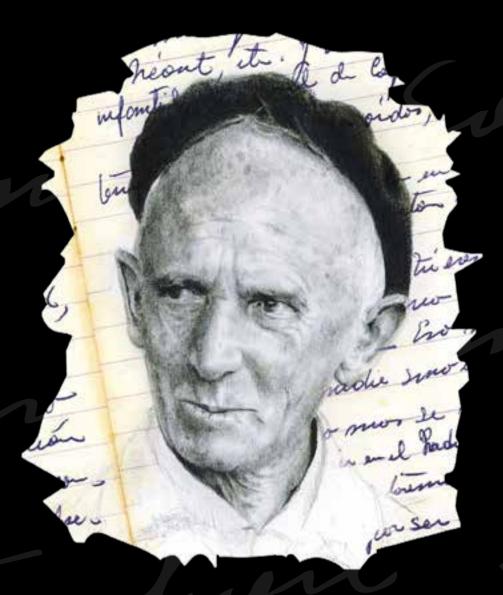
# Fernando González The Journey to the Presence



"What I wish for my books is that they live their lives without me and make me happy when I read them again."

Otraparte

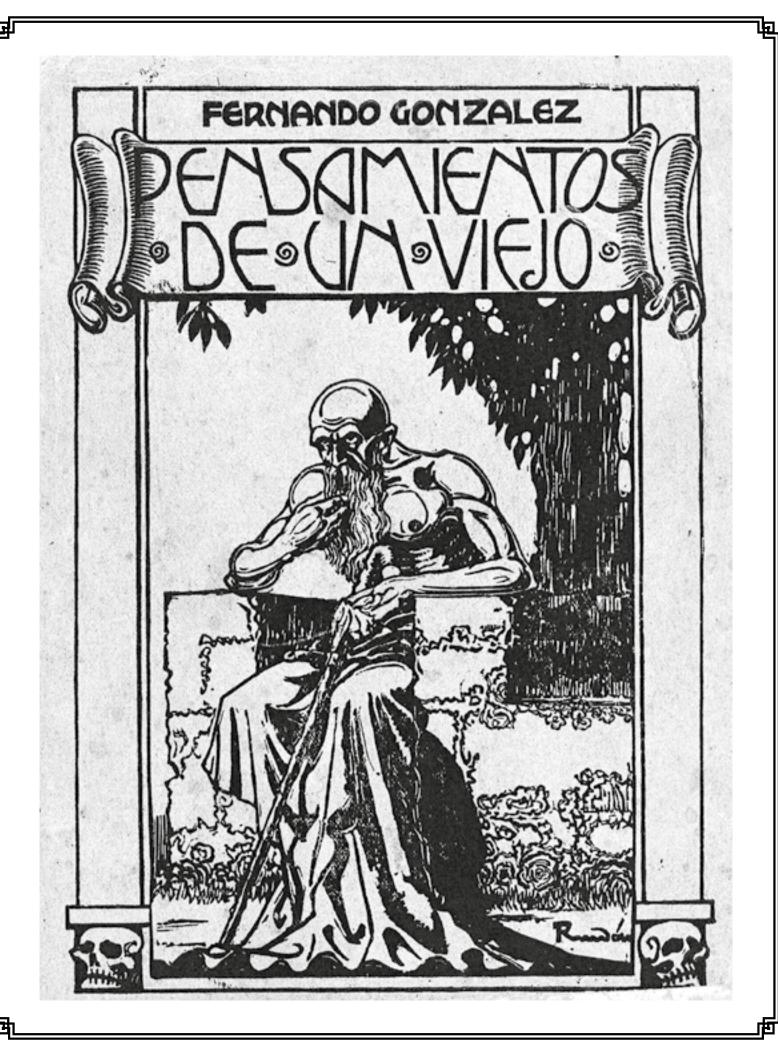


# Fernando González The Journey to the Presence

Reviews based on articles and essays by Alberto Aguirre, Alberto Restrepo González, Alfredo Iriarte, Carlos Andrés Londoño, Efrén Giraldo, Ernesto Ochoa Moreno, Juan Sebastián López Morales, Norelia Garzón de Vallejo, and Santiago Aristizábal Montoya. Cover illustration by Daniel Gómez Henao.



Ediciones "OTRAPARTE"



## Thoughts of an Old Man ~ 1916 ~

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?

Find Insalz

This is Fernando González's first book, published at the age of 21. Jesuitism, atavism, and inhibitions made of him a spiritual chaos in his youth. As a result of this initial period of exploration, this unique book appears in the South American milieu of the time—a book that avoids the juggling of adjectives and boasts of erudition so typical of the turn of the century—a significant book, that expounds on the problems of human intimacy. Mr. Fidel Cano, founder of the liberal newspaper El Espectador, wrote the prologue and is very paternal and full of praise, and yet he is penetrating and accurate in understanding González as a "tormented man" who goes "straight to believing." The Jesuit world was the starting point for the search for authenticity that the author would assume until the end of his life. This work hints at many of the themes which he later developed and would carry through to his mature works. We find here brief reflections, written with the rhythm that emerges between the master and his pupils. He addresses his listeners in a pious tone and invites them to meditate on life with calm and slowness. Issues such as self-study, loneliness, remorse, death, love, and desire, are outlined. But in the background of all these excursions is glimpsed the longing to unite with the absolute—his mysticism: "I dissolve my soul in the whole universe, and so I love the whole universe."



## UNA TESIS

Fernando GONZALEZ

MEDELLIN

IV XX MCMXIX



Imprenta EDITORIAL M dellín

### A THESIS ~ 1919 ~

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 dependent 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."

