



FERNANDO GONZÁLEZ
From Rebelliousness to Ecstasy

corporación
Otraparte



C'est ce de la jeunesse



FERNANDO GONZÁLEZ

From Rebelliousness to Ecstasy



Ediciones "OTRAPARTE"

*(Cover illustration by Daniel Gómez Henao. Biographical notes based on the book
"Fernando González, Philosopher of Authenticity" by Javier Henao Hidrón).*



What Was I Born For...?

FERNANDO GONZÁLEZ OCHOA was born on April 24, 1895 in Envigado, Antioquia. From childhood, his original and rebellious spirit manifested itself with force and led him to “live as an enemy” [a state of constant criticism]. Son of Daniel, a schoolteacher and retail merchant, and of Pastora, a housewife, he was the second of seven siblings. About his infancy, he tells us: “I was white, pale, wormy, silent, solitary. I often stood in the corners, suspenseful, still. I was easily angered, and I would roll in the creek every time I fought with the people at home.”

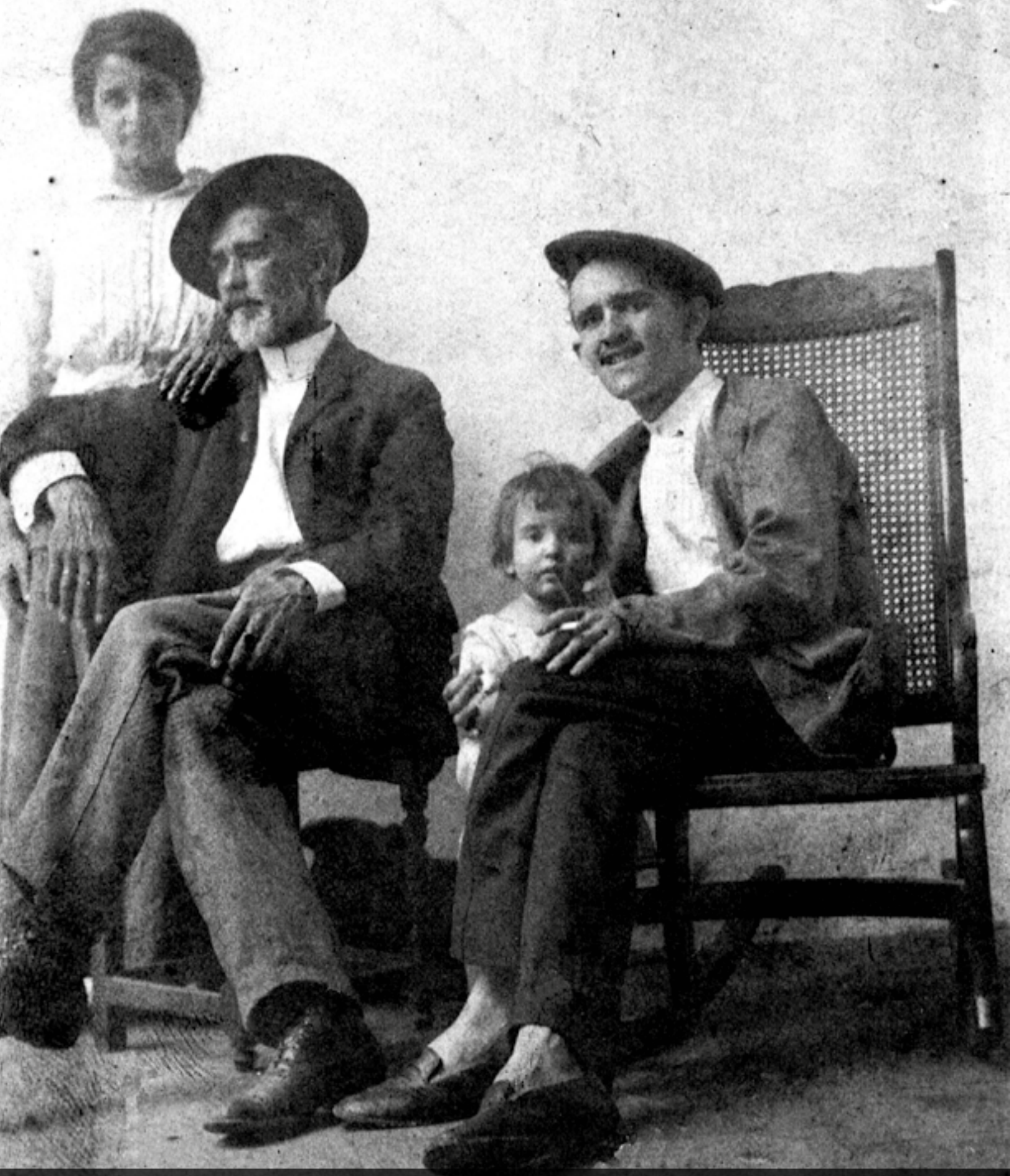
APRIL 24, 1942 (47 YEARS OLD). From 11 to 12½ I felt a vital plethora of *joy* and *happiness*. My mother tells me that I was born at four in the morning; that I was very tearful during the first days, “the one who cried the most in the house”; that I was pink, big-headed and big-eared; that my head was as clean as my face, pink, and that I did not start to grow hair until I was eight months old; that people said it was not going to grow; that Alfonso, the eldest (3 years old), as soon as he heard about my birth, said: “How I would like to have a shotgun to kill him!” I cried a lot. I also remember that my conscience only appeared to me when I was 10 years old. I lived my childhood and early youth in fear, without understanding anything, awed. I see this very clearly, that I was thrown from far away and that I was born (fell) dumbfounded. Where was I before? That’s why I was crying and took so long to acclimatize. Yes. I was going far, very far, and who knows why I fell here. I see clearly that my companions urge me; they call me. I will listen to their stimulating voices. I must rehabilitate myself: that’s what I came here for. Courage, courage!

—*Unpublished notebook*



Pastora Ochoa Estrada and Daniel González Arango on the day of their wedding: “From both parents I inherited the love for the great and beautiful life, which is for me, therefore, like a solemn and distant tempest in the Cauca River...”

