombian Negro.

Finally, Manuela is idealistic. Idealistic in the sense that Díaz has portrayed a society in his novel that Colombia has been unable to obtain in reality. That is, a society in which a Negro can live and can be written about

without any special reference to the fact that he is a Negro. In this regard Manuela differs radically from all other Colombian novels in which a Negro is a major character. Not only does it differ thematically from the contemporary novel but it also differs from the other novels of the nineteenth century. We shall see this difference in the novels of Jorge Isaacs and Eustaquio Palacios.

CHAPTER II

NEGRO CHARACTERIZATION IN THE ROMANTIC NOVEL: MARIA AND EL ALFEREZ REAL

The romantic movement in Colombian literature did not produce a novel with a major Negro character. However, it is significant to this study to observe how this important literary trend depicted the Negro. For this purpose I have selected for examination two of the outstanding Colombian novels of this tendency. They are María (1867) by Jorge Isaacs and El alférez real (1886) by Eustaquio Palacios.

Jorge Isaacs was born in Cali, April 1, 1837. He was the youngest of the nine children of Jorge Enrique Isaacs, an English Jew, and doña Manuela Ferrer y Scarpetta. The elder Isaacs was a successful planter and, in 1855, had acquired the estate of "El Paraíso" (which in later years would serve as the focal point of the novel María). In 1848 young Jorge Isaacs went to Bogotá to continue his education and remained there five years. During this period his father's business ventures went bad and the family's financial situation deteriorated. The civil war of El Cauca (1860) completed the financial ruin of the family and

Isaacs, in spite of the popularity of María, was never able to recoup the lost fortune. He took an active part in politics and fought in the civil wars. He served as a diplomatic representative to Chile (1871-1872) and worked intermittently as a superintendent of public education. The critic Fernando Alegría sees in Isaac's life the symbolization of that "liberalismo dinámico, de acción aristocrática, inspirada . . . que caracteriza a los más ilustres románticos de su época."[1] Isaacs died on April 17, 1895 in Ibagüé.

María (1867) was written one year after Eugenio Díaz's Manuela. This was a period during which the romantic novel had begun to decline (as is perceived in Díaz's Manuela and the novels of Alberto Blest Gana in Chile) and was evolving toward the costumbrista novel. Curcio Altamar classifies María in the category of "La Novela del Post-Romanticismo."[2] María, however, contains many of the elements of the typical romantic novel: sentimentalism, melancholy, presentiments of tragedy, the introduction of an exotic element (the story of the Africans Nay and Sinar), the use of local color and popular customs and the sensitive

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[1]Fernando Alegría, Historia de la Novela Hispanoamericana (Mexico: Andrea, 1966), 42-43.

[2]Curcio Altamar, Evolución de la novela . . ., 97-122.

depiction of the landscape. Arturo Torres-Ríoseco calls *María* "la verdadera obra maestra de la escuela romántica sentimental."[3]

Isaacs was not, however, unaware of the new literary trend (*costumbrismo*) and *María* contains several *costumbrista* sketches. Mario Carvajal says that after José María Vergara y Vergara had introduced Isaacs to the Mosaico group, Isaacs "salió . . . contagiado del fervor costumbrista de sus padrinos y mecenas . . . y regresó, al Valle a hacer, él también, su novela de costumbres."[4] Carvajal hypothesizes that Isaacs had set out to write another novel in the *costumbrista* manner but that because of his poetic sensibilities the work "se le escapó de las manos y se instaló en alturas de dominio universal."[5]

The source of inspiration for the figure of María has never been ascertained and has been a subject of literary discussion since the novel was first published.[6] It

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[3]Arturo Torres Ríoseco, *Historia de la literatura Iberoamericana* (New York: Las Americas, 1965), 77.

[4]Mario Carvajal, introduction to *María* (Cali: Biblioteca de la Universidad del Valle, 1967), xi-xii. All references in the text will be from this edition.

[5]*Ibid.*, xiii.

[6]See Eduardo Posada, "Personajes de la novela *María*," *Boletín de Historia y Antigüedades* (Bogotá), XIV (1923), 506-509 and Luis Delgado Martínez, "¿Quién fue la María que inspiró a Jorge Isaacs?," *Revista de America*, XXI, Nos. 63-64 (abril-mayo, 1950), 65-80.

now seems certain that Isaacs had a cousin who was born in Jamaica, who might have come to Colombia, and who died quite young.[7] Also the influence on *María* of the French novels *Paul et Virginie* (1784) by Bernardin de Saint-Pierre and *Atala* (1801) by François René de Chateaubriand has been a frequent subject of literary commentary.[8] Literary critics have also discussed the possible existence of a real María,[9] the artistic value of the novel,[10] and the theme of love in María.[11]

One aspect of *María* which the critics have not discussed is the role and portrayal of the Negro characters.

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[7]For a more complete study of the life of Isaacs and the background of *María* see Enrique Anderson Imbert's introduction to *María* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1951) and Mario Carvajal, *Vida y pasión de Jorge Isaacs* (Santiago de Chile: Ercilla, 1937).

[8]Isaacs recognizes his debt to Chateaubriand within the novel itself when he has Efraín read from *Atala* and the *Genio del cristianismo* (*María* chaps. XII, XIII and XXXIV); however, it has never been conclusively established whether or not he was familiar with *Paul et Virginie*. See Anderson Imbert, *María*, XIX, who says that "no hay pruebas de que Isaacs leyera a Saint-Pierre; tampoco las hay de que no lo leyera" and J. Warshaw, "Jorge Isaacs' library: Light on two *María* problems," *Romanic Review*, XXXII, No. 4 (Dec., 1941), 389-398.

[9]Enrique Martínez Delgado, "¿Quién inspiró a don Jorge Isaacs su novela *María*?," *Revista Javeriana* (Bogotá), XXXIII, No. 185 (junio, 1950), 284-287.

[10]Concha Meléndez, "El arte de Jorge Isaacs en *María*," *Asomante*, I, No. 2 (1945), 69-86.

[11]María J. Embieta, "El tema del amor imposible en *María* de Jorge Isaacs," *Revista Iberoamericana*, XXXII, No. 61 (enero-junio, 1966), 109-112.

Negroes appear in two major settings in *María*. First, they comprise the principal characters in the interpolated story of Nay and Sinar and, secondly, they are the slaves and freedmen who live on and around the estate of El Paraiso.[12] The depiction of these characters reflects the romantic sensibilities of the author. The description of their lives is replete with stereotypes and is typical of the romanticized picture of life often associated with the "Old South" of the United States. We shall see that this pastoral setting in which masters and slaves live in complete harmony is just as idealized as the love of Efraín and María.

Efraín and María are the principal characters of the novel. Briefly the story tells of Efraín's return home, after six years away at school, to find that love has bloomed between him and María. The joy of their innocent love is disturbed by the news that Efraín will soon have to depart for Europe to continue his studies and also by the delicate condition of María's health. In view of his father's insistence, Efraín unwillingly goes to London. There he receives an urgent message calling him home but he arrives too late. María has died. This brief outline of

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[12]Donald F. Brown, "Chateaubriand and the Story of Feliciana in Jorge Isaacs' *María*," *Modern Language Notes*, LXII, No. 5 (May, 1947), 326-329 has studied this interpolated story from the aspect of what he considers to be Isaacs' own version of the tale of *Atala*. He does not consider character portrayal.

the plot does not do the novel justice but most critics agree that it is not the story but the telling of it which makes *María* a great novel.[13]

Interpolated into the story of María and Efraín is the history of Nay and Sinar. This tale is completely extraneous to the plot of *María* and is reminiscent of the intercalated divagations that Cervantes made in his *Don Quijote*. Nay is the African name of the ex-slave Feliciana. Efraín uses the occasion of her illness and approaching death to recount the unhappy story of her life.

Nay was the daughter of a successful and powerful Ashanti general. She falls in love with Sinar who is a prisoner and slave of her father, Magmahú. Nay pleads for the life of Sinar and after a defeat by the English army Magmahú pardons Sinar and the three of them flee to another kingdom. Sinar is converted to Christianity by a missionary and he in turn imparts his faith to Nay. A sumptuous wedding is planned for them. However, on their wedding night an enemy tribe attacks and, having caught them off guard, they slay Magmahú and take Nay and Sinar prisoners. The two are taken to the coast and sold to a slave trader. Nay is separated from Sinar and brought to Colombia where she is

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[13]See Curcio Altamar, 112, who says that "la novela de Isaacs recogió artísticamente esta simpatía hacia la melancólica sentimentalidad y escenificó en el Cauca un idilio juvenil más puro que el de *Atala*."

purchased and given her freedom by Efraín's father. She never sees Sinar again.

This is only the outline of this short story but I shall examine some parts of it more closely to see how Isaacs depicts his African setting. One of the salient features of the novel María is the excellent portrayal of nature and its blending with the story of the two young lovers. In this interpolated story the lack of geographic description is notable. When Isaacs is describing the Valley of the Cauca he gives an exact portrayal of the scenery. For example:

> De allí para adelante las selvas de las riberas fueron ganando en majestad y galanura: los grupos de palmeras se hicieron mas frecuentes: veíase la pambil de recta columna manchada de púrpura; la milpesos frondosa brindando en sus raíces el delicioso fruto; la chontadura y guatle; distinguiéndose entre todas [sic] la naidí de flexible tallo e inquieto plumaje, por un no sé qué de coqueto y virginal que recuerda talles seductores y esquivos. (p. 371)

On the other hand, the events in the episode about Nay and Sinar occur without any direct relationship to the physical environment. Isaacs tells us that the setting is in West Africa and he mentions the names of some rivers (Tando, Gambia) and tribes (Ashanti, Achimi, Kombu-Manez, Cambez) but there is no elaboration as in the above quotation. There is nothing that would distinguish the locale of this story as being African. Furthermore, the dress, the customs and the music are not described as they are in the wedding scene for Bruno and Remigia or the episode of

the boatmen who carry Efraín up the river Dagua. Since Isaacs cannot depend upon the fidelity of his descriptions to convince the reader that this episode is true he adds a footnote in which he quotes the well-known Historia Universal[14] of César Cantú to substantiate the veracity of what he says.

If, however, this episode does not include a detailed description of local customs what it does have is movement and action. The story of the battles and of the escape has an animation and verve that the idyll of Efraín and María does not have. We are given a picture of Magmahú going to war and defeating his arch-enemy. We see him capture slaves and become his king's premier general. But then we witness a sudden reversal of fortune. The defeat, the flight and the capture follow in rapid order. This quick-paced narrative of adventure and misfortune enlivens the lethargic, foreboding main story.

The characters themselves lack any psychological depth and their primary function is to add an exotic element to the novel as we see in the description of Sinar. We are told that he has "la tez úvea," that he wears "la guarnición de un sable turco ceñido con un chal rojo de Zerbi" (p. 247) and that he bathes his body with sweet-smelling oils. This description reveals an intermingling of Arab customs along

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[14]Madrid: Biblioteca Ilustrada de Gaspar Roig, 1856.

with the African which was not unusual in the African countries immediately south of the Sahara desert. It has also led to the supposition by some critics that Sinar is not an African but a Moor.[15] However, an ignorance of African history, culture and peoples gives a confused interpretation of this point. Many Africans (and being African is not synomous with being black as these critics would seem to impute) south of the Sahara had adopted Moslem customs and practices and Sinar does not have to be a Moor in order to exercise these customs.[16]

Nay and Sinar appear to be no more than the embodiment of "exotic primitive" stereotype. The exotic element was a frequent feature of the romantic novel (for Chateaubriand it was the North American indian) and, as the noted critic Enrique Anderson Imbert says: "el exotismo era un rasgo tan típicamente romántico que Isaacs no quiso renunciar a él: y nos dío el cuento de Nay y Sinar en marco africano."[17] The story of Nay and Sinar is an exotic African equivalent to the idyll of María and Efraín. We have the same situation of the truncated love of a young couple with one partner forever separated from the other.

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[15]See Mario Carvajal, María, 245.

[16]See Donald L. Wiedner, A History of Africa South of the Sahara (New York: Vintage, 1962), 32-40.

[17]Anderson Imbert, María (Mexico, 1951), xxi.

Nay is pictured as beautiful, charming and during the wedding festivities as having "humillado durante seis días con sus galas y encantos a las más bellas esposas y esclavas de los Kombu-Manez" (p. 260). However, Isaacs must not have conceived her as being too intelligent because after she has been enslaved and brought to America she is able to learn only a little Spanish "merced a la constancia con que se empeñaba Gabriela (her mistress) en enseñarle su lengua." (p. 267) In contrast to this, however, is Nay's almost complete understanding of the meaning of slavery and the significance of being sent to North America as opposed to, for example, going to a non-English speaking area, the Spanish or Portuguese colonies where there was a possibility of obtaining freedom.

In fact, it is Nay's intention to kill her baby rather than have him raised as a slave. This is one of the few scenes in the novel where sincere emotion appears to conquer the author's romantic and idealistic tendencies. When Nay is brought to America the slave trader does not immediately sell her because she is expecting a baby and "su señor esperaba realizarla major una vez que naciera el manumiso." (p. 268) Once the child has been born the trader decides to sell Nay to a North American. Nay pleads with the father of Efraín, who happened to be stopping at the trader's inn, not to allow her to be sold away to the United States where she knows that a legal and lifelong slavery

would await her and her child. The father buys her and then tells her that she and her child are free.

Perhaps this gesture is less noble than it seems. The father knows that according to the Constitution of 1821[18] the importation of slaves into Colombia was illegal and that according to the law, if not in fact, Nay was already free. Isaacs does not picture slavery as a cruel and inhumane institution. He accepts the existence of slavery and fails to see the moral injustice of it. He is more shocked that the trader "negociaba . . . con sangre de reyes" (p. 268) than with the fact that he "negociaba." This view seems to be corroborated when the father states that the trader's wife committed an "imprudencia" when she let Nay know the date of her arrival in Colombia. This implies that Nay might have been able to seek legal redress if the father had wanted to keep her as a slave.

The interlude of Nay and Sinar appears to be no more than a digression by the author to add color and movement to the novel. It is an exotic tale with a lot of action compressed into a few pages. As is the case with Efraín and María the author has made no attempt to probe the psychology of these secondary personages. It is doubtful that Isaacs ever conceived of them as real, living

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[18]Actually it was the Constitución de Cartagena de las Indias (June, 1812) which prohibited the importation of slaves into Colombia as a commercial venture.

individuals. Nay and Sinar are used to embellish the action and to add a dreamlike quality of "palacios de oro" (p. 274) as Efraín says. This interpolated story contains most of the aforementioned elements of the romantic novel.

The other Negro characters in María are portrayed in much the same manner as Nay and Sinar. Their way of life is depicted as one in which supposedly the slaves were contented and gayly sang through the work day and gathered around the campfire at night to exchange Uncle Remus tales.

One of the first reflections that Efraín makes is that "los esclavos, bien vestidos y contentos hasta donde es posible estarlo en la servidumbre, eran sumisos y afectuosos para con su amo."(p. 20) This acceptance of their status by the slaves seems to be owing to the fact that the father, "sin dejar de ser amo, daba un trato cariñoso a sus esclavos, se mostraba celoso por la buena conducta de sus esposas y acariciaba a los niños." (p. 21) Certainly not all masters were cruel and disinterested in the welfare of their bondsmen; however, the successive accumulation of idyllic elements as pertains to slavery is absolutely contrary to the history of the "peculiar" institution.[19]

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[19]The best history of how slaves lived and were treated is Kenneth M. Stammp's The Peculiar Institution (New York: Knopf, 1956). See also Jaime Jaramillo Uribe, "Esclavos y señores en la sociedad colombiana del siglo XVIII," Anuario colombiano de historia y de la cultura, I, No. 1 (1963), 3-55.

This picture is no more accurate for Colombia than it was for our own Southland. The daily life of the slave in Colombia was just as exacting as that of slaves in other countries. Racial harmony did not exist and, although slavery was ultimately abolished peacefully, full social and political equality did not automatically accrue to the former bondsmen.[20]

The description of the wedding of the slaves Bruno and Remigia is the first costumbrista sketch that Isaacs gives. The dance which accompanies the ceremony is lively and colorful:

> Cuando llegamos, Julián, el esclavo capitán de la cuadrilla, salió a . . . recibir nuestros caballos. Estaba lujoso con su vestido de domingo y le pendía de la cintura el largo machete de guarnición plateada . . . No había sino dos flautas de caña, un tambor improvisado, dos alfandoques y una pandereta; pero las finas voces de los negritos entonaban los bambucos con maestría tal; había en sus cantos tan sentida combinación de melancólicos, alegres y ligeros acordes; los versos que cantaban eran tan tiernamente sencillos, que el más culto dilettante hubiera escuchado en éxtasis aquella música semisalvaje . . . bailaban en ese momento Remigia y Bruno; ella con follao de boleros azules, tumbadillo de flores rojas, camisa blanca bordada de negro y gargantilla y zarcillos de cristal color de rubí . . . Bruno, doblados sobre los hombros los paños de su ruana de hilo, calzón de vistosa manta, camisa blanca aplanchada y un cabiblanco nuevo a la cintura, zapateaba con destreza admirable. (pp. 22-23)

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[20]For a more complete treatment of slavery and its aspects in Spanish America see David B. Davis, The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture (Ithaca, New York: Cornell Univ. Press, 1966), 224-243; James F. King, "Negro Slavery in New Granada," Greater America: Essays in Honor of H. E. Bolton (Berkeley: Univ. of California, 1945), 295-318; and Jaramillo Uribe, Anuario colombiano de historia . . ., (1963), 22-25.

In this description Isaacs captures the color (azul, rubí, roja, blanca) and the mood (lujoso, alegres, éxtasis) of the occasion. The description of the dancing is intermingled with the stream of colors and music and we are caught up in the atmosphere of the festivities. This is the art of Isaacs. He captures the essence of a scene rather than merely elaborating the objects that he sees.

Isaacs uses Negro characters to add variety and color to the novel. The melancholy advance towards tragedy is interspersed with a number of diversions in order to lessen the gravity of the story. The story of Nay and Sinar is an example of these interludes. Another of these episodes would be the encounter with the enticing and vibrant Salomé:

> . . . aquellos dientes de blancura inverosímil, compañeros inseparables de húmedos y amorosos labios: sus mejillas mostraban aquel sonrosado que en las mestizas de cierta tez escapa por su belleza a toda comparación . . . le temblaba la suelta cabellera sobre los hombros, y se estiraban los pliegues de su camisa blanca y bordada. (pp. 315-316)

This sensual description of Salomé by Efraín is part of Isaac's insight. Even though Efraín is devoted to María he still notices the appearance of other women. He is a youth on whom "humedos y amorosos labios" and "la suelta caballera" would make an impression even if he is immune to the "mil encantos" of Salomé.

The white characters in the novel display a great deal of concern for the Negroes and an idyllic harmony

reigns between the two groups. The servants cry when Efraín leaves for school and are happy when he returns. The mulatto Lorenzo is "amado por toda la familia." (p. 359) and Efraín states that Feliciana was "amada de mi madre, quien la distinguió siempre con especial afecto y consideración." (p. 273) Finally, we have seen that the father treated his slaves with a "trato cariñoso."

All of these elements contrast with the prevailing reality of nineteenth century Colombia. James F. King states that "the common assumption that slaves passively accepted servitude . . . is no truer in relation to the mainland areas of Spanish America than elsewhere in the New World."[21] Even for Negroes who were not slaves full equality was not a reality. In an article dealing with the period of time encompassed in the novel Randall O. Hudson says:

> The colored castes received a large measure of political and economic, if not social, freedom by 1860. These advances made them desire more freedom and created conflict with the whites. The friction between the whites and the Negroes, tended to limit this progress, and equality was often more apparent than real.[22]

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[21]James F. King, "Negro History in Continental Spanish America," Journal of Negro History, XXIX, No. 1 (Jan., 1944), 19.

[22]Randall O. Hudson, "The Status of the Negro in Northern South America, 1820-1860," Journal of Negro History, XLIX (Oct., 1964), 239.

This side of the picture is evident in the treatment of the boy, Juan Angel, for whom Efraín expresses "un cariño especial." He is the son of Feliciana and, although he is free, he is ordered about in much the same manner as a slave:

> Y tú ¿que haces ahí que no te largas, negritico? . . . Cárga con la guambía y vete, para que vuelvas pronto, porque más tarde no te conviene andar solo por aquí. No hay que decir nada allá abajo. ¡Cuidado con no volver!, le grité cuando estaba él del otro lado del río. Juan Angel desapareció entre el carrizal como un guatín asustado. (p. 100)

This treatment is probably typical of that given to any servant but there is no doubt that he is cast as being easily frightened and cowardly (even though we know that his father and grandfather, Sinar and Magmahú, were great warriors). Isaacs anticipates the Stepin Fetchit stereotype of the Negro whose eyes pop out of his head merely upon hearing of something dangerous:

> Juan Angel dejó de sudar al oír estos pormenores, y . . . nos veía con ojos tales cual si estuviera oyendo discutir un proyecto de asesinato. (p. 99)

Nevertheless, a poetic note is often discernible in the <u>costumbrista</u> sketches. The description of the two Negro boatmen who carry Efraín up the river Dagua shows how the poetical tone is not lost even when Isaacs narrates the handling of a canoe:

> Tales evoluciones y portentos gimnásticos asombraban ejecutados por Laureán, aunque él, por su estatura, con ceñirse una guirnalda de pámpanos, habría podido pasar por el dios del río. (p. 384)

Thus the labor of rowing the boat up the river becomes "evoluciones y portentos gimnásticos" in the language of Isaacs. Such a description makes the chore appear less like work and more like a ritual, an impression which is heightened with the comparison of Laureán with "el dios del río." It is this harmony between the characters and their activities with the nature around them which the author mastered. All the elements of the novel combine to convey an elegiacal mood. In the following verses sung by the boatmen we are told that the song "armonizaba dolorosamente con la naturaleza." (p. 368)

Se no junde ya la luna;
  Remá, remá.
¿Qué hará mi negra tan sola?
  Llorá, llorá.
Me coge tu noche escura,
  San Juan, San Juan.
Escura como mi negra,
  Ni má, ni má.
La lú de s'ojo mío
  Der má, der má,
Lo relámpago parecen,
  Bogá, bogá. (p. 367)

These verses have a striking similarity to the "Canción del Boga Ausente" by the Negro poet Candelario Obeso.[23] Obeso (1849-1884) was a contemporary of Isaacs and his poetry was well known. The poem by Obeso goes:

Qué trite que etá la noche,
  La noche qué trite etá;
No hay en er cielo una etrella
  Remá, remá.

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[23]See Mario Carvajal who refers to this similarity in a footnote in María, 367.

Other stanzas end with the estribillos: ¿Qué hará? ¿Qué hará? . . . ¡Llorá! Llorá! . . . Der má, der má! . . . No hay má, no hay má! The last stanza is:

Qué ejcura que etá la noche,
La noche qué ejcura etá;
Asina ejcura é la ausencia
Bogá, bogá! . . .[24]

Although Isaacs verses are not copied from the "Canción" it seems likely that he took his inspiration from Obeso's poem. This seems to be especially true when we note the similarity in theme of the two poems, absence and solitude. For example, "Se no junde ya la luna" by Isaacs is similar to the line "No hay en er cielo una etrella" by Obeso. Also the verse "Qué hará mi negra tan sola?" by Isaacs expresses the same idea as the second stanza of the "Canción" which begins "La negra re mi arma mía." Finally, Isaacs uses almost the same refrains as the Negro poet: Remá, remá . . . Llorá, llorá . . . Der má, der má . . . Bogá, bogá.

It is in this episode involving the Negro boatmen that the Negro receives the most accurate and artistic treatment. The superstitions of the boatmen, their skill as healers of snake bites and other diseases, the description of the home of Bibiano (raised on posts above the

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[24]Candelario Obeso, Cantos populares de mi tierra (Bogotá: Biblioteca Popular de Cultura Colombiana, 1950), 7.

waters of the Dagua), the danger from poisonous snakes and the lush vegetation combine to make this one of the most evocative chapters in the entire book.

Previously, at the funeral for Feliciana, the mourners had sung the following song:

> En oscuro calabozo
> Cuya reja al sol ocultan
> Negros y altos murallones
> Que las prisiones circundan;
>
> En que sólo las cadenas
> Que arrastro, el silencio turban
> De esta soledad eterna
> Donde ni el viento se escucha . . .
>
> Muero sin ver tus montañas
> ¡Oh patria!, donde mi cuna
> Se meció bajos los bosques
> Que no cubrirán mi tumba. (p. 277)

These three stanzas presented by Isaacs as a slave hymn are actually romances written by himself.[25] Slave laments were not only melancholic but also structurally simple. The subtle analogies (oscuro calabozo, esta soledad eterna) are atypical of slave songs. Also this verse form (which was very popular with romantic poets) belies the free flowing and melodic Negro verse. It is ironic that these stanzas are actually less poetic than many of the prose passages of the novel.