Findfonsalz

In 1919, a heated controversy took place between the Catholic Church and the University of Antioquia, in which the newspapers El Colombiano and El Espectador, that is to say, conservatives and liberals, crossed lances. There was a clash between Catholics and non-Catholics, believers and atheists, clergymen and laymen. At the center of the confrontation was a young 24-year-old writer, who on April 20, at the Imprenta Nacional (National Printing House), had published his graduating thesis as a doctor of the School of Law and Political Sciences at the University of Antioquia. The Right to Not Obey was the title of Fernando González Ochoa's thesis, who, under pressure, eventually agreed to change to the generic title of A Thesis. "Those were very innocent times," commented the author. The work is marked by a tinge of liberalism because, after the confrontation with the Jesuit world, the young González turned to the liberal and rationalist European culture: "I am a supporter of the Liberal School." However, the underpinning of his essay is not liberalism as such, but an anarchic diatribe against the plight of the people: "We have a poor, isolated, and therefore ignorant people, and an exaggerated number of intellectuals." "Sovereignty is primarily and solely in the hands of the people, impoverished and fanatical." "How the passions and the credulity of the populace are indulged."

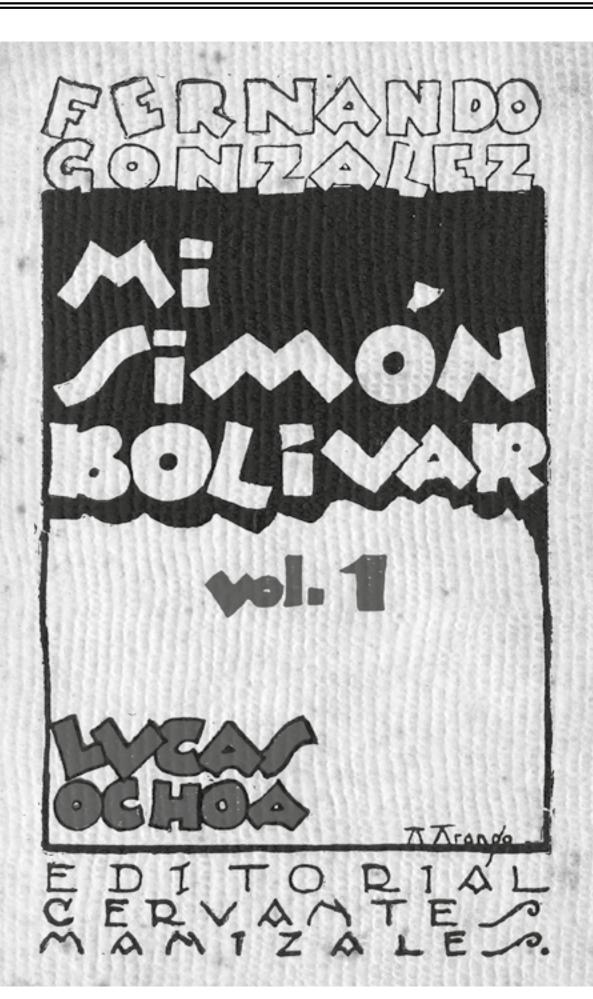


## Journey on Foot ~ 1929 ~

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.

JOURNEY ON FOOT IS A BOOK OF BREAKING APART, of separation. It is a journey of liberation. Fernando González, with a walking staff, set out on foot because he needed the physical gesture of distancing himself. Distancing himself from what? First, from the Jesuit mental world that imprisoned him and from which he broke away when he denied the first philosophical principle before Father Quirós. Second, to distance himself from the mental mood of that Medellín of fat businessmen who traded heaven as if they were engaged in dirty business. Third, to tear himself away from the learned and prevalent rhetoric among his contemporaries at the time. Lastly, to break the chains of a religiosity based on catechism (dogma) in order to embark on a mystical process that will mark his life and reach, in the end, culmination and closure. He breaks away from a confined and oppressive environment, which suffocates him, and goes to breathe fresh air and seek new horizons. To walk is always to seek horizons. That is why he walks and walks on foot. He opens up. He feels vital, young, and full of life. And as he does, he proposes a new philosophy, a new prose, a new sociology, and a new religiosity that smells of a chaste sensuality, like grass, like a peasant girl. That smells like a virgin. The scent of virgin America, virgin Colombia, and the aroma of a virginal and clean human being. Journey on Foot breaks thirteen years of silence by deepening the findings and postulates of Thoughts of an Old Man and constitutes the beginning of the systematic task of Fernando González's whole life: the search for the philosophy of reality as opposed to the imaginative philosophy of metaphysical reverie.

