



Review

Author(s): Lee A. Daniel

Review by: Lee A. Daniel

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EARLY, EILEEN. *Joy in Exile: Ciro Alegría's Narrative Art*. Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1980. Paper. xxii + 107 pp. \$7.75.

Over the past two decades, the Spanish American novel has been acclaimed as a dynamic genre in international literary circles. It is particularly noteworthy that the prestigious Nobel Prize for Literature was awarded to the Guatemalan Miguel Angel Asturias (1967), for his powerful portrayal of the human exploitation and suffering associated with dictatorship (especially in his novel, *El señor Presidente*), and the Colombian Gabriel García Márquez (1982), author of the widely popular *Cien años de soledad*.

Although in recent years the "Boom" Generation of Fuentes, Cortázar, Cabrera Infante, García Márquez and Vargas Llosa has provided explosive leadership in the art of writing novels, through the effective utilization of experimental and avant-garde narrative techniques, the *novela indigenista*, primarily of the decade of the 1930's, will always have a special significance in the development of Spanish American prose fiction. The novels of social protest of the Ecuadorian Jorge Icaza (especially *Huasiungo*, 1934), the Mexican Gregorio López y Fuentes (*El indio*, 1935), and the Peruvians Ciro Alegría (*El mundo es ancho y ajeno*, 1941) and José María Arguedas (*Los ríos profundos*, 1958) depicted vividly the primitive Indian worlds of their respective cultures, rich in folklore, superstition, and centuries-old traditions, while imparting to the reader the crying need for restructuring society with a view toward ameliorating the socio-economic plight of the indigenous masses.

In this monograph, originally written as a doctoral dissertation, Early presents for a "nonspecialist, English-speaking readership" a perceptive analysis of Ciro Alegría's novels. Following a "Prologue" by Professor Tito Cáceres Cuadros, of the Peruvian Universidad Nacional San Agustín, in which he enthusiastically applauds Early's incisive observations regarding Alegría's effective use of narrative voice, there is an "Author's Preface," a "Forward" and an "Introduction." Chapter 1 ("Formative Influences") traces the early years of Alegría's life, from his birth on Hacienda Quilca in the northern Andes of Peru, to his secondary school and university years in the coastal city of Trujillo, where he developed a deep, pro-Indian social consciousness, owing largely to the influence of the APRA movement of Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre, culminating in Alegría's 25-year political exile. Early devotes the subsequent three chapters to a detailed discussion of the Peruvian's narrative art as reflected in his award-winning novels: *La serpiente de oro* (1935), *Los perros hambrientos* (1938), and *El mundo es ancho y ajeno* (1941). Chapter 5 treats Alegría's short story collection, *Duelo de caballeros* (1965). Following the author's "Concluding Remarks," the present volume contains rather extensive and useful "Notes" and a "Select Bibliography."

Early's work offers an interesting critical approach to Alegría's art as a novelist. Her thorough examination of the Peruvian's progressive development of narrative points of view is indeed innovative. Although one may wish that the trappings of dissertation style had been eliminated from the final published product, this study should be warmly welcomed by teachers and students of Spanish American prose fiction, as well as by those who have come to know

Ciro Alegría's novels only in translation.

ANTHONY J. VETRANO
Le Moyne College (Syracuse, New York)

FOSTER, DAVID WILLIAM, compiler. *Peruvian Literature: A Bibliography of Secondary Sources*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1981. xxix + 324 pp. \$37.50.

La bibliografía presentada en este libro se divide en dos partes. En la primera se agrupan las fichas en veinticuatro subdivisiones de referencias generales: bibliografías de la literatura peruana, tópicos especiales sobre poesía, arte dramático, novela, autores femeninos, etc. Estas subdivisiones facilitan la investigación de determinados asuntos y la localización de ciertos autores en un específico contexto. Foster justifica el no haber incluido una sección sobre literatura folklórica e indigenista debido a que ya existen bibliografías muy buenas sobre estos tópicos. Tiene razón y, además, la duplicación sería tan larga (en páginas) como costosa.