Isaacs is successful in reproducing the language of the Negroes (as in the song by the boatmen) but he is not

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[25]See Mario Carvajal, María, 277.

consistent. On occasion he omits the aberrations of speech that Negroes made when they spoke Spanish. He also includes such traditional forms of address as "mi amo," "sumercé," and "el niño Efraín." Isaacs is very conscious of the language of his characters and as with other aspects of the novel (landscape, color) he has blended the language of his personages with the setting.

In comparison with Eugenio Díaz, Isaacs undoubtedly reflects a different temperament. Isaacs is a sentimentalist and injects the full tide of his emotion into María. Díaz is more objective and narrates his story from a more dispassionate point of view. Isaacs has infused his novel with the full flow of his sentiment whereas Díaz remained composed even when describing such painful scenes as the burning of the church. Both authors achieved an excellent rendering of the landscape.

In the treatment of its Negro characters María is flawed, as it is throughout the novel, by a lack of psychological depth. A number of the characters represent stereotypes such as the "exotic primitive" (Nay and Sinar), the tremulous Negro (Juan Angel) and the sensuous mulatto (Salomé). Of course, Isaacs was writing a romantic novel and not trying to portray an exact reality. Some of the costumbrista sketches give very good pictures but, in essence, "la realidad de la novela es . . . una realidad

dentro de la irrealidad de la obra de arte romántica,"[26] as the critic Fernando Alegría has written. We shall see this combination of realism and romanticism in El alférez real by Eustaquio Palacios.

El alférez real; crónicas de Cali en el siglo XVIII (1886) by Eustaquio Palacios belongs to a group of Colombian novels which might be designated as historical-romantic. It is the foremost example of those novels which idealized past values and were indicative of the social stratification of Colombian society. The novel is a chronicle of life in Cali during the latter part of the eighteenth century and Curcio Altamar calls it "la novela histórica colombiana más leída hoy."[27] The presentation of the customs and traditions of that epoch is actually highly romanticized and ennobled. However, the novel is still read today. It has had eight Colombian editions and it has been adapted as a reader for American students.[28]

The scholars Gerald Wade and John Englekirk omitted an analysis of El alférez real from their study of the Colombian novel because they considered it sufficiently well known in the United States.[29] Javier Arango Ferrer

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[26]Fernando Alegría, Historia de la novela hispanoamericana, 3rd edition (Mexico: Ediciones Andrea, 1966), 45.

[27]Curcio Altamar, 90.

[28]John L. Fisher edited an edition for American students: New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1942.

[29]Wade and Englekirk, 235.

has called it "casi tan famosa como María de Isaacs."[30] Finally, Mario Carvajal calls it "el otro gran libro valle-caucano" (Jorge Isaacs, the author of María, is also from the Valley of the Cauca and situates his novel there).[31]

The author, Eustaquio Palacios, was a lawyer, newspaperman, educator and poet. He was born in Roldanillo in 1830 and died in Bogotá in 1898. He studied successively in Cali, Bogotá and Popayán until he obtained a doctorate in jurisprudence. He served as the rector of the Colegio de Santa Librada and as a councilman of the city of Cali. In 1878 he founded the weekly newspaper El Ferrocarril and was its editor until his death. He was also the author of Lecciones de gramatica y literatura castellana, Explicación de las oraciones latinas and Elementos de literatura española.

El alférez real was the only novel that Palacios wrote. In it he introduces us to the historical figure of don Manuel de Caicedo y Tenorio, the "Alférez Real y Regidor Perpetuo de la muy noble y leal ciudad de Santiago de Cali." Don Manuel is also the master of the estate of "Cañasgordas" where most of the story and the costumbrista descriptions are centered. The portrait of don Manuel is well drawn and

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[30]Javier Arango Ferrer, Dos horas de literatura colombiana (Medellín: Ediciones La Tertulia, 1963), 54.

[31]Mario Carvajal, Vida y pasión . . ., 9.

we are given an analysis of his personality. However, the unifying theme of the novel is the story of the unconfessed and impossible love of Daniel for doña Inés de Lara.

Daniel is secretary to don Manuel and a very bright and industrious young man. However, he is an orphan and poor. On the other hand, doña Inés is also an orphan but she is rich, and of noble lineage the protégée of don Manuel. Daniel falls in love with doña Inés even though he knows that his love is futile because of the difference in their social standing. After a series of episodes wherein both protagonists become seriously ill (allowing the author to describe the medical practices of the period), Daniel is impressed into the army and disappears, and doña Inés decides to enter a convent, the true identity of Daniel is finally revealed. It turns out that he is the nephew of don Manuel and, consequently, wealthy and of noble birth. He and doña Inés are thereby able to marry and the story ends happily.

Most of the novel has as its setting the estate of Cañasgordas with a few scenes in nearby Cali. It is the description of life on the plantation and in Cali which forms the "crónicas" of this novel. Intrinsic to this study are the descriptions that the author gives of the slave plantation and also the portrayal of the slaves Fermín, Andrea and Martina. Andrea is the personal servant of doña Inés and Fermín is friendly with Daniel. Martina is

Fermín's mother and is also the cook for don Manuel. These three slaves are more associated with the activities of the house than with the chores of the field hands. This is important because the hierarchical social stratification of colonial Colombian society had its counterpart on the slave plantation. The slaves who worked in the master's house considered themselves superior to those who worked in the fields and the fair complexioned mulatto offspring of the master considered themselves better than the black Africans. Consequently:

> Martina no se confundía con los demás esclavos (y) gozaba en la casa de ciertos privilegios.[32]

Martina and Andrea "eran las únicas que trataban de cerca a la señorita Inés" (p. 35) and Fermín "en vez de ir a los trabajos con la cuadrilla, estaba consagrado a la vaquería, a servir de paje a sus señoras, y a acompañarlas en los paseos a caballo, y a servirles de mandadero." (p. 35)

All of the activities on the plantation were centered around and directed from the Big House ("la casa grande").[33] Don Manuel was the owner of more than two hundred slaves and these slaves were:

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[32]Eustaquio Palacios, El alférez real (Bogotá: Biblioteca de Autores Colombianos, 1954), 35. All references are to this edition and the page number will be given in the body of the text.

[33]The Big House in tropical Colombia was very similar to the Big House in Brazil. Gilberto Freyre in The

> divididos por familias, y cada familia tenía su casa por separado. Los varones vestían calzones anchos y cortos de lienzo de Quito, capisayo de lana basta y sombrero de junco; no usaban camisa. Las mujeres en vez de la basquiña . . ., se envolvían de la cintura abajo un pedazo de bayeta de Pasto . . . y cubrían la cabeza con monteras de paño o de bayeta, hechas de piezas de diferentes colores. (p. 22)

Many of these Negroes had been born on the plantation but:

> había algunos naturales de Africa, que habían sido traídos a Cartagena y de allí remitidos al interior para ser vendidos a los dueños de minas y haciendas. Estos eran llamados bozales, no entendían bien la lengua castellana, y unos y otros la hablaban malísimamente. A esa multitud de negros se daba el nombre de cuadrilla. . . . (p. 22)

Palacios also gives a description of the activities on the plantation:

> Eran racionados todos los lunes, por familias, con una cantidad de carne, plátanos y sal proporcionada al número de individuos de que constaba cada una de ellas: con este fin se mataban cada ocho días más de veinte reses.
>
> Todos esos esclavos, hombres y mujeres, trabajaban toda la semana en las plantacions de caña; en el trapiche, moliendo la caña, cociendo la miel y haciendo el azúcar; en los cacaotales y plantanares; en sacar madera y guadua de los bosques; en hacer cercas y reparar los edificios; en hacer rodeos cada mes, herrar los terneros y curar los animales enfermos; y en todo lo demás que se ocurría. (pp. 22-23)

Masters and the Slaves (New York: Knopf, 1946) gives us this description of it: "The Big House completed by the slave shed represents an entire economic, social and political system: a system of production (a latifundiary monoculture); a system of labor (slavery); a system of transport (the ox cart . . . the horse); a system of religion (a family Catholicism . . .); a system of sexual and family life (polygamous patriarchialism); a system of bodily and household hygiene . . .; and a system of politics (compadrismo)," xxvii. This is almost exactly the structure of "Cañasgordas."

The contrast in style between Palacios and Isaacs is immediately noticeable. Palacios rendition of the slave plantation is a mere listing of the activities and a description of the slaves. He does not express any emotion or see any beauty, color or poetry in the activities of these slaves. His matter-of-fact listing of their activities is in stark contrast to Isaacs' description of Cortico and Laureán working on the canoe. This realistic description of the plantation chores also contrasts with the romanticized and idealistic story of love between Daniel and doña Inés.

Fermín is aware of Daniel's infatuation and he offers him whatever support that he can give him. He tells him that "estoy dispuesto a dar por usted mi vida, aunque ciertamente la vida de un esclavo vale bien poco." (p. 61) He and Andrea serve their masters faithfully and they aid in the eventual union of the couple by acting as discreet matchmakers and go-betweens. Fermín and Andrea also love each other but on an occasion when Daniel asks Fermín if he hasn't thought about getting married, Fermín responds:

> ¿Casarme? ¡Jamás! Mi madre me ha dicho que viva y muera soltero; que a su merced le duele haberme dado la vida; que es muy doloroso tener hijos esclavos en quienes manda otro y no la madre y a quienes castiga otro a pesar de la madre. (p. 61)

This revelation of what the feelings of a slave might be towards his servitude is, unfortunately, not developed further. Fermín continues:

> Aunque usted no tiene confianza en mí para confesarme su secreto, yo sí la tengo en usted: la única muchacha que me gusta y con quien me casaría si ella y yo fuéramos libres, es Andrea. (p. 62)

This conversation is as far as Palacios delves into the personality of Fermín or into a discussion of the slaves attitude toward slavery. It goes farther than Isaacs' stock characters but as yet there is still no development of the Negro personality. Fermín is a caricature of the faithful slave--an eighteenth century Uncle Tom. His devotion to Daniel is paralleled by Andrea's loyalty to doña Inés. Their servility is rewarded when they are given their freedom at the end of the novel.

The other slaves are similar to the grateful and humble slaves that we saw in María. We are told that they "respetaban a don Juan Zamora (the mayordomo) y lo querían." (p. 46) Even if he were not cruel it is unlikely that slaves would "love" their driver. But life on Cañasgordas is virtually carefree and idyllic. There are scarcely any crimes, disputes or misunderstandings. And for the slaves life was not all work and toil because in addition to having Sundays free:

> se les daba libre el día sábado para que trabajaran en su provecho: algunos empleaban este día en cazar guaguas o guatines en el río Lili o en los bosques de Morga . . . otros tenían sus labranzas sembradas de plátano y maíz, y criaban marranos y aves de corral: éstos, a la larga, solían lirarse dando a su amo el precio en que él los estimaba. . . . (p. 23)

In addition there was also time for relaxation:

> Los negros . . . sentados en las puertas de sus cabañas fumaban tabaco en pipas de barro, al mismo tiempo que conversaban; otros tocaban flauta de caña o de carrizo en los corredores de sus cabañas o en el gran edificio del trapiche. (p. 19)

Curcio Altamar says that:

> pertence esta sociedad al mundo más dichoso, puro y sencillo, en donde el hombre no parece concebido en pecado, y en el cual hasta los esclavos son felices, viven contentos con su suerte y salen a escena sólo para mostrar que el amo es bueno.[34]

The slave Matías deserves special mention. Matías is a rogue. He likes to sneak into Cali at night and watch the dances and have a drink and a cigar. Don Manuel and don Zamora overlook his escapades until one night he is picked up by the night watch and arrested. Don Manuel is upset and decides to punish him because "ese negro es un tunante." (p. 211) However, the priest intervenes and asks don Manuel to forgive the delinquent because "la esclavitud es en sí misma una iniquidad; no la haga vuesa merced más grave, tratando con crueldad a los esclavos." (p. 211) This recognition that slavery was an injustice and the partly condemnatory attitude of the author marks a progression in the appraisal of social injustice in the Colombian novel. Don Manuel accedes to the priest's request and Matías escapes punishment although he receives "un sermón sobre la obediencia a sus amos y los resultados de la mala conducta." (p. 212)

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[34]Curcio Altamar, 91.

This is the picture that Palacios draws of slavery as it existed in Cali in 1789. Although he alludes to the existence of cruel masters the scene that he describes is essentially benign. The slaves described here had a great deal of freedom of movement, loved their masters, were clothed and fed well in addition to not being overworked. This depiction does not concur with the long history of run-away slaves, the high rate of suicide and infanticide among the slaves, the frequent revolts and the establishment of outposts of former slaves.[35] The Colombian scholar José Rafael Arboleda has written that:

> Los esclavos resistieron a la esclavitud de la manera más efectiva que estuvo a su alcance. Las revueltas de los negros esclavos son tan antiguas como la pérdida de su libertad.[36]

Also, the statement that many of the slaves loved their masters and would even die for them is probably more reflective of the pervasiveness of slavery than of its benign nature. We saw in Fermín's statement that the slave didn't even have authority over his own children. The father image in the slave family was very weak and the

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[35]See José Rafael Arboleda, "La historia y la antropologia del negro en Colombia," America Latina, Rio de Janeiro: Centro Latinoamericano de Pesquisas en Ciencias Sociales, V, No. 3 (July-Sept., 1962), 13-14 and the works under footnote 20 for more about slavery during this period.

[36]Arboleda, 13.

slave often learned to identify with the master.[37] The master's authority was so complete that he was not only the source of any cruelty which the slave might experience but also provided any positive reinforcement that the slave might receive. John Dollard writes that "it may come to pass in the end that the unwelcome force is idealized, that one identifies with it and takes it into the personality; it sometimes even happens that what is at first resented and feared is finally loved.[38]

The slave Matías is considered a "tunante" because he is not submissive, obedient and humble. However, slaves did not benefit from working hard and, from their point of view, there was really no reason why they should. The contrast between Matías and Fermín is significant. While the author draws Fermín sympathetically it is Matías who reflects the slave's rebelliousness against the system. The relative felicity of slave life as depicted here was not a reality. Palacios purports to record the history of an epoch. Insofar as slavery is concerned that picture is distorted. The idealization of this period of history caused Palacios to overlook the negative factors in it.

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[37]See Stanley M. Elkins, Slavery (New York: Grosset and Dunlop, 1963), 130.

[38]John Dollard, Caste and Class in a Southern Town, 2nd edition (New York: Harper, 1949), 255.

Palacios concentrates the action of the novel in and around the Big House. This gives him good spatial control of the novel. Most of the major events occur in the house. The love of Daniel for doña Inés is conceived in the house and finally accepted there. Andrea and Martina are portrayed in their relationship to the Big House and its members. Daniel works as don Manuel's secretary in the house and, finally, all of the activities of the plantation are directed from there. Certainly, the estate of Cañasgordas is the focal point of the novel.

In El alférez real there is not the poetic evocation of the land that there is in María nor even the objective appreciation of the beauty of nature found in Manuela. Palacios' description of the landscape is confined almost entirely to a bathing outing that the women make to the Pance river. In describing the valley Palacios becomes less objective and more subjective. His prose is more imaginative and poetic than when he pictured the plantation. For example:

> Al ver esos verdes campos, y esos rebaños paciendo, y esos arroyos murmurantes, y esos frescos bosquecillos, y esos matices de luz y de sombras, y esas hermosas doncellas, cualquiera creería tener a la vista un cuadro mitológico: recordaría a Teócrito y el idilio de Polifemo y buscaría con la vista a Cíclope, que debía de estar sentado en la cumbre del Pance vigilando sus ovejas y enamorando a la desdeñosa Galatea con la música de su agreste flauta. (pp. 140-141)

In this passage Palacios abandons his sober and scholastic style and presents a vignette of artistic merit.

His sentences are long and he makes use of learned references (Polifemo, Cíclope, Galatea). Rather than metaphors, he uses long sentences to create an image which frequently has many comparative elements (campos, rebaños, arroyos, bosquecillos, matices de luz y de sombras, doncellas). Consequently, Palacios uses a longer sentence to create his mood with images than Isaacs did with his use of metaphors. His use of classical references harks back to the Golden Age when supposedly everyone was happy and the shepherd leading his flock and playing his flute was the happiest of all men. Here we see the full force of Palacios' romanticism.

The language that Palacios uses is precise and correct. He does not use gallicisms or neologisms. Since his description of the land is not as intimate as that in María neither does he use a great many Americanisms. He does try to point out the peculiarity of speech of the slaves and we learn that they:

> suprimían siempre la r y la s finales, y aun la r en medio de dicción, y se detenían mucho en la vocal final acentuada; a esto se agregaba un dejo en la pronunciación, peculiar a todos ellos. (p. 50)

We have already seen a number of similarities between María and El alférez real. Both novels depict the Valley of the Cauca region. They both are romantic tales about the vicissitudes of fortune for a pair of young lovers. Each novel has two pairs of lovers--one white and

one Negro (although the story of Fermín and Andrea is not as fully developed as that of Nay and Sinar). Daniel's narration of what books he has read in El alférez real is similar to the perusal of Efraín's library in María. Finally, the absence of the protagonist for a period of time in both stories precipitates a dramatic climax.

Palacios does not mention either Isaacs or María in his dedication but it seems more than likely that he was familiar with and influenced by this famous novel by his contemporary and neighbor. María's impact on Palacios is visible throughout El alférez real and the only significant difference in the latter work is the omission of the exotic element.

There is also a description of the city of Cali which recalls Díaz's picture of Ambalema in Manuela. The population of Cali is divided into three racial groups:

> blancos, indios y negros, o sea: europeos, americanos y africanos. . . . (p. 69)

After an explanation of the various mixtures of these three groups (mestizo, mulatto and zambo) we learn that:

> Los blancos de la raza española tenían para sí todos los privilegios y preeminencias; después de éstos, los más considerados eran los mestizos, que hacían alarde de descender de espanoles . . . Los demás eran iguales en la humildad de la categoría; pero la del esclavo era, como es claro, la más triste. (p. 69)

Slaves were brought to Cali from the port of Cartagena and Palacios tells us that:

> Toda familia regularmente acomodada tenía una esclava, por lo menos, para el servicio domestico; la cocinera era siempre una negra. Estos esclavos ciudadanos lo pasaban mucho mejor que los de las haciendas, que vivían al remo del trabajo y tratados en algunas de ellas con crueldad. Había amos de terrible fama, con los cuales eran amenazados los criados que no querían portarse bien. Conque un señor de esos bonachones dijera a su sirviente: 'Te vendo a don Fulano,' bastaba que se corrigiera en el instante. . . .

The picture of slavery is quite complete although idealized. Undoubtedly, a great deal of research went into Palacios' novel. He has accurately depicted the physical environment of eighteenth century Cali. Unfortunately, this is one of the shortcomings of the novel. Palacios' style is more erudite than artistic. He has little of the poetic and sentient prose of Isaacs. Yet this marks a literary progression because the sentimentalism of the early romantic writers has given way to a more simplistic, almost objective, rendering of the past (the physical environment in El alférez real is accurately depicted, it is the story and the mood which are romanticized). As an historical novel El alférez real succeeds in its portrayal of don Manuel and of the city of Cali. However, the representation of slavery clashes with the reality of that epoch. As in María, slavery has been idealized and distorted. Jaime Jaramillo Uribe has written that:

> todo indica que al finalizar el siglo XVIII la esclavitud se encontraba en una situación crítica. La tensión entre amos y esclavos debía ser muy grande, a juzgar por la frecuencia de los conflictos, por las

> rebeliones, las huídas, el cimarronismo[39] y la organización de palenques que encontramos a todo lo largo de la segunda mitad del siglo, y por los sentimientos de temor e inseguridad que manifestaban los proprietarios.[40]

What we see in El alférez real are the seeds of a realism that bloom in the writings of the next author, Tomás Carrasquilla.

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[39]"Cimarronismo" refers to the flight of escaped slaves or of fugitive Negroes to the country and their establishment of themselves as woodsmen or foresters.

[40]Jaramillo Uribe, 54-55.

CHAPTER III

TOMAS CARRASQUILLA AND LITERARY REALISM:

LA MARQUESA DE YOLOMBO

Tomás Carrasquilla Naranjo was born in Santodomingo, Antioquia, January 17, 1858 and he died in Medellín, December 19, 1940. Except for his literary production, his long life is virtually devoid of any notable accomplishments. He never travelled outside of Colombia and he spent almost his entire life within the confines of his native province, Antioquia. He studied philosophy, law and history at the University of Antioquia (1875-1876) but his program was interrupted by the outbreak of the revolution of 1876. In 1891 he served briefly as a municipal judge and after that his literary works were his only activities of consequence. His biographer, Kurt L. Levy, has said that "la vida de nuestro hombre fue de una singular carencia de acontecimientos."[1]

For many years Carrasquilla's work was overlooked by literary commentators.[2] In recent years, however, it

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[1]Kurt L. Levy, Vida y obras de Tomás Carrasquilla (Medellín: Bedout, 1958), 19.

[2]Levy, 223-238, devotes an entire chapter, "Un pecado de omisión," to the failure of literary critics to discuss Carrasquilla.

has been the subject of several discerning studies. In the introduction to the collected works of Carrasquilla, Federico de Onís has called him "un escritor de valor único e insustituíble en nuestra literatura, cuya obra . . . tiene todas las trazas de llegar a ser clásica e imperecedera."[3] The critic and scholar Carlos García Prada has called Carrasquilla the "precursor de la novela moderna" in Spanish America and goes on to say that he produced "algunas obras que bien pueden figurar entre las mejores que en tiempos modernos se han escrito en castellano."[4] Wade and Englekirk affirm that "sus obras mejor logradas le asignan un puesto al lado de los más destacados novelistas latinoamericanos."[5] Finally, Luis Alberto Sánchez calls Carrasquilla "uno de los más grandes y estáticos prosistas de la literatura moderna sudamericana."[6]

Carrasquilla did not publish his first work until he was thirty-eight years old. The short story Simón el Mago (1890) was written in order to fulfill the requirements of the literary club, El Casino Literario, which he had

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[3]Federico de Onís, prologue to the Obras Completas of Tomás Carrasquilla (Madrid: E.P.E.S.A., 1952), xiii.

[4]Carlos García Prada, "Tomás Carrasquilla, clásico antioqueño," Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana, XXVII, No. 97 (1965), 332, 340.

[5]Wade and Englekirk, 236.

[6]Luis Alberto Sánchez, Escritores representativos de América, vol. III (Madrid: Gredos, 1963), 33.

been invited to join. However, he began to write continuously after the publication of his first novel, Frutos de mi tierra, in 1896. His last novel, Hace tiempos (1936), was dictated when he was more than seventy years old and blind. Among his other works are: Blanca (1897), Salve, Regina (1903), Homilías and Entrañas de niño (1914), Dominicales (1915), Grandeza (1916) and El Zarco (1925).

Federico de Onís has attributed the long obscurity of Carrasquilla's work to its coincidence with the modernist movement in Spanish America.[7] In the same year that Carrasquilla published Frutos de mi tierra, Rubén Darío's Prosas profanas also appeared. At the very moment when the Modernists were revolting against the limitations of costumbrismo and provincialism, Carrasquilla's work was distinctly regional and parochial. Whereas Modernism sought the universal and the cosmopolitan, Carrasquilla focused all of his attention on the remote province of Antioquia.

Curcio Altamar points out, however, that Carrasquilla "anduvo siempre tan convencido de haber atinado en la elección de su forma novelística, que su último libro seguía los mismos procedimientos y guardaba el mismo aire del primero, publicado cuarenta años antes."[8]

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[7]Onís, xii.

[8]Curcio Altamar, 159. García Prada, 332, says that Carrasquilla "es quizás el único novelista hispanoamericano de su tiempo que tuvo conciencia plena de su arte y sus intenciones."

Carrasquilla's style was a reaction to the previous costumbrista novelists whom he found "sosos, superficiales y decorativos" and to the romantic authors whom he considered "insufribles"[9] (Eugenio Díaz's Manuela "le parecía imperfecto, por 'no ser estudio de caracteres'" and in Isaac's María he found "un sentimentalismo empalagoso"[10]).

The authors that Carrasquilla had read and favored were mostly masters of the Spanish "Siglo de Oro" and of the nineteenth century: Cervantes, Fernando de Rojas, Quevedo, Pedro de Alarcón, Juan Valera, Armando Palacio Valdés, Leopoldo Alas, Emilia Pardo Bazán and Benito Pérez Galdós.[11] The Spanish master of realism, José María de Pereda, has been mentioned as a possible model for Carrasquilla because of the similarity in regionalism, characterization and descriptive quality of their work; however, other commentators maintain that there is a greater proximity between Carrasquilla and Pérez Galdós.[12]

Pereda and Carrasquilla were both strictly regional writers and they both included in their novels the language of the lower classes. However, Pereda's writing often

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[9]García Prada, 331.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Ibid.

