CHARACTER AND SYMBOL IN JOSÉ LEZAMA LIMA’S ‘PARADISO’

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Character and Symbol in José Lezama Lima's Paradiso

Fiona Ritchie M.A. (St. Andrews)

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Date 21st March, 1982
Character and Symbol in José Lezama Lima's Paradiso

This thesis explores the possibility of some degree of unity in Paradiso, which appears initially to be a work of poetic self-indulgence, lacking a coherent plot, credible characters and causality, and possessing seemingly extraneous chapters. In particular, the characters, with their one shared voice (Lezama's) and apparently arbitrary appearances in independent scenarios, demand scrutiny.

Lezama Lima's earlier works are devoted to his sistema poético, a working method aimed at a material representation of the mystical world of the Spirit in the "incarnate Word". Since the writer himself has defined Paradiso as a novela-poema, the novel is here examined as a poem, with the characters (recurring images) fulfilling symbolic roles. Luis Fernández Sosa's reading of some of Lezama's poems "anagogically" (following the terminology of Northrop Frye) is equally applicable to Paradiso, with its multiple levels of meaning.

In Paradiso each act or incident is ritualized, suggesting that the characters are indeed symbolic and may attain the stature of archetypes. Characters derived from members of Lezama's family circle acquire symbolic names and layer upon layer of additional imagery until they are expanded into archetypes. The recurring image of the (family) tree linking heaven and earth, continual emphasis on the cycle of birth/death/renewal and the main configurations, such as hero/princess/dragon/treasure, assist in the identification of the principal symbolic characters: Great Mother Goddess, Son/Lover, Dionysiac sacrifice, the questing Orpheus and the magnificent doomed Icarus.

Each concept or character is a stepping-stone for the central autobiographical figure, inspired by personal tragedy to seek self-perfection and accept his vocation. The stages on the journey--family relationships, the discovery and mastery of sexuality and creativity, the pursuit of infinite knowledge--are presided over by a variety of tutors, not least Hialta, Cemí's anima, poetic Muse and spiritual guide. Within Cemí's heroic conquest of the Unconscious, the imagery of the quest yields much when interpreted in terms of Jungian archetypes. With his eventual assimilation of opposites, Cemí becomes actively contemplative, attuned to ritmo hesicástico and obedient to his calling. The analysis of character is the key to Lezama's fictionalized autobiography, which emerges as a finely structured novel given precise form by its symbolic characters.
To Peter, the best friend of all.
"Such gladness was reflected in her smiles,  
Meseemed the joy of God therein did play."

Dante Alighieri *Divine Comedy: Paradiso.*  
Canto XXVII, l. 104-5.  
(Dorothy L. Sayers' Translation).
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### Abbreviated Titles - Books

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<tr>
<td>&quot;La narrativa&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;La narrativa de Lezama Lima y Sarduy: entre la imagen visionaria y el juego verbal.&quot; By Justo Celso Ulloa. Diss. Univ. of Kentucky 1973.</td>
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## Abbreviated Titles - Periodicals

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<td>CH</td>
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<tr>
<td>C.I.L.</td>
<td>Centro de Investigaciones Literarias (Casa de las Américas, Havana)</td>
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<td>CMS</td>
<td>La Cultura en México. Supplement of Siempre (Mexico City)</td>
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INTRODUCTION

Despite Lezama's insistence on the comparative clarity of his first novel ("mi trabajo oscuro es la poesía y mi trabajo de evidencia, buscando lo cenital, lo más meridiano que podía configurar en mis ensayos, tiene como consecuencia la perspectiva de Paradiso") a haze of confusion obscures its true significance even now.  

Many critics have uncovered serious difficulties when attempting to treat Paradiso as a conventional novel with a reasonably traditional structure — that is, with a logical plot and credible characters pursuing their existence in a world of normal causality. Even allowing for a quite open format in which the main character, José Cemi, goes on a journey of self-discovery, as in a Bildungsroman, various aspects of Paradiso remain shrouded in mystery.

M. Wood declares that:

It is a novel written by a certain kind of poet, with all that kind of poet's slavish devotion to the belief that only images matter. All the riches and invention in Paradiso have gone into its figurative language, leaving tone, syntax and the whole craft of prose to fend for themselves.

O. Mendell voices some of the most common criticisms of the novel:

Los capítulos no parecen organizados de manera deliberada. A veces incluyen extensos períodos de tiempo, pasajes anecdoticos o superfluos que no funcionan como parte de un todo y que debilitan aspectos más importantes del mismo capítulo. La frecuente presencia de unidades narrativas secundarias da a la novela una estructura fragmentaria, desconcertante e indeliberada que no parece obedecer a una necesidad interna del texto.
These are legitimate complaints from a reader anticipating a traditional nineteenth century narrative structure. Even the reader forewarned by his acquaintance with examples of the new Latin American novel, such as Cortázar's Rayuela, Vargas Llosa's Conversación en la catedral or Carlos Fuentes' La muerte de Artemio Cruz will most probably be perplexed by Lezama's apparently anarchic narrative technique. I hope to prove that Mendell's doubts about the "necesidad interna del texto" are unfounded, by uncovering a common denominator to draw together the diverse elements of the novel.

Paradiso's fourteen chapters are interwoven in a pattern which seems to defy any attempt to rearrange them in a more logical design. The characters too have been criticized as an isolated group breathing a rarified poetic atmosphere. As Cortázar says:

"parecen moverse en un continuo absoluto, ajenos a toda historicidad, entendiéndose entre ellos por encima del lector y de las circunstancias inmediatas del relato con un lenguaje que es siempre el mismo lenguaje y que toda referencia a la verosimilitud psicológica y cultural vuelve inmediatamente inconcebible."

Each speaks with Lezama's voice, performing ritual acts in a distant yet familiar realm. This should challenge the reader to a heightened awareness of possible patterns within the novel. Nevertheless, Lezama would be the last to make claims for Paradiso as a novel; quite the contrary:

"Indudablemente que es una novela-poema en el sentido en que se aparta del concepto habitual de lo que es una novela. Paradiso está basado en la metáfora, en la imagen .... Yo no me puedo considerar, no, me he considerado nunca, un novelista (my italics)."

If he wrote as a poet first and foremost, we can expect to find metaphor and symbol developed on a grand scale. The characters in a novel-poem would act as images and symbols, providing the key to the work. Lezama's
remarks in interviews often reveal the way in which he believes his poetic imagery has taken on a life of its own, how it has assumed character, and it is here that investigation can really begin, always bearing in mind E. Rodríguez Monegal's warning to the unwary:

La paradoja es que pocos libros como Paradiso tienen tal poder de irradiación luminosa; pocos textos contienen su propia glosa hasta un punto tal de saturación total; pocas ficciones desarrollan como ésta la espiral de sus configuraciones con tal segura intuición del camino recorrido y a recorrer. Pero en Paradiso, el exceso de luz actúa de máscara.

Of Paradiso and indeed his life's work, Lezama has said, "su raíz es esencialmente la de un auto sacramental." We would be wise to take him literally with regard to both form and content. He evokes the moment of metamorphosis from image to personification in striking terms:

Al llegar a mi madurez se fue haciendo en mí el sistema poético del mundo, una concepción de la vida fundamental en la imagen y en la metáfora. Me pareció adivinar en cada poema una vida que se diversificaba, que alcanzaba infinitas proliferaciones, entrelazamientos, conversaciones y silencios. Los enlaces y las pausas se cor- porizaban, en un poema hablaba de Riosotis de Miraflores, Pisa Rocio, El Entomatado, las palabras al trepar sobre las palabras esbozaban figuras, me parecía que las imágenes enmascaradas querían revelar su secreto al final del baile.

Paradiso stands at the climax of the dance but its characters show a great reluctance to be unmasked. We might expect them to have scant life of their own; they will be subordinated to Lezama's overall scheme of the novel; they are not required to be primarily authentic personalities. Lezama's abiding interest, as in the auto sacramental written to evoke the mystery of the Eucharist, lies in religious or mystical concepts which he clothes later in poetic imagery and still later in flesh. He explains to A. Álvarez Bravo his motivation for writing:
encontré la palabra potens ... el si es posible, la posibilidad infinita que después observamos en el virgo potens del catolicismo—o como se puede engendrar un dios por sobrenaturales modos—y llegué a la conclusión de que esa posibilidad infinita es la que tiene que encarnar la imagen. Y como la mayor posibilidad infinita es la resurrección, la poesía, la imagen, tenía que expresar su mayor abertura de compás, que es la propia resurrección.

Lezama seeks the incarnate Word. It is clear that while characters have their place, they are secondary to Lezama's system of images, as Cortázar implies: "a Lezama no le importan los caracteres, le importa el misterio total del ser humano...." 10 Like many earlier religious writers, such as Dante in the Commedia, Calderón in autos sacramentales, Cracién in the Criticón, or John Bunyan in Pilgrim's Progress, Lezama chooses symbolic characters acting out an allegory as the best means of expressing and giving form to the intangible: "vi que el poema se habitaba, que el poema se iba configurando en novela, que había personajes que actuaban en la vida como metáforas, como imágenes...." 11

E. Rodríguez Monegal recommends an "anagogic" reading of Paradiso, basing his suggestion on Dante's definition in Il Convivio (II, 1):

conviene empezar por la exposición literal: es decir, el estudio de "la bella mentira" .... La segunda exposición es la alegórica, la que busca la verdad escondida .... La tercera es la que deduce la moral de la historia .... Y la cuarta y última es la anagogica, la que revela "las cosas sublimes"....

This scale of meaning is reminiscent of Lezama's "verbo que expresa, el que oculta y el que significa" and his "supra verba que es en realidad la palabra en sus tres dimensiones de expresividad, ocultamiento y signo." Lezama continues this line of thought, going so far as to hint again at a fourth level of meaning: "Diría que hay una cuarta palabra que es única para la poesía," but declining to name this mysterious ultimate level. 13 L. Fernández Sosa applies Dante's scheme of levels of
meaning to some of Lezama's poetry in José Lezama Lima y la crítica anagógica, but it has not been followed for Paradiso. Fernández Sosa was inspired by Northrop Frye's discussion of the archetypal and anagogic approaches to literature in his Anatomy of Criticism. Frye bases his theory of symbols on the above quotation from Il Convivio, setting out five phases of which the last three, the formal phase (allegory), the mythical phase (in which symbol becomes archetype) and the anagogic phase are of particular interest. According to Frye, the archetype is a "communicable symbol" connecting different poems and helping "to unify and integrate our literary experience." Since narrative is "a recurrent act of symbolic communication" and ritual and dream are "the narrative and significant content respectively of literature in its archetypal aspect." Frye explains that the archetypal analysis of plot "would deal in terms of the generic, recurring, or conventional actions which show analogies to rituals." Such ritual acts abound in Paradiso and will be examined in detail.

Frye tells us that the archetypal poem imitates the cyclical process of Nature and suggests valuable leads for the student of archetype in Frazer's Golden Bough and in "the work done on the dream basis of naive romance by Jung and the Jungians." He finds that in the archetypal work there is "the tendency to suggest implicit mythical patterns in a world more closely associated with human experience." The multitude of characters in Paradiso, engaged in a great diversity of activity and incident which seems to lack a central, unifying core, may indeed assume the stature of archetypes as suggested by Cortázar: "todos y cada uno de los personajes están vistos en esencia mucho más que en presencia, son arquetipos antes que tipos." Each bears a symbolic name, as we shall see; memories of relatives become highly symbolic characters who are partly biographical but soon seem to transcend
their physical counterparts as recognizable archetypes. Lezama takes the raw materials of his life, his parents and closest relatives who have influenced his early development, transforming them into rather larger-than-life characters over a considerable period of time: Rialta, José Eugenio, Doña Carmen Alate, Doña Munda, Doña Augusta, Andresito and Alberto, to name only the most important family characters. The basic sketches of his idolized relatives, especially his parents, are embellished with layer after layer of additional imagery. The accumulation of attributes becomes increasingly complex, lifting the characters out of their personal circumstances (actual events in Lezama's life such as his father's death) to a level where they can be employed to reflect, as archetypes on a mythological plane, the particular patterns which the writer discerns in his own life. Each wears at least one cloak of additional, but related attributes which may prove to be shared with some mythical figure (for instance, Rialta and Doña Augusta as embodiments of the Great Mother, José Eugenio as her son/lover, Alberto as Dionysus and Cemí as a latter-day Orpheus). These mythical figures possess their own inherent significance and also specialized identities in the world of Jungian psychological archetypes, which draw the reader on towards yet another level of significance in Lezama's rich narrative. Recurring imagery such as that of the family tree repeated in patterns of renewal and rebirth which appear in the early chapters provides clues to the possible identity of each archetypal figure and its hidden meaning.

Almost all the family characters belong to this category of imaginatively developed biographical personages, but from the eighth chapter onwards other ideas are taken and compressed into new bodies, also symbolically named (Fronesis, Foción, Oppiano Licario) and their movements indicate the relative positions of certain influences in Cemí's mind (for instance, Fronesis appearing in reasoned debate and Foción appearing
in frenzied sexual activity and street rioting, are representatives of Order and Chaos). Grotesque caricatures embody the demonic energy of the central chapter, while others appear briefly as personifications of recurring concepts, such as the idolatrous worship of Reason (Mr. Squabs and Dr. Santurce). Characters appear, as in an auto sacramental, bearing their emblems: Cemi is marked out by his ronchas and faulty breathing rhythm as the future poet; José Eugenio, the ill-fated god of fertility, carries a melon and uses a knife to expose its seeds, while wearing a green uniform and singing "The Merry Widow". Lezama allows his poetic imagery to speak for itself. As archetypes, the characters should contain a wealth of meaning and connotation, retaining our attention over some six hundred pages.

To what end has Lezama assembled these characters? César López explains to us their relationship with Cemi: "A la manera de Jung, el héroe (en una especie de ascensión simbólica a la poesía) trata de llegar a la mismidad, integrando la voz de los arquetipos, moviéndose hacia los imagos parentales." 19 Each character should therefore be a stepping stone for Cemi in his quest for self-discovery and some sort of immortality. It is only in an anagogic approach to life and poetry that Cemi will find that part of his nature which is immune to death. Frye reasons that if "archetypes are communicable symbols, and there is a centre of archetypes, we should expect to find, at that centre, a group of universal symbols." 20 Jungian dream symbolism belongs to this group of archetypal, universal symbols which heralds the anagogic phase where a kind of supernature, rather like Lezama's sobrenaturaleza, is born and "poetry unites total ritual, or unlimited social action, with total dream, or unlimited individual thought." 21 Frye states that when the poet and critic move from the archetypal to the anagogic phase, they enter "a phase of which only religion, or something as
infinite in its range as religion, can possibly form an external goal." 22

We have already seen in his remarks to Álvarez Bravo the extent of
Lezama's own religious and poetic quest which produces in Paradiso a
self-contained world of poetry. The power of Lezama's unifying poetic
vision of reality must draw all aspects of the novel together on the
fourth plane which he mentions, on the level of supra verba, if it is
to attain any sort of harmony and ultimate meaning. The progress of
Cemi ("un presunto trasunto de mi personalidad") 23 along the path of
discovery which leads eventually to his vocation as a poet must provide
the dynamics of Paradiso's plot. Characters who do not help him on
his way, either as examples and pointers towards his goal (eg. Rialta),
or as dire warnings of pitfalls and false trails (eg. Alberto) would
be aberrations amongst their fellows, gratuitous creations arising
merely from the exuberance of Lezama's style. Critics have suspected
such wild spirits as Leregas, Farraluque and Albornoz to be merely the
rather salacious meanderings of a self-indulgent writer. 24 I hope to
prove that this is not the case.

Cemi's spiritual journey seems to fall into three major stages, as
Lezama has indicated: "es la exaltación de la familia, el nacimiento
del Eros, el conocer en la infinitud." 25 His notable absence from
those chapters describing his family's history and his lineage may be
explained by the notion that as a hero embarking on a quest, he requires
a suitably noble pedigree. The atmosphere of the real world which yet
contains within it the possibilities of marvellous happenings (such as
contact with a spiritual plane which abolishes all barriers of time and
space, as in the juego de yaquis incident) is carefully evoked. Cemi's
dream of a return to the womb and his three ritual baptisms seem to
take the place of an account of the momentous, mythical birth of the
hero. His innocent childhood is shown to be peopled by various tutors
who inculcate in Cemí a great respect for and awareness of the sum total of the family's significance, immortalized in the memories of its almost legendary history. At this stage all sexual themes are transposed to other characters. Cemí is challenged by the void created by the death of his father. Death comes in the shape of Oppiano Licario, his challenger, and with him a simultaneous awareness of the creative potential of that void.

Adolescence, the second major stage, brings with it the problems of sexuality and the uses of its creative potential, as expressed in the characters of Alberto and other minor satellites. The request of the injured lady, Rialta, for Cemí's championship of her cause (the desire to make sense of José Eugenio's death and turn the loss to gain) appears in Lezama's mother's inspiring speech urging him towards "lo más difícil" (I, 321). Thus commences the great battle for control of the self, the warring elements within the pure hero being polarized in symbolic characters, Lucía, Fronesis and Foción. A study of the imagery used to portray this stage in Cemí's development will reveal striking parallels with the traditional imagery of the quest (the dragon, the treasure, the hero reminiscent of St. George) and with the terminology of certain branches of Jungian psychology.

Tranquility returns with victory and reassuring family characters such as Rialta and Doña Augusta reappear, suggesting that the hero emerges unscathed from his ordeal. The twelfth chapter, a miniature allegory of Paradiso within the novel itself, could be seen as the new understanding of his past experiences reached by the victorious hero/poet before his final reconciliation, in the third and final stage, of the warring factions within his personality. Only a most detailed analysis of the characters will reveal how and why this pattern emerges in the novel. From an analysis of the characters and their interrelationships
it is hoped to prove that they, as archetypes, hold the key to Lezama's fictionalized autobiography.
Notes

1 "Interrogando a Lezama Lima," in Recopilación de textos sobre José Lezama Lima (Serie valoración múltiple), ed. P. Simón, Havana 1970, p. 25. This anthology of criticism will be referred to hereafter as Recopilación.


7 Eloisa Lezama Lima, "Mi hermano," in her edition of José Lezama Lima: Cartas (1939-1976), Madrid 1979, p. 21. This anthology will be referred to hereafter as Cartas. Lezama's sister does not give the source of her quotation, but placing it in context, she says: "Refiriéndose a la censura que sufrió Paradiso en España dice mi hermano: 'No sé cuál es su motivo, su raíz es innegablemente ecuménica, es católica. Algunos insólentes han afirmado que en mi obra hay elementos pornográficos, pero no solamente es una injusticia sino que hasta puede ser una canallada, porque precisamente si algún autor se ha caracterizado por la gravedad de su obra he sido yo. Mi obra podrá ser censurada por defectos de estilo, pero jamás por motivos éticos, puesto que su raíz es esencialmente de un auto sacramental'" (my italics).

8 "Interrogando a Lezama Lima," in Recopilación, p. 34.

9 A. Álvarez Bravo, ed., "Suma de conversaciones," an interview forming part of his Introduction to his anthology of Lezama's works, Los grandes todos, Montevideo 1968, pp. 31-2. This anthology will be referred to hereafter as LCT.


15 Ibid., p. 105.

16 Ibid., p. 108.

17 Ibid., p. 139.


20 Frye, p. 118.

21 Ibid., p. 120.

22 Ibid., p. 125.


24 J. R. Ribeyro, "Notas sobre Paradiso," in *Recopilación*, p. 181. Ribeyro states that "Lezama Lima muestra una complacencia y un amor al detalle que sólo su genio descriptivo, su humor y su fantasía salvan de la vulgaridad."


26 Unless otherwise stated, all quotations from Lezama Lima's writings are taken from his *Obras Completas*, 2 vols., Mexico City, 1975-77. *Paradiso* = I, 5-645.
Chapter I
José Cemi's Lineage

I. José Eugenio Cemi and his Family Tree

Yo creo que Paradiso parte de su circunstancia, su realidad inmediata. Ofrece las dos cosas: lo muy inmediato, lo más cercano —la familia— y lo que se encuentra en la lejanía, lo arquetípico, el mito. Toda novela es siempre algo autobiográfico; todo novelista emplea recursos idiomáticos, recuerdos de infancia, entrevisones, momentáneas fulguraciones, una visión, una totalidad. Para ello he partido, como algunos teólogos medievales, de una summa. He procurado sí, ir de una summa a una totalidad. En ese sentido hay en Paradiso personajes autobiográficos....

Lezama's words warn us that a dissection of the novel Paradiso with a view to identifying members of his real family will be a waste of time. Even if the researcher could provide a real life equivalent for each member of the Cemi and Olaya families, his view of the novel would remain sadly limited. The reason is obvious: although Lezama recalls his relatives, even those who died before he was born, with affection, admiration and pride, he is merely using them as jumping-off points, spring-boards for his poetic imagination. They are vessels remodelled to contain whatever ideas Lezama may wish to express, jigsaw pieces to be manoeuvred as he deems necessary. Lezama has said that all his characters bear altered names in the novel, but this is not the case. A glance at the Lezama family tree (see Appendix) reveals that José Cemi's grandparents, with the exception of Doña Augusta, take their names from their counterparts in that family. This applies only to Christian names. Less
prominent characters such as Andresito and Eloísa Cemi also retain the original names, but it is accurate to say that all major characters in the fictional family are given symbolic names: Doña Rosa Lima Rosado becomes Rialta Olaya, Doña Celia Rosado Aybar becomes Doña Augusta, Don José María Lezama Rodda becomes Colonel José Eugenio Cemi. If we begin to read these new names like signposts, we may appreciate to some degree the way in which Lezama's real family expands from "lo más cercano" into "lo arquetípico, el mito." From a collection of everyday occurrences and personal history is woven a complex and often beautiful tapestry, a summa which is intended to convey a higher reality.

Lezama is not particularly interested in historical or factual accuracy; rather he delights in deciphering patterns and coincidences within such facts. They are the vivencias oblicuas which he hopes will serve to direct the reader's thoughts towards lo incondicionado, the surprising level one may reach by observation of events or understanding of language, despite rather than because of what Lezama calls "Aristotelian causality";

Trato en mi sistema de destruir la causalidad aristotélica buscando lo incondicionado poético. Pero lo maravilloso, que ya esbozamos en la relación entre la metáfora y la imagen, es que ese incondicionado poético tiene una poderosa gravitación, referenciales diamantinos y apoyaturas. Por eso es posible hablar de caminos poéticos o metodología poética dentro de ese incondicionado que forma la poesía. En primer lugar citaremos la ocupatio de los estoicos, es decir la total ocupación de un cuerpo. Refiriéndonos a la imagen ya vimos como ella cubre la substancia o resistencia territorial del poema. Después citaremos un concepto de enorme importancia y que hemos llamado la vivencia oblicua. La vivencia oblicua es como si un hombre, sin saberlo desde luego, al darle la vuelta al conmutador de su cuarto inaugurate una cascada en el Ontario[...]. Existe también lo que he llamado el sobito, que lo podemos considerar como opuesto a la ocupatio de los estoicos[...]. Existe también lo que pudiéramos llamar el camino o método hipertélico, es decir, lo que va siempre más allá de su finalidad venciendo todo determinismo.
These terms are employed by Lezama Lima when offering a description of his working hypotheses as a poet. His theory of poetics involves the setting up of associations and juxtapositions of words and ideas, in the hope of revealing the non-causal connections, called vivencias oblicuas, which in turn point the reader towards at least a different, if not higher level of meaning. A revelation of the latter, called lo incondicionado (the unexpected) by its very occurrence defies the laws of la causalidad aristotélica, a term used by Lezama to represent the normal process of logical connection (1 + 1 = 2), the commonly accepted relationship between cause and effect. We shall find Lezama juggling with this concept when examining the complex relationship of Alberto with Santurce, Demetrio and Oppiano Licario, and in the episode involving Mr. Squabs and the death of Andresito. The vivencias oblicuas are triggered off amongst events in "lo más cercano - la familia" in order to attain (by el súbito) lo incondicionado, which is a key word for "lo que se encuentra en la lejanía, lo arquetípico, el mito." The first step in a full examination of the characters in Paradiso, with particular regard to the ways in which they are employed to express lo incondicionado, is to observe the patterns at work in lo más cercano.

Lezama has contemplated his own relatives' characters, enveloped in the minutiae of their daily lives, analysing his relationships with them and pondering the nature of the family tree until his thoughts have carried him off into the far distance, or lejanía, and the world of myth. It is here that our name-signposts assume considerable importance. The accuracy of the information they convey will be confirmed by further study of the novel. Doña Augusta is indeed an august personage, embodying the nobility and integrity of the Olayas, whose worthiness Lezama is at pains to emphasize. She is head of her late husband's family and also rules benevolently over the shattered Cemís following the death of José Eugenio,
thus she fulfils the promise of her name, which calls to mind the Emperor Augustus. The reign of this Roman emperor heralded an age of great literary activity, which is most interesting since Dofia Augusta contributes much to the youthful José Cemú's awareness of elegant and expressive language. Rialta's name is explained as follows: "José Eugenio, absorto, comprendió que por primera vez se había trazado un puente que lo unía con algo, con las ciudades que unen a dos familias en un puente. Miró a Rialta, que, muy aturdida, extendía el tapete que cubría el piano" (I, 155). José Eugenio's realization occurs during his first formal visit to the Olaya family. We are to believe that the meeting inspires both young people with a sense of awe and awareness. We are shown how Rialta hides her maidenly confusion, "muy aturdida," by busying herself with a simple task. Whether or not this degree of awareness is realistic — they are very young — is not important. What is significant is the emphasis placed on the meeting by Lezama, here and elsewhere in the novel. The name "Rialta" reminds the reader of the peculiar character of the Venetian Ponte Rialto, on which stand large family houses, with the Grand Canal below. It could thus be said that Venice is one of the "ciudades que unen a dos familias en un puente" (I, 155). The bridge is named after the island which it links to the rest of the city, the word being defined in the Dizionario Enciclopedico Italiano as: "rialto (comp. di ri-e alto, modellato su rialzare) a. Luogo che s'innalza alquanto sul piano; altura. b. Più genericam., parte rilevata, prominenza." However, whilst he no doubt had the function of the bridge in mind, Lezama would be aware of the figurative meaning of rialto from rialzare, that is "alzare di nuovo ... riprender coraggio, redimersi, rialzarsi dal peccato." The concept of striving upwards, of self-renewal, is crucial to the character of Rialta and her influence on her son, José Cemú. Rialta performs the function of the Ponte Rialto in Venice, spanning a gulf between two groups of strangers
by her marriage to José Eugenio Cemí. It will become clear that this
gulf lies not only between two families, but between two political ideo-
logies and heritages.

The origin of the family name "Cemí" has been debated by various cri-
tics, not least among them Klaus Müller-Bergh, whose explanation is quite
expansive:

José Cemí, el héroe de Paradiso, es el prototipo del
cubano autóctono, completo, firmamente arraigado en los
mitos precolombianos del mundo del Caribe, así como en
los mundos del grecorromano. El término cemí, imagen
o ídolo, abarca distintas divinidades taino, que gobier-
nan las aguas, las mareas y la maternidad, el crecimiento
de la yuca y el curso de los huracanes. De igual
manera Cemí representa a menudo a Átabex, la madre de
Dios, a su hijo Yucahuguamé, el espíritu de la yuca, y
da Guabancex el vertiginosa divinidad que gobierna los
huracanes.

Lezama's explanation is more straightforward:

y un presunto trasunto de mi personalidad aparece con
el nombre de José Cemí, que es fácil para todo cubano
su desciframiento: "cemí", un ídolo, una imagen. Y
como Vd. sabe que una de las obsesiones mías ha sido
la imagen, por eso uno de los personajes, sino el cen-
tral, por lo menos el impulsador central de la novela,
se llama Cemí.

For the moment, suffice it to say that José Cemí is intended to be a poe-
tic image of Lezama's own character, but only as a "presunto trasunto,"
a sketch based on what he observes in himself, but developed to fit into
a more ambitious design than a simple autobiography. The Christian na-
mes, we should notice, have been reduced as we move through the family
tree. José Cemí's grandfather bears the Christian names of Joseph and
Mary, and whilst they are very common names, we may later find them si-
gnificant when studying the grandfather's dream. To the reader, José
Cemí often appears as just "Cemí", in contrast to José Eugenio who is al-
ways afforded his proper name, or title, "el Coronel." It is obvious
that José Cemi is the fruit of the union of the two family trees, so it may be this knowledge which causes the word cemi to be assimilated in one's mind with semilla. There is no evidence to suggest that this assimilation was in the author's mind but it tends to complement his vivid imagery involving the family tree, as we shall see.

Pursuing this line of investigation still further, we find that José Eugenio's name may provide us with another clue to the symbolic significance attached to Lezama's characters. The word "eugenics" in English, "eugenismo" in Castillian, refers to the science relating to the development and improvement of offspring, especially human offspring. It comes from the Greek, (EU-, gen-, stem, to produce, as in eugenes, well-born). This conveys admirably the careful cultivation of the seed, the offspring, José Cemi, which is José Eugenio's fatherly duty. E. M. Santí observes that: "Todas esas diferencias entre padre y hijo se resumen en el contraste inscrito en sus nombres: José Eugenio y José. El del hijo aparece marcado por la ausencia del segundo nombre: Eugenio, eugenes, el bien nacido. El hijo no es, no puede ser, el 'bien nacido', que sería el padre." 8 Lezama has said of Paradiso:

Pour comprendre ce roman il faut aussi connaître mon intention; exprimer d'aussi près que possible la vie quotidienne de l'homme et de sa famille. La tradition cubaine c'est le déracinement, il faut savoir cela aussi .... L'Eros cubain est donc l'Eros de l'éloignement essentiel. Vous comprenez? Le cubain regarde le quotidien comme lointain et le lointain comme s'il pouvait l'embrasser.

Thus one must investigate the presentation of the family characters very closely but always with the totality of their meaning in view, as Lezama suggests. I propose to examine first the Cemi family tree and then that of the Olayas, the nature of their union in the marriage of José Eugenio and Rialta, and the child Cemi's relationships with his relatives.
José María Lezama shares with José Eugenio Cemí his career (an engineer, and colonel of artillery in the new republic), his death (in an influenza outbreak at Pensacola, his marriage into a revolutionary family, his background: "vasco típico, hijo de vascos" and some of his personal traits: "representaba la alegría, la fuerza expansiva, la salud de la familia." ¹⁰ Lezama speaks of his own father with pride, as a competent military man contributing a great deal to the new republic's army: "Mire, mi padre era un militar. Pero un militar muy especial. Mi padre forma parte de la clase militar cuando la universidad se incorpora al ejército. Era un hombre de carrera: un ingeniero, un arquitecto, un hombre que sabía idiomas." ¹¹ The opening paragraphs of Paradiso provide the reader with an introduction by proxy to José Eugenio, "el Coronel." Baldovinia, the servant girl, imagines his laughter at her discomfiture when he returns to find his son unwell, "mientras el Coronel baritonizaba sus carcajadas ..." (I, 6). The reader is shown examples of his authority— it is "la casa del Jefe" (I, 6), who commands the utmost respect from his men: "también era ingeniero, lo cual engendraba en la tropa ... la misma devoción que pudiera haber mostrado ante un sacerdote copto o un rey cazador asirio" (I, 9). This is one of many comparisons of the family with historical and royal personages in order to increase their stature. In the midst of the child's suffering, we are waylaid by references to his father, all of which emphasize his vigour and good health. Throughout the novel José Eugenio is always referred to as "el Coronel", even on his death bed, in his role as father and leader of men. Only in those chapters dealing with his youth prior to his marriage are we permitted to approach him more closely. He is not presented unsympathetically yet there is an unrelenting, unyielding quality about him which we soon sense. It becomes clear that Lezama does not plan any surprises, since in one sweep of the pen he reveals the cheerful
Colonel humming "La viuda alegre", while in the next we are exposed to the hidden irony of his choice of song: "Los treinta y tres años que alcanzó su vida" (I, 21). He is noted for his musical good naturedness, but what really fires Lezama's imagination is the value of this brief life and the effects upon others of its abrupt extinction. Here too, we are introduced briefly to his parents: he is "hijo de un padre vasco, severo y emprendedor, glotón y desesperado después de la muerte de su esposa, hija de ingleses" (I, 21). Before he leaves this first glimpse of the Colonel, Lezama supplies us with some images of his fruitfulness, images which set the scene for further development along the lines of Nature's bounteousness. Against his green soldier's uniform he holds "el amarillo yeminal del melón," "yeminal" suggesting creative power in Nature. The shape of the melon is used to represent the Colonel's "días redondos y plenarios" (I, 21), and the pictorial effect of the image is that of a tree bowed down by its plentiful fruit. Rocio, often associated with new beginnings and the renewal of the family tree in Paradiso, is said to hang heavily in the kitchen as the melon is cut. Dew seems to represent new life although, in the context, the cutting of the melon suggests the premature death of the life-giver. So in a brief passage Lezama has managed to evoke all the most striking elements to be portrayed in the Colonel's character as the novel progresses.

The puzzling little incident involving the cook's rebellion has a place in the overall pattern of character symbolism in the first chapter. It is intimately linked with the illness of the child, as compared with the good health of the father, and with the Basque grandfather's gosoa familia, which serves to introduce his dream. An examination of José Cemí's illness will prove more useful in a study of his relationships with his parents, and will, therefore, be postponed till then. However, one should note that an illness constitutes a falling away from a normal,
happy state of affairs, a veritable banishment to a hostile world. A return to the former state of good health constitutes a return to normal life, where we cease to feel "different" or "marked out", as is Cemí by his ronchas. The rebellion of Juan Izquierdo, due to his offended pride ("Que un hombre de mi calidad tenga que servir ..."; I, 20) leads to his banishment from the household; he has fallen from grace with his employers. It is interesting to note that it is the unjust who stand at God's left hand on Judgement Day, a fact that must make poor Juan Izquierdo one of the goats. This is borne out in an otherwise mysterious sentence - "La tarde fabricaba una soledad, como la lágrima se cae de los ojos a la boca de la cabra" (1, 23). The cook has fallen from his paradise, the Colonel's kitchen, to the misery of wet nights outside, weeping the slow, involuntary, inevitable tear of an animal. The relentless rain seems to symbolise his contrition and the sorrow of the family at losing such a good cook. Nature, the rain, seems to sympathize. This pathetic fallacy appears in the very next episode also, an episode which is framed by the fall and reinstatement of Juan Izquierdo. His acceptance back into the fold by the Colonel rounds off a chapter which is chiefly concerned with recuperation of a former state of well-being.

The most important redemption is revealed in José María Cemí's dream. This is the reader's first excursion into the family's past, its origins, so the image of the family tree as a vital link with the past is prevalent. Having witnessed the vigour of José Eugenio and the apparent weakness of José Cemí, we are projected into the past, to the arrival of the Cemí name on Cuban soil. The impression given by the grandfather is one of great strength and energy; he has chubby fists and zooms about like a comet from place to place, still managing, with his "typically Basque" short neck, to present an air of solidity. Lezama often mentions the short neck, intending it to symbolize the determination and latent power
of the man and the nation he represents. Once the family has been gathered together, the grandfather's conversation flows, but to a purpose monitored closely by the author. Under the guise of dinner party trivia concerning the food, Lezama contrives to call to our minds the conquistadores and the English, who governed Cuba for a short time, thus evoking specific stages of Cuban history, before going on to the invasion of the island by the grandfather's generation. It is he who is responsible for the new blood in the Cuban family of his wife. As befits a great creator of new life, he is filled with a life-giving force: "El aliento parecía que recobraba en él su primitiva función sagrada de flatus Dei" (I, 25). Comparison of the grandfather's habitual reticence with his loquacity on his special day leads to the idea that the gossá familia is much more than an excuse for a family reunion, that it is rather a communion, infused with God's spirit, which is often represented in the Bible as a strong wind: "Pero en el día del gozo familiar, ese aliento se trocaba en árbol del centro familiar y a su sombra parecía relatar, invencionar, alcanzar su mejor forma de palabra y además, como si fuese a presentar, según las señales que los teólogos atribuían a la fiesta final de Josafat" (I, 25). The family reunion has now assumed a religious aura, but Judgement Day is not intended here as an image of terror. Lezama seems to regard it as the means of returning to a former state of blessedness. It is a renewal of contact with higher reality. We are reminded of the effect of the Holy Spirit (flatus Dei) on the disciples, who become inspired to speak in many tongues. Cemí's poetic inspiration is held to come from the same source, his early difficulties in breathing revealing parallels with his difficulties in expression. The branching of the lungs and of the family tree alike form links with Heaven through inspired language, in that the breath seems to constitute a column of air stretching upwards from the earth.
Having established the latter idea in the reader's mind, Lezama proceeds to provide him with a tree which stretches literally up to the heavens. Beaten by the Belgian runner in a race in Bilbao, José María travels to Cuba, where the debate about Spanish and indigenous seeds ensues. This debate is actually political in nature, as it involves a crisis of identity for the Spanish immigrant to Cuba, who sees his pure Spanish blood being diluted in that of the criollos, just as the Spanish vine seeds seem to be wasted. It is the grandfather's dream which resolves his feelings of anguish in his new country:

In this lyrical passage, Lezama sets the scene for the dream. José María feels, at last, a deep sense of unity with his beautiful surroundings. They seem to represent a New World locus amoenus and appear to welcome him. He is the "recién nacido," the new arrival who now benefits from the rocío, which baptises him. J. C. Ulloa tells us that the malanga is a "planta aroidea cubana y símbolo del abuelo que se va cubanizando," and he considers that in the above passage Lezama is setting one of his favourite eras imaginarias, that is, "lo filogeneratriz," into a Cuban context. 12 Lezama describes it on several occasions and it is essential to compare its occurrence in his essay "A partir de la poesía" with the passage in the novel:

La primera era imaginaria es la filogeneratriz. Comprende el estudio de las tribus misteriosas de los tiempos más remotos .... Los idumeos aparecen levemente aludidos en el Génesis. En el famoso soneto de Mallarmé, que comienza:
"Te ofrezco el fruto de una noche de Idumea," se alude a las reproducciones del período mitológico. Se adornece el hombre, es decir, el tiempo se borra, de su costado empieza a crecer un árbol, de sus ramas se desprende la nueva criatura. En otras interpretaciones, el falo crece como un árbol, mientras el hombre se abandona al sueño, salta del árbol la nueva vida (II, 835).