Findfonzal



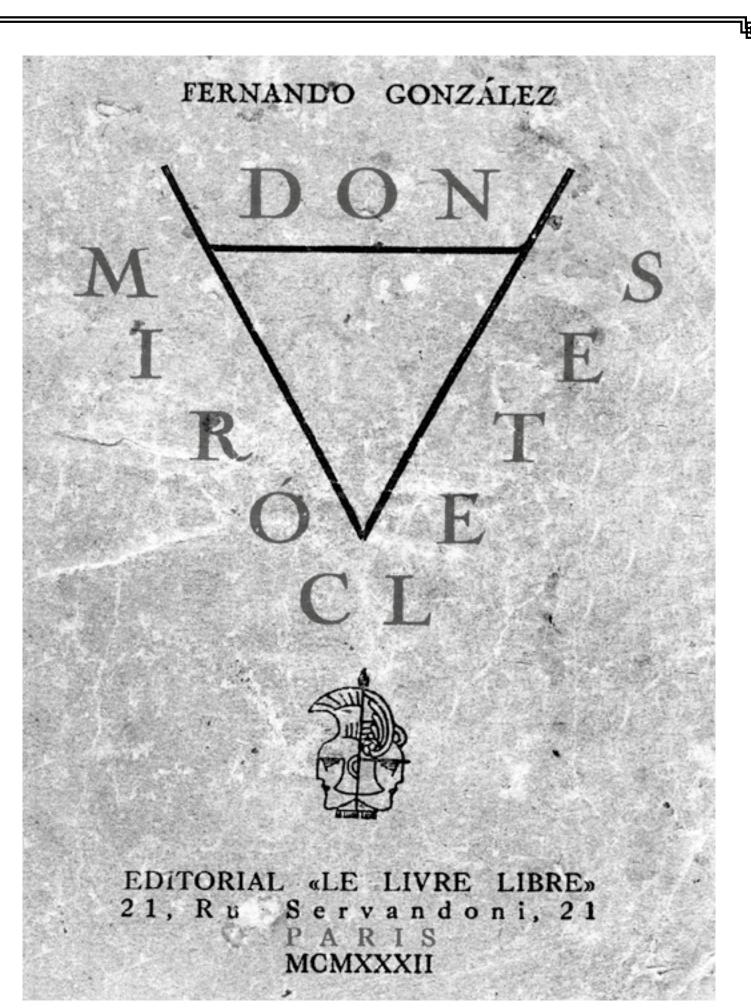
#### My Simón Bolívar

~ 1930 ~

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 fulfilled the following principles in which the performance of human energy is summarized: I. Knowing exactly what one desires; II. Desiring it as desperately as a drowning person wants air; and III. Sacrificing oneself to the realization of 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.

Findfonsalz

From an original historical perspective, Fernando González presents Simón Bolívar. It is not a traditional erudite approach that examines its objective from the outside, but, rather, a novel way that starts from the own and the intimate, powerfully involving the senses, from the incarnation of the commonality between the subject and object of research. As a result, his method is referred to as "emotional," because it is the historian's (emotional) experience that serves as a link to obtain a unique view of the character. In order to refer to Bolívar, Fernando González elaborates, through one of his alter egos, Lucas Ochoa, a theory in which the self ascends through degrees of consciousness. This theory demonstrates that there are various levels of consciousness in individuals and peoples, namely the organic, familiar, civic, patriotic, continental, terrestrial, and cosmic. Bolívar is an example of the evolution of the self in our continent, since he reached the continental level and fought not only for political independence, but also for spiritual freedom. What Fernando González does, then, is give us a "living and pulsating" Bolívar. And as such, he is different, unsettling, and disturbing. The Bolívar that emerges from the book is not the domesticated and tamed personage with which Bolivarian ideals have been perverted under the guise of admiration and worship. That is why, in 1930, the book by the writer from Envigado produced much irritation, and will continue to do so.



## Don Mirócletes ~ 1932 ~

It seems to me that no one has been tormented by a character of their own making as Manuelito Fernández has tormented me. He embittered the days of my first visit to Paris, because I created him there, and he came to be so alive that he replaced me. I almost went crazy when I realized that I had become the son of my brain. I wanted to form a character and surround him with people and life observed long ago. I was seized by the logic that presides over the emergence of artistic organisms, and it almost drove me to madness. On August 20, 1932, at eleven o'clock at night, I entered the subway at the Magdalena station, fleeing from a beautiful woman who repeated to me: "Pas cher! Pas cher! Quatre vingts francs avec la chambre..." ("Cheap! Cheap! Eighty francs with the room...") And there I felt so identical to my character that I could hear him talking inside my skull, and so I finished this book without Manuelito committing suicide. "If he kills himself," I said to myself, "I will hear the bullet break my bones and penetrate my brain." My project and logic demanded an end with a suicide. But it was impossible.

Findfonsalz

Fernando González moved to Europe with his family in 1932 when he was appointed consul in Genoa and later in Marseilles. That same year, he published in Paris the novel *Don Mirócletes*, dedicated "to the kapok trees of Envigado's town square", and whose reading was forbidden by the archbishop of Medellín. In this novel, the moral conscience is separated from the physiological one, embodied in the character Manuelito Fernández. Everything in the work leads to this internal climate, and the author's existentialism begins to become evident, which he will later expand in Salomé and The Remorse, when the characters manifest that each human being is a commencement that marches irremediably towards the grave. The anguish generated by this reality and, incidentally, the fear they experience in the face of death, may possibly be an explanation of the spirituality that is evident in these books and the author's notorious inclination towards religiosity, the turning inward to self-analysis. Another theme is the methods used by the character to achieve perfection, which also appears in other works. According to José Guillermo Ánjel (Memo Ánjel), this "is a book of usuries, deaths, and long agonies," and the author commented in a 1936 interview: "Here I came to understand my personality, its origins, etc. It is a biography of the subconscious. At the same time, it is the smile of the one who is already finding himself and who, from the height of his own soul, contemplates the shapes of his relatives, of his fellow citizens".

FERNANDO GONZÁLEZ

EL

HERMAFRODITA DORMIDO



## 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 heavens, and calls out to God. Also, when he goes for a walk with his children, he looks up at the sky, just like birds of prey do 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, but almost all people cut off the current and shrivel up like raisins. He feels alive and in communication with the whole of creation. "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.

THE SLEEPING HERMAPHRODITE CONTAINS TWELVE ILLUSTRATIONS reproducing sculptures seen by the writer in museums during his stay as consul in Genoa. They are to be understood as a declaration of dependence on the most important theme he deals with: beauty in classical sculpture. The book is one of the most singular representations of three genres in the Colombian literary canon: travel literature, literary essay, and art criticism. Such a confluence of interests helps us situate the work. On the one hand, it identifies the recognized author as the one who lashed out at his fellow countrymen, spoke out against dying Europe, and dared to formulate political and cultural programs for South America; that is, the González who forged his own personality as a writer and philosopher "of authenticity." But, on the other hand, an author like no other, who manifests himself: the one who, enraptured, takes up the pen to evoke the experience with works of art that made a deep impression on him. Thus, there appears a tension between Christianity and paganism, and between sensuality and asceticism, which is projected onto the self. Three themes predominate: the figure of Mussolini, which responds to the interest in personalities such as Bolívar, Juan Vicente Gómez, or Santander; the question of national and continental beingness, which he brought to fullness in The Blackish; and the experience of contemplation in museums, which at the time were beginning to form part of the tourist industry.