[12]See Sánchez, 41; Wade and Englekirk, 236; and Curcio Altamar, 156.

sustains a thesis (for example, the evil of the cities, the glories of the monarchy and of the church and the advocacy of a patriarchal way of life) whereas Carrasquilla's does not. If we must speak of similarities, then Carrasquills would be more akin to the Galdós of Fortunata y Jacinta because both authors had the tendency to view the novel as an image of life and as the depiction of people and their idiosyncrasies.

Carrasquilla was an original writer (inasmuch as any creative artist can be said to be original). Ignoring the aesthetic and cosmopolitan appeal of Modernism, disdaining the vast human panorama of Balzac and severing all ties with the naturalism of Zola, Carrasquilla embarked on "una interpretación estética de su pueblo y de su raza a través de la descripción de sus costumbres, de su habla, de su idiosincrasia y de su geografía,"[13] as Horacio Bejarano Díaz succinctly states it. His first novel, Frutos de mi tierra, was written with the express intention of proving that his small world of Antioquia was as worthy of literary depiction as any other area. This was of especial concern to Carrasquilla as he noticed many of the Spanish American Modernists (Darío, Lugones, Valencia, Nervo) abandoning autochthonous themes and espousing an admiration for the

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[13]Horacio Bejarano Díaz, "La novela en Antioquía," Universidad Pontificiana Bolivariana, XXVI, No. 94 (1964), 267-285.

French masters (Stendhal, Flaubert, the Goncourt brothers, Verlaine and Mallarmé).

La Marquesa de Yolombó (1928) is a continuation of Carrasquilla's "interpretación estética" of Antioquia. The setting encompasses the final years of the colonial period and the early years of independence, approximately 1760 to 1825. Through the life of the protagonist, Bárbara Caballero Alzate, Carrasquilla describes the life in the mining regions of Yolombó. Carrasquilla avoids the romantic tendency that Eustaquio Palacio used in El alférez real in favor of a realistic description of the people, the customs and the geography.

The protagonist, doña Bárbara Caballero, by means of hard work and perseverance is able to overcome the handicaps of being a woman in a society where a woman had few privileges. Through the expert management of a mine given to her by her father she is able to accumulate a personal fortune which she uses to establish schools and to attempt the cultural improvement of the region. Kurt Levy says that "ya era un poco radical la desviación en una mujer al hacerse cargo del manejo de una mina; pero lo de nivelarse con el sexo fuerte, aprender a leer y a escribir y abrir escuelas en el municipio eran cosas que llegaban a la iconoclastia."[14]

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[14]Levy, 162.

Doña Bárbara is successful in her mining operations and in almost everything that she undertakes. Yet, in spite of her ability and intelligence, she has not attracted a husband because she is not a physically beautiful woman. She is a devoted servant of the king and her one hope is that someday she will travel to Spain and meet His Majesty. Her homage to Carlos IV wins for her the title of Marquesa de Yolombó. Her money, her nobility of character and her title make her famous throughout the region. These same qualities also attract a charlatan who poses as a Spanish nobleman, cognizant of doña Bárbara's inordinate admiration for nobility, and who defrauds her of her money. This imposter, Fernando de Orellana, successfully deceives doña Bárbara and the entire community. He weds her, escapes with her money and is never heard from again.

After the shock and disillusionment of Orellana's deception doña Bárbara falls into a state of mental depression. She recovers many years later but only after revolutions have occurred in France and in North America and independence has been proclaimed in the Spanish colonies. She becomes a saintly woman devoted to charitable deeds. Levy sees doña Bárbara as a symbolization of the ancien régime and he believes that she died spiritually with the collapse of the old order.[15]

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[15]Levy, 168.

Surrounding doña Bárbara are a multitude of characters representing all the aspects of the community. There are Spaniards, indians, creoles and Negroes. There are miners, farmers, servants and slaves. Among these secondary characters are many Negroes and Carrasquilla gives a lucid description of their status and their treatment:

> Ser esclavo de Doña Bárbara es una ganga: les da dos días libres por semana, buena alimentación, buen alojamiento, buena ropa y buenas medicinas. Cepo y látigo, nunca jamás; trato franco y cariñoso, siempre. A la primera falta, amonestación; a la segunda, medio ayuno; a la tercera, venta . . . Con tal sistema mantiene sus treinta y siete siervos, disciplinados y adictos, así en la mina como en el pueblo.[16]

Instead of straightforward narration of the above type much of the novel takes the form of a dialogue in order to reveal the peculiarities of language of that area and epoch. We see this in the following passage where the Negro servant Guadalupe explains one of the superstitions of the people to doña Bárbara:

> Pes es que Su Mercé y algotros tán creyendo que los ayudaos no semos sino los negros y las pionadas. Pero nu'es asina, amita, y perdone que yo se lo manifieste: los ayudaos tán que no caben en la blanquería: toitos los amos de nosotros los negros . . . Porque haberá de saber, Su Mercé, que los señores de l'España del Rey, nuestro señor, vinieron ayudaos dende allá. ¡Allá es la mata de l'ayuda! (O.C., 468)

Carrasquilla's facility with language has been pointed out as one of the major achievements of his

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[16]Tomás Carrasquilla, Obras Completas, 492. All subsequent references to this edition are in the text.

writing[17] and García Prada affirms that "si el escenario y los personajes de la novela carrasquillesca son convincentes, por lo plástico y lo verídico, mucho más lo son por el lenguaje que los pinta y caracteriza."[18] Levy analyzes the language that Carrasquilla uses in a chapter of his book and we find several of the linguistic features that he describes in the above passage. For example, "pes" represents the reduction of the dipthong from pues; "semos" illustrates the substitution of one vowel for another (somos) and "tán" shows the suppression of an entire syllable from están.[19]

The mixture of diverse racial and cultural groups (European, African and indigenous) and the substantial illiteracy of the people led to a number of religious superstitutions and syncretism. Carrasquilla describes the following religious climate:

> El alma yolombera . . . era un revoltijo, si muy raro y estrafalario, muy explicable, por cierto. Media población era africana, y por más que fuese bautizada y metida en catolicismo, cada negro conservaba, por dentro y hasta por fuera, por transmisión o ancestralismo en creencias, mucha parte de las salvajes de sus mayores. Esta negrería, entreverada con esos españoles de entonces, más supersticiosos y fantásticos que cristianos genuinos, más de milagros que de ética, coincidía y empataba con africanos y aborígines en el dogma común

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[17]Sánchez, 39, says that "la riqueza verbal de Carrasquilla demanda puesto en Academia."

[18]García Prada, 336.

[19]See Levy, 207-222.

> del diablo y sus legiones de espíritus medrosos. De este empate vino una mezcolanza y un matalotaje, que nadie sabía qué era lo católico y romano, ni qué lo bárbaro y hotentote, ni que lo raizal. (O.C., 431)

In this passage Carrasquilla shows the religious hodgepodge which had resulted from the intermingling of Catholicism with African and indigenous cults. He ascertains the essence of the situation by referring to the alma yolombera rather than merely speaking of the gente or the pueblo. This passage also indicates certain characteristics of his style. He describes this alma as a revoltijo which is a strong qualifier, especially when applied to the soul, and emphasizes the state of religious turmoil prevalent throughout the area. He then juxtaposes the adverbs muy and muy in the phrase "si muy raro y estrafalario, muy explicable." We see this same kind of juxtaposition with por (por déntro y hasta por fuera, por transmisión . . .) and with más (más supersticiosos . . ., más de milagros . . .) further down in the passage. The use of the adjective estrafalario adds an element which the author wants to emphasize, that is, not only was this situation very rare but also very outlandish. This description is reinforced with the subsequent use of the adjectives supersticiosos, fantásticos, mezcolanza (not just a mezcla because here the use of the augmentative obviates the need for any further qualification and accentuates the jumbled situation) and matalotaje. The prevalence of these superstitions is

established by the reference to the dogma común del diablo and to his legiones de espíritus medrosos where the adjective común and the noun legiones indicate the scope of these attitudes. Finally, he equates lo católico y romano with lo bárbaro y hotentote in a striking comparison of dissimilar entities (a conceit) to stress that no one knew one from the other.

As much as one fourth of the population believed in some form of cult worship. In the following passage the author describes the make-up of this particular group. These same lines, as we shall note, also reflect the precise and elegant style of Carrasquilla.

> componíala el baturrillo heteróclito y matizado, de indios, negros y blancos, en que entraba más el Congo que todo. En esta clase era donde el diablo estaba más regado; donde era más temido y prestigioso, por reunirse en ella las tres versiones de su poderío: la católica, la africana y la indígena. Muchos usaban escapularios y amuletos de toda especie, rezaban a imágenes milagrosas, invocaban los ángeles tutelares; pero esto no contrarrestaba . . . las fechorías y travesuras de las malignas legiones. Muchos, al salir de noche, iban espantando espíritus, como quien espanta zancudos en el Magdalena. (O.C., 431)

His choice of adjectives is pertinent and his verbs are forceful. The selection has an overall unity of adjectives, verbs, nouns and syntax which build the image of religious fetishism. The baturillo is defined not only as heteróclito but also as matizado because it is composed of whites, Negroes and indians. The predominant African influence is emphasized by the use of the word Congo which carries with it the mysteriousness and the exoticism

associated with the so-called Dark Continent. The devil is described as being más regado, más temido and (más) prestigioso among this group of people. These three modifiers are paralleled by the three areas of the devil's poderío: la católica, la africana y la indígena. Then the author points out some of the idiosyncrasies of this group, such as the use of escapularios y amuletos or the worship of imágenes milagrosas or ángeles tutelares. Carrasquilla concludes the passage by referring to the fechorías and the travesuras of these malignas legiones, thereby aggrandizing their stature by denoting them as legions. In the last sentence we see the alliterative use of the initial syllable /es/ in espantando espíritus, como quien espanta. . . .

Religious superstition was not confined only to the humble and illiterate. Doña Bárbara was "más supersticiosa que ellos" and she believed that her Negro servant Sacramento had special powers. Sacramento "le tiene prometido no dejarla enfermar, de ningún modo." (O.C., 394) Religious orthodoxy and Catholic dogma were not only poorly understood by the slaves and workers but also by the aristocracy.

Sacramento is one of the more important minor characters. She enjoys a "gran renombre como curandera mágica o cosa tal" and

> sea casualidad, sea que los males que no han de matar tienen de aliviarse o de curarse del todo, es lo cierto que la negra, con sus andróminas y agüeros, levanta enfermos muy postrados, propinándoles cualquier porquería de las suyas . . . Sobre sus filtros y enyerbos, para producir amor volcánico u odio implacable, cuentan y no acaban. (O.C., 389)

The occult powers of this female Cagliostro are the subject of the town gossips who point to her strong, young husband, Guadalupe, as evidence of her proficiency as an enchantress. Supposedly she has him bewitched and "ni la hembra más linda y tremenda se lo ha quitado." (O.C., 389) She also has a strong influence upon doña Bárbara who is so confident of Sacramento's abilities that she "no tiene porque temer a los enemigos del alma ni del cuerpo." (O.C., 394) A current rumor is that doña Bárbara "está aprendiendo brujería, por libros y por estudios prácticos con Sacramento" (O.C., 562) and that all of her success and good fortune were the result of "estas artes demoniacas."

Sacramento also tells doña Bárbara that "cuando Su Majestá, el Rey entual, l'envió papel de Marquesa, es porque le v'a enviar el marqueso . . ." (O.C., 560) Consequently, when Fernando de Orellana appears in town Sacramento tells the Marquesa that:

> si no le ha creído a su negra, en toíto este tiempo, agora tiene de crele, quiera que que no. ¡Lo mesmito que yo le dije una y otra vez! ¡Ai le llegó, a conjorme lo tenía su negra en esta tusta, mandao por mi Amo el Rey! (O.C., 602)

The prognostication of Sacramento and the credulity of the townspeople help to mold doña Bárbara for her tragic deception.

Another of the important Negro characters is Narcisa, the personal maid of the Marquesa. Narcisa is very devoted to her mistress and in several ways they complement

one another. She idolizes doña Bárbara and doña Bárbara permits this idolization, thereby creating a strong bond between the two of them. In contrast to doña Bárbara's ugliness, Narcisa "es tipo acabado de hermosura." (O.C., 495) The author suggests that in the Congo she would have been a queen and he gives this sensitive description of her:

> Es una criatura tan negra, de un negro tan fino y tan lustroso, de formas tan perfectas, de facciones tan pulidas, que parece tallada en azabache por un artista heleno. El blanco de esos ojos y los dientes rutilan en esa obscuridad; andares y movimientos son cadencias; veneno letal le recorre todo el cuerpo. (O.C., 495)

We also observe that this description of the Negro servant is warm and expressive. The author refers to her as una criatura, disdaining the more common noun mujer, and creates a feeling of endearment and dependence appropriate to this character. He then uses the adjectival modifier negra which he immediately inverts into a noun negro obtaining the effective juxtaposition of una criatura tan negra with un negro tan fino. The quadruple repetition of the adverb tan greatly enhances the qualities attributed to her and the allusion to the magnificent craftsmanship of the ancient Greek sculptors leaves an impression of classic beauty. Finally, her movements are cadencias and the reference to veneno letal leaves the impression of a beautiful, graceful, lethal jungle cat--a black panther.

The servant and the mistress also sing well together. They consider this chance occurrence an act of God and

when "la señora toma la guitarra y la esclava el pandero . . . se paran muchas gentes a oirlas." (O.C., 496)

Doña Bárbara is kind and understanding with her slaves and has earned the nickname of "la Madrecita de sus negros." In addition the author refers to her as "este Pedro Claver[20] con enaguas" (O.C., 391) because of her unselfish concern for the sick. However, life is not idyllic for the Negroes in Yolombó. In the mines they "cargaban como animales" and if the grandfather, called Taita Moreno, happened not to like a meal "hacía sentar las negras a la mesa a comerse todo el condumio. Mientras más llantos, más azotes." (O.C., 475)

Life is represented in Yolombó in both its good and its bad aspects. The harsher and crueler elements of slavery are mentioned along with its more benign features. The slaves who were used in the mines worked hard and dressed in rags. Some slaves were beaten when they erred in their duties. Other slaves stole. A few were abused.

One incident involves Martín, the nephew of doña Bárbara and a rapscallion of the first order. As a consequence of one of his escapades (he ran off with the Negress Bibiana) he has been confined to the mining area during the Holy Week festivities while the rest of the family has gone

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[20]It will be remembered that San Pedro Claver was the Jesuit priest who worked in Cartagena de los Indios ministering to the spiritual needs of the slaves.

into the town. Not to be frustrated by being excluded from the festivities, Martín decides to hold a celebration at the mine. He chooses the mulatto Crispín to play the role of Christ in the crucifixion and ties him to a cross. Crispín dies tragically after Martín ignores his pleas to lower him from the cross. This irresponsible conduct is forgiven by don Pedro, Martín's grandfather and the highest authority in Yolombó, as a boyish prank. He dismisses Martín's cruelty because "le viene de raza" (O.C., 584) and sums up Martín's delinquency as "picardías bien hechas."

Martín's father, don Vicente, views his son's conduct differently. He considers Martín's behavior a crime and a sacrilege. He does not feel that the killing of the humble Crispín should be lightly dismissed as picardías bien hechas. Carrasquilla presents both sides of the disagreement between don Vicente and don Pedro and it is the latter's sentiments which prevail. In the context of the novel don Pedro's attitude is justified. No matter what our contemporary opinion of that occurrence might be, in the epoch that Carrasquilla is describing the death of a slave, even though lamentable, was of no great consequence. This is more than evident in the following affirmation by doña Bárbara:

> A muchos blancos que diz que son muy nobles, les parece que matar a un negro es como matar una comadreja o un alacrán. Yo se lo he oído, a muchos. Y, si tienen a los negros como animales dañinos, tienen que pensar asina. (O.C., 611)

Nonetheless some of the slaves lived well and received special attention and understanding from doña Bárbara. Narcisa, for example, had been given her freedom but chose to remain with doña Bárbara. The Negro Pacho steals some gold in order to feed his hungry family. The Marquesa listens to his excuse instead of immediately punishing him. After she has heard his story she gives him the gold and promises to insure that his family will no longer go hungry. Her fairness and charity win for her the respect of her friends and servants alike. Among her most devoted attendants are the free Negroes Pacho, Guadalupe and Sacramento, "más fieles y sumisos a Doña Bárbara, que sus esclavos legales." (O.C., 462)

The slaves who worked in the house prepared the meals for both the masters and the slaves. They gathered firewood and they kept the house clean. After the evening meal, they met on the patio for singing and dancing:

> Negros y negras, frente a frente, los ojos en los ojos, rútilos en lo blanco, ígneos en las púpilas, al aire los tizones, danzan y danzan al redor de la fogata. Se acercan, se apartan, para unirse luego; los brazos en los brazos, cruzados los tizones, los senos oscilantes, con remeneo de caderas, giran, a paso lento y subrayado . . . En repentino y simultáneo ímpetu, se desprenden, se vuelven del revés, espalda con espalda. Se acuclillan, saltan de un lado, saltan del opuesto, hacia dentro, hacia fuera; pero siempre acuclillados y rastreros, cual si fuesen sapos posesos por el demonio. (O.C., 498)

In this description of the dancers Carrasquilla skillfully uses repetition to create an image of motion

back and forth. He juxtaposes the word groups to depict the undulation of the dance: negros y negros; frente a frente; ojos en ojos; brazos en brazos. The phrases also show the interaction of the dancers along with the verbs se acercan, se apartan. The climax of the dance is sudden and different and the author likens the squatting dancers to sapos posesos por el demonio, an effective, if somewhat contrived, image.

Various opinions about slavery are expressed throughout the novel but the practice is not idealized or rationalized. Doña Bárbara points out that there are no cruel or inhuman masters in Yolombó but that, on occasion, slaves are whipped. She, like don Pedro, considers Martin's act "una cosa aislada" which occurred out of boyish prankishness rather than cruelty. We have already seen that the slaves are treated well although they are worked hard and punished. However, this brings up the question of the morality of human bondage and there are several emphatic statements on this subject. Doña Bárbara frankly declares that "¡Yo no creo que haya un crimen más grande, en todo el mundo!" (O.C., 612) On another occasion, while insisting upon the participation of Negroes in the religious festivities, she states that "aunque sean unos tristes esclavos, están, también, redimidos con la sangre de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo, lo mismo que nosotros." (O.C., 503) For doña Bárbara, then, the Negroes "más que esclavos, son para ella compañeros y camaradas a quienes sirve y complace."(O.C.,487)

There is also a comdemnation of the hypocrisy of the slave trade by the Marquesa. She observes that:

> Los blancos y los ricos se van al Africa . . . y engañan y amarran y aporrean a hombres y mujeres y les quitan la libertad y los embarcan como cosa propia. Y esto, en vez de ser un crimen, es un negocio. . . . (O.C., 612)

Doña Bárbara recognizes a double standard in the judgment of the actions of whites and those of Negroes and she disdains it. She realizes, however, that this situation is the result of the failure of many whites even to recognize Negroes as human beings: "no son personas ni tienen alma; son unas cosas negras." (O.C., 612) There is no doubt that this attitude was widespread among slave masters and among apologists for slavery. In the United States it led to the legal definition of slaves as chattel.[21] However, she is not blind to the shortcomings that Negroes may have and when Fernando de Orellana questions her about the morality of slaves, the Marquesa tells him that:

> Habrá malos, como en todo. Pero los negros son de mejor entraña que los blancos. . . . Ellos no roban gente ni acosan ni esclavizan ni venden a nadie. Si fueran tan malvados como los blancos, ya hubieran acabado con ellos. (O.C., 613)

Of course, we know that historically this statement is not entirely accurate. We have seen in <u>María</u> that Africans did enslave one another and that they sometimes sold their prisoners to European slave traders. Doña

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[21]See Davis, 248-249.

Bárbara's statement has some merit, however, because she is speaking of the meekness and passivity of many of the slaves. It was a humbleness which the masters preached but did not practice. It was also a situation which they often abused:

> La religión de los blancos es muy cómoda: para ellos, oprimir; para los negros, dejarse oprimir. (O.C., 613)

Carrasquilla does not moralize, yet through doña Bárbara we are given a very strong indictment of slavery. She exposes the absurdity of enslaving people under the pretext of teaching them la religión de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo. Carrasquilla harmonizes the criticism of slavery with the rest of the novel. He does not harangue or polemicize. Doña Bárbara's opinions about slavery develop from the context of the story just as naturally as her opinions about education, religion and the rights of women.

La Marquesa de Yolombó does not propound a thesis. Rather through the expert use of dialogue and conversation the author broaches the topics that preoccupied the people of Yolombó at the end of the colonial period. Among these topics were independence, education and the role of religion as well as the question of slavery. These conversations are more important than the plot and reveal a great deal more about the society. We also learn about doña Bárbara's personality through these discourses although the novel is not psychological in the sense that it shows the psychological development of the personage.

Doña Bárbara is very conscious of herself as "la más noble, la más sabia, la más rica de Yolombó" and we see the same type of class consciousness that we saw in El alférez real. Curcio Altamar says that La Marquesa de Yolombó:

> interpreta y revive con mejor objetivismo y verdad la mentalidad y los sentimientos de determinadas clases sociales hispanoamericanas frente a la realeza española y a la independencia de la patria, que mucha otra literatura romántico-narrativa o simplemente histórica.[22]

Don Pedro Caballero reflects this awareness of class differences when he dismisses the delinquency of Martín without punishing him. "Los castigos," he says, "sólo se hicieron para los infelices." (O.C., 584) Doña Bárbara is a staunch royalist and she believes wholeheartedly in the superiority of the aristocracy. She does not consider herself an egotist but she dogmatically asserts that "Dios eligió a las familias que deben mandar en el mundo." (O.C., 617) She does good deeds and she is concerned for those less fortunate than she. However, this is not because she has no faults but because, as she says, "me acuerdo que soy noble y que debo dar ejemplo a mis esclavos." (O.C., 470) Her very class consciousness makes her susceptible to the charlatan Fernando de Orellana who poses as a Spanish nobleman.

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[22]Curcio Altamar, 157.

Class consciousness and the awareness of social differences prevail throughout the novel. The Caballeros, doña Bárbara and don Pedro represent the apex of society in Yolombó along with the Morenos, don Vicente and Taita Moreno. The two families are united by don Vicente's marriage to doña Luz, the daughter of don Pedro. At the other end of the social ladder are the Negroes. They too are aware of class (and racial?) differences. During one of his conversations with doña Bárbara, Guadalupe tells her that "si los negros, que semos unos micos sin cola, aprendemos, ¿qué nu' aprendería Su Mercé?" (O.C., 470) Doña Bárbara is "admirada" at the extent of Guadalupe's understanding of matters. This frank narration of social and class differences is an integral part of Carrasquilla's recreation of the atmosphere of that epoch.

The Negro in La Marquesa de Yolombó is not the nondescript Negro of Manuela nor is he the romanticized figure of María and El alférez real. For the first time in the Colombian novel the Negro begins to take on a distinct personality (Sacramento, Guadalupe), albeit in embryonic form. The Negro character is not developed psychologically but, then, neither is that of doña Bárbara. The conversations and dialogues are used to show the characteristics of the various personalities. The settings, the descriptions and the customs help to develop the characters rather than any psychological probing. For example, Guadalupe and

Sacramento are characterized by their speeches and by their own peculiarities of language. Illustrative of this would be the following remark that Sacramento makes to doña Bárbara: "¿Y sabe pa qué me sirvió la libertá? pa volverme . . . ¡ni le digo qué!" (O.C., 464)

Carrasquilla's attachment to his native province has enabled him to create, according to García Prada, an "imagen verdadera y precisa de la vida y del ambiente antioqueños."[23] The author appears to be defining his own literary credo when he says that:

> El hombre cosmopolita o genial podrá identificarse con el universo mundo por el espíritu; por el corazón se identificará siempre con un rincón cualquiera del planeta, con las cuatro paredes en donde lo amolde el hábito y lo vincule el cariño. (O.C., 428)

Carrasquilla's little corner is Antioquia. The idyllic Risaralda valley is the scene for the first Colombian novel to enter wholly into the world of Negroes. Bernardo Arias Trujillo's "película de negredumbre y de vaquería," Risaralda.

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[23]García Prada, 334.

