

## About the Latin American *Real Maravilloso* (1949)

by Alejo Carpentier

Commentary, Notes, and Translation by William Little© (2008)

Carpentier begins his essay by quoting a couple of verses by the nineteenth-century French Symbolist poet Charles Baudelaire<sup>1</sup> about exoticism in Asia and Africa. The Cuban author then describes in intensely synesthetic prose scenes and places he has observed in China: buildings with rounded corners, non-figurative decorative art, sampans with quadrangular sails, fogs over rice paddies, polychrome Chinese art, sculptures mounted on carved dragons, pagodas in Shanghai, and much more, all, as he says about himself, without truly understanding Chinese culture. He then moves to Islamic culture, which he appreciates with equal amounts of amazement and lack of deep understanding. In the third part of his essay he reviews his impressions derived from a visit to the Soviet Union, whose cultures were much more accessible to him despite the fact that, as he himself states, he does not understand Russian. In his next stop, he evokes what he discovered during a visit to Prague, where he experienced churches related to Jan Huss,<sup>2</sup> famous palaces, and various cultural elements that reminded him of Schiller,<sup>3</sup> the Faust myth,<sup>4</sup> Tico Brahe,<sup>5</sup> Johannes Kepler,<sup>6</sup> Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni*,<sup>7</sup> the works of Franz Kafka,<sup>8</sup> compositions by Johann Sebastian Bach,<sup>9</sup> and, again, much more. In the fifth and last "movement" of this seminal essay he turns his attention to Latin America:

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A Latin American returns home and he begins to understand many things. He discovers that, assuming *Don Quixote* belongs to him rightfully and de facto, in the text of the Goatherds' Discourse<sup>10</sup> he learned words that reminded him of Hesiod's *Works and Days*.<sup>11</sup> He opens the great chronicle of Bernal Díaz del Castillo<sup>12</sup> and he finds the only real and believable chivalric romance ever written, a chivalric romance in which the doers of evil deeds were visible, palpable *teules*;<sup>13</sup> unknown animals were real; isolated cities were viewed; monsters were seen in their rivers; and stunning mountains were seen topped with snow and smoke. Bernal Díaz, without suspecting it, had outdone the deeds of Amadís de Gaula, Belianis de Grecia, and Florismarte de Hircania.<sup>14</sup> He had discovered a world of monarchs' headdresses made from green-feathered birds,<sup>15</sup> of plants that went back to the origins of the earth, of never-before tasted foods, of drinks made from cacti and palm; but he did not even realize that, in that world, the events that humans deal with usually take on their own style according to the trajectory of the event itself. Latin Americans carry with them a heritage thirty centuries old, but, despite observing absurdities, despite having committed many sins, they ought to recognize that *their style* continually takes shape throughout *their* history, even though that style can sometimes engender true monsters. However, there are compensations: a Melgarejo,<sup>16</sup> Bolivia's tyrant, can force his horse *Holofernes*<sup>17</sup> to drink barrels of beer; from the Mediterranean Caribbean, there arises a José Martí,<sup>18</sup> able to write one of the best essays about French impressionist painters that has ever appeared in any language. Our Central America, inhabited by illiterates, produces a poet, Rubén Darío,<sup>19</sup> who transforms all poetry written in Spanish. There is even, down there, someone who, a century and a half

ago, explicated philosophical propositions about alienation to slaves who had been freed three weeks earlier. There is, down there (one cannot forget Simón Rodríguez)<sup>20</sup>, someone who created educational systems inspired by Rousseau's *Émile*,<sup>21</sup> in which it was only expected that students would learn to read in order to go up the social ladder by virtue of their understanding of books, which is to say, law codes. There is someone who strove to develop Napoleonic war strategies with mounted lancers who had neither saddles nor stirrups to put on the backs of their nags. There is the protean solitude of Bolívar in Santa Marta,<sup>22</sup> the battles fought at bayonet point during nine long hours in a lunar landscape in the Andes; the towers of Tikal;<sup>23</sup> the mural paintings rescued from the jungle at Bonampak;<sup>24</sup> the ongoing enigma of Tihuanacu;<sup>25</sup> the majesty of Monte Albán's acropolis;<sup>26</sup> and the abstract beauty—absolutely abstract—of Mitla's temple<sup>27</sup> with its variations on vivid themes that are foreign to any figurative intention. The list is well nigh interminable.