In Paradiso, it is certain, the self-same dream appears:

Sentí que me arreciaba un sueño, que me llegaba derrumbándose como nunca lo había hecho. Debajo de aquellos rojos y verdes entremezclados dormía un cordero. La perfección de su sueño se extendía por todo el valle, conducida por los espíritus del lago. El sueño se me hacía traspies y caída, obligándome a mirar en torno para soslayar algún reclinatorio. Inmóvil el cordero parecía soñar el árbol. Me extendí y recliné en su vientre, que se movía como para provocar un ritmo favorable a las ondas del sueño (I, 27).

It seems appropriate that a man named José María should dream of the sleeping lamb with all its Christian connotations and ancient mystical import.

Whilst I am uncertain as to whether, as Ulloa claims, the red and green colouring of the scene refers to the "rojo del cinabrio y al verde de las infusiones de té de las permutaciones alquímicas de los taoístas en busca de la inmortalidad." It seems clear that images of measured breathing persist throughout the dream sequence: "Recordemos que los procesos alquímicos creaban entre los taoístas un ambiente propicio para la adquisición de la respiración embrionaria." The flamboyant sways rhythmically in the breeze ("asomaba como un marisco por las valvas de la mañana..."); the effect of the red blossoms and green fireflies, whether narcotic or otherwise, is to purify José María's whole being. It seems that his dream is induced by his surroundings which become infused with the natural rhythm of sleep. A lamb dreaming of a tree could well be Christ offering the purifying way of the Cross. Hence there is an opportunity to return to Paradise even in the distant New World, whose
natural beauty recalls a lost Eden. The image of the lamb complements that of the "fiesta final de Josafat" of the Cemi family and Juan Izquierdo, emphasizing the breath of the Spirit (flatus Dei) which suffuses their communion in the gossa familia. José María has stumbled upon the imaginative, innocent first era imaginaria, a poetic age in which men believed reproduction to be a miracle beyond normal causality, in which the tree, like the Cross, brought new life. It is only through the abolition of Time in a sleepy descent into the Unconscious that man joins in once more in the moment of perfect creation. The union is short-lived as Ulloa points out:

... Lezama Lima muy acertadamente nos indica que nadie entre sus familiares pudo hallarlo durante su periodo de dormición porque las huellas "se habían borrado," lo cual constituye en alusión indirecta al hecho de que el hombre ha perdido el camino o nexo que lo unía con ese estado paradisíaco de que gozaba antigamente y que le permitía estar en estrecha relación con lo sagrado.

Permitted to touch on lo incondicionado, José María experiences, however briefly, mythical Time. According to Mircea Eliade, quoted by both Ulloa and M. J. Fazzolari in their discussion of the dream: 15

in illo tempore, in the mythical time of Paradise, a Mountain, a Tree, or a Pillar or a liana connected Earth with Heaven, so that primordial man could easily go up into Heaven by climbing it. Communication with Heaven in illo tempore was simple, and meetings with the gods took place in concreto.

So José María's dream of a lamb beneath a tree is as effective a return to the origins as Moses' journey up the mountain to receive the Ten Commandments. Since these paradisical times communion between Man and his gods has been severed (in Christian terms, by the Fall of Man), hence the nostalgia for Paradise. The sacred meeting place or altar was always considered to be at the centre of the world, an axis mundi consecrated by long use and popular belief. 17 Just as the flamboyant is a link with
Heaven, the family tree is to be the axis mundi of the Cemí and Olaya families. The first seven chapters of the novel are devoted to this return to the origins through dream sequences and memory. Lezama has warned his readers that his characters tend to gravitate from the everyday to the miraculous and mythical and we must take him at his word, charting carefully their movement through the novel.

The reader is told nothing more about the Colonel’s ancestry until much later, after being introduced to the Olaya family in Jacksonville. Some confusion arises from the fact that José Eugenio now seems to have been an orphan from the age of ten years and has been brought up by his maternal grandmother. Another surprise is that the Enriqueta of the gossa familia has now become Eloísa. In her introduction to an annotated edition of Paradiso, Lezama’s sister Eloísa remarks:

Se ha tomado como un error el que J. L. L. llame Enriqueta a nuestra abuela Eloísa. “Otro zapote, Enriqueta,” es una frase de cuño familiar que implica “repetición.” (Enriqueta era hermana de Eloísa y estaba casada con otro vasco, Juan Felipe Lezama).

The true identity of Enriqueta can be discerned within the text of Paradiso, not without some difficulty. However, the early appearance of José María Cemí, followed by that of his orphaned children, presents a problem in the novel’s structure. These may be slips of the pen, but without them we might miss the tale of the Spanish emigré who has a mystical experience in the New World, or alternatively the story of the resentful Tío Luis and the career and marriage of the forceful José María as a new Cuban. As it is, we receive first hand accounts from people involved, speaking from very personal viewpoints. Lezama is highly selective in his choice of family anecdotes, and it seems that he is quite prepared to subjugate individual characters to the requirements, not of plot in the accepted sense, but of an evolving system of ideas to be presented in the novel. This is
a practical example of Lezama's disregard for the concept of causality. Thus in what might be termed a flashback to José Eugenio's childhood, we find that someone we have already encountered in the future no longer exists. Lezama is anxious to present José María's dream related, at an early stage, in the first person, not as the memory of another character. He is concerned, above all, with the dream imagery of a return to the origins, which is to be of fundamental importance to the Cemís and Olayas. Lezama reveals his underlying pattern in no uncertain terms:

Al padre de José Cemí, a quien vimos en capítulos anteriores ... lo vamos a ir descubriendo en su niñez hasta su encuentro con la familia de Rialta .... Alcanzaba el Coronel todavía el árbol universal en la última etapa feudal del matrimonio. Inmensas dinastías familiares entruncaban con el misterio sanguíneo y la evidencia espiritual de otras tribus .... Así las dos familias alentroverse se perdían en ramificaciones infinitas, en dispersions y reencuentros, donde coincidían la historia sagrada, la doméstica y las coordenadas de la imagen proyectadas a un ondulante destino (I, 87-8).

The dream of José María has the effect in the novel of setting up just such an altar as Eliade describes, in the form of the Cemí and Olaya family trees; the very structure of the early chapters ensures that the reader is carried back deliberately into the origins of things in a way that he cannot ignore. Lezama forces us, by means of such authorial interference as that quoted above, to be aware of glancing constantly over our shoulder. He establishes the status quo, and then proceeds to explain how it came about, returns us to the Colonel's career, then plunges us into the trials of the Olaya family, only to place us back among the Cemís, now seen as interlopers.

In the Ruda household during José Eugenio's childhood, Tío Luis is shown to have misgivings about his status in the new Age in Cuba, just as his "rival", José María, had done. He is presented as a country bumpkin whose awkwardness is aggravated by the superior attitude of José Eugenio,
now twelve years old. José Eugenio is not malicious but he has the young person's curiosity about the fact that someone of his acquaintance is "different". What José Eugenio notices most is Tío Luis' accent, but when he realises that the desired pronunciation of reloj is impossible, he relents, abashed. Tío Luis' failures all relate to standards of culture which are essentially European. His character lacks light and shade; it lacks definition, like the voices of the singers at the opera which he so admires. He arrives in Havana in 1902, troubled times in which attempts were being made to form a new Cuban government. His main difficulties are, significantly, in self-expression: "tosco, aunque bien plantado y con destemplados presunciones de guajiro tiposo; hablador, aunque con abundoso riego de palatales trocadas en sílabas explosivas, en incorrectas divisiones de sílabas y en ingúrgite de finales de palabras" (1, 82).

However, like his Spanish ancestors before him, José Eugenio discovers that it is possible to push the rustic poor relation too far; he will ultimately rebel and withdraw from the "superior's" company. Just as Cuba was dependent on other nations at this time (Spain and North America) Tío Luis is financially dependent upon the Cemí will and he has neither job nor ambition. The uncle is compared with an amoeba, which suggests his unformed state, the lack of personal identity. Doña Munda's pride in her son's sayings cannot conceal the fact that they are boorish, revealing only his ignorance of European culture, from which he has become isolated since the arrival in Latin America of his ancestors, the conquistadors. The names of craftmen and cultures which he bandies about are not supplied from a fund of personally-studied facts. He speaks as a parrot and his discomfiture in the presence of his cultured half-Spanish nephew suggests that he knows this. Doña Munda knows that Tío Luis must complete his education outside his own country and she speaks of this as a postscript to her concern for José Eugenio's education, "Eres un viejo
accidente entre nosotros, y eso quiere decir que debes ir a buscar tu centro al extranjero" (I, 107).

Doña Munda may seem harsh and on the personal level this is probably true, but in political terms it is common sense. Cuba needed Spanish financial support to survive and had to accept it, harsh though the terms might be. There is no place for the man who refuses to assimilate the two cultures and backgrounds. Later on we find that José Eugenio has learned this lesson well, having combined his observations of Tío Luis' behaviour with his school experiences of the attraction of "otherness" and of the potential for creation out of the void. He reveals this in a conversation with Doña Mela, the separatist: "Existe el Eros de lo que se nos quiere escapar, tan fuerte como el conocimiento sexual de la ausencia. En el animal poderoso, la conciencia de lo que se le quiere separar es el nacimiento de un ojo" (I, 163-4; my italics). This is how Lezama describes the loss of the Spanish colonies, Cuba included. The struggle is presented as inevitable, bringing with it a sense of loss to both parties, yet essential for the future growth of each. The opponents become fully aware of each other only when they are separated by distance. This applies equally to personalities, such as Luis Ruda and José Eugenio, or Eloísa and José María, and countries, such as Cuba and Spain, which are inextricably bound up in these characters. José Eugenio first experiences the potential of absence or emptiness at school (a stage of his life best examined later in close relation to Alberto, his future brother-in-law): "El hecho de mezclar en el gusto una especie cualquiera, quedaría para él como una infinita sexualidad engendrada por la memoria de un tacto imposible, que a ciegas reconstruya los cuerpos en la lejanía ... " (I, 121; my italics). In other words, in the void left by the separation, each entity is enabled to form a clearer image of its own nature and of its opponent, touched now by a longing for that which is out of reach.
The concept relates both to the creative imagination and to political consciousness between nations. Future growth is assisted by the insights gained at a distance, Lezama seems to imply.

Dofía Munda feels compelled to inform her grandson of his ancestry in an attempt at self-justification as a result of his demand for an increased allowance. The union of the two families is one of strength and delicacy, as embodied in José María and Eloísa, respectively. They seem to be archetypes even to the extent of personifying what for Lezama are the salient features of their races; a refinement typical of the English and a vigour typical of the Basque. Fazzolari has said that the lament of Dofía Munda is actually "la versión lezamiana, muy poetizada, de Contrapunto cubano del tabaco y el azúcar, de Fernando Ortiz. Lezama recoge la idea, la condensa y la complica al convertirla también en un contrapunto de lo cubano autóctono con lo español importado, para resumir el drama de la Isla." 19 This certainly seems to be the case, with the family tragedy of Eloísa's death representing the end of the original way of life, in the face of a new influx of Spaniards from the mother country. Dofía Munda regrets the passing of the old ways as much as the death of her daughter:

Teníamos ese refinamiento que tienen la gente de tierra adentro cuando están dedicadas al cultivo de hojas muy nobles, y a adivinar los signos exteriores de los insectos en relación con las estaciones. Ese trato con la naturaleza cuando elabora esos productos de distinción y excepción principales, el arroz, el té o la hoja de tabaco, pasa a las manos primero y a la visión para el primor después ... (1, 92).

All this has been replaced with "aquellos sembradíos de caña vulgarota," to which both the delicate Eloísa and the refined art of tobacco cultivation cannot adapt themselves. The contrast of characters is too great and Eloísa's death seems to be the result of a change of environment and the lack of pure honey from the palm to keep asthma at bay. The art of
cultivating these palms has also been swept aside by the spreading sugar plantations. We have already seen how José María's lungs have the capacity to be filled with flatus Dei and we now find that Eloísa's breathing rhythm is also significant: "Tu madre tenía la rapidez invisible de la respiración, parecía habitar esa contracción, ese punto que separa lo mineral grabado por la secularidad y el desprendimiento, del nacimiento de lo que bulle para alcanzar la forma de su destino" (I, 93). The latter description could very well be an evocation of the alchemists toiling over their infusions, as Lezama has drawn them in "Las eras imaginarias: la biblioteca como dragón": "La búsqueda alquímica de la píldora de oro, para conseguir la inmortalidad, se trueca en la captación de una luz blanca por la respiración interna, por el aliento secreto. La luz ha de entenderse como principio, como embrión, no como resplandor o brillo" (II, 911).

It is Eloísa's need for light and clarity, qualities which her son will inherit in abundance, which leads to her demise, as these things are denied her in the new environment. The ancient craft of the family has been further subjugated by anonymous administrators. Fazzolari identifies them, in my view quite correctly, with the anonymous North America businessmen who took over financial power from the Spanish, monopolizing the sugar industry. The bitter resentment felt by José María on the death of his young wife seems to constitute his own fall from Grace, as he condemns God and tries to "punish" Him by pining away. Of course the reader cannot forget the gossá familia and it is an irritating confusion, but the higher truths conveyed by both passages compensate for this apparent piece of carelessness. Doña Munda seems to come to terms with the situation in her conversation with Tío Luis, finally becoming aware that the change has been inevitable, bringing with it benefits for the new generation:
Desde ese día [on which she discovered that José Eugenio had inherited his mother's finer feelings] pienso en mi hija y en los sentidos que como hojas la hubieran ido rodeando para formar con sus hijos una cámara sagrada, como esos árboles desarrollados por la cercanía de la sombra de otro árbol, sin mostrar ninguna subordinación de cuerpo a sombra, pues sus raíces se clavan en la inmediata corriente, justificando orgulosamente la unidad de su jerarquía (I, 105).

Although Luis mocks Doña Munda and her symbols of vegetation ("Vd. siempre Mamá Munda, queriendo colocar la familia en el parafso pradera de los incas"; I, 106, my italics), he is moved to accept her words. In Doña Munda's eyes the Basque, as she calls him, is glorified by his rebellion against God ("Pues sólo los reyes sienten el deseo de rebelarse contra los dioses y titanes"; I, 105) since she is also aware of his secret remorse.

If the comparison of the decline of Eloísa and that of Cuba under renewed Spanish dominance in the nineteenth century is pursued still further, it seems that Lezama pictures the resistance of Spain to the inevitable loss of its Cuban colony in the defiance of José María who refuses to accept Eloísa's death. The objects of his displeasure are "los dioses y titanes" (I, 106), in other words, Fate. His apparent remorse wins Doña Munda's grudging admiration because it seems to imply an admission of guilt, at least of the sin of neglecting to ensure the well-being of his self-assumed responsibility, Eloísa. As José Eugenio has said with reference to Spain: "En el animal poderoso, la conciencia de lo que se le quiere separar es el nacimiento de un ojo. Entonces siente al lograrse la separación, la pérdida de un tentáculo de visibilidad. Y brama rizando el cielo. Es una hermosa pelea" (I, 163-4). Their marriage entails a sense of loss, yet the union of the two families is a process of assimilation of the best attributes of both, symbolized in José Eugenio who represents the new Cuban of the turn of the century, the result of a similar exchange of qualities. José Cemí will inherit the
qualities of both grandparents and it is interesting to note that the questions of rhythm of breathing and personal adjustment to the surrounding world are the concern of all three. Both Doña Munda and José María take us back to a paradisical era to establish contact with the Heavens once more by means of a family tree intimately connected with the indigenous Cuban trees, the flamboyant and tobacco and sugar cane, the interloper. As we shall see, José Eugenio's outlook is developed at school, that is, as his relationship with Alberto deepens. Alberto is to be the instrument by which the Olaya family will receive a surge of energy in the shape of José Eugenio and his heritage. The union will be between the old established family and the recently assimilated, second generation Cuban whose forebears had come to Cuba in the 1880s. An examination of the nature of the old criollo Olaya family must precede a study of the union and its fruit.

II. Rialta Olaya and her Family Tree

Soy el producto de un encuentro placentero, en los primeros años de la República, entre familias de gran accentuación cubana y familias en las cuales predominaba lo español [...]. [Paradiso is] un contrapunto, un nexo, de cómo estaba formada la sociedad cubana en aquellos instantes históricos.

Lezama's declared interest in Cuban society might very well take the reader by surprise since the writer seems to ignore recent events in Cuba, although much of Paradiso must have been written since the 1959 revolution. However, Lezama's concern with the establishment of the first republic and the kind of people involved in the forming of a new government, (through undercover support from the rebels, the provision of funds for the same) and involved in bringing new, invigorating qualities to the country (by intermarrying and by reviving the economic life of the island) is clearly
visible in the early stage of Paradiso. Once again Lezama's family is called upon to illustrate life in Cuba at this time, the last twenty years of the nineteenth century, and the beginning of the twentieth. While Lezama presents an interesting picture of the period, politics is only a secondary concern. Here too, Lezama begins with his personal experiences and develops them to suit his underlying design, as Jean Franco suspects:

el casamiento de los padres de Cemi reúne el estoicismo del vasco y la "viveza criolla" de la familia de Rialta, contraste que, sin embargo, no obedece a un interés nacionalista por parte del autor, sino que sirve de metáfora para este choque de elementos dispares que producen la revelación poética.

This is borne out in the novel by the author's masterly evocation of the spirit of each family.

Lezama takes particular care in his introduction of Rialta and Doña Augusta, just as he does with José Eugenio. Within the confines of one chapter he manages to bring out some salient characteristics of the main characters before propelling us into the midst of a prior generation embodied in Doña Augusta and José María; meanwhile Cemi's illness and Juan Izquierdo's little fall from grace run their course. Mother and daughter seem to be inseparable and are almost confused with one another in the text: "Una parecía que dormía; la otra en su lado contaba. Por los rincones, una cosía las medias; la otra hablaba. Cambiaban de pieza, una como si fuese a buscar algo en ese momento recordado, llevaba de la mano a la otra que iba hablando, riéndose secreteando" (1, 19). Their relationship seems to be perfectly balanced and Rialta is almost a carbon copy of her mother; that is, she bears all the distinctive qualities of her family. Both women have access to a secret, a shared outlook on life. The power of tradition is emphasized by the discussion of lace, in which the two ladies lament the innovations of the lacemakers. Rialta is emphatic in her expression of disgust, which gives rise to the reader's
first glimpse of her delightfully original similes such as, "Eso me gusta como si le pusieran una inyección antirrábica al canario o como si llevaran los caracoles al establo para que adquiriesen una coloración chartreuse" (I, 17). This revelation is immediately followed by the information that Doña Augusta also uses similes compulsively; their colourful statements are said to be incontrovertibles (I, 17) since Rialta, and by implication Doña Augusta, is "sumergida en las tradicionales aguas de seisientos años" (I, 17), in other words they are of an old, established Cuban family, dating from the earliest days of the conquest. They embody that authority afforded by custom and tradition. The pieces of French lace which they discuss so avidly have that same resistance to change, having been celebrated in "versos, de excelentes poetas franceses" (I, 17).

The characters' fluent speech in this part of Paradiso is also poetic, a fact which becomes most significant when we consider that this is the gift of speech and command of language which will be inherited by José Cemí and used to immortalize his family. Traditional values are evoked by the image of lace painstakingly worked in days gone by and expressed in the typical time-honoured style of the Olaya women:

El encaje es como un espejo, que hecho por manos que podían haber sido juveniles cuando nosotros nacimos, nos parece siempre un envío o como una resolución de muchos siglos, grandes elaboraciones contemporáneas de paisajes fijados en los comienzos de lo que ahora es un disfrute sin ofuscaciones (I, 17).

The paisajes prefigure José María Cemí's dream of a locus amoenus, already discussed.

Doña Augusta occupies a position of authority in the household, a representative of the past and of honoured tradition. Her criollo cooking is an aspect of tradition which fills the rest of the family with delight. This too prefigures the importance accorded to ritual meals later in the same chapter. Lezama endorses the grandmother's respected
position by employing several similes evoking royalty through the ages:
"así como los reyes de Georgia tenían grabadas en las tetillas desde su nacimiento las águilas de su heráldica, ella por ser matancera se creía obligada a ser incontrovertible en almíbar y pastas" (I, 17-8), and:
"aun el Coronel la obedecía y obligaba a la religiosa sumisión, como esas reinas que antaño fueron regentes, pero que mucho más tarde, ... volvían a ocupar sus antiguas prerogativas y a oír de nuevo el susurro halagador de sus servidores retirados" (I, 18). If the reader visualises the timid José Cemi observing her supreme reign in the kitchen with a sense of child-ish awe, the similes lose some of their strangeness and seem more fitting.

The process whereby royal status is granted to certain characters involves a kind of mystification used to distance them from the reader; Lezama wishes to ennable José Cemi's ancestors, or rather, to turn the close relatives into revered ancestors or even archetypes whose origins lie in the mythical past. He uses the technique repeatedly in the novel.

Certain critics such as J.M. Alonso have found the process of glorifying respected ancestors distasteful:

But what makes Paradiso truly off-putting here, I believe, is what has caused it to receive a bad reception. Lezama's underlying but obvious protest of aristocracy .... Unfortunately, Lezama's heavy load of ornamental erudition, much like the ownership of jewelry and furs in many cases, ultimately means to signal the Cemi family's claim to actual sociological aristocracy, the kind once supposedly assigned by God.

Lezama has explained his use of images of royalty in "A partir de la poesía," in which he considers the great epochs in history which he believes have possessed a truly poetical spirit, so powerful that it can affect other Ages. One such image is "los reyes como metáfora" (II, 837), kings of the stature of Julius Ceasar and Alfonso X el Sabio who embodied the spirit of their times and had a profound effect on world history. Lezama
wishes to lift them out of their historical contexts and give them immunity to Time:

No basta que la imagen actúe sobre lo temporal histórico, para que se engendre una era imaginaria, es decir, para que el reino poético se instaure. Ni es tan sólo que la causalidad metafórica llegue a hacerse viviente, por personas donde la fabulación unió lo real con lo invisible, e.g. certain kings... sino que esas eras imaginarias tienen que surgir en grandes fondos temporales, ya milenios, ya situaciones excepcionales, que se hacen arquetípicas ..." (11, 832-3).

There is no doubt that Doña Augusta is represented as the great matriarch, with the help of images which lend a sense of magnificence to quite ordinary tasks such as cooking traditional dishes. However the writer's primary concern in giving this impression is for the spiritual nobility of the characters out of whose midst the young poet José Cemí is to emerge. The background of such a personage must include many types of culture, an awareness of the rest of the world, an assimilation of all that has gone before. The very strong influence of his cultured and majestic grandmother will be instrumental in achieving this. The royal images underline the fact that the criollo family is in a unique position culturally, as J. J. Arrom has said: "criollo, en lengua española, es un término que designa distinciones de carácter cultural. Los criollos somos los que, sea cual sea el color de nuestra piel, nos hemos criado de este lado del charco y hablamos y pensamos en español con sutiles matizes americanos." 24 In other words, the criollo has access to both European and Latin American cultures.

Lezama's treatment of Rialta follows the pattern already established for José Eugenio. Having introduced two generations of each side of the family, the Olayas and Cemís, and described the Colonel at work, Lezama proceeds to delve into the past of the Olaya family, beginning with Rialta. She is described in a manner which is totally in keeping with Lezama's
previous exploitation of the theme of the family and the tree. It is worth quoting in full:

La tendida luz de julio iba cubriendo con reidores saltitos los contornos del árbol de las nueces, que terminaba uno de los cuadrados de Jacksonville, en los iniciales crepúsculos del estío del 1894. Rialta, casi sonambúlica en el inasible penetrar vegetativo de sus diez años, se iba extendiendo por las ramajes más crujientes, para alcanzar la venerable cápsula llena de ruidos cóncavos que se tocaban la frente blandamente. Su cuerpo todo convertido en sentido por la tensión del estiramiento, no oía el adelgazamiento y ruido del rendimiento de la fibra, pero sus oídos habían quedado colgados del rejuego y sonido de la bayas corriendo invisible dentro de la vaina. Despertó, oyó, se volvió. -Rialta, don't steal the nuts (I, 53).

In "Las eras imaginarias: la biblioteca como dragón," Lezama evokes a certain stage in the history of Chinese philosophy during which Lao-tse "sentía el surgimiento del ser como una fruta silenciosa desprendida de un árbol inmóvil" (II, 895). Similarly Lezama reveals Rialta's destiny, the emergence of her Being, through the presence of a tree laden with fruit. As in the case of José Eugenio, the character is examined at the beginning of adolescence, at the point of entry into the adult world.

The other new beginning which may be hinted by the prominent positioning of the date in this opening paragraph of the chapter is that of Cuba itself. At this time José Martí and other separatists, with whom the Olaya family is identified through Doña Mela, were preparing a rebellion against Spanish power in Cuba. It is a time of hope on many levels; for the young girl in the Spring of life and for the country she has been forced to leave. There is an aura of happiness around the girl, expressed in the light which bathes the tree, "con reidores saltitos"; this light reappears in the description of Rialta's smile seen some time later through the blind by José Eugenio. She is completely in harmony with the life-force flowing in the tree and perilously oblivious to the dangers of the creaking branch. In fact it is the most creaking branches which she
chooses to climb upon, in her sonambulous state. The latter state often
overcomes Lezama's characters when they are in harmony with the Unconscious
to the extent of temporarily losing their own identity.

Rialta is unheeding of danger in her desire to hear the invisible sap
flowing; she reaches out for something just beyond her grasp and thus her
security is undermined, as Fazzolari has pointed out: "prefigura el consejo
que algún día dará a su hijo de perseguir siempre lo más difícil. La ad-
monición final la acusa de querer robar las nueces, de aspirar a una per-
fección que está más allá de las limitaciones humanas." 25 Nevertheless
the gentle touch of the nuts on her forehead seems like a calling to her
destiny, that of marrying José Eugenio and thereby performing the duty of
maintaining family continuity at the expense of her own happiness when
the branch breaks and José Eugenio dies. If, as we have said in connec-
tion with the dream of José Marfa, the family tree is a symbol of the
axis mundi, then this passage is a symbolic representation of Rialta's
part in furthering the family's links between heaven and earth, between
the present and the origins. This impression is supported by Ulloa's
claim that the nut is a symbol of unity and perfection, represented by its
spherical shape, "emblema de esperanza en el más allá." 26 The más allá
in question is both the return to the origins and the glimpse of lo incon-
dicionado, such as that afforded us by the poetic artifice of placing
Rialta up a tree, setting up waves of meaning in the passage. Standing
by the trunk of the tree Rialta is once again bathed in light and she is
said to be reinstated in "su segura levitación terrenal" (1, 54). This
seems to suggest that she will rise above her circumstances, as she does,
by successfully raising her three children after her husband's death.
The entire passage is an example of Lezama's skill in creating a scene
in which, by his choice of images, we are permitted to grasp an idea which
is operating on the symbolic mythical level, as is that of the family tree.
His poetic principle of **súbito** (a realization of some higher truth pertaining to lo incondicionado, as noted) is seen in that moment when Rialta stands beside the tree: "y súbita, la luz comenzó a invadir su contorno ..." (I, 54; my italics). His intention is that we will be able to make the connections from the situations which he sets up, thus illuminating our understanding in a flash of insight.

Rialta is to provide the means whereby the family will develop further, but in looking to its future Lezama does not forget its past, symbolized in the person of Doña Carmen Alate, "la hija del oidor, la vieja Cambita" (I, 86). In order that we cannot easily avoid comparing the most venerable woman with the youngest, he places Rialta at the beginning, fittingly, and Cambita at the end, framing the chapter. Our brief introduction to the grandmother shows that Lezama is using her as a symbol of the conquering of Time, both in the family memory and in her death. The phrase, "la hija del oidor," takes its place amongst estribilos popular in the family, but complements particularly the phrase emphasizing distance, exile, long periods of time, such as "cuando la emigración" and "allá en Jacksonville" (I, 61). Like the others, Lezama says, it was "una fórmula para despertar la imaginación familiar" (I, 61) which will always evoke feelings of sadness. The importance of exile lies in the fact that it involves distance and separations, just like death. Lezama constantly links exile and death, since members of the family have been buried in Jacksonville, a fact which predisposes the characters to an awareness of these related phenomena. However, memory and feelings evoked by the grandmother's name are of a more positive, even exotic nature. The power of her name is underlined by the fact that even José Cemí, her most distant relative, is affected by it; it is "ofda y saboreada por José Cemí como la clave imposible de un mundo desconocido" (I, 61), giving the impression of a vast distance spanned in Time. The grandmother
possesses both extreme old age and youth, as her name conjures up contrasting pictures, hence she is "una divinidad dual" (I, 62). Lezama uses images deriving from Egyptian, Greek and European myth to express her dual nature - she is a perfectly preserved mummy, a statue from the classical world enhanced by the erosion of Time, and a beautiful young girl returning from exile to meet an old king, her father. The king represents the family member who recalls her name afresh; the child she carries is the new understanding or creativity which her spoken name produces. The antelope is Time, distrustful since the girl/grandmother escapes him periodically.

Because the grandmother is the most distant relative, the closest the family can come to the main trunk of the tree, she is an aid to understanding the continuity of the tree. For this reason we are encouraged to link her with Rialta, for she is "llenando al mismo tiempo esa línea del horizonte de delfines y salmones griegos, de tortugas trasladando lotos, como aparecen en las mitologías hindúes" (I, 62). Here Lezama reveals the source of his symbols at once and we can easily verify that both represent immortality. These images reappear in the description of the moment of death of Cambita: "Al fin de los fines, donde saltaban los delfines adriáticos y las tortugas hindúes, el ocaso imaginativo señalado por 'la hija del oidor' se consumó ..." (I, 87). The idea of the tortoise as two halves of a whole, *yin* and *yang*, is discussed by Lezama in "Las eras imaginarias: la biblioteca como dragón," in which he says: "la tortuga es cielo y tierra ..." (II, 922). This is most appropriate as Lezama describes the death in terms which suggest a return to the earth in plant form, a return which is also the resumption of the life of the spirit alone. Ulloa points out that: "Eliade encuentra que el hombre cree que los mortales ... become one with the womb of all things, again acquire the status of seed, again become germs. Death is a renewal of
contact with the source of life."" 27 Cambita does not exactly die —

she withers away "ganando el amarillo y la quietud" (I, 86). The slow,
quiet rhythm of her death is very striking and much emphasized: "se extin-
guía entre una rara mudez...." and "mientras su cuerpo permanecía dísili-
camente inmutable ..." (I, 86-7). She is perfectly immobile, seeming
to develop tentacles like a jellyfish in order to collect sensory infor-
mation. There are two main forces at work to bring about her "death ";
one is "los adormecimientos de la clorofila," that is, the process through
which she returns to the state of dormant seed; and secondly, "las sutie-
lezas del prehálito" (I, 87), that is, a return to the "respiración em-
bronaria que trataba de imitar la respiración del feto en el vientre
maternal" (II, 899). This might seem to be an exaggerated claim on the
strength of one word, prehálito, but if the state attained by the grand-
mother in her stillness and silence is considered in this light, it be-
comes possible to attempt an interpretation of the mysterious incident
of the diamond trapped by her rigor mortis.

The rather amusing dilemma of her son and his fury at the prospect
of losing his ring seem strangely out of place in the death scene. It
is as if the grandmother cannot resist a little prank, even on her death-
bed, hence Lezama's references to "la aparición insinuante de dones de
profecía y de burlas" (I, 86) and the diamond, once it has escaped from
its restrictive clasp "sonriendose" (I, 87). Once again the clue to this
puzzling configuration of symbols and events lies in Lezama's essay, "Las
eras imaginarias: la biblioteca como dragón." The purpose of alchemy
amongst the Chinese has always been, according to Lezama, the attainment
of a golden pill of long life or immortality. In later ages, Chinese
philosophy and alchemy turned more towards the concept of "la flor de
oro," then "la flor de luz, forma visible del aliento, el aliento que es
el actuar del cielo" (II, 911), so that eventually measured breathing be-
came of prime importance in the search for eternal life:
La obtención de esa luz blanca nos lleva a la suspensión de la respiración, sustituyéndola por la respiración interna. Con la respiración interna el hombre se trueca en un neuma, así obtiene el cuerpo hálito, el cuerpo neumático. Todo el cuerpo se une con el creador, con el cielo, con el aliento superior, al obtener el cuerpo hálito, el cuerpo diamantino, la flor de oro, la luz ...

Cambita is the diamond. She has broken free from all bodily restrictions and like the stone she can afford to smile at her puzzled relatives as she returns to the state of the embryo or seed. In "The Process of Individuation," M-L von Franz may provide an insight into the choice of the diamond as an image. She says that "the Self is symbolized with special frequency in the form of a stone, precious or otherwise .... In many dreams the nuclear centre, the Self, also appears as a crystal," and she continues: "The mathematically precise arrangement of a crystal evokes in us the intuitive feeling that even in so-called dead matter, there is a spiritual ordering principle at work." 

Cambita is now sustained by inner breathing or prehálito; despite the fact that Lezama makes scarcely any direct reference to her breathing it is clear that it is the secret of her "death" when we consider el cuerpo diamantino as synonymous with el cuerpo hálito which comes into being at the moment of union with creation. Octavio Paz tells us that "el budismo Vajrayana ... concibe al sabio y al santo, al adepto que ha alcanzado simultáneamente la sabiduría y la liberación, como un ser hecho a la imagen del diamante," and he gives the meaning of the supreme Buddha's name, Vajrasattava, as "esencia diamantina" in Sanscrit. 

By his comparisons of her with the Greek oracle ("con una rapidez y gravedad oracular") at Delphi ("su cuerpo permanecía delficamente inmutable ..."; I, 86-7), Lezama is suggesting her wisdom. In a similar fashion he alternates his references to the diamond with others to "el escarabajo triptolémico" (I, 87), an ancient symbol of wisdom and power of the Pharoahs, who are noted in "Las eras
imaginarias: los egipcios" for their attempts at overcoming death. This ties in neatly with a previous image of Cambita, unwrapped from her mummification as good as new. Not only has she attained wisdom but also freedom to assume the next stage of her being: "Ante el asombro del abogadillo, el diamante quedó sin retorno, pues el organismo vegetal se había replegado en una forma que sus hojas y escudetes se cerraron en espera de la próxima marea baja y del nuevo cabrito lunar" (I, 87). Although the jewel is returned to the son, it has no hidden meaning for him. Thus it is personified as an extension of Cambita, content in her fulfilment. It is also an ironical smile because the secret remains hidden. Once again the rhythm of breathing has been brought to our attention, as in the case of José María and his wife Eloísa. This theme reaches its climax in the trauma of José Cemí's asthma attacks and difficulties of self-expression, as we shall see.

Within the carefully established framework of this chapter various seemingly unrelated characters play out their little dramas. All are quite closely inter-related when we examine them in detail. The voice which warns Rialta against stealing the nuts belongs to the female half of a very odd couple indeed, Mr. Frederick Squabs and his wife Florita. The name "Squabs" has a Dickensian flavour which is appropriate for their miserable nature. Everything about Mr. Squabs suggests coldness and a soullessness nature and both people are described in a humourous and mocking tone. This is epitomised in their child's tedious repetition of the phrase "Mamá, a scene in Pompei, a scene" (I, 55), which is adopted by the entire Olaya family and adapted to every suitable occasion. The ingenuity of the Olaya children in employing the phrase emphasizes the barren mind of Flory Squabs. Indeed the Squabs are used by Lezama to throw into relief the striking qualities of the Cuban family in exile. The contrast between the two families is used to illustrate the dichotomy
expressed at the beginning of Lezama's "Preludio a las eras imaginarias," with the Squabs favouring rationalism, what Lezama often calls la causalidad aristotélica: "Con ojos irritados se contemplan la causalidad y lo incondicionado. Se contemplan irreconciliables y cierran filas en las dos riberas enemigas" (II, 797). The confrontation ends in the death of the exponent of lo incondicionado, Andresito. There is no reconciliation between the explicable and the mysterious in this case. The conversation of Doña Augusta and Florita, ostensibly about Rialta's dangerous escapades, is like a stone thrown into a pool to make ripples of meaning which reach out across the rest of the chapter. Florita condemns Rialta for overreaching herself, while Doña Augusta remarks: "Pienso que a los ángeles tendrá que serles amable, y aumentarán sus musicados cuidados, cuando un niño se extienda por un ramaje para oír el gracioso rodar de aquellas esferitas por el misterio de su cápsula" (I, 58). She approves of the child's sense of adventure and wonder at natural things. Florita justifies her inaction with the fatalistic remark that her will was only strong enough to prevent the child from stealing, not from falling. There follows a debate on the merits of Free Will in Protestant doctrine, and the action of Divine Grace in Catholic belief. Doña Augusta defends her own beliefs against the gloomy ideas of Florita, as she sees them: "Pero usted se fía demasiado de su voluntad y la voluntad es también misteriosa, cuando ya no vemos sus fines es cuando se hace para nosotros creadora y poética," (I, 57). The Olayas prefer to leave room for Grace to have a beneficial effect on their human limitations, to improve their own efforts in a mysterious way until they are acceptable to God, according to their faith. She regards the Protestant way as too independent and proud, and says so: "Qué sombrío debe ser en ustedes los protestantes ... que esperan que al lado de su voluntad suceda algo ..." (I, 58).