IT OCCURS TO ME THAT THIS BOOK HAS NO PURPOSE... Just as I have not been able to discover what I was born for, I have not been able to discover what this book was born for... “Mom, what was I born for, and for what do I wake up?” And as long as it is not proven (what an odd word!) that there is an ultimate purpose, all beings will ask their parents: “What was I born for?” —*Thoughts of an Old Man*

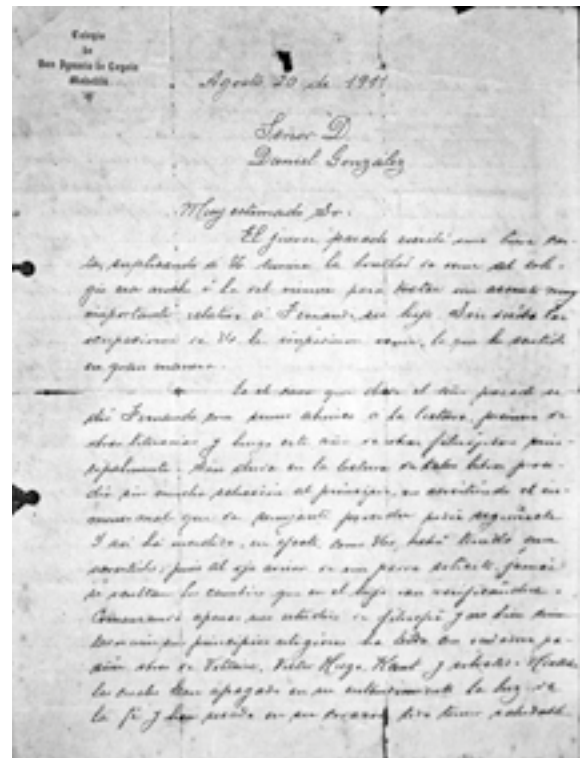


The First Principle

HE ATTENDED GRADE SCHOOL at La Presentación in Envigado, run by the Sisters of Charity, and studied up to his fifth year of high school as an intern at the San Ignacio de Loyola School, run by the Jesuit community. According to the report sent by the school principal to Daniel González, the young man's father, in 1911, he was expelled for his precocious and wide-ranging readings, for transmitting his philosophical concerns to his classmates, and for his neglect of strict religious practices (for example, his failure to attend the third day of spiritual retreats, or for abstaining from communion on Assumption Day).

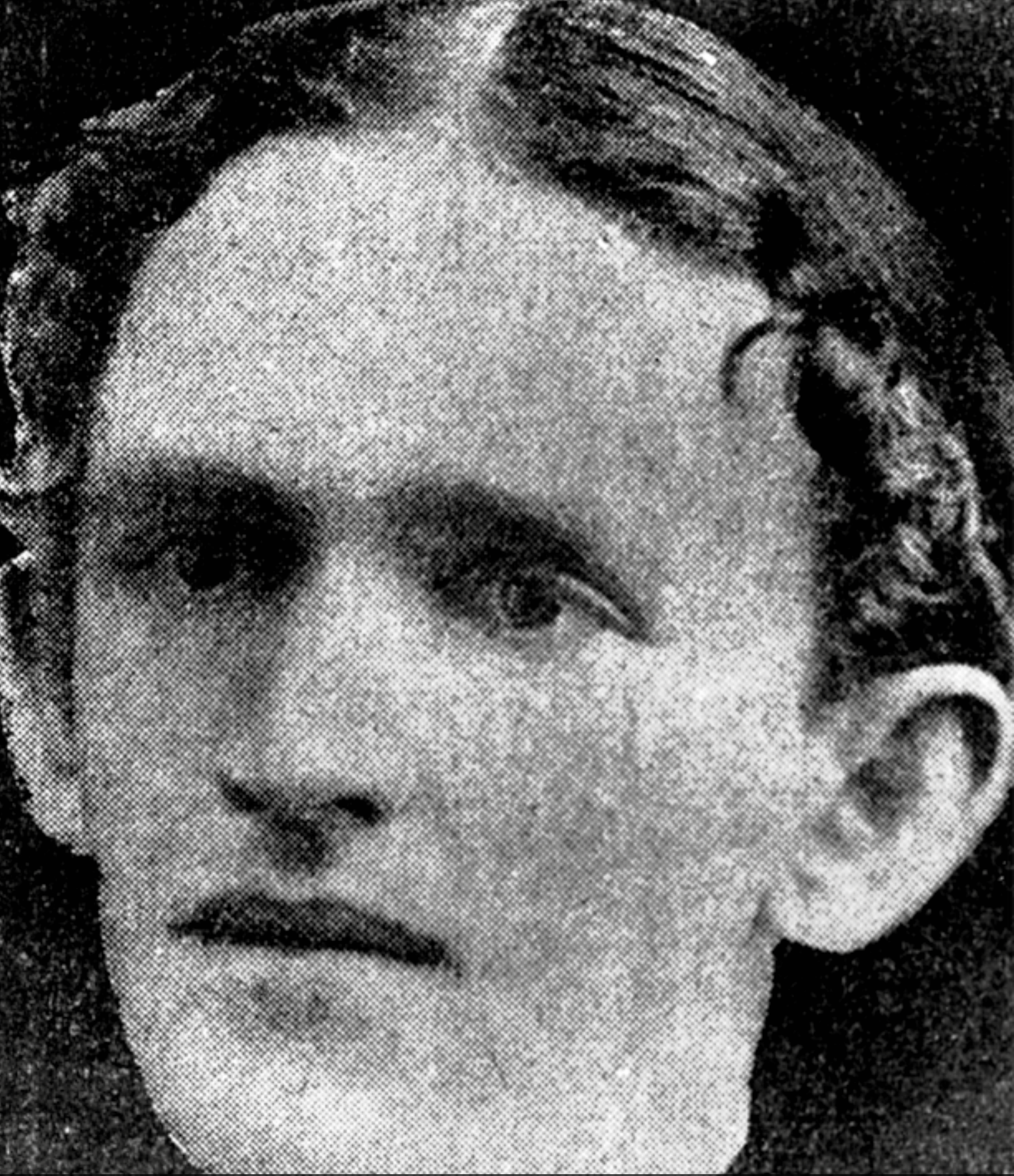
I, GENTLEMEN, WAS THE MOST SOUTH AMERICAN CHILD. I grew up with the Jesuits; I was the incarnation of inhibitions and psychological embolisms; I was nobody; I lived from what was alien to me: I lived with the Reverend Fathers... Hence the protest was born in me and I became the preacher of the personality. My life has been dedicated to giving back to the Reverend Fathers what they threw at me; I have lived uncovering my true self. I am the preacher of the personality; therefore, I am necessary to South America. God saved me, because the first thing I did was to deny Him before the Reverend Fathers. God is so good that He saved me, inspiring me to deny Him. Then I denied everything to Father Quirós. The first principle! I denied the first philosophical principle*, and the priest said to me: "Deny God, but you have to accept the first principle, or we'll throw you out of school..." I denied God and the first principle, and since that day I feel God, and I'm getting rid of what men have experienced. Since then, I have found myself, the emotional method, the theory of the personality: each one must live his experiences and consume his instincts. The true endeavor is to live our life, to manifest ourselves. Precisely in the most inhibited man, and in the most inhibited country, and on the vainest continent, the philosophy of the personality had to appear.