Instead, I shall say that a first notion of *lo real maravilloso* came to my mind when, at the end of 1943, I was fortunate to be able to visit the kingdom of Henri Christophe—the ever-so-poetical ruins of Sans-Souci; the huge block of the La Ferrière citadel that is imposingly intact despite earthquakes and lightening—and to become acquainted with the still Norman city of Cabo, the *Cap Français* of the former Colony,<sup>28</sup> where a house with very long balconies leads to the stone façade palace where Pauline Bonaparte<sup>29</sup> once lived. My encounter with Pauline Bonaparte, there, so far from Corsica, was like a revelation for me. I saw the possibility of establishing certain possible syncretisms—American ones—recurring beyond time and relating this with that, yesteryear with the present. I saw the possibility of importing certain European truths to the latitudes that are ours but acting as a counterbalance for those who, wishing to travel against the sun's path, tried to transport our truths to a place where, even thirty years ago, there was neither the ability to understand them nor a way to judge them in their proper dimensions. (For me, Pauline Bonaparte was a Virgil and guide, a first groping step—starting with the Venus of Cánova<sup>30</sup>—toward my research efforts concerning characters who, like Billaud-Varenne, Collot d'Herbois, Victor Hugues, would come to populate my *Siglo de las Luces*<sup>31</sup>, which I saw as a function of American lighting. After having experienced the heretofore unmentioned spell<sup>32</sup> of the lands of Haiti, having found magical traces of the red roads of the Central Plateau, and having heard the petwo and the rada drums,<sup>33</sup> I saw myself transported to a state in which I could fuse that recently lived, awesome reality with the exhausting presumption of giving life to the *maravilloso* qualities that characterized certain European literatures of the past thirty years; namely, what is *maravilloso* sought in the clichés of the forest of Brocéliande, the knights of the Round Table, the magician Merlin, and the Arthurian Cycle.<sup>34</sup> The marvelous, as it is badly portrayed by the workers and freaks in circuses—when will young French poets tire of the weird characters and the clowns in the *fête foraine*, which Rimbaud<sup>35</sup> had already dismissed in his "alchemy of the word". The marvelous that is seen in the Surrealists' shows and that is achieved by means of prestidigitator tricks while putting together objects that usually have nothing to do with each other: the old tall tale about the fortuitous meeting of an umbrella and a sewing machine on a dissecting table that produces ermine spoons, snails in a rainy taxi, and a lion's head in a widow's pelvis. Or, again, the marvelous in literature: the king in the Marquis de Sade's *Juliette*,<sup>36</sup> Jarry's

supermacho,<sup>37</sup> Lewis's monk,<sup>38</sup> and the chilling machinery in dark Gothic English novels: walled up priests, lycanthropy, hands nailed on castle doors.