Mr. Squabs is also mocked in the phrase "Do you want to play the organ,
Mr. Squabs? and is reintroduced after Lezama explores the possibilities of the phrase, "la hija del oidor" and the richness of the family's imagination. The writer then turns from the family's skilful use of language to its musical hopes, although we should bear in mind that the conclusions he draws about musical creativity refer very pointedly to language and poetry also. Once again the Squabs and Olayas are contrasted.

Don Andrés Olaya is one of many men in Paradiso to be pushed into the background by the powerful characters of the females in the family. From the brief episode in which he mediates between his son and tale-bearing daughters we see that he has given his son every encouragement in his musical aspirations. Andresito's talent is infusó, inborn, a gift (I, 64). Carefully picking his words, Don Andrés tries to tell his daughters that he knows of their petty misdemeanours from Andresito. Their reply is a startling portent of Andresito's death: "-Oh, oh, padre, nosotros no podíamos saber eso, pero que tan cerca de nosotros esté un muchacho muerto" (I, 64). His playful reference to "un príncipe usurpador, disfrazado de bufón, que se acaba de ahorcar" (I, 64) soon takes on a similar aura.

Exchanges between Don Belarmino and Dofia Augusta are interspersed with the machinations of a still more gloomy Mr. Squabs, directed towards ensuring a well-lit garden for Flery's twelfth birthday party. On the one hand we have the old Cuban exile, Don Belarmino, attempting to persuade the delicate and sensitive Andresito to give "una interpretación" at the tombola. He regards Andresito's skill with the greatest respect, although the boy is much too reserved to draw attention to himself. On the other hand Mr. Squabs is the exact opposite, as a musical performer: "Improvisará — añadió mintiendo, pues ya casi se sabía la obra de memoria, pero así tenía al alcance de la mano esa disculpa ..." (I, 77). His self-conscious art is uncreative and unpoetic. Andresito is rather young to be at ease performing: "se sensibiliza casi hasta enfermarse cuando cobra
conciencia de que es vigilado, seguido o interrumpido" (I, 78). In fact he has the sensibilities of a prima donna. The situation begins to change when his father takes the view that the tombola is just what the boy needs, as a kind of rite of passage into society. He hopes that it will cure a certain backwardness in Andresito which is also visible later in Alberto after his first few adventures at school. Like Andresito, Alberto experiences a feeling of panic in the face of new phenomena which seem to him to threaten his own identity:

"Andresito feels that: "cuando conoce a alguien, como para abandonar la imagen nueva que camina hacia él, se sobresalta, y quisiera ... tirarse al río para liberarse de ese fantasma invasor que lo cifra" (I, 79-80; my italics).

It is revealed that Don Andrés has been having discussions on theology with Mr. Squabs and Doña Augusta suspects that their "conversaciones de sobremesa" (I, 81) have had some influence on Andresito's decision to play in public. This leads directly to tragedy: "Aunque él [Don Andrés] se burla del organista, todos los burlados, por una especie de venganza evangélica, ejercen una influencia muy decisiva y terrible sobre los burladores" (I, 81). Andresito has become a victim of the rationalist Mr. Squabs. Instead of continuing to perfect his craft in private he succumbs to the temptation of "hacer visible la voluntad" (I, 81). The decision to perform in public, to act, is intimately connected with the opposing principles of human rationality and Divine Grace, since Mr. Squabs believes that
"ningún aprendizaje debe hacerse en el silencio del que espera, sino que es la acción la que logra su forma, y no la etapa última de la materia, como creían los escolásticos ... y ni siquiera la acción sobre el instrumento, sino la acción como acto inocente y salvaje" (I, 81). Andresito's violin solo is the least of the issues at stake. It seems that the reception of his playing is favourable and he is treated as a serious musician by the Cuban audience. Yet he is the victim of a disaster which is set in motion not only by Mr. Squabs' advice to perform before he is ready emotionally, but also by his rival claims on the time of Carlitos, whose work is incomplete, thus causing Andresito's death precisely because he has been called away by Mr. Squabs. The alternation of scenes concerning the tombola and the birthday party sets up two patterns of causality, one being the obvious chain of events which leads to faulty workmanship, and the other, the persuasion of Mr. Squabs, however indirect, which effects a change in the minds of father and son. When Mr. Squabs first encounters the unexpected (the elopment of Flery and Carlitos three years later) he cannot cope and becomes insane. Extreme rationality therefore has inherent perils, Lezama seems to say. Even in his music the organist cannot escape his own, self-imposed limitations; when he finally acquires illuminations for his garden it has the look of death and sterility about it: "La iluminación de la casa y el jardín remedaba una planicie donde las parejas al danzar se trocaban en árboles escarchados ..." (I, 84). The fact that people in the garden continually consult their watches shows that all are tied to the present; there is no future or beyond. The blasted trees are in striking contrast to the healthy Olaya family tree which dominates the chapter. Thus it seems that the spiritual outlook of the Olayas has come under attack from the cold-hearted rationalist, Mr. Squabs, with disastrous results. The Michelena episode will presently be shown to be an integral part of the debate on Grace versus Reason; it is a vital
counterpoint to the apparent triumph of Mr. Squabs; it is not the aberration which some readers have suspected, heralding, rather, the symbolic union of Cemí and Olaya.
Notes


2 J. Santana, "Lezama Lima: el mundo de la imagen," Cuba Internacional, 3, No. 18 (Jan. 1971), 69. Lezama states that "en mi novela todas las figuras aparecen con el nombre cambiado." [Interview].

3 Ibid., "Por ejemplo, mi madre aparece con el nombre de Rialta; mi abuela con el nombre de Augusta; mi padre con el nombre de José Eugenio Cemí."


5 Dizionario Enciclopedico Italiano, Rome, 1959.


7 Santana, "Lezama Lima: el mundo ...," p. 69.

8 E. M. Santí, "Paradyiso," in José Lezama Lima: textos críticos, ed. J. C. Ulloa, Miami, 1979, p. 95. This anthology will be referred to hereafter as Textos.


12 J. C. Ulloa, "La narrativa de Lezama Lima y Sarduy: entre la imagen visionaria y el juego verbal," Diss. Univ. of Kentucky 1973, p. 95. This work will be referred to hereafter as "La narrativa."

13 "La narrativa," p. 95.

14 Ibid., p. 96.

15 Ibid., p. 86, and M. J. Fazzolari, "Paradiso y el sistema poético de Lezama Lima," Diss. City Univ. of New York 1977, p. 52. This work will be referred to hereafter as "Paradiso y el sistema."


17 Ibid., p. 58: "an axis-mundi - mountain, tree, or creeper - to be found at the centre of the world, connecting Earth with Heaven."

19 "Paradiso y el sistema," p. 62.

20 Ibid., p. 63.

21 Santana, "Lezama Lima: el mundo ...," p. 69.


26 "La narrativa," p. 103.


CHAPTER II

The Sacred Union

I. The Michelenas

Lezama brings many diverse elements into play in the most complex third chapter in an attempt to uncover the true nature of the Olaya family and its Cuban origins, and there are few passages in Paradiso as obscure at first sight as the episode concerning the Matanzas festivities. It presents the reader with many problems, not least that of disentangling actual events from the imagery which envelops and even threatens to smother them entirely; and even should he complete that task to his satisfaction the reader must then decide what it is they have been drawn together to represent. Other apparent digressions such as José María Cemí's dream and the death of Cambita are experienced and related directly by members of the Olaya and Cemí families whereas Andrés Olaya was not present at Matanzas for the festivities. His information is derived from the gossiping of "el joven de la carpeta" (I, 67) and we receive a version filtered through the consciousness of Andrés. As he has never been to Matanzas on business before on Elpidio Michelenes's behalf, he has not been involved in any outlandish exploits and it seems as if his employer has had his final fling on his last visit before assuming the role of a responsible father. The episode is centrally placed in the chapter, flanked on either side by the dealings of the Olayas with Flery, Florita and Mr. Squabs, and it thus precedes Andresito's untimely demise; these events are in turn encased in an outer shell formed by the images of Rialta,
reaching up in all her youthful confidence to the unobtainable fruit, and Cambita, metamorphosed by her stillness into a plant, part of Nature which has reabsorbed her in death. Thus it seems that the Michelena episode is to be the kernel of this part of the novel, of this chapter, symbolizing a sacred union on several levels.

As we have seen, the characters of Mr. Squabs and Andrés Olaya senior have been juxtaposed, as have those of Mrs. Squabs and Doña Augusta; the former through their discussions on theology and "la nueva imagen del mundo" (I, 80) and the latter in their impromptu discussion of Free Will and Grace, resulting from Rialta's tree-climbing. Andresito's death seems to reveal the workings of causality, yet knowing the reasons for the disaster on the physical plane explains very little. Don Andrés Olaya's poetic outlook on life and his interest in theology lead him to explore the works of the German mystics; thus Doña Augusta and her husband share a belief in the miraculous, at least in terms of Roman Catholicism. Protestantism, as represented by Mr. Squabs, is gloomy and over-ambitious, while Catholicism awaits God's pleasure, in the form of Grace. Once again Lezama is using characters to embody concepts, with the result that the antithetical characters are woven into debate and controversy, appearing to be incompatible. Bearing this in mind, I think it would be true to say that Lezama provides the reader with an example of the miraculous or mystical in action in the shape of the Michelena episode, before offering his rendition of sterile causality on the prowl in Andresito's death scene. It is his way of fore-arming the reader.

Don Andrés has been encouraging his son in his promising career and dealing with his mischievous daughters, when Lezama suddenly whisks us into the past, to the times in which the elder Olaya has been a struggling young man himself. We are given quite an amusing picture of his employer, Elpidio Michelena and Juana Blagalló, who is plagued by nervous tics
and affects looks of bored indifference as signs of her refinement. Andrés Olaya is in an ambiguous situation in his new job as he is the poor relation, recommended by a rich relative from Cienfuegos. He is accorded the honour of sitting at the master's table but is revealed as a misfit by the ill-mannered servants: "su deslustrada y usada indumentaria había tenido reojos y risas ocultas del resto de la servidumbre" (I, 65). A simple incident at table is now related by Lezama with the intention of extracting certain elements at a later stage and weaving an elaborate web of symbol around them. Much to Andrés' embarrassment, he finds himself singled out for attention by the Chinese cook:

Un día que esforzadamente disimulaba su apetencia, notó que el chinito que servía manejaba el estilo ruso de repartos de delicia con una grave irregularidad para él. Pasaba las bandejas, cargadas de venecianos ofrecimientos, con excesiva velocidad que recortaba su tiempo traslaticio de bandejas de ajenías de viandas a plato de propia divisiones ...

Andrés is naturally annoyed that he and the Chinese servant are so far out of synchronization that he is caused to miss some courses. The servant is presented as rather unsavoury once Andrés realises that he is being deliberately insulted, by the "grosero y malintencionado chino servicial" (I, 65). He is then shown to be apparently very old, "la mejilla disecada y paliducha" (I, 65-6), but also mysterious, "la intraducible intención budica del servidor" (I, 65). The article in dispute on the occasion on which the youth finally loses his temper is interesting: "la doradilla de un bufuelo de oro regado con rocío de mieles mantuanas" (I, 65), since it must call to mind the golden pill of long life sought after by the Chinese alchemists, which we have seen to be of great interest to Lezama. He seems to be laying a trail for
the reader, particularly in using the word būdica which reflects his interest in Chinese philosophy. At this stage all that can be safely concluded is that the Chinaman possesses something of value to Andrés, (the golden doughnut) and prevents him from obtaining it because he moves too quickly for the paradoxically slow young man. One should also note that Andrés is goaded into very nimble movement and retaliation, which is unfortunately witnessed by his employer.

There follows another incident which Lezama proposes to combine with the doughnut affair but again he relates it quite simply at this stage. Señor Michelena takes Andrés into his confidence regarding the couple's desire for a child. The poor, obliging employee is encouraged to join in their prayers to the Cuban "Virgen de la Caridad" (I, 67) in the hope of obtaining sobreabundancia (I, 66), which should be taken to mean Grace, a gesture of mercy to a particular human being, to bring about an event over and above normal causality. Elpidio Michelena's remarking on the fact that he and his wife are getting on in years reminds the reader of that biblical couple, Abraham and Sarah, whose fondest hopes were realized in the gift of a son, Isaac, despite their advanced years which should have prevented such a birth had it not been for the workings of sobreabundancia. The ceremony of praying seems to have become a ritual: "En alta voz, frente al pequeño altar de la Caridad que tenemos en la sala, vamos haciendo las invocaciones, reiterándonos hasta el abandono por el sueño o el desmayo" (I, 66-67). All three become totally involved in expressing their wishes to the Virgin, hoping to influence her power by the very limited power of their voices, yet they have faith in her intervention. If we accept that "Transcurrieron algunos meses en que se iba adomerciendo, musitando aún el rezo" (I, 67), it is not really so surprising that the Matanzas fiesta should materialise in Andrés' somewhat fevered brain in the manner described below.
The plainest version of the facts would appear to be that Elpidio Michelena has a party at one of his Matanzas farms, to which he invites a little band of four musicians. Accompanying them is Isolda, from Seville, the mistress first of the clarinetist, Joan Albayat with whom she had travelled from Spain, and then of the surly Luis Mendil, the violinist of the group. Isolda shares her affections with the host, Michelena, but she is also attracted once more by Mendil and possibly Albayat. There is much jealousy between the men; Isolda seems to fall foul of the Chinese servant, once outside the brightly-lit house, but it seems unlikely that any real crime passionel is involved, despite the passions which are unleashed by Isolda's attractions. However the struggle between opposing factions which Lezama chooses to represent has little direct relationship with the private lives of these rather mysterious characters. Once again the writer exploits them to illustrate a system of ideas which might otherwise have remained closed to many of his readers. J. J. Arrom has reminded his readers that Lezama has said in an interview: "Para llegar a mi novela hubo necesidad de escribir mis ensayos y de escribir mis poemas. Yo dije varias veces, que cuando me sentía claro escribía prosa, y cuando me sentía oscuro escribía poesía." 1 Relating Lezama's statement to the Matanzas episode, Arrom comments:

Pues bien, hasta este momento la novela había fluído en una prosa que, en relación al estilo de Lezama, casi pudiera calificarse de transparente. Pero en el trozo a que me refiero hay un despliegue tal de insospechados neologismos, de fastuosas metáforas, de veladas alusiones, de sustituciones perifrásicas y de arcanos y mágicos simbolismos que nos sume en un alucinante mundo poético. 2

There is no doubt that the difficulties presented by these pages are manifold, incorporating the elements mentioned by Arrom, but I feel that the convolutions of Lezama's prose have misled him on one point,
when he claims that "Michelena estaba ... en compañía de una 'irreconocible Isolda', cuando se entreabrió la puerta y apareció la otra...." 3 I agree with E. Gimbernat de González that there is but one woman or manatí involved and concur that "nuestra afirmación de que sólo hay una mujer, se afirma en el trozo ... donde se habla de 'la mujer que daba uñas en aquellos rasgueos' ..." (1, 67), 4 that is, the fact that the young man telling the tale to Andrés refers to one woman only taking part in the festivities. The battle of wills set up by Lezama is waged between the Chinese servant who has made a fleeting appearance in previous pages and the woman Isolda, who is a completely unknown quantity as far as the reader is concerned, at this stage. The reader is witness to the juxtaposition of these two characters, their dawning attraction for one another and their eventual meeting and interaction. Gimbernat de González states that the woman represents "como en las pinturas de los taoistas[sic], el elemento 'embarión-fluencia,'" 5 and later expands on this: "dentro de la estructura interna de este episodio, esta mujer/pez-sirénido tiene un valor de embarión-fluencia-imagen-embarión, o sea, el dado por los taoistas [sic] en sus pinturas." 6 Of the Chinaman, she says, "es el vacío, el espacio creador del tao." 7 Unfortunately there has been no really detailed study of the episode in question to substantiate these statements to date.

Lezama has not cast the reader adrift entirely however, since it is not his purpose to wilfully confuse, but rather to challenge and to stretch the mind to its limits. Left with recourse to his own imagination only, the critic could find this episode quite formidable. Guided by the author's remarks concerning Paradiso, the reader of this novel may uncover other sources of information: "Es decir, mi trabajo oscuro es la poesía y mi trabajo de evidencia, buscando lo cenital, lo más meridiano que podía configurar en mis ensayos tiene como consecuencia
la perspectiva de Paradiso" which seems to suggest that all shall be made clear in the novel. In this case it appears that a satisfactory degree of understanding can be reached only by comparison of the content of certain of Lezama's essays with the text of the novel:

En numerosos ensayos, que aparecen en la primera parte de mi libro "La Cantidad Hechizada" he procurado esbozar una concepción total de la vida partiendo de la poesía, tomando como fundamento la frase de Tertuliano: "Es cierto, porque es imposible." Aliados la metáfora, la imagen, el poema y la poesía intentan ese imposible.

Turning to the text, we find a rather weird spectacle unfolding before our eyes. The reader is placed firmly outside the brightly-lit house, "En la casa estaba la afiebrada pareja...." which is then identified for us as "la irreconocible Isolda," and "Dentro estaban el señor Michelena ... y la mujer ...." (I, 67). The fact that the house is brilliant with lights is interesting since this feature appears later at Mr. Squabs' party, where it is an infernal glare, and also at significant moments for Alberto and José Cemí, as we shall see. Here there seems to be nothing sinister about the brightness, but it may be significant that the manatee is only too ready to forsake it for the dark woods around the farm. The woman seems ordinary at first sight as she begins to "levantar la voz hasta las posibilidades hilozoístas del canto" (I, 67); she is attempting to sing, but Lezama's use of the unusual word hilozoístas in this context, meaning to give form or existence to an idea, recalls some thoughts expressed by Lezama in "Preludio a las eras imaginarias," in relation to the coming into existence of an image or of poetry itself:

La potencia actuando sobre la materia parece engendrar la forma y el signo. Es cierto que en la forma la materia parece llevada a su última dimensión y morada. En el signo la potencia en la materia se vuelve hilozoísta, cruje, se lamenta, regala su escultura para que la entierren (II, 811-2; my italics).
In "Introducción a los vasos órficos." Lezama ponders the nature of song, the song of Orpheus in the Underworld in particular:

Desaparecen los fragmentos habitables de lo temporal, para dar paso a una permanente historia sagrada, escrita, desde luego, en tinta invisible, pero rodeada de un coro de melódioso hieratismo. Tanto la luz como el cono de sombras, penetran en las posibilidades del canto, hasta en el sombrío Hades, la morada de los muertos "que viven", siempre que el canto, que antes respondía presuntuosamente a la luz, responda también en la noche de los muertos (II, 853-4; my italics).

As far as Lezama is concerned, canto is synonymous with poema and can be seen as a catalyst acting between heaven and hell, between historical and sacred Time, since through Orpheus' attempt to rescue his wife, Eurydice, death and hence historical Time was conquered by the power of song and poetry. This attempt was of course doomed to failure by Orpheus' own impatience. Isolda's preference for darkness suggests that her song will appeal to dark mysterious forces as she leaves the house.

Already Isolda is undergoing a curious metamorphosis whilst in the house. She seems to be half woman and half siren: "desperezaba su lomo de algas, y se desenredaba después ..." (I, 67) as her voice takes on a life of its own: "la voz desprendida del cuerpo, evaporada lentamente, se reconoce en torno de las lámparas o al ruido del agua en los tejados ..." (I, 67). It seems to rise upwards at first towards the light, as Lezama suggests above, free from all restrictions.

Lezama has expressed an interest in the disembodied voice in "Preludio a las eras imaginarias": "Me parece realmente deslumbrante. Fue la voz tan solo lo que of, porque cuando me fijé en el grupo, observé que me era imposible precisar de quién era esa voz, la raíz humana de ese verso. Poética la voz, anónimo el rostro. Buena señal" (II, 799).

In a similar way, Isolda has been described as irreconocible whereas
the voice, the song, "se reconocía ..." (I, 67). Still considering the phenomenon of the disembodied voice in "Preludio a las eras imaginarias," Lezama concludes that "el no viajar aparece como un conjuro capaz de llevar lo Órfico a confines donde la etapa previa a la maldición se entretiene cantando" (II, 800). He is referring to the man who journeys in the mind only, the man capable of being receptive to the creative power of language, to song or poem, and so to sacred Time. The woman is expelled from the house with some violence, "amaratada" and "chillante," "en reverso" (I, 67), and since the house bathed in light has been turning into a sea in which the sirena Isolda floats ("una goterosa iluminación," "corrientes marinas"; I, 67), she now appears in the rich darkness, as a fish out of water: "la mujer que despaciosamente abría y alineaba la boca como extraída de la resistencia líquida, con las pequeñas escamas que le regalaban el sudor caricioso" (I, 67-68). She is still singing, she still embodies song and poem, but she has been wrenched from her own environment to be thrust into darkness, in which she soon begins to move about mournfully. Like the signo, the image, which we have seen described and personified above: "se vuelve hilozoísta, cruje, se lamenta" (II, 812); she embodies and symbolizes "las posibilidades del canto," which Lezama sees invaded by both the influences of light and "la noche de los muertos" as a result of the myth of Orpheus which expresses what is to Lezama an important stage in Greek thought, the realization of the creative possibilities of the image in life and death. On the basic level, the woman has sexual relations with Michelena and leaves the house; on a second level, the siren comes out of the ocean, representing light, and moves on to the land, darkness; the final level seems to represent the movements of the creative force and its agent, the song/poem, between planes of reality, Heaven and Hell, fleeting and eternal Time.
Phrases such as "la mujer que lo rozaba" and "el sudor caricioso" (I, 67-8) leave the reader in little doubt of what has taken place between Michelena and Isolda and the sexual element is forcefully, although subtly, represented.

It is most interesting that Lezama should choose the image of a manatee in this passage since it is an animal, or fish, which appears at intervals in his essays. Arrom is mainly concerned with "lo tradicional en el mundo novelístico de Lezama Lima," and recalls the early writings of the Spanish explorers: "si leemos a los cronistas de Indias, pronto surge, clarísima, la explicación [of the word manatí]: la imagen del manatí entra en las crónicas envuelta en un halo de lo asombroso, lo ilusorio y lo fantástico." He goes on to explain that Christopher Colombus himself was the first to connect the humble sea-cow with the European myth of the sirens, in his Diario: "vido tres sirenas que salieron bien alto de la mar ... pero no eran tan hermosas como las pintan...." 10 Arrom is at pains to point out that Lezama, whatever his purpose, is using a specifically Cuban image, deriving from the actual arrival of the conquistadors in South America. I find it more significant still that Lezama has used the image in his essays also and have taken particular note of the contexts in which it appears. The most striking occurrence of the manatee is to be found in "Introducción a un sistema poético" which is collected in Tratados en la Habana, first published in Havana in 1958. It is important to note that the first four chapters of Paradiso were published in isolation in Orígenes from 1949 to 1955 and "Introducción a un sistema poético" also appeared in the latter in 1954. 11 "Introducción a los vasos órficos," which has also been useful in formulating an interpretation of the Michelena episode, first appeared in La cantidad hechizada, a collection published in Havana in 1970, the essay being dated 1961.
This would seem to suggest that Lezama was writing his major essays on poetry and the early chapters of his novel in the same period, a fact which is clearly illustrated by the echoes and reflections inspired by using sections of these essays as parallel texts for this part of Paradiso.

Lezama now leaves the woman/manatee outside the house and turns to the silent witness of her trial, "el chinito de los rápidos buñuelos." He is thus named to banish any doubts which the puzzled reader may have, as to his connection with the Chinese servant of earlier pages. He is identified by the golden doughnuts which we have already seen to be of likely symbolical significance, and he acquires other epithets which refer back to Andrés' uncomfortable meal at the Michelenas'. This is the only thing which might serve to remind us of Andrés at all. The author introduces the Chinaman with some striking imagery: "Frente a la casa de druidicas sospechas lunares y con sayas dejadas por las estinfalidas, sentado en una mecedora de piedra de raspado madreporario, el chinito ... se movía óseamente dentro de aquella casona de piedra ..." (I, 68). This could almost be a picture of the sea itself, moving restlessly amongst its coral reefs, immobile for millenia. The rocking of the chair may suggest the movement of the tides in contrast to the stillness of the reefs. The image appears also in "Introducción a un sistema poético", where Lezama asks the reader to imagine two opposing inscriptions on two blackboards: "soy, luego existo" and "Existo, luego soy" (II, 393-4) stating that "a medida que el ser se perfecciona tiende al reposo." He continues:

La serenidad del índice o el temblor de la mano [writing the inscription on the blackboard] al avanzar en el vacío, el antinómico colorido de las tizas, el carbonario encerado o la caliza pedregosa, el reposo aristotélico o la dinámia pascaliana, el ser del existir y el existir del ser, se mezclan en claroscuros irónicos o se fanalizan mirándose como irritadas vultúridas (II, 395).
Lezama thus juxtaposes the concept of eternal Being manifesting itself in the particular, in examples of existence, with the transient, particular instance of material existence, striving to attain eternal Being of its own volition. Describing their inevitable failure to come together, Lezama proceeds along now familiar lines:

Pero, en esas regiones la síntesis de la pareja o del múltiplo no logra alcanzar el reposo donde la urdimbre recibe el aguijón. Allí la síntesis presupone una desaparición sin risorgimiento [sic], pues aquellos fragmentos como un rompecabezas de mármol comienzan sus chisporroteos o sus instantes donde no se suelta el pez de fósforo que une al inanimado madrepórraro con la flora marina, con la cabellera de algas, o con la musgosa vagina. Contaminada esa síntesis de toda grosera visibilidad, bien pronto nos damos cuenta que conducidos por Anfíareo o por Trofonio, buscamos la cueva del dictado profético o las profundidades de la plutonía (II, 395-6; my italics).

From the very close similarity in Lezama’s choice of imagery in his essay and in this passage, to represent immobile Being and changeable existence, it seems that the Chinaman is to portray Ser while the manatee, in her process of metamorphosis, is Existence. Here too we uncover references to the dangers of a failure to effect a union of the two, to the alternatives of light and darkness, Heaven and Hell. The hurricane, "el brisote del cordobazo" (I, 68), represents chaos. The Chinaman is determined to resist the approaches of the manatee but he is filled with "el hastío que le regalaba el huevo de cristal sobrante" (I, 68). This too has been described by Lezama: the consciousness that perfection of Being leads to repose, "derivado de la sorpresa de ese reposo, lo lleva a la tierra aérea y al hastío del ser" (II, 393). The crystal egg which is said to be responsible for hastío is a symbol of wholeness and completion, in "Introducción a los vasos órficos":

De los comienzos del Caos, los abismos del Erebo y el vasto Tártaro, el orfismo ha escogido la Noche, majestuosa guardiana del huevo órfico o plateado, "fruto
del viento". La noche agrandada, húmeda, y placentera, desarrolla armonizado el germin. En ese huevo plateado, pequeño e incesante como un colibrí, se agita un Eros.... Ese huevo, al cascarse, fija al Eros en el Caos alado, engendrando los seres que tripulan la luz, que ascienden, que son dioses (II, 854-5).

The Chinaman has access to the secret of the egg as to all other secrets; moreover he seems to be in charge of the entire ceremony, conducting the proceedings. The image of "el sueño de antílopes y candelabros frontales" (I, 68) may be a reference to dreams and hopes of metamorphosis to achieve complete Being. His conducting of the scene would allow him to "sacar cualquiera de las piezas charlatanas, inoportunas e intemporales, y colocarle de otra parte del río ..." (I, 68), that is, to use any one of the cheap songs supplied by the musicians who we are to meet presently, and transform it into a significant signo with a deeper meaning. He can place everything in order but declines to do so -- the "bastonete de Lully" (I, 68) being the symbol of measured melody and rhythm in the traditional style in music, of order. Instead, he hears within the "excepción de la ley del remolino" (stillness) being devoured by "el crecimiento de las mareas en la desolación pianística del lunes" (I, 68). Chaos seems to be increasing its influence and the Chinaman does nothing in his capacity of all-powerful Ser to prevent this, but it need not be destructive: "el remolino de la puerta del este" (I, 68) is linked with creative tendencies in "Introducción a un sistema poético":

La potencia apetitiva es característica de la fruición. La potencia apetitiva está en directa relación con la idea de entrar en, por eso el misterioso entrar en las ciudades va unido a los símbolos de la Puerta del Este, el Ojo de la Aguja ... teniendo a su lado el concepto de guardián ... (II, 394-5).

The Chinaman is the guardian whose role it is to prevent the manatee from entering by the Gate of the East into the world of creative possibilities.
The woman/manatee continues her transformation into a sea creature, from "mujer boqueante" (I, 68). The undertones of an orgy are now allowed to come to the surface: now, "la piel se le había doblado, cosido y encerrado, como para hacerse resistente a los batazos que por la borda la pegaban los marineros de la Cruz del Sur" (I, 68). Of these sailors, Gimbernat de González has said: "En el comienzo del camino entre la casa y los yerbazales la mujer, 'nuevo manati' enfrenta el primer choque con el asombro de los marineros de la conquista." 13 This is the probable identity of the sailors, who are introduced to remind the reader that we are dealing with Cuba, before looking for other complementary explanations of the beatings. If indeed the movements of the manatee towards darkness are connected with the creative, nocturnal Orphic rites, then we should note Lezama's description of these rites in "Introducción a los vasos órficos":

Se alejan los peregrinos de la ciudad por el puente de Sísifo, rodeado de las más antiguas tumbas. Los símbolos de Sísifo y de los descensos infernales son impuestos por los bosques de los alrededores de Atenas .... Arrancan los efebos ramas de los árboles, comienzan a golpear a las doncellas para incitarles a las apariencias más germinativas (II, 858-9).

The desired effect of any orgy is the enhancement of the possibilities of creation, according to M. Eliade:

The orgy is a symbolic re-entry into chaos, into the primordial and undifferentiated state. It re-enacts the "confusion", the totality before the Creation, the cosmic Night, the cosmogonic egg ... to recover the original wholeness out of which sprang differentiated life, and from which the cosmos emerged.

Lezama has combined the idea of the orgiastic ritual beatings with that of the struggle between Being and Existence which results in the production of the image in "Introducción a un sistema poético":

Pero la única solución que propugnamos para atemperar el irritado ceño de los dos encerados, la poesía mantendrá el imposible sintético, siendo la posibilidad de sentido de esa corriente mayor dirigida a las grutas, donde se habla sin que se perciban los cuerpos, o a las órficas moradas subterráneas, donde los cuerpos desdeñosos no logran, afanosos del rescate de su diferenciación, articular de nuevo las coordenadas de su aliento, de su pneuma (II, 396).

Only poetry is pure enough to achieve a total union between Being and Existence, the universal and the particular. Lezama expands further on this idea and his remarks are well worth quoting:

Marcha de ese discurso poético semejante a la del pez en la corriente ... Maravilla de una masa acumulativa que logra sus contracciones en cada uno de sus instantes, estableciendo al mismo tiempo una relación de remolino a estado, de reflejo a permanencia, como de golpe en el costado o de escintilación errante detrás de la prodigiosa piel de su duración (II, 397).

It seems certain that the idea of the image of the fish, or even of the manatee being beaten, was quite clearly formulated in Lezama's mind when writing "Introducción a un sistema poético." The wrapping of the Paradiso manatee in her own skin suggests mummification, which is perhaps plausible if we recall that Lezama emphasizes that the manatee is doomed and that the Egyptian mummies were a method of triumphing over death: "El nuevo manatí sonaba de peldaño en gualdrapa funerar ..." (I, 69). Her oiliness may also be a reference to the process of embalming bodies before mummification, another example of an image developed by ancient civilisations especially for overcoming historical time. Her own physical efforts give her "nuevos reflejos que se incrustaban por los palos que le daban por la borda ..." (I, 69), and as she draws nearer the Chinaman sees her as more of a threat, "hacía calmosos gestos de rechazo ..." (I, 69). The bones which he rattles are a puzzle, but if the manatee embodies in her approach to the Infinite (the Chinaman) the Orphic fertility rites and the regeneration of
creative power, there may be a connection with the rites of Dionysus, at which the death of the god of wine (and later vegetation) was re-enacted. His murderers, the Titans, are said to have used rattles to attract the infant god to his doom. This would explain the Chinaman's alternate attraction and rejection of the manatee; on the level of the rite, the animal/god must die (human sacrifice may have been substituted by that of an animal at a later date), whilst on the level of Existence trying to manifest itself in Being, never the twain shall meet. The woods of the Orphic rites are present and when the manatee reaches them, the lights of the house are utterly extinguished. Her oiliness assists her progress towards the stone chair, eternal immobility and repose.

Under one of his many pseudonyms, Buñuelo de Oro feels constrained to speak, by the nearness of the manatee; she has drawn a reaction from him by her approaches. His greeting is ominous: "Aquí nos estamos mirando [...] pero el vegetal se pica cuando lo mira fijamente el gato montés" (I, 69). He is referring to the permanency of his condition in contrast to her temporal slavery: "Ka es también para los egipcios el gato" (II, 401-2), Lezama has said, and the meaning here is that Ka, the Egyptian double image or soul, will survive death. The Chinaman recommends applications of coconut oil for the manatee's protection. Further reference is made to Egyptian religious belief when Buñuelo de Oro remarks: "Los halcones blancos se reproducen mirándose sin volver los ojos hacia atrás" (I, 69), since the white falcon is also an Egyptian symbol of the human soul (II, 889), as explained by E. Neumann:

Preservation of the body through embalming, its purification, also the purification of the Ka, the ghost-soul belonging to the body, these are the preliminaries that lead up to the grand Osirian mystery, namely the germination of the spiritual body from the mummified corpse. The heart-soul (Ba), a human-headed falcon who is the life principle of the body and the mummy....
It is interesting to note that Orpheus fails to conquer historical Time because he looks back. Lezama seems to be suggesting that the Orphic rite is not entirely suitable for his purpose, as he has done at intervals throughout these pages. Nubes Precipitadas seems to be the Heavens, Being, Creative possibility, and upon meeting with the tree, a growth upwards from the earth, Time is reversed, as is shown by the tree desanillándose, cancelling out the rings in its trunk which denote its historical age. Time is Apresurado Lento, and here it is sacred Time, or eternity, which is strongest. For this reason, the tree must represent man’s upward striving towards higher reality and the Heavens, which move to accommodate him. This is also why the two together (Apresurado Lento and Nubes Precipitadas) have an influence on the white falcon or soul. The Chinaman continues his speech by saying: "Existe la reproducción por la mirada y por el grito" (I, 69-70); reproduction means here any act of creation and speech and writing have the capacity to create, as does the look or gaze which is empowered to observe and interpret visual signs of reality. The coconut tree has "la mirada espejo" (I, 70), that is, a double existence or image as in "Preludio a las eras imaginarias":

The tree is a sign that the age in which men despaired is past, and that they need no longer rely entirely on their own efforts to save
themselves from historical Time. The concept of miraculous rebirth or resurrection has come into being, the possibility of a degree of permanency for the soul through the use of religious symbols and language. Man will be able to communicate with the Heavens, with absolute reality, through his capacity to form images of the same (tree). This faith in creative potential and resurrection is made possible by the existence of the Etruscan concept of potens (11, 817), the knowledge that anything is possible, even the miraculous which can defy causality. The tree is an image of the growth of Man towards Heaven, a link between Heaven and Earth which are thus drawn closer together. The formulation of a poetic image of the Absolute is comparable with the setting up of a tree or altar described by Eliade, as in José María Cemí's dream (I, 27); it is a gesture to which the Absolute may respond. 16 Lezama suggests in this chapter that the imagery used by Man to approach the Absolute (Ser) fulfils the role of tree or altar and this implies that the poet must assume the task of communicating with the sacred in these secular times, using poetic imagery.