—*The Blackish*



Letter of expulsion addressed to Daniel González, signed by Rector Enrique Torres S. J.

* The first principle he refers to is that of contradiction: "The same cannot both be and not be at the same time and in the same respect."



The Panidas

IN 1915, HE JOINED THE PANIDAS GROUP —the name was a homage to the Greek god Pan—, a cenacle of “madmen and artists” organized in Medellín the year before by León de Greiff, Ricardo Rendón, Félix Mejía Arango, Libardo Parra Toro, José Manuel Mora Vásquez, Eduardo Vasco, and other companions of his youth. Fernando González publishes his first book, *Thoughts of an Old Man* (1916), with a prologue by the distinguished journalist Fidel Cano. Parables, monologues, aphorisms, and occasional dialogues fill this work, premonitory of the philosopher of the personality of the decade of the thirties, and of the traveler of the spirit of the senile age. He is the thinker in embryo, who writes for those who read only in silence, but still with a romantic and old-fashioned way of writing. More poet than philosopher, as befits a young man of twenty-one, prematurely aged and for whom “the movement of the spirit serves as a measure of time...”

HE WHO RUNS AWAY FROM LIFE does so because he loves it too much. Ordinary men believe that a philosopher is a man with an arid soul. On the contrary, how can one who does not have a heart full of life analyze life? How can somebody know the passions and desires and movements of the soul if he doesn't have a tormented soul? —*Thoughts of an Old Man*

I DON'T REMEMBER HOW MANY OF US were the *Panidas*, who in the second decade of this century drank liquor X and worked around in wandering projects, consuming youth, which is manna, that rots if it is not spent. But I do remember that they were Rendón, León de Greiff, Pepe Mejía and other poets who committed suicide or who are now engaged in commerce, having lost the memory of their honorable youth. I also remember that, in a hoarse voice, Rendón would say to the companion who was full of booze and put his glass aside: “Drink the drink”. —*Fernando González*



Fernando González and his cousin, José Vicente González.



The Right to Not Obey

AFTER THREE YEARS of intense concentration, dedicated to reading, self-knowledge, and the gestation of *Thoughts of an Old Man* (1916), he resumed his secondary studies. The degree of “Bachelor of Philosophy and Letters” was conferred on him by the University of Antioquia on February 8, 1917, and two years later, he graduated as a lawyer from the same institution with a study of political sociology: *The Right to Not Obey*. The title did not please the university authorities, who considered the essay subversive and also inappropriate for degree work. Pressed by the circumstances, he decided to introduce some modifications and to call it, succinctly, *A Thesis* (1919). The dramatic events that occurred during the First World War and the rise of State Socialism found in Fernando Gonzalez’s thesis a reasoned, firm, and upright response.

ON HOW IN COLOMBIA there are many doctors, many poets, and many schools, but little agriculture and few roads.

PEOPLES WHOSE YOUTH do not think, for fear of error and doubt, are doomed to be colonies.

ANARCHISM, which is the suppression of all government, is a beautiful ideal, but still very far from our time. Anarchism has a scientific basis and is nothing other than the principles of the liberal school carried to an extreme.

HAVING MADE THE PREVIOUS OBSERVATION, all that remains for me is to express to you that the aforementioned thesis fills the regulatory requirements in abundance, and that the new doctor will undoubtedly be, by reason of the great wealth of his legal knowledge, one more stamp of honor for our university. — *Víctor Cock (Thesis Chairman)*



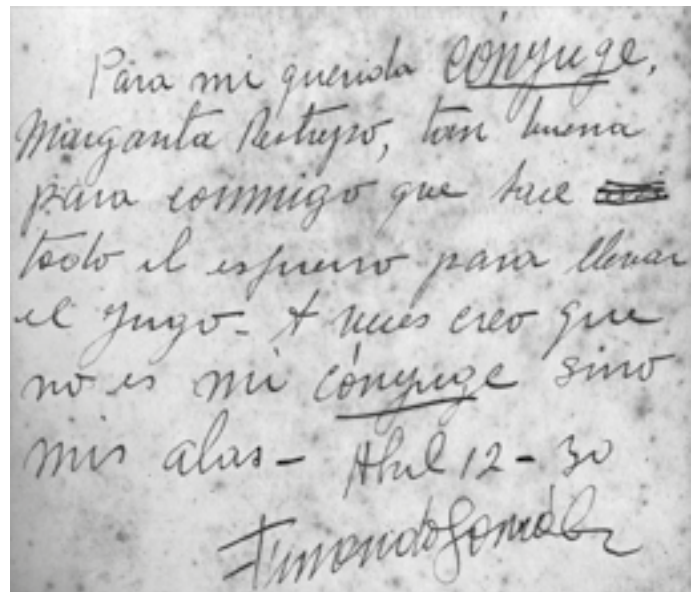
Fernando González Ochoa and Father Jesús María Mejía Bustamante (1845-1927), main parish priest of Envigado (1880-1918) and promoter of Santa Gertrudis church, where he invested more than 20 years in its construction.



Margarita

IN 1921, FERNANDO IS APPOINTED magistrate of the Superior Court of Manizales, the city where his older brother, Alfonso, was domiciled, and the following year, he married Margarita Restrepo Gaviria in Medellín. Often mentioned in his books as “Berenguela”, in his wife he found not only a great companion, but also a sensitive and intelligent reader. When the first edition of *Journey on Foot* (1929) came out, he wrote the following in the dedication of the copy he gave her: “Sometimes I think she is not my spouse, but rather my wings.” Margarita was the daughter of Carlos E. Restrepo, the former president of the Republic of Colombia, who would eventually become a good friend and confidant of Fernando González. According to Fernando, they were married to “philosophize and for eternity”. There were five children born from this union: Álvaro, Ramiro, Pilar, Fernando and Simón.

ONE BRIGHT MORNING, like this one, I met Berenguela. I was dominated by the energy of the space between her smiling eyes. Therein dwells the aura of intelligence. She happened to read some of my notebooks and told me that she admired me. “I wish to marry a woman who admires me.” She said nothing but asked for more notebooks. When I insisted, she told me that she pitied me. I brought her other notebooks, the most intimate ones, telling her that I wanted to marry a woman who would pity me. She didn’t answer either, but a month later, after reading me, she said that she despised me. I replied that I wanted to marry a woman who despised me. That’s why we got married. In reality, what else is man, the son of God, but an admirable being, worthy of compassion and despicable? I admire, commiserate, and despise myself. We have been very happy. Why? Because we got married knowing each other. —My Simón Bolívar



Para mi querida conyuge,
Margarita Restrepo, tan buena
para conmigo que he ~~he~~
tudo el esfuerzo para llevar
el yugo. A veces creo que
no es mi conyuge sino
mis alas - Abril 12 - 30
Fernando González

“To my dear spouse, Margarita Restrepo, so good to me that she makes every effort to bear the yoke. Sometimes I think she is not my spouse, but rather my wings.”