# FERNANDO GONZALEZ MI COMPADRE

EDITORIAL JUVENTUD

### *My Compadre* ~ 1934 ~

During the gestation and realization of this work I did not care about morals, good or bad. I cared about facts; I was a biologist. And in the presence of General Gómez, when the old man dilated those hypnotizing eyes that normally looked like two cuts, I felt proud of my South America that can produce, with the mixture of bloods, vital prominences. Isn't a river still great even if it is dirty? If he had great capacities to imprison, to hypnotize a people, to humiliate, to seize a group of arrogant plainsmen to the point of handling them like children, wasn't Juan Vicente Gómez great? [...] The amount of energy is the essential thing; to apply it to what they call good or bad, that is a matter of discipline. My conclusion was: we are promising, since we produce these human beings. What do I care about one of these men they call good if they are so because of a lack of desire? They are eunuchs of the spirit.

After a serious illness that brought him to the brink of death, Fernando González's yearning for the fullness of life emerged, more uncontainable than ever. My Compadre is the symbol of this rebirth. For a long time, Juan Vicente Gómez had been a stimulus for falling in love with primitive America. González traveled in 1931 to Venezuela to meet him and felt "for this great American an immense affection and admiration" because everything in him was "methods, blood, formation, and South American ideas; he has neither traveled, nor is he literate, nor does he have money outside the country." However, this biographical study is really a mockery of the political system, of the inoperative senatorial chattering, and of the American democracies as puppets of the international powers that perpetuate castes and privileges. Gómez represents ignorance and force, action and decision, intuition and determination brought to power, and he is the antithesis of everything that in South America has been called culture, power, progress, and civilization. The arrival of this illiterate native to the Venezuelan presidency and his capacity for work, material progress, and order in the face of the traditional powers, inoperative and inactive for almost a hundred years, is the greatest exposition of the socio-political lie of America. González mocks the false national cultures of South America and praises Gómez, for he, stubborn, despotic, and ignorant, is the incarnation of the continental historical moment.

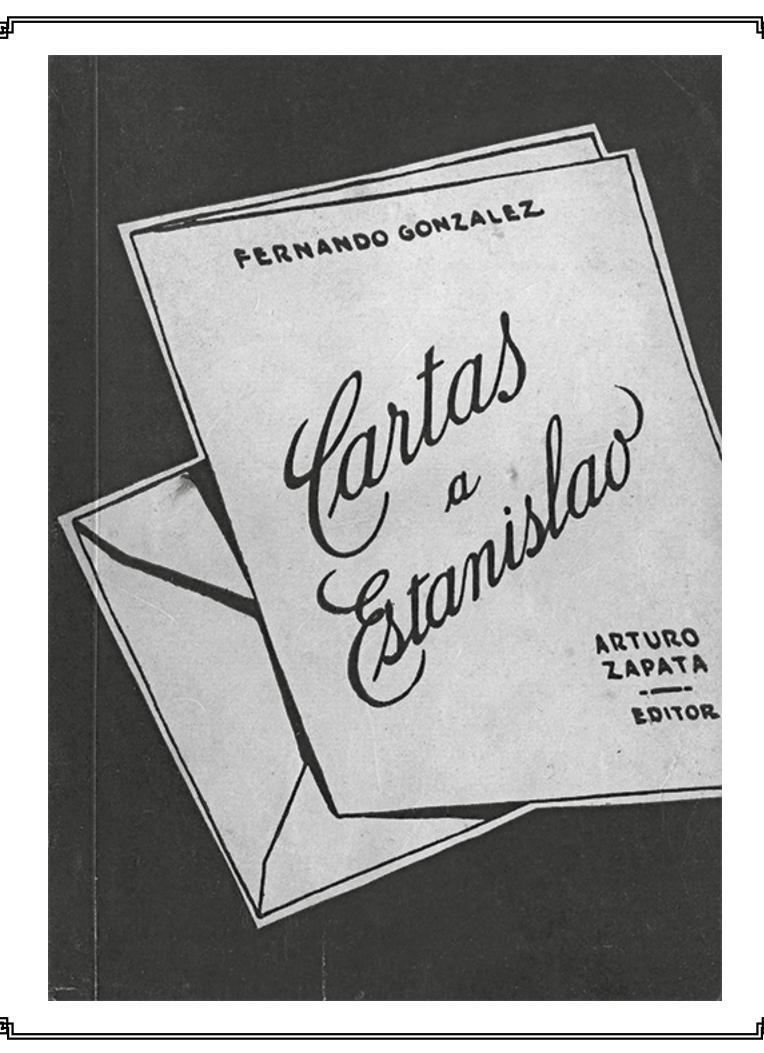
FERNANDO

EDITORIAL ARTURO ZAPATA

### THE REMORSE ~ 1935 ~

Here we are dealing with the explanation of how man ascends, through sin, through insults to Santander, and then comes the remorse, that is to say, the understanding. May we become more and more each day. The reason for this book was born in Marseilles, when a girl told me on New Year's Day that I could kiss her at twelve o'clock. We were frightened. I kissed her, but I began to criticize myself, to regret that I had not kissed her well. Then the problem of remorse dawned on me. It is a purely psychological book, a description of the way in which man progresses in conscience, in knowledge, in liberalism.

Fernando González's problems are always suggested to him by his experiences: the vision of a burial leads him to meditate on death; having resisted the love of a young woman, raises the problem of remorse; his return to Colombia after living in Europe makes him worry about the causes of the vanity of South Americans. For all these reasons, he rejected the reading and interpretation of his work apart from the experiences that originated his thoughts and words: "The book has to remain as it was born to me, without changes, without suppressions, because otherwise we would have a sermonary for hysterical ladies. I am an artist of life, a painter of animals in heat." However, the ideas displayed in The Remorse are not a sudden occurrence in the author's life, because since Thoughts of an Old Man, the relevance of the subject's moral combat had already germinated. This book intends to show, through a deep experiential analysis, a method of spiritual ascension (level of consciousness) to possess oneself: "This book is for the Colombian youth. I was prompted to write it by the desire to teach my fellow citizens the secret of greatness. My teachings will be covered with the hard and gentle flesh of Toní... When I made the sacrifice of which I will speak later, [...] it was for Colombia as a whole that I said: "In exchange for this, give us inner beauty. [...] My disciples are those who renounce what they like the most every day because it does not satisfy them. They want to possess God."