But, by dint of their headlong effort to evoke the marvelous, these miracle-workers become bureaucrats. By invoking tired formulas that turn certain paintings into a monotonous jumble of caramel-colored clocks or mannequins stitched together with vague phallic monuments, the marvelous is nothing more than an umbrella or a lobster or a sewing machine or whatever sitting on a dissecting table in the middle of a sad room or a rocky desert. In Unamuno's words,<sup>39</sup> poverty of imagination results in codes learned by rote memorization. And nowadays there are codes for the fantastic based on the principle of the donkey devoured by a fig, which was proposed in the *Chants de Maldoror*<sup>40</sup> as reality's supreme inversion to those to whom we are indebted for "children threatened by nightingales" or André Masson's<sup>41</sup> "horses devouring birds." But note that when André Masson tried to depict the jungle on the Island of Martinique, with such incredible intertwining of its plants and the obscene promiscuity of certain fruits, the marvelous truth of the subject matter devoured the painter, leaving him nearly impotent before his blank paper. And it had to be a Latin American painter, the Cuban Wifredo Lam,<sup>42</sup> who could teach us the magic of tropical vegetation, the frenzied creation of the forms of our nature—with all its metamorphoses and symbioses—into monumental canvases with unparalleled expressiveness in contemporary painting. Considering the disconcerting imaginative poverty of a Tanguy,<sup>43</sup> for example, who for the past twenty-five years has been painting the same stony larvae under the same gray sky, I feel like repeating a phrase that makes the first-generation Surrealists proud: *Vous qui ne voyez pas pensez à ceux qui voient*.<sup>44</sup> There are still too many "teenagers who find pleasure in raping the cadavers of recently deceased beautiful women" (Lautréamont), without noticing that what would have been marvelous would have been to violate them when they were alive. But what many people forget, while disguising themselves all too easily as cheap wizards, is that *lo maravilloso* begins being marvelous in an unequivocal way when it arises from an unexpected alteration in reality (a miracle); from lighting that is unusual or uniquely favorable to reality's unnoticed textures; from a privileged revelation of reality; from an increase in the scale and categories of reality as these are perceived with particular intensity by virtue of a spiritual exaltation that leads it into an "extreme state" mode.

To begin with, the sensation of *lo maravilloso* presupposes faith. Those who do not believe in saints fail to be cured by means of saints' miracles, nor can those who are not Quixotic be transported body, soul, and earthly goods into Amadís de Gaula or Tirant lo Blanc.<sup>45</sup> Prodigiously true-to-life are certain sentences spoken by Rutilio in *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*<sup>46</sup> about men transformed into wolves, because in Cervantes' time it was believed that people could suffer from werewolf mania. In the same vein, the character's trip from Tuscany to Norway on a witch's blanket. Marco Polo<sup>47</sup> asserted that some birds could fly with elephants grasped in their talons, and Martin Luther<sup>48</sup> threw an inkwell at the head of a demon he saw standing in front of him. Victor Hugo, so exploited by book dealers for the marvelous aspects in his books, believed in apparitions because he was sure he had spoken with Léopoldine's ghost in Guernsey.<sup>49</sup> Van Gogh<sup>50</sup> was satisfied having faith in the sunflower for having concretized its revelation on canvas. Hence, the marvelous invoked in disbelief—as the Surrealists did for so many years—was never more than a very boring literary dodge that went on too long like some

"arranged" oneiric literature, or some praise of madness, which some of us oppose very strongly. Of course, that is not sufficient reason for some proponents to think they are right for returning to what is real—a term that, then, takes on a gregariously political meaning—for they only substitute prestidigitators' tricks for clichés uttered by card-carrying men of letters or the scatological delight of certain existentialists.<sup>51</sup> But it is indubitable that there is scant defense for poets and artists who praise sadism without practicing it; who admire supermachos out of impotence; who invoke specters without believing they respond to spells; and who found secret societies, literary sects, vaguely philosophical groups, with saints and signs and never-achieved arcane ends and without being able to conceive a valid mysticism or to give up their most miserable habits in order to risk their souls on the fearful card of a faith.