Journey on Foot

IN 1928, HE WAS APPOINTED Second Civil Judge of the Medellín Circuit. In his secretary, Benjamín Correa, a former seminarian and philosophy aficionado, he found an admirable friend. After taking his company on a trip “with backpacks and staffs” through the towns of Antioquia, Caldas, and Valle, he wrote *Journey on Foot* (1929), a book in which he began his struggle against the “literature of words”. According to Gabriel Miró, “it is an extraordinary and unique work that reveals to the Spaniards of the peninsula how much the psychological genius of a South American Creole is capable of”. Monsignor Manuel José Caycedo, Archbishop of Medellín, issued a decree on December 30, 1929, prohibiting the reading of the book as a mortal sin.

ANYWAY, we woke up and continued traveling. A dog fight accompanied our passage through the town square, and then we got lost in the uncultivated grounds of this land. For a long time, we walked along a path of ruminants, not knowing where we were going. Nor do we know where we are going when we live. It was not a great sadness to be lost, because we had been lost since we couldn't find the first philosophical principle in the company of our dear friends the Jesuits. When we asked the Reverend Father Quirós how the truth of the first principle he gave us could be verified, he would say: “That is the first one; it cannot be proved.” Since then, we have been lost. And just as we were guided along this path by the footprints of a ruminant, so we are guided through life, preventing us from absolute loss, by the mark left as a child in our soul by three women: Mother, Sister Belén, and you, Margarita.

YOU, MARGARITA, who know the author's intense love for his Colombian land, for the Colombian air, for the solitary Simón Bolívar of Santa Marta, for the territorial sea, you are the only one who can understand the purpose of this book: to describe to the youth the conservative Colombia of Rafael Núñez; to do something so that the man who will scourge the merchants will appear. This book is for you; you know what the author thinks of our Lord Jesus Christ.

BAJO PECADO MORTAL

es condenada por dos Obispos la lectura
del libro de Fernando González

“Viaje a pie”.

El Arzobispo de Medellín:

Sea, Manuel José Caycedo, por la gracia de Dios y de la Santa Sede Apostólica, Arzobispo de Medellín, asistente al Sello Pontificio.

Constituido por nuestro cargo pastoral en guardia de la fe y de las buenas costumbres (c. 526), apremiado por el deber de alejar el peligro de perversión que traen las malas lecturas (c. 1396) y habiendo sido denunciado ante Nos como gravemente nocivo el libro intitolado «Viaje a pie», cuyo autor es el doctor Fernando González.

Después de haberlo sometido al examen y haberlo hallado prohibido A JURE, porque ataca los fundamentos de la Religión y la moral con ideas evolucionistas, hace burla sacrilega de los dogmas de la fe, es blasfemo de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo y con sarcasmos volterrianos se propone ridiculizar las personas y las cosas santas, trata de sucesos lascivos y está caracterizado por un sensualismo brutal que respiran todas sus páginas.

DECRETAMOS:

El libro del doctor Fernando González, «Viaje a pie» está vetado por derecho natural y eclesiástico, y por tanto su lectura es prohibida bajo pecado mortal.

Dado en Medellín, a 30 de Diciembre de 1929.

† MANUEL JOSÉ
Arzobispo de Medellín.

El Obispo de Manizales:

Ratificamos, de acuerdo con lo dispuesto en las Conferencias Episcopales, la condenación del libro «Viaje a pie» del doctor Fernando González, hecha por el Ilustrísimo señor Arzobispo de Medellín.

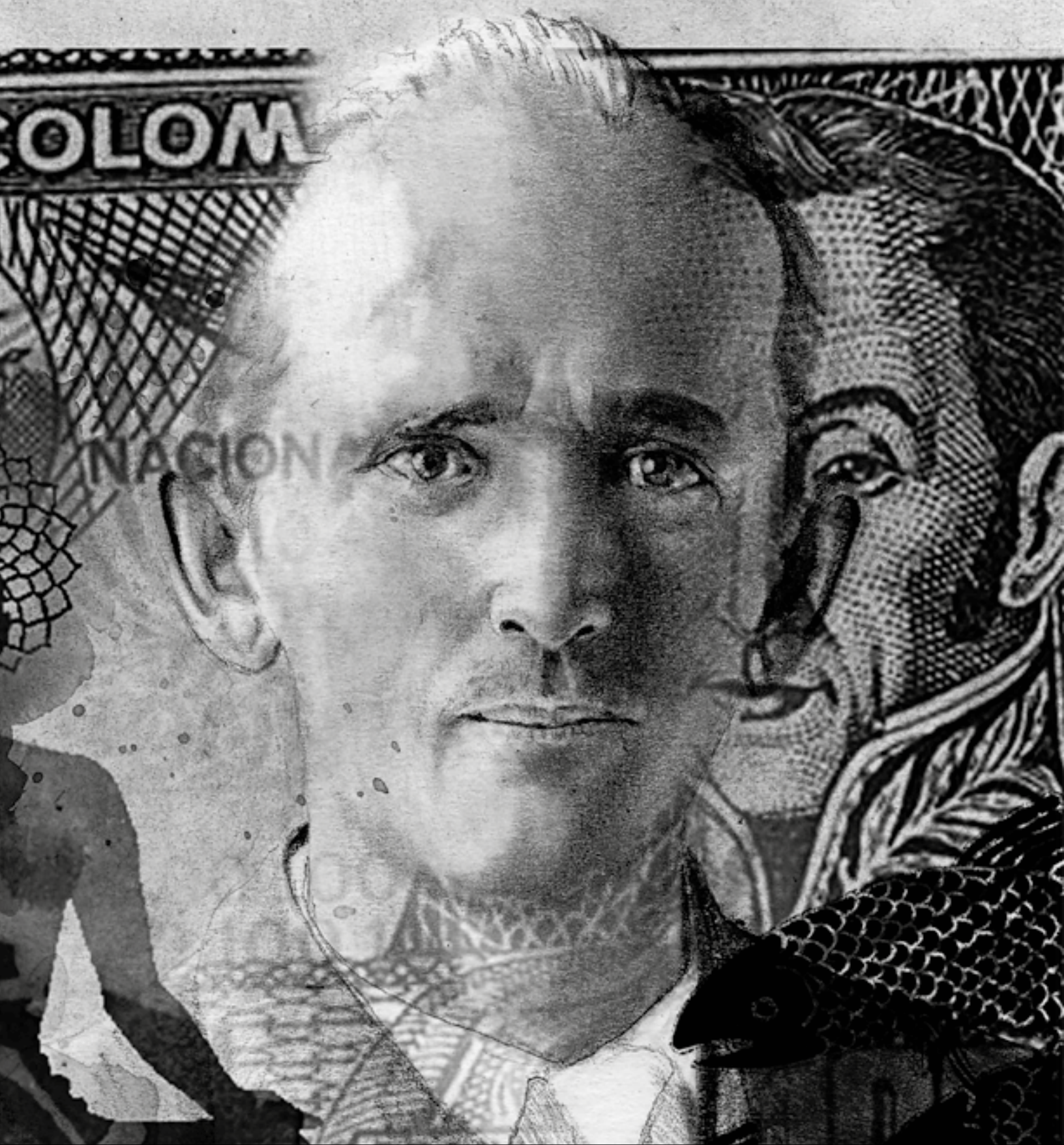
En consecuencia, declaramos prohibida, bajo pena de pecado mortal, a los fieles de nuestra Diócesis, la lectura de dicho libro. Basta leer sus páginas para conocer su evolucionismo y leerla para pervertirse de que está prohibida por el mismo derecho natural.