In the preceding lines Lezama celebrates the moment when Man began to look beyond obvious phenomena towards the Infinite, and then hastens to introduce the reader to the equivalent process in Chinese philosophy. Dos Reverencias seems to represent an element of doubt by mocking the power of the grito and "se asombra del grito de un insecto ..." (I, 70), an important animal for the Chinese:

Los insectos, los pájaros, y las mariposas servían a esas incesantes metamorfosis de las imágenes que venían a cumplimentar la raíz taoista de esa pintura, el embrión incesante, la vuelta a las orígenes prenatales, que eran para el chino la vuelta a la lejanía (from "Las eras imaginarias: la biblioteca como dragón"; II, 902).
They represent the dynamism of images of reality which flow to and fro. Quieto Presuroso also arrives and derides, in his turn, "la mirada" and the "burgomaestre halcón blanco" (I, 70), the use of symbols of a double reality, defying death. His reason is that "el grito puede reproducir por conjugación de los distintos" (I, 70), in contrast with the look, which can act only as a mirror. Nevertheless he eventually retires in confusion, forced to admit that both have their powers. The fact that he moves into "the dynasty of the blue dragons" suggests that he accepts the Taoist belief in the creative void, which could be compared with the blueness of the firmament. The tree of Hanga Songa represents, it would seem, the Chinese philosophy of the creative void also, and may be the actual creation of an image at a given moment, by the interaction of the poet and the potential for a poem, hence the projection of a shadow or image towards Heaven—a tree reaching across the void. The Nictimenes, which circle the tree in endless flight, are its protectors. Nictimene was a Greek woman, daughter of Epopeo, king of Lesbos, who was turned into an owl for sinning against her father. There are six of these metamorphosed women who move from a circle to a spiral: "se abrían en espiral, comenzaban a llorar, guardando la distancia del espejo corteza para mantener la borrosa imagen" (I, 70), reminding the reader of Lezama's description in "Introducción a un sistema poético" of the trembling hand which writes up the phrase, "existó, luego soy," the motto of uncertainty (II, 394): "Los anteriores concéntricos de albatróes son reemplazados por ansiosos espirales alcíoneos" (II, 394). The manatee, the poetic image, has launched herself out into el vacío with no-one to assist her. Nubes Precipitadas, in the upper branches of the tree, is less silent and less impressive than the flight of the Nictimenes "vuelo de silencios de aceite planísfero, pisados silencios de pie plano" (I, 70), which Gimbernat de González sees as another
example of the "recurrencias dentro del episodio de escalones que faltan." 18 Lezama refers to missing steps on more than one occasion:

Un hombre camina por la tierra pisándola, dice Chuangtse, pero lo que hace posible la gran prosa china y toda la prosa en general, podemos añadir, es la tierra que no pisa, la distancia entre los pasos lo permite llegar a una gran distancia ("Las eras imaginarias: la biblioteca como dragón"; II, 908-9).

It is the empty space which provides the greatest opportunities for creativity, the eloquent pauses and tasteful areas of blank canvas, so to speak. In the next few lines it seems as if Chinese philosophy at last supersedes the mirror image of the Egyptians: "la doble columna de aire, el cuerpo que penetra por la derecha y sale en imagen ... por la izquierda ..." (I, 70-1) may be a reference to foetal breathing, which for the Chinese meant "conseguir la inmortalidad" ("Las eras imaginarias: la biblioteca como dragón"; II, 911). The fact that the Nictimenes now fly in an anti-clockwise direction shows that historical Time has been momentarily overcome. The manatee now becomes immobile herself.

The Chinese servant, now alias Bandeja Saltamontes, ponders forms of matter and forms of Time: that is, historical and sacred Time. He sees historical Time as "las armas de Aquiles," a symbol of what Lezama calls *hybris* or "el orden de la desmesura" (in "Introducción a un sistema poético"; II, 426). When discussing the inevitability of Achilles' death as a sign of his mixed origins, Lezama compares his life with the *desmesura* or chaos which featured in the Greek cults. In Paradiso he juxtaposes "las armas de Aquiles" (I, 71) with "el peto de la tortuga" (I, 71) which is a reference to the tortoise as *yīng* (sic) *y yang* ... cielo y tierra" in "Las eras imaginarias: la biblioteca como dragón" (II, 922). Because the arms of Achilles (chaos) and the tortoise (a symbol of the union between Heaven and Earth because of its shape) weigh
heavily on him (in his role as the creative void), he wishes to dissolve "tiempo entrecruzado horizontal vertical" (I, 71) that is the union of the two types of Time in the image, for if he does not do so, "la sombra le sobreviviría como cuerpo y entintaría el muro con las huellas de la tiza" (I, 70); in other words a permanent (artistic) creation would come into existence, in the form of writing as a result of the interaction of fertile Chaos and vacío or lejanía. The Chinaman states this in another way: "El prehálito y el ultracáos unen la sombra hacia arriba del Hanga Songa," thus uniting the essence of Orphic and Chinese Taoist thought. The virtues of the Ser manifesting itself in Existence are expounded in a rather beautiful passage: "El lunar del conejo es su vida en la nieve, si no la homogeniedad lo destruiría, como el nacimiento de una fuente de agua en el fondo marino o la gota de agua rodando dentro del cristal de cuarzo" (I, 71).

The paper tree erected by the party-goers is something of a parody of the Hanga Songa tree but it has the semblance of a ritual, nevertheless. The musicians all wear masks and Joan Albayat is disguised as an official of the 18th-century Prussian court of Potsdam, prepared to play Mozart's clarinet concerto while Mendil is dressed as a Polish guard, presumably also in an 18th-century style costume; another reference is made to this century by proffering the information that Mendil's great grandfather was Sir George Pocock's personal, rascally hairdresser, when the English won Cuba from the Spanish and French. Isolda is lost to Mendil when he neglects her to study a Mass by Cuba's first great composer, Esteban de Salas, and so she returns to her first love. No wonder Michelena is confused. The woman/manatee continues to sparkle, that is, she is still producing reflections, as does the poetic image, as described by Lezama in his essays. The masks present no problem for the Chinaman, "pues el desfile de disfraces le había transparentado
los símbolos" (I, 73). Mendil and Albayat are consigned to the level of elements in the orgy, but to Lezama they represent an important stage in Cuban history. It may be that he is poking some fun at the squabblings of European powers over Cuba in the 18th-century. Various symbols reappear briefly as the Chinaman weaves patterns with his cords — he is el vacío creador, producing images to be combined as he sees fit. Having set such complex images before his reader, Lezama warns that same reader against his own prose: "Para no perderse en la curva hay que dibujar el arco, pero hay que pensar también en Descartes, escondido en Amsterdam, pues cuando el sabio dice sus cosas más claras debe estar escondido, estar escondido con los tres proverbios ..." (I, 73).

Lezama the essayist has described in "Las eras imaginarias: la biblioteca como dragón" how "la prolongación indefinida de curvas horizontalizadas, viene a darnos la sucesión embrión, nombre, imagen, embrión" (II, 903), shown in Chinese painting as gracefully trailing branches. He is aware of the dangers of becoming disorientated in the vertigo of vacío but Lezama is not averse to complication in his language and meaning: "Hay la palabra simple, la jeroglífica y la simbólica. En otros términos, el verbo que expresa, el que oculta y el que significa." 19

Lezama believes that only his interweaving of levels of meaning presents a true challenge to the mind and this is what he means by "los tres proverbios."

Meanwhile, the manatee has become discouraged and has turned back towards the musicians, for which the penalty will be failure to achieve a lasting existence (Orpheus looking back). The Chinaman’s mutterings are now quite obscure to all who hear them and he prepares to trap the manatee, who is off guard. He is now Pasa Fuente Veloz and whilst he ties the moaning manatee up, Albayat’s influence is felt: "temblando, como si el rocío le penetrase por los poros, regido por las ordenanzas
del clarinetista francés" (I, 74), as if Albayat embodies the fertile
chaos which has gone before. A branch of rue impedes the Chinaman in
his attempts to tie the final knots and he brushes it aside in vain:
"volvía para pegarle por todo el cuerpo ocupando de nuevo su sitio como
una guardia polaca húmeda y humosa" (I, 74); this recalls the beating
of the manatee with branches in the Orphic tradition and underlines
Mendil's involvement. Having performed this act, Pasa Fuente Veloz
drags the trussed manatee to the tree, significantly placed mid-way
between the bright house and the immobile chair, rattling the bones
all the more as the hour of the manatee's death draws nigh. Still
muttering, he leaves the bundle hanging from the tree, where the Nic-
timenes peck at it like vultures, dropping small pieces which still
cast reflections and glitterings. In this way the manatee's flesh,
her being, is reabsorbed into the vacío. The aura of ritual surround-
ing the manatee's death calls to mind some similar aspects of the an-
cient agriculturally-based religions, in which the god was ritually
killed in order to ensure the continuance of the life-force and the
fecundity of the earth, animals and their owners, faced with a drought
or cold winter during which the god seemed to be absent or to have died.

The basic elements of such a rite as that of Dionysus, a god of vege-
tation in one of his aspects, who dies periodically and is resurrected
after an orgiastic death ceremony, follow the pattern established in
the Michelenas episode: that is, the Absolute is approached at a suppli-
catory level, provoked into action by the sympathetic magic of the orgy
and responds finally through its own graciousness, so that Spring re-
turns, the Michelenas have children, the miraculous occurs and creat-
ive power on all levels is renewed. This phenomenon might be seen as
a prelude to certain Christian concepts of Divine Grace, and, indeed,
the placing of the Michelenas episode within the context of a debate on
Grace in Christian terms (between Doña Augusta and Mrs. Squabs) serves to highlight such an impression. The rending of the corpse in the course of the rites, as in the legends pertaining to these gods, is a commonplace. The body of Osiris is torn and scattered all over Egypt (II, 883); Tiamat, a monster representing untamed creative power in Assyro-Babylonian mythology, is challenged and conquered by Marduk, who imposes order on the world only after tearing the monster to pieces. She seems to have been trussed up in a net like the manatee: "The Lord spread out his net and caught her in it. / The evil wind which followed him, he loosed it in her face." His weapon, the strong wind, reminds us perhaps of the cordonazo hurricane wind beating the manatee. There is no way of knowing which specific aspect of mythology Lezama had in mind, but it is the overall pattern which is important. Other fertility cults involved the same enactment of the violent death of the lover/son of the Great Mother Goddess; she is immutable, while he is ever changeable and prone to death, like the crops and beings he represents. Attis, Adonis and Tammuz were such gods. The common factor is the encouragement of fecundity and creativity by means of a violent death and/or orgy which implies, as we have seen, a return to the primeval state of undifferentiated chaos, full of potential. In the Michelena episode the mediating element is the poetic image, represented by the advancing manatee. The scattering of the pieces of her body symbolizes the unleashing of creative power; similarly the reflections and glitterings of her scaly flesh represent the waves of meaning and significance exuded by an effective poetic image towards the receptive reader. Buñuelo de Oro's last act is most important; by acting on the manatee and then beating on the door of the lighted house, he is able to metamorphose the forms of matter, where the manatee seemed to have failed: "Bandeja Saltamontes, con el puño crispado, seguía
golpeando la puerta, hasta que se hundió en la madera ablandada por la lluvia. Se hundió también hasta el sueño claveteado, peldaño tras niebla, niebla tras peldaño que falta" (I, 75). Thus Being or creative emptiness, the void, encouraged by the approaches of existence, the image, is eventually moved to act on behalf of the image, so creating the meeting point of historical and eternal Time. This meeting point is the exact spot into which Bumuelo de Oro's hand sinks, as the door is softened by rocío and lluvia, often used as symbols of fertility by Lezama, as signs of the presence of creative possibilities. In these pages Lezama surveys the imagery employed by the Greeks, the Egyptians, the Etruscans and the Chinese to express the desire to transcend death with the image. He borrows freely from their religious symbolism to enrich his text and without his corresponding essays, the critic would be in grave difficulties.

Elpidio Michelena has his request to the Virgin answered, whether as a result of his prayers or of his orgiastic exploits we cannot be certain, and twins are born to Juana Blagalló, but the family fortune dwindles. One should note that Michelena's Christian name suggests "él pidió," as indeed he did. He begs for a miracle and receives it. I do not think it would be pushing the analogy too far to say that he has approached the Absolute, in humility, in the same way that the manatee moves towards the immobile Chinaman, el vacío creador, hoping for the impossible, and once sufficient supplication has been made, the Absolute, lo incondicionado plays its part in creating in the first instance a child and in the second instance an entry for Existence into the sphere of Essence (Ser) through the "graciousness" of that entity. If this is the hidden meaning of the Michelena episode, then it fits into the jigsaw of the third chapter admirably, complementing the debates on Free Will and Grace which take place between the Squabs and
the Olayas. The death of Andresito has such an effect on the Olayas that as an image of lejanía and ausencia it is rich in possibilities. Even family sorrow is not sterile. If the reader bears in mind the Michelena episode as an example of the creative power of the image, he can appreciate fully the fact that Mr. Squabs' victory is hollow and his illumination infernal.

The grief of Jacksonville fades as Lezama describes the meetings of Alberto and José Eugenio which will lead to the union of the two families. It is recalled only in the dance scene where the President, referred to as Don Tomás by Rialta, urges her to have her brother's remains returned to Cuba. Don Tomás is probably the first President of the Republic, Tomás Estrada Palma, so by using the actual historical person in his novel Lezama is once again relating the Olayas to the heart of Cuban life and society. "La vieja Mela" (1, 156) is another member of the Olaya family who conquers time, but only through the foibles of her erratic memory: "De su boca saltaba el tiempo disfrazado ..." (I, 157). Her memories of her antics as a separatist are particularly vivid, much to the embarrassment of the rest of the family, when José Eugenio comes to call. The Olayas and Cemí's seem set to remain on opposite sides of the political fence, the former wanting complete independence for Cuba and the latter prepared to maintain its connections with Spain. It is the diplomacy and courtesy of José Eugenio which prevents a rift in the budding relationship. La Mela finds his admission that he has relatives of the same opinion as herself most disconcerting. It is Colonel Méndez Miranda who is chosen to give away the bride at the wedding of Rialta with José Eugenio: "representaba la confluencia en simpatía de las dos familias" (I, 169). Although Doña Mela is included as a figure of fun to some extent, with her arms-cache in the henhouse, she has a serious side, revealed in her nightmares.
She dreams repeatedly of sirenas, who moan and wail like the Isolda/manatee/sirena in the Michelena episode: "esas fanfarrias de sirenas" (I, 160). Her son Andrés treats the dream as a symptom of her chronic asthma, unimpressed by her description of the star she had seen in a park full of people: "como si fuese un balón plateado de muchas puntas, estaba allí para alegrar a aquella romería" (I, 160). On her return to bed, "soñaba de nuevo que la estrella, rodando, iba pasando las tibias puntas por su pecho, zafando botón tras botón, hasta que de nuevo su respiración se extendía con ritmo que le comunicaba una brisa clásica, tierna y respetuosa" (I, 160). The star is the lone star on the Cuban flag, and its effect is seen to be highly beneficial. Lezama uses the image of asthma here to represent the struggling of the Cuban people to come into being as a nation. Difficulty in breathing implies that natural self-expression is being hampered. The moaning of the manatees expresses the sorrow of the Cubans, symbolized by an indigenous animal. The struggle to evolve, to have Being, is the underlying concern of the writer in the Michelena episode, and although it is perhaps best to consider it as an examination of the process of becoming of any image or idea, I feel that Lezama must have had the creation of a new Cuban republic and nation in the forefront of his mind as he wrote of the manatee.

José Eugenio sums up the separatist cause in a speech which, significantly, is placed just prior to the wedding ceremony and recalls La Mela's feelings of suffocation:

El animal fuerte, poderoso, resistente, que ríe con el testuz lleno de frutas y pájaros insulares, obliga el ámbito al sofoco. El separatismo surge de ese sofoco. Pero solo [sic] nos separamos en una dimensión de superficie, de aquello que sabemos que es una fuerza demasiado oscura, indomenable para nuestra progresión. (I, 163).
In other words, Lezama wants the Cuban to retain all that is best of his Spanish inheritance. The histories of the Cemí and Olaya families illustrate the history of Cuba in the nineteenth century, in all its subtleties, political and social. The writer applies his theories on culture and the progress of the poetic image as religious symbol through the ages to his own country and family. The family feeling of the Olayas, that of exile and sadness, is complemented by the confidence of the Cemís. Lezama has said of Cuban history:

Pero esa gran tradición romántica del siglo XIV; la del calabozo, la ausencia, la imagen y la muerte, logra crear el hecho americano, cuyo destino está más hecho de ausencias posibles que de presencias imposibles. La tradición de las ausencias posibles ha sido la gran tradición americana y donde se sitúa el hecho histórico que se ha logrado. José Martí representa, en una gran navidad verbal, la plenitud de la ausencia posible (II, 345-6).

Lezama is thinking here of all the Cubans forced into exile, for whatever reason, given the opportunity of scrutinising their country from a different viewpoint, as they experience the sorrow of a stranger in a strange land. José Martí is Lezama's favourite example of this aspect of Cuban history and spirit, a man deeply committed to bringing about the new Cuba, who died just before his dream was realized, in 1895. Lezama exploits the Olayas' exile from Cuba by combining it with their faith in the miraculous as illustrated in the third chapter of Paradiso in particular. He prepares to blend Cemí strength and Olayas mysticism. The union will express multiple levels of meaning: it symbolizes the complex relationships between colony and mother country, the blending of national and personal characteristics to form a new being, the poet. Combined with the spirit of the Olayas, the the forcefulness of the Cemís forms a parallel with the image acting on the potential of the creative void, of vigorous movement approaching
serene immobility, just as acted out by the manatee and the Chinaman in the Micheleno episode. Such a recipe of ingredients, such a union, must produce either a prodigy or a monster, in the frail body of José Cemf.

The Sacred Union

II. Rialta and José Eugenio

José Eugenio y Rialta atolondrados por la gravedad baritonal de los símbolos, después de haber cambiado los anillos, como si la vida de uno se abalanzase sobre la del otro a través de la eternidad del círculo, sintieron por la proliferación de los rostros familiares y amigos, el rumor de la convergencia en la unidad de la imagen que se iniciaba (I, 171).

It is with a sense of surprise that the reader stumbles upon the wedding ceremony of José Cemf's parents, for it materializes abruptly between the political confrontations of José Eugenio with La Mela and the antics of Don Demetrio. Yet at times it has seemed as if the early chapters have all been designed to point out the inevitability and necessity of the union of these two young people who embody the quintessence of the qualities brought together in their complex ancestries. Lezama devotes part of his first chapter to a picture of their married life, followed by a glimpse of the Colonel at work in Mexico and Jamaica, all interspersed with frequent references to the children, José and Violante. As we have seen, the reader is drawn into the fascinating worlds of the Olaya and Cemf ancestors, where he flits from one colourful memory to another until Time begins to move forward once more as José Eugenio meets Alberto Olaya at school and the new neighbours discover each other by degrees. At many stages in the text there seem
to be portents of the union of the two families, thus introducing the
notion of Destiny: Rialta's attempt to reach the nuts on the tree (I,
53-4); the author's comments used to reintroduce José Eugenio after
his absence from the previous chapter: "Así las dos familias, al entron-
carse, se perdían en ramificaciones infinitas, en dispersiones y reen-
cuentros, donde coincidían la historia sagrada, la doméstica y las
coordinadas de la imagen proyectadas a un ondulante destino" (I, 88);
José Eugenio's first meeting with Alberto Olaya: "Y no obstante la
frase ... llave ... contracifra iba a entregarle los laberín-
tos y bahías de los otros años que regalaría Cronos. Clave de su
felicidad primigenia y generatriz, sombra de fondo para deslizarse a
lo largo de su calle" (I, 101); and José Eugenio's appreciation of the
symbolic content of Rialta's name: "comprendió que por primera vez se
había trazado un puente que lo unía con algo ..." (I, 155).

The portents culminate in José Eugenio's initial reaction to a
glimpse of Rialta's smile at a dance. That smile expresses the essence
of the Olaya spirit whose significance Lezama tries so persistently to
emphasize, using both imagery and blatant authorial intervention.

Nosotros, nuestra familia, tiene la carcajada, sólo
imaginó sonreír a mi madre, a pesar de que apenas
pudo ya recordarla .... Giraba la luz por las
persianas, poliedro que amasa la luz como harina de
los transparentes, como si hubiese caído su sonrisa
[de Rialta] en el agua de las persianas. Me pare-
cía que nuestra antigua carcajada necesitaba de esa
sonrisa, que nos daba la lección del espíritu ac-
tuando sobre la carne, perfeccionándola ..." (I, 148).

The carcajada is a symbol of the Cemí family's good health and high
spirits, which can be a little overpowering, as the more delicate
José Cemí is to discover. It expresses the innate happiness of José
Eugenio and his joy in living. Yet José Eugenio is aware, as soon as
he comes in contact with the smile, that the boisterous aspect of the
Cemí spirit would benefit from its influence. He is already thinking in terms of a spiritual union which would improve and refine the balance between the body and spirit. He recalls his mother, Eloísa, and her smile, a facet of her personality which seems to have been swallowed up in the exuberance of her husband until both she and the smile simply faded away in her son's memory and in fact. Eloísa was noted for a transparence, an inner quality symbolized to some extent in her English ancestry and ill health, but it was too fragile to survive. As I have noted, Doña Munda's ruffled feelings are smoothed when she sees in José Eugenio a similar refinement; it is this delicacy in him which now finds an echo in Rialta, who is also from a criollo family, in a situation where the principle of "love at first sight" seems to be operating on the spiritual level only. It is Rialta's smile, more than any aspect of her person, which dazzles José Eugenio. Lezama is here considering the smile as an expression of the inner self, that is, as a more refined and reflective reaction to the world than the involuntary laugh. The author seems to see a marked contrast between the laugh and the smile, as symbols of differing characteristics and attitudes in the two families. The Olaya smile has a spiritual quality, having the effect of expressing the unseen workings of the mind, of drawing people together by its old-fashioned graciousness, as seen in the interview between Rialta and the President. José Cemí, much later in the novel, sees his mother's smile as a passport to the world of the marvellous or miraculous. At this stage in his development, while he is becoming more closely emotionally involved with his mother and the qualities represented by her smile, the rude good health and vigour expounded in his father's frequent laughter illustrates the polarity of the characters and outlooks, as we shall see when examining José Cemí's childhood ordeals. The duration of a laugh is the moment in which a person's
whole being is convulsed in an involuntary reaction to some phenomenon. On the other hand, the smile is gentle and may not require any exterior provocation, so it is an expression of hidden, quiet thoughts, possibly from a higher source. For Lezama, it seems, the laugh represents an attitude to life at once too brusque and too forceful, whilst the smile is required by the Cemís because so far, as Lezama has shown us, the members of the latter family have reacted forcefully to their surroundings without much hint of introspection; Lezama wants to develop in his characters that awareness, that susceptibility to the marvellous, to Divine Grace, which, for him, is embodied in the Olaya smile: "la lección del espíritu actuando sobre la carne." José Eugenio is to be a man of action in harmony with the world, but his actions are to be tempered by the influence of Rialta. She is to cherish the spiritual aspect of his nature, so that José Cemí will develop a deep self-awareness and sensitivity to the world around him, appropriate to the poetic mind.

In Paradiso it is clear that Rialta's smile is a source of goodness since Lezama employs a favourite image to underline the fact; a prism reflects light in all directions and the effect of seeing the smile through the blinds is similar, like sunlight penetrating into a darkened room. Doña Munda's reply to her grandson's rather startling remarks is calm and continues in a similar vein, comparing and contrasting the Spaniard and the criollo in other traits. She chooses the courteousness of Don José María and Don Andrés Olaya whom she has espied through the blinds; she concludes that both are in fact very alike in their attitudes and that their gestures are "Una misma nota en dos registros" (I, 149). This could be said of the laugh and the smile also, since one is merely a refinement of the other. Lezama is very concerned with the mixing and blending of races, which is not surprising
since his own character is a blend of Spanish, criollo, English and Basque qualities. He is not merely interested in purity of blood, but rather in the synthesis of qualities embodied in different nationalities to produce the true Cuban. This concern is tempered by his desire to describe the origins of José Cemí as a poet, drawing on elements grafted on to his family tree through the ages, to evoke a picture of spiritual growth.

The consequences of an unfortunate mixture of forebears is revealed to the reader in the space of a few pages; the ill-fated Dr. Zunhill, who attacks one of the Olaya girls to whom he was engaged, is shown to be a complete misfit (as was the fair-complexioned, Danish Cuban, Dr. Selmo Copek of the previous chapter): "un hombre más bien bajo, a quien su pelirroja ascendencia irlandesa le daba un aspecto un tanto ridículo, apoplético ..." (I, 152). Doña Mela might be expected to despise anyone less "Cuban" than herself. However, her caustic remarks are used by Lezama to emphasize the condition of the madman: "Esos criollos que tienen pinta de extranjeros son muy complicados. Su propia sangre los ofusca y los enreda" (I, 153). I find it doubtful that Lezama is here succumbing to racist tendencies. He seems to be using these examples of peculiar mixtures of races in order to underline the appropriateness of the union between the criollo and Spanish families, and the potential for growth in individuals and in the country as a political entity, through a blending of the Spanish elements already present in the criollo and a fresh vigour derived from the new Spanish immigrants. The laugh and the smile symbolize the qualities inherent in the two families, extrovert and introvert, robust and delicate, flesh and spirit, active and passive, even masculine and feminine as do José Eugenio and Rialta. These characters are seen as the sum total of their family heritages and are in this sense archetypes.
Nothing has been concealed from the reader. Indeed it seems that every nuance of the magnetism drawing the families together inexorably has been documented minutely. How, then, can the wedding scene take the reader by surprise, when he has been so well prepared by the author?

Lezama appears to be quite vague about the ages of his characters from time to time. The last reference to José Eugenio's age comes in a conversation between Doña Munda and her son Luis Ruda, in which they decide to send him to college. This would tend to suggest that he is around twelve to fourteen years of age, since we are told that he is "aún de doce años" (I, 89) earlier in the same chapter. Some isolated incidents concerning his first day at college, a conversation with his classmate Fibo which suggests they are still getting to know each other, and an ambiguous episode in the showers with Alberto Olaya give no clue to the amount of time passing. All these events could have taken place within the first week at school, or they could have been selected from a period of some years. The sense of time passing is also disrupted by the fact that the reader's attention is diverted away from José Eugenio's development at this point so that Lezama can concentrate on Alberto's adolescent trauma. The exploits described could occupy a single night in which Alberto moves from one new experience to another, meeting the girl with the pitahaya flower, the old man in charge of the carro's whip' who pursues him to the cinema, and lastly Oppiano Licario in the "Reino de siete meses" bar, returning to the girl with the flower much later that same night. The heated exchange between Doña Augusta and Sr. Jordi Cuevaroliot is set in the early forenoon following Alberto's "primera noche fuera de la casa" (I, 143) which also leads one to think that little time has passed. José Eugenio reappears in the novel in response to Alberto's invitation to the dance and while he ("criado en un ambiente provinciano y español") finds her gracious manner
to be "la quintaesencia de lo criollo" (I, 145), Rialta in her turn
"por la primera vez había fijado el rostro de aquel amigo de su hermano" (I, 146). As we have seen, Rialta's smile ensures love at first sight and the formal introduction of the families is effected by the extraordinary scene made by the insane suitor, Dr. Zunhill. The only possible stumbling block to the union, La Mela, the separatist grandmother, is thwarted by José Eugenio's diplomatic speech at his first dinner in the Olaya household. No sooner has the curtain dropped on this decisive scene than the reader is swept into another, in which José Eugenio is seen admiring his dress uniform before two mirrors, being aided by Luis Ruda. It is not revealed that this is the long awaited day on which the two families will be united until the details of José Eugenio's finery have been described.

The reader suddenly finds himself caught up in the bustle of last-minute preparations and minor crises. There has been no attempt to describe the courtship of the couple and no reference whatsoever to any physical desire, although their attractive personalities have been clearly revealed. Their ages are no longer a mystery since we know already that Rialta is two years younger than her husband and she is described thus, at the turning point in her life:

Lucía Rialta espléndidamente sus veinte años y al enfrentarse con su destino ostentaba sonriente el tranquilo rielar de la casta Venus. Siempre a los familiares y a los extraños, les causaría esa impresión como de caminar sobre las aguas. De quien, en los peligros, oye una voz que le avisa del buen término de sus designios (I, 169-70).

José Eugenio presents an equally impressive figure and he too is noted for the qualities which other people value in his character:
José Eugenio Cerío era un punto de rara confluencia universitaria ... La seguridad de su alegría, la elegancia de su voluntad, la magia de su ejercitada disciplina intelectual, le regalaban centro, le otorgaban gracias, que sin ofuscar de súbito, mantenían una cariñosa temperatura, de criollo fuerte, refinado, limpio, que hacía que se le buscase, y, como uno de los signos de su fortaleza, sin agotarse en su intimidad ni debilitarse en arenosas confidencias (I, 171).

Lezama portrays the couple as particularly blessed with exceptional qualities of spirit which commend them to all who know them. Rialta appears to be guided in her judgements by a secret voice, presumably that of Divine Grace, since the gift of walking on the waters is that of Christ or of Venus rising from the foam. José Eugenio is the central point in his social circle, just as he will be the centre of his family. Lezama places considerable emphasis on the fact that he appeals to all classes of students, and he denotes them by "los casi-mires y gabardinas de los estudiantes de familias ricas" and "las americanas de entreestación de los estudiantes más pobres" (I, 172). He is a man of the new republic: "En la próxima convocatoria, para formar la oficialidad de la naciente república, alcanzaba el número uno ... (I, 165) and in this sense too he must appeal to all, as does the republic itself. Thus Lezama links even this most personal of moments, the marriage of José Eugenio and Rialta based on that of his own parents, with the dawning of the new republic of Cuba.

At this stage in the narrative, the reader is no longer confused as to the ages of the main characters, although the difficulty of tracing the time-scale in this part of the novel remains. This obscurity may have been intended by Lezama to give the impression of an inevitable event which chooses its own time and place and then just "happens" before our very eyes. Lezama is not a writer given to compressing events for the sake of brevity. On the contrary, quite minor
events are often expanded at length to bear the weight of important symbolism. A case in point is the first meeting of José Eugenio with Alberto, studied in chapter IV. The writer may have felt that a description of courtship would have detracted from the wealth of symbolism that has been built up over several chapters, all fashioned carefully to emphasize that this union is not merely taking place between two ordinary mortals, but between whole systems of ideas. The close relationship which exists between the real parents of Lezama Lima and the fictional Cemís is another possible impediment to the development of the characters along these lines. The writer not only omits any sexual references which would disturb the atmosphere of ritual and reverence, but actually emphasizes the purity of his central characters. We have been told in a striking phrase that Rialta "ostentaba sonriente el tranquilo rielar de la casta Venus" and as G. Zaldívar has pointed out, the adjectives used all confirm her innocence: "graciosa, leve, muy gentil" (I, 145), from the first moment José Eugenio sees her. He too is beyond reproach, as the devotion of his friends reveals: "criollo fuerte, refinado, límpido" (I, 171). The last adjective here is most significant, again meaning pure and without guile. If a great poet is to emerge from the new family, the latter must be exemplary in every way; since Lezama has shown other members of the Cemí and Olaya clans in contact with a higher reality through dream and memory, using the symbol of the tree reaching towards heaven, the new union must also be seen to be perfect so that it is worthy to produce one who is able to relate to higher realities through language.

We must now return to the introductory quotation. It describes the precise moment of the ritual in which the two people are formally joined. They are shown to be mutually dependent in "la eternidad del círculo", symbolized by the exchange of rings; the company of their
friends ("la proliferación de los rostros de familiares y amigos") (I, 171) makes them very much aware that they are setting up a new circle of their own ("sintieron ... el rumor de la convergencia en la unidad de la imagen que se iniciaba" I, 171). Julio Ortega has commented on the intensity of the symbol of the circle:

Lezama reveals that while José Eugenio is the centre of his social circle for the present (his fine qualities "le regalaban centro"; I, 171), Rialta "Comenzaba un extenso trenzado laberíntico, del cual durante cincuenta años, ella sería el centro, la justificación y la fertilidad" (I, 170). We cannot fully appreciate the ominous portent contained in these words until we witness the Colonel's death scene, but the reader might pause to wonder why Rialta is to be the centre of the family, rather than José Eugenio. The image of the circle, in relation to Rialta and her family, becomes increasingly important in this section of the novel, as we shall see. The first stage of the relationship is brought to a close with a description of Rialta's smile: "Rialta asumió una sonrisa desprendida .... Durante la duración de su matrimonio, mostraría siempre esa alegría derivada, su júbilo parecía desprenderse de la salud alegre, del frenesí soterrado de su esposo" (I, 172). Such devotion, depending entirely on the well-being of one person, is sure to be very vulnerable.

Without further ado, Lezama hastens on to his next scene, having established the ritual of the wedding as a moment isolated in time, as
it is from the rest of this chapter. The reader is now ushered in to the home of José Eugenio and Rialta with no more ceremony. There, yet another confrontation occurs between relatives, José Eugenio and Rialta's uncle, Demetrio Olaya, who will later play a quite important role in the development of José Cemí. The uncle is presented as a feckless, "temporarily" unemployed gourmet, baited mercilessly by José Eugenio and nicknamed "Guasa Bimba" because of his empty pride and false dignity, assumed to protect him from the "sorna criolla" (I, 173) of his relatives. José Eugenio's attitude reminds the reader of his treatment of his own uncle, Luis Ruda, which may have been excused as youthful thoughtlessness. In this context, however, the consequences could be much more serious, since "se divertía mucho viendo el rostro de Demetrio amoratado por el miedo, perplejo de terror" (I, 173) while he shows off his collection of weapons. Having stressed that Demetrio is determined to have his revenge for the constant humiliations, Lezama seems to digress somewhat, with Rialta's richly ornamented account of the attack on the shrubbery at the military camp where the couple lives and José Eugenio is commandant. The author makes full use of this opportunity to reveal precisely how the great gift of the Olaya family, that of fluent self-expression, has developed in Rialta since the days of clever phrases in Jacksonville. In the midst of the tale he halts Rialta's flow of speech in order to point out to the reader the differences in style which it displays when compared with that of Doña Augusta, which is "majestuoso, oracular" (I, 174). Rialta's indignation transforms her speech into "un encantamiento, una gracia, el refinamiento de unos dones que al ejercitarse mostraban su alegría, no su castigo ni su pesantez" (I, 174-5). Lezama seems to be thinking of the ways in which Castillian has been transformed in Cuba by the criollos, a phenomenon which he has described in "Nacimiento de la expresión
criolla": "La espuma del tuétano quevediano y el oro principal de Góngora, se amigaban bien por tierras nuestras ..." (II, 350), and "por lo americano, el estoicismo quevediano y el destello gongorino tienen soterramiento popular. Engendran un criollo de excelente resistencia para lo ético y una punta fina para el habla y la distinción de donde viene la independencia" (I, 351).

The passage woven around the apparently simple episode of two prisoners insisting on hacking down weeds and shrubs alike, in defiance of Rialta, could almost be an illustration of criollo speech at its best. Rialta's moral and spiritual qualities have been certified by the author as irreproachable, only a few pages earlier, so we are intended to accept her authority on ethical matters. Indeed the question of cutting down the bushes is afforded the stature of a moral issue by the emotive language unleashed by her fury. She is the defender of all that is good and worthwhile and here she is seen to lose the battle (the bushes are cut down), yet the implications of the incident resonate through her language. She sees the prisoners as: "raspados, ceñidos por la piel de la cebra ... canailles" (I, 174) and "unos sepultureros shakesperianos" (I, 175). Rialta's role as the protectress of right and decency is reinforced by her references to phrases from Mallarmé ("mumura sus abejas") and Shakespeare ("mientras la pulpa de los anones les enseñaba sonriente la leche de la bondad humana") which allude to the benevolence of Nature. Human kindness is the last thing likely to appeal to these malevolent men, determined to destroy the strawberry and naseberry plants by inventing orders from José Eugenio. By destroying them they are actually attacking him, since Rialta says her husband was planning to sow the strawberry plants in other parts of the camp. If José Eugenio is considered in his role as leading shoot of the Cemi family, the reader finds the attack on the plants,
intended as a symbol of his person, quite shocking. Rialta's emotive language encourages us to think in terms of an assault on a human being; the escort is an accessory to the crime, with his "índice rúspido" and his hideous maw: "risa mala, enseñaba todos los dientes, ahora se precisaba en el espacio hundido por dos muelas extraídas, una extensión necrosada de tejido purulento, como quemada" (I, 175); the "victim", the plants, are seen as a symbol of fertility since they bear fruits which "rompían la brevedad de su rocío para alegrar la mañana" (I, 174) and they seem to bleed and struggle as "comenzaron a pegar tajos, hacia las raíces o hacia la copa, haciendo temblar como una zarza el tronco" and "Bajo la presión central, el ramaje del árbol pareció abrir los brazos" (I, 175). The blows are extremely vicious: "un machete incesante, sanguinario", "cada machetazo sanguinolento," "Las raíces trenzaron la bayoneta como un caduceo pitagórico" (I, 175), and they finally triumph.

Yet the fruit seems to have hidden qualities, and benefits from "El rocío, divinidad protectora entre lo invisible y lo real ..." (I, 175). The reader may recall that José Eugenio is first seen in Paradiso carrying a melon, literally bearing fruit, and that Mamita calls him "el dios de las cosechas opimas, que armada de una gran cornucopia inunda las nieblas y las divinidades hostiles" (I, 43-4). She sees him as someone "siempre perseguido muy de cerca por la muerte" (I, 43) and yet she believes that his destiny is "fecundar la alegre unidad" (I, 44). He will fulfill this duty within his family circle, but Mamita's intuitive feeling about him will prove to be well-founded. The eventual fate of the strawberries is most significant, in my opinion:

y las fresas reventadas, con su linfa sagrada penetrando en la Tebas de sus semillas, se desconchaban a través del paredón, donde muy pronto la llegaba
Still bearing its hidden power for fertility and growth ("linfa sagrada"), the fruit bursts against the wall, where it has been violently hurled, but under the sun's rays (another aid to creation and growth in Nature) its juices form strange patterns. Images are created by these patterns in a kind of natural abstract art. The overall meaning of the passage appears to me to be that something can be created even out of destruction, should all our attempts to defend beauty, culture and life itself be doomed to failure. The themes running through the passage seem to prefigure those surrounding the death of José Eugenio, particularly the concern with the aftermath of what seems like wanton destruction and the possibilities of creation which death might bear in its wake. The prisoners are merely trying to strike a blow against authority but in Rialta's eyes they are the almost fiendishly ugly agents of death, offending Nature.