This became particularly clear to me during my stay in Haiti, when I came into daily contact with something that we could call the *real maravilloso*. I was treading a land where thousands of men hungry for freedom believed in the licantropic powers of Mackandal<sup>52</sup> so much that that collective faith could produce a miracle on the day of his execution. I was already acquainted with the prodigious story of Boukman,<sup>53</sup> the Jamaican initiate. I had been in La Ferrière Citadel, a construction without precedent in the history of architecture and anticipated only in Piranesi's *Imaginary Prisons*<sup>54</sup>. I had breathed the atmosphere created by Henri Christophe, a monarch of incredible determination, who was much more stunning than all the cruel kings invented by Surrealists, who are most fond of imaginary—but not experienced—tyrannies. At each step I would find *lo real maravilloso*. Yet, besides, I thought that that presence and the validity of *lo real maravilloso* were not a privilege unique to Haiti, but rather they were the patrimony of all of Latin America, where we have not yet finished establishing an inventory of our cosmogonies. The *real maravilloso* is found at every step in the lives of the people who inscribed their dates in the continent's history and left surnames that are still in use today: beginning with those who searched for both the fountain of youth and the golden city of Manoa including certain early day rebels or certain modern heroes of our wars of independence, people with a mythological aura like the female colonel Juana de Azurduy.<sup>55</sup> It has always seemed significant to me that, in 1780, some sane Spaniards left Angostura<sup>56</sup> in search of El Dorado, and that in the days of the French Revolution—long live Reason and the Supreme Being!—Francisco Menéndez from Compostela would wander about the region of Patagonia searching for the enchanted city of the Caesars.<sup>57</sup> Turning our attention to another aspect of this matter, we would see that, for example, precisely contrary to Western Europe folkloric dance, which has completely lost its magical or invocative nature, in Latin America, on the other hand, you will hardly ever find a communal dance that does not contain a deep, ritualistic sense by creating an initiation process around it. Witness the Cuban *santería* dances or the prodigious Black version of the Corpus holiday, which can still be seen in the Venezuelan pueblo of San Francisco de Yare.<sup>58</sup>

There is a moment in the sixth canto of *Maldoror*<sup>59</sup> in which the hero, who is being pursued by the world's combined police forces, escapes from "an army of agents and spies" by adopting the appearance of different animals and using his talent for transporting himself instantaneously to Beijing, Madrid, or St. Petersburg. This is the acme of "marvelous literature". But in Latin America, where nothing like this has been written, a Mackandal already existed endowed with the same powers by the faith of his

contemporaries. With that magic of his he also inspired one of the strangest, most dramatic uprisings in history. Maldoror—as avowed by Ducasse himself—was no more than a "poetical Rocambole."<sup>60</sup> From him alone there followed a short-lived literary school. From the Latin American Mackandal, on the other hand, an entire mythology remains accompanied by magical songs that are preserved by an entire people, and those hymns are still sung during Voodoo ceremonies.<sup>61</sup> (Additionally, there is an unusual coincidence in the fact that Isidore Ducasse—a man with an exceptional instinct for the poetically fantastical—was born in the Americas and that, at the end of one of his cantos, he boasted so emphatically about being *Le Montévidéen*.<sup>62</sup>) And it so happens that, due to the virginity of its countryside, its conformation, its ontology, the Faustian presence of its Indians and Blacks, the revelation that its recent discovery entailed, and the fecund racial mixing that it occasioned, Latin America is a long way away from exhausting the immense wealth of its mythologies. But, what is the history of Latin America but a chronicle of *lo real maravilloso*?

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Baudelaire (1808-1867) was the French poet who made the transition from Romanticism to Symbolism and who made the first critical analyses of modernity and modern art.

<sup>2</sup> Jan Huss (1369-1415): Czech mystic, religious philosopher, Christian reformer, who was judged to be a heretic and was therefore burned at the stake.

<sup>3</sup> Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805): German neo-Classical poet, philosopher, historian, and playwright.

<sup>4</sup> The Faust myth was made famous in by the Enlightenment German writer and scientist Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832). *Faust: The Tragedy Part One* was published in 1808.

<sup>5</sup> Tycho Brahe (1546-1601): Danish astronomer who worked with Johannes Kepler.

<sup>6</sup> Johannes Kepler (1571-1630): German mathematician and astronomer.

<sup>7</sup> Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791): Austrian composer: *Don Giovanni* (1787).