El presente decreto y su ratificación serán leídos en todas las Iglesias y Capillas de la ciudad episcopal y publicados por la prensa para conocimiento de los fieles.

Dado en Manizales, a 8 de Abril de 1930.

† TIBERIO,
Obispo de Manizales.

“Under mortal sin, it is condemned by two bishops the reading of Fernando Gonzalez's book, *Journey on Foot*.”



Bolívar and Venezuela

ON THE OCCASION of the first centennial of the Liberator's death, Fernando González published *My Simón Bolívar* (1930), a beautiful and polemic book inspired, according to him, by his *alter ego*, Lucas Ochoa. On September 1st, he travels to Venezuela with the purpose of meeting General Juan Vicente Gómez, whom he calls the "Big Hat". Three years later, he published *My Compadre* (1934), his biography of Gómez. The title of the book is due to the fact that the general was the baptismal godfather of Simón, his youngest son, who later in life rose to prominence as the governor of the islands of San Andrés, Providencia, and Santa Catalina. In Gómez's government, González believed he saw "the first essay of self-expression of the South American race." In a letter to his father-in-law, Carlos E. Restrepo, Colombia's ambassador to Italy at that time, he said: "Yesterday I finished the book *Mi Compadre y Venezuela*, which I have been preparing for three years. There I say everything that my conscience dictated to me, without reservations, about the Great Colombia." Months later, he added, "In Venezuela they got angry and did not even allow the entry of the copies I sent."

IN SEARCH OF HUMAN BEAUTY, Lucas traveled north and south, east and west in a futile endeavor. Then he went to the past and found that in Santiago de León de Caracas was born, at one o'clock in the morning of July twenty-fourth, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-three, a Spanish Creole, heir to all the energy of the conquistadors, and that in his short life of forty-seven years, four months and twenty-four days, he had fulfilled the following principles in which the performance of human energy is summarized: I. Knowing exactly what one desires; II. Wanting it as desperately as a drowning person wants air; and III. Sacrificing oneself to realize the desire. This man was SIMÓN BOLÍVAR. Having found human beauty, Lucas isolated himself from his fellow citizens and devoted himself for years to the creation of the hero in himself. —*My Simón Bolívar*



Fernando González in Bogotá during a series of lectures. Photo by Montoya, 1931.



Consul in Europe

ON AUGUST 20, 1931, by means of a decree expedited by President Enrique Olaya Herrera, Fernando Gonzalez was appointed as General Consul of Colombia in Genoa (Italy), a position that he assumed at the beginning of 1932, accompanied by his family. In the same year, the publishing house Le Livre Libre of Paris published *Don Mirócleles*. In 1933, he was Consul of Colombia in Marseilles (France), where the Colombian President had transferred him after a request from the fascist government. The cause was his criticisms of Mussolini and his regime, found by the Italian police in the notebooks that gave origin to *The Sleeping Hermaphrodite* (1933).

WHO IS LUCAS OCHOA in the days when he makes a clean sweep of his Italian adventures? Often, he goes to the window of the consulate where he works, looks at the sky, and calls out to God. Also, when he goes for a walk with his children, he looks up to the sky, like birds of prey when they sun themselves on the rooftops. He has great assurance that we are *made* and that we can *receive energy*. It's a matter of placing ourselves in relation to it. Almost all cut the current and shrivel up like raisins. He feels alive and in communication with everything created. "Up there," he says, "even the farthest sun is united with me." Many times, he wakes up during the night and feels the solidarity with the stars, he feels how the sun is warming the other hemisphere and sees the earth going its way, so beautiful. He enters the temples and stands for hours against a column, because he affirms that he has relationships with God. Who is God? He answers that it's the essence, that which is not *made*. That God is not formal. He says that he has some things to help his relationship with God:

for example, the rays of the sun that enter through the windows of the churches and that materialize in the corpuscles of the ambient dust; the sun, to which he looks askance, while breathing slowly and deeply; the silent moon and the multicolored stars. Also, at night he curls up in his bed and cries inwardly: "Take me, take me away, to other emotional planes! Carry me, Mother of mine! I was created !" — *The Sleeping Hermaphrodite*



Fernando González Ochoa with his sons Fernando (left) and Simón. They are accompanied by the cat Salomé. Marseilles, France, 1933.



The Blackish

IN JUNE 1934, after his return from Europe, he lives in Envigado in a country house, which he calls “Villa Bucharest.” In 1935, Editorial Arturo Zapata of Manizales publishes *The Remorse*, an “essay on moral theology” conceived in Marseilles, and *Letters to Stanislaus*, most of which are addressed to his friend Estanislao Zuleta Ferrer, father of the renowned intellectual of the same name. In May 1936, he published *The Blackish*, dedicated to “those animals that inhabit the Great Colombia, similar to man...” At the same time, the first issue of *Antioquia* magazine appears, a journalistic project of which he managed to publish 17 issues, the last one in 1945.