The tale of the burlador burlado is resumed in the very next paragraph, in which Demetrio is allowed his little triumph when José Eugenio's antics almost lead to his death. The prankster is convinced that he has dealt Demetrio a mortal blow when the gun turns out to be loaded and the "victim" does not disillusion him until he has savoured José Eugenio's look of horror: "Su terror parecía superar a las figuras anteriormemente aludidas del fresco terrible" (I, 176). Just as the malevolent jokers who uprooted the plants are mocked by the images produced by the crushed berries on the wall, José Eugenio is derided by the results of his own action when "El eco de la detonación rodando por las piezas de la casa, ceñido de una máscara burlesca, ladeando la boca, inauguraba un cañuto de agua lanzado sobre la frente frígida y sudorosa del burlador burlado" (I, 176). It seems that the stray bullet has
ended up puncturing some part of the plumbing and the leak chooses its landing place precisely. Demetrio has cheated death in a more obvious way than the fruit. I find it most interesting that Demetrio, like so many characters in Paradiso, has an evocative name. Whatever its derivation, it is likely to remind the reader of Demeter, of whom Neumann says, "the Demeter of the Greeks is, as mistress of the underworld, also a goddess of death. The dead, named by Plutarch 'demetrios', are her property.... This seems to suggest that the Demetrio in Paradiso, in the present context, is a symbol of death, someone whom José Eugenio is seen to mock and deride until his jokes backfire. Demeter is also the Earth Mother, responsible for growth of all vegetation and fertility. Rialta has been connected with the family tree, the dormant seed, the fruit of the nut tree, and now with the cutting of fruit-laden plants. She will presently see the tragic felling of a mature pine tree (I, 218), her husband. Neumann continues describing Demeter; "her earthly womb is the womb of death, yet it is the lap of fertility from which all life springs." Demetrio's appearance here enables Lezama to hint at an aspect of the symbolism of the marriage by externalizing or personifying that aspect, keeping it isolated from the pleasing personality of Rialta in her role of loving wife and mother. Rialta is not to blame for her husband's death in any causal sense. It is rather a natural result of the alignment of the Olayas with permanence, the world of Grace and the spirit as symbolized by their contemplative smile, and the contrary alignment of the Cemís with transience, the world of action and personal endeavour and laughter, as we shall see. Lezama sees the Olaya virtues as eternal and immutable, a stable background against which action may evolve.

José Eugenio is a burlador by the very nature of his personality, cheating death by virtue of his enjoyment of life and its fruits.
We see him in his prime, as a successful student, military engineer and young, devoted husband. Lezama has exploited this character to the full, draping several layers of meaning about his strong shoulders: in considering the complementary aspects of the family trees, various apparently unrelated themes have been skilfully intertwined: family relationships, hereditary personality traits, the extrovert, physically strong male and the introspective, contemplative and delicate female, even at times the historical relationship of Cuba with Spain. It is certainly true that José Eugenio and Rialta are "atolondrados por la gravedad baritonal de los símbolos" (I, 171), both at their wedding ceremony and in the reader's mind. Despite the fact that these characters may already be somewhat top-heavy, Lezama adds further subtleties by juxtaposing the marriage ceremony and the incident of the hacking down of the strawberry plants. In so doing, the marriage is inevitably fused with startlingly vivid images of death, by a writer who, contrary to first impressions, does not indulge his image-forming genius at random. The configuration of struggle-death-union-creativity has appeared in unforgettable form in the Michelena orgies. It involved references to many religions devoted to the concept of birth derived from death, resurrection. In the curious fate of the strawberry plants, making possibly significant patterns on a sun-baked wall, we see a kind of resurrection. When we consider that José Eugenio is closely identified, if not synonymous with the butchered plants, and that at his moment of death "Rialta recibía la más sombría noticia de su vida ... oyendo como un hacha el viento lento del enero americano recorrer los pinares" (I, 218), we can see that the linking of the marriage and death is prophetic. Like the vegetation gods whom we mentioned in connection with the sacrifice of the manatee (Attis, Osiris, Tammuz), the young man is doomed to a death from which new
life will arise. Just as the ritual death of the manatee touches on the higher levels of reality, of Being, through the poetic image (of which religious symbols are an example), so José Eugenio's death should be given meaning by José Cemí, the son who meditates on his loss and on the Infinite in his poetry. I am not, of course, suggesting that the manatee simply represents José Eugenio, as the image is far too rich in possibilities for such a simplistic interpretation; but as we proceed to examine the relationships of parents and children we will see that love and death are intimately interwoven. The apparently sacred union of the parents is followed by the death of the father and the birth of artistic creativity in the son, in the form of poetry which is intended to re-establish contact with the Infinite in a reunion of matter with Spirit, a concept with which Rialta and the Olayas are persistently identified.
Notes

1 "Interrogando a Lezama Lima," in Recopilación, p. 25.


3 Ibid., p. 473.

4 E. Gimbernat de González, "Paradiso: 'Aventura sigilosa' de un sistema poético," Diss. Johns Hopkins 1975, p. 103, note 6. This work will be referred to hereafter as Paradiso: 'Aventura sigilosa.'

5 "Paradiso: 'Aventura sigilosa,'" p. 77.

6 Ibid., p. 103, note 3.

7 Ibid., p. 78.

8 "Interrogando a Lezama Lima," in Recopilación, p. 25.


10 Arrom, "Lo tradicional ...," pp. 472-3, quoting from Christopher Columbus' Diary.


12 Reposo aristotélico should not be confused with the causalidad aristotélica which has been examined in the context of Doña Augusta's debate with Mrs. Squabs and in "José Eugenio Cemí and His Family Tree," note 4. The concept of reposo aristotélico is juxtaposed here with la dinamia pascaliana, and Lezama considers the former to be the stillness of perfect being (Ser), which need not take any action to assert itself. It is the kind of tranquil completeness sought by the Indian mystics. This is in marked contrast to la dinamia pascaliana which seems to represent a certain striving on the part of changeable existence (Existencia) to attain the level of permanent Being.

13 "Paradiso: 'Aventura sigilosa,'" p. 77.

14 Myths, Dreams and Mysteries, London 1977, p. 188.

16 *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries*, p. 63.

17 "Nictimene" is defined in the *Diccionario Enciclopédico U.T.E.H.A.*, Mexico City 1953.

18 "Paradiso: 'Aventura sigilosa,'" p. 79.


23 J. Ortega, "Paradiso de Lezama Lima," in *La novela hispanoamericana actual*, eds. A. Flores and R. Silva Cáceres, New York 1971, p. 58. This anthology of criticism will be referred to hereafter as NHA.

24 *Origins*, p. 77.

25 Ibid., p. 77-8.
CHAPTER III

The Childhood of José Cemi

I. The Trauma

Un niño puede tener a su lado el tao, sin saberlo, pero si al paso de los años, durante toda su vida lo busca, sólo comprueba que se ha evaporado, que el tao no lo acompaña. Tal vez en su agonía lo pueda recuperar y entonces percibe que penetrará en lo invisible con tao, con germen y con imagen, su espera fue un acto creador. Su espera creó una imagen y esa imagen va a resultar sorprendentemente creadora en la muerte ("Las eras imaginarias: la biblioteca como dragón"; II, 891).

Such an individual is José Cemi, destined to undertake a solitary quest for truth. The tao, to which Lezama refers frequently in "Las eras imaginarias: la biblioteca como dragón," is the appreciation of the existence of the creative void, the silent and seemingly inexorable challenge of which inspires the human mind to produce images that are in themselves overtures to the unimaginable and incomprehensible. The lack of an answer to the great imponderables leads to a diverse multitude of answers. The ancient religions of the world are examples of Man's response to the creative void. It becomes clear from the detailed examination of the Michelena episode (I, 64-75) that Lezama envisages the interaction of the image (the manatee), and the void (the Chinaman), as a religious rite in which the image is powerless without the intervention of the void itself in a reciprocal approach. The religious overtones are highlighted by the preceding discussion of Divine Grace, between Doffa Augusta and Mrs.
Squabs. The interweaving of symbols from Greek, Egyptian and Chinese thought, with the eventual triumph of Grace in the Christian and particularly Roman Catholic sense suggests that Lezama regards each system of images and ideas as a step further along the path to the conquest of Time in a perfect resurrection or return to the paradisical origins. Of the role of poetry Lezama has said to Alvarez Bravo:

encontró la palabra potens ... el si es posible, la posibilidad infinita que después observamos en el virgo potens del catolicismo - o como se puede engendrar un dios por sobrenaturales modos - y llegué a la conclusión de que esa posibilidad infinita es la que tiene que encarnar la imagen.

Within this statement Lezama is combining the poetic and the religious. He then continues:

Y como la mayor posibilidad infinita es la resurrección, la poesía, la imagen tenía que expresar su mayor abertura de compás, que es la propia resurrección. Fue entonces que adquirí el punto de vista que enfrento a la teoría heideggeriana del hombre para la muerte, levantando el concepto de la poesía que viene a establecer la causalidad prodigiosa del ser para la resurrección, el ser que vence a la muerte y a lo saturniano. (My italics).

Lezama sees his task as a primarily sacred one, in which poetry is to reveal the invisible truths in words that will conquer Time because they are the distillation of wisdom and the revelation of a higher reality. The word becomes flesh in a very special way: "la maravilla del poema es que llega a crear un cuerpo, una sustancia resistente...." The poet feels its challenge:

Se convierte a sí misma, la poesía, en una sustancia tan real, y tan devoradora, que la encontramos en todas las presencias. Y no es el flotar, no es la poesía en la luz impresionista, sino la realización de un cuerpo que se constituye en enemigo y desde allí nos mira. Pero cada paso dentro de esa enemistad, provoca estela o comunicación inefable. (My italics).
The poet thus has the duties of interpreter and shaman, expressing the higher truths of his peers who are not gifted with similar powers of understanding, so that they too may approach the mysteries of life and death.

Many family characters have been used to illustrate concepts which Lezama considers as precursors of the tao to be rediscovered by José Cemíf. Long before José Cemíf comes to the forefront of the novel, the ideas of ausencia, as the void out of which images flow, and lejanía, suggesting a similar concept but also implying the inaccessibility of that void, have been well established. The image of the family tree has served to reveal the ways in which the Olayas are in touch with higher truths; the most important aspect of tao, in which the soul returns to oneness with the creative void, to the completeness of the seed, is represented by Cambita's death scene; Time, in the historical sense, is destroyed in many ways. We have seen these elements in the family characters but they will be of little use to José Cemíf until he makes them his own, consciously and through personal experience, however painful. Lezama has described José Cemíf as "un presunto trasunto de mi personalidad" and regards him as "el impulsador central de la novela." 4 When asked to define Paradiso, he has divided the novel into three parts on almost every occasion. The three sections follow what he considers to be the pattern of his own development as a poet, the essential growth in understanding which leads to poetic maturity: "La novela es una vida, la de José Cemíf, y la mía, que está metida por cada una de sus esquinas. Es un Wilhelm Meister habanero y constituye hasta ahora la más grande experiencia sensible e intelectiva realizada por un cubano, por un americano también." 5 The novel is therefore an attempt to come to terms with Cuban and American life as experienced by one person, a poet, by examining three stages in one life: "Es mi madre, mi familia; la amistad, en lo que significa de reto religioso (la apertura del compás: la amistad) y, después, la presencia
de Oppiano Licario ... que significa el 'Eros de la absoluta lejanía!...

In a letter to his "queridas y buenas hermanas" Lezama refers in a similar way to the novel: "es la exaltación de la familia, el nacimiento del Eros, el conocer en la infinitud." The process involves those phenomena to be found near at hand, that is, family relationships; the widening horizon of school days and new friendships leading to unknown desires; and finally an exploration of phenomena whose roots lie far beyond the physical reality and geographical limitations of Latin America, in the labyrinths of the human mind itself.

Since Lezama's chosen weapon for his duel with "lo invisible" (II, 891, and above) is the image or poetry, it is reasonable to assume that Cemí will also be a poet and that he, like Lezama, is the child who "puede tener a su lado el tao" (Ibid), that is, the awareness of creative power in himself in the midst of a silent void. José Cemí undertakes, in Paradiso, a quest whose goal is an image: "Su espera creó una imagen y esa imagen va a resultar sorprendentemente creadora en la muerte" (Ibid), a quest for an image of permanency, eternity or Being, as opposed to mere existence. Lezama has laid the trail for the journey already in the Michelena episode, where there is a struggle between immutable Being (symbolized by the Chinaman in his ancient coral chair) and existence (symbolized by the manatee, lurching clumsily towards the Chinaman at whose hand she becomes a sacrifice in a ritual which breaks down the barriers between historical and sacred Time). Cemí is driven to seek the image of eternity by personal tragedy. The reader must not expect the text to be littered with youthful dabblings in poetics, for Lezama's deepest concern is with the quest as the cultivation of a certain state of mind in which the developing poet is predisposed to look beyond the material towards the spiritual. The poem itself is almost a by-product of the quest, hence we have no examples of poems in the novel offered as
Cemí's own work. However we can trace the progress of José Cemí through childhood towards poetic awareness with great accuracy. As Ortega has said, in a most interesting article, "toda la novela vendría a ser el debate y el descubrimiento de un cauce que conduce al hallazgo y formulación de una concepción de la realidad a partir de la poesía." The theme of the spiritual journey has been noted by G. Pérez Firmat, who sees many parallels with Dante's *Divina Commedia*, not least the Italian title common to the novel and the third section. He compares the habits of the two protagonists:

*like Dante ... he* is continuously a wayfarer, *un caminante*. As a child he is seen walking home from school; during his days as a university student he habitually strolls through El Prado ... *As in the Divina Commedia, the act of walking becomes a metaphor for the spiritual journey of the soul.*

José Cemí is the focal point in the novel around which everything else revolves, awaiting his attention. He is an image of Lezama: "cemí, un ídolo, una imagen." The early chapters of *Paradiso* (1-7) reveal how Cemí is chosen for the quest.

In the opening pages of the novel, the reader finds Cemí floundering in the midst of a crisis, with only the ministrations of anxious servants to assist him. The descriptions of the asthma attack are interspersed with others of the house and the inhabitants are named in connection with the rooms they occupy. As a result, we can deduce that the victim of the attack, a five year old boy, is José Cemí, but during the crisis he is referred to only as *niño, criatura, garzón, muchacho*; he is an anonymous being, fighting for his life. At the tender age of five years, Cemí is already marked out as different by his irregular breathing and his mysterious *ronchas*: "Mientras las ronchas recuperaban todo el cuerpo, el jadeo indicaba que el asma le dejaba tanto aire por dentro a la criatura, que parecía que iba a acertar con la salida de los poros." (I, 6) His major
difficulty is one of expression, because so much air (childhood impressions or ideas?) is bottled up in his little body and Baldovinia says of him: "no quiere o no sabe llorar" (I, 10). The rhythm of his breathing prevents him from expressing himself freely. Ortega points out that it is only in the final image of the novel that Cemí discovers his ritmo hesicástico: "Este proceso de la conquista de la realidad por la poesía es un ciclo ... que empieza en la primera imagen de la novela y concluye en la última imagen...." 11 Two distinct types of imagery run throughout the scenes depicting Cemí's illness; the first relates to Christianity and the second to magical rituals of initiation. They are very closely connected and radiate from the would-be witchdoctors, the servants. The first cure, suggested by the orderly and Truni, is the more easily understood since it has a certain logic — alcohol would have the effect of temporarily cooling the offending area — and its advocates stand around draped in blankets like the cloaks of officiating priests who are in "la misma posición de la huida" (I, 6). The parents seem to have fled from Cemí also, leaving the servant "cumpliendo las órdenes de sus señores en huida" (I, 5) although she is almost overcome with horror herself: "el afán que ya tenfa de huir" (I, 6) and imagines the ugly blotches on the child's body to be contagious: "como animales que eran capaces de saltar de la cama y moverse sobre sus propias espaldas" (I, 10). Baldovinia, most probably a character inspired by Baldomera who worked for the Lezama family, sees that even the most sensitive areas of the child's body are affected: "vio los muslos, los pequeños testículos llenos de ronchas que iban agrandando ..." (I, 5). It is noteworthy that the areas most closely connected with reproduction (a form of creativity) are particularly marked. This may symbolize Cemí's potential for creativeness of a different kind, that is in poetry.

All who observe the physical evidence of Cemí's unusual condition
wish to flee, as from something incomprehensible or evil. Only Baldo-
vinia, in her compassion, controls the impulse, and when she finds the
drops of alcohol and her frenzied massaging to be of no use, she finds
another possible remedy. Holding the lighted candelabra close to the
child's skin to ascertain her degree of success with the "planazo mágico"
(I, 10) she drops some hot wax: "una gruesa gota de esperma se solidifi-
caba sobre su pecho ..." (I, 10). Seeing that the drops serve to cover
the blotches at least temporarily, she allows more to fall: "Encristaladas,
como debajo de un alabastro, las espirales de ronchas parecían detenerse,
se agrandaban y ya se quedaban allí como detrás de una urna que mostrase
la irritación de los tejidos" (I, 10). The blemishes do not disappear,
but they become immobile and appear less widespread until the child moves:
"Al menor movimiento del garzón, aquella caparazón de esperma se desmoronaba y aparecían nuevas, matinales, agrandadas en su rojo de infierno,
las ronchas ..." (I, 10). Arguing in favour of the existence of "el su-
strato edípico de la novela", E. M. Santí has noted that José Cemi lacks
a middle name while his father is Eugenio, "el bien nacido." 12 Assuming
that José Eugenio represents "el sentido mismo, el centro, la autoridad,
el orden del discurso, la razón de ser," Santí postulates that "Esas
espermas [gotas de cera derretida y líquido seminal] provienen de una
vela encendida, de una especie de falo presencial, que ilumina la primera
escena en ausencia del padre y que permite ver bien al que no es 'bien
nacido.'" 13 The references to flight and absence which I have noted would
support this interesting conclusion. As to the nature of the droplets
of sperm or wax, Santí believes them to be "gotas de sabiduría, de sen-
tido pleno, de patria potestad, de Presencia, que ahora se malgastan, se
dispersan ... no pueden llevar a cabo ninguna in-semi-nación." 14
I too consider this to be the general meaning of the passage, but would go
further by saying that the image of wax/sperm covering the blemishes of
the son depicts the father's desperate attempts to integrate him into normal rhythms of breathing and behaviour, attempts which are later revealed in detail. The sperm represents the father's natural vigour and good health, expressed in his active life, a way of life which he tries to impose on a more contemplative (but not necessarily homosexual) soul. Santí suspects that the final leave-taking of the blemishes is described in a significant way: "Las ronchas habían abandonado aquel cuerpo como Erinnías, como hermanas negras mal peinadas ..." (I, 15). He points out that the Erinnías were "las Furias Eumenides, cuya función, entre otras, era la de castigar a los parricidas," and compares this occurrence with another which takes place after Cemí has overheard the story of Doña Augusta's disinterred father: "Esa noche volvieron las pesadillas a cabalgar de nuevo las Erinnías" (I, 196). There may well be an element of withdrawal from José Eugenio and all he represents revealed in the child's dreams, which will be examined presently. I feel that much more evidence is required before what Santí calls the "teoría del texto" can be accepted: "una poética de la oscuridad semántica como la dificultad de la transfiguración del hijo en el padre, de la copia imperfecta en el original, de la repetición en la presencia-en-sí, y de la imposibilidad de que los dos pueden coincidir en algún espacio o momento." According to this idea, Paradiso would be a novel dedicated to showing how the past and present cannot usefully interact, even to the extent of deliberate misquotation within the text to illustrate the point. There would be a cycle of replacement and renewal which one could trace throughout the novel, a point well worth considering as we proceed.

Returning to the dismal scene, Baldovinia has hastened to beg more advice from Zoar and Truni. Truni has thrown a sheet over her head, thus enhancing her previous similarity to a nun or priest, draped in robes. The distressed Baldovinia is like "una disciplinante del siglo XVI" and
Zoar's body appears to become like "un escaparate de tres lunas" which suggests vividly a church window symbolizing the trinity. The atmosphere is laden with the overtones of a Christian rite: "Truni, Trinidad, preci-saba con su patronímico el ritual y los oficios. Sí, Zoar parecía como el Padre, Baldovinia como la hija y la Truni como el Espíritu Santo" (I, 11). Ortega regards this grouping as the first example in Paradiso of a recurring motif: "la trinidad aparece como grupo de complementarios a lo largo del texto" and is only the first of "los sucesivos desplazamientos." The three servants are thus replacements for the elements of the trinity and for the absent parents; and "el mismo Cemí está desplazado de la figura trinitaria porque el autor nos habla de la hija y no el hijo (Cemí)...." 17 The child is excluded and therefore I feel that he is intended to represent here fallen Man, whose task it is to gain his own reinstatement to a state of innocence. Ortega himself suggests that the image of the sick child is "la alegoría del nacimiento mismo, una imagen del hombre escindido de la divinidad por su misma naturaleza humana...." but does not follow up this idea because he feels that there is no implication in the chapter of the concept of original sin. 18 It seems to me, however, from my study of José María's dream depicting a tree connecting Heaven and Earth with the lamb sleeping beneath, paralleled in the story of Juan Izquierdo's fall from grace within the Cemí household, that every image in the opening chapter leads the reader to this conclusion. Lezama offers us three distinct pictures of the fall from Grace in case we require variations on the theme to clarify the issue. Cemí's illness, as M. Fazzolari has said:"abre la novela como un heraldo que llegara a anunciarnos el destino poético de su protagonista ... lo hace morir y resucitar en cada ataque...." In addition "Las ronchas ... son signo también de una piel extremadamente sensible que prefigura la comunión con las estrellas, pues recuérdese que 'las atracciones entre los seres y las cosas jamás se producen entre un poro y otro poro, sino entre los poros y las estrellas.'" 19
Cemí is destined to communicate with higher levels of reality; the blemishes on his skin mark him out from all others. Even his initials may be significant, according to Ortega: "pues cuando Licario encuentra por primera vez a Cemí — encuentro que fundamenta su destino de figura en la novela — lo reconoce por las iniciales J. C. ¿Paralelismo entonces, del destino poético con el de Cristo como hijo?" This can be supported quite well from the text: Zoar picks up the languishing child "como un San Cristóbal" (I, 12); the incantations are accompanied by the crossing of the arms before and behind the child; the kisses which Truni places in the centre of the crossed arms recall the kiss of Judas which marked out Christ for death; the child sees the whole ritual as something which signifies that other people will shun him: "Ahora se me quedarán esas cruces pintadas por el cuerpo y nadie me querrá besar para no encontrarse con los besos de Truni" (I, 13). It is interesting to note that the child does seem to begin his recovery after the ritual has taken place, in a kind of acceptance of his condition. This is shown by Baldovinia's wondering remark: "Como un pequeño círculo de algas, que primero flotasen por tu piel y que después penetrasen por tu cuerpo ..." (I, 13) which seems to imply that the blemishes are an outward sign of the inner condition. There appears to be a link between the "gran aguacero de octubre" and the child's "copiosa orinada" (I, 13), since both result from a build-up of pressure which is then relieved. Juan Izquierdo suffers the wrath of his employers and the storm simultaneously; Baldovinia fears that Cemí will dissolve in his own urine and be absorbed into the rainstorm; both have fallen from Grace and are reinstated after a period of banishment and this is made clear in Cemí's case by the use of a most appropriate biblical image: "la imagen de la mañana que nos dejaban en la de todos los animales que salían del Arca para penetrar en la tierra iluminada" (I, 15). The Latin American reader might also recall the
story of Creation in the Popul Vuh, in which the gods destroy the results of their first attempts to make men in a great flood. Like the God of the Jews, they are angered because their creations "En su torpeza no comprendieron tampoco la presencia de los dioses..." 21 The world-wide legends of a flood celebrate a new beginning for Man, as does the example of Christ; so it is here: "el polvillo de la luz ... comenzó a deslizarse en su cabellera" (I, 16). A halo of golden light surrounds the restored child. The means of restoration have followed Christian patterns, but the aura of a pagan, magical ritual is very marked: Zoar is "el hechicero"; there is fear of the powers of Nature, so great that Baldovinia begins to tap out a beat reminiscent of the Negroes' magical drums to ward off death; much of the magical and Christian ritual is blended in much the same fashion as it is in the Mambígo brotherhoods' ceremonies in Cuba. 22

To sum up, I think that Cemi is closely bound to the figure of Christ in his role as a mediator between Man and God. Lezama clearly sees the poet's duty in a similar light and the task is an honourable but onerous one. The difficulty in breathing caused by asthma echoes the problems of poetic inspiration and expression, and there is much suffering involved before the union with wholeness attempted in Taoist "foetal" breathing exercises can be his. Cemi has been chosen by the circumstances of his family, by an accumulation of hereditary characteristics, and the crisis that we witness is his first confrontation with his own uniqueness; and yet, if he but knew it, he is not alone in his suffering. Eliade has made a study of "Illness and Initiation" and states that

Even when the office of shaman is hereditary, the election of a new shaman is preceded by a change of behaviour: the souls of shaman ancestors choose a young man out of the family; he becomes ... dreamy ... has prophetic visions and, in some cases, attacks that leave him unconscious. 23
Cemi's asthma attacks certainly leave him unconscious and the necessary drugs make him dreamy. In the shaman or interpreter of the spiritual, it is a sense of isolation which brings on illness:

The precarious state and solitude incident to every illness are ... aggravated by the symbolism of the mystical death: for to assume the supernatural "election" is to be filled with the sense of being abandoned to the divine or demonic powers; that is, doomed to imminent death.

Each asthma attack has this effect on the child, and the blemishes increase his conspicuousness. However, this process of election does not really become conscious in Cemi until after his father's death, coming as it does just at the beginning of his adolescence. The first chapter in Paradiso is intended to prepare the reader for Cemi's special future task, and is followed by a prolonged study of the family tree which I believe to be an image of "a symbolic ascent to Heaven by means of a tree or post" and of "[the shaman's] journey right to the foot of the Tree of the World." This same tree appears in José María's dream. The chosen one undergoes a great crisis, descending from the Heavens to the depths. Eliade says that this is because "the symbolic return to chaos is indispensable to any new Creation...." In Cemi's case, this means that he will only be able to "create" when he has explored and mastered his own internal heaven and hell, having accepted his own nature, whatever that may be. The result will be that after "all these trials, the sensory activity of the 'elect' tends to become a hierophany: through the strangely sharpened senses of the shaman, the sacred manifests itself." It seems to me that Cemi's illness presents all aspects of this phenomenon in miniature.

By the time that Cemi is reintroduced in chapter VI, the reader is forewarned with the knowledge of his inherited characteristics. We know little of the intervening years and when Cemi reappears he is still five
years old, as in the first chapter. What has been made clear, however, is that "todos manejaban el arte de la conversación, de la narración, y de la paremiología. La tradición oral que nos fue transmitida enriqueció nuestro inconsciente." 28 These are the words used by Lezama's sister to describe family life in her childhood. Cemí is also deeply impressed by family conversations and memories and is mentioned briefly as a silent witness, from time to time: "José Cemí había oído de niño a la señora Augusta o a Rialta o a su tía Leticia decir ... allá en Jacksonville" (I, 61) or again "esa palabra de 'oidor', oída y saboreada por José Cemí como la clave imposible de un mundo desconocido" (I, 61). He is continually being initiated into his own family's history and values, a suitable lesson for a shaman or seer since he is "the principal custodian of the rich oral literature." 29

The child is to be the victim of three submersions in cold water, while Violante suffers a fourth which almost proves fatal. Elements of these horrific incidents are combined in Cemí's mind to produce nightmarish fancies which reveal his deepest fears. The tensions which lead to Cemí's trauma stem from his father's disappointment in him and his natural desire for fatherly approbation. The two are contrasted:

José Eugenio expansionaba su pecho de treinta años, parecía que se fumaba la brisa marina, dilataba las narices, tragaba una épica cantidad de oxígeno, y luego lo iba lanzando por la boca en lentas humaredas ... Pero enfrente veía a su hijo de cinco años, flacucho, con el costillar visible, jadeando cuando la brisa arreciaba, hasta hacerlo temblar con disfrazo ... (I, 177).

The contrast is made in terms of their breathing capacities; the father fills himself with life-giving air, enjoying nature's bounty; the child is over-sensitive to the same elements, and unable to expel air in a normal rhythm. This is meant to indicate that he cannot turn his experiences into words, so a method of coming to terms with reality has to
be found: "En el sueño gira, se desespera, quiere escribir en las almohadas ... se despierta como si hubiese salido del infierno. ¿Qué es lo que ve en esa excursión? Siente el sueño como un secuestro ... Cada sueño que no puede contar, lo ahoga, ahí está ya el asma" (I, 182).

The terms which Rialta uses to describe Cemí's distress remind the reader of Cemí's first crisis. They also echo Eliade's account of the necessary spiritual journeys of the shaman, down to hell. As Gimbernat de González has said: "El sueño es escritura, es traducción a un sistema nuevo. El ritmo desajustado, presencia del ritmo sistáltico, de la disnea, es fruto de lo no contado..." In his dreams, the child descends to a dark, unknown world, which is, in fact, his own psyche.

In the first incident, in the canoe, father and son are watching each other all the time: "miraba a su padre con astucia, para fingirle la normalidad de su respiración" while his father draws attention to the disability: "¿No notas extraña la respiración de Joseito? Fijate que él no respira igual que tú .... Cuando se pone así me intranquilizo ..." (I, 177). The father's concern is tempered by irritation, to the extent that he is prepared to risk the life of Violante, his favourite, in the murky pool at El Morro to show off his healthier child: "Quería evitar la vulgaridad trágico-comica, de que comenzaran a darle recetas, pócimas y yerbajos" (I, 179). The finger from which Cemí dangles in the water beside the canoe is "su índice hecho a ejercer la autoridad" (I, 177) and it is like an anchor, revealing that Cemí looks to his father for guidance and support. It is withdrawn at precisely the crucial moment and Cemí is left to sink or swim in the little whirlpool. This seems to me to be a symbolic representation of José Eugenio's death, which takes place at the onset of Cemí's adolescence. It is noticeable that Cemí expresses no anger towards his father but remains the silent victim, trying to confort the would-be teacher: "le daba palmadas a su padre,
asustado ahora por su susto" (I, 178). At El Morro, "Se veía que a José Eugenio Cemí le molestaba mostrar a su hijo con el asma ..." (I, 179) and in a heavy-handed attempt at joviality he tells the children that sharks frequented the pool in former times. Cemí is naturally transfixed with horror at the "Motivo para sustentar muchos años de pesadillas," as it becomes, especially as he is witness to Violante's peril. Again, there is much imagery evoking the descent to hell; Violante is likened to Eurydice; her rescuer is Poseidon; she is fished out with "largas varas con tridentes" (I, 179) which could refer back to the river and sea god, or to the devil's trident. The latter is more likely, for in one of Cemí's anguished dreams he equates "el perdón" (release from the subterranean hell) with "el despertar" (release from his dream). The quest is also evoked by the phrase "no encuentro la piedrecilla", which is the seed of wisdom or understanding. It is in this passage that a vivid image of the fish appears: "los tiburones ... la plata sagrada de sus escamas y caudas" and "los tiburones dormidos flotan ininterrumpidos en el aceite de sus músculos abandonados a la marea alta y a la flaccidez" (I, 179). The effect on Cemí is noticed by Rialta: "observó que se llevaba las manos a los ojos como queriendo rechazar una visión" (I, 181). The experience has already become a vision. The conversation between the anxious parents touches on the sources of Cemí's problem, its hereditary nature, possible remedies and its one possible benefit: "es una enfermedad protectora como una divinidad. El que la tiene, se inmuniza contra todas las enfermedades" (I, 182). It is seen as a mark of divine favour instead of a curse, in the same way as the poetic disposition which now isolates him will later be a great gift. His mother has noted already that his company is much sought by his friends when he is well. It is now José Eugenio's turn to try some sympathetic magic, plunging his son into the bath of ice to cure a fright with a shock. The third
submersion is the most obvious ritual: "La escena tenía algo de los antiguos sacrificios" (1., 183) and it is the climax of José Eugenio's attempts to restore Cemi to a normal rhythm of breathing, which would reassure the father that the son was not radically different in both body and mind. Neumann describes a similar phenomenon:

The pre-Christian plunge bath signifies return to the mysterious uterus of the Great Mother and its water of life. The plunge bath ... became in Christianity the baptismal bath of transformation....

Ancient gods have been held responsible for sending floods to wipe out their unsatisfactory creations and it seems as if the intention is to first cleanse and then bless with a new life, both physical and spiritual. This is the purpose of the Christian baptism and, according to Eliade, of the future seer or shaman's initiation, which requires a descent to the depths, here symbolized by the immersion of the child. The elements of destruction and re-creation are both present in the symbolism of these scenes.

Cemi's long and involved dream of the fish is woven around his father's inept efforts to "save" him from his condition and his mother's acceptance of it. It is she who refers to the illness as a blessing in disguise, she who deals with the aftermath of the father's well-meaning blunders: "Rialta penetró en el baño con la confianza de que iba a enmendar los yerros de su esposo" (I, 184). There can be no doubt that Cemi's relationships with his parents are problematic. It may be useful to summarise the dream briefly. Cemi is in the depths of a troubled sleep, his arm hangs extended over the bed, sweating profusely, and presently curls up over his chest. He glimpses his father in his uniform, bowing courteously before Doña Augusta's house. This vision fades and is replaced by the sensation of losing grip of his father's finger, as in the river, accompanied by an apparent loss of consciousness. A broad pink
fish leads him to the safety of a gentler rhythm of breathing and thereafter it is his mother who dominates the dream, in the form of a starfish which pulsates in the presence of the fish producing a white tegument. Along the tegument, little dwarves or elves with long white hair come merrily into a wooden cabin, in which Rialta presides over a long table covered with platters. The child's arm continues to expand and contract and he witnesses again Violante's disappearance down the fearful hole, but now he sees his mother on the edge. The dwarves become active again, bursting in over the sill in one direction, then suddenly, many of them exit once more as the door opens of its own accord. Those remaining inside wear red waistcoats with blue buttons, and they tap out special rhythms to settle into their new home. Cemi's arm now relaxes on the cool stone floor, as if he is aware that it is his mother who governs his existence and baptises him in soothing water. Each dwarf now goes to his rightful position where the platters contain fish with faces like that of Rialta. They seem to be nestling into the walls, forming a kind of Marian retable. The child awakes in a much happier state of mind:

"como si sobre sus más oscuros regiones, el mediodía hubiese comenzado a predominar" (I, 187).

The most interesting piece of work, to date, on the above passage has been done by Pérez Firmat, who believes that the dream is but one element in a web of homosexual imagery and themes in Paradiso:

The psychoanalytic background of Cemí's sexual ambivalence is well-defined. According to Freud, Stekel, Irving Beiber ... male homosexual tendencies are often the result of a child's fixation on the mother coupled with a fear of an authoritarian or aloof father. [...] The childhood of Cemí repeats this pattern.

There is no denying the fact that Cemí's experiences with his parents would provide the makings of a Freudian text book case. This in itself should put the reader on guard, if only because it is too obvious.
Lezama has said: "el cristiano puede decir, desde la flor hasta el falo, este es el dedo de Dios"—words which he puts in the mouth of Cemi (I, 425). Being able to see a higher meaning in all things could also be a gift of the poet, and so the reader must dig deeply to understand Lezama's intentions in *Paradiso*: "su raíz es innegablemente ecuménica, es católica ... si algún autor se ha caracterizado por la gravedad de su obra he sido yo." 33 So what can be the purpose of what seems to be a passage laden with sexual overtones? I agree with Pérez Firmat in that the fish and the finger are José Eugenio and that Rialta is the rescuer. The union of Rialta and the child appears to Pérez Firmat to be "the ultimate consequence of Cemi's Oedipal fixation: the desire to copulate with his mother," and he explains his evidence carefully: "As in copulation, both parties move rhythmically and become as one"; the orgasm is symbolized by the entry of the dwarves into the house, the rigid arm is the phallus and the perspiration is the sperm; "The banquet that goes on inside the house is another symbol for the satisfaction of the sexual drive." Pérez Firmat continues:

As in copulation, some midgets/sperm remain inside the house/vagina and some do not.[...]. Those who remain are the ones wearing red vests [...]. Red is the colour associated with lust [...]. The suggestion of coitus is maintained by repeated references to rhythmic motion: the midgets that descend on the tegument are "riéndose en su vaivén [...]" the midgets dance while discovering the secrets of the house (the sperm exploring the vagina).