<sup>8</sup> Franz Kafka (1883-1924): Jewish Czech writer who created characters oppressed by a nightmarish, boring middle class world.

<sup>9</sup> Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750), German Baroque composer and organist.

<sup>10</sup> *Don Quixote* (1605, 1615), novel by Miguel de Cervantes (1547-1616), the inventor of the modern novel with this novel. The Goatherd's Discourse refers to the first of the two principal speeches delivered by Don Quixote. In this speech, which he pronounced in front of unlettered goatherds, he talks about the glories of the Golden Age.

<sup>11</sup> Hesiod (ca. 700 BCE), early Greek poet, rhapsode, and writer of mythologies and cosmologies.

<sup>12</sup> Bernal Díaz del Castillo (1492-1585), *True History of the Conquest of New Spain* (1568). See Web pages for: => **HUM 2461 Bernal Díaz del Castillo.**

<sup>13</sup> *Teules* is an Aztec Náhuatl word for priests.

<sup>14</sup> Amadís de Gaula, Belianis de Grecia, and Felixmarte de Hircania are protagonists of 16<sup>th</sup> century Spanish chivalric romances.

<sup>15</sup> For a photograph of such an Aztec headdress, see: => **HUM 2461.**

<sup>16</sup> General Manuel Mariano Melgarejo Valencia (1818-1871) was one of the most ruthless and incompetent presidential dictators (1864-1871) in Bolivia's entire history.

<sup>17</sup> Holofernes (6<sup>th</sup> century BCE) was king Nebuchadnezzar's Assyrian general mentioned in the Book of Judith in the bible. A city of the Hebrews was saved by the widow Judith, who seduced the general, got him drunk, and beheaded him.

<sup>18</sup> José Martí (1853-1895), was Cuban writer, politician, father and martyr of Cuban Independence, and he is acclaimed as the father of the first generation of *modernistas*. For notes on Martí, one of his poems, and an excerpt from one of his essays, see: => **HUM 2461.**

<sup>19</sup> Rubén Darío (1867-1916): Nicaraguan poet. For notes on Darío and one of his poems, see: => **HUM 2461.**

<sup>20</sup> Simón Rodríguez (1769-1854): Venezuelan educator and tutor to Simón Bolívar.

<sup>21</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) was the French Enlightenment essayist and *philosophe* who wrote the book *Emile* about education. He is the political theorist responsible for the notion of the "social contract".

<sup>22</sup> For the chronological reference to Simón Bolívar, the Liberator of Venezuela, and his stay in Santa Marta, see: => **HUM 2461.**