#### Letters to Stanislaus

~ 1935 ~

In "Letters to Stanislaus," I wrote poems to the proud and divine acceptance of oneself and launched diatribes against the lie that has been humanity in Latin America. Among the many objects I had in mind when writing it, the main one was love for the cultural work that we free men, the liberals, can carry out. I wanted to mock nominal liberalism; I wanted the young to understand that liberalism is a state of conscience and the result of great sacrifice and discipline. It is the duty of every thinker to stay away from political parties in order to preserve freedom of criticism. Those who devote their lives to thought must be a spur; those who devote their lives to action must do what is possible. Together, spur and mule go, and together they accomplish the work of arriving, but in some sense, the spur is the enemy of the mule. Socrates already said that he was like a gadfly on the horse Athens. Who loved Athens as much as he did? Who loves freedom and liberalism as much as I do? But my duty is not to compromise.

Find gonzaloz

After being expelled from the consulate in Marseilles, Fernando González returned to Colombia in 1934, and a year later he published Letters to Stanislaus, a series of correspondence with family and friends, especially Estanislao Zuleta Ferrer, who died on June 24, 1935, in the plane crash in which the Argentine singer Carlos Gardel also perished. The friendship between the writer from Envigado and the young lawyer, father of the well-known philosopher and writer of the same name, was profound. It is a book that hurts and punches, in which González shows off the sarcasm and irreverence that earned him hatred and abhorrence. And it fully shows one of his most human facets, in addition to contributing a rich vein of originality and forcefulness to his literary production, enriched with a frank, direct prose, without concealment, seasoned at the same time by the intimacy that favors friendship or the irony of the responses to critics and detractors. Fernando González raises his angry voice and becomes a prophet, denouncing the moral baseness and social lies of the country: "My true vocation was born! I want, Estanislao, to create schools where we may discipline the youth... to astonish the world. Grant me that we could establish three schools, discipline two generations, and Colombia would be great. Until today, in four hundred years of public life on this continent, generations have been made for fear, shame, slavery, and sin".

#### FERNANDO GONZALEZ

## LOS NEGROIDES

(ENSAYO SOBRE LA GRAN COLOMBIA)

ESOS ANIMALES QUE HABITAN LA GRAN COLOMBIA, PARECIDOS AL HOMBRE...,

EDITORIAL ATLANTIDA MEDELLIN

1936

### THE BLACKISH ~ 1936 ~

What do I care about morality and the law, I, the preacher of personality, of self-expression, who loves Jesus and the devil, Bolívar and Gómez? I love only those who are honest with their own souls. I don't write for the South Americans who have had a meter imposed on them by the Spanish friars; I don't write for the citizens of Bogotá (or Quito, Lima, Santiago, and Buenos Aires), who have given birth to nothing, pray like Europeans, legislate like Europeans, and urinate like Europeans.

In The Blackish, Fernando González addresses what he considers the fundamental problem of South America: vanity. He defines it as "a lack of substance, an empty appearance." He opposes to it, as the only means of overcoming it, the free expression of the personality, that is to say, pride, self-conceit: "Pride is the fruit of the development of the personality, therefore, contrary to vanity." We are vain in almost everything we do. We endure, as few others do, the harmful consequences of mediocrity and indiscipline. We hide the truth to look good. We live for the decorative. For us, the varnish, the wash, and the touch of paint are essential. We are slaves to what people will say. Besides, we are ashamed of our ancestral roots. We hate the Indian and the black in us. In any case, we prefer the "white" European or North American image. According to Fernando González, the true human endeavor is in living our lives and manifesting ourselves. South American culture (a copy of European culture) has been responsible for creating inhibited individuals who are ashamed to express themselves. And culture should have a particularly formative function that helps the individual not to disguise himself, but to disrobe and get rid of what prevents him from self-expression. So, as a South American people, we have no identity and our sin is called vanity. Vanity is inversely proportional to personality, and vanity is an act performed for the purpose of appearing socially acceptable.

#### ANTIQUIA

Manera nueva de panfleto filosófico.



las obras de . FERNANDO GONZALEZ

El único límite de nuestro atrevimiento es el amor a Antioquia. Nuestro fin; antioqueñizar la Grancolombia.

1

LA PLUMA DE ORO, la mejor Librería. Editora y distribuidora exclusiva. Medellín, Colombia, Suramérica. Carrera 52 No. 435 - Apart. 144

### *ANTIOQUIA* ~ 1936-1945 ~

Antioquia wants to be a publication that does not swindle the public; it will appear only when the editor has something worth reading. It will be different from the magazines that exist today in the republic. It will differ from some of them in that it will not be made up of cookie-cut articles, and from others in that it will not serve anyone but rather express some delicate feelings, such as love for originality, brazenness, and for the homeland, and the arts. It will be a cheeky magazine. But it will never cause painful wounds; it will only caress.