WE HAVE ALREADY GRASPED SOUTH AMERICA: *vanity*. All constitutions, laws, and customs have been copied; pedagogy, methods, and programs have been copied; all forms have been copied. They are ashamed of the *ca-rriel* and the *ruana*. What is original? What manifestation springs forth, like water from a rock? Bolívar and Gómez. Who are their fathers, and who are their sons? I have meditated for years, and Bolívar remains inexplicable to me. He was a meteor. He was sent by someone. Gómez has parents: he is the son of guerrillas, assassination, and racial cataclysm; a hundred years of atrocious struggles to unite all races on this sensual continent, explain him. He was a fundamental genius, astute, cold, unconscious, and the incarnation of the American devil. What a superb personality, what a beautiful individuality that of Juan Vicente Gómez! Do you understand now why I loved him and why we were *compadres*? —*The Blackish*



Fernando González and Tomás Carrasquilla (1935).

WHAT IS MISSING IN COLOMBIA, STANISLAUS? I know it. I have had that secret in my possession for a year, just as my aunt Lila had the devil imprisoned in an antique jar for nine months, the time of my mother's pregnancy... What is it? That all beauty, goodness, and power come from God. In Colombia nobody, not even the men of the keys, has friendships with God. Colombia is a timid country, a beaten humanity. Very intelligent, but they are afraid. That is why the sterility. The governors think randomly about the book they read, as if they were people without a navel. —*Letters to Stanislaus*



The German's Orchard

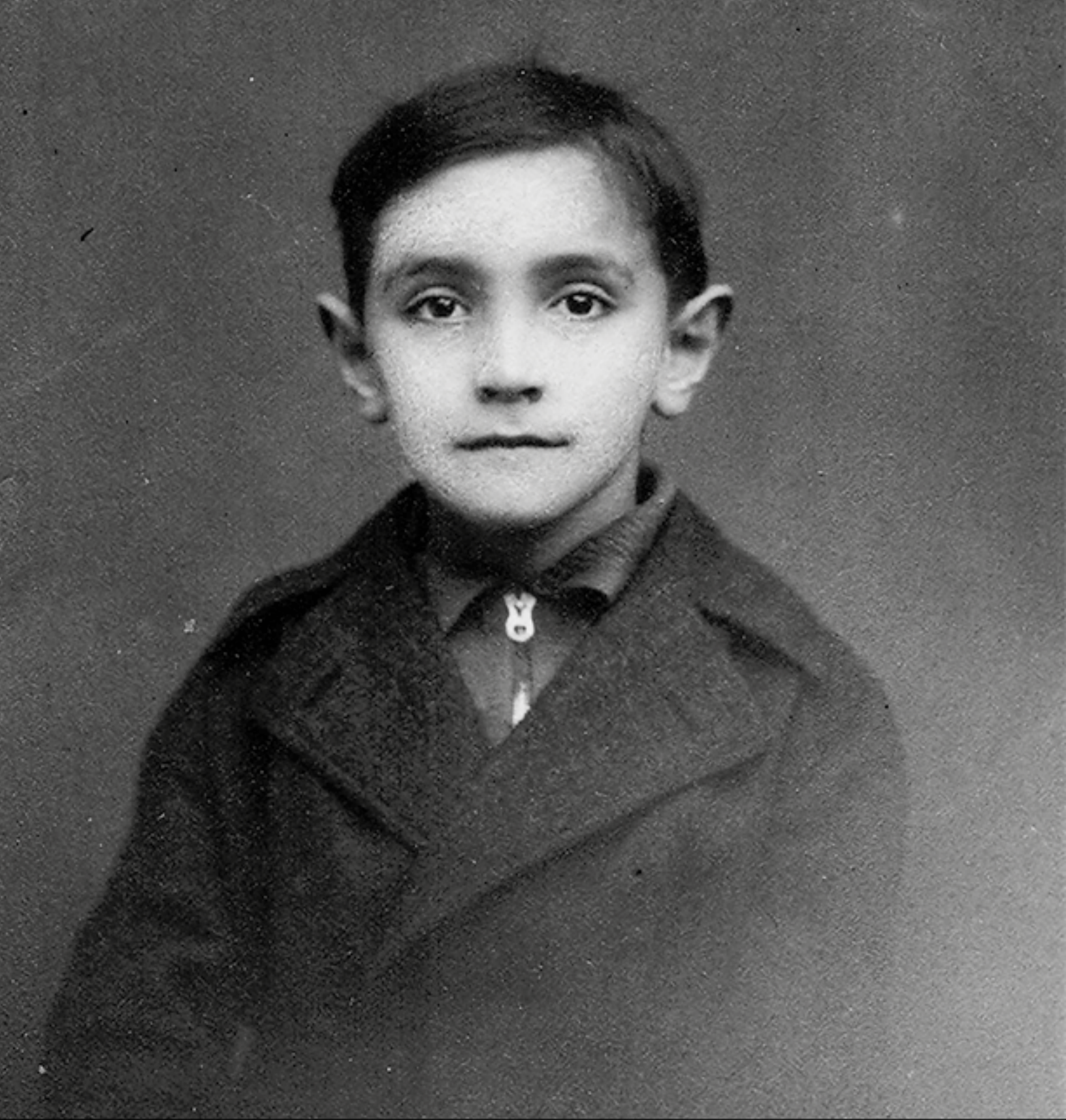
THE INSTINCT OF “owning real estate” became a reality in 1940. With his family, he moves to “The German’s Orchard”, a beautiful country house that he has built with the support of his savings, the inheritance of his father-in-law, Carlos E. Restrepo, and the collaboration of three friends: the architect Carlos Obregón, the engineer Félix Mejía Arango (Pepe Mexía), and the painter Pedro Nel Gómez. He’ll later refer to it as “Ramiro’s Beehive,” “Progrede-re,” and “Otraparte” [*Elsewhere, Somewhere*]. On the occasion of the first centenary of the death of General Francisco de Paula Santander, he published *Santander* (1940), a merciless historical and psychological analysis of the “Man of the Laws”, where he also analyzed the phenomenon of the national heroes.