- <sup>23</sup> Tikal refers to the largest of all ancient Mayan ruins (300 BCE-900 CE). It is located in Guatemala. For a virtual journal of Tikal and environs, see: => **HUM 2461**.
- <sup>24</sup> Bonampak. Mayan ruins (600-800 CE) and archeological site in the Mexican State of Chiapas.
- <sup>25</sup> Tihuanacu: major pre-Incan civilization in the Bolivian Andes (ca. 1200 BCE).
- <sup>26</sup> Monte Albán, precontact (500 BCE) Zapotec civilization and archeological site in Oaxaca, Mexico.
- <sup>27</sup> Mitla: precontact (500 BCE – 200 CE) Mesoamerican archeological site in the Mexican State of Oaxaca.
- <sup>28</sup> Henri Christophe, Sans-Souci, La Ferrière, Cap-Français, etc. are all Haitian. Henri Christophe (1767-1820) was a leader of the Black slave War of Independence against France before becoming king of Haiti. The Citadelle La Ferrière was built by Henri Christophe after 1804, and it is the largest fortress in the Caribbean region. After committing suicide Henri Christophe was buried in La Ferrière. Sans-Souci (1810-1813) is a palace also built by Henri Christophe when he was king Henri I. Cap-Français is now known as Cap-Haïtien. It is a beach resort city on the north coast of Haiti.
- <sup>29</sup> Pauline Bonaparte (1780-1825) was Napoleon Bonaparte's favorite sister.
- <sup>30</sup> The Venus of Canova refers to a life-size sculpture of Pauline Bonaparte done in white marble by the Italian neo-Classical sculptor Antonio Canova (1757-1822). The work's title is "Pauline Bonaparte as Venus Victrix". It was made in 1805-1808.
- <sup>31</sup> Alejo Carpentier published his novel *Siglo de las Luces* in 1962. The three names refer to characters in the novel.
- <sup>32</sup> At this point in the Spanish version of the essay, Carpentier inserts the following footnote: "Here I turn to the text of the prologue to the first edition of my novel *El reino de este mundo* (1949), which did not appear in later editions, although today I think it is, with a few details, as valid as it was then. For us, Surrealism has ceased being—due to an imitative process that was still very active fifteen years ago—an erroneously exploited presence. But what is left for us is the *real maravilloso*, with its very different nature that is more and more palpable and discernible and that begins to proliferate in the works of some young novelists on our continent."
- <sup>33</sup> Petwo and rada refer to two kinds of drums used in Haitian Voodoo music. Rada drums have cowhide covers attached to the drum with wooden pegs. Petwo drums have goatskin covers attached with cords.
- <sup>34</sup> In medieval literature about King Arthur—the king of the famous Round Table at Camelot—Merlin is said to have loved Vivian in the Forest of Brocéliande, a Celtic forest also known as the Paimpont forest.
- <sup>35</sup> Arthur Rimbaud (1854-1891), French symbolist poet whose metaphors, he said, were inspired by the images in country carnivals (i.e., *fêtes foraines*).
- <sup>36</sup> The Marquis de Sade (1740-1814) is the author of famous pornographic works and a philosopher of extreme freedom. *Juliette* (1801) is the sequel to *Justine; les infortunes de la vertu*, a pornographic novella written while de Sade was in the Bastille prison in Paris in 1787.
- <sup>37</sup> Alfred Jarry (1873-1907) wrote the grotesque French play *Ubu Roi* (1896) about an outrageous, foul-mouthed character named King Ubu.
- <sup>38</sup> The reference is to the Gothic novel by Matthew Gregory Lewis (1775-1818), *The Monk* (1796).
- <sup>39</sup> Miguel de Unamuno (1867-1936), Spanish existentialist philosopher, essayist, poet, playwright, and novelist.
- <sup>40</sup> *Les Chants de Maldoror* is a novel about a quite evil character by the Comte de Lautréamont (1846-1870). It is considered the first surrealist work. This author's real name was Isidore Lucien Ducasse.
- <sup>41</sup> André Masson (1896-1987) was a French artist who was interested in Cubism, Surrealism, and automatic drawing. Masson is famous for—as Carpentier mentions here—forcing himself to work into and past exhaustion in an attempt to free his unconscious mind from rational control.
- <sup>42</sup> Wifredo Lam (1902-1982), Cuban artist. For paintings by Lam, see: => **HUM 2461**.
- <sup>43</sup> Yves Tanguy (1900-1955) was a French surrealist painter.
- <sup>44</sup> French: "You who do not see think about those who do see." For a definition of Surrealism see: => **HUM 2461**.
- <sup>45</sup> For Amadís de Gaula, see fn 14 above. For Don Quixote, see fn 10 above. Tirant lo Blanc is the protagonist of a Catalan chivalric novel of the same name (1490). He was known for his down-to-earth, realistic qualities.
- <sup>46</sup> *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*, a "Byzantine novel", is the last work produced by Cervantes. It appeared posthumously in 1617.
- <sup>47</sup> Marco Polo (1254-1324) was one of the first Europeans to travel the Silk Road to China and to visit the Great Khan of the Mongolian Empire.
- <sup>48</sup> Martin Luther (1483-1546) is the German monk and theologian who began the Protestant Reformation in 1517 by nailing 95 theses on the castle church door at Wittenberg in order to protest abuses in the Roman Catholic Church.
- <sup>49</sup> Victor Hugo (1802-1885) was the great Romantic French author of *Les Misérables* (1867) among many other novels, plays, essays, and poems. From 1855 to 1870, he lived in exile from France the Island of Guernsey in the English Channel. Léopoldine was Hugo's first daughter and second child.