En la segunda parte se incluyen a treinta y ocho autores. Para cada uno de ellos hay, a lo más, tres subdivisiones: 1) bibliografías (aparentemente, dieciséis de ellos no las tenían previamente); 2) tesis doctorales y monografías (inexistentes en el caso de cuatro autores); 3) ensayos críticos. No nos sorprende que los autores a los que se dedican más fichas sean Vallejo (p. 523), Garcilaso de la Vega, "el Inca" (p. 308), Vargas Llosa (p. 288), Palma (p. 244) y Mariátegui (p. 222). Foster admite que la exclusión de ciertos autores no agrade a algunos. Aquí podríamos mencionar estas omisiones: Juan Gonzalo Rose, Julio Ortega, Carlos Zavaleta, Maria Wiese, Francisco Izquierdo Ríos, Cecilia Bustamente, Winston Orrillo y Francisco Benzedú. Es de notar que estos mismos autores aparecen en la bibliografía en función de críticos de la obra literaria de otros autores. Ortega, para citar a uno, es tanto crítico literario como autor de obras creativas en diversos géneros.

Foster no utiliza estudios publicados en periódicos y pequeñas revistas literarias como fuentes para su bibliografía. Y sí acude a más de quinientas revistas y otras fuentes principales (excluyendo los libros y monografías). Este material incluye datos publicados hasta el período 1979-1980. La ordenación numérica y alfabética resulta muy conveniente. Por cada ficha hay un número que identifica al autor en cuestión y otro que corresponde a un crítico; el orden numérico de los críticos sigue un orden alfabético también. Para las fichas sobre referencias generales, en vez de un primer número hay una letra que la identifica según el tópico de que trata.

Se nota que el autor (en esta obra Foster merece más este título que el modesto de compilador) ha revisado personal y cuidadosamente las obras mencionadas para asegurarse de su corrección. Por este motivo la obra resulta una fuente bibliográfica de mayor exactitud, cosa que no sucede en el caso de tantas bibliografías publicadas. Se la recomiendo a todas las bibliotecas universitarias y a todos los estudiantes e investigadores de la vida y de las letras peruanas.

JORGE J. RODRÍGUEZ-FLORIDO
Chicago State University

COMPTON, MERLIN D. *Ricardo Palma*. Boston: Twayne Publications, 1982. 168 pp. \$15.95.

Ricardo Palma was a prominent Peruvian in his

lifetime and, because he created the *tradición peruana* and wrote some 500 works in the new genre, he is still a prominent Peruvian in 1982.

Professor Compton's research on Palma, as evinced by a doctoral dissertation and three monographs, is amply evident in *Ricardo Palma*. His primary purpose in the book is to acquaint the general reader of English with the *tradicionista* and his works. The book is divided into six chapters and has a selected bibliography. In the first chapter Compton provides biographical information and discusses the ambient in which the young Palma lived. He considers the political activities, romances, and early pre-*tradiciones* to chronicle Palma's long maturation process—the evolution from a Romantic to a mature *tradición* writer.

In the two following chapters Compton gives much background material, and although he offers no definition of the *tradición* per se, a very adequate discussion is provided in "The 'tradición'—An Examination in Depth," in which even the uninitiated would gain an understanding and appreciation of Palma's literary creation. Compton states that the *tradición* was born in "Pues bonita soy yo la Castellanos" and that "Los polvos de la Condesa" is the work in which Palma first uses the unique structure that readers have come to associate with the *tradiciones*.

Compton delights in recounting customs and practices of Colonial Peru as illustrated in numerous *tradiciones* he discusses in Chapter Four. One example is the *tablilla divisoria* in the marriage bed as presented in "La cama matrimonial." Many delightful and interesting tidbits are given in the numerous topics covered under the general headings of "Honor," "The Catholic Church," "The Viceroy" and "Miscellaneous Themes."