CHAPTER IV

RISARALDA: UNA NOVELA CRIOLLA

Luis Alberto Sánchez, in a statement calling attention to the relative lack of circulation of Colombian novels, has written that "la literatura colombiana ha sido bastante provincial . . ."[1] The noted critic then proceeds to give examples of how even the best Colombian novels have failed to gain recognition beyond the national borders or took a long time in doing so. We have just seen an example of this provincialism in the preceeding chapter on Tomás Carrasquilla. It now appears that Bernardo Arias Trujillo's novel, Risaralda (1935), is an instance of this same extranational neglect. Various Colombian literary critics have recognized its artistry, including Antonio Curcio Altamar who says that "Risaralda tendrá un sitio de prestigio y de cuenta en la novelística nacional."[2] Javier Arango Ferrer calls it "una excelente novela."[3] Silvio Villegas, in the prologue to the 1959 edition of the novel,

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[1]Sánchez, p. 32.

[2]Curcio Altamar, p. 250.

[3]Arango Ferrer, p. 65.

affirms that "Risaralda no es solo una gran novela colombiana, sino una de las adquisiciones definitivas de la literatura en America."[4] The American critic Gerald Wade refers to Risaralda as "a near high in Colombian fiction, and, indeed, in all Spanish American literature."[5] Finally, Ricardo Latcham calls it a work of "gran prosapia criolla, que merece una difusión más de acuerdo con su maestría y con su dinamismo moderno."[6]

Bernardo Arias Trujillo was born in Manizales in 1905. His literary production is not extensive because he died at the age of thirty-four, in 1939. His literary criticism is contained in Retablos Bolivarianos; and his Diccionario de Emociones is a collection of love letters. Both were compiled in 1938. In addition he published several short stories in La Novela Semanal: Cuando cantan los cisnes . . ., Luz and Muchacha sentimental (all three in volume 3, 1924).

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[4]Silvio Villegas, prologue to Risaralda (Medellín: Editorial Bedout, 1959), IX. All references to Risaralda given in the text will refer to this edition.

[5]Gerald Wade, "An Introduction to the Colombian Novel," Hispania, XXX, No. 4 (Nov., 1947), 481. This is the English version of the article which was later published in Spanish in collaboration with John Englekirk and to which I have referred in previous chapters.

[6]Ricardo Latcham, "Perspectivas de la novela colombiana actual," Atenea, LXXXIII, No. 248 (1946), 214.

Risaralda is one of the numerous Colombian novels that were inspired by José Eustasio Rivera's La vorágine (1924) and whose regionalism had a fundamentally social basis. Their Americanism is based on the reality of the nation--political, economic and social--but is not a catalogue of details as the costumbrista novel often was. The intent of these novels was to give a total and artistic picture of man in his relationship to the land. The depiction of this interaction of man and nature has almost none of the idealization of the romantic novel and, in fact, often shows nature as a brutal force that corrupts man (for example, La vorágine). Curcio Altamar has written that

> leen nuestros narradores a Tomás Carrasquilla y a Rivera, tomando del primero sus procedimientos de objetividad transcriptiva y de composición, y del otro el afán de mostrar una angustia nacional en un panorama terrígeno.[7]

Risaralda is a third person narrative which depicts the lives of the Negro inhabitants of the Risaralda valley. The author also shows the close relationship that existed between the people and the environment. Finally, he depicts the passing away of this pristine mode of existence in face of the forces of civilization represented by the white man. Like his illustrious compatriot Rivera, and like the equally famous interpreters of the pampa and the llanos, Ricardo Güiraldes and Rómulo Gallegos, respectively, Arias Trujillo

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[7]Curcio Altamar, 225.

belongs to the generation of post-World War I novelists who depicted a new vision of America. These authors were influenced particularly by the Mexican Revolution of 1910 and the struggle for social reform. There was also widespread disillusionment with European culture and society and these authors turned to a more American type of expression. Some of these writers discussed the problems of the city (Manuel Gálvez, Eduardo Barrios) while others depicted regional problems (in addition to Güiraldes, Gallegos and Rivera, we might include Gregorio López y Fuentes of Mexico, Alcides Arguedas of Bolivia, Ciro Alegría of Peru and Jorge Icaza of Ecuador). Many of these authors were concerned with the social problems of the illiterate masses. They assigned previously minor characters primary roles; and the aristocratic and bourgeois characters of the romantic novel and of Tomás Carrasquilla were replaced by Negroes, indians, and common people. Mariano Azuela's Los de abajo (1916) and Güiraldes' Don Segundo Sombra are the embodiment of this new concept of characters. Until the work of Carrasquilla in the depiction of the Negro in the Colombian novel rarely was comment made on his position in Colombian society.

The setting of La Marquesa de Yolombó is historical but it gives the first indication that Negroes perhaps did not live the romanticized lives depicted in María and El alférez real. Risaralda depicts the Negro character, who had previously been a secondary figure in the works of

Carrasquilla, Palacios and Isaacs, as a major figure and gives him his first extensive development in the Colombian novel.

Risaralda is divided into two parts. The first part describes the idyllic Risaralda Valley and the customs of its Negro inhabitants. The author introduces a cast of characters which includes ex-slaves, outlaws, vaqueros or cowboys, the store-keeper Pacha Durán and just plain loafers. We also learn about the customs of these people: their dances, their music, their weapons, their social habits and other idiosyncrasies. In the second part of the novel the author relates the love story of the Negress, La Canchelo, and of the white vaquero, Juan Manuel. The second part is the description of the relations between the original Negro inhabitants and the new white arrivals. These whites impose their customs and practices upon the Negroes thereby destroying the primitive culture of the valley.

Risaralda destroys the romantic myth. Negroes, mulattoes and zambos flock to the idyllic Risaralda Valley fleeing "los tiranos blancos." For the Negroes who came to the Risaralda Valley to establish the all negro community of Sopinga, the white man "era el blanco de sus odios, persecuciones, rencores, celos y mendacidades." (p. 70) Almost all of these fugitives from the white world "mostraban cicatrices de padecer y herretes de servidumbre. Habían servido a señores que no lo fueron, por que más tenían de hienas que de cristianos" (pp. 51-52).

The author explains that Negroes had been

> eternamente perseguidos, llamados siempre a servir al amo o para jugarse el cuero en las guerras civiles en conquista de una libertad que nunca usufructuaron . . . Allí (in Sopinga), lejos del terror de los amos, en ese rinconzuelo criollo de soledosa paz, fueron a recostar los fardos de su cautiverio para soliviarse de tántos reveses. (p. 52)

But Risaralda is not polemic. Arias Trujillo endeavors to portray the valley as it once was. The description of nature and of the characters is written in a prose which, at times, is almost poetic. The very beginning of the book sets the tone that most of the novel is going to follow:

> En el principio era la selva. Era en el principio la selva immensa, silenciosa, poblada de misterio y de osadía. Los siglos rodaban sobre el lomo del río al vaivén de las aguas y los robustos árboles tutelares, coronados de orquídeas, como dioses, presenciaban taciturnos el desfile infinito de las centurias. (p. 1)

In the above passage we see an example of the author's ability to evoke poetically a given situation. The biblical allusion of the opening sentence is reinforced by its repetition in the second sentence, era en el principio la selva. The prominent role that nature is going to have is immediately emphasized in the quadruple adjectivization of the jungle, la selva immensa, silenciosa, poblada de misterio y de osadía. And not only is the tremendous impact of nature accented but also its seeming immortality as the trees presenciaban taciturnos el desfile infinito de las centurias.

But the description of the valley is not entirely abstract:

> Valle anchuroso de Risaralda, valle lindo y macho que se va regando entre dos cordilleras como una mancha de tinta verde . . . llano esmeraldino y fanfarrón como un cadete de primeras armas, prado caldense donde la vida es sabrosa, el sol bueno, y el agua clara; vallecito que tiene la epidermis y las colinas acribilladas de palmeras, mansos ríos que acunan los guaduales soñolientos, en cuyas orillas hay hembras sensuales de ondulado caminar, como las samaritanas, y unos mocetones pendencieros que echan al dado la vida, porque las mujeres les digan guapos. (p. 1)

As does the poet, Arias Trujillo uses repetition to enhance the description of the valley: valle anchuroso, valle lindo and vallecito. He personifies the description of the valley by comparing it to a proud (fanfarrón) cadete de primeras armas. He speaks of smiling groves of trees (guaduales soñolientos) and gentle rivers, and the intimacy of man and nature is shown by the hembras sensuales and the mocetones pendencieros who play on the banks of the river.

The jungle is described in all of its grandeur and immensity:

> Selva hirsuta, con árboles consulares de grandes ramazones que formaban naves extensos y oscuros. Por los cuales erraban fieras y bichos de todo pelambre y veneno, atrincheradas en su salvajía para oponerse al zarpaso del hombre. Lo que no era montaña densa y tupida, eran immenso esteros de agua putrefacta, sobre los que anidaban millares de huevos de mosquitos trasmisores de malaria y fiebres perniciosas y amarillas. Las pampas humedas hervían de zancudos y anofeles y sus profundidades incomensurables eran difíciles de domar, porque estaban formadas por parches de greda pegajosa y agua putrida de fácil hundimiento y trágica salida, pues frecuentemente se tragaban hombres enteros sin dejar huellas de su antropofagia y ferocidad. La selva era una encrucijada de bejucos y parásitos, ramas caídas

> y doblados leños que opilaban a cada paso, el tránsito del hombre. Millares de orquídeas de lujo, lucían sus instalaciones cromáticas bajo árboles, y devengaban del presupuesto de sus gajos fértiles, chorros de savia vivificadora. (pp. 89-90)

The preceeding description of the jungle is realistic. It is not the romantic interpretation of nature that Isaacs transcribed in María but neither is it the omnipotent vortex of Rivera's La vorágine. It is a real jungle of dense trees and stagnant pools of water. It is a jungle inhabited by wild animals and malaria-carrying mosquitos. It is a jungle composed of putrid vegetation and beautiful orchids. This is the jungle in which the natives of Sopinga are at home but where the white man who comes later is an alien. This is a world of primitive forces which seems to contaminate the men around it with its primeval ferocity.

In the episode of the flood in the second half of the novel the author again gives an intimate description of nature. Arias Trujillo describes scenes and elements that other authors have completely overlooked. First we have the flood:

> Era una inmensa montaña móvil que se llevaba por delante cuanto encontraba, como un tanque de guerra. La cordillera, tenebrosa y oscura, encapotada de neblina, seguía alimentando los cauces de los ríos que bajaban de sus cavernas, flancos y arrugas, con impetu sin freno de aguas sucias. Casi todo el llano desapareció por fin, transformándose en un océano del que apenas surgían, a flor de agua, pequeñas islas que eran los picachos de antiguos oteros o partes altas del valle . . . (pp. 208-209)

The depiction of nature had been largely idyllic and romantic in Colombian literature until Jose Eustasio Rivera recorded the opposite aspect in his powerful epic about the jungle, La vorágine. In the above passage Arias Trujillo continues Rivera's revelation of the more sobering aspects of nature. This tremendous flood, metaphorically called una moñtana móvil, inundates the land and completely dominates man, animals and insects. The author has an alert eye to catch the reaction of the various animals:

> Extraordinaria la fraternidad de todos estos animales disímiles: las serpientes, trémulas de cobardía, merodeaban al lado de los novillos que pasturaban con más recelo con las aguas que con sus vecinos. El miedo mutuo desvanecía las diferencias y temores, y el ansia de vivir los ayuntaba, sin tiempo para hacerse males. (p. 209)

The power of the flood affects both the noble bulls and the lowly snakes. The description of how the snakes react to the flood is brilliant:

> De los animales ruines, ninguno como la serpiente para organizar su salvación . . . Trepan, arrastrándose con rapidez, por las colinas, escóndense en las arrugas de sus faldas, suben al vértice de los árboles, y se destrozan unas a otras por disputarse el puesto más seguro. (p. 210)

Other snakes seek safety in abandoned huts but even there the flood waters irrepressibly rise up and the serpents

> desesperadamente, huyen hacia los techos, y una vez que la inundación va llegando, se escapan a los caballetes del rancho, instalan allí su terror, y cuando el agua quiere tragerse ya la última prominencia del tambo, todavía las culebras hacen esfuerzos desesperados por escapar, y se yerguen, casi verticalmente, hasta que el

> agua les llega ya al pescuezo. Y al verse así acosados, locas ante lo inevitable, frente a la muerte que abre sus fauces, silban con desespero, se retuercen en convulsiones de pánico y con resolución heroica de morir, apresuran el martirio, arrojándose estoicamente a las voraces aguas, aún con la esperanza de salir con vida. (p. 213)

The author describes the reactions of other creatures such as the herons who land on driftwood or on the floating body of a dead bull when they need to rest, but he does not overlook other elements associated with the flood. For example, the smell, the hunger and the sickness:

> se riega por la atmósfera una oleada pútrida de hediondez infecta que produce fiebres intermitentes y vertigos enervantes. Los huracanes pasan untados de epidemia y de podredumbre, y la peste empieza a arrasar lo que la inundación no pudo. Detrás de las enfermedades viene su comedido escudero: el hambre, con su séquito de dolores y tragedias. La peste, nacida de la putrefacción de los árboles, peces y animales que el agua corrompió recorre las zonas ilesas para arruinar a los campesinos, y todo el valle toma ahora, más que nunca, un aspecto de escombros desolados. (pp. 212-213)

Nature is depicted in both its positive and negative aspects. The valley can be verdant and bountiful but the ravages of the flood, disease and hunger are also realities that the inhabitants of Sopinga must face.

The first part of Risaralda describes the arrival of the Negroes to the idyllic valley and the establishment of the all-black community of Sopinga. It is essentially a description of the land and of the customs of the sopingos. The second part of the novel narrates the arrival of the vaquero or cowboy Juan Manuel Vallejo to the valley and his

love affair with the beautiful Carmelita Durán, popularly known as "La Canchelo." This second part of the novel is primarily a description of the life of the vaquero and his activities.

The first Negro who "desvirgó la pubertad de la montaña" was Salvador Rojas who came to the valley "huyendo de la guerra civil." He and his companion, el Maestro Augustín López, gathered together a group of Negroes and established the colony of Sopinga. The description of these first inhabitants is harshly realistic:

> Eran todos ellos unos ginesillos sinvergüenzones, unos avispados cojuelos de rompe y rasga, una alegre canalluza de guerras civiles, morralla de guerrillas, contrabandistas de profesión, atorrantes y perdularios, amigos de entreveros con autoridades y alguaciles, aficionados a correrse sus vidrios y a hacer firuletes con la "peinilla" a los prójimos que no les eran simpáticos. Menos hábiles para el trabajo que para la pesca y caza, curtidos por el sol con una briosa y sólida arquitectura muscular, solían hacer sus faenas con lentitud africana, porque más confiaban en la providencia de la tierra que en la fuerza de sus brazos, brillantes de charol y de molicie. (pp. 2-3)

This description of the inhabitants of Sopinga is starkly realistic, almost naturalistic, in its emphasis on their negative qualities. They are described as sinvergüenzones, una alegre canalluza and morralla de guerrilla among other derogations. They are quick to fight and slow to work but they know how to enjoy life and trust in la providencia de la tierra. The concepts of hard work and getting ahead would be alien to these people whose happiness

in their earthly paradise is not based on the possession of material goods. The author calls them "una erudita barbarie."

The sopingos, as the inhabitants of Sopinga were called, established their community and ran it according to their own customs and idiosyncrasies. They rejected all authority which emanated from white society. Consequently, when an official is sent to Sopinga from the nearby town of Cartago (in order to make the Sopingos "respetá la autoridá"), the author tells us that he is quickly run out of the community which adamantly rejected "la intromisión de los blancos en sus asuntos." (p. 5)

One of the customs of the sopingos which disturbed the whites was their marriage practice, or rather the lack of it. Because, the author writes, "los negros risaraldenses tenían un concepto árabe de la propiedad de la mujer, la cual era para ellos solamente una 'cosa.'" (p. 7) The sopingos did not believe in marriage vows or wedding ceremonies and "el amor no era egoista." A woman belonged to the man who was strong enough to take her and keep her. In one of the more brutal and naturalistic scenes in the novel, Juancho Marín, "el guapo entre los guapos," cuts off his companion Cristobal's head and tosses it into the river. This occurred because Juancho had become fond of Cristobal's wife and decided he wanted her. Juancho won and the woman then belonged to him.

This system worked well for the sopingos and the women served their men and did not complain. On the other hand, after the whites imposed their authority and religious practices on the community "se vío el caso de muchos matrimonios que eran felices y habían vivido unidos hasta antes de la intromisión clerical, desatarse malquistados, desde el mismo momento en que la iglesia les formalizó el estado." (p. 79)

The harshest, and seemingly most unbelievable, episode in the novel deals with the ill-tempered Negro Esteban Rodas. One morning he leaves his house to go check his fishing lines. His little six-year old daughter follows him crying. He tells the child to go back and she pays him no attention. Since the child persists in following him, Esteban "la agarró del cabello y despacio, exquisitamente, con una finura florentina--refinamiento increible en un negro malo--la fue haciendo tajaditas tan delgadas como hostios y los iba tirando una por una, con lentitud, a los pescados del río." (p. 33) Such description goes far beyond realism and enters the realm of the macabre (even if the prologuist affirms the veracity of such episodes[8]).

These gruesome events are only one aspect, a negative one, of life in the Risaralda valley. Life among the Sopingos was unconstrained and the exhibition of one's

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[8]Villegas, VI.

masculinity and courage was a virtue. The guapo or man of courage was one of the most highly considered members of the community:

> Los que más consideración gozaban entre los juerguistas, eran los guapos, quienes por cualquier nada se requintaban machete en mano a buscar camorra al prójimo. Las gentes todas los temían, el hembraje les era dócil y los dueños de casa procuraban tenerlos contentos, por lo cual extremaban sus adulaciones, zalemas y agasajos, más por temor que por pleitesía. (p. 30)

In consequence, a high value was placed on bravery and manliness and "un hombre hacíase despreciable si alguna vez había sido derrotado o no había cometido siguiera un homicidio." (p. 4)

The weekly Saturday night dances are bacchanalian imbroglios for which the men prepare by sharpening their machetes. Dancing and jesting are the major activities of the evening fueled by the unsparing consumption of liquor. The jesting (el trovar) represents a rivalry in which the antagonists "hacían alusiones picarescas o intencionadas sobre defectos y virtudes de cada quién, y casi siempre, como resultados de esos tiroteos musicales, había uno o varios muertos. . . ." (p. 29) The first verse is thrown out spontaneously by a member of the concurrence and is answered by a second party or by the person to whom it alluded. An example of this jesting is the verses exchanged by Victor Manuel and Saturnina. Victor begins by affirming his prowess with the women:

Tengo amores en Cartago,
y queridas en Pereira,
una novia en Manizales
y dos mocitas en Neira. (p. 40)

to which Saturnina responds:

En San Pacho están las sordas,
y en Aranzazu las feas;
las lindas en Manizales
y las pu . . . ras en la Aldea.

These verbal jousts have no set length and continue until they are interrupted by another speaker, until they deteriorate into a conflict or until one of the participants draws the contests to a close. An effective closing verse is the one that the guapo Jauncho Marín sings to his companion Vicentico:

Vamonós por un traguito,
corazón amable y santo,
no hablemos más pendejados
y démosle fin al canto. (p. 43)

The entire concurrence answers with the standard closing verse, which might reveal a clever pun (<u>todos apuntan al blanco</u>) on racial alienation between Negroes and whites (although the author gives no further explanation):

Angelés con carabinas,
todos apuntan al blanco:
gloria al Padre, gloria al Hijo,
gloria al Espíritu Santo. (p. 44)

Even in the midst of their social activities the Negroes are aware of their estrangement from white society --just as the very existence of Sopinga is testimony to the fact that the Negroes believed that they could live better in a community of their own.

Among the verses that the author includes to illustrate the music of the Negroes is the complete "Canción del boga ausente" by Candelario Obeso. I have previously referred to this poem by Obeso in Chapter I and although Arias Trujillo does not ascribe the poem to Obeso he does say that it was written "por un negro de verdad." (p. 54)

The most popular dance is the bambuco which the author describes thus:

> Este bambuco nuestro tiene de corrida de toros y de riñas de gallos, los dos juegos predilectos del pueblo; el poncho es a veces un capote para hacer suertes a las hembras y ponerlas en su puesto, y tanto la ruana como el pañuelo son una reminiscencia primitiva del ala conquistadora del gallo enamorado . . . El bambuco es baile de pureza y es inocente y cordial como una declaración de amor. (p. 37)

In its essence the bambuco is not a happy dance:

> El traduce años de esclavitud, ansia sin rumbo, bajel sin dueño, hambre de patria . . . chasquido de látigo sobre curvadas cervices, dolor hondo, desgarrador, taciturno, que por dentro sin piedad y sin descanso, aunque en veces se haga malicioso y ladino y trate de expresar pasajeras alegrías. Ese contento es sólo un truco para velar con suavidad hondos penares. (p. 53)

Another of the popular dances is the torbellino, "el único danzón alegre de los bozales." (p. 53) Many of the Negro songs and airs reflect the sadness and the bitterness which has been their lot in the New World but the torbellino is a complete expression of joy. The author gives the following description of it:

> El torbellino es aire nacional de abolengo africano y expresa la euforia elemental del negro de Colombia. Este, deliberadamente, echa en olvido la amargura que dejó en el bambuco y suelta las riendas de la alegría,

> de la Gorrachera sin control, en ese ritmo animado y vital que incita a botar fuera la angustia ya mover el cuerpo con movimientes cósmicos. (p. 52)

In contrast, the bambuco "es pena alegre, aire saudoso, tímido efusión, pero es siempre tristeza." (p. 53)

As the years pass by the inhabitants of Sopinga moderate some of their worst vices but their free love practices and tumultuous dances persist. There existed a general antipathy towards outsiders and happily for the Negroes "el blanco no había podido penetrar en este recodo rebelde en donde la negredumbre se estableció con anchuroso independencia." (p. 68) In addition to chasing off the periodic emissaries of the government, the inhabitants also resisted any encroachment by the clergy. In one episode they frighten off a priest by tying the naked body of a dead old woman to the cords of the church bells. The spectacle is sufficiently horrendous that the priest quickly departs. Consequently, "con estas costumbres y en ese valle de contento, el negro era feliz." (p. 71)

They were superstitious and in moments of anxiety they recurred to their manicongos, "unos fetiches por ellos mismos construídos, hechos a su imagen y semejanza, para implorarles ayuda divina." (p. 71) Like the whites "ellos fabricaban sus dioses para temerlos, pedirlos favores y odorarlos." (p. 71) Their only fear was of the unknown and of those things which, in their ignorance, they could not explain. Otherwise, "eran libres, señores de cuanto se

extendía ante sus miradas, amos de ríos, montes, animales y esteros." (p. 72)

The sopingos knew that they were fugitives from white society and they had the premonition that one day the white man would come to the valley. When eventually he did he came in force. A gunboat sailed up the Cauco and disembarked armed troops. The Negroes well knew what the arrival of the white man signified and

> los que pudieron emigrar, lo hicieron con mudo contento de los conquistadores; y los que se quedaron, resignándose aparentemente, buscando y no perdiendo nunca la oportunidad de rebelarse contra la tiranía forastera, que sólo había llegado a sembrar cizaña, servilismo, odiosidad y desamor. (p. 79)

The white man arrived and imposed his laws and customs. He took the best land. He conscripted the young men into the army and even the priests used the civil authorities to force the native inhabitants to get married "de acuerdo con las normas de la iglesia." The whites had come to the paradisiacal Risaralda valley because they had heard that:

> Sopinga era tierra de buen clima, fructuosos llanos, próvidas montañas y mansos ríos y que por lo tanto en ese rincón de cielo podrían establecer dehesas de ganado, haciendas y estancias, pueblos y centros comerciales. (p. 76)

The arrival of the whites also meant that life in the valley, as the sopingos knew it, would no longer be the same.

One of the first acts of the white conquerors is to change the name of the community. They consider Sopinga immoral, African and savage. They select the new name of

"La Virginia," "apodo feminado" which has absolutely no meaning or consequence for the original inhabitants. Methodically, the newcomers impose an alien social order and with it "un invisible cordón sanitario de jerarquía entre las dos castas." (p. 83)

The arrival of the white man is the end of Sopinga and the beginning of a new era. In poetic and nostalgic phrases the author laments the passing of the old order which, like Guiraldes in Don Segundo Sombra, he considers the passing away of a way of life:

> ¡Pobre Sopinga, pobrecita tierra negruzca que ya no lo eres del todo, porque cada día te vas despercudiendo más y el virus de la civilización te llenó de toxinas que te palidecen y desfiguran! . . .
>
> ¡Adiós, Sopinga mulata, cachorrita tierra de bailongos, de tiples y de bambucos, donde fueron libres los bozales hasta que un día llegaron los blancos a enturbiar sus vidas! . . .
>
> ¡Adiós, tierra buena para siempre y bandida a ratos, nidal de negros guerrilleros y contrabandistas que cantaban unas tonadas dulces y tristes, como las tristezas dulces que se sienten por la tarde, a las orillas de tu río, en los rubios veranos. (p. 85)

In the preceeding lines the author evokes a feeling of compassion for Sopinga: ¡Pobre Sopinga . . .; Sopinga mulata; tierra negruzca; tierra de bailongos; de tiples y de bambucos; tonadas dulces y tristes. This sentiment he contrasts with the whites who arrive a enturbiar sus vidas and who spread el virus de la civilizacion. In this passage we have the essence of the conflict between civilization and barbarity, between progress and the status quo. The

author depicts negatively the coming of the whites and he seems to be correct when he calls civilization a virus, especially when it is not long before the whites, whom he calls "la canalla blanca," destroy the natural beauty of the valley and impose a caste system in which the Negroes are considered inferior.