Findfonsalz

Fernando González was on a quest for himself. All his creative endeavors, as well as his presence as a man in the world, had that goal already marked in the Temple of Delphi as the first philosophical impulse. In issue number 2 of the Antioquia magazine, when he says that the first issue had been sold out, he wrote: "We did not expect so much, because this magazine is our daughter and we live as adversaries." That is why he made this magazine, to live in permanent opposition, for there is no other way to live in a rotten society. It also works as a history text. Because it is not the simple review of events, but their perforation. "Dig deep, dig deep," said Nietzsche. And Fernando González dug. Read today, it has the condition of a historical textbook. Because he achieved that miracle of levitation, that Ortega advocated, to understand one's own time—to distance oneself, rising, in order to appreciate, coldly and as a whole, the phenomenon. And one begins to understand a country that has been dragging its wounds since its inception. What he said in May 1936 is valid today: "Colombia has a people and no leadership class." Antioquia magazine is a book of philosophy, sometimes written in the key of poetry, novel, sociology, or chronicle. Out of all those glimpses and manifestations, penetrating observations, sieges, proposals, and interrogations sprout at every step. The philosopher manifests himself in multiple ways. And what he proposes to us is restlessness, uneasiness. The state of perpetual awe.

#### FERNANDO GONZALEZ

# SAMMADER

EDICIONES
LIBRERIA SIGLO XX
BOGOTA
1940

#### *SANTANDER* ~ 1940 ~

Given that Santander is a false national hero, the purpose of this book is to expose him. Colombia, guided by him and his offspring, who govern us today, is on a twisted and dark path that leads to the alienation of souls and land, sky, sea, and subsoil. A powerful instinct, an attraction to the truth, guides us in this work. It would be unpatriotic if Santander were truly representative of the nine million Colombians who populate this territory. But he is not, and a voice orders us to expose him so that the youth may avoid him.

Findfonsalz

In 1940, the year of Francisco de Paula Santander's centennial, this book burst with insolence to demolish the myth and question the dogma. Fernando González reveals the tortuous, elusive, petty Santander, full of perversity and envy. It has been said with unfair levity that it is a poisonous libel. It is not. Passion and anger vibrate throughout it. But it happens that when the true Latin American man feels his soul devoured by the Bolivarian mystique; when he lives the Liberator's tragedy, stumbling along the roads of his great America with the obstacles that a few mischievous midgets interposed on his colossal steps; when he evokes the final defeat of Bolívar by the midgets; and when he recalls, with Fernando González, that while the Liberator died childless, those who govern us today are the progeny of Santander, Riva Agüero, Flórez, Páez, and Rivadavia, his natural reaction can only be angry, choleric, and violent. And that's the stand of Fernando González. His Bolivarian spirit confronts him with the most prominent of all those who, with astonishing concomitance, fulfilled the execrable mission of spoiling the ideal of the Liberator, the only one essentially capable of building the great Spanish-American nation, prematurely fractioned into tiny pieces by the rapacity of his enemies. Santander is an implacable, passionate, devastating book, and its publication produced a chorus of unanimous "patriotism," wounded by the author's assertions.

FERNANDO GONZALEZ

## EL MAESTRO DE ESCUELA

1941



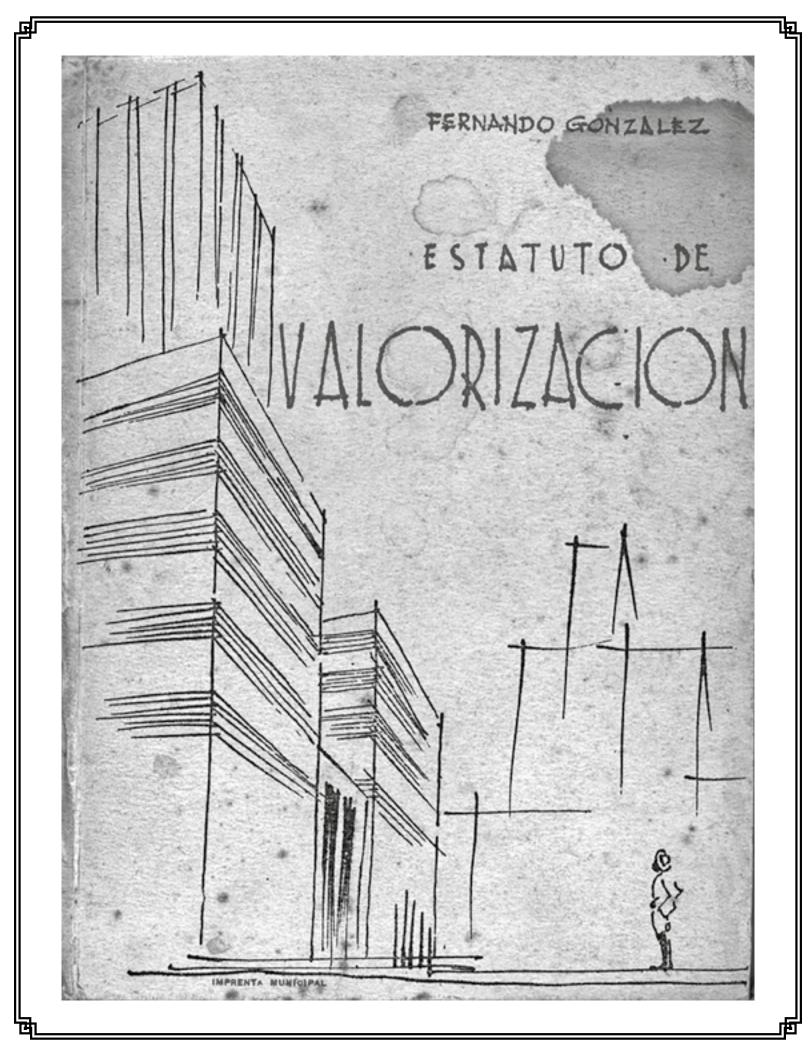
#### THE SCHOOLTEACHER

~ 1941 ~

Manjarrés was rather tall; his legs were very long and skinny. But you could tell that he was born to be fat: he was emaciated, he had the skinniness of a schoolteacher; that was not his natural condition, but he suffered it. He wore a hanging mustache and, in the left inner pocket of his coat, a toothbrush with the bristles facing upward, the decoration of every schoolteacher. As he discoursed, he opened and closed his old pocket-knife, which was well used and cleaned by rubbings and grindings; he also used to take out pieces of chalk from his pockets; these, and blackened smuts, are the only abundance in a schoolmaster's house.