WE OBSERVE IT FROM AFAR, with its symphony of windows, balustrades, and rooftops; and up close, we begin to discover all the wonders of a reliquary. There is coordinated everything that the impetus of reinforced concrete and the bad taste of the nouveau riche are dislodging: the iron railings cast by Francisco José de Caldas when building the ancient Colombian Mint; the tiny balustrades that, in the 18th century, watched over the physiognomy of the young women of Rionegro; the small wooden image detached from a colonial pulpit. The living room, ample and sober, combines Spanish wood carvings, made by a carpenter from La Ceja who still does not

suspect modernism, with the precious wooden table that belonged to Margarita’s father and Fernando’s father-in-law: President Carlos E. Restrepo. Each finding provokes in the noble writer from Envigado an exclamation of an artist who is in harmony with his work. After contemplating with rapture the inner courtyard, bricked in the old style, with drawings of pebbles, and centralized by a rustic cistern that evokes the charitable Samaritan, we went up the cloistered staircase, to the view of the top floor, below whose railing stand out the red geraniums that embellish the facade, and in the background the hillsides dotted with poplar trees and residences, that instead of crowding together are dispersed, giving the most pleasant sensation of spaciousness. —*Luis Enrique Osorio (Cromos magazine, 1942)*



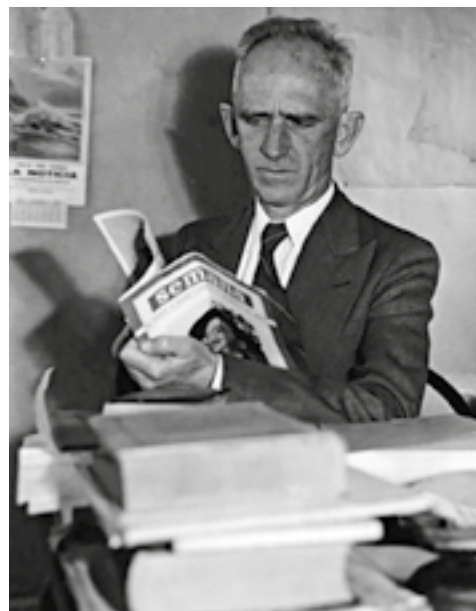
The German’s Orchard in *Cromos* magazine (1942).



*The Pit of the
Nocturnal Animals*

IN *THE SCHOOLTEACHER* (1941) he analyses the complex of “the great misunderstood man” and ends up declaring the death of Manjarrés, the school teacher from Envigado. It is his most heartbreaking book, in which he lives his own agony and burial. The consequence is a long period of literary and philosophical silence that will last for eighteen years. On January 28, 1947, at the age of 22, and when he was about to obtain his Doctor in Medicine degree, his son Ramiro died of leukemia. In 1953, Fernando González was appointed Consul of Colombia in Europe, a post he held for four years, first for a few months in Rotterdam (Holland) and then in Bilbao (Spain). This new job was an exceptional opportunity to leave his already prolonged confinement in *The German’s Orchard*, where in the last twelve years he had spent so many nights “filled with silence”, after having made the decision to bury the schoolteacher who had vibrated so intensely in his inner world.

I WAS IN THE “PIT OF THE NOCTURNAL ANIMALS” as follows: in 1941, because they did not appreciate me; because I was not for others the “great man” that I believed in and wanted to be; that is, because I had lived with pleasure the complex of “the great misunderstood man”, and I dwelled on it with arrogance, confronting my nothingness to the infinite Intimacy, despising and denying the beatitudes that I’d had on my journey... There was much economic poverty at home, and my son Ramiro fell ill and died, and he was more to me than I was, for in his agony I cried out that we should be exchanged, that he should live, and I should die..., and we had to borrow the place to bury his corpse. I then wrote *The Schoolteacher*, in which I ended up mocking the Spirit and saying that “the king is my rooster”, and that “I buried the schoolteacher in me”, and that I would be able to do what everyone does, “sell my lie,” and I signed the book “Ex Lucas de Ochoa”. And one does not live with impunity the arrogance of affirming his vain person and much less can one confront it with the Spirit! There were years of downfall and perdition, and from there Zacchaeus and my son pulled me out, because years ago I gave myself to calling them, imploring them to come to my aid. —*Book of the Journeys or of the Presences*



Fernando González Ochoa. Photo by Gabriel Carvajal (1949).



Theory of the Journeys

IN SEPTEMBER 1957, HE RETURNED to Colombia and settled in his country house, “The German’s Orchard”, which he would soon call “Otraparte” [*Elsewhere, Somewhere*]. He dedicated himself to writing his definitive work, essentially mystical in content: it is a philosophy-wisdom or course of the inner life, exposed in a dialectic and dramatic form, and in which he distinguishes three stages to which he names the Passionate world, the Mental world, and the Spiritual world. In the *Book of the Journeys or of the Presences* (1959), in the notebooks given by Lucas de Ochoa to the “pu-bli-cist” González, one is taught how to travel through marvelous interior worlds. A new language of living knowledge is employed, in which the use of the gerund stands out, which “is in itself an expression of a flight out of the conceptual imaginative...” With this work, different from all the previous ones, the gymnosophist or “naked philosopher” emerges.

I HAVE NOT CHANGED MY OBJECTIVE. Since I was a child or ovum, I have been after eternal youth, and I look for it and search for it in pipes, sewers, caves, girls, and old men. Since I was a child, I defined or knew myself as the one who calls God from his latrine; that is why, to fulfill the mission, I was born in me, a latrine, and I was born in Colombia, another latrine. I am not a convert. Converts disgust me. Where does one convert to? Oneself, a man, is a turd that floats in the ocean of life. That is why Paul, the patron saint of travelers, said, “In life we are, we move, and we live.” —*The Letters to Ripol*

TO SUM UP, each one has his own issues, the entanglement he came to unravel, which is what he really develops and represents in this world; what he processes in the various representations which he believes to be of his concern. And almost everyone believes that it is with others, and that there are several activities, but it is intimately a personal business, with oneself, digesting one’s person to find one’s originality. And as the agony barely subsides, the struggle becomes painfully conscious, so originality jumps out, and that is why I maintain that the best profession is mine, as an observer of that. The agonizer smells more and more like himself, walks, urinates, and does everything as only he can do it; in short, he is becoming himself. —*Book of the Journeys or of the Presences*



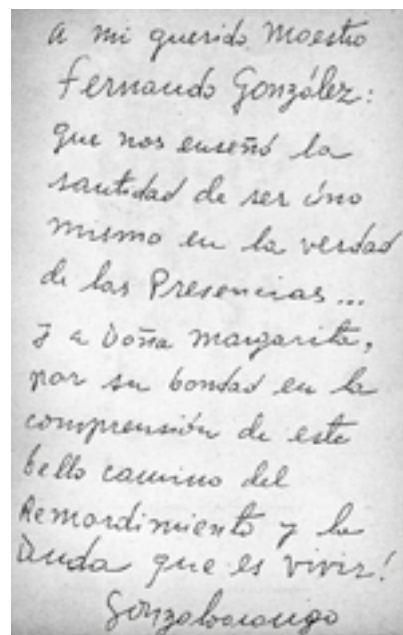


Otraparte

IN THE LAST YEARS of Fernando González's life, Otraparte became an almost mythical place. The name became popular and used to be pronounced with admiration and respect. The master began to be called "The Magus of Otraparte" or "The Sorcerer of Otraparte". He was frequently visited by young people eager to meet him, by artists, intellectuals (Alberto Aguirre, Carlos Castro Saavedra, Carlos Jiménez Gómez, Darío Ruiz, Félix Ángel Vallejo, León Posada, Leonel Estrada, Manuel Mejía Vallejo, María Helena Uribe, Olga Elena Mattei, Óscar Hernández, Regina Mejía, Rocío Vélez, Rosemary Smith...), and by priests, being notable among the latter the Benedictine Father Andrés Ripol, with whom he had an intense and beautiful correspondence. Among the young people who approached the master at that time were many of the members of the group of the "Nadaístas", and mainly Gonzalo Arango, to whom he dedicated the "first gifted notebook" of the fourth part of the *Book of the Journeys or of the Presences*.