Thus, with a note of pain, the author says goodby to Sopinga:

> Ay, Sopinga de mis entretelas, que te prendías siempre como yerba de potrero en el vestido del alma: estás tan desfigurada, te han puesto los blancos tan forastero y pretencioso, que ni Salvadorcillo (the founder of the settlement) volviera a mirarte. . . . (p. 86)

With civilization, technology and the machete the white man assumes authority. The verdant forest is cut down to make way for new homes and businesses and what was yesterday "fiera jungla" becomes today "suelo domesticado."

In this part of the novel the author singles out the machete as another of the national elements that he wants to praise. In the following passage we see the praise that he renders to a seemingly commonplace instrument:

> ¡Bendigamos al machete victorioso siempre, abajado nunca, que lo mismo reluce con donaire en lo mejor de un baile de garrote, que se yergue altivo y libertador en medio del combate! Bendigamos al machete criollo porque es leal como nuestros paisanos, porque con su punta se escribío la historia patria, y porque debería figurar por derecho propio en el escudo de armas de la República! (p. 92)

The victory of the machete over the jungle and the dominance of the white man over the Negro, that is, the triumph of civilization over the uncultivated brings to a close the first part of the novel. The second part of the novel introduces us to the life of the vaquero and to the love of Juan Manuel and La Canchelo.

The second half of the novel opens with a quote from the Song of Solomon in the Bible: "No miréis en que soy morena porque el Sol me besó. . . ." (p. 99) This opportune quote introduces a paean to the beautiful Negress, Canchelita Durán. In a series of stanzas that follow the psalm structure of the Bible the author sings the praises of this "Hija de la Selva" in almost biblical terms:

> --Morena eres porque el Sol te besó, y codiciable como fruta en sazón, pues que tus carnes dan miel de caña y olor de trapiche criollo, y toda tú, tienes el perfume afrodisiaco de las leonas del Desierto . . .
>
> --Bendita seas, mozuela de manigua, talle de bambú, orquídea del trópico, retoño de la gleba, la de altivos senos en botón, con lisuras de mangos bien maduros y curvas aterciopeladas de entrega, redondos y suaves como los flancos morenos de las tinajas donde guardas el agua fresca de tu casa. (pp. 99-100)

Other biblical allusions in the description of La Canchelo include references to the Old Testament, to Solomon and the Temple of Solomon and the use of the phrases: Glorificada seas; Hosanna; and Loado seas. The author also makes more mundane comparisons of her with Joan Crawford and with the possibility that in Africa her "ilustre cuerpo"

would be sacrificed to pacify the gods. The author completes the biblical tone of this passage with a final "Amen."

La Canchelo is the daughter of Pacha Durán who is one of the more prominent members of the community. Pacha is the owner of the inn where the Negroes hold their weekly dances. She is notorious for her greed and her escapades. Her story is one of the most interesting and poignant in the novel. She was born in Cartago but she did not know who her father was because, "como ella decía, la engendraron 'en fiestas.'" Her mother treated her cruelly as a child and she did not protest when a fisherman carried her off when she was still a young girl. However, her lover also mistreated her and she fled to Sopinga.

As a young woman Pacha was attractive and from her first moment in Sopinga "fue tentación de negros, apetito de mulatos, ansia de zambos, sueño de mestizos y chifladura de todos." (p. 26) An energetic and ambitious young woman, she married a man for his general store and then cast him aside for other husbands "que salían de su lecho tan extenuados de fuerzas corporales como de dinero." However, as the years passed by, "su oro . . . dío en filtrarse hacia los bolsillos de los muchachos que la cortejaban, mucho por interés y nada por amor." La Canchelo was the fruit of one of her last affairs. She loved her only child dearly and guarded her against the misfortunes that she had experienced

herself. Pacha was wealthy and her life and money were devoted to seeing her daughter well married and established. She wanted to die "dejando a su Canchelo, casada con hombre blanco y de buenas maneras, no con un negro vulgar del puerto, ordinario y despreciable." (p. 162)

La Canchelo is exceedingly attractive and vain. She exhibits the airs and the feeling of superiority that her mother has engendered in her. Although a virgin, she has the satisfaction of knowing that she is coveted but Pacha "cuidaba de su virtud como de algo propio, con sagacidad de eunuco." The young men describe her with such interesting epithets as culiapretada and pispa (prudish). La Canchelo's affectations and Pacha's desire to have her wed a white man are the chagrin of the Negro community.

The white man designated as the suitor of La Canchelo is the vaquero Juan Manuel Vallejo. He is as much of a man as she is woman.

> Era este Juan Manuel un mocetón de buena estampa, aventurero y sentimental, asaz poeta y mujerengo, entendido y bizarro trotamundos, baquiano en domar lo mismo a una arisca moza, que a una potranca chúcara. A la hembra la amansaba con lazos de amor y a esta con sogas de valentía. (p. 107)

The love story of Juan Manuel and La Canchelo is elementary. He views her as a beautiful, spirited young filly that arouses his instincts of lover and horsebreaker. He woos her and, aided by his skin color, wins her. His love, it seems, is ephemeral because he can't bring himself

to marry her even though she is carrying his child. La Canchelo is spared the anguish of having him leave her when he is killed in a freak accident (a bull that he had roped pulled the lasso around a hollow tree trunk which crashed down on both horse and rider). The scorned Negress has the consolation of knowing that, in death, Juan Manuel will always be hers.

The introduction of Juan Manuel into the novel allows the author to describe the life and customs of the vaquero. This part of the novel has a spiritual alliance with those great novels that grew out of the Spanish American soil: La vorágine, Doña Bárbara and Don Segundo Sombra. Juan Manuel, at times, seems to be a more sophisticated and self-confident Arturo Cova because like the protagonist of Rivera's novel he has fled the city and struck out into the wilderness. Unlike him, however, he learns the arts of survival and becomes an accomplished vaquero. Like don Segundo Sombra he is a vagabond, a restless wanderer who becomes uneasy when he is tied down in one spot, because "tenía alma de vaquero que es tener alma de extensión." In a passage that could have come from Güiraldes' Don Segundo Sombra, Arias Trujillo writes that:

> la llanura ejerce sobre el vaquero extraños dominios de dulce tiranía. Cuando se amanceba con ella, que es brujo y tiene filtros hechizantes, ya jamás podrá desasirse de sus brazos, ni evadir su grato imperio. (p. 112)

Also like don Segundo, Juan Manuel is a skilled horseman, an expert herdsman and a good storyteller. He obtains a job on a neighboring hacienda and with his guitar or tiple he entertains his companions with songs and stories. The tiple is another of the national elements that the author singles out for praise:

> ¡Tiple bonachón y montañero tiple sentimental y macho, camarada fidelísimo de nuestro pueblo humilde! El campesino lo oye zurrunguear desde que su madre lo acunaba sobre las rodillas, y no es todavía mozo cuando ya lo ha aprendido a rasgar para ir a cantarle a la novia . . . El tiple no puede faltar en ninguna casa labriega, en el taller aldeano, en las cantinas del pueblo, en las fondas de los caminos reales . . . Tambíen el tiple es patriota y por eso los reclutas lo enrolan para la campaña, primero que sus encapillados . . . Evoquemos, pues, al tiple criollo, hermano y compinche de todas nuestras desventuras y glorias. . . . (pp. 134-135)

One of the verses that is sung in accompaniment with the tiple is in praise of La Canchelo:

> Por ser hija de la Pacha
> y mas hermosa qui un cielo
> le pusieron en Sopinga
> el mote de La Canchelo. (p. 122)

Two of the most important elements in the life of the vaquero are his horse and his saddle. Juan Manuel had a good horse and an excellent saddle. His relationship to his saddle was like a marriage because:

> Más que por su fidelidad, amábala por pundonor caballeresco: jamás se había caída de ella, nunca, por su culpa, ni por fallo de sus correas, lo derribó a tierra una potranca chúcara, que es la suprema humillación para un vaquero de honor. (p. 140)

The author describes many of the other interesting activities of the vaquero, such as, the branding and disinfecting of the bulls, the castration of the old bulls, the Sunday bath, dancing and drinking (brandy or el aguardiente which has been "el mejor combustible para movilizar la vida nacional") and the poncho:

> Ruana se le llama en tierra fría y poncho en la caliente. Desde niños lo llevan con donaire, es el más ambicionado regalo de infancia junto con el machete, y cuando ya se es mozo, sirve para todo: de alfombra para montar el pelo en buena bestia, a escondidas del padre; de defensa, cuando con un canto le hace quites y pespuntes a los toros en las ferias del pueblo o en las corridas de la hacienda. En las riñas domingueras es símbolo de honor y el que se atreva a pisarlo tiene que pagar su atrevimiento con pena de la vida, porque el poncho es la honra y como ésta, no puede ser pisoteado por nadie, mientras haya sangre en las venas y vergüenza en el alma. Cuando estalla la pelea, el labriego envuelve su brazo con el poncho para mejor resistir las cuchilladas del adversario. La prenda familiar y útil está siempre lista a servir a su dueño para todos los menesteres, aventuras y percances. (p. 157)

In addition to the numerous material articles that Arias Trujillo particularizes as indicative of Colombian nationality he also describes the social phenomenon of the cuatrero or bandit. In the dashing figure of Víctor Manuel Restrepo the author draws us a romanticized picture of a Colombian Jesse James, a veritable Robin Hood of the plains. Nicknamed Víctor Malo, this outlaw stole only from the rich and shared his spoils with the poor. Cognizant of the inequitable distribution of wealth in the country, Víctor Malo "creía obrar bien, quitaba al prepotente parte de sus

sobras, para dárselos al pobre o a si mismo. . . ." He enjoyed the admiration and aid of the people in his constant encounters with the police.

The appearance of Víctor Malo's gang in the Risaralda valley gives occasion to a duel with machetes between the fabled outlaw and the valiant Juan Manuel. The latter challenges the bandit to a hand to hand combat in order to spare the town an attack by the entire gang. The two adversaries, "como dos gimnastas griegos educados para el circo," wage an epic battle until Juan Manuel finally prevails. The badly wounded vaquero has proven his courage but this interlude serves the purpose of introducing another aspect of Colombian society. Unfortunately, it is an aspect which is still very real today--banditry.

The Negroes of La Virginia (formerly Sopinga) do not accept or trust Juan Manuel. Although he is an excellent vaquero, he is still white. They resent his courtship of the prettiest of the Negro girls and "la negredumbre zurcía conjuraciones contra el blanco entremetido." The Negroes are always conscious of the verse which says:

> Si ves a un negro comiendo
> di un blanco en la compañia,
> o el blanco le debe al negro,
> o es del negro la comío. . . . (p. 166)

They do not believe that a white man can sincerely love a black woman. Consequently, when Juan Manuel tells his fellow vaquero Desiderio, a Negro, that he loves La Canchelo but not enough to marry her, Desiderio is not surprised and calmly replies:

> Claro: los pobres negros no servimos a ustedes, sino pa que nos carguen como mulas y nos desgracien las mujeres, nada má. (p. 191)

La Canchelo suspects Juan Manuel's treachery but she lovingly nurses him to a recovery from the wounds that he suffered in the fight with Víctor Malo. After he has recovered from his delirium she does not hesitate to tell him the truth as she sees it: "lo que pasa es que vos ya no me querés, que tas jarto conmigo porque matates tus antojos y te querés volá pa dejame a mí puay tirada com ún cuero." (p. 202) Then, in what is perhaps the most sensitive and disturbing statement about interracial relations in all Colombian fiction, the aggrieved Negress states what seems to be a universal truth about black-white understanding:

> Lo que pasa, es que vos no comprendés mi pena. Vos, como sos blanco, no sabés de estos dolores de los negros. Ustedes tan creyendo que sólo los blancos son cristianos. Pero nosotros también tenemos alma y nos duele el corazón. . . . (p. 203)

All the anguish and tears of more than four-hundred years of slavery and discrimination, of caste systems and women wronged, of men castrated and spirits broken, go into the above statement. Carmelita knows, Desiderio knows and all the Negroes who fled to and founded Sopinga know that the white does not see and, more importantly, does not treat the Negro as a human being. In that declaration is the raison d'être of Sopinga and the tyranny of the white conquerors. In those four sentences is the essence of the

Negro Colombian's struggle for equality in a predominantly white society. In those lines are buried forever the world of María and Manuela. Risaralda is only the gentle harbinger of a new and more bitter realism that not only destroys the myth of racial egalitarianism but damns it as well. Waiting in the foyer to be heard are Diego Castrillon Arboledo, Arnoldo Palacios and Manuel Zapata Olivella.

Juan Manuel's feeble response to this incident is: "Mire mijita: vos sabés que yo no te engaño . . . Mire, mija: por esta cruz que vuelvo y que me trague la tierra si te toy engañando . . ." Do we see poetic justice when the hollow tree pulls up from the ground and smashes down Juan Manuel? His rationale is once again reminiscent of Don Segundo Sombra:

> El no quiere vivir días intrascendentes en un mismo predio, hacerse viejo en un solo lugar, opacándose en bregas cotidianos bajo un cielo igual. El desea vivir en diario errabundaje, como la gota de agua que nunca pasa por el mismo sitio. Quiere ser móvil, buscar distintas aventuras y diversos amores, con la emoción a flor de alma, entre encrucijadas de peligros e interrogaciones permanentes. (p. 220)

Symbolically Juan Manuel can be compared to Gallegos' Santos Luzardo. Like the antagonist of Doña Bárbara he represents the civilized man (it should be remembered that, unlike don Segundo, Juan Manuel is city-bred and educated, his life as a vaquero is an adaptation) who journeys to the wild plains and overcomes both foes and nature. It is the clash between what Domingo Faustino

Sarmiento called civilización y barbarie. It is progressive white civilization contrasted with the pristine simplicity of the Negroes. Villegas says that "La Canchelo es el Valle de Risaralda humanizado por el hombre blanco."[9] That is, just as it was difficult and represented a challenge to Juan Manuel to win La Canchelo, so it was for the white man to win, or dominate the valley.

Risaralda raises the implicit question of what is civilization? Who is fooling whom? The Negro in Sopinga had freedom and lived in unison with his environment. Unhampered by social and religious conventions, he satisfied his basic desires in the most elemental fashion. He worked when he wanted to work. He sang, he danced, he fought and he loved whenever it pleased him. He rowed his canoe under the stars and he understood the beauty of the night. Conversely, the whites destroyed nature. They built factory-like towns and destroyed the forests. Their lives were governed by rigid ceremonies and pretensions and had none of the spontaneity that the Negroes had previously exhibited.

One final comparison with Don Segundo Sombra will confirm the affinity of the two novels. As don Segundo rides off, his young protegé remarks: "aquello que se

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[9]Villegas, VIII.

alejaba era más una idea que un hombre."[10] The same sentiment can be applied to the Risaralda valley. That which disappeared with Sopinga was more of an idea, more of a possibility than a reality. It was a way of life which had become incompatible with the technology and science of the twentieth century.

I have elaborated upon Arias Trujillo's description of many diverse elements, such as, the land, the guitar, the poncho, the machete, the vaquero and other subjects. This is pertinent because I wanted to establish the fact that Risaralda is not a novel about Negroes. It is a national novel in which Negroes are an important element. It is national in the same sense that La vorágine is, that is, it takes an inherently Colombian subject and depicts it artistically. Risaralda is an outstanding novel and deserves greater recognition. More important than individual problems are the questions of nationality that it discusses. It stands on a par with that great trilogy of novels about the Spanish American personality: La vorágine, Don Segundo Sombra and Doña Bárbara.

The naturalistic manner of depicting the lives of the Negroes (such as Juancho Marin cutting off his companion's head or Esteban Rodas cutting up his daughter) will receive a more extensive development in Las estrellas son negras by Arnoldo Palacios, the next novel to be discussed.

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[10] Ricardo Güiraldes, Don Segundo Sombra (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, 1961), 184.

CHAPTER V

A "NATURALISTIC" PORTRAYAL OF THE NEGRO: LAS ESTRELLAS SON NEGRAS

After the World War had ended in 1918 many authors in Spanish America turned away from Europe as a source of literary and intellectual leadership. They became interested in their own nations and cultures and especially in the plight of the American Indian. A new wave of "Indianist" novels was initiated, of a very distinct nature from the romantic novels of the nineteenth-century. In Mexico, Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador, countries which have a large indian population, this new type of novel depicted the inferior social status of the indian and decried his mistreatment at the hands of the white majority.[1] However, in their zeal to publicize and redress the wrongs perpetrated upon the indian these authors overlooked the plight of other minority groups, principally the Negro.[2]

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[1]The best known of these novels are: Raza de Bronce (1919) by the Bolivian Alcides Arguedas; Huasipungo (1934) by the Ecuatorian Jorge Icaza; El indio (1935) by the Mexican Gregorio López y Fuentes; and El mundo es ancho y ajeno (1941) by the Peruvian Ciro Alegría.

[2]A notable exception is the novel Pobre Negro (1937) by the Venezuelan Rómulo Gallegos.

In Chapter I we noted that the Indianist novel never had much repercussion in Colombia, neither during the romantic period nor in the subsequent period of social protest. In Colombia the Negro takes the place of the indian as a literary subject but it was not until after the Second World War that Colombian authors addressed themselves to the social situation of the Negro. Las estrellas son negras (1949) by Arnoldo Palacios depicts the harshest aspects of the Negro's life in Colombia. This novel has been called by Curcio Altamar "la mejor y más cumplida novela naturalista de Colombia, tanto en la ejecución como en la impasibilidad cruda del estilo y en la preferencia por explotar el elemento sórdido, roñoso y cruel de la existencia humana."[3] Néstor Madrid-Malo supports this opinion by listing Palacios as one of the "autores de primera línea" during the decade of the forties.[4] On the other hand, Humberto Bronx finds in this novel "muestras de un naturalismo sórdido y ruin, poco común y casi único en la literatura colombiana."[5] This

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[3]Curcio Altamar, 251.

[4]Néstor Madrid-Malo, "Estado actual de la novela en Colombia," Revista Interamericana de Bibliografía, XVIII, No. 1 (Jan.-Mar., 1967), 72.

[5]Humberto Bronx, Veinte años de novela colombiana (Medellín: Editorial Granamérica, 1966), 20.

statement says nothing about the literary value of the novel but implies that its naturalism automatically invalidates its worth.

Las estrellas son negras can be shocking and disturbing in its emphasis on the negative, however, Jean Paul Sartre has written that "concrete literature will be a synthesis of Negativity, as a power of uprooting from the given, and a Project, as an outline of a future order; it will be the Festival, the flaming mirror which burns everything reflected in it, and generosity, that is, a free invention, a gift."[6] Palacios has chosen to reveal the world in a particular manner, naturalism, so that the reader will not remain indifferent to it. It is the task of the writer, to quote Sartre again, "to act in such a way that nobody can be ignorant of the world and that nobody may say that he is innocent of what it's all about."[7]

Las estrellas son negras introduces us to a world of hunger and social inequity. It cultivates a theme which is reminiscent of that of John Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath (1939). Like Steinbeck, Palacios shows

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[6]Jean Paul Sartre, What is Literature? (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 153.

[7]Ibid., 18.

how the life of the poor can become wretched and almost unbearable. The portrayal contains all of the poignancy of Steinbeck's novel and its naturalistic scenes are just as forcefully drawn. Just as Steinbeck was able to express artistically the courage of the Joad family in the face of the social hostility directed at them, Palacios likewise depicts the determination of the boy Irra to overcome the anguish and suffering of the Negro's life. Both authors evoke the strength and goodness to be found in the basic humanity of their characters. Palacios does not over-exaggerate the sordid element (as did Jorge Icaza whose style he appears to have emulated).

Palacios narrates approximately one day in the life of a Negro youth, Irra, and during that time we learn what it is like to be poor and black in Colombia. The author narrates the novel but he frequently uses interior monologue and dialogue so that we may see how the characters themselves respond to a situation. The novel shows the protagonist reacting to and reflecting upon the social circumstances in which he finds himself. The novel is divided into four parts entitled: (1) Hambre, (2) Irra, (3) ¡Nive! and (4) Luz Interior. Palacios depicts the psychological growth of Irra from reaction to reflection, from anger to a determination to improve his economic condition.

The language of the novel is often coarse and unrefined in keeping with the level of society that the author is depicting. There is also frequent transcription of the Chocó dialect which the uneducated characters speak. The prose style is reminiscent of that which Jorge Icaza used in Huasipungo in which there is a disregard for standard grammar and syntax. A brief example of ths language of Palacios' characters is the following sentence: "Iz que jueron a ñamá ar jué . . . Peo tá borracho" (p. 153).[8] This dialect differs markedly from standard Spanish which would read: Dicen que fueron a llamar al juez . . . Pero está borracho. This style has the advantage of showing the correspondence between the language that people use and their level of education, or rather, the lack of it. We learn that the people are not fed, that they are not educated and that public officials are negligent in their duties.

Chapter I depicts the hunger and frustration of the unemployed protagonist. Chapter II describes his reaction to being hungry and being unable to find a job. Chapter III shows Irra as he begins to communicate with other people and Chapter IV describes his arrival to a level of self-understanding.

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[8]See Curcio Altamar, 251, who refers to "La exactitud fotográfica del habla regional chocoana."

In the first chapter hunger is omnipresent: "Irra sintió el aullido del hambre. El hambre aulló en todos los agujeros de la casa. Y en el polvo de las calles. ¡Hambre! . . ."[9] Elena the younger sister of Irra picks at the wall covering and in the following passage we see the impact of hunger upon the child and upon the emotions of the protagonist:

> Ella se habia dedicado a arrancar el pañete de la pared, echándolo en el regazo. Miraba quien la observaba y al sentirse sola se comía el pañete. En eso la vió Irra. Sobrecogiólo brutal sensación de odio, o de reproche, y le lanzó una patada . . . La patada la golpeó en el costado derecho. Al caer, el vestido remendado de tela ordinaria se le arremangó y la niña quedó desnuda unos minutos . . . Su carita negra quedó untada de polvo, y lo mismo su cabello motoso en el cual se veían enredadas algunas basuras (p. 39).

In the above passage we see the author's effectiveness in describing what hunger will make a person do. A child is reduced to eating the wall covering and Irra's anger, not so much at his sister but at his inability to ameliorate their poverty, causes him to react violently. Palacio's style is almost reportorial. He describes what happens with very little elaboration on the details. The child picked at the wall. She looked about her. Irra saw her. Hatred overcame him. He kicked her. This is the essence of Palacios' style and it gives the impression of

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[9]Arnoldo Palacios, Las estrellas son negras (Bogota: Editorial Iqueima, 1949), 168. All references in the text will refer to this edition.

being telegraphic without actually being so. The author uses this type of narration to give greater force to these naturalistic scenes. The reader is presented with the weight of a negative occurrence (for example, he kicked her) without any elaboration that would detract from that action. Throughout the novel the author refrains from any commentary and allows the reader to draw his own conclusions.

The poor have their pride and even gnawing hunger cannot bring Irra to humble himself and beg the grocer for credit:

> El estomago le ardía. Sintió más hambre aún . . . No había comido nada, cierto. Y a pesar de ello, ahora como un perro cobarde no había tenido voluntad suficiente para proponerle al tendero, les fiara una mísera libra de arroz (p. 76).

Irra seems trapped by circumstances beyond his control. He has ambitions. He wants to work and help his family but he is frustrated in his efforts to change his situation:

> Cómo le gustaría ser mecánico. Pero por más que Irra caminaba durante todo el santo día no lograba conseguir trabajo en ninguna parte. Ya había perdido la esperanza de que le dieran un empleo de portero proque el era negro y casi todos los puestos se los daban a los blancos, o a los negros que le lamían los zapatos al intendente. A Irra le dolían los pies de tanto ir y venir en busca de trabajo (p. 42).