Finally, this critic sees the relaxation of Cemi's hand as "the post-orgasmic detumescence of the penis" and the movements of the midgets from one room to another as "the passage of the sperm from the vagina into the uterus where the ova/fish are fertilized/eaten." 34

Whilst this interpretation may add to a fuller understanding of the text, it does not reach right to the heart of the matter, so I propose to re-examine the dream, bearing in mind the imagery of descent and initiation so far uncovered. Lezama has interwoven Cemi's daytime
trauma with what appears to be part of the children's fairytale of Snow White and the Seven Dwarves. It is most certainly the dream of a child who needs "to restore psychological balance by producing dream material that re-establishes, in a subtle way, the total psychic equilibrium"; these are the words of C. G. Jung, on the subject of the general function of dreams. 35 Cemi needs to resolve his confused relationships with his parents. In the dream, the entry of the dwarves into the little cabin ("una casa de madera, como de cazadores canadienses"; I, 185) represents the "hut for initiations" which Eliade notes to be common to many nations and which he says "symbolizes the maternal womb"; hence the entry of the future seer into the hut implies his descent into death and his return to the womb in the foetal condition: "the candidate's regression to the pre-natal stage is meant to render him contemporary with the creation of the world; he no longer lives in the maternal womb as he did before his biological birth, but in the cosmic Night and in the expectation of the 'dawn' — that is, of the Creation." 36 The healing powers of such a return to the womb were believed to be very strong, and this healing process seems to have its effect on Cemi, who awakes refreshed to a new dawn: "pudo ver por primera vez a su barrio en la madrugada, cuando la retirada de la brumosa y bostezada placenta nocturna deja a la arcilla y a las piedras de las casas bondadosamente lavadas ..." (I, 187). He survives his night of illness in the first chapter in the same way, since he awakes bathed in a golden halo of light, on a morning reminiscent of the end of the biblical flood, symbolizing God's forgiveness, or the return a new beginning. I feel, therefore, that while Cemi's dream may possibly reflect the child's total identification with his mother by the use of the imagery representing a physical union, there is a greater probability that it represents a successful symbolic death and mystical rebirth of the child destined to be a poet. It is successful in
contrast to those "deaths", imposed by the father, which have ended in hasty rescues and withdrawals from the point of danger.

What Cemi witnesses here in his dream is, in a sense, his own conception, rather than his copulation with his mother. It is clear that the marriage of Rialta with José Eugenio is a sacred event, unbesmirched with any taint of sexual desire, that it is a marriage of concepts. We know nothing of the couple's intimate relationship and it seems to me that Cemi's dream places the marriage on a ritual level once more, as the child struggles to come to terms with his own being, examining his own inherited characteristics. Lezama has gone to great lengths to enumerate these characteristics as they occur in members of Cemi's family tree, both Cemis and Olayas. He has in fact devoted the better part of five chapters to revealing that the Cemis embody the active spirit in Man and that the Olayas are contemplative and more passive. He even goes so far as to picture these features in the physiognomy of some, such as Eloísa's fine, English lips and José María's powerful head and short, bull-like neck. The regal air shared by Rialta and her mother signifies their susceptibility to the influence of the spiritual, of higher reality. Finally, José Eugenio expresses his vigour and his slightly aggressive nature in his hearty laughter while Rialta possesses a gentle, inspiring smile, of which José Eugenio has said: "Me pareció que nuestra antigua carcajada necesitaba de esa sonrisa, que nos daba la lección del espíritu actuando sobre la carne, perfeccionándola ..." (I, 148).

It seems to me that José Eugenio represents natural Man and Rialta represents spiritual Man, the first having recourse to science and ethics, and the second looking beyond his material nature to hidden qualities of the spirit or the subconscious. One might say, with J. L. Henderson:

Here we come to that aspect of initiation which acquaints man with woman and woman with man in such a way as to
correct some sort of original male-female opposition. Man's knowledge (Logos) then encounters woman's relatedness (Eros) and their union is represented as that symbolic ritual of a sacred marriage which has been at the heart of initiation since its origins in the mystery-religions of antiquity.  

Rialta's smile is a symbol of her female "relatedness" and there is no doubt that José Eugenio has an active and questioning mind, as shown by his chosen career of mathematics and engineering. José Cemí must choose between the active and the contemplative modes, he must become "actively contemplative" in order to fulfill his eventual role as poet and seer. This would require him to combine his "male" and "female" aspects, to become fully integrated as an individual, capable of plunging into the depths of his psyche and emerging unscathed. His dream grapples with these problems of the Unconscious.

The image of the child's arm extending and contracting may remind the reader of Lezama's description of his childhood dream of reaching out for the other hand, which he explains thus in "Confluencias":

No solamente esperaba la otra mano, sino también la otra palabra, que está formando en nosotros un continuo hecho y deshecho por instantes .... Saber que por instantes algo viene a completarnos, y que ampliando la respiración se encuentra un ritmo universal. Inspiración y espiración que son un ritmo universal .... Lo que se oculta es lo que nos completa .... El saber que no nos pertenece y el desconocimiento que nos pertenece forman para mí la verdadera sabiduría (11,1210-11).

The hand reaches out to the unknown, in the threatening night, and what it seeks is the creative power of language. Finding true knowledge is equated with joining the balanced rhythm of the universe, as symbolized in the natural rhythm of breathing. The arm seeks "una casi invisible salvación" (I, 184), in Cemí's troubled sleep. It is bathed in a cold sweat which "coincidía con la respiración, que se hacía más dificultosa y anhelante" (I, 184), so that Cemí's anxiety increases as his arm gropes about in vain, and the sign of his troubled condition, an asthma attack,
appears. It also reveals his divorce from the natural rhythm of the universe, sought by Lezama in his childhood dreams in the form of self-expression in language. Cemi now seems to be swimming about in "el acuario del sueño," reminding us of the river scene when he almost drowned. Just as he glimpses clearly his father bowing to his grandmother's house (resignation?), like a suitor come to call on Rialta, he is sucked into a vortex and seems to lose consciousness. This may signify that Cemi has moved into a time preceding his own birth, to the time of his parents' courtship. It strongly suggests a descent into the unknown, and certainly into darkness: "parecía como si le pusiesen una mano frente a los ojos, entonces una ola oscura y con cuernos ..." (I, 184); the latter seems like an image of the devil and hell. The child's rescue by a second fish could be his father's remorse at nearly drowning him. The second fish's laughter (one of José Eugenio's characteristics) is not unkind, for it protects the child's finger just as his father has initially helped him to swim. This fish leads Cemi to "unas flotaciones muscíneas, donde comenzaba la música acompsada, de fino cálculo, de su nueva respiración" (I, 185). This could mean that José Eugenio, who is basically well-intentioned towards his son, brings him to Rialta for comfort and that the child is more at ease in her company, because their characters have more in common. The rhythm is that of balanced breathing, foetal breathing perhaps; its secondary meaning may be that of the rhythm of sexual intercourse, since the "salvación por la pez" dissolves into "el rostro de su madre" whose symbol at this point is a starfish. The interaction of the starfish and the fish who brought Cemi to her may very well represent the sexual union of his parents: "una estrella de mar, que se contrafa o expandía a la cercanía del pez" (I, 185); and by implication, his own conception. The role of the fish is momentary and it is soon absorbed in an image of Rialta's family tree: "se borraba en el reposo
de hojas gigantescas, de visible circulación clorofílica, para metamorfo-
searse en el rostro de su madre" (I, 185). This image calls to mind
the concept of the Earth Mother and her consort, but I will postpone an
examination of this aspect of the relationship for the present. José
Eugenio's death will effect his withdrawal from the scene and the in-
creased influence of Rialta, the all-encompassing mother-figure. José
Eugenio is the means whereby the child is brought to the depths, in im-
mersions, and also in the sense of José Eugenio's seed being brought to
Rialta; that is what I think is symbolized by the fish and the starfish.

I accept Pérez Firmat's interpretation of the movement of the sperm/
dwarves into the house, but I think that the house is a symbol of the
womb and the dream itself is a return to that womb, or to the Creation.
I am encouraged in this view by some remarks on the creation myth and,
in particular, on the "ouroboros", made by Neumann:

So long as the infantile ego-consciousness is weak
and feels the strain of its own existence as heavy
and oppressive, while drowsiness and sleep are felt
as delicious pleasure, it has not yet discovered its
own reality and differentness.

As a result,

It is in this sense that we speak of "uroboric incest" ... to be understood symbolically, not concretistically and
sexually [...].

Uroboric incest is a form of entry into the mother, of
union with her. In uroboric incest, the emphasis upon
pleasure and love is in no sense active, it is more a
desire to be dissolve and absorbed .... The Great Mo-
ther takes the little child back into herself, and al-
ways over uroboric incest there stand the insignia of
death, signifying final dissolution in union with the
Mother.

It is almost impossible to determine whether the rhythmic union takes
place between Cemí and his mother, or between the mother and father.

As there are continual references to foetal breathing rhythm which might
also be the rhythm of intercourse, and since the entry into the womb is an act of creation on the part of the father's sperm and a return to the origins, to the depths of the Unconscious, on the part of Cemí, I would say that both a physical and a spiritual union are implied. That of Cemí with his mother represents a spiritual oneness, his preference for the contemplative mode of thinking, "produciendo un ámbito donde su respiración parecía zafar sus cordeles" (I, 187). The "blanco tegumento algooso" seems to be connected with "la descarga del sudor por el canal del brazo" (I, 185), so it does seem as if the child's re-entry into the womb is directly linked with sexual intercourse. Father and child become almost indistinguishable, but I think this is partly because Lezama is using the same symbolism to represent two different types of union. The horror of "el boquete infernal de aquella piscina, que parecía buscar el centro de la tierra, el infierno de los griegos" (I, 185) is a vivid evocation of a second death, of the return to the womb. It is unlikely, in the dream of a five year old, to be the horror of the vagina which Fronesis later feels. One should remember that Cemí regularly suffers a simulated death in his asthma attacks, and is predisposed to this type of sensitivity, to loss of consciousness and the feeling of falling into darkness. Violante is mentioned to give the dream-like sensation of observing yourself acting in your own dreams. It is really himself that Cemí sees teetering on the brink. The sperm which stay in the womb have distinctive markings of red and blue but the colours may only have the vague meaning which Pérez Firmat ascribes to them (red for lust and the genital area of the female). When the arm finally relaxes, it is bathed in dew, which may represent the moisture of the vagina or the sperm, or rocío may be used as a sign of fertility, even the potential for creation which is encouraged by Rialta in her son. His father has now disappeared completely, so the episode could be another fore-runner of the death of
José Eugenio and Rialta's new role as centre of the family. An important example of her influence on Cemi is her advice to him after he has been in danger in the student riots. Rialta's influence is like "un bautizo" (I, 186), a word which enhances the idea of Cemi as a chosen one. He emerges from the depths thanks to his mother, whose face appears in all things: "todas las figuras remedian el rostro mariano ..." (I, 187). Rialta has become identified with the Virgin Mary which, according to Pérez Firmat, "allows him to avoid guilt-feelings by removing his affections to a neutral object." 40

The same critic has devoted some time in his study of Paradiso to equating Rialta and Beatrice, as guides and mentors to Cemi and Dante respectively. Given the similarity of title that we have noted, it seems highly plausible that Beatrice is as a mother to Dante, for she is said to look at him "con quel sembiante che madre fa sovra figlio deliro" (Paradiso; i, 101-2); and given the ambiguity of sexual roles in Cemi's dream, we can imagine Rialta as at least a spiritual mother/lover, whose smile introduces Cemi to "un mundo mágico" (I, 198) and "la lección del espíritu" (I, 148). It seems to me that Rialta's nature as a type of the Virgin Mary goes far beyond being a method of guilt transference.

M. L. von Franz discusses the presence of a female in male dreams as follows:

[The dreamer] will discover a female [or male] personification of his unconscious .... Jung called its male and female forms "animus" and "anima." The anima is a personification of all feminine psychological tendencies, in a man's psyche, such as vague feelings and moods, prophetic hunches, receptiveness to the irrational, capacity for personal love, feeling for nature ... and his relation to the unconscious. 41

As Rialta is Cemi's link with the Unconscious, and provides much of his poetic inspiration, which can only come from an exploration of one's own Unconscious, the theory of the anima seems particularly appropriate.
Von Franz continues by saying that "In its individual manifestation, the character of a man's anima is as a rule shaped by his mother." 42 Various types of influence, for better or for worse, are then examined, and it is tempting to recognise amongst them one kind of anima which seems to have power over Cemi:

Whenever a man's logical mind is incapable of discerning facts that are hidden in his unconscious, the anima helps him to dig them out. Even more vital is the role that the anima plays in putting a man's mind in tune with the right inner values and thereby opening the way into the more profound inner depths ... In establishing this inner "radio" reception, the anima takes on the role of guide or mediator, to the world within and to the Self [...], this is the role of Beatrice in Dante's Paradiso.

I would say that this is also the role of Rialta. José Eugenio, the active part of Man, brings Cemi, the seed, to Rialta, the contemplative part. Both are needed, but the active half is only the initiator of the process, a factor which can later be dispensed with. The reader may be reminded here of the immobile Chinaman and the manatee, the creative void and the image struggling to come into being, the passive "female" principle and the active "male" principle. If Cemi is to be a poet, possessing intuition and receptiveness to "the right inner values", he must go in search of his "female" side. This does not mean that he will automatically develop homosexual tendencies, as Pérez Firmat suggests, but it may mean that he runs a grave risk of being overwhelmed by that side of his nature, as he explores the Unconscious. His great challenge in life will be the mastery of all elements so that both sides are held harmoniously in balance.

The harmonious union of the opposing principles of heaven and earth, male and female, in tao, "el vacío embrionario" (II, 890), has long been the desire of the Chinese philosophers and alchemists who sought the secret of eternal life or longevity. Lezama describes a process devised
by them to achieve this end, in "Las eras imaginarias: la biblioteca como dragón":

El taoísmo estableció lo que ellos llaman la respiración embrionaria, que trataba de imitar la respiración del feto en la vientre maternal. Al volver a la base, al retornar al origen, se expulsa a la vejez, se vuelve al estado de feto, se retorna al origen. (11, 899)

It could be a description of Cemi's dream, with the new rhythm it brings, but for the fact that the dream is virtually an unconscious experience for the five year old. This is but a preliminary return to the ouroboric, undefined Unconscious. Cemi must yet, like Orpheus, make the journey as a fully-conscious adult in order to make the experience his own, prior to winning the gift of poetic insight.

II. Images of Death

La poesía es algo más misterioso que una dedicación, pues yo le puedo decir a usted que cuando mi padre murió yo tenía ocho años, y esa ausencia me hizo hipersensible a la presencia de una imagen. Ese hecho fue para mí una conmoción tan grande que desde muy niño ya pude percibir que era muy sensible a lo que estaba y no estaba, a lo visible y a lo invisible. Yo siempre esperaba algo, pero si no sucedía nada entonces percibía que mi espera era perfecta, y que ese espacio vacío, esa pausa inexorable tenía yo que llenarla con lo que al paso del tiempo fue la imagen. 44

In these moving words Lezama expresses his belief that the death of his own father is the major event in his poetic development. It has come to represent in his mind the basis of his image-forming capacity. Confronted with the inexplicable absence of a person once centrally placed in his world, the child's mind is filled with horror by the sudden emptiness and hastens to eliminate the infinite void with the images formed in the course of grappling with the concept of death. Something which began as a balm to the child's troubled spirit gradually transforms itself
into a great gift for a future poet. In some terrible act of the gods, the perfect way of life is swept aside; the stability of family life is shattered when Lezama's father dies, and he is forced to seek new answers. *Paradiso* is the story of that quest. Cemi begins by searching for his father and ends up seeking higher reality through imagery which he hopes will provide an answer to death. We have seen how the pathetic creature of the first chapter has been marked out for his task by his illness which causes his unusual breathing rhythm and isolates him from others. It becomes clear that the child's future role is that of seer, for his particular circumstances have elected him to cherish and protect the family tree in whatever way he can. We have witnessed the various rites administered by José Eugenio, in his attempts to restore his son to his idea of normality; Cemi's dream expresses the disturbed state of the five year old mind which longs to return to the warm security of the womb to escape his father's heartiness and the outside world; ultimately the dream of the return to the womb, to the original unity, signifies that the child has undergone a symbolic death and rebirth at the sub-conscious level. It indicates also, by the withdrawal of the father from the dream situation, the complete spiritual union of mother and son. Since Rialta has been presented to the reader consistently as a vessel of the spirit and of Grace, as a Marian figure like Dante's Beatrice, it becomes clear that Cemi's preference for the more contemplative qualities of his mother denotes his receptiveness to a higher level of reality. Cemi's inner mind is already aware that he must seek out the "female" element of his nature, using the driving force and energy of the "male" element - he must become actively contemplative. Rialta will become, in Jungian terms, Cemi's anima; in poetic terms, his Muse. Three years before his father's death, the child bears in some secret corner of his psyche the knowledge that his choice in life has
been made. Related so closely to the sacred and spiritual, Rialta will naturally expand her influence to fill the void in her son's life, until she becomes indispensible to his poetic world.

Death is no stranger to José Cemi; it stalks around his bed during every asthma attack, while the child floats dreamily in the vapours of soporific herbal remedies. He is no doubt familiar with the memories of Andresito and old Cambita, not to mention three of his grandparents, all held dear and oft-lamented by those remaining. The various incidents in the child's life catalogued by Lezama between the dream of the return to the womb and the death of José Eugenio are all, each in its own way, experiences by which Cemi is compelled to formulate images; almost all are images of death.

Rodríguez Monegal proffers a list of important experiences in Cemi's development "desde la muerte y resurrección incesante que se produce con los frecuentes ataques de asma de la niñez" and including "toda esa sucesión de instantes de revelación, iluminación, visitación de lo sobrenatural que acompañan su desarrollo." He abandons his task, admitting that the very presence of any event in the novel guarantees its significance to Cemi. The novel is composed of precious formative moments. Ortega regards the novel in a similar light: Cemi's life is "una serie de iniciaciones -en el proceso de aprendizaje- [...] adquieren una resonancia de destino casi religioso, presidido por la coincidencia de un oficiante - el padre, la madre, el tío Alberto, los amigos, Licario-...." The child is willing to learn from everything he is able to absorb via his senses, but almost all the incidents are beyond his understanding at the time he perceives them. He tends to stumble from one to another, somewhat blindly. In rapid succession we are presented with: an interview between father and son, with the son's confusion of the terms *bachiller* and *amolador*; the heroism of the father before his men, faced
with bandits; Doña Augusta's aphorisms; the exhumation of her father; Santa Flora and the Olaya smile; the rustic bedtime stories of Baldovinia; the Colonel's death song. We must attempt to uncover Lezama's intentions and the hidden meaning of these diverse moments in the childhood of Cemi. We must ask: which moments are singled out, and why?

When Cemi emerges from "la brumosa y bostezada placenta nocturna" (I, 187), the world seems to unfold itself before him with a clarity hitherto unknown. The dream has had its restorative effect and when he meet his father downstairs, his heightened senses take pleasure in the odour exuded by the book before he becomes interested in the contents indicated by "el dedo índice del padre" (I, 188). The finger is that of the Creator, protector and tutor, but on this occasion the lesson takes an unexpected turn. Lezama offers here a perfect example of the interaction of two quite distinct phenomena which, on being abruptly juxtaposed, strike sparks of meaning off one another. The sudden flash of insight attains the level of incondicionado (LGT, pp. 34-5) and an additional meaning is born. Cemi's apparent "raro don metafórico" (I, 188) is actually the result of a misunderstanding for the child confuses the new names bachiller and amolador when looking at the illustrations. Nevertheless, his combination of the traditional images (the scholar at his studies and the knife-grinder surrounded by showers of sparks) provides a vivid, new image of that scholar locked away with his dusty books:

Un bachiller es una rueda que lanza chispas, que a medida que la rueda va alcanzando más velocidad, las chispas se multiplican hasta aclarar la noche (I, 188).

The new image appears to be an inspired metaphor evoking the gift of wisdom or of poetry, illuminating the darkness of ignorance and confusion. Above all, the incident reveals how the unexpected, higher level may be reached when two elements of daily reality are thrown together in what Lezama calls the vivencia oblicua (LGT, pp. 34-5).
The Colonel's success in routing bandits in the country districts is portrayed as it must have seemed to the small boy, as an act of heroism worthy of admiration. The reader is shown that, despite certain differences between the natures of father and son, the child can still look upon the father as a conquering hero who cheerfully defies wrong-doing and death itself: "No estaban acostumbrados a las actuaciones de un cubano fuerte, viril, que en cualquier latitud donde estuvo, se ganó la admiración ..." (I, 189). Cemi will naturally want to emulate his father, but in a different field of action. He will especially wish to imitate José Eugenio's lack of respect for death, "la gesta por la que se ganó la buena y graciosa simpatía del pueblo de Dios" (I, 190). José Eugenio is never seen in a truly war-like situation at any stage in the novel. However we are left in no doubt as to his moral strength and qualities of leadership — his potential in any walk of life is immense: "la alegría fuerte, que marcaba las líneas de la cara con decisión dominante ..." (I, 191).

Cemi once again has the exclusive attention of the womenfolk when his father is absent and his mother and Doña Augusta reign supreme again. The grandmother broadens his education by bringing home little figurines and precious curiosities, which help to expand his imagination. Words and objects are now highly evocative: "vio el camino trazado entre las cosas y la imagen, tan pronto ese pueblo empezó a evaporar en sus recuerdos. Veía, como en un cuadro de Breughel, el pueblo por la mañana ..." (I, 192). Other works of art influence the child, including a Venus with Cupid. The most impressive aspect of Doña Augusta is her prodigious memory, which she combines with her aphorisms such as "La caca del huérfano hiede más" (I, 194). Lezama defines the effect of this use of language as the creation of a state of awareness in the listener (Cemi) of "la presencia de lo nauseabundo contrastado con la del esplendor" (I, 194). This might be more clearly seen in the phrase "Eso es como escupir sangre
en una bacinilla de oro," and its ultimate consequence in writing could be Lezama's detailed description of the growth extracted from Rialta's body, which Cemi observes with fascinated horror in its jar. It is beautifully ugly (I, 451-2) and the writer dwells upon it. Lezama is not averse to poeticising the unpleasant for his own ends, and we are shown here how Cemi first experiences such a use of language on a smaller scale. Juxtaposition of opposites produces some witty results here but Lezama will later expand the notion to encompass even the grotesque, as in the infamous eighth chapter.

Images of a sombre nature soon invade Cemi's conscious mind, on overhearing Doña Augusta's gory tale of the exhumation of her father. She relishes the story, it is clear: "Pero lo que aquella tarde vi rebasó todas mis suposiciones, todas mis posibilidades imaginativas, sobre la línea donde lo irreal pesa más que lo real y le da como pies para andar" (I, 195). She can only recall how filled with joy she was at the glimpse of a loved-one long dead, even though the vision is shattered at once by the effect of the elements. Such a miraculous preservation of the outward image of the man inspires Doña Augusta: "Nos dio como una última orden, que sin poderla interpretar nos llenó y nos recorrió de nuevo" (I, 196). Hardly surprisingly, this vision from beyond the grave has the power to horrify the young eavesdropper. The nightmare which follows involves Cemi in an imitation of his father's military manoeuvres on a mysterious plain where forms coalesce and dissolve before his eyes: "los cuerpos, en las extensas invitaciones que le hacía la llanura, se troocaban en los polvorosos remolinos y después volvían a rehacerse de nuevo en las falsas seguridades de sus acostumbradas figuras" (I, 197). Memories of his grandmother's story are present in the changing form of reality, while admiration for his father causes him to mimic soldiery. Santí sees the mimicry as a desire to replace his father, suppressed but
appearing in the dream; he rightly draws attention to the introduction to the passage ("Esa noche volvieron las pesadillas a cabalar de nuevo las Erinnias" (I, 196) which refers to "Las Furias o Eumenides, cuya función, entre otras, era la de castigar a los parricidas." 47 As we have already observed, Santí points out the presence of the Erinnias image in Cemi’s night of illness. Here, however, the critic links it with the Colonel’s comments on Cemi’s persistent nightmares which he (the Colonel) refuses to take seriously:

Lezama’s thinly-veiled reference to Freudian theory is surely a warning to the unwary that Cemi’s condition of mind is not psychotic. He suffers not from an easily-defined oedipal complex, but rather from a poetic intuition which leads him on inexorably to cultivate those qualities inherent in his mother’s gentle personality. The Erinnias are mentioned in order to implant in the reader’s mind the concept of the father being replaced by the son; it is present in the child’s imagination largely because of the image of the preserved corpse crumbling to dust, that is, an image of life disintegrating in an instant.

Santa Flora’s waxen perfection exudes an aura of concrete reality which confuses Cemi even more, until he is convinced that the religious image is the body of the dead saint. Lezama is unusually explicit in his description of Cemi’s lack of understanding, putting much emphasis on his tender years: "iba descubriendo los objetos, pero sin tener una masa en extenso que fuera propicia a la formación de análogos y a los agrupamientos de las desemejanzas en torno a núcleos de distribución y de nuevos ordenamientos" (I, 198). In other words, his Immature mind
does not yet possess enough information to make the kind of cross-references necessary for successful images and metaphors to be produced. Nevertheless, the child is enabled to glimpse the level of higher reality, lo incondicionado, in his grandmother’s smile:

Esa sonrisa su imaginación volvía a inaugurarla cada vez que era necesaria una introducción al mundo mágico. La sonrisa que observaba ... no era causal, no era la respuesta a una motivación placentera o jocosa. Era el artificio de una recta bondad, manejada con delicadeza y voluntad, que parecía disipar los genios de lo errante y lo siniestro (I, 198).

The reader is reminded, inevitably, of José Eugenio’s reaction to the smiles of Eloísa and Rialta. The women and the smiles are one and the same, mirrors reflecting Divine Grace upon the beggars at the church door, their friends and family circle. Even the comparatively young Cemi is aware of the secret power of this particular smile, which can dispel evil. The regal air and the apparent graciousness which accompanies it might lead one to think of a contemporary figure such as the British royal family’s queen mother, who seems to embody both qualities in her public image. The child is consciously linking his female relatives with the world of the miraculous because he notices it most at those moments when the women are speaking of awesome subjects such as the preservation of a body after death, religious statues, and works of art, all in rich, fluent, elegant language. It is no wonder that this exotic blend of imagery and death disturbs the child’s sleep. Baldovinia’s stories are quite innocuous but may well have sexual overtones of which Cemi is not unaware, although he does not understand them: "Eran sus cuentos comienzos de fábulas, pragmáticas introducidas a la Fontaine, o relatos de sangre" (I, 199) which often have hastily improvised endings to conceal their true meaning. The Colonel’s reaction to Baldovinia’s reports on Cemi’s nightmares is typical and quite in character, for he turns Cemi’s fear of death into a joke: "Cuando nosotros estábamos vivos/
andábamos por ese camino/ y ahora que estamos muertos/ andamos por este otro ..." (I, 201). In retrospect, the song is deeply ironic since within a few pages the Colonel himself will be treading the other path. Cemí's horror at the thought of his father even "playing dead" is almost overwhelming and combines with all the other images of death previously experienced, in a ghoulish chorus in his mind. He is quite uncertain of his father's power to overcome death, despite his earlier admiration for him.

I feel that we must connect José Eugenio's earlier successful exploits with Cemí's fear, because there has been an aura of death hanging over this chapter, even in the tales of bravado. The wedding of José Eugenio and Rialta is closely followed by the incident with Don Demetrio, in which José Eugenio, the Colonel, features as the burlador burlado in a game of death (I, 176). The description of Rialta's defence of the Colonel's strawberry plants contains quite alarming images of the tree struck down, yet the aftermath is strangely optimistic (the juice of the destroyed plants makes mysterious patterns on the wall, natural abstract art). Now, instead of a scene of victory, Cemí sees and hears signs of tragedy. His father's laughter echoes constantly in the short passage: "Le quedaba aún la vibración anchurosa de la carcajada ..."; "sentía la carcajada de su padre ..."; "su padre, con el disfraz de la muerte y el recuerdo de la carcajada tratando de destruir la imagen ..." (I, 201), but it is now hollow and rings out in vain. It has always been a symbol of good health and happiness but now Cemí imagines it being swept aside, as in a circus trick:

como si le remacharan las tablas del entarimado que lo sostenía, y ya entonces caía de brúces, reemplazándose el golpe en la frente por silenciosas carcajadas de algodón, que arden con levedad, desprendiendo un humo como si la figura antes de hundirse se quitara el sombrero, de acuerdo con la tradición milenaria y desconocida (I, 201).
This is a striking picture of a burlador burlado. Lezama does not intend us to think of the Colonel's attitude to death as entirely pointless, but he shows clearly that he is pitifully unprepared for a reality which refuses to be laughed away. The female branches of the family tree are much more in tune with rhythms of life and death, and perhaps for this reason, they tend to outlive their partners. So, in answer to the question: "Which moments are singled out?", we see that Cemi's life is charted in terms of moments of insight into reality, particularly into the nature of death. As to the reason, Lezama wants to underline the fact that Cemi learns simultaneously about imagery, language and death. He will later employ the weapons of imagery and creative writing against death.

Masks of death have watched over the Colonel at many points in his life and it seems that Lezama hopes to direct the alert reader to the second chapter, by means of a reference to his early career in Kingston and Mexico. In the same paragraph, he reveals finally that Jose Eugenio's death is at hand, drawing in other family tragedies which unite the preceding chapters:

Otra vez, la primera en los días de la emigración del separatismo, la familia iba a sufrir un sumergimiento, una ruptura, ¿una profundización en la dimensión de verticalidad tierra-cielo? Lo cierto es que la catastrófpe que se avecinaba, abandonaría la familia a su dimensión de imagen, de ausencia [...] la espiral levantada por el padre, al consumirse en el monótono desesperado destino del hijo, logra realizar el esplendor de un destino familiar, donde cada uno de los sobrevivientes logra prolongar la casi gloriosa visibilidad de sus misterios ... (I, 202).

Lezama insists that the reader be aware of all the ramifications of the death, after which, he implies, the son will replace the father in an interpretative role. Looking back at the Colonel's early career, in the firm knowledge that he is destined to die in the prime of life (aged thirty
three years), we appreciate that he is a marked man, rather like his son. Examining the imagery carefully, we can see that the death is inevitable and even necessary, in the sense that out of loss comes gain on a different level. What this really means is that as a result of a long period of meditation on his personal tragedy, Lezama has deciphered certain patterns within it, patterns which transpose the death on to a mythical plane where its poetic potential may be exploited. We have seen that certain deaths can be creative, such as that of the manatee, around whom were woven many symbols of religious sacrifice. These sacrifices were intended to ensure continuing fecundity on all levels of creation, to influence the gods. Signs and portents of this sort surround the Colonel. Some have been noted in passing, but a brief review of the most striking will prove valuable.

The Colonel appears bearing fruit (a melon) in the early pages of the novel, whistling a tune from the "Merry Widow" which we now know to be rather ironical. He is surrounded by the colours of fruitfulness, green and yellow, "Al acercarse contrastaba el oliva de su uniforme con el amarillo yeminal del melón ..." (I, 21) and by "el olor natural del rocío" (I, 22). Roció, dew from the heavens, is frequently connected with both the Colonel and his father; both are men fulfilling the role of grafts on to the Olaya family tree, which is almost a matriarchal line. It is the great female characters in the family who are especially recalled (Mela, Carmen Alate) but José María Cemí is remembered for his vigour, symbolized by his strong bull-like neck. Men in the family who have died young include José María Cemí, Don Andrés Olaya, Andresito and, by implication the husbands of Abuela Munda, Abuela Mela and Carmen Alate. It will soon be the turn of José Eugenio and Alberto. The women also follow a distinct pattern. All have been blessed with longevity and are more deeply aware of the spiritual side of life. We have
noted that Rialta and Augusta are almost one and the same person, sharing all their interests, a special regal smile expressing the miraculous, widowhood and responsibility for José Cemi's education. They represent the prevailing female principle and by virtue of their spiritual insight they have the most powerful influence on Cemi. The Cemi men seem to me to embody many of the main characteristics of the mythical husband of the Great Goddess or Earth Mother, as described by Eliade:

this structure made up of the rainy sky, bull and Great Goddess was one of the elements that united all the proto-historic religions of Europe, Africa and Asia ... the greatest stress is laid on those functions of the sky god in bull form which bear on birth and plant life. 48

Similarly, the greatest significance of the Cemí males is in their contribution to the family tree (fruit of the Earth) which is represented by all kinds of vegetation at different stages in the novel. That their role is essential is often stressed, for the matriarchal line is helpless without their power. José Eugenio, the "sky god", will express his power as "simply an unlimited reservoir of seeds." 49 He is the rain watering the earth and his seed is Cemi, while the name Eugenio suggests the cultivator of the seed. At his death there is a flowing-out of creative power: "como una campanilla que se dilata hasta el rocío de las hojas nocturnas" (I, 217), at the precise moment that the telephone rings to announce the death. This little phrase contains the elements of dew, vegetation and the fertile night, all directly related to José Eugenio.

These exalted beings, the embodiment of the life-bringing elements, pay a high price for the favours of the Great Goddess:

They are no longer the creators who make the cosmos ... but simply fecundators and procreators at the biological level. Hierogamy with the goddess becomes their essential function ... but they never play the leading part in them [fertility cults], that is always played either by a Great Mother, or by a "son", the god of vegetation who periodically dies and rises again.
There is no doubt that women have all the leading roles in *Paradiso*, but the men are indispensable, nevertheless. Women have a certain regal presence befitting the goddess and they are archetypal mothers in the novel. If the men are gods of a rather ephemeral type such as Attis, Adonis and Tammuz, they are doomed. The marriage of Rialta with José Eugenio is the "hierogamy with the goddess" described by Eliade above. It is anotably pure union, celebrated in great pomp, and many of Rialta's characteristics as Great Goddess are emphasized. She is presented as the centre or focal point and "ostentaba sonriente el tranquilo rielar de la casta Venus" (I, 169). Her chastity is unquestioned but the phrase "siempre ... causaría esa impresión como de caminar sobre las aguas" (I, 170) must refer not only to her spiritual gifts but must also call to mind the traditional representation of Venus rising from the waves, as in Botticelli's painting. She is a chaste mother goddess and later a Marian figure, embodying the positive aspects of the myth. However, in the inevitability of her husband's death, we can see the more fearful side of her nature. He is clearly marked out as "el dios de las cosechas opimas, que armado de una gran cornucopia inunda las nieblas ..." (I, 43-44) and is simultaneously "perseguido muy de cerca por la muerte" (I, 43). The role of god of the harvest brings in its wake the role of sacrifice. It must be stressed, nevertheless, that there is no dark side to Rialta's character in the novel and this is because the death of José Eugenio is part of the natural process, a phase in the cycle of life. Eliade explains it thus:

When the Earth becomes a goddess of Death, it is simply because she is felt to be the universal womb, the inexhaustible source of all creation. Death is not, in itself, a definite end, not an absolute annihilation .... Death is likened to the seed which is sown in the bosom of the Earth Mother to give birth to a new plant.
No blame is to be apportioned since the death will eventually be turned to good by the son, Cemf. The reader has already seen a character return to the womb of creation, on the occasion of the death of Carmen Alate, La Cambita, who becomes first like a plant and then like a dried-up, dormant seed. In José Eugenio's case the seed is already born, but has not received its call to germination as yet. Rialta's stature is increased by the death and Lezama does not picture her in any direct way as the terrible and cruel version of the Great Mother who is represented in myth by such figures as Kali or Ishtar. She will be a positive influence upon the psyche of the budding poet, in the aspect of a sacred Muse, like Dante's Beatrice as portrayed by Dante Gabriel Rossetti in his "Beata Beatrix", or indeed the aspect of the Virgin Mary. Nonetheless, she is a demanding goddess in her own way. We shall see that Cemf must draw on every resource to fulfil her wishes, all of which are designed to assist him in seeking out his own destiny.

The many masks of death hovering around the Colonel are intended to help us bear in mind that premature death is his fate. Mexico is a threatening place for him, "un mundo soterrado" (1, 48) which he visits in the line of duty. It is not so surprising that he should have a premonition of death there, since it is the land of maize harvest and drought, where the god of vegetation bears many attacks made by man and the elements. He feels that it is a land filled with images of death which prevail over all others, through ancient religions and superstitions: "La niebla cerrada en un azul nebuloso, de principios del mundo, impedía los avances de la imagen" (1, 49). In other words, the power of ancient beliefs almost overwhelms him until his own image of himself is completely obscured. His symbolic calling as a god of vegetation, of life, is very strong at this point. José Eugenio's second unusual experience in Mexico is his meeting with the Mexican diplomat. The latter contemplates a
precious jewel set in a secret compartment of his gold pocket-watch "como un gato egipcio ante un ibis" (I, 49). The Colonel chides him for cultivating greedy, obsessive pleasures, contrasting his own instinct for sharing: "El placer, que es para mí un momento en la claridad, presupone el diálogo. La alegría de la luz nos hace danzar en su rayo" (I, 49). The secret worship of an idol is shown to be a sterile activity by the empty bowing and babbling of the beggar at Cuernavaca, who only occasionally manages to make his chants coincide with the passing of potential benefactors. Animal masks dance around the Colonel at Taxco, seeking him out, perhaps as a victim. All these phenomena blend into the dream which follows his loss of consciousness in his hotel room. In the obscure passage there seems to be a struggle between the forces of darkness and death, represented by characters from the Popul Vuh, and some more benevolent power, signified by the enormous sparkling diamond. In the midst of this confrontation stands the babbling beggar, measuring time into units. Placed at the end of the third chapter of Paradiso is a very similar episode in which one of Doña Carmen Alate's relatives tries to wrench from her petrified hand a ring containing a precious jewel. The jewel appears to represent the perfect self—it is the emblem of the "adepo que ha alcanzado simultáneamente la sabiduría y la liberación." 54 Here it is a symbol of José Eugenio's continuing quest and eventual success in attaining that wisdom. The fact that this jewel is contained in a watch suggests that he too must overcome Time, not by becoming a seed but by sharing his knowledge of goodness and gift for living. He too has access to visions of a higher plane of reality, believing, we are told just before his death, in a kind of Platonic second family:

Si su conducta se configuraba, adquiría un signo, el sólo hecho de imaginarse que podía causar un desagrado en esa familia sobrenatural, pero que el sentía como gravitante y real, lo intranquilizaba, le daba un sentimiento de fracaso, de hacer visible su debilidad ... (I, 209).
His conduct is therefore governed by an ideal, of which his earthly family is the material representation. By virtue of his ideal "la eticidad era el fondo del carácter del Coronel" (I, 208).