Findfonsalz

After the publication of Journey on Foot, My Simón Bolívar, and Don Mirócletes, the young lawyer is already the antithesis of the Colombians of his generation. His harsh language has marginalized him from the literary circles of turn-of-the-century daintiness. What is at the heart of *The Schoolteacher*? Bitterness? Disappointment? Disillusionment? Frustration? Submission? All these feelings are expressed frankly and directly in the novel, or they surface in the personality of Manjarrés, the "great misunderstood man", who is and is not Fernando González. But it would be simple reductionism to believe that the crisis he goes through when he writes the book is a defeat. On the contrary, it is the victorious final laugh, painfully ironic, with which the master takes revenge on the society that rejects him. Fernando González, with a painful clarity, laughs at himself, laughs at his milieu, says goodbye and turns his back, to sink into a stage of silent and solitary inner search. Only apparently, or symbolically, is *The Schoolteacher* the novel of a loser. Certainly, the author experiences a hard and difficult moment of maladjustment, of repudiation, of incomprehension. He feels that his life is split in two. He enters the dark night. But there is no breakdown. It is the culmination of a stage that pushes him toward maturity. Active life is left behind. The contemplative life begins, which will blossom over the years into the fullness of the mystical experience of the Presence (God).



#### Statute of Valorization\*

~ 1942 ~

In the 20th century, the shareholder is sitting back in his armchair, receiving the dividends of the corporation. Who works? Who robbed? Who bought justice? It is not known. Who bought the votes in the elections? It is not known. Why was the project for a tax on beer or cigarettes not discussed in the second debate? It is not known. Who is God? The CEO. Where is the CEO? He is ubiquitous. In this war, so-and-so, Hitler, Churchill, or Roosevelt will not win; the new order will win, a new order that is very old, which is in the Gospel, in Tolstoy, in Gandhi, in Lenin, etc.

Femolymans

THE NATIONAL LEFT (LAIN), A MOVEMENT WITH A CLEAR LEFT-LIBERAL ORIENTATION, Was founded around 1940 by Fernando González, seconded by the physician Rubén Darío Arcila (whose consulting room in Uribe Uribe Square served as the headquarters for the party) and by the painter Pedro Nel Gómez. Many intellectuals, artists, and politicians adhered to the political proposal. In the 1941 elections, LAIN obtained 901 votes and elected Arcila as a member of the Medellín City Council, with Froilán Montoya Mazo as his deputy. From that time on, Fernando González was appointed Legal Advisor of the then-created Municipal Valorization Office and was responsible for compiling and drafting the Statute of Valorization\* that governed the capital city of Antioquia from that time on. The text was published as a book in 1942 and, in addition to the pertinent legislation, it contains resounding and provocative analyses of Colombian politics. After The Schoolteacher, Fernando González's literary production slows down, in contrast to the fecundity of the previous decade, during which he published almost a book a year. The solitary man from Envigado is in retirement, and it is in this context that he writes this work. With the exception of the last four issues of the Antioquia magazine, he would not publish a book again until 1959, when the Book of the Journeys or of the Presences appeared. In the epilogue of the Statute of Valorization, he says: "What we understand by liberalism is the same thing that General Rafael Uribe Uribe preached."

\* "The direct valorization tax is hereby established, consisting of a contribution imposed on real estate properties that benefit from the execution of civil works of local public interest; such contribution is exclusively intended to cover the expenses required by such works."

FERNANDO GONZALEZ de los alles o de las resencias AGUIRRE

# Book of the Journeys or of the Presences ~ 1959 ~

Idaydreamed about those papers, and I could already see in my hands the first copy of the little book, bound in dark red, almost black, and which would fit in my jacket pocket. Every book should fit in the pocket; it has to be carried, it has to be hand-held, to be read at the foot of the trees, next to the fountains, wherever the desire seizes us. A good book has to be caressed. To live with one, to walk with one. Anyway, this illegal love for books took hold of me and did not let me sleep, just like a girl who lived at home when I was young...

This mature work is a compilation of the philosophical and spiritual process of the author during a long period of crisis that plunged him into silence and solitude for almost twenty years. In 1941, he published *The Schoolteacher*, which concludes as follows: "I end by announcing that the schoolteacher has definitely died." And in the last line of the last page, "Requiescat in pace . Now I am dead. Ex Fernando González." And at the end of the appendix "The Idiot," a heartbreaking and rude cry: "Life is a bitch." His literary production slows down in this period, in contrast to the fecundity of the previous decade. In 1947, his son Ramiro died at the age of 24. It was a severe blow, which knocked him down. These are years of trial, of a deep inner commotion that will be reflected in his most intimate experience in this book. Between 1953 and 1957, he repeated his experience as Colombian consul, this time in Rotterdam and then in Bilbao. In 1957, he returned to his beloved house, The German's Orchard, whose name he changed to Otraparte [Elsewhere, Somewherelse] in 1959. That return is the story's beginning, and it contains his memories of the dark night, the infernal experience of "the pit of the nocturnal animals," and his immersion in the mystery of the Intimate (God). It is about the resurrection of the schoolteacher Manjarrés: "In this book I expressed dramatically, dialectically, beginning with me and my Envigado, how the journey is made from the roots, from the self to Christ and the Father and the Holy Spirit."