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<sup>50</sup> Vincent Van Gogh (1853-1890) was the great Dutch painter in the modes of Impressionism, Fauvism, and Expressionism. Indeed, many of his most famous works are still life canvasses of sunflowers.

<sup>51</sup> Existentialism is a philosophy about human solitude that proposes the existence precedes essence. The first existentialist philosopher was the Dutch theologian and philosopher Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855). In the twentieth century, Miguel de Unamuno and Jean-Paul Sartre were important existentialist thinkers.

<sup>52</sup> François Mackandal (d. 1758) was the Vodou "priest" who led a pre-Independence slave rebellion of the Haitian Maroon against the white plantation owners. He was betrayed by one of his own men, captured, and burned alive in Cap-Français (now, Cap-Haïtien).

<sup>53</sup> Dutty Boukman was born in Jamaica, became a Voodoo "priest" (*houngan* in Haitian Creole), and went to Haiti where he started the Haitian War of Independence in 1791. At a Voodoo ceremony in the renowned forest called the Bois Caïman, he foretold the future leaders of the Haitian slave revolt that would lead to the formation of the first free Black republic in the world: Jean-François, Biassou, and Jeannot. Boukman was caught and beheaded. As a result of his martyrdom he was admitted to the pantheon of Voodoo spirits (*loa* in Haitian Creole).

<sup>54</sup> Giambattista Piranesi (1720-1778) was an Italian who drew pictures fantasy prisons, which prints were published in his book *Carceri d'Invenzione* (1750-1761).

<sup>55</sup> Juana Azurduy de Padilla (1780-1862) was a remarkable woman who was born in Bolivia and died in Argentina. She was famous during the war of independence in the Southern Cone, where she was the commander of the Northern Army of the Government of the United Provinces (i.e., Argentina) with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel at first and then Supreme Director of the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata. She commanded mostly native-American troops (Quechua and Aymara). Four of her sons were killed during the independence wars, and she even fought while pregnant. Today, the international airport in Sucre, Bolivia is named the Juana Azurduy de Padilla International Airport. Also, a woman's rights organization in Argentina is named for her.

<sup>56</sup> Angostura, Venezuela, is now called Ciudad Bolívar. It is situated at a narrows on the Orinoco River, and it is the city in which Simón Bolívar gave a key address to the Congress of Angostura during the War of Independence in 1816.

<sup>57</sup> I cannot identify this Francisco Menéndez from Compostela. The City of the Caesars is synonymous with El Dorado.

<sup>58</sup> San Francisco de Yare is a small town roughly 40 km south of Caracas. Tourists still flock to this town to witness the Afro-Latin custom of "devil dances", which are celebrated on the Catholic holiday of Corpus Christi. A male-dominated fraternity of Diablos (devils) organizes these solemn dances, whereas female dancers honor St. John. The masks worn by the male dancers are similar to masks used in Central Africa.

<sup>59</sup> Maldoror: see fn. 39 above.

<sup>60</sup> Rocambole refers to a fictional character created by a French writer (Pierre Alexis, 1829-1871) in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The character was so popular that the word *rocambolésque* (French and English) is still used to refer to a fantastic adventurer.

<sup>61</sup> Carpentier's fn: "See Jacques Roumain, *Le Sacrifice du Tambour Assolo (r)*."

<sup>62</sup> The French phrase *Le Montevidéen* means "The Montevidean"; i.e., a man from Montevideo, Uruguay.