I find it interesting that Cemí should have his first sexual experience just before his father's death. It is a purely passive affair, as he is pursued by the girl, Grace, but it is important as another initiation. He is shortly to assume the role of creator, but on the artistic plane, and this is the only first-hand experience in sexual matters directly related to him. It should be noted that José Eugenio dies of a disease of the lungs, while his son lives with another. This binds them even more closely together. The legacy from father to son is entirely bound up in the unexpected presence of Oppiano Licario, who has already aided Cemí's uncle Alberto in his first night away from home. It becomes obvious from the conversation at the Colonel's bedside that a friendship has developed from that meeting and that Licario had always hoped to meet José Eugenio. If Licario is, as Lezama claims, "el eros de la absoluta lejanía," then he must symbolize the dawning of the deepening awareness of the distant and miraculous, and therefore of the powers of the creative void. When we come to examine Alberto in detail, we will see that this is indeed the case. At Alberto's moment of crisis, Licario deserts his friend when the latter gives in to despair. José Eugenio is sorrowful, but never despairing, and so Licario stays to witness his death.

Rialta is unable to witness his passing because of a twist of fate; her absence leads to the dying man's commands being passed on to Licario: "Tengo un hijo, contézcalo, procure enseñarle algo de lo que usted ha aprendido viajando, sufriendo, leyendo" (I, 216). Cemí's father has in this way appointed Licario to be his most important tutor, qualified by his experiences of travel, suffering and culture. Licario's character is a metaphor representing an awareness of the creative potential of
emptiness and the void left in Cemi's world by his father's death: as Lezama has stated "esa ausencia me hizo hipersensible a la presencia de una imagen." He signifies a quality dormant in Cemi himself, an ability to sense hidden truths, a faith in the miraculous, cultivated by the female influence; it is closely linked with the faculty of looking beyond obvious, concrete reality, in terms of imagery. Every word of Paradiso has been preparing the reader for the moment when Cemi receives his call. M. L. von Franz has described the phenomenon in a way that seems to apply to him:

The actual processes of individuation — the conscious coming-to-terms with one's own inner centre (psychic nucleus) or Self — generally begins with a wounding of the personality and the suffering that accompanies it. This initial shock amounts to a sort of "call", although it is not often recognised as such.

Cemi is deeply wounded by his loss but does not fail his first test. With the help of Licario, he remains conscious at his father's bedside and looks steadily at the corpse:

Sintió que se anublaba, que se iba a caer, pero ... se sostuvo de unos ojos que lo miraban ... con inexorable fijeza. Era el inesperado que llegaba, el que había hablado por última vez con su padre (I, 220).

The fact that the Colonel dies alone, with Licario remaining in the wings, means that he has to face the Infinite, the void of death, unaided. Licario is, significantly, "el inesperado." Cemi's new found strength comes, not from any exterior source, but from within. It prevents him from "perder el sentido" in more ways than one, as Santí points out:

No significa precisamente que Licario impida que Cemí desmaye, sino también que de esa manera comienza su misión de recuperar o de "recoger" el sentido mismo ... la razón, el logos, que se acaba de dispersar con la muerte del padre.
Licario disappears from the text until Alberto's death and has no further contact with the child until he has almost reached maturity. It seems that his influence lies dormant throughout the turbulent period of adolescence.

José Eugenio's death marks the end of an era of family stability and harmony. The family's image par excellence, the tree, has suffered a mortal blow: "Rialta recibía la más sombría noticia de su vida rodeada de extraños ... oyendo como un hacha el viento lento del enero americano recorrer los pinares" (I, 218). It is interesting to note that both deaths in exile take place in North America ("Pero el abeto norteno exigía de esa familia nuevas ofrendas funerales"; I, 218); each time the Cuban family comes in contact with this country, it suffers loss and one cannot help wondering whether this is coincidence or whether a touch of political symbolism has crept in. The most important aspect of the death is, of course, its creative effect upon Cemi's poetic imagination. He will now be totally under his mother's influence and she will be his spiritual guide in all things. At this stage in the novel, the reader is rather perplexed as to precisely how the apparent disaster may be turned to the family's advantage. In what way can Rialta and Cemi transcend José Eugenio's death and what will be the nature of their relationship as great mother goddess and "new born" son?

Cemi’s duty is to transform the images of death into images of life and resurrection. If, as Eliade says: "Death is likened to the seed which is sown in the bosom of the Earth Mother to give birth to a new plant," then José Eugenio's demise is a symbol of hope. He passes away (as the god of fecundity) so that an even greater act of creation may take place, that is, the celebration of the family's history and meaning in an art form, Paradiso. It is not long before Rialta provides her son with an example of the power of the image to conquer death.
The children's game of *yaquis* turns into a sort of mass hallucination and appears to be based on an actual event, described by Lezama in an interview:

advertimos, en el círculo ... una figura que se parecía al rostro de nuestro padre. Lloramos todos, pero aquella imagen patriarcal nos dio una unidad suprema e instaló en Mamá la idea de que mi destino era contar la historia de la familia. Tú tienes que ser el que escriba, decía, tú tienes que.

This incident is rather a mystical one, and the writer sees it as a turning point in his life. Its significance derives from the fact that it reveals some kind of life after death, if only in the memory of the one left behind. How much more powerful such an image would be with the vigour of creative language at its disposal. The process whereby the image is formed, according to Ortega, is "también el rito de aquel espejo universal que la misma novela representa." The game itself may be what we call "jacks" and it soon sets up a rhythm of its own. The children's concentration on the bouncing ball and falling jacks leads them into a hypnotic state: "el ascender de la pelota se cristalizaba como una fuente ..." (I, 225), until they reach "éxtasis coral" (I, 225). They are in a world outside normal time, in a magic circle, formed by three, which expands now into a square and back to a circle as Rialta joins in the game. Slowly, the conditions become ripe for a penetration into "un pequeño cielo imaginario" (I, 225). It is a moment of communion when matter is transformed: the tiles are "líquidas láminas" (I, 225) which at length become "un cristal oscilante, que se rompía silenciosamente, se unía sin perder su temblor, daba paso a fragmentos de telas militares, precisaba rápidos tachonazos, botones recién lustrados" (I, 226). The effect is somewhat like peering into an abstract painting and discerning vague forms. The numbers in the game are noted, three, five and seven, and it is not until twelve is reached that the whole image is visible.
Four, the number of sides to the square, is combined with three, the number of sides and angles of the triangle, so that in their union an act of creation takes place. This configuration of numbers and forms has some considerable significance in psychology and mysticism, according to M.-L. von Franz: "roundness (the mandala motif) generally symbolises a natural wholeness, whereas a quadrangular formation represents the realization of this in consciousness." Yantras, that is instruments of meditation in Eastern religions (like the mandalas) are patterns of triangles, which express the tension of opposites. In Lezama's pattern, circle, square and triangle are all present at different times. They signify a moment of union with a higher plane of reality, beyond death. As R. D. Souza has said: "The geometrical progression from a square to a circle ... is used to convey the attempted movement from inner confusion to inner unity, or the movement from a pluralistic to a unified state." Here we have another example of lo incondicionado working through everyday objects. Matter can reveal spiritual truths, given the proper conditions. Lezama manages to expand the instant by his detailed description of what "en realidad, era una sensación entrecortada, pues se abría dentro de un instante, pero donde los fragmentos y la totalidad coincidían en ese pestañeo de la visión cortada por una espada" (I, 227). Much of Lezama's writing is dedicated to isolating a moment in Time, a moment set apart from all others, communicating for an instant with sacred Time. Just as matter dissolves here, we have seen it do exactly the same thing at the point where the Chinaman "con el puño crispado aún seguía golpeando la puerta, hasta se hundió en la madera ablandada por la lluvia" (I, 75). The principle is the same; through some act of Grace, the normal barriers of reality are broken down.

Rialta has always held a special fascination for her son, but as time passes his appreciation of her fine qualities becomes more conscious.
Their first moment of parting since the death of the Colonel helps Cemi analyse his impressions of her. Any absence is, for him, the absence of a dead loved one, yet his attitude seems to be changing: "A medida que fueron pasando los años paradojalmente, esa sensación de muerte ... lo fueron llevando ... a sentir la vida como una planicie ... hasta decir con sencillez que la vida era un bulto muy atado, que se desataba al caer en la eternidad" (I, 297). In other words, he comes to long for eternity, in later years. Meanwhile, he is becoming aware of his mother's task as leader of the family:

La lejanía parecía ya el elemento propio para que sus ojos adquieran todo su sentido, el respeto por sus hijos y sus profundas intuiciones familiares. Al paso del tiempo sería el centro sagrado de una inmensa dinastía familiar. Su serenidad, la espera, sin precipitación innoble o interesada, en el desarrollo de las virtudes de sus hijos (I, 297).

He realizes that all her efforts are on behalf of her children and that they will learn to look towards lejanía by following the look in her eyes, a facet of her person which is to become increasingly important to her son. His awe of Doña Augusta is supplemented now by the knowledge that she is dying of cancer. Her regal qualities are magnified by death, which is "aún más majestuosa que su innata majestuosidad" (I, 297). He is conscious of a great battle between life and death within her body. She is another figure who has seemed solid and permanent and is about to be withdrawn from his circle; this is foreshadowed for Cemi in a disintegrating image, like the one of the dissolving soldiers of his childhood dream: "La marcha del tren, en la rapidez de las imágenes que fijaba, le daba el rostro de Doña Augusta, miríadas de pespunte que se deshacían de una figura oscilante hacia una nada concreta como una máscara" (I, 298).

The childhood image of the death mask reappears once more.

I have said that in her role as Great Goddess, Rialta is demanding.
She reveals her wishes in a long speech which is crucial to an understanding of Cemí's task. No Spartan mother ever issued a more daunting command, yet he is greatly inspired by her words, which Lezama has attributed to the impression made upon his own mother by the vision of the dead Colonel: "Sé que esas son las palabras más hermosas que Cemí oyó en su vida, después de las que leyó en los evangelios, y que nunca oirá otras que lo pongan tan decisivamente en marcha ..." (I, 322). The word of conviction, Sé underlines the fact that he is speaking from experience of a most personal kind. What can a mother say, to inspire her son to assume his destiny as a creator, to fill him with "el orgullo consistente en seguir el misterio de una vocación" (I, 325)? She praises his efforts to take the place of his father in leading the family: "vas ocupando el lugar de él," believing that the empty space will be filled in some miraculous way. Fear for his safety is stressed because he has just witnessed riots at the university; the shadow of death has passed him by. She ponderers briefly the rightful place of parent and child, saying that each must respect the natural order of life. The very embodiment of piety and motherly love, she proceeds to recount her prayers for him: "que una voluntad secreta te acompañase a lo largo de la vida, que siguiéses un punto, una palabra, que tuvieses siempre una obsesión que te llevase siempre a buscar lo que se manifiesta y lo que se oculta" (I, 321). As his Muse, Rialta sets Cemí the task of looking always to the infinite void, of reaching out to the spiritual plane of Being. As his mother, she begs him to remember his father and help her to make sense of their lives without him, through his creative powers: "me quedé sin respuesta...." she laments, but it is not without hope because of her faith: "siempre conocí que un hecho de esa totalidad engendraría un obscuro que tendría que ser aclarado en la transfiguración que se exhala la costumbre de intentar lo más difícil" (I, 321). The death must be turned to good in some way, if only
by attempting the impossible. Circumstances which are very difficult
will, she hopes, bring out the best in her son. To make an attempt is
the essential factor; the reward is guaranteed:

cuando el hombre, a través de sus días, ha intentado lo
más difícil, sabe que ha vivido en peligro, aunque su
existencia haya sido silenciosa, aunque la sucesión de
su oleaje haya sido manso, sabe que ese día que le ha
sido asignado para su transfigurarse, verá, no los peces
dentro del fluir, lunarejos en la movilidad, sino los
peces en la canasta estelar de la eternidad (1, 321).

Such a man will succeed in reaching the level of eternal Time and so ex-
perience a spiritual resurrection. This will be the aim of all Lezama/
Cemí's work, culminating in Paradiso. Within Rialta's speech lies the
answer to the death of José Eugenio, the method by which the family will
transcend its tragedy.

We must now turn to the second question: what will be the nature of
the relationship between Rialta as Great Goddess and Cemí as her "new
born" son? The mother sees the son as a replacement for the father on
a spiritual level only but that does not mean that the aspect of the old
religious myths wherein the Great Goddess takes her son as her new lover
is irrelevant. It is expressed in the dangers of which Cemí is warned
in his mother's speech. I am not suggesting that Rialta is thinking
of herself here, but that some section of these unspecified dangers is
connected closely with her. I have shown that, in Jungian terms, fi-
gures such as Beatrice and Rialta represent the female, intuitive side
of the male psyche, to which the man must be receptive in order to delve
into the spiritual qualities in himself. We must, of course, remember
at all times that:

When analytical psychology speaks of the primordial
image or archetype of the Great Mother, it is refer-
ing, not to any conscious image existing in space
and time, but to an inward image at work in the hu-
man psyche. The symbolic expression of this psychic
phenomenon is to be found in the figures of the Great Goddesses represented in the myths and artistic creations of mankind.

Lezama creates a mythical goddess of his own, in the shape of Rialta. The image of the mother is especially suitable for expressing the nature of the hidden anima, in fact it seems that: "In its individual manifestation, the character of a man's anima is as a rule shaped by his mother." 65

As we have seen, Cemi is being urged to seek out the spiritual side of life, thus cultivating his "female" aspect, and the burgeoning presence of such mother-dominated figures as Don Demetrio and Alberto in the novel seems to be a warning, since their lives are uncreative in any sense and quite unsatisfactory. Von Franz confirms the dangers of over-emphasis on one aspect of the psyche:

Worship of the anima as an officially recognised figure brings the serious disadvantage that she loses her individual aspects. On the other hand, if she is regarded as an exclusively personal being, there is the danger that, if she is projected into the outer world, it is only there that she can be found [...]. A man becomes either the victim of his erotic fantasies or compulsively dependent on one actual woman.

There is no doubt that Cemi is totally dependent on Rialta for spiritual guidance, but only until Oppiano Licario reappears on the scene. If he represents Cemi's own capacity for an appreciation of lejanía and the Infinite, then it seems that the youth becomes autonomous at last. What saves Cemi from being merely an extension of his mother may be the fact that she is not demanding some sort of totally passive, dominated existence, rather, on the contrary, she demands a heroic attitude, the courage to risk all for the ideal of resurrection. This role is not for a weakling, but for a seeker, a mystic who is what I would describe as "actively contemplative." Cemi is a hero who has a succession of tutors, and achieves spiritual growth because:
In the developing consciousness of the individual, the hero figure is the symbolic means by which the emerging ego overcomes the inertia of the unconscious mind, and liberates the mature man from a regressive longing to return to the blissful state of infancy in a world dominated by his mother.

Cemi will take up arms like a knight of old, Rialta being the Lady who inspires his devotion, but she is merely his guide to higher paths. She represents the origins, the moment of creation, and Cemi seeks her out, not because he wishes "to return to the blissful state of infancy," but rather to the womb, which is a symbol of the original unity of Being, the Unconscious, the Void. He seems to escape the worst dangers of excessive attentiveness to his anima, but observes the negative aspect in friends like Leregas and Foción. Lezama never forgets the source of his inspiration, with the result that poems on the mother/son relationship appear periodically in his work. Particularly in Aventuras sigilosas, published in 1945, where we find the image of the mother, and of a union of mother and son: "Llamado del deseoso" begins with the words "Deseoso es aquel que huye de su madre" (I, 759), and pursues the theme of the desire to approach and simultaneously flee from her. This seems to express the longing to return to a state of perfection and wholeness which is at once awesome and attractive. "La esposa en la balanza" (I, 761), confuses the roles of wife and mother. We should not be surprised at this, since we have noted already how Lezama employs sexual imagery in Cemi's dream of the fishes, which also evokes a return to a pre-natal, unified state. Naturally, this technique risks misinterpretation, but it should be clear that the meaning transcends the imagery, leaving behind any oedipal connotation. The first line of "El retrato ovalado" takes up the theme again: "huyó, pero después de la balanza, la esposa se esconde como madre" (I, 777). The wife and mother are two elements of the female principle, so, for Lezama, union with them signifies the
attainment of unity within his own psyche and therefore perfect wisdom and creative power. Even after her death, Lezama's mother is remembered in "La madre" and other poems, and in a letter to his sister, Eloísa, he has written: "Creo que la muerte de Mamá me ha herido para siempre." Her influence prevails throughout his life's work:

In Paradiso, Cemí is eventually enabled to talk fluently to his dying grandmother about the hidden meaning of his mother's life: "ustedes dos parecen dictadas, como si continuasesen unas letras que les caen en el oído. Nada más que tienen que oir, seguir un sonido ..." (I, 516-7). The most important point about the conversation is that she, the great matriarch, accepts him as her representative: "lo propio tuyo es captar ese ritmo de crecimiento para la naturaleza" (I, 517), formally appointing him: "En eso yo también observo que tó eres de nuestra familia ... tó observas ese ritmo que hace el cumplimiento de lo que desconocemos, pero que ... nos ha sido dictado como el signo principal de nuestro vivir" (I, 517-8).

In other words, she accepts him in her capacity as head of the family, and also as a symbol of the Great Mother Goddess and consequently of the feminine principle or anima in his own psyche. Cemí has been incorporated into the Olaya family thanks to his intuitive, poetic gifts, despite the long period of doubt and danger through which he passes during his adolescence. Doña Augusta is saying, in effect, that his spirit is still pure, ready to meet once again the mysterious figure of Oppiano Licario.
Notes


2. Ibid., p. 28.

3. C. Vitier, "Crecida de la ambición creadora. La poesía de José Lezama Lima y el intento de una teleología insular," in his Lo cubano en la poesía, Santa Clara 1958, p. 375. This is an extract from a letter written by Lezama to Vitier in 1941.


10. Santana, "Lezama Lima: el mundo ..."


13. Ibid., p. 96 and p. 98.


15. Ibid., pp. 94-5.

16. Ibid., p. 98.

17. Ortega, "Paradiso de Lezama Lima," in NHA, p. 44.

18. Ibid., p. 43. Ortega continues: "(aunque en Lezama no es explícita ninguna culpabilidad metafísica que sugiera directamente el concepto cristiano del pecado en el origen)."

20 "Paradiso de Lezama Lima," in NHA, p. 44.


22 L. Cabrera, La sociedad secreta abakúa, Miami 1970.


24 Ibid., p. 78.


26 Ibid., p. 79.

27 Ibid., p. 80.


29 Myths, Dreams and Mysteries, p. 77.


32 "Descent into Paradiso ...," pp. 251-2. Pérez Firmat quotes Beiber as follows: "Mothers relate to sons who become homosexuals in characteristic ways ... She babies him, is overly concerned about his illness and physical injury, and hinders his participation in the normal activities of boyhood, presumably out of concern for his welfare.... The homosexual is seldom his father's favorite.... In the large majority of cases, the homosexual hates, fears or lacks respect or admiration for his father, who minimizes, humilliates and spends little time with him." The passage is taken from I. Beiber, "Clinical Aspects of Male Homosexuality," Sexual Inversion, Ed. Judd Marmor, New York: Basic Books 1965, p. 250.

33 E. Lezama Lima, ed., "Mi hermano," in Cartas, p. 21. Lezama's sister quotes him here without referring to her source, stating merely that he was "Refiriéndose a la censura que sufrió Paradiso en España ..."

34 "Descent into Paradiso ...," pp. 252-3.

35 C.G. Jung, "Approaching the Unconscious," in his ManS, p. 34.

36 Eliade, Myths, Dreams and Mysteries, p. 201.


38 Origins, p. 16.

39 Ibid., pp. 16-17.

40 "Descent into Paradiso ...," p. 253.


42 Ibid., p. 186.
43 Ibid., p. 193.
44 "Interrogando a Lezama Lima," in Recopilación, p. 11.
48 M. Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion, London 1979, p. 91.
49 Ibid., p. 92.
50 Ibid.
51 Myths, Dreams and Mysteries, p. 191.
52 Neumann, The Great Mother, pl. 66.
55 Santana, "Lezama Lima: el mundo . . .," p. 73.
56 "Interrogando a Lezama Lima," in Recopilación, p. 11.
59 Myths, Dreams and Mysteries, p. 191.
60 "Interrogando a Lezama Lima," in Recopilación, p. 12.
63 R. D. Souza, "The Sensorial World of José Lezama Lima," in Major Cuban Novelists, Columbia, Missouri 1976, p. 61. The latter work will be referred to hereafter as MCN.
64 Neumann, The Great Mother, p. 3.
66 Ibid., p. 198.
68 José Lezama Lima, Fragmentos a su imán, Havana 1977, pp. 36-7.
CHAPTER IV

Initiations

I. The Life and Death of Alberto Olaya

The ill-fated Alberto Olaya emerges in Paradiso as a restless spirit on the verge of adolescence, the second son of Doña Augusta and Don Andrés. One of five children, he is shown to be the innovator of family jokes, since it is he who notices with amusement the frasecita ritually exchanged between the Jacksonville pastor and his organist. Thus "Do you want to play the organ, Mr. Squabs?" (I, 60) becomes a family estribillo which is aired on any occasion in danger of becoming too solemn. Alberto seems to have inherited Doña Augusta's skill in employing appropriate aphorisms and word play at crucial moments. The great matriarch's aphorisms are reknowned in the family circle:

Pero donde su reposada sabiduría paremiológica alcanzaba celeste sin zureo de mosca, era en el refrán que volcaba sobre unos vecinitos de la esquina. Allí estaba como recogida de la casa una flacucha de doce años, aunque su sonrisa entreabría río creciente y matinal y su mirada atraía y rimaba. Cualquier familia la endilgaba malas notas, pereza, gracias fofas, cuentos torpes. Doña Augusta afirmaba milenaria, llorosa casi: "La caca del huérfano hiede más" (I, 194).

Alberto's word play comes in lighter vein:

Cemí había oído contar que Alberto tenía un amigo coleccionista, cuyo padre era un ricachón con un ingenio de azúcar. A su pasión por los platos de cerámica, unía la constante alusión a los opulentos rámajes de su heráldica. ¿En cuál de sus platos, Señoría, le preguntó Alberto, saborea su sirope en campo de azur (I, 241).
Even in this simple way Alberto bears upon him the mark of the Olayas in skill with words and conversation. Simultaneously he is noted for his "resguardada malicia de garzón criollo" (I, 60), something which is represented here as a rather endearing feature, typical of the Cuban boy's high spirits. This personal charm and attractiveness, in which he most resembles his sister Rialta, is to remain with him until death, despite all his failings.

Towards the end of Alberto's life we see that he also possesses Rialta's special smile; seen through the eyes of his uncle, Demetrio, he appears "con todos los recursos de su simpatía criolla, entreabriéndose en mágica fineza por sus ojos y por su sonrisa" (I, 233). We are told that he is divinely gifted with the power of seizing and benefiting from the present moment. It seems that Alberto is aware of the concept _el súbito_, leading to _lo incondicionado_ as described by Lezama elsewhere. However this ability to live only in the present moment in spite of glimpses of the invisible _incondicionado_ will eventually overthrow him.

Throughout the course of _Paradiso_, the two features of Alberto's character revealed at his first appearance, that is, boyish mischievousness and skill with language, remain constant. The elements which will conspire to effect his downfall are present from the start; the effect of time on his character is to magnify the degree to which he possess both features. However, Cemí's uncle Alberto does not come across as a static character by any means. He is based on a Lezama's own uncle but perhaps more significant for the student of _Paradiso_ is the fact that Lezama Lima regards Alberto as a typical component of the Cuban family: "En la familia cubana es muy frecuente la presencia de un tío un poco bala perdida, el tío terrible, el tío soltero, que se emborracha, que en las familias más graves es como una excepción, una tarambana." He describes such uncles as protective of, and protected by, their families, much loved
despite their demonismo. It is obvious that Alberto follows this pattern exactly (I, 233-6). Such an explanation of Alberto's character leaves vast areas of mystery surrounding him, although Lezama's comments describe accurately the human being from whom he was developed, and may explain his place in the average Cuban family. In the extraordinary world of the Cemís and Olayas, the forty year old bachelor has acquired great stature. His deeds are already being overlaid with a gloss of glamorous myth. He is a survivor of those hazy times, "allá en Jacksonville" (I, 61); he makes himself known to José Eugenio before anyone else in the family; he enjoys a certain notoriety; even amongst his sisters, Rialta, Leticia and Matilde, "llegaba su heraldo precedido por la tradición oral, por las cosas que de él se contaban bajando la voz ...") (I, 236).

This amusing, temperamental figure who is one of "esas criaturas inclinadas aunque sea con levedad al mal" (I, 235), does not seem a plausible candidate for a tragic death. Yet Alberto's death is described in such terms that critics have been led to speculate as to whether or not he escapes final damnation. Fazzolari and Ulloa hold widely differing views:

Ulloa opina que la cargada simbología que acompaña el viaje de Alberto apunta hacia la resurrección y la bienaventuranza eterna, aunque no ignora que "la imagen final del árbol está estrechamente vinculada con destrucción y muerte y que es, por tanto, emblemática de esta más que de vida", pero permanece ciego por completo a las innumerables alusiones infernales. Hay un contrapunto de imágenes y situaciones de eternidad y salvación con otras de muerte y condena en el que definitivamente triunfan las últimas.

Alberto's life may not have been exemplary but it is not at all obvious why his death should involve these problems of interpretation. Nevertheless, Lezama's imagery in this chapter demands an explanation, a re-evaluation of Alberto as a character and/or archetype. I propose to scrutinise his role in the novel, and in the light of this scrutiny to re-examine his death. We have seen Alberto playing pranks with words but
his other appearances in the third chapter involve more serious consequences. An elaborate chain of circumstances is shown to have caused the death of Don Andrés' first-born. Not least in this causal chain is Alberto. Andresito is seeking Alberto, whom he knows to be upstairs at the emigrés party, at the precise moment that the lift gives way. Alberto is a rather unworthy successor to the shy, sensitive musician whose last act has been to represent his family's honour before strangers. At least this is how the family memory recalls him. The reader is shown that Alberto is something of an usurper: by his occupation of his brother's room; his substitution of the music stand (a symbol of the late Andresito's artistic endeavour) with a pair of binoculars (an aid to pranks); and by his conversion of the violin into a guitar. All suggests the debasing of what might have been and the choice of words reveals Alberto's innovation in an unfavourable light: "los temblequeos de la voz" (I, 85) and "banales guitarreros" (I, 86). Alberto's choice of coplas is interesting, underlining his adolescent preoccupation with his own awakening sexuality. It seems that the boy has unusual verbal skill, even if it is applied to trivia at this point. The reader may begin to suspect that the punning in the little verse will lead to rather insalubrious results:

Ya se aproxima la hora,
Ja se aproxima la hora,
en que la vaquita va al vacán.
Rasca
al matadero, al matadero (I, 86).

Alberto puns on the word vaca (heifer or cow), to arrive at vacán, with connotations of the bull awaiting the heifer; through the similarity in Spanish of the sounds of the consonants "b" and "v" the word vaca acquires a masculine element in vacán, since bacán means "sugar daddy." Indeed, the second edition of Paradiso in Espiral/Fundamentos (Madrid 1976) reads bacán. The expression al matadero, can mean "to the abbatoir" or by
implication "to the slaughter." This in turn suggests sexual initiation, in that Alberto seems to see himself as the vacán or bacán in question. We are left with an impression of Alberto strumming mediocre ballads to himself in stark contrast to his late brother Andresito practising on his ill-fated violin.

Alberto's first meeting with José Eugenio is marked by the more intrusive presence of the narrator in an attempt to evoke an air of portent. The new boy's mysterious loitering on the opposite balcony (I, 98), up to his old Jacksonville tricks again, is emphasized by the narrator's rhetorical question, "¿Cómo no vamos a ofenderle regalándole una finalidad, una cadena causal que desprecia?" (I, 98) and the image of the antelope also has this effect of adding an elusive quality to the scene. It appears several times in connection with the momentous meeting: "De pronto, José Eugenio vio salir por la puerta que correspondía al piso alto de al lado, alguien de la misma edad suya, muy desenvuelto, de criollos tobillos de antílope, que al pasar a su lado ni miró, ni saludó ..." (I, 98; my italics) and also: "La decisión de los pasos del regreso, agrandados, graciosamente exagerados, como el gamo después de saborear la entregada corriente busca la sombra del ceibo, poniéndose en marcha con ligerísimo trotecillo" (I, 101; my italics). The impression of an imminent, far-reaching encounter is very strong. The words uttered amid the clouds of Alberto's cigar smoke are unimportant but their historic import for the two families affords them a life of their own. The representation of these words as "Clave de su felicidad primigenia y generatriz" (I, 101) for José Eugenio, is effected by Lezama Lima retrospectively imposing order on events that eventually turned out to be significant. Alberto is thus seen to be the vital link between the two families and the implications of the first encounter are contained within the imagery of the passage.
Before developing Alberto’s relationship with José Eugenio at school, Lezama chooses to digress to ponder the effect of Time upon various personages, concentrating on Tío Alberto. The passage appears to be an impromptu explanation of the author’s technique of writing about his relatives. The family softens the memory of Alberto’s adult tantrums by comparing them with those of an historical figure, thereby converting them into a treasured family memory (I, 108). This is precisely what Lezama has done in the novel in order to lend his family the trappings of royalty in order to emphasize their inner nobility, as in the case with Doña Munda: "La vieja subió la cabeza con irrebatible altivez, como Catalina de Rusia, bondadosa en la severidad del ceremonial ..." (I, 107). The same process can be seen in operation in the later development of the incident where Alberto smashes a Sévres vase, into the second motif in chapter XII. This digression seems to be Lezama Lima’s warning to the reader about how he may employ his characters. He even admits that this way of preserving a person’s memory reduces the stature of that character by limiting him to one aspect of his nature.

Alberto is therefore a stylised memory like Lezama’s other family characters, and as such, may be exploited as a symbol. A note in Lezama’s sister Eloísa’s edition of Paradiso seems to reveal clearly that this is indeed the case: "En la realidad el tío Alberto muere pocos meses después de su madre; los meses que vivió huérfano fueron de total disipación." She remarks further that "La muerte de tío Alberto es una verdadera creación: José Lezama Lima le da la muerte que le correspondía; en la realidad Alberto queda esa noche preso y en la mañana siguiente amanece ahorrado."
The youthful Alberto is not merely intended to forge a link between the two families. The connection established between himself and José Eugenio through their shared school experiences, is to remain an important factor in Alberto's life after the death of his friend, with possible far-reaching consequences in his own death scene thanks to the power of memory. José Eugenio has already proved to be a resourceful, sensitive boy, with his father's determination typical of a Basque and his mother's English delicacy of feeling. Even the formidable Doña Munda has come to admire his qualities, however much she may resent his orphan's dignity.

It is interesting that his first experience of the wider horizons provided by the school hall full of strangers is immediately preceded by that of Alberto. After taking the initial step, the latter recedes from the reader's view, so that all attention is focussed on José Eugenio's impressions of the vast space surrounding him, like a great, sparkling monster (I, 111). We are as yet unaware of Alberto's reactions to this "otherness", the void peopled with faces which fascinates José Eugenio at this juncture in his life. At first, Lezama deals solely with José Eugenio's adventures—his reactions to "el monstruo de la extensión" (I, 111); his observation of Enrique Aredo's attempts at ingratiating himself with his peers (I, 117); the almost sexual excitement aroused by that ingenious test of alertness instituted by the Headmaster, Cuevarolliot (I, 118-9); the sexual overtones of reconstructing in his mind the sight of bodies frolicking like fish in the baths, merely from the sounds in the distance (I, 121-2), an evocation of the power of the image.

In order to appreciate the significance of José Eugenio's observations and to interpret Alberto's school experiences we must examine Fibo and Aredo. Fibo is a demon-rampant, selecting victims at random for his attacks with a sharp-pointed pen. The essence of the game, is that no-one knows where the pen, (variously described as "látilgo tocoloro," "varita
arcoiris," "ariete rizado") like that of the satirist, may strike next and no-one must betray his attacker by crying out. It is interesting to note that whereas other children obey this unwritten rule, Aredo ignores it. The tone of the descriptions of Fibo are humorous: "como un director de orquesta abandonado al éxtasis"; "con la rapidez de un bailarín en una feria rusa"; "con la rapidez de un endemoniado que salta sobre su caballo después de haber cumplido su incomprensible venganza" (I, 114-5).

On the other hand, José Eugenio sees Fibo's sexually-oriented attacks as an example of original sin,

En aquel primer día de clase iba José Eugenio a inaugurar el primer día de contemplación de maldad en su pura gratuidad; la primera demostración que vería, más allá de la dificultad conciliar del quod erat demonstrandum, de la incontrovertible existencia del pecado original en cada criatura (I, 112).

Unlike other children who approach each other and make contact in the new environment, Fibo's method of contact is ambush, causing pain and also surprise. The classroom is an infernillo in the sense that the pupils may have an adverse influence on each other, in their highly susceptible adolescent state of latent sexuality. Of this sadistic tendency in some children, Sigmund Freud has said:

Cruelty is especially near the childish character, since the inhibition which restrains the impulse to mastery before it causes pain to others that is, the capacity for sympathy develops comparatively late .... Children who are distinguished for evincing especial cruelty to animals and playmates may be justly suspected of intensive and premature sexual activity in the erogenous zones.

However we should bear in mind that José Eugenio's attitude to the new environment also involves an almost sexual pleasure, in the desire to reconstruct using the imagination, that which is out of reach: "donde la simple presencia de un objeto era una traición intolerable, ofuscadora"
He has discovered that by connecting the sounds of water in the distance with the sights that pertain to them — water splashing on the bodies in the showers — he can invoke the creative powers of space and distance. It seems that Lezama considers this to be the germ of the concept of *lejanía*, which he personifies later in the character of Oppiano Licario. Lezama refers to the phenomenon in relation to his own father's death, attempting to explain the emotions embodied in José Cemi:

"cuando mi padre murió yo tenía ocho años y esa ausencia me hizo hipersensible a la presencia de una imagen. Ese hecho fue para mí una commoción muy grande que desde muy niño ya pude percibir que era muy sensible a lo que estaba y no estaba, a lo visible y a lo invisible." ⁸ This dawning perception of reality in the father will be inherited by the son. Here as elsewhere in the novel, the reader is afforded a glimpse of the great potential of José Eugenio, of the qualities which are destined to make him a first class engineer and mathematician, rather than a poet. The void out of which the image emerges (in "Las eras imaginarias: la biblioteca como dragón") is understood to be the Taoist concept of "wu wei" (II, 896); "el vacío embrionario" (II, 890); "el espacio creador" (II, 895); the young José Eugenio has stumbled upon the tip of the iceberg which will only be revealed in part to him. Only the simpler aspect of the concept is relevant to him: it will be up to Cemi to uncover the rest. The father's discovery is "lo que expresa el espacio vacío," (II, 893) and it seems that he is fully self-aware, since he tells Fibo, "Necesito equivalencias luego surgen las grietas, el hecho sólo es creador por mi respuesta" (I, 123). He is ready and willing to play an active part in events, a fact revealed by his readiness to defend himself with the inkpot. Even the potentially evil Fibo comments on José Eugenio's steadiness, his strong roots. It is made clear that he has placed himself beyond the reach of Fibo, and by implication, of evil. It appears
that he has done this by adopting an outward-looking attitude, by becoming aware of the potential of the invisible, in the form of the image.