Education doesn't seem to offer a means of progress either. In the following passage we see the author's skillful use of dialogue and his reproduction of the regional

dialect of Chocó as Irra answers his mother's questions about his studies:

> Ar juin, ¿qué te contejtó er diretó d'erucación, mijo?--habló la madre, voz cavernosa, doliente.
> -Nada. Que no hay beca para estudiar fuera de aquí . . .
> -¿Y vó no ganátei tu año, pué? . . .
> O é qué . . .
> -Tampoco . . . Las becas se las repartieron a los blancos . . . Que se vayan al diablo! . . . Que se las metan por el jopo y se vayan a la porra! . . . ¡Prefiero la tisis o la lepra, pero no ser pobre! . . . ¡Ser pobre es la peor desgracia! ¡Maldita sea! . . . (pp. 42-43).

The above passage shows that obtaining an education and learning well do not always help the Negro. Prejudice still exists and although Irra was the top student in his class the white students received the scholarships. Consequently, we notice the beginning of anger and bitterness as the youth becomes more aware of social inequity. The selection also makes a subtle distinction between Irra, who has attended school and uses good Spanish, and his mother who uses a patois.

The mother is the sole support of the family and she has grown old and tired. She admonishes Irra and reminds him of his responsibility:

> Yo te lo tuve iciendo, Irraé, que no te metiérai en su mardita politica . . . Qu'eso no t'ía tré sino peljuico . . . Yo ya toy mú vieja ya, y mú enjelma; lo que gano loj arcanza ni pa la comira . . . Colmigo no contéi, no, Irraé . . . Tu máma ya no resijte . . . Y tuj helmanitaj mujere necesitan tu apoyo . . . (p. 43).

In this passage we can now more fully distinguish a number of features of the Chocó dialect. Entire

syllables are suppressed in the verb estar and with the preposition para: tuve for estuve, toy for estoy and pa for para. Sometimes only the initial consonant is suppressed: iciendo for diciendo. The /r/ and the /l/ are used interchangeably: mardita for maldita, peljuico for perjuicio, enjelma for enferma and arcanza for alcanza. There are other changes such as /s/ to /j/: resijte, tuj and helmanitaj; /d/ to /r/: comira for comida; and the suppression of the /y/ in muy: mú.

Irra feels himself maturing and changing. He recalls the newspaper headline that the people of Barranquilla had rioted and looted stores for food and clothing. And why not? "El gobierno no hacía nada por remediar la suerte de los pobres. Habían vivido de promesas toda la vida" (pp. 43-44). He feels himself a man and he makes a man's decision to change the situation. He must kill the person whom he considers responsible for his poverty, the Mayor:

> Hasta hace unos segundos Irra era solamente un muchacho cualquiera, resignado a soportar el hambre, y a acostarse cuando ya había agotado toda esperanza de llevar el plátano a las casa. Hasta hace unos instantes Irra era uno de tantos muchachos que soportaba con resignación la miseria de él y la miseria de toda la familia, dejando su vida a merced de la voluntad Divina. Pero ahora había cambiado. El mismo no entendía que fuerza exterior se había infiltrado a su sangre . . . Por fin Irra iba a hacer algo . . . Era un hombre. Un hombre completo con responsabilidad suficiente para matar (p. 44).

Irra has identified the problem, poverty and hunger, and he recognizes the need to do something about it. He

makes a decision. Part of the maturation process is learning how to make decisions but Irra also has another concern. As he leaves the house he sees attractice girls swimming in the river and he realizes that he has never possessed a woman. He believes that a man his age should have a woman.

As he wanders, Irra meditates on the questions of poverty and hunger--"todos hablan, pero nadie tiene coraje . . . Nadie se conmueve hoy por la suerte de los pobres" (p. 51). He thinks that if he could be a sailor he could travel. He would earn money and spend it on liquor and women. Or, if he were a mechanic, he could work at night and go to school during the day. How nice it would be to have a title: "¿Aquí está el doctor Israel?"

Irra stops at the store. A man is reading the newspaper to the people who are unable to read. When Irra has a chance to see the paper he comes across an article about a lynching in the United States:

> Nueva York. Febrero 25. U.P.--Linchado un negro en Macon, Ga. a eso de las cuatro de la tarde. Horrenda carnicería hicieron de él. Parecían quererselo comer la carne caliente" (p. 73).

Irra doesn't know what the word lynch means but he realizes that "debía de ser que también allá el negro era mal mirado por los blancos" (p. 75).

Out on the street again he looks about him:

> Negros descalzos, ropas raídas, arrinconados por allí sin itinerario . . . Negros indolentes; demasiado indolentes. ¡Qué cantidad de desocupados! Y la vida carísima; imposible mantenerse. Infamia

> A los gobernantes de la nación no les importaba un bledo la tragedia del pueblo . . . Los pobres tendrían que rebelarse . . . Pues si habían de morir de hambre . . . por qué no jugarse el todo por el todo?" (pp. 78-79).

The above passage is a typical example of Palacios' style. He makes frequent use of interjections and repetition to reinforce the idea that he is expressing. Thus in describing the unemployed Negroes he refers to them as negros indolentes which he emphasizes with demasiado indolentes. Then to drive home the entire idea of the large number of unemployed people he reinforces the two previous statements with the interjection ¡Qué cantidad de desocupados! Palacios also uses extreme statements and contrasts to enhance his assertions. Life is not just expensive but carísima, the superlative. The contrast with this expensive life is the imposible mantenerse. The author uses this type of exaggeration and contrast throughout the novel and it makes his argument more forceful. The abuses done to the poor loom so large that it is almost imposible for them to survive. This, to the poor, is infamy and they would be justified in rebelling.

The awareness of the poverty and misery around him lead Irra to the decision to leave Chocó and to go to a larger city, Cartagena, where he would have a chance to work and to earn money. He visits the cafe owner don José to ask him for money so that he can make the trip. But when he has received the money Irra feels more crushed

than ever. Even his resolution to leave and find work is dependent upon others:

> Irra huyó de la trastienda, sintiéndose aplastado por el mundo . . . Tembloroso, sudado, avergonsado de sí, . . . Irra sentía su sér reducida a una masa pastosa, gusanosa, bajo el cielo azul que para él cobijaba sólo hambre y humillación . . . Irra empezó a llorar de rabia; lloraba de desesperación; lloraba de ansiedad; lloraba al sentirse tan miserable, tan empequeñecido, estropeado por la vida a cada paso. ¿Que había hecho el para sufrir tanto? (pp. 89-90).

Again in this passage we see the author's use of exaggeration and contrast. Irra is aplastado por el mundo. He is so crushed that he is reduced to una masa pastosa which is further reduced to gusanosa and then, with this worm-like image in mind, the author refers to the vastness of the cielo azul which further enhances the description. He then repeats the verb llorar four times: empezó a llorar de rabia, lloraba de deseperación, lloraba de ansiedad and lloraba al sentirse tan miserable. He then reemphasizes the image of the entire paragraph and of the initial aplastado with the adjectives empequeñecido and estropeado.

In his desperation, humiliation and anger Irra decides to carry out his proposal to kill the mayor. All men are born under the sign of a star and he was going to find out why some were good stars and others were bad. And his, as he says, "es una estrella negra . . . Negra como mi cara" (p. 97. He decides to carry out his resolution to take action. He gets an old axe and goes to the

mayor's office. He nervously waits outside the mayor's door not knowing whether to barge in or to knock politely. After an hour of waiting he realizes that it is past the working hours. He then leaves, frustrated once again.

The second half of Irra's day shows him in a closer relationship to other individuals. We see him interacting with his sisters: Elena, Aurora and Ana Clara. He mistreats and abuses them, as we saw when he kicked Elena, but:

> Las adoraba siempre, y aspiraba verlas bien, con finos vestidos, perfumadas, las uñas esmaltadas; aspiraba a que ellas pudieran asistir a bailes, y al cine los domingos. Pero él mismo no se explicaba lo que sucedía. ¿Para qué tratar de justificarse, cuando en el fondo de su corazón lo atormentaba precisamente la tremenda situación de su familia, cosa que él deseaba remediar? Lo mejor era irse (pp. 111-112).

We also see Irra in conversation with his friend Iván who helps to broaden Irra's perspective on social conditions. Irra states that all whites live well but Iván tells him:

> Tóos no . . . Ahí onde los ve bailando, hay blancos que amancecen sin er desayuno . . . Yo me doy cuenta, Irra, polque yo le hago mandao a tóos . . . (p. 156).

However, Irra's most important relationship is with the girl Nive. With her Irra consummates his manhood but, more importantly, she is the catalyst for his maturation and self-identification. Nive is alone when Irra goes to visit her and as he looks at the fourteen-year old girl

she begins to look like a woman to him. He decides to seduce her and he uses "el secreto para enamorar." This is a superstitious formula which guarantees success in love making but which the educated Irra only half believes. After satisfying his lust Irra is disgusted and mortified. He hates Nive:

> Ya no le importaba el hambre, no le importaba la falta de ropa, no le importaba la suerte de su familia. '¿Por qué, Dios mío, le suceden a uno estas cosas? . . . Ya no es el hambre lo que me atormenta . . . Bórrame esta conciencia, ¡eh, Dios! . . . No sé nada . . . No entiendo mi propia vida . . .' Cada palabra de Nive, cada suspiro suyo, lo hacían sentirse más miserable. El era un perro chandoso . . . ¿Cómo había él hecho eso? (pp. 144-145).

In this passage in addition to the usual repetition of sentence elements (the triple repetition of no le importaba, the double repetition of ya no and the complementary negatives of no se and no entiendo) we see Palacios' use of rhetorical questions: ¿Por qué, Dios mío, le suceden a uno estas cosas? and ¿Como había el hecho eso? The sense of guilt is also reinforced by referring to Irra as a perro chandoso.

Irra's post facto regrets are quite different from his earlier sense of conquest and masculinity. The realization of the possible consequences of his actions overwhelms him and, ignoring Nive's appeal to him, he flees the house. He is now certain that he must leave the city, not because he still wants to better himself but in order to escape any recriminations from Nive's mother.

On his way home Irra meets his friend Iván and they see the results of a homicide. The description of the dead man is graphic and I shall return to it later. This naturalistic episode does not contribute to the main story line and I want to describe without interruption the psychological development of the protagonist. Irra enters his house tormented by thoughts of Nive's mother pursuing him but as he calms down he realizes that:

> En verdad, Nive había sido su único amor, su primer amor, más o menos verdadero amor. Se enamoraron sin darse cuenta . . . Debía llevársela. Pero, ¿cómo diablos? (p. 161).

Irra goes to bed and, in spite of the rats and bedbugs, he falls asleep. He arises early the next morning, cold and hungry, to prepare his departure. This last part of the novel describes Irra's maturation as a man and his self-identification. As he bids farewell to his family he is again aware of the social inequities which confront the poor. He looks at his brother Jesús:

> Jesús, cuyo porvenir era idéntico al de Irra. Quizá peor. Porque la vida allí, a todo trance rodaba hacia el aniquilamiento del hombre . . . ¡Y pensar que la tragedia había sobrevivido siglos! ¡Presentir que el destino de las generaciones venideras, era el mismo destino! Irra tomó la resolución definitiva de marcharse . . . Irse lejos . . . Allá, más allá, . . . No detenerse mientras le faltara el pan. Pan para su madre. Pan para sus hermanas. Pan para Jesús. Pan para él . . . Para todas las gentes: . . . PAN . . . (p. 168).

This passage reflects the strong sense of social consciousness that Irra possesses and his allegiance to

his family. He is leaving not only to improve his own situation but also that of others. The author quotes the Bible: "El Pan Neustro de cada día, dánosle hoy" because although man may not be able to live by bread alone he certainly cannot live without it. Irra tells his mother:

> ¡Estoy jarto! . . . Ser pobre es la peor infamia! . . . Prefiero la lepra, la tisis . . . Pero no la pobreza, mamá! . . . ¡Maldito sea el que echó la pobreza al mundo . . . (p. 172).

Irra walks down to the docks and passes the old, delapidated houses of the poor whites. The idea strikes him that whites are also poor and he wonders if "¿no sería más bién una miseria general?" (p. 178). He also sees the necessity of convincing whites that they too lead wretched lives and the inference is that they must join together to improve their situation. He continues to the pier but the thought occurs to him that perhaps the situation might not be better in Cartagena and he might not be able to obtain employment there. Then he is confronted by Nive's mother.

An impulse to flee strikes Irra when he sees the old woman but he stays. The mother tells him that Nive became ill and passed away during the night. She had called the doctor but he was drunk at a dance and the child died without medical care. Irra is struck by remorse and by the impulse to stay for the burial. He also feels the conflicting desire to take the boat which is pulling away. He runs for the boat, leaps the gap between the boat and the dock and lands in the mud.

While sitting in the mud with the passers-by laughing at him Irra considers his life. He becomes a new and confident person. He realizes that "él y Nive no habían hecho nada malo. Habían sido capaces de amar, permaneciendo puros en el alma, cumpliendo el milagro de la creación del hombre por la naturaleza" (p. 191). He also realizes that he doesn't really need to leave: "Cada cual hacía lo que podía. Irra también haría." And Irra "sintió su alma invadida de confianza. Y si alguien hubiera observado de cerca su rostro se hubiese contagiado de una humilde alegría purísima . . . y ensanchando el pecho respiró libre. ¡Libre!" (p. 194).

This last word of the novel, libre, is very important. Free! From what was Irra free? The society had not changed. He was still unemployed. He and his family were still hungry. But Irra was free. He had matured psychologically throughout the book. He was free from the anger, the self-pity and the lack of identity and motivation which often handicap the downtrodden. He was free of any sense of guilt or uncertainty and he could face the future with self-assurance and confidence. He was free, in effect, to really begin his life.

In addition to the story of Irra there are other elements which the author includes. One of these is the poignant description that he gives of the mother:

> Su rostro sudoroso traslucía profundo cansancio, acumulado durante una vida entera golpeada por la miseria. Estropeada por la angustia de no haber cumplido uno solo de sus deseos en bien de sus hijos. Todo el día lavando ropa a pleno sol, sin comer. Y ahora el amasijo, que le embargaría más de media noche. No había otro remedio: trabajar, luchar, no importa que el organismo se abocara a estallar. Para el pobre, ¡luchar! No desfallecer mientras hubiera resperación y unos hijos necesitados de pan (p. 108).

Palacios skillfully arouses compassion for the mother who has worked so hard, an entire lifetime, only to be golpeada por la miseria and without a single hope fulfilled. The situation of the poor seems almost hopeless with no recourse except to struggle until total collapse. Palacios uses this type of passage to invoke the compassion of the reader and to show him what poverty does to the poor. He hopes that by revealing the plight of the poor he will encourage the public and the government to initiate measures to improve the conditions under which the poor live.

In the previously mentioned episode about the homicide, Palacios uses another technique, shock, to arouse the reader. The description of the dead man is appalling:

> Yacente el tronco de Ramón, extendido en un catre de lona, empapado de sangre cárdena, coagulándose. El brazo izquierdo estirado. Las piernas rígidas, alargados un decímetro más allá del extremo del catre, colgantes. ¿El otro medio brazo? . . . ¿la cabeza? Tal vez oculta bajo la almohada . . . (pp. 151-152).

The description of the dead man is morbid and actually extraneous to the story. The description of such a beastial crime, with a dog eating part of the dead man's flesh, adds nothing to the novel artistically and the only reason for its inclusion is to disturb the reader. More appropriate to the story and to the description of how the poor live is the scene where Irra is in bed:

> De pronto Irra saltó, encogiendo una pierna. ¡Malhaya! . . . Las ratas no respetaban ni a una persona despierta . . . Se acaba de acostar y ya la rata lo roía . . . Se rascó luego hacia el omoplato. Una rasquiña suave, de cierto modo agradable . . . El extremo de su índice tocó una bolita esponjocita . . . quizá una bolita de algodón . . . Pero la bolita trataba de zafársele, cuando la atrapó entre el pulgar y el índice. Claro que sí. Una chinche . . . También ya venían las chinches a comer . . . a chuparse su sangre . . . A veces estos animalitos chupaban tanta sangre, tanta, que caían desplomados o se reventaban de por sí (pp. 162-163).

This description of rats and bedbugs is more pertinent to the story, more credible and just as unsettling to the reader. The bourgeois reader for whom the novel is written (it should be remembered that most of the poor in Spanish America are illiterate) will undoubtedly wonder how a person can go to sleep when he knows that he may be bitten by a rat and will undoubtedly be visited by bedbugs.

Palacios is successful in depicting the more sordid elements of the lives of the Negro poor. Like Jorge Icaza, whose style he approximates, he has tried to anger the reader and arouse him to action. He ends the novel on an

affirmative note and the young protagonist is sure of himself and ready to face the future. This optimism is not shared by the authors of the last two novels to be discussed, Sol en Tambalimbú by Diego Castrillón Arboleda and Corral de Negros by Manual Zapata Olivella. These novels of social protest present a pessimistic picture of the role of the Negro in Colombian society.

CHAPTER VI

THE NOVEL OF SOCIAL PROTEST: *SOL EN TAMBALIMBU* AND *CORRAL DE NEGROS*

Sol en Tambalimbú by Diego Castrillón Arboleda and *Corral de negros* by Manuel Zapata Olivella belong to the series of social protest novels initiated in Spanish America by Manuel Gálvez (*La maestra normal*, 1914) in Argentina and continued by such authors as Jorge Icaza (*Huasipungo*, 1934), Gregorio López y Fuentes (*El indio*, 1935) and Alcides Arguedas (*Raza de bronce*, 1919). These authors often emphasized the negative and sordid elements of life in order to make their protest more incisive. An aspect of this literary naturalism was discussed in the previous chapter on *Las estrellas son negras*. Following the examples of these authors, Castrillón and Zapata Olivella undertake the serious examination of social issues. They examine the nature, function and effect of the society in which the Negro lives and how that society acts upon him. They present the Negro as an outcast and describe his struggle to become an equal member of Colombian society.

Diego Castrillón Arboleda was born in Popayán in 1920. In addition to *Sol en Tambalimbú* he is also the author of *José Tombé* (1942), which Curcio Altamar calls

an "ensayo valioso,"[1] and which is one of the few Colombian novels to deal with the "Indianist" theme. It is a sociological novel which describes the bitter struggles between indians and white men. Wade and Englekirk mention Castrillón in their essay on the Colombian novel as a "digno discípulo: of the novel of social protest.[2] Néstor Madrid-Malo refers to Castrillón as an author of "primera línea" who shows us that he is "dueño de su propio estilo y de una fresca manera de novelar."[3]

Sol en Tambalimbu (1949) describes mainly the effects of caste and class in Colombian society. This theme is analogous to the motif of Las estrellas son negras and to the positions of social protest of other Spanish American novels. The novel is divided into three parts which the author entitles (1) El Hombre, (2) La Tierra and (3) La Angustia. The first chapter introduces the protagonist Mario Salazar, a mulatto, who aspires to the social and political prominence represented by the family of Susana Puentes, a creole. The second chapter has a rural setting and depicts Susana rebuilding her lost fortune with the aid of the mestizo Gabriel del Camino. The final segment of

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[1]Curcio Altamar, 82.

[2]Wade and Englekirk, 246.

[3]Madrid-Malo, 72.

the novel describes the struggle for political hegemony between Mario and Gabriel.

Mario Salazar is an ambitious and talented young man who finds that society judges him not by his ability but by the color of his skin. He hopes to obtain both social and political prominence and he considers himself "un hombre destinado o los mayores honores y a los más firmes poderes." He wants to be "admirado por las damas y envidiado por los hombres" but the stigma of being colored in a society dominated by whites is evident: "en su rostro moreno de mulato y en su origen humilde siente el peso infamante de injustos prejuicios sociales y de profundos desequilibrios económicos."[4]

Mario is invited to a soirée where Susana Puentes and other members of the aristocratic elite are in attendance. This is the group to which Mario aspires. His initial satisfaction at having been invited is attenuated when he suspects that the other guests, all of whom are white, are talking about him. When he overhears one of them saying that "cada cual debía ir donde sus iguales" he realizes that he is being ridiculed and he experiences the chagrin familiar to all social outcasts. Mario recognizes that:

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[4]Diego Castrillon Arboleda, Sol en Tambalimbú (Bogotá: Kelly, 1949), 10. Al references in the text will be from this edition.

> esa misma risa que escucha a sus espaldas es la que viene oyendo desde la infancia, es el signo del desprecio que le tienen, es la manera que usan ellos para alejarlo de su mundo . . . (p. 14).

His disillusionment is completed when Susana Puentes, for whom he feels a strong attraction, rebuffs him after he attempts to achieve a close social relationship with her. Susana humiliates him by calling him a "mulato odioso" and he leaves, embittered and determined to avenge himself.

Mario's political philosophy is based upon the belief that the masses of the people should control the government. He tells his friend Miguel Pinto that:

> . . . todos somos iguales. ¿Por qué vamos a dejar a unos pocos lo que nos corresponde a todos por derecho . . . ? . . . Es el conjunto de derechos, Miguel, lo que nos hace iguales a todos; es el conjunto de ambiciones, de deseos, de energías y capacidades, lo que nos diferencia . . . Si nos sometemos fatalmente a ser esclavos, pues como esclavos nos quedamos. (p.49)

However, Mario's true motive for wanting to gain political power is based upon a personal desire for revenge against the people who slighted him. The author tells us that Mario:

> . . . hace todo lo que pueda lastimar a esa sociedad que lo rechaza . . . Dáse a la tarea de recoger todas las calumnias, todas las lacras, todos los chismes que pesen sobre las más honorables families, y los va clasificando . . . con el propósito de esgrimirlos como armas en el momento oportuno. Nadie se le escapa . . . Es la obra fundamental de su vida! (p. 27).

Castrillon's narration is very prosaic and there is very little use of imagery. His primary intent is to

develop the story. The enmity in social relations between Negroes and whites is reflected in the lack of warmth in his style. The above passage is undistinguished for its language but Castrillón is capable of evocative prose. He describes Mario standing before the house of Susana Puentes and he depicts all of the emotions which perturb Mario:

> Odia y ama ese lugar, la luz, el viento, el olor a manzanilla y a eucaliptus que allí se respira. Desea huír, alejarse de allí, y no obstante permanece inmóvil en la esquina. Dijérase que un encanto invisible mantiénelo embrujado, observando como se esparcen dulcemente los contornos de la lomita por la campiña. Y lejos, muy lejos, casi en el horizonte teñido de rosados pálidos y vellones de nubecillos blancos, el saucedal crespo y triste, a la orilla del río, bajo cuyas sombras solía jugar de niño (p. 25).

In this selection the author uses effectively the techniques of contrast and an appeal to the sensory organs. He contrasts ama with odia and desea huir with no obstante permanece inmovil. He appeals to the olfactory organs when he speaks of el olor a manzanilla y a eucaliptus and to the tactile and visual senses with el viento and la luz respectively. He uses the image of an encanto invisible which has a bewitching effect and uses the affectionate diminutive endings of -illo (nubecillos) and -ito (lomita) to create a sympathetic image. He also uses lejos, muy lejos, casi en el horizonte to describe the spatial distance of the willow grove but it also has the effect of evoking temporal distance when he speaks of his boyhood. Finally, he uses the adjective triste to describe the

willow grove but it would also apply to Mario's emotions as he looks at the estate and remembers his youth.

Castrillón describes the chasm that separates Mario from Susana. Mario envies the Negro servant of the Puentes family because he, the servant, is able to be near Susana. The author describes Mario's reaction to the servant:

> Cuanto envidia, sólo lo sabe Dios, el derecho de entrar allí como Tomás lo hace, hablarle a Susana, a todas horas verla, en su vida íntima, en la alcoba, y sentir y palpar y admirar lo que ella siente, palpa y admira! (p. 25).

However, acceptance in the society which Susana represents has been denied to Mario and he decides to use politics as a ladder for political power and social acceptance. He uses his newspaper, "El Trabajo," to attack the government which is controlled by an oligarchy of upper class creoles. The father of Susana Puentes, don Ignacio, is the mayor, and her sister, Carmen, is married to the governor's son, Carlos del Castillo. Mario is presented with a golden opportunity when he discovers that Carlos has embezzled government funds. He attacks the Puentes family, incites a public outcry and demands the resignation of the government.

The populace, spurred on by Mario's diatribe, holds a demonstration against the government and calls for the establishment of a government with a broader social base. The mounting public pressure and the attempt to rectify

Carlos' theft break don Ignacio's health and he dies. The government of the Del Castillos falls and is replaced by the successful Mario Salazar:

> La caída del gobierno de los Del Castillo es un truinfo rotundo de la nueva corriente Salazarista que, encabezada por su caudillo, lánzase ferez sobre todas las posiciones administrativas, sin respetar nada, cual hambrienta horda de salvajes, dispuesta a aplastar con su empuje brutal todo rescoldo que le pueda recordar la ominosa dominación fenecida (p. 109).

The fall from power of the Del Castillo family brings Mario political hegemony and a modicum of revenge for his humiliation by the upper society. As Mario consolidates his gains he looses any chance of a reconciliation with Susana. For Susana, Mario's actions have only engendered a deep hatred toward him: "un odio suave y voluptuoso que casi le produce placer al extenderse como un fluído por su cuerpo virginal. Delinea en su imaginación la figura de Mario, así moreno y fornido como es, y más odio le inspira" (p. 72).