AT THE TIME I READ HIS BOOKS, I assumed that such a great man —of whom nothing was known— had to be dead. However, he lived 50 cents away by bus from Medellín, in a little house on the edge of the road to Envigado, among shady acacias and dwarf orange trees: Otraparte. He was a kind and dreadful master. After Jesus Christ, I have never known a better one. —Gonzalo Arango

I SEE HIM NOW AS IN MY EARLY TWENTIES. He had a magnificent skull in which resonated the anguish of this human race; the clear eyes of a prophet capable of experiencing amazement; ears like shells accustomed to hearing the rhythm of the sea and of the grass that is born, the wind, and the voices never invoked; hands that sculpted the air, the defining word, the message; a voice that repeated its thought and repeated it again to be more certain, or to grab the doubt and extract its essences, as if by squeezing it. Silences full of wisdom. It is difficult to forget his figure in the afternoons of Envigado, in the hustle and bustle of the city, in the Benedictine peace of Otraparte. —Manuel Mejía Vallejo



a mi querido Maestro
Fernando González:
que nos enseñó la
santidad de ser uno
mismo en la verdad
de las Presencias...
Y a Doña Margarita,
por su bondad en la
comprensión de este
bello camino del
Remordimiento y la
Duda que es vivir!
Gonzalo Arango

A dedication by Gonzalo Arango to Fernando González and Margarita Restrepo.



I Am Nobody in God

THUS, WE ARRIVE AT THE YEAR 1964. An intense inner life guided his actions; he seemed to have achieved the state of bliss of Father Elías, his self-improving *alter ego* in *The Tragicomedy of Father Elías and Martina the Candlemaker* (1962), the incarnation of an ideal to which he had aspired since his youth. On February 16, Sunday, at about 7:30 p. m., he suffered a heart attack that took him definitively to the real Otraparte... or the Kingdom of Silence. He was about to turn 69 years old. When the heart attack struck, the cup of coffee beside him spilled over the sheet of paper on which he was writing his most recent wishes and, at the same time, making an examination of his existence: “I will establish the new seminary, a seminary where the texts are the seminarians themselves... The books are dead, while the seminarians are moribund in God. [...] What am I? Nothing, creature. Whether I accept it or not, I am nobody in God.”

EVERY DAY I CONSUME MYSELF. I should not complain about these experiences because they make me wise. The end of life is to reach death with the body consumed by the journey and the soul like a full moon rising. —*The Sleeping Hermaphrodite*

WHEN I SAW HIS CORPSE: what peace! What consent with death! What blissful beatitude! He rested with the serenity and confidence of a saint. He lay full of divine love, as if in dying he had celebrated his wedding with God. There was not a trace of confusion, nor of doubt, nor of dreadful uncertainties. He was identified with the Other Life. I'm glad he found it. He had made himself worthy of God by seeking Him with passion, faith, and desperation. To me, he was an immortal spirit, the holiest and most human of the men I knew. I owe the best of my spiritual self to him. His presence elevated me to the deepest and purest part of myself. —*Gonzalo Arango*



Fernando González by Raúl Bernal in 1964.



Otraparte House Museum

THE HOUSE WAS BUILT IN 1940 for the González Restrepo family. The planning and construction process involved the architect Carlos Obregón, the engineer Félix Mejía Arango (Pepe Mexía), and the painter (engineer and architect, as well) Pedro Nel Gómez. The latter designed the beautiful patio that resembles a carpet adorned by a circular well built of cement and stone; Obregón designed the plans and Mejía Arango directed the work. Predominantly colonial in style, it has a second floor consisting of an alcove and its corresponding balcony, an aspect that confers it a special attractiveness and highlights its beauty. In the last years of the writer's life, Otraparte became an almost mythical place; the name became popular and used to be spoken with admiration and respect. The Assembly of Antioquia declared it a Departmental Monument according to Ordinance number 76 of 1979, and by means of Law 1068 of 2006, the Congress of the Republic "exalts the memory, life, and work of the philosopher Fernando González and declares the house museum that bears his name in the municipality of Envigado, Antioquia, as an Asset of Public and Cultural Interest of the Nation." In 1987, it was converted into a museum and is currently a cultural center and the headquarters of Otraparte Corporation, a non-profit organization created in April 2002 at the initiative of his son, Simón González Restrepo, former governor of the islands of San Andrés, Providencia, and Santa Catalina.

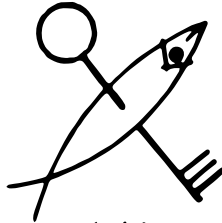
MORE THAN A MEMORY OR A HISTORICAL SITE, the house where Fernando González lived, endured, and died is a living temple that summons to silence, to reflection, to the search for the authenticity that the philosopher preached, and of which Colombia is still an orphan. In Otraparte beats and dwells, and does not quench or extinguish, the heart of the thinker from Envigado. Nothing that is done in Otraparte can be closed, finished, but must be germinal. Pure seed. The beginning of the journey. Of a journey open to life, to truth, to authenticity...

—Ernesto Ochoa Moreno



Fernando González's
homeopathic medicine kit.

FERNANDO
GONZALEZ



EX-LIBRIS



OTRAPARTE HOUSE MUSEUM

Cra 43A # 27A Sur - 11
Fernando González Avenue
Envigado, Antioquia, Colombia
C. P. 055422

Phone number:
(57) (604) 448 24 04

Hours of operation:

Monday through Friday:
8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Saturdays and Sundays:
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Closed on holidays.

Otraparte.org

Fernando González

- Abogado -

Edificio Córdoba, Plaza No. 6
Carrera Bolívar Medellín-Colombia

Teléfono No. 119-84

Con el apoyo de:



Alcaldía de Envigado

Juntos
SUMAMOS
por Envigado