

... Both of us, you think, have to play at old-time literature, have to play at the old-time novel with its hero, its villain, its plot, its deadly conflict, and its denouement. Except that the point of view produces two separate novels. You, the hero of yours; Barniol, the hero of his. He, your villain in your fiction. You, his villain in his. His novel is about the efficiency with which an intelligent official handles a dangerous group of antisocial rebels until he reincorporates them into society... Your plot is different. It's about a man who has been half-dead for many years, who only feels alive when he is rebelling, refusing, clenching his fists... You're Lucifer, Ernesto, you're an incorrigible Lucifer.³⁸

The judicious adaptation of the above new literary techniques as well as the avoidance of strident anticommunism give *Perromundo* a literary stature unequalled by its antirevolutionary predecessors and one that cannot be ignored by critics of Latin American literature.

II. The Short Story

A Mirror of the Antirevolutionary Novel

An analysis of the twenty or more volumes of antirevolutionary short stories reveals the same characteristics as those of the majority of the antirevolutionary novels. Such titles as *Cuatro cuentos cristianos* (1964), *Rojo y negro, cuentos sobre la tragedia cubana* (1964), *Castro quedó atrás* (1970), and *Cuentos del exilio cubano* (1970) by non-professional authors Pedro Ernesto Díaz, Andrés Rivero Collado, José Sainz de la Peña, and Angel A. Castro discourage serious consideration of these works. The one exception is the unpretentious little volume *Los unos, los otros... y el seibo* (1971) by Beltrán de Quirós. Its twelve two-page stories describe conditions in a UMAP (Unidades Militares de Ayuda a la Producción) camp between 1965 and 1968 in Camagüey Province. The protest against the loss of freedom, the hard work in the canefields, and the ineffective revolutionary methods is convincingly expressed in a direct, sincere, unimpassioned low-key style

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 92-93.

"Prose Fiction of the Cuban Revolution."
Seymour Menton.—1975.

and by means of nonviolent plots. Another thin volume that deserves special mention at this point is Carlos Ripoll's (b. 1922) *Julién Pérez por Benjamín Castillo* (1970), a delightful spoof of literary censorship based on the Padilla-Arrufat incident.³⁹ The story involves a confrontation between the spirit of José Martí, in the person of Julián Pérez, and Fidel Castro, ending in the latter's violent death at the hands of his own men. However, the most noteworthy feature of the volume is not its story but its physical format, which is exactly the same as that of the Casa de las Américas prize-winning volumes.

Three Professionals: Novás, Ferreira, Casey

Whereas Juan Arcocha is the only one of the relatively well known novelists in exile to have published an antirevolutionary novel—and only in English—three distinguished short-story writers have published several antirevolutionary stories that are worthy of comment.

Lino Novás Calvo (b. 1903), whose volume *La luna nona y otros cuentos* (1942) was called by Cuban critic Ambrosio Fornet in 1967 "el libro más importante de nuestra cuentística,"⁴⁰ published nine antirevolutionary stories in *Bohemia Libre*,⁴¹ *Revista de Occidente*,⁴² and *Exilio*⁴³ between December 1961 and 1968, and republished them in the volume *Maneras de contar* in 1970 along with some of his more

³⁹ Carlos Ripoll received a degree in agronomy from the Universidad de La Habana, an M.A. from the University of Miami, and a Ph.D. from New York University. For several years he has been teaching Spanish American literature at Queens College in New York. He has published a study of the *Revista de Avance*, an edition of Carlos Loveira's novel *Juan Criollo*, and two anthologies: *Conciencia intelectual de América, antología del ensayo hispanoamericano* (1966) and, in collaboration with Andrés Valdespino, *Teatro hispanoamericano* (1972).

⁴⁰ AF-I, p. 38. After leaving Cuba in September 1960, Novás Calvo became one of the assistant directors of *Bohemia Libre* in New York. Since 1967, he has been teaching Latin American literature at Syracuse University.

⁴¹ "Un buchito de café" (December 13, 1961), "El milagro" (April 29, 1962), "Fernández al paredón" (May 27, 1962), "La abuela Reina y el sobrino Delfín" (July 8, 1962), "El hombre-araña" (May 12, 1963), and "Nadie a quien matar" (May 12, 1963).

⁴² "La noche en que Juan tumbó a Pedro" (3 [September 1965]).