Susana and her family (Carmen and Carlos) leave the city where their confortable existence has come to an abrupt end. They move to their country estate in Tambalimbú and try to rebuild their lives. Gabriel del Camino, a former protegé of don Ignacio, accompanies them to their estate and directs the activities of the ranch. Gabriel is a mestizo, industrious and determined to help Susana. Together they rebuild the estate and turn it into a profit

making enterprise. However, Gabriel feels the same social gulf between himself and Susana that Mario faced. When talking to the aristocratic Susana he is nervous and unsure of himself: "sonrié con desencanto ante su inferioridad social frente a Susana, triste estado que no le permite desearla, que lo hace indigno de aspirar a ella como cualquier otro hombre. La ve . . . muy lejana de sí, separada de él por los prejuicios, por la educación y hasta por la gratitud que debe a la memoria de su padre" (pp. 146-147).

The same arbitrary class distinctions which kept Mario and Susana apart also inhibit Gabriel and, like Mario, he turns to politics as a means of enhancing his personal stature. The author tells us that Gabriel:

> Créese capacitado para enfrentarse a Mario Salazar en formidable debate sobre prestaciones sociales a los campesinos, sobre justicia social, sobre amor al pueblo, destruyendo de un tajo ese prestigio artificioso labrado sobre la piedra del odio y el engaño demagógico . . . ! (p. 154).

Gabriel expounds his political philosophy:

> Yo creo que lo malo son los hombres; las ideas son las mismas de siempre . . . Es que el hombre es hombre siempre y, para gobernarlo, hay que comprenderlo y legislar de acuerdo con ello. Tratar de comprender lo que anhela nuestro cuerpo, nuestro espíritu y nuestra inteligencia; tratar de vivir de nuestros propios recursos, con nuestro propio trabajo; . . . tratar de despojarnos de influencias extrañas que ni son fruto de nuestros problemas ni nacen de nuestros impulsos afectivos. No se miden los zapatos cortando lo que sobre del pie sino buscando un número mayor . . . (p. 128).

Gabriel's opposition is directed toward Mario and he attacks the Salazar government through the newspaper "La Idea." Mario ignores Gabriel's challenge but Gabriel seizes an opening when he uncovers fiscal irregularities within the Salazar government. Public indignation is aroused, an investigation is demanded and Mario is put on the defensive. The denouement is rapid and melodramatic.

Mario is trapped by his own misdoings and in desperation decides to have Gabriel killed. Instead he kills a subordinate who refuses to carry out his orders. His office building is burned by a mob and he wounds Gabriel in a fight. Mario flees pursued by the enraged mob and Gabriel remains to face the bright prospects of the future with Susana at his side: "una luz purísima, un destello luminoso brota en su conciencia y le descubre el porvenir, en forma de paisaje, de paz, de justicia . . ." (p. 312).

Sol en Tambulimbú is written in a very prosaic style and lacks the inspiration of María, the sensitivity of Risaralda, the eloquence of La Marquesa de Yolombó. These novels extolled the land, the customs or the people which they were describing whereas Castrillón has focused upon a social problem. Consequently, the depiction of the setting is secondary and, where the other authors excelled in the description of the land, Castrillón's description of Tambalimbú is uninspired:

> Tambalimbú llega con el tiempo a transformarse en un lugar feliz y próspero, en donde la actividad se funde con la ambición y la esperana. De entre las ruinas y malezas que invadieran sus campos solitarios, vense hoy surgir fértiles sementeras de trigo. El progreso ha poblado subitamente sus tierras. Las cercas deterioradas días atrás, delíneanse ahora a lo largo de la falda, separando los cultivos de la loma, en donde pacen gordas vacas de ordeño; la vieja y agrietada casona, despojado de su desolado aspecto, hállase adornada con flores y bonitos cuadros . . . (p. 117).

This is not the "valle anchuroso de Risaralda, valle lindo y macho" but we know more about what happens to the land and how it prospers. Castrillón does not give a description of the land per se but we see that its effective use changes Tambalimbú into "un lugar feliz y próspero." The land is important because it helps Susana to rebuild her fortune and it offers Gabriel an opportunity to show his capabilities as a leader. Neither the peculiarities of the urban environment nor those of Tambalimbú are described. Politics and prejudice are the common denominator of the two areas and the major characters remain unchanged by the different environments. Susana is no less haughty after she begins to work on the ranch than when she was in the city. The rural setting serves only as a base for the rebuilding of the political and economic fortunes of the Puentes family.

Eugenio Díaz, Jorge Isaacs and José Eustasio Rivera had already described the land brillantly and, perhaps, unsurpassably. Castrillón unfalteringly engages the social

problems to which these authors only alluded. Certainly, Mario Salazar, the embittered, angry, violent mulatto of Sol en Tambalimbú is far removed from Manuela, the mulatto heroine of Diaz's novel. Manuela, the character, was substantially the literary equal of the other characters but she accepted her assigned role of social inferiority to don Demóstenes. Mario, the character, is also the literary equal of the other characters but he rejects the allegation of social inferiority attributed to Negroes and fights for inclusion in the social organism.

Castrillón narrates a story that is in essence a sociological study of Colombia's three largest racial groups: the white (Susana Puentes), the mestizo (Gabriel) and the mulatto (Mario). In a letter to Susana, Mario sums up the black man's position in an alien society:

> Sé que aunque me defienda, más tarde, dentro de poco tiempo, no me perdonarán mis enemigos este maldito color con que nací y se unirán para destruirme. Por ello no tengo voluntad de luchar más ni de vivir, pues sé que usted tampoco se detendrá . . . Si, por Dios, sáciese con este mulato despreciable si le es necesario para ser feliz! Yo debiera estar viviendo en el monte como lo que soy, como un salvaje. El mayor mal que se ha hecho a mi raza ha sido sacarla de su estado de ignorancia. He cometido una falta queriendo ser feliz en un medio extraño. Sin embargo, algun día usted comprenderá su error y, aunque hoy me odie y me destruya, no se librará de mí, de mi recuerdo, de lo que hay de mi en usted, como ninguno de los Americanos se librará de lo que hay en ellos de mi sangre . . . (p. 302).

This remorseful attitude reflects the pathos that is often the lot of the Negro Colombian. The tragedy of

the black man's existence is revealed and yet, instead of being vindictive, Mario is defeated, destroyed--"no tengo voluntad de luchar más ni de vivir"--by an oppressive society. Thus even Mario comes to see himself as the whites see him--a "mulato despreciable." He calls himself a savage and states that "el mayor mal que se ha hecho a mi raza ha sido sacarla de su estado de ignorancia." In time, his treatment at the hands of highly placed people has literally made a monomaniac out of Mario.

Mario realizes that his political dominance and all of his pretensions have come to an end. In his heart he blames Susana, the woman that he loved, for what has happened and as he thinks about her "su fantasía se la trae a ese mismo sitio. 'Negro, negro, negro . . . óyela exclamar. Instintivamente pósase los dedos por la mejilla y su semblante se torna melancólico, viéndola perdida para siempre. Sus ojos pequeñitos se llenan de lágrimas . . . ¡Se ha quedado solo! . . . Y en medio de la destrucción de todo su ser y de toda su vida, ve a otro ser que vive, piensa y quizá goza con perfidia su ruina." (p. 301)

Sol en Tambalimbú, however, is not only about Mario Salazar. It speaks of all of Colombia and all of Spanish America. Mario tells Susana, and the rest of white America that "no se librará de mí, de mi recuerdo, de lo que hay de mi en usted, como ninguno de los Americanos se librará de lo que hay en ellos de mi sangre." White Colombia and

white America won't be able to disclaim the black brother and pretend that prejudice doesn't exist.

Susana Puentes is a member of the dominant creole class. This privileged minority (the mayor, don Ignacio, and the governor, don Francisco del Castillo) remains aloof to the problems of the poor and is only concerned with maintaining its position of preëminence in the government. However, this group is destined to be replaced by men who represent the wider interests of all the people. The author shows that the people themselves will overturn this elite group when he has them march on don Ignacio's house and demand his resignation. Only when Susana allies herself with Gabriel is she able to survive. The inference is clear that this class has been living like a leech off of the people and is unable to survive on its own. The description of Carlos, Susana's brother-in-law, gives an idea of the attitude of this class:

> Nació de una raza superior, ya seleccionada, para dedicarse al estudio, a los artes, a una vida tranquila que le permita pensar y sentir . . . No, no, no, él no puede entregarse a luchar contra bárbaros que no lo comprenden . . . (p. 173).

Carlos becomes a drunkard and a misfit when the family looses its money and power. He is unable to function productively and finally commits suicide.

The mestizo, represented by Gabriel del Camino, is depicted as the provident life-blood of the country. It is implied that the mestizo can inject new energy, vitality

and ideas into the society and this portends a bright future. Gabriel's political address to the people is an example of the new current of thought:

> Yo siempre he creído en una América unida y fuerte, en una concordia continental que anule 'poder' como fuerza de riqueza y exalte 'ser' como razón de justicia. Nuestro esfuerzo debe dirigirse contra las luchas absurdas y fratricidas entre países hermanos que nos alejan, anarquizan e imposibilitan nuestra marcha hacia el porvenir y nuestra misión en el mundo como países civilizados . . . Ya es tiempo de que nos desliguemos de toda idea social importada, venga de donde viniere, imposible de adaptar sin perjuicio tremendo para nuestro libertad, neustro temperamento y nuestra misión! Nuestro único fin es acabar con las normas artificiosas e injustas que nos arrastran por cauce extraño a nuestra raza y a nuestro suelo . . . (p. 285).

This speech by Gabriel is very significant because it reveals the insensitivity and one-sidedness of many whites in a racially mixed society. Gabriel speaks of one America "unida y fuerte" and of the necessity of casting away archaic social attitudes; however, he is not above using divisive racial epithets, such as referring to Mario as an insolent mulatto. The author depicts the mestizo as injecting new blood into the society but apparently the same racial prejudices and discrimination will prevail as regards the Negro. The coalition of the mestizos and the creoles will continue to bar the way to the Negro.

The portrait drawn of Mario is tragic. Anxious to succeed, willing to work and well-educated, his path is blocked constantly by the color of his skin, which he is

never allowed to forget. Gabriel's paper, La Idea, constantly refers to him as "El Negro Salazar" and for Mario, "este mote despectivo lo hiere hondamente." He is constantly alone, "abandonado" as the author says, and he has no close friends. This exclusion from society changes Mario into an insensitive and revenge-seeking politician. In a discussion with Susana, he shouts at her: "¡Esto has hecho de mi . . . Un loco ¿lo oyes? ¡un loco!" (p. 273).

Castrillón depicts a society which not only incapacitates a black man as a productive citizen, unless, of course, he is a lackey, but also strips him of every shred of dignity. His portrayal of Mario is not very charitable. He characterizes him as a weak individual who is unable to cope with social adversity. He also describes Mario as incapable of providing effective and cooperative political leadership. He portrays Mario as a political demagogue and alleges that better leadership can be provided by the non-black mestizo class. Never is Mario treated with respect. On the other hand, Tomás, the Negro servant of the Puentes family, is liked and respected--but only because he "knows his place." Unlike Mario he is meek, humble and subservient. On one occasion he is even referred to as "Don Tomás." Not once is Mario referred to as don Mario.

Sol en Tambalimbú portrays a new Negro. It is the Negro who has reached maturity after the Second World War,

a war which was ostensibly fought for the cause of democracy and human rights. Often, in the past, these rights were primarily enjoyed by white citizens and not by the Negro or the indian. However, the two decades following the end of the war in 1945 have witnessed black men in both Africa and America demanding their civil rights. The Negro as depicted in the Colombian novel has acquired a new dimension. He no longer accepts the prevalent social order and he demands complete admittance into the life of the country. In the last novel to be discussed, Corral de negros by Manuel Zapata Olivella, the author calls for rebellion and revolution, if necessary, to gain equal rights for the Negro.

Corral de negros (1963) by Manuel Zapata Olivella is a thesis novel. Even though social propaganda is more important than artistic creativity, its portrayal of Negro character does render it significant to this study. Unlike Castrillón Arboleda, Zapata Olivella does not depict the Negro as an individual who is demoralized by alien social forces. Rather, he urges the downtrodden on to action and and political envolvement. He proposes civil disobedience and revolution. His attitude toward the Negro's social situation is expressed by one of his characters, Camilo, who asks: "¿Por qué los negros de aquí no podremos hacer lo que hicieron los de Cuba?[5]

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[5]Manuel Zapata Olivella, Corral de negros (Cuba: Casa de las Américas, 1963), 223. All references in the text will be from this edition.

Manuel Zapata Olivella (1920) has been one of the most active of contemporary Colombian authors. A doctor by training, he published his first novel, Tierra mojada, in 1947. He subsequently wrote La Calle Diez (1960), En Chimá nace un santo (1963) and Detrás del rostro (1964) for which he was awarded the Premio Literario Esso of 1962. He is also the author of two collections of short stories: Cuentos de muerte y libertad (1961) and ¿Quién dió el fusil a Oswald? (1967). Pasión vagabunda (1949) is a book of travel stories and Hotel de vagabundos which won the Premio Espiral in 1954 is a drama. Zapata Olivella is also the director of the literary magazine "Letras nacionales." And, in 1968, he was a visiting lecturer at the University of Toronto in Canada.

In addition to winning the 1962 Premio Literario Esso, Zapata Olivella also received an honorable mention in 1961, the first year of the awards, for his novel En Chimá nace un santo. The literary critic Néstor Madrid Malo says that "desde Tierra mojada, el médico-novelista ha realizado una curva ascencional."[6] Several other critics, including Javier Arango Ferrer, Humberto Bronx and Eduardo Camacho Guizado, also have acknowledged Zapata Olivella's literary production.[7]

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[6]Madrid-Malo, 76.

[7]See Arango Ferrer, 74 and 81; Bronx, 24; and Eduardo Camacho Guizado, "Novela Colombiana, panorama

In his article on the contemporary Colombian novel Camacho Guizado writes that "la novela comtemporánea en Colombia tiene su punto de partida en la realidad nacional. El escritor toma conciencia de su circumstancia histórica concreta y sus obras expresan su actitud ante ella."[8] Zapata Olivella's novels depict the reality of present day Colombian society and especially the problems of the proletariat. However, not only is Zapata Olivella concerned about social conditions, he is also combative. Unlike Diego Castrillón Arboleda who denigrates the capabilities of the Negro, or Arnoldo Palacios who describes the Negro's position in society (without any propaganda), Zapata Olivella calls for action. In Corral de negros he tells the story of a Negro family living in Chambacú, an all-Negro community in the outskirts of the old fort city and slave port, Cartagena. The family is composed of a mother, La Cotena, and her five children. The author does not provide them with a family name. Possibly in order to suggest that they may represent any poor Negro family. Consequently, he uses the lives of the children to indicate some of the paths which the poor may follow. Clotilde, the only girl, is the mother of an illegitimate child. The father,

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contemporaneo," Letras Nacionales, Bogotá, IX (1965), 33. Camacho Guizado is the author of Estudios sobre literatura colombiana, siglos XVI-XVII (Bogotá: Ediciones Universidad de los Andes, 1965). He is professor of literature and stylistics at the University of the Andes.

[8]Camacho Guizado, 47.

a white man, had refused to marry her. Máximo, the oldest son, is the most important personage in the novel. He is one of the few educated black men in the community. He is a civil rights activist. He tries to organize the people of Chambacú into a political force and he leads the protest against social inequities. Medialuna is a boxer and he has great potential. However, constant hunger weakens him and impairs his ability. Eventually he is seriously injured in a fight. Críspulo is a serious and industrious person. He raises and trains fighting cocks none of which are very good. The cocks, like the people of the community, are undernourished and weak. José Raquel is the black sheep of the family. He works in the port and is alleged to be involved with contrabandists. His activities force him to join the army in order to escape the police. After the war in Korea he returns home with a Caucasian wife. He becomes an idler and a drunkard and, eventually, he abandons both his wife and his family.

The novel describes a period of approximately ten years duration, from the Korean War (1950-1953) to the Alliance for Progress program (1961). It is divided into three sections: (1) "Los Reclutas" describes the conscription of Colombian men into the army for participation in the Korean War; (2) "El Botín" narrates the consequences of the war; and (3) "La Batalla" depicts the progress that the poor make as an active political group. The author

makes frequent use of dialogue but most of the novel is a third person narrative.

The story begins with the depiction of the adamant opposition of the poor to the participation of Colombia in the Korean War. The men hide from the soldiers who come looking for them. La Cotena is afraid that one or all of her sons may be taken. Maxímo paints anti-war slogans on buildings and is pursued by the police. Opposition to the war is combined with an anti-United States attitude because it is believed that the war has nothing to do with Colombia and is only to benefit the U.S.A. As the boxer Medialuna says: "¿Qué carajo tenemos que ver con los coreanos?" (p. 37) or as his brother Crísplulo says:

> Matar cristianos es algo muy serio. Máximo asegura que llenan de mentiras las cabezas de los soldados antes de que vayan a las trincheras. Libertad. Patria. Democracia. Vainas que nunca hemos conocido. Ni el mismo Maximo que ha leido tantos libros, sabrá qué quieren decir esas palabrejas . . . Menos servir de burro de carga a los gringos. Si ellos quieren matar chinos y coreanos, será porque algo ganarán. Money. Es lo único que les interesa. Esos místeres tampoco saben lo que es democracia. Yo sé que allá cuelgan negros. (pp. 50-51).

or as Máximo himself says:

> Ni los gringos, ni las Naciones Unidas, a las que mangonean, pueden imponernos una guerra injusta. Ni ellos, ni nosotros, tenemos derecho para sojuzgar un pueblo libre. Repito: ¡no más colombianos a Corea! (p. 55).

Zapata Olivella's style is concise and almost telegraphic. It is suited to the subject that he is narrating. He makes quick and incisive declarations. He is to the

point, intense and caustic. He appears to be in a hurry to express his ideas, for he omits various grammatical elements. Thus he frequently uses the infinitive in the place of a longer element: matar cristianos es algo muy serio. He uses single nouns in a manner similar to the way a boxer uses a job: Libertad; Patria; Democracia. It almost has the effect of making these ideals appear despicable, especially when he classifies all of them as Vainas: Vainas que nunca hemos conocido. He also uses the English word "Money" to reinforce the self-interest of the North Americans. He effectively juxtaposes a negative statement with a contrasting affirmative one: tampoco saben lo que es democracia but yo sé que allá cuelgan negros. He uses the ni . . . ni construction in an alliterative combination: Ni los gringos, ni las Naciones Unidas; Ni ellos, ni nosotros. Finally, he uses a short and direct declaration: Repito: ¡no más Colombianos a Corea! The description of Chambacú is didactic:

> Chambacú. Barrio de hambrientos para que siempre fueran hijos de Chambacú. Corral de negros esclavos. Jabón para lavar la ropa de los ricos de Manga. Leña que activaba los hornos de las fabricas. Ladrillos para adoquinar las escaleras de la universidad por donde los señoritos subían al palacio presidencial, al congreso. A legislar, a planificar la reproducción de esclavos. Los ricos dando gracias a Dios y los pobres huñdiéndose en los infiernos de la miseria (p. 16).

Again we notice the telegraphic effect of the author's style. He frequently omits the verb in a sentence: Cambacú;

Barrio de hambrientos Corral de negros esclavos. He also leaves out the definite articles with some nouns: leña; jabón and ladrillos. And he will often use the infinitive, leaving out a finite verb: a legislar, a planificar. Finally, he uses the present participle as a modifier (los ricos dando gracias and los pobres hundiéndose) in place of an adjectival clause thereby emphasizing the active and continuous participation of the rich in dando gracias a Dios and the poor hundiéndose en . . . la miseria.

In order to obtain a sufficient number of men to fill Colombia's quota, for the Korean War, the government surrounds Chambacú with soldiers and impresses all eligible men into the army. The people are opposed to the war and they remember Máximo's lectures telling them to "Organizarse. Resistir. Luchar. Triunfar" (p. 19). However, they are unorganized and when confronted with the power of the government, represented by the army and by the police, they are afraid. The author describes the fear of the people:

> El miedo. Nacieron con esa herencia de esclavitud. Unos ni siquiera sospechaban su condición de esclavos. Otros tomaban aviesos caminos de rebeldia: el vicio, el robo, el crimen. La mayoría, sumisa, perdida le dignidad y esperanza, pagaba su cobardía con la prostitución, el analfabetismo y las enfermedades. Estos resignados eran sus peores enemigos (p. 15).

Again the author is didactic. He emphasizes the idea of fear, El miedo, by placing it by itself. He then relates fear to the heritage of slavery, esclavitud, that

the Negroes have, thereby invoking a somber image of the negative aspects of slavery. In this passage he uses triple substantives twice to reinforce the statement of perverse paths to which the Negroes are led: el vicio, el robo, el crimen or la prostitución, el analfabetismo and las enfermdades.

The existence of a community like Chambacú and the poverty of its inhabitants is not an accident. Máximo tells us that:

> No es ocasional que Chambacu, barrio de Negros, haya nacido al pie de las murallas [de Cartagena]. Fueron traídos aquí para construirlas. Los barcos negreros llegaban atestados de esclavos provenientes de toda el Africa. Mandingos, yolofos, minas, carabalies, biafaras, más de cuarenta tribus. Para diferenciarlos les marcaban las espaldas y pechos con hierro candente . . . Los que huían se refugiaban en las selvas que rodeaban entonces a Cartagena . . . A los que aprehendían, les mutilaban alguna parte del cuerpo . . . Después de nuestra guerra de Independencia, los fugitivos cimarrones regresaron a la ciudad. Encontraron a los nuevos amos. Estos no tenían cadenas y látigos, pero sabían esclavizar tanto como los otros. Les pagaban salarios de miseria. El hambre es un yugo más pesado que los grilletes (pp. 157-158).

This historical passage refers to a past different from that which Jorge Isaacs and Eustaquio Palacios described in their novels. It also shows the intentional continuation of a system of social abuses even after slavery had ended. The use of hunger as a method of suppressing the poor Negro is a theme which the author reiterates:

> El hambre era un yugo impuesto por el enemigo para mejor explotarlo (the Negro) . . . Los negros debían ser ignorantes, hambrientos,

> prostituidos, sumisos . . . El hambre no era un medio para ganarse el cielo, sino los grilletes heredados de los antepasados (pp. 15-16).

The soldiers succeed in capturing Maxímo during one of their roundups of recruits but he refuses to submit to their authority. He continues his protest against Colombian participation in the war and he is tortured and later jailed by the army. On the other hand, his brother José Raquel joins the army in order to escape the customs officials who are looking for him because of his rumored dealings with contraband goods. Críspulo hides successfully from the soldiers and Medialuna escapes induction by participating in a boxing tournament. La Cotena expresses the sentiments of the mothers of the conscripted men when she says "no es nada tener hijos, sino lo que se sufre por ellos" (p. 38).

The second part of the novel describes José Raquel's return home after two years of participation in the war. Among the spoils with which he returns home is a white wife. The residents of Chambacú are amazed that a Negro would bring a woman there to live and La Cotena wonders:

> ¿Qué humos se han metido en la cabeza de ese imbécil (José Raquel) para traer una gringa a Chambacú? "¿Será una puta?" "¿Sabe Dios en qué burdel la recogió?" (p. 73).

Jose Raquel's wife, Inge, is from Sweden where he had met her after the war. He confides to his friends that:

> Para mi la guerra no fue la guerra, sino un buen negocio, que además de la moto me trajo una buena hembra. Pero esto de la sueca, no fue en Corea, sino en Suecia (p. 111).

The introduction of Inge into the novel adds the perspective of a white character's reaction to Chambacú and to the conditions under which Negroes live. Inge's initial reaction is that she must be in Africa:

> Jamás estuvo en Africa, pero debía ser así. Ahora lo veía todo negro. Qué idea estupida haber venido a América . . . No era Colombia lo que la desagradaba, sino Cartagena, Cartagena de Indias . . . Lo terrible había sido aquel infierno llamado Chambacú. ¿Por qué José Raquel pertenecía a ese mundo? (p. 88).

It is not long before Inge realizes that Chambacú is not the beautiful world that she had seen pictured on Colombian postage stamps. She comes to know the poverty of the poor and the filthiness of their living conditions. The streets are unpaved, full of holes and a quagmire of mud when it rains. José Raquel is unable to use a motor scooter which he brought home and eventually sells it. La Cotena tells Inge that "la vida de nosotros los pobres es muy dolorosa, pero tambien tiene sus momentos de alegría" (p. 103).