FERNANDO GONZALEZ

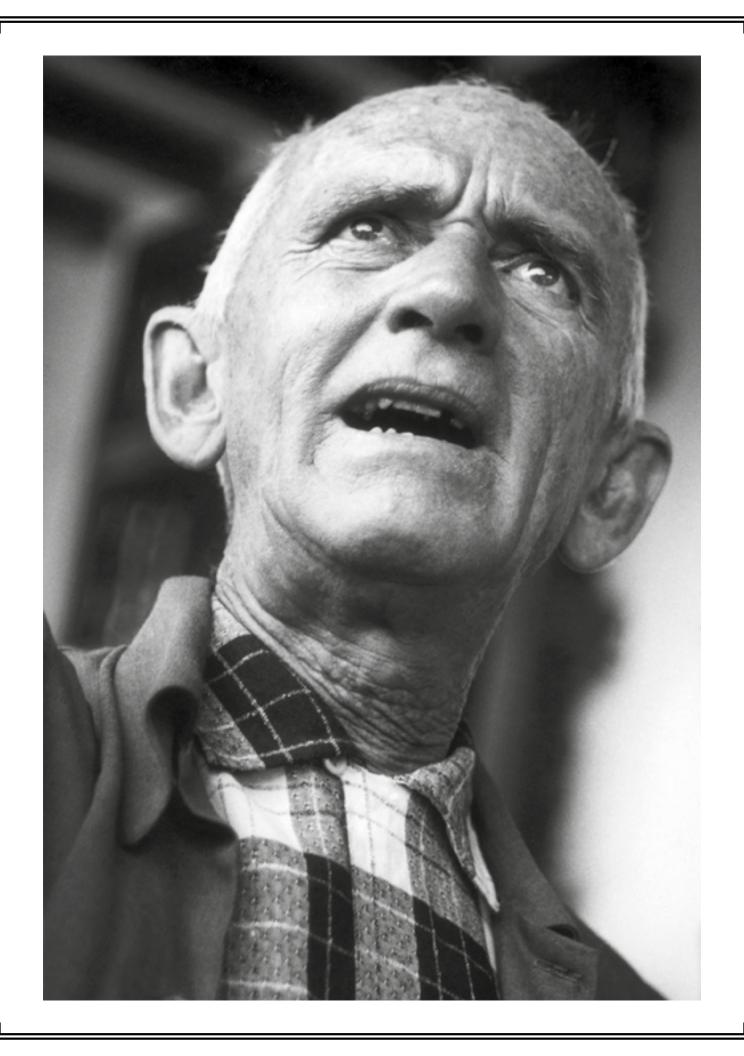
## ATRAGICOMEDIA DEL PADRE ELIA MARTINA LA VELERA

# The Tragicomedy of Father Elías and Martina the Candlemaker ~ 1962 ~

And the characters of this drama: just as it is necessary to gaze in the silence of the night to see the traveling stars, I have given myself to gaze in solitude, and I have received at home the visit of mysterious travelers. There is no such thing as solitude; what they call solitude is precisely company, and vice versa.

Findymaks

Fernando González assumes in this last book his contradictory condition in the South American milieu and piously mocks his solitude, overcome by a superior order of mystical experiences. Fabricio, the sacristan, and Father Elías are one and the same: "The one, a pagan presence; the other, the presence of the cross. Paths to the same place, the presences always lead to Christ." In these characters, we find the reconciliation of the spiritual universes in which he lived his adventure of faith and authenticity. The tragicomedy is the expression of the human and supernatural phenomena that lead to redemption, to the extinction of the self through union with God. At the end of his days, he is a man in beatitude, but he is misunderstood, rejected, and looked upon with suspicion. In spite of this tragic tinge, the end is a fullness of realizations. It is enveloped in an atmosphere of peace in which his figure and his attitudes are a living reflection. His life was truly a tragicomedy. He was viewed as the embodiment of hatred, violence, and injustice when he was nothing more than a seeker of freedom in love and truth; labeled an atheist when his work and struggle could not be understood without the sense of God; and condemned as unpatriotic when his voice was nothing more than a denunciation of the social lie that besieges and oppresses the people, exploited and ill.



#### Fernando González Ochoa

~ 1895-1964 ~

Regarding myself, I will tell you that I was born in Envigado on April 24, 1895, on a street with a creek; that I am not from any academy; that I have no degrees, since I lost those from high school and law; and that I am very happy about that, since he who does not lose everything, dies totally.

Findymaky

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 adversary" [a state of constant criticism]. 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 thesis in 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). In 1922, he married Margarita Restrepo Gaviria, daughter of Carlos E. Restrepo, former president of the Republic. They had five children, four sons and one daughter. He served as a magistrate of the Superior Court of Manizales, second judge of the Medellín Circuit, legal advisor to the Board of Valorization of Medellín, and Colombian consul in the European cities of Genoa, Marseilles, Bilbao, and Rotterdam. He began to stand out as a writer because of his participation in *The Panidas* group and the appearance of his first book, *Thoughts of an Old Man* (1916), at the age of 21. Between 1929 and 1941 he wrote with great intensity and published *Journey on Foot* (1929), *My* Simón Bolívar (1930), Don Mirócletes (1932), The Sleeping Hermaphrodite (1933), My Compadre (1934), The Remorse (1935), Letters to Stanislaus (1935), The Blackish (1936), Santander (1940), and *The Schoolteacher* (1941). Other of his works are *Antioquia* magazine (1936-1945) and the Statute of Valorization (1942). After 18 years of almost total literary silence, he wrote the Book of the Journeys or of the Presences (1959) and The Tragicomedy of Father Elías and Martina the Candlemaker (1962). From 1941, he lived with his family in The German's Orchard, which in 1959 he called Otraparte, currently a house museum and a cultural center. According to Javier Henao Hidrón, in his book Fernando González, Philosopher of Authenticity, "in the last years of Fernando González's life, Otraparte became an almost mythical place. The name became popular and used to be spoken with admiration and respect. The master began to be called *The Magus of Otraparte* or *The Wizard of Otraparte*. He was frequently visited by young people eager to meet him." Shortly before his death (February 16, 1964), he had written: "The end of man is to fall asleep in Silence. It will not be said, "he died," but "he was picked up by Silence," and there will be no mourning, but the silent feast, which is Silence."



#### OTRAPARTE HOUSE MUSEUM

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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

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