⁴³ "Un bum" (Winter 1965) and "Una cita en Mayanima" (Summer 1968). A tenth story, "La vaca en la azotea," was published in *Papeles de Son Armadans* (March 1973).

divisions have been determined by specific changes in the government's attitude toward literature and the arts in general.

4. The role of literature and the arts in a revolutionary society has been widely debated in Cuba, with international repercussions. Cuba has not deviated significantly in this respect from the model established by other socialist countries.
5. The novelists and short-story writers of the Revolution include representatives of four distinct literary generations—those born at the turn of the century like Alejo Carpentier (b. 1904), between 1910 and 1920 like José Lezama Lima (b. 1912), between 1920 and 1937 like Guillermo Cabrera Infante (b. 1929) and Edmundo Desnoes (b. 1930), and in the late 1930's and early 1940's like Jesús Díaz Rodríguez (b. 1941). The large majority of the works have come from the two younger generations.
6. The most prolific of the novelists with three or four titles, but not necessarily the best, are Noel Navarro, Samuel Feijóo, Edmundo Desnoes, José Soler Puig, David Buzzi, Lisandro Otero, and Severo Sarduy. The most prolific short-story writers are Angel Arango, Antonio Benítez Rojo, and José Lorenzo Fuentes. Those who have published both significant novels and volumes of short stories are Humberto Arenal, Reynaldo Arenas, and Noel Navarro.
7. The best known of the Cuban novels published between 1959 and 1972 are artistically innovative and are related only indirectly in varying degrees to the Revolution: Alejo Carpentier's *El siglo de las luces*, José Lezama Lima's *Paradiso*, Guillermo Cabrera Infante's *Tres tristes tigres*, and Severo Sarduy's *De donde son los cantantes*.
8. Among the novels that deal more directly with the Revolution, the best are Lisandro Otero's two volumes of a planned trilogy, *La situación* and *En ciudad semejante*, Severo Sarduy's *Gestos*, and Edmundo Desnoes's *Memorias del subdesarrollo*.
9. The best of the short-story writers are Calvert Casey, Humberto Arenal, Antonio Benítez Rojo, Jesús Díaz Rodríguez, and Norberto Fuentes Cobas.

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10. A rather large majority of the Cuban novels and short stories published between 1959 and 1973 are concerned with the portrayal of prerevolutionary Cuba, and particularly prerevolutionary Havana. The clandestine urban movement against Batista receives much more attention than do the guerrilla exploits of Fidel Castro in the Sierra Maestra. Among the works that take place in Cuba after 1959, the most frequently treated themes are the reluctance of the bourgeoisie to accept the revolutionary changes and the counterinsurgency campaign of the early 1960's. In general, authors have avoided controversial aspects of the Revolution. Some criticism of the regime appears in books published outside Cuba: Guillermo Cabrera Infante's *Tres tristes tigres*, Reynaldo Arenas's *El mundo alucinante*, Eduardo Manet's *Un cri sur le rivage*, and, possibly, Alejo Carpentier's *El siglo de las luces*. Of the works published in Cuba, the following are somewhat ambiguous in their revolutionary zeal: Edmundo Desnoes's *Memorias del subdesarrollo*, Ezequiel Vieta's *Vivir en Candonga* and *Pailock*, *el prestidigitador*, Leonel López-Nussa's *Recuerdos del 36*, and Norberto Fuentes Cobas's *Condenados de Condado*.

11. A growing number of novels and volumes of short stories have been published by Cuban exiles. Most of them are anticommunist diatribes with scarce literary merit. However, a few novels by Juan Arcocha, Luis Ricardo Alonso, and Carlos Alberto Montaner and individual short stories by Calvert Casey, Lino Novás Calvo, and Beltrán de Quiros are serious literary efforts to portray conditions in Cuba, in Miami, and elsewhere from the exiles' point of view. A few of the exiles, like Lydia Cabrera and Julio Matas, have continued to publish the same kind of escapist stories that they published in Cuba.

12. The Cuban Revolution is the principal or partial theme of twenty-two pro- as well as antirevolutionary novels, one volume of short stories, and one other short story written by a variety of Americans and Latin Americans. Of these, the best are clearly Carlos Martínez Moreno's *El paredón*, Julio Cortázar's "Reunión," and Antônio Callado's *Don Juan's Bar*.

Note: Beltrán de Quiros (pseudonym of Jorge Luis Rosmeur) lived inside Cuba until May of 1980, that he left to the United States.