The last two chapters, in which Compton mainly discusses Palma's poetry and to a lesser degree his linguistic efforts and his significance in Spanish America, are perhaps the least meaningful parts of the book. However, Compton writes that "Palma's love affair with language was one of the most significant ingredients in the development of the *tradiciones*."

Compton admits that the full impact of the *tradiciones* cannot be gleaned from his overview because "it is impossible to convey an appreciation for the powerful role Palma's language played in these works." Nevertheless, whether it be in the field of language and lexicography, poetry or the *tradición*, Compton provides insightful and detailed comments on works in these areas by Palma. Those who have already studied Palma will appreciate and value Compton's comments while the general reader will gain a basic understanding of Palma's literary production. Also, the consideration of less well-known works and versions of works heretofore unavailable will titillate even the Palma scholar.

A study of Hispanic literature presupposes an appreciation of Ricardo Palma, but because there are so few of the *tradiciones* in English translation, and with the paucity of in-depth works written in English that treat Palma's life and works, Compton's *Ricardo Palma* is a significant step toward filling that void.

LEE A. DANIEL

Southwestern Oklahoma State University

HIGGINS, JAMES. *The Poet in Peru: Alienation and*

the Quest for a Super-Reality. Liverpool: The University, 1982. vii + 166 pp. £7.50.

With James Higgins' *The Poet in Peru*, the new series Liverpool Monographs in Hispanic Studies makes a strong beginning. The book's clear style and reasonable interpretations of frequently difficult material make it accessible to nonspecialist readers, while its selection of the less-studied poets—Carlos Germán Belli, Antonio Cisneros, César Moro and Martín Adán—along with César Vallejo and José María Eguren, makes it of use as well to those with a more serious interest in Latin American poetry.

Eguren (1874-1942) and Vallejo (1892-1938) are the central figures in Higgins' study, not only because of their seminal role in Peruvian poetry, but also because their work demonstrates the two principal themes Higgins finds there. Hence they are studied in both of the book's major divisions, "Poetry of Alienation" and "Visionary Poetry." In the case of Vallejo, these studies provide as good a general presentation as can be found in limited space, and continue the author's well-known previous work. In terms of scholarly contributions, the Vallejo sections are strongest in interpretation, some of which is carried forward from Higgins' 1970 anthology. The other poets are all less-known than Vallejo, and it is firmly to be hoped that the studies of Belli and Cisneros in particular will call attention to their very significant achievements in poetic language and imagery.

The book's second strong point is its attempt to establish a given poet's *Weltanschauung*. This area is also probably its major weakness, as the goal of characterizing a poet—rather than his work—leads to a risky blurring of distinctions between the two ("It would seem that these various girls [whom Eguren knew] fused together in the poet's memory as a symbol of beauty cut down before it had reached full bloom . . .," pp. 97-98). Such speculations enter the realm of biography and fail to shed light on the work at hand. Similarly, the dual thematic focus and repeated authors necessarily lead to some repetition, as with the change from bourgeois materialism in Vallejo, Cisneros and Moro, or the recurrent image of what Higgins calls "spiritual orgasm" (epiphany or fulfillment), for example.

Higgins' premise is that "the visionary poetic" of Vallejo, Adán, Moro and Eguren is "a response to the experience of alienation." Such alienation is found, above all, in a withdrawal from or a distrust of society (Vallejo, Eguren, Moro, Adán, Belli and perhaps Cisneros as well), a loss of faith and innocence (Vallejo, Eguren) and the failure of personal relationships (Cisneros). Although social criticism in Cisneros is touched on, sociopolitical themes are little stressed here, Higgins preferring to focus on the philosophical and psychological forms of alienation as an individual phenomenon and of course the visions of alternatives—a better society through more authentic individuals, and the refuge which poetry may offer. Overall, Higgins' interpretations are fair and thoughtful, although each reader will fault some, and this one found distracting the tendency to view multiple and simultaneous meanings in but one way, to the exclusion of others equally valid (as in the case of the "Lady Poetry" theme in Moro).

It should be observed that some parts of this study apparently have been delayed in publication, a matter