Zapata Olivella refrains from elaborating on any of these "momentos de alegría" as he continues to describe the adversities which confront his characters. It is evidently not his intention to point out the positive values in the lives of the poor. Rather he wants to depict the

plight of the poor and seek social changes by enumerating the inequities which confront them. The houses of the poor are plagued by rats and mosquitoes. There are no floors and when it rains the ground becomes a sea of mud. Medialuna is injured in a fight and falls into a coma. The doctor is called and diagnoses hunger as the primary cause of the boxer's illness. Medialuna's companion El Zurdo declares "no pasamos de ser unos boxeadores hambrientos" (p. 135).

The author also depicts a number of sordid occurrences from the Korean War. José Raquel is shown standing next to a pyramid of human heads. The graft of some of the officials is described (it was common to steal from the dead and the dying) and the author draws a morbid picture of mentally disturbed soldiers:

> Los locos eran los únicos que reían por que no se daban cuenta de su situación . . . había un bogotano que cagaba por el culo artificial que le habían abierto en la espalda. Se sacaba la mierda y se la comía, diciendo que tenía un morral al hombro lleno de chorizos (p. 108).

The final portion of the novel describes Máximo urging the poor to defend their rights. The Negroes have been ordered to leave Chambacú in order that a luxury hotel for tourists may be built. However, Máximo exhorts the people:

> Nos defenderemos . . . Ni siquiera la nación tiene derecho sobre la tierra que pisamos. Bien saben que bajo este basamento de cáscara de arroz y aserrín, sólo hay sudor de negros. No hemos

> venido acá por nuestra propia voluntad. Nos han echado de todas partes y ahora quieren arrebatarnos la fosa que hemos construido aquí para mal morir . . . Confunden nuestra paciencia con la resignación. Basta. Resistiremos. Iremos más allá de la resistencia. Exigiremos justicia (p. 154).

Máximo, Inge, the school teacher Domitila and the ex-boxer Camilo form a "Junta de Defensa del Barrio" which is "una manera de poner en práctica sus ideas sociales" (p. 199). Yet their efforts to organize the people are unavailing. The government undermines the committee's efforts to organize the people by spreading rumors about new houses, new roads and schools, and even money to be had from a new "Alianza para el Progreso" program. Since a Peace Corps group is scheduled to visit the poverty-stricken community, the government rescinds its eviction order. The police captain appoints José Raquel to the police force with the grade of sergeant and charges him with maintaining order in Chambacú. Ostensibly José Raquel is given the position because he lives in the community and because he was a non-commissioned officer in the army, however, the captain knows that he can manipulate José Raquel because of his (José Raquel's) previous involvement with the custom's officials. He tells José Raquel:

> Nadie como tú para poner orden allí. Ante todo, retiraré los policias que impiden la construcción de más ranchos en las orillas. Por el momento no es conveniente expulsarlos de allí. Después de la visita de los miembros del Cuerpo de Paz, veremos si se prosigue o no a la acción contra ellos (p. 179).

The news of the impending visit of the Peace Corps fills the people with hopes of an immediate improvement in their living conditions. The author's commitment to social justice and his awareness of the hypocritical actions of the United States are once again iterated when Máximo warns the people that the Americans "llegan con el señuelo de los dólares para mejor esclavizarnos." He states that:

> No necesitamos dinero sino instrumentos de trabajo . . . Si realmente quisieran redimir a nosotros los negros de Chambacú, habrían empezado por reconocerles derechos a los de Norteamérica . . . ¿Por qué si le niegan la cultura al negro Meredith, cerrándoles las puertas de las Universidades, vienen a hablarnos de escuelas? (p. 199).

This is one of the most significant passages in the novel. Here the author ties in the plight of the Colombian Negro with his counterpart in the United States. He points out the hypocrisy of the North Americans who promise to help the poor Negroes of Chambacú but deny basic civil rights to their own black countrymen. Máximo realizes that money alone is not a panacea. The poor need jobs and education. His attitude toward the United States is antagonistic. He believes that the real reason for the formation of the Peace Corps and the Alliance for Progress program is that:

> Los Estados Unidos temen que nosotros, toda América Latina, imitemos la Revolución Socialista de Cuba . . . Afirman que la Alianza para el Progreso es un plan para nuestro desarrollo. Muy bonita manera de volver a ponernos los grilletes (p. 200).

Inge doesn't agree with Máximo's constant talk about revolution. She tells him that in Sweden they always tried to resolve their problems one at a time. Máximo explains to her that:

> Suecia se ha desarrollado en circunstancias distintas a las nuestras. Nosotros constituimos una semicolonia imperialista. Nuestro progreso está frenado por múltiples excusas, fuertements atrancadas por los intereses económicos de un puñado de criollos y extranjeros (p. 195).

The Peace Corps eventually arives and the people are disillusioned when they do not immediately receive money for new homes and schools, but, instead, they are told that they must "elaborar los planes y empezarlos" (p. 218) and that the Americans will investigate how they can "ayudar en su financiación." The people are embittered and angry. "Qué planes?" "¡Estamos cansados de promesas!" "¡Mentirosos!" they shout at the Americans. A mob forms and attacks the members of the community who had aided the "gringos embusteros." These people were social outcasts. Arturo, "el loco," is depicted as the village idiot. La Carioca is a prostitute. Constantino owns a saloon in which he maintains a brothel. The crowd breaks into the saloon and plunders it. They pursue La Carioca and threaten to kill her. However, Máximo intercedes and exhorts the crowd to direct its anger toward the government:

> ¿Por qué en vez de perseguir mujeres y asaltar cantinas, no reclaman sus derechos? Ya les decía yo que no esperaran limosnas de criollos y gringos. Nadie vendrá a redimirlos de su

> miseria. Convénzanse que sólo nosotros mismos, con nuestra unión y deseo de lucha, podremos transformar a Chambacú en un barrio digno de vivir . . . Marcharemos sobre la ciudad. Exigiremos al gobernador trabajo y escuela. No necesitaremos más. Con nuestros propios esfuerzos ganaremos el pan y transformaremos a Chambacú (pp. 221, 223).

The people, led by Máximo, march toward the city. A detachment of policemen awaits them. Among the police is the sergeant José Raquel. In one of the best written passages in the novel the author describes the ensuing encounter:

> Los cañones de los fusiles temblaban. Los policias sin poder dar un paso atrás, esperaban la orden del Sargento. Ya olían el sudor de los negros. Ignoraban si era el miasma del fango o sus propias cartucheras sudorosas. Sonó el disparo. "Sardinilla" creyó que su pistola se le había disparado. Los fusiles levantaron la mira. Se oyó nuevamente la detonación. Maximo dio una voltereta y cayó de espalda. Una mancha roja le nacía en la camisa. El Sargento no lo había visto o se hacía el ciego (p. 226).

The author skillfully creates a sensation of irreality in the above passage. Specific subjects are replaced by the use of the indefinite or by an inanimate subject, "los cañones . . . temblaban," "sonó el disparo" and "se oyó . . . la detonación." The nervousness of the police is described by the "cañones . . . temblaban" and the inability of the officers to tell whether they smelled their own sweaty gun belts of the fetid mire. The shot that kills Maximo is not definitely attributed to anyone

but "'Sardinilla' creyó que su pistola se le había disparado." The final irony is that José Raquel, whose brother has just been killed, "no lo había visto o se hacía el ciego."

Unfortunately, Zapata Olivella doesn't often use this artistic and descriptive method of narration. His dogmatism and directness in propounding his thesis detract from the literary value of the novel. The novel ends with the death of Máximo. However, at the point of his death the people have been motivated to political action. There is a Junta de Defensa del Barrio and its members (Inge, Domitila, Camilo and others) are shown preparing for a meeting immediately after Máximo's funeral. Máximo's long and patient effort to politicize the community has finally been achieved. The people no longer need him to lead their struggle. They are prepared to carry on without him and pursue the social justice for which he gave his life. This is the optimistic prospect which the author portrays for the Negroes of Chambacú.

Zapata Olivella also includes a description of some of the customs of the people. In adherence to the realistic setting of the novel these practices generally demonstrated a lack of education and a belief in superstition. When Dominguito, Clotilde's son, has his leg infected from the poisoned spur of a cock, La Cotena puts her trust in the curandero or quack doctor to cure him rather than in the

physicians at the hospital. This curandero, Bonifacio, also serves as a fortune-teller and the author writes that he received his mysterious power "de las mismas manos del diablo" (p. 31). The author also describes the excessive drinking, prostitution and illiteracy of some of the Negroes. However, Máximo has held out a ray of hope for everyone and has even told the prostitutes "Qué las putas también [serán] liberadas" (p. 43).

Corral de negros is, to paraphrase Jean-Paul Sartre,[9] a synthesis of negativity designed to uproot from the present and to project a new future. In this novel Zapata Olivella is concerned with depicting a negative feature of present-day Colombia. This aspect of his social awareness is suggested in Eduardo Camacho Guizado's observation about contemporary Colombian authors: "los novelistas . . . se plantean la creación literaria como una cierta responsabilidad histórica."[10] Camacho Guizado goes on to say that "podría ser que ello fuera el más decisivo paso para la cimentación de una literatura auténticamente colombiana."[11] Since Camacho Guizado mentions both Zapata Olivella and Arnoldo Palacios in his discussion, this quote supports my initial

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[9]See Chapter V, p. 144.

[10]Camacho Guizado, 37.

[11]Ibid.

premise, as stated in the introduction, that the embodiment of the Negro in the novel may be considered as a highly important step toward the development of an authentically national literature in Colombia.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

The novels examined in this study extend over a period of almost one-hundred years (1866-1963). They reflect differences in theme, intent and degree of literary craftsmanship. Each is an important and representative work, typical of one of the several phases which can be distinguished in the evolution of the Colombian novel. Each author has depicted an aspect of Colombian society which shows the participation, or the lack of it, of the Negro in that society. The range of observation and the breadth of treatment are as varied as the styles of the individual authors; however, from our contemporary perspective, there are some observations which can be made about the portrayal of the Negro in these works.

Manuela by Eugenio Díaz is an outstanding costumbrista novel in which the author depicted Colombian life in 1866. The author's style is generally prosaic and uninspired. Although he does have a few very expressive and creative passages, in general his narration is straightforward and sober. There is very little dramatic conflict. The use of satire is effective and the author is also

humorous, sentimental and caustic on occasion. He is not very effective in presenting his characters, who turn out to be caricatures. There is a lack of psychological depth. This shortsightedness directly affects his treatment of Manuela. Díaz fails to penetrate beyond the surface of his heroine's physical beauty. He perceives none of the complexities of a Negro's life in a country in which slavery had ended only fifteen years before he wrote his novel. Because he is more concerned with satirizing particular political beliefs (the liberal philosophy), the author loses sight of his characters as vital human beings.

From today's perspective it would seem that don Tadeo's vehement reaction to Manuela's rejection of his advances is caused in part because he, as a white man, feels slighted by the fact that a humble mulatto girl would spurn his overtures. The autocratic political boss is unaccustomed to having anyone oppose him, especially a woman and particularly a mulatto. Don Tadeo is the product of a tradition in which the white master expects complete obeisance from the Negro subordinate. Only under these circumstances is his almost paranoiac thirst for revenge comprehensible. The threat to his political dominance comes from don Demóstenes, not from Manuela. A rational, unprejudiced reaction would have been for him to confront his liberal opponent.

Don Demóstenes' attitude toward Manuela and her cousin Rosa would also be open to question today. He regards them as childlike creatures who are unable to cope with the Machiavellian machinations of don Tadeo. He sets himself up as Manuela's protector and intercedes in the political affairs of the village on her behalf. His cooperation is beneficial as long as he is present. However, his sudden return to Bogotá leaves Manuela without protection from don Tadeo and precipitates the dénouement. Don Demóstenes' patronizing regard for Manuela is based upon the näive belief that Negroes were primitive and childlike creatures and, consequently, were not sophisticated enough to participate equally in a modern society.

Díaz's portrayal of Colombian society, in spite of its accuracy in describing objects, is superficial. He fails to penetrate the social and political complexity of his characters and manages only to portray some poorly developed caricatures.

Jorge Isaacs was also guilty of social myopia. Not only did he fail to see nineteenth-century Colombian society as it really existed but, in <u>María</u>, he completely idealized that society. His portrayal of Negroes and Africans is completely romantic. The black man for Isaacs is not a personality but a stereotype--the happy slave and the exotic African. In keeping with the romantic tradition, Isaacs' world is one of imagination oriented toward a sensuous

reaction to the world of experience. His writing represents his personal conception of life rather than an objective transcription of the society around him.

María abounds with sentimentality and poetic evocation of the landscape. The author skillfully captures the essence of a particular setting. He describes both colors and sounds and he fully injects his emotions into the novel. His description of the pastoral setting is both artistic and enumerative. However, the novel is pure romance. It is an idyll of love and death that has little to do with social reality. Under these conditions it is not surprising that Isaacs did not create a credible Negro character. He was following the literary conventions of the romantic movement and his portrayal of the Negro evidences the idealization of characters that was typical of this genre.

In El alférez real there is a greater awareness of social and historical reality than in María. Eustaquio Palacios describes the historical setting of slavery and the conditions under which the slaves lived. His Negro characters are also more humane. They have petty vices and they declaim against the injustices of human bondage. Palacios comes close to seeing the Negro as a personality but he uses him primarily to provide a descriptive background for his novel.

Palacios' style is sober and scholarly. He uses learned references which allude to the Golden Age of Greece.

He generally avoids metaphors, Americanisms and neologisms. There is no evocation of the landscape. He uses long sentences with many descriptive elements and points out the peculiarities of speech of the slaves. His treatment of characters generally follows the conventions of the romantic movement. Daniel and doña Inés are young, attractive, wealthy and face the future hopefully. Their counterparts, the Negro servant-slaves, Fermín and Andrea, are also young and in love, however, they face only the prospects of life-long bondage.

This novel also shows that sometimes the slaves try to aid and understand their masters. Fermín and Andrea try to help Daniel and doña Inés overcome the barriers which separate them. This characterization adheres to the stereotype of the faithful and loyal house servant. On the other hand, both Daniel and doña Inés stand aloof from their servants and keep them at a distance (and rightfully so, according to the then prevalent social mores). Thus, the characters who embody the greatest warmth, understanding and fraternity are the Negro slaves. The white characters are class conscious and materialistic. They help to maintain the barriers which have made Colombia a racially divided society.

However, Palacios' treatment of the Negro evidences a greater awareness of the complexity of this character than the previous depictions of Díaz and Isaacs. This

growth in awareness continues in La Marquesa de Yolombó by Tomás Carrasquilla. Carrasquilla's depiction of Colombian society is not only artistic but it is also the first balanced treatment of Negro and white characters in Colombian fiction. He was able to capture the essence of characters like Sacramento and Guadalupe and he represented them as realistic personalities.

A great part of Carrasquilla's success as an author is owing to his facility with language. He makes ample use of dialogue in which the personages are characterized by the language that they use. He transcribes the peculiarities of language of the late colonial epoch and of the Negro servants. He occasionally uses alliteration, contrast and imagery. His choice of adjectives is pertinent and his verbs forceful. His style is precise and elegant.

The region Carrasquilla described, Antioquia, did not have a large Negro or indian population. It is an area that has been traditionally isolated from the rest of Colombia. The population is more homogeneous than in other regions. Perhaps this basic insularity and ethnic unity allowed the inhabitants to take a less prejudiced view of other racial groups. Carrasquilla reflects this unbiased view in his novels. He portrays Negroes because they were members of the society. He does not romanticize them; neither does he stereotype them. Carrasquilla takes the essential step of depicting the Negro realistically rather than idealizing or stereotyping him.

Bernardo Arias Trujillo fully exploits the Negro as a literary subject. Previous authors had not developed the broad range of the Negro's personality nor had they ventured to depict his particular subculture. In Risaralda Arias Trujillo portrays a variety of Negro characters and he depicts their customs and idiosyncrasies. His Negro characters are complete personalities. They embody both positive and negative values.

At times, his prose is almost poetic, especially in his evocation of nature. He makes use of biblical allusions and personification to describe the land but his description is generally realistic and even naturalistic. He evokes a feeling of compassion for the inhabitants and their way of life. He has an alert eye for small details, and he frequently uses metaphors. His style is a combination of realistic description and inspired expression.

Arias Trujillo is also the first Colombian author to show full cognizance of the Negro's position of social and cultural marginality. His characters are people who have fled to the Risaralda Valley in order to escape the injustices of a white-dominated society. He elaborates the particular social, religious and cultural practices of the Negroes and shows how, ultimately, these are subsumed by the white majority. On this plane, he is depicting the Negro symbolically. He sees the Negro as the embodiment of certain pristine values which are threatened by modern, technological society.

Undoubtedly, Arias Trujillo exaggerated the idyllic life in the Risaralda Valley. The lack of social conventions and the uninhibited cordiality of the sopingos is intended to contrast with the presumed restraints of white society. The Negroes are shown as living in harmony with their environment. On the other hand, the white man cuts down the forests and destroys the natural environment in order to build towns and factories. In reality, Negroes are not as primitive and innocent as Arias Trujillo pictures them nor are the manifestations of an industrial society (introduced into the valley by the whites) necessarily evil.

La Canchelo, Pacha Durán and Juancho Marín are completely developed Negro characters. They are aware of their social standing vis-a-vis the white population and each reacts according to his or her own personality. Juancho is embittered and anti-white. Pacha is ambitious and accepts the social superiority of the whites. She hopes that La Canchelo, who is disdainful of Negro suitors, will marry a white man.

Arias Trujillo was successful in describing various cultural and social practices of the Negro. However, he was unable to capture the essence of the Negro's personality. It is not sufficient to describe Negroes as outcasts from the social mainstream and depict their reactions to an oppressive majority. It is necessary to delve into

the Negro's personality, into his consciousness, and discover what his true thoughts and feelings are. This is what Arnoldo Palacios does in Las estrellas son negras.

In order to do this, Palacios makes extensive use of interior monologue which suggests the flow of the protagonist's thoughts. He also uses dialogue which allows him to reproduce the regional dialect of the Negroes. This dialect is characterized by a disregard for standard syntax and grammar. The prose style often seems reportorial. The sentences are generally short and to the point. There are no elaborate descriptions or colorful metaphors. Instead the author uses interjections, repetition and exaggeration to make his argument more forceful.

Arnoldo Palacios alone among these authors has truly attempted to explore the Negro's psyche. This approach is unique and the results are singular. Instead of looking at the Negro from the outside and trying to imagine what is going on within him, he allows Irra to express exactly how it feels to be a black and young youth in Colombia. Irra's version of Colombian society, i.e., the society that we see through his eyes, is brutal and naturalistic. It is, in effect, a society whose elements seem to conspire against the Negro.

In the portrayal of Irra can be found many of the tenets of existential philosophy. He starts with himself. He questions himself. His deepest feelings are his own

personal feelings about his being, his history and his consciousness. His predicament, and by extension the Negro's predicament, fills him with horror. He constantly questions his suffering. He does not philosophize and he has no interest in abstract theories. His concern is for his own, present day, here and now predicament. Consequently, if he is to lead an honest life he has to make a choice, an act of self-determination, with all of its threats and all of its promises. The only meaning that life can have for him is that which he gives it through his act of self-determination.

The author portrays Irra passing through a spiritual crisis. His self-questioning and his suffering are finally resolved in his determination to act and, in effect, to give his own meaning to life rather than to have life's meaning assigned to him on the a priori basis of his skin color. He refuses to allow external forces to dehumanize him. He is determined to exert himself, to improve himself.

Palacios' characterization of Irra is, perhaps, the most accomplished portrayal of the Negro in Colombian fiction. This youth embodies all of the characteristics of an authentic individual. In him are embodied the human passions--pain and joy, hope and despair. The author has represented the Negro as an existential being rather than as an object. On the other hand, Diego Castrillón Arboleda

portrays the Negro as an individual who, perhaps, cannot assert his existence and individuality and is overwhelmed by society.

In Sol en Tambalimbú Castrillón presents a very negative portrayal of the Negro. Mario is referred to and depicted in a contemptuous manner. Castrillón represents an evolution in the literary representation of the Negro. No longer is he merely a figure to be employed sympathetically to add color to the story or to be romanticized. In this novel Castrillón depicts the effects that an alien society can have on a Negro.

This author seems to suggest that the Negro cannot overcome the alien social forces which confront him. Mario Salazar, like Irra, suffers and tries to redeem himself through an act of self-determination. He desires those things which an unjust society has denied him: fame, wealth, power and social prestige. However, Mario is only temporarily successful and, in the course of time, his failure is absolute.

Mario's rise to power was built upon a base of bribery, public defamation, vilification and incitement. A desire for revenge is his only motivation. These qualities do not represent a very stable basis for political leadership and Mario's government falls. The industrious Gabriel, a mestizo, finally defeats him. Consequently, Mario's act of self-determination is a failure. But, not

only does he fail to establish his own consciousness, he is completely shattered and accepts the negative identity that society assigns him. Mario is a pathetic personality.

Castrillón achieves this representation with a style that is prosaic and uninspired. He uses few metaphors or images. He does occasionally make an appeal to the sensory organs of sight, sound and smell when he depicts a locale. However, the primary concern of this novel appears to be the examination of the different modalities of Colombian society. Consequently, the portrayal of Mario, Susana and Gabriel as possibly representative members of three social groups (Negro, creole and mestizo) seems to take precedence over artistic creativity.

Corral de negros by Manuel Zapata Olivella develops an entirely new role for the Negro in Colombian society. The usually quiescent Negro of the previous novels, who reacts to society's impact upon him, has evolved into a social activist in this work. Máximo is not satisfied with the status quo and is determined to change it. He believes that the Negro can effect change through political organization and solidarity.

The author achieves this different representation of the Negro through a style that is telegraphic, concise and caustic. Unlike Arnoldo Palacios, Zapata Olivella does not let the story make its own point. Instead, as the author, he inserts intense and declamatory statements.

Grammar and syntax often seem to be impediments, so eager is the author to make his point. He omits various grammatical elements and uses single words to great effect. He also uses contrast and irony to make his narration more forceful. Finally, he uses an occasional English word to ridicule the gringos from the United States.

Zapata Olivella believes that the people can be organized and educated politically. His portrayal of Máximo shows this. At the beginning of the novel Máximo stands virtually alone as a political activist. At the end of the novel the people of Chambacú are demonstrating against civil injustices and, when Máximo is killed, the members of the Junta de Defensa del Barrio (Inge, Camilo, Domitila and others) are prepared to carry on his activities.

The author also relates the plight of the Colombian Negro to the situation of the Negro in the United States. He condemns the North American hypocrisy which promises to help the poor of Latin America (through the Alliance for Progress and the Peace Corps) but abases the Negro American with second class citizenship. He sees a common cause for both North and South American Negroes in the fight against "Yankee" imperialism. He is, perhaps, the only Colombian author who has conceptualized the plight of the Colombian Negro on an international plane. He relates the problem of Negro oppression to capitalistic domination and appears to among the growing body of writers from various countries

who share the views about racism and colonialism that Franz Fanon expostulated in his book The Wretched of the Earth (Paris, 1961).

Each of these novels contains a significant depiction of Negro characters. It is important to note that while the works themselves do not represent a continual growth in literary craftsmanship the development in the portrayal of the Negro as a vital and complex personality does seem to follow the chronological order of the novels. The importance and complexity of the Negro characters of the last three novels (Las estrellas son negras, Sol en Tambalimbú and Corral de negros) is much greater than in any of the earlier works.

This study also reveals that the portrayal of Negro characters has primarily been the concern of white authors who generally subscribed to the social mores of their period. Owing to the peculiar circumstance of the Negro Colombian (poverty and a lack of education), he seldom followed a literary career. Today he is more educated and now we find Negroes (Arnoldo Palacios and Manuel Zapata Olivella) writing about themselves. This factor is significant because it has been Negro authors who have achieved the most sentient and understanding portrayal of black characters. The situations that Arnoldo Palacios and Manuel Zapata Olivella describe have added meaning and impact because they grow out of experiences with which the authors

are familiar. The Negro for them is not a material object to be viewed objectively (or romantically) but rather an existential being. Finally, Zapata Olivella connects the plight of the Negro Colombian to that of his counterpart in the United States. This adds a dimension of internationalism and fraternity which is unique in Colombian literature. This bond of unity has become a frequent topic of discussion of the so-called Third World powers during the 1960's.

The aim of this study has been to examine the role of the Negro in the prose fiction of Colombia. It can be said that the portrayal of the Negro has undergone radical change during the nearly one-hundred years spanned by the novels analyzed. Whereas his depiction began as a stereotype, essentially removing him from human consideration, it progressed to a period of idealization of Negro life and, most recently, the representation of the Negro depicts him realistically as a sentient personality. It is the hope of this author that eventually the image of the Negro will find its imaginative consumation in the literature of societies that are free of racism and color prejudice and where one may read of the nature and impact of true interracial fraternity.

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