Enrique Aredo contrasts sharply in temperament with Fibo. This singles him out as a prime target; he is by no means the innocent victim. Whereas Fibo pounces on situations, Aredo is the type of person to whom things inevitably happen. His weakness, readily available wealth and obesity, compared with Fibo's mulatto blood and lower social status, are factors that make him an object of mockery for the common herd, which is quite conscious that he is "different" in more ways than one (I, 117). Aredo's game of chance is rather perverse, even masochistic, involving the opposite principle to that of Fibo. Jordi Cuervarolliot initiates his pupils into the experience of being the victims of the unexpected, as does Fibo in a more negative way. The reaction Cuervarolliot demands is exactly the kind that José Eugenio is prepared to give in his personal circumstances. The aim is to make the most of the chance event (to catch the bread), thus avoiding regrettable consequences (in this case ridicule, spilled water jugs, etc.). Indeed, the essential thing is not to allow oneself to be a victim at all, to keep alert. In keeping with his character as portrayed so far, Aredo is a passive observer in this game, risking personal ridicule so that he may enjoy the discomfiture of others. Again this way of looking at events is described in terms of sexuality: "[Aredo] sentía la sádica voluptuosidad de rebasar una medida, como si su sexualidad ... tuviese que atravesar el Cipango del azar y de la coincidencia de todas sus posibles en una afortunada coordenada" (I, 119-20). Firstly we have two characters who devote themselves to chance and coincidence, to sadism and masochism, respectively, to active and passive roles which are parasitic. Their enjoyment depends on others' pain or embarrassment. Secondly, we have José Eugenio, refusing to allow himself to be manipulated in any way, prepared to go a step further
and take advantage of the creative possibility. What of Alberto in this situation? He seems to have gone to ground early in the school episode, yet within a few pages we find him undergoing a crisis. Fibo holds back in awe of Alberto, whose presence has protected his friend, José Eugenio. We are thus quite unprepared for Alberto's banishment to the eerie showers, let alone for the powerful fascination which Aredo seems to exert over him. Alberto's initial offence is not at first obvious but it seems that he has caused a commotion in class by demanding a translation (in itself a reference to making songs and poems). He has dared to question his peers and has treated Browning with levity ("galleaba ... I, 127). Alberto's request to have "thinking songs of things" translated does not really seem to me amusing enough in itself to dissolve the class in laughter. On consulting an original copy of Orfegenes (published in 1955) kindly presented to me by Lezama's wife, the late Señora María Luisa Bautista de Lezama during my recent visit to Havana, I found that only in this first version of the latter half of chapter V of Paradiso does the phrase appear as "thinging songs of things." Such a pun makes sense of the boyish laughter which is unleashed by Alberto's flippant air and implied disrespect for the teacher and the matter in hand. It is interesting to note that in the Unión edition of Paradiso, the first published complete version of the novel (Havana, 1966), the phrase has already been changed to "thinking songs of things" and thus it appear in all subsequent editions, including the Obras completas (I, 127). It is impossible to determine whether this is a result of over-correction, or a change of heart on the author's part. I find the latter doubtful, as in my opinion the original version of the phrase makes better sense in the context.

Alberto's punishment possesses the aura of a human sacrifice, evoked by the imagination of those who watch him go. The mythical atmosphere
of the quest is established: "un emisario que tendría que inventar, que encontrar casi por milagro, el prodigio de su regreso" (I, 128). There follows a passage in which it is difficult to isolate concrete events, as opposed to fevered imaginings. On the "realistic" level, Alberto reluctantly enters the showers; feeling threatened by the gurgling pipes, he retreats until he finds himself looking down the rumbling plughole, an even more frightening prospect. He then seems to move towards a second cubicle in which there is a second large draining hole which does not seem so menacing, but he cannot find a satisfactory means of escape, so he falls asleep and dreams. Aredo and José Eugenio are both present at this point, either as an image in Alberto's mind (José Eugenio) or in fact (Aredo). The aforementioned mythical aura is further developed in Alberto's dream by the magical transformation of the threatening shower-head and its pipes into "el ave de Angra Mainyu" (I, 128), suggested by the shape. The plugholes become two areas of dread; the first seems to be associated with death, doubt, fear, and Enrique Aredo. In Alberto's vision, the latter, in his fine leather hunting coat, recalls both the description of Alberto's "criollos tobillos de antílope" (I, 99) and later his remark "Pensar que un antílope vendría a morir a mis pies" (I, 117) - although there is no causal link between these phrases, they increase our appreciation of Alberto's hunted feeling. Falling victim to Enrique Aredo, the voyeur of physical coincidence, (the passive observer of the game), is equivalent in Alberto's mind to succumbing to death and passivity. Death brought by the bird of Angra Mainyu would mean the negation of all creativity. Probably used here by Lezama Lima in its original sense, he was an Iranian winged god, the creator of a world of death, introducing doubt into the world of faith. He represents darkness and falsehood but is regarded in myth as the inverted mirror image of good.

The alternative provided by Lezama Lima to Angra Mainyu is Cotzbalán,
hardly less fearsome. Cotzbalán is one of the demons which the Quiché
gods used as an instrument of vengeance against their unsatisfactory crea-
tion, Man. After destroying many by floods the demon tore Man's flesh
to pieces, like a wild cat. These mythical animals are placed in Alber-
to's mind to reveal his dilemma to the reader— their origins in myth are
not of prime importance here, as only Cotzbalán is readily recognizable
to most readers, since the image is taken directly from Latin America
culture. The agent of the gods destroys Man's body and this fact recalls
the first description of the little baths, down whose drain (tragante)
the soapsuds progress slowly "tratando de despedazar" or "tear up" "el
recuerdo del cuerpo adolescente que había brújido" (I, 118). The shower
is already linked with cleansing, descending to the depths, punishment
and renewal. José Eugenio's action of pouring out a glass of water seems
to suggest a further purification for Alberto, in the face of Aredo's
spying. His offering is "sin claroscuro temporal" (I, 130), thus it is
permanent, unchanging, "una cascada rodeada de una naturaleza detenida,
congelada" (I, 130) recalling (although distinct from) the "agua maternal"
which suggests a return to the womb and the halting of time (I, 129).

The subject of "Sentía que avanzaba siempre hacia Angra Mainyu ..."
(I, 130) seems to be Alberto, still under attack from Angra Mainyu, al-
though José Eugenio is the key to the previous paragraph. Destruction
of the body and consciousness occurs in sleep, equally as well as through
the violent action of the wild cat demon, thus Alberto has found a way
to avoid the issue: Cotzbalán cannot face Angra Mainyu if the body has
already been "destroyed." Despite the fact that Alberto has undergone
the test, it is José Eugenio, by his forceful presence in the mind of
Alberto, who resolves the problem of escape; it is almost as if one is
the double or alter-ego of the other. We are shown that José Eugenio
fully understands the trial, the choice between "el primer tragante ...
la mentira" and "la cascada miniaturesca ... la destrucción del cuerpo" (I, 130-1). The cascade as used in Alberto's letter (Ch. VII) is also a symbol of life and the possibly of poetry (I, 238) and may represent ejaculation, sexual activity and creativity. Alberto's slumber indicates that he is not self-aware; thus it is José Eugenio's wisdom that prompts his friend to go one further than Cotzbalán, making the body "disappear" altogether. This is symbolized by the actual escape from the danger by action (they abscond from punishment). There are sexual undertones regarding the two tragantes, the relationships between the four youths and Alberto's descent into the dungeon but as Eros (desire) relates both to the concept of lejanía and to human relationships, the parallels in imagery are very close. Fibó and Alberto are perhaps similar in their unchannelled, uncontrolled Eros, whereas Aredo is totally passive and dependent and José Eugenio is self-sufficient in his surroundings. The gift of the compass underlines the new union of Fibó and Aredo, once they know that Alberto and José Eugenio are closely allied, since the compass joins two points.

Alberto seems to be wavering between self-assertion amidst the undifferentiated mass of "otherness" which he has just encountered at school (comparable experiences are those of Andresito at the tombola and José Eugenio in the vast space of the school hall) and the temptation to allow himself to be re-absorbed into passivity as a part of the unconscious state. We have here a prelude to José Cemí's dream of a return to the pre-natal, unconscious state of ouroboric incest. The incidents have in common: blissful sleep, the idea of escape from responsibility and choice, the image of descent into "agua maternal," a state of oblivion which is at once comforting and terrifying. However the boys at Cuerarolliot's school are adolescents, not infants, and can no longer yield to such a regressive temptation, they must act, taking full responsibility for them-
selves. Alberto would appear to have reached the stage beyond the maternal ouroboros, a stage defined by Neumann as follows:

During the phase when consciousness begins to turn into self-consciousness, that is, to recognise and discriminate itself as a separate individual ego, the maternal ouroborus overshadows it like a dark and tragic fate.

This would explain why Lezama allows Alberto's mind to choose such awe-some images from myth to represent his confused feelings. Neumann continues:

Whereas, in the beginning, the waking state was sheer exhaustion for the feeble ego consciousness, and sleep was bliss, so that it could later surrender itself rapturously to uroboric incest and return to the Great Round, now this return becomes more and more difficult and is accomplished with increasing repugnance as the demands of its own independent existence grow more insistent.

The unconscious, ego-less state holds a fatal fascination for Alberto and that is why his relationship with Aredo is ambivalent—this character embodies the simultaneous attraction and repulsion he feels. Fibo, as the other side of the coin, (a vicious type of self-assertion) is also unacceptable because he represents a potentially negative type of sexuality. If Fibo and Aredo refer to two different types of existence, Alberto and José Eugenio provide us with the possible reactions of the introvert and extrovert, respectively, in keeping with the contrasting nature of their family backgrounds. The struggle for autonomy is much more difficult for the introverted Alberto. Hanging around his neck is the albatross of generations of Olaya susceptibility to the spiritual life and the Unconscious. Here we can observe yet another reason for the necessity of a new grafting of vigour on to the family tree.

Aredo and Alberto are closely linked by the image of sacrificed animals, but it has been noted that in some sense Alberto is a prey also
in José Eugenio's eyes. The latter pair shares a very strong attraction and Alberto is the graceful male antelope who will lead home a future husband for his sibling doe, Rialta. The imagery of the delicate antelope is superceded by that of Aredo as hunter. This is particularly vivid in Alberto's hallucinations:

vio a Enrique Aredo, del tamaño de un faldero, haciendo zalemas en el portal de su granja, con una cazadora de coloreadas tirillas de sarape. Desnuda toda la pierna izquierda, sonriéndose mientras transportaban el jabali, con la cabeza horriblemente flácida, en una parihuela de hojas de plátano y tejas coralinas (1, 128-9).

Alberto sees himself as the captured boar and equates an acceptance of what Aredo stands for with death. It is interesting to note that according to Neumann, "the pig is a symbol of the Archetypal Feminine and occurs everywhere in myth as the sacrificial beast of the Earth Goddess." So, it seems, should Alberto regress to an Aredo-like stance, he will be sacrificing himself to the Great Mother or the Unconscious; he will forfeit his personality, sexual development and will-power and remain an incomplete individual. It will be a spiritual death.

Unfortunately for Alberto, these are not the only dangers to be avoided. The wild cat, Cotzbalán is ready and willing to tear him to pieces, should he escape the fate of the boar, as a straightforward sacrifice. Tearing to pieces also suggests a sacrifice; can this one involve Fibo? The latter seems to embody excessive sexual aggression, while José Eugenio offers a golden mean. The alternative to submergence in blissful unconsciousness is to hurl oneself into all life's experiences, especially sex. In so doing, one remains vulnerable to time and death but it would seem at first sight to be a definite means of self-expression and to provide an escape for the ego from the perils of the "Great Round" or ouroboros. So where does sacrifice fit into this state of affairs? Once again we must turn to Neumann for a possible interpretation, since
Lezama seems to be employing archetypal imagery to portray the development of his characters. Obsession with sexual exploits brings disaster:

the cult of the phallic fertility, like the phallic sexual orgy, is everywhere typical of the Great Mother. Fertility festivals and rites of Spring are sacred to the youthful phallus and its rampant sexuality. The grim contrast between these orgiastic Feasts in which the youth and his phallus play the central part, and the subsequent ritual castration and killing, defines archetypally the situation of the adolescent ego under the dominance of the Great Mother. The youth has at this stage no masculinity, no consciousness, no higher spiritual ego.

These activities are seen to be a disguised method of submergence of the self in a state resembling unconsciousness, that is, in ecstasy; hence it is not a true path to self-expression. Although it seems that Alberto indulges in masturbation in the showers, while facing this crisis in his sexual progress ("detenida entre el índice y el anillo de la mano derecha, la flor del sexo pendía en el hastío final de la desnudez"; I, 130), he appears to have made good his escape with the help of José Eugenio. What the latter has to offer, as we have seen, is his clear-sightedness, his way of meeting "otherness" head on, and his extrovert personality. There is nothing whatever in the passage, of an explicit nature, to suggest that these two boys share their first sexual experience, other than as a poetic expression of the concept of lejanía. It is essential to remember that Lezama often expresses relationships in sexual terms, which have no real physical context, as far as one can tell. Lezama makes it clear that even after he has "escaped" from his dilemma, Alberto is still apprehensive, fearing the loss of his identity in the mass of new sensations around him: "la diversidad que corría hacia él no podría sofocarlo" (I, 132). Whereas José Eugenio preserves a distance between himself and the void filled with new phenomena so that he can maintain a degree
of (almost artistic) control, Alberto is capable of reacting only in a
proud and defiant manner. It is a reaction which will lead him to di-
saster and death. He seems to remain at the level of aggressive, ado-
lescent sexuality throughout his life and his poetic potential is thus
stunted.

We have seen that in his interview with Santana Lezama describes
Oppiano Licario as "el Eros de la absoluta lejanía." Of this mysterious
character, he says, "salta en la lejanía de la ruina tibetana, como una
ciudad donde ya el hombre ha roto los límites de su frontera corporal." 16
It seems that this escape from bodily limitations is what José Eugenio
urges Alberto to attempt in the dungeon of the showers. In the literal
sense Alberto has made his body disappear; he escapes from his bondage
in the school baths. However, his subsequent actions show that his
achievement is only on one level. The fact that his subsequent encoun-
ter with Oppiano Licario is flanked on either side by a sexual adventure
which ends in deception and falsehood seems to confirm this. We learn
during the Colonel's death scene that Oppiano Licario is aware that
Alberto, although saved from the homosexuals, yields to a different kind
of temptation. He follows Fibo's path, after all. Alberto is at
once attracted to the girl with the pitahaya flower, in the amusement
park. Symbols of female sexuality and phallic symbols prevail: the
captured pitahaya flower; the tío verde who steals the yellow flower -
his dolmen-shaped cigar, his maize-coloured hair, evoking the presence
of a fertility god. The tone of the language suggests evil: "el dolmen
de un tabaco del tamaño de un murciélago con las alas abiertas" (1, 134).
The yellow flower is used as a symbol of the search for a golden pill
of longevity by the Chinese alchemists and is described in "Las eras
imaginarias: la biblioteca como dragón": "la destilación de la gota de
oro se va trocando, en ese vacío creador taoísta, en la flor de oro.
El artificio destilado se trueca en la naturaleza de la flor de oro, la luz ..." (II, 911). It may be that Alberto's dawning Eros is being given another test; the girl may represent innocence in this her first appearance. Young Alberto casts himself in the role of rescuer of the damsel in distress but he does not see that all is not as it seems. He substitutes the lost flower with the gift of a propelling pencil, perhaps intended to represent his linguistic potential, his possibilities as a creative writer, following José Eugenio's example. We should note that the pencil could also be regarded as a phallic symbol, and that the more subtle gift replaces the raw sexuality of the viejo. The entire situation in the play-ground seems to prefigure the amusement park and the evil old man encountered by Cemí on his way to the lighted house in the finale of the novel. It is important to note that Alberto has already rejected the homosexual advances of the old man before he meets the homosexuals in the bar. His flight from Aredo implies this rejection also, as the latter embodies passivity. His initial attraction to the girl affords him protection from the maize man/god. The fact that the old man still sports the flower when he comes in search of Alberto shows that the flower as a symbol of creative sexuality is being steadily diminished as Alberto is drawn into this kind of chaotic energy, this uncontrolled creative force. It is also an indication that the old man represents all kinds of sexuality.

The meeting with Oppiano Licario seems to offer another chance. It is ironic that it takes place in a bar where Oppiano Licario warns Alberto against the demon drink, which accounts to some extent for his first meeting with death in a bar in his final hours. The enigmatic phrase pinned on the door is not meant for Alberto for it sounds a death knell in his ear (I, 137). The sign is disturbed by Alberto on his way out again, "levando con el rabillo 'tantum regis,'" reminding
us of a Fibo-like demonismo, as revealed by Alberto's forked tail. It seems that this demonismo will get in the way of his higher potential, eventually leading to his downfall. Both Oppiano Licario and the barman are bound like Egyptian mummies: "un calvón, muerte ceñida de lino" and "Sin descansar los brazos, maniobró con astucia todo su cuerpo para acercarle más al mostrador ..." (I, 138). This must surely be a representation of la absoluta lejanía, as Lezama describes it to Santana, since we are also told: "No parecía notar la cercanía ..." (I, 138). The image of Osiris is explained to Alberto by Oppiano Licario, who is not named until his encounter with José Eugenio much later. It involves the name of the bar, "Reino de siete meses," which is explained as a reference to the seven month absence of Osiris, the god of fertility, for part of the agricultural year during the drought, and his two month return during the rainy harvest season. Without the help of Lezama's essay on Egyptian religious beliefs it would be difficult to decipher this passage: in "Las eras imaginarias: los egipcios," Lezama traces the development of the concept of lejanía in Egyptian thought, in relation to other philosophies. What interests him most as a poet is the capacity for forming images out of the void. The myth of Osiris tries to account for the absence of fertility for part of the agricultural cycle, so the king to whom the door will be opened by Oppiano Licario/Osiris must be someone able to think in terms of the image spanning absence and distance, which will give him power over death, emptiness and distance. The meeting, coming at this point, dovetails neatly with the two preceding sections concerned with the desire of the flesh. A different causality is established by the Egyptians by preserving the body in mummification in order to preserve the soul. Oppiano Licario, as the image of lejanía, is concerned for Alberto's wayward soul and its preservation through the flesh and spirit acting in unison, creatively.
Alberto's reaction to Oppiano Licario's approach is to take his advice, rejecting the homosexuals. We discover later that the relationship has deepened to one of friendship. It is interesting to note that it is Oppiano Licario who teaches Alberto to play chess, a skill which is passed on via Alberto, to José Cemi. Oppiano/Osiris represents a typical lover of the Great Mother who endures ritual death to bring life once more. He is inviting the youth to assume the role of creator, whether in sexual or poetic terms, and his appeal seems to prevent Alberto from becoming involved with the homosexuals, seen in this context as symbolic of an even more negative approach to self-expression; their flight from the Great Mother, is neither backward to the maternal ouroboros nor forward towards ordinary sexual activity, rather it is a form of self-castration as victims of her terrible aspect. Osiris is notable in myth for the fact that he is succeeded by his son Horus who was conceived by Isis after his death. Oppiano/Osiris' invitation to Alberto to become the king, in the inscription on the door, signifies his willingness to have Alberto become his son Horus, of whom it has been said:

the Horus king no longer acts the part of a temporary fertility king under the dominance of the Earth Mother; he has become the ever-fruitful patriarch who continuously fertilizes the earth and rules over its progeny.

His function has made itself independent of the natural rhythm which was given sacred expression in the old fertility ritual.

Alberto has the chance to set himself outside the merry-go-round of sexual exploits which binds him to the Unconscious, just as Horus and the later Egyptian kings freed themselves from the old cycle, thanks to the resurrection of Osiris, who bequeathed divine authority to his son from beyond the grave. Oppiano Licario is a symbol of the potential creativity of the void, a path which Alberto could follow to safer ground.

Having fulfilled his role as matchmaker, Alberto disappears from view
until the link with José Eugenio is re-established by the death-bed presence of Oppiano Licario. Alberto is notable by his absence from the wedding celebrations, probably because his presence would disrupt the atmosphere of purity surrounding them. The glimpse of Oppiano Licario which is afforded to Cemi represents his first serious brush with lejanía, as revealed to him by his father's death. At this stage we begin to realise that Alberto is not the king sought by Oppiano Licario, but his regent. Until Cemi comes into direct contact with Alberto after his father's death, his power over words and the foundations laid by other family members remain dormant. By this time he has suffered the pain of loss, shared the "juego de yaquis" vision, and now Alberto helps him on his way with the letter, the chess game and even his death. On the simplest level of the story, Alberto reappears as a latter-day Dionysus, having left Osiris far behind, ruining himself with alcohol yet possessing charm and personal appeal which have helped to make him the object of family protection.

Don Demetrio Olaya provides an interesting parallel, as he is devoted to his mother's memory, just as Alberto is to Doña Augusta, despite his attitude when he is drunk. The memory of La Cambita ceases to be debilitating when Demetrio is able to merge it with the general concept of the Earth Mother, embodied in La Blanquita. She is also a Marian figure, as Rialta seems to become in José Cemi's dream of fishes. La Blanquita is described as follows, in relation to Don Demetrio:

Los años transcurridos desde la muerte de la madre de Demetrio, doña Cambita, la hija del oidor, le habían ablandado una tristísima soledad. La Blanquita con sus ungüentos, se había convertido en una intercesora mariana entre su frustración y su destino (I, 231; my italics).

Rialta is seen in a similar Marian role in her son's dream:
La faz de esos pescados multánimes repetía siempre el mismo rostro, Rialta .... Si adoptamos una perspectiva tangencial al refectorio y nos recogemos en cucilllas, los platos ascienden, como si estuviesen calzados en las paredes, haciéndolas más visible la dominación del rostro, como en esos retablos, donde con sutileza de matices que cuesta trabajo perseguir, todas las figuras remedian el rostro mariano, en distintos gestos, pero donde la persistencia de los signos de la cara central, influye en cada una de las demás figuras que parecen proteger a la oveja, a los niños y a las nubes (I, 187; my italics).

Thus both mother-son relationships are being transformed into quasi-religious devotion to a Marian image. Blanquita, because of her Indian background, is further sublimated into the figure of Great Mother. Lezama considers the latter image to be expressed in every mother-son relationship, including his own. Here we have another striking example of the process whereby Lezama raises many of his characters to the stature of mythical beings. We have noted that the *demetrio* were those beloved of Demeter, the dead living in the womb of the Earth whose egos and personalities have been reabsorbed into the Unconscious. The mother-son motif is explored ad infinitum in *Paradiso* and it involves tragedy and death in Alberto's case, as will be shown. Demetrio and Blanquita are used to illustrate various things; firstly, Cemí's introduction to their household by Alberto leads to his realisation that the space encompassed by the house (its capacity for creation), not the exciting objects it contains, is the most important thing: "Era, todo lo contrario, como si uno se abandonase al sueño, a los nacimientos, albricias navideñas o agonícas visiones" (I, 232), secondly, in the comparison of Blanquita and Alberto Lezama suggests that Blanquita is protected from her ancient Mexican gods by a layer of natural goodness and reminds the reader that Alberto is in danger from his own demonismo; thirdly, we have Demetrio's introduction of Cemí to Alberto's style in the letter. It is appropriate that he should perform this task as he has successfully resolved
his mother's memory into a poetic image of reality, with the aid of Blanquita.

Both Fazzolari and Gimbernat de González see Alberto's letter as an initiation into the world of language; Fazzolari emphasizes the departure of the ladies as the traditional exclusion of women from tribal puberty rites and magical rituals. 19 Gimbernat de González describes the language and style of the latter at length. The main point which she makes is that the letter operates on two levels, the literal—a list of fish, and the metaphorical—sexual references. This is accurate as far as it goes. 20 The letter is indeed the product of Alberto's concern for Demetrio's relations with women, but it is also a piece of linguistic virtuosity which is carried along by its own momentum. The words "acércate más" signify that Cemi is now to be drawn forward into the mysteries of sexuality and language, "el idioma hecho naturaleza" (I, 199).

Alberto's potential for metaphor, only glimpsed so far, takes all, including the reader, by surprise. Alberto's unease prior to the reading arises from his mistaken belief that its only value is as amusement. Gimbernat de González points out that the constant warnings refer to the deceptive nature of the language, its double meanings. There are several quite important points to consider. The letter was posted on the "second Ide of March," a date famous for the death of an emperor. The little copla (I, 238) will later be used by Death's messenger, referring to Alberto's own loss. Rialta's comment on Alberto's "histrionic powers" should perhaps be taken as a warning about the letter's worth. The different fish often seem to refer to different kinds of women and sexual activity, but there are constant undertones of death and renewal which can either be regarded as subconscious manifestations issuing from Alberto's troubled mind, or as a form of communication working directly between Lezama and the reader. Examples of this are plentiful, for instance:
"El teleosteo, reino de hueso, con su caballo de mar, trueca los bronquios en branquias, y lleva el aquejado de athma (ahogo, en sánscrito), a que le penetre una cascada por la boca ..." (I, 238). This may present a parallel with what Alberto is doing — providing Cemi with the poetic inspiration which will eventually lead to control and balance in the ritmo hesicástico of the final chapter. The phrases which immediately follow seem to evoke Alberto's fate once his benevolent influence has had its effect on Cemi: "Pero al final, las lágrimas de oro aparecen en la cámara mortuoria, donde el Chucho, muestra su morado, con eclipses azules y su cola erótigante como la de un gato" (I, 238) and yet: "Glanis hechicero igual a Glanis, pez astuto, le enseñó no solo a no picar el anzuelo, sino a comerse el gusanillo caracada" (I, 240). Taking the bait without the hook, as well as a sexual reference, could refer to a use of the creativity of eros which does not lead to death, i.e. "el eros de la lejanía" as a means to poetic expression. By learning from Alberto's mistakes and his use of rich language, Cemi may take the bait without the hook. The "pez fálico" is linked by the imagery to primeval chaos and the "lechuza de mar," the "sea owl" or "whore," takes its place bearing "los ceros de la muerte" (I, 240) — in other words this sort of sexuality leads to spiritual death. It is the path followed by Fibo and all who are obsessed with sexual ecstasy. The final exhortation to action could apply to Demetrio and Cemi equally well; "Tu muela de cangrejo es un molino para el trigo" (I, 240), suggesting assimilations and transformations. The signature rex puer suggests a young king, and as Alberto is expressing himself in creative, evocative language, he may at this point have some pretensions to the title. We recall here the interest of Lezama in Lao-tse who is the "viejo-sabio-niño" (II, 890). However whimsical Alberto's royal title, it echoes the many instances in which royal personages are linked with family members, in order to
underline their nobility of mind. So the family black sheep is still
part of the family line in this sense. The reflections of Cemí on the
letter reveal that he has been receptive to its nuances. Alberto's
humour, his word play (sinope/sirope; I, 241), the frolicking words, fish-
like in their darting movements and ever-changing shoals—all combine to
present a fresh view of his uncle, and of language itself, with strong
visual impressions reminiscent of José Eugenio's experiences of space
at school.

Like Demetrio, Santurce seems at first sight unimportant to Alberto
and José Cemí. Santurce, Leticia's husband, has a staid, pseudo-scientific
approach to life. Whereas the Colonel's forceful nature has equipped him
for a life of action (travel, war) and precision (mathematics and engineer-
ing), Santurce's logic is flawed by pedantry and dogma. The discourse
on sugar production is well placed, just after the letter, and shows up as
a barren desert in comparison. Naturally the temperament of family members
differs but Leticia seems to represent the Olaya spirit warped by the in-
fluence of her husband, that is, the influence of blind, unimaginative
logic. Alberto's chess game provides a concrete example of the principles
underlying his prose. The colourful enumeration of the fish, with its
secondary level of sexual allusions and a possible third level of portent,
is reflected in the method whereby Alberto wins his chess game. Since
it is Opplano Licario who introduces him to this kind of chess, we should
consider it as a forerunner of his "silogística del sobresalto." The un-
expected correspondence between the elements reveals another level of rea-
lity in the vivencia oblicua, by the sudden glimpse el súbito, and leads
to lo incondicionado, the unexpected result, in this case Alberto's win
and the mysterious, meaningful, third level of the letter. 21 Santurce,
Lezama's long-standing foe in the guise of what Lezama terms "Aristotelian
causality," is beaten by the false clues because he relies on conventional
logic and concrete evidence (*cercanía*). Once again, Cemí is fascinated and begins to understand the process involved, recognising his uncle as a kindred spirit.

It is at this time that José Cemí emerges as an individual, to a hitherto unprecedented degree. He participates in the "juego de yaquis"; he is taken to Demetrio's house and draws some important conclusions; he listens to and appreciates Alberto's letter; his imagination is so fired by the chess game that he rushes to check the board for himself; lastly, he allows his judgement of Santurce to be influenced by his family. Their amused tolerance and Alberto's ill-concealed disdain inspire Cemí to defy his authority. Bearing in mind that Santurce has so far represented blind logic and is a figure of fun in the family, Cemí's deliberate rattling of the cutlery when Santurce demands silence, signifies a very important rebellion. The reader is unlikely to be aware of this in a first reading since it is the parallel between Cemí's action on this occasion and a similar action much later that alerts us. It will be useful to compare them: "Un tintineo del tenedor sobre la vajilla, hecho con malicia por Cemí, fue la primera violación de la norma dictada por Santurce. El tintineo pareció el eco de la ironía al ofrecer la cabecera al visitante familiar" (I, 252-3) and:

>Santurce can never head the Olaya family, at table or anywhere else. He and what he represents command no respect in a family which reveres the imagination. The same tinkling, produced by chance on the final page stirs Cemí's memory and he connects the different areas of his apprentice-
ship to form a new balance and understanding. Alberto, despite his defects, is furthering the cause of Oppiano Licario, so it is not surprising that the latter should appear in person at the cafe at which Santurce breaks the news of Doña Augusta's imminent death (I, 260). The tragedy of the situation is that the shock of the news blinds Alberto to everything else, including the presence in the background of Oppiano Licario. Thus Santurce is "el bloque de hielo"; normal causality (death = oblivion) prevents Alberto from rising above the circumstances. Grief prevents Alberto from seeing beyond the physical fact of death, therefore his mother's death will debilitate him, can never be creative in any sense. One feels that Lezama is writing from personal experience when he says, "ella le daba esa alegría de sentirse seguro y aún joven, pues en realidad la vejez de un hombre comienza el día de la muerte de su madre" (I, 260). Alberto's sin seems to be that of despair, of lack of faith. Gifted with a degree of insight, he does not possess enough to formulate an acceptance of his mother's death. The one thing which he does not have is time to ponder, but for the imagery of the last few pages of his life, which are really only his dream of salvation. Alberto's despair has erected a causal barrier through which the concept of lejanía cannot penetrate.

Critics have been impressed by the irony surrounding the great family occasion, the ritual meal. Fazzolari points out its similarity to the gossa família, as a mean of strengthening family relationships, a way of watering the family tree, so to speak. An earlier passage in the first chapter evokes the picture of Doña Augusta reigning supreme in the Colonel's kitchen, enumerating her favourite recipes. Since this later scene is full of potential for renewal, yet is overshadowed with gloomy portents, Fazzolari believes that it marks the end of childhood and the withering of the family tree. However she also sees it as a prelude to new life.
It seems true to say that the lace tablecloth is a symbol of the family continuity and Fazzolari makes the interesting point that Mallarmé regarded lace as a symbol of poetry. This may have some bearing since Lezama published several studies on the French poet. The survival of a family so closely linked with the Unconscious implies the continuing of the poetic spirit; and likewise the connection between the material and spiritual worlds perceived through poetic vision by Rialta, Doña Augusta and Cemi. The two women indulge in a lengthy discussion on traditional lace designs in the very first chapter of the novel, and so the reader takes leave of the secure family atmosphere under the influence of the same image that helped to introduce it. The break-up of the family is heralded by the presence on the cloth of a set of green dishes: "conseguida el efecto tonal de una hoja ... (I, 253). The family tree sheds members like leaves, against a background of continuity—this does not mean that the tree itself will die. However the dishes are placed on a cloth, the lace cloth, which is like "la mitad del cuerno menguante lunar ..." (I, 253); that is, decline has set in and the family will fade like the moon, which is also cyclic and may wax again in the person and poetry of Cemi. The idea unites with Doña Augusta's attempts to turn the clock back: "Los he querido rejuvenecer a todos" (I, 253), by evoking childhood memories of the origins, so that her guests "Se sentirán niños ... (I, 253). Yet all these attempts to prevent decline and decay fall on deaf ears, with the exception of Cemi, who is the hope for the continuation of all Doña Augusta and Rialta represent.

Various other aspects of the meal seem to be portents of doom. Alberto's lively fishes are now transformed into a magnificent sea-food soufflé, which includes the emperor fish (rex puer?). Lezama Lima makes obvious the menace of the three blood-red beetroot stains on the white cloth. Demetrio is unable to avoid causing them despite three attempts.
This could refer to Alberto's three chances of escaping death: the warning (from the cowboy), the memory (of the Colonel) and the dream (of the guitarist). No one knows at this stage whose lives are threatened:

Pero esas tres manchas le dieron en verdad el relieve de esplendor a la comida. En la luz, en la resistente paciencia del artesanado, en los presagios, en la manera como los hilos fijaron la sangre vegetal, las tres manchas entreabrieron como una sombría expectación (I, 256).

The number three is invoked as a magical and symbolic one. It is interesting that Cemí helps to cover up the signs of imminent death with the crab shells. Immediately after this, Cemí begins to justify the hope expressed in this concealing act, with his own little piece of verbal virtuosity, noticed only by his grandmother. We are reminded that it is November, a time of sadness for the family which has lost two other male members in the grim winter months (Andresito in December and José Eugenio in January). Death is brought right into the foreground by Doña Augusta who hopes to cheat "Hera la horrible" with the ritual of the meal. The frutero functions as another symbol of Cemí's future role, which he is to assume from Alberto. The fruit is the goal; the fish attempts to climb up the long-stemmed bowl to "el cielo curvo del plato" (I, 258). The latter phrase suggests that this is a recurrence of the symbol of the tree linking heaven and earth, as does the family tree. Hence the joining of Cemí's hand with Alberto's on the stem signifies the passing over of the duty of representing the family's spiritual life to Cemí. The last few sentences of the chapter seem to confirm this:

Le pareció de nuevo ver el langostino saltar alegre en la cascada de la iridiscencia desprendida por la ban- deja con las frutas. Volvió de nuevo el frutero a lanzar una cascada de luz, pero ahora el langostino avanzaba al refractarse los colores frutales, hacia un cementerio de coral (I, 276).

Cemí is unaware as yet of his new role, but the seed has been sown and he is seen to reach for its fruits.
If we accept the explanation for Oppiano Licario's abandonment of Alberto offered above: that Alberto's despair leads him back to the world of Aristotelian causality (represented by Santurce), thus driving out the possibility of lo incondicionado, in this case life after death for his mother and consequently for himself (represented by Oppiano Licario); we can begin to unravel the mystery of his last hours. The apparent end of family continuity fills Alberto with despair, not resolution, so he cannot be the king whom Oppiano Licario has sought. However he has prepared the way for Cemí. Exit Oppiano Licario: enter the Messenger of Death. The Mexican guitarist disguised as a gaudy cowboy is not merely the embodiment of Death coming to collect Alberto, but rather a modern Mephistopheles. His music (poetry) is debased, played on a greasy, tortured instrument; "la madera gimiente" (I, 262) reminds us of Andresito's modified violin. The "excreto ratonera" (I, 262) recalls the ratones associated with the homosexuals in "Reino de siete meses". The first 
copla urging Alberto to "lo divino" is undermined by the image of the obese sufi (I, 263). Fear strikes Alberto at last; the charro now represents the "trompo infernal" and suitably hellish visions arise in his mind. The cowboy is an "Etruscan sacrifice" in whose entrails the victim sees only doom. Nevertheless there seems to be hope for Alberto as he recognizes the second copla as blasphemous:

A vernos mañito, maño
como en la cruz del amor,
uno encimita del otro
y un clavón entre los dos.

The demonic cowboy gives himself away as an infernal envoy by his hissing and spitting, as if salt had been thrown on a fire. Alberto's fears are confirmed by the demon's recitation of his verse, "Ay mare, mi mare," referring now to the imminent death of his own mother (I, 264 and I, 238). Santurce's departure at this point implies that Alberto has entered the
world of the image, of lejanía once more, as he faces the challenge of
death, supplying a verse of his own, and by this action escaping death
(the dagger).

La muerte me está jugando
y como me puse alegre,
me dijo fuera seriando,
por eso la sigo esperando.

Taking death seriously implies believing that it is final. "Me puse
alegre" implies a challenge.

The arrest of the two men for disturbing the peace seems to bring us
back to reality once more as the men become calmer on the way to the sta-
tion. What transpires there has a direct effect on Alberto's fate—
although there is some debate as to whether this effect is beneficial.
Fazzolari criticises Ulloa's declaration that Alberto is rescued from doom
by the memory of José Eugenio. She feels that Alberto is condemned to
Lezama Lima's idea of hell as the Greek underworld: "Hay que tener en
cuenta que Lezama no es un católico ortodoxo, que a veces parece panteísta,
y que tiene mucho del gnosticismo, que la mayor parte de las veces su in-
fierno no es el cristiano, sino el griego, esto es, el valle de Proserpina,
el mundo de los muertos." 24 We must decide what sort of memories the
Captain's conversation evokes, remembering that Alberto has already challen-
ged death. He is carried off in a carro; Ulloa compares this to the "Carro
del Toldo" (as in "Las eras imaginarias: la biblioteca como dragón"; I, 901)—
a covered wagon or war chariot whose canopy and base reminded the Chinese
of the sky arched over the earth. Its central column was believed to
link heaven and earth so it must be included here as a sign of hope (cf.
the frutero). The conversation contains references to Christmas, family
unity, the character of José Eugenio, and particularly the episode in chap-
ter V involving the two boys; "Primero pensé en el tragante de la piscina ..."
(I, 267) recalls Alberto's symbolic escape from the showers. In fact the
whole story is about an actual escape. Alberto's weeping is inspired by a feeling of terrible loss for he is still gripped by a horror of death; "estremecido aún por el recuerdo de los familiares que gimen en el valle de Proserpina, perseguidos por el perro de tres cabezas" (I, 270). Every impression carefully built up so far around the memory of José Eugenio belies the image which Alberto has of his fate. Rialta's faith and the "juego de yaquis" vision have prevented the reader and the rest of the family from adopting Alberto's viewpoint. No wonder that he is despairing, if this is how he views his brother-in-law's and mother's death.

Alberto's request for the freedom of the cowboy may symbolize his resignation to death or his mistaken belief that he is no longer in danger. The hellish vision has now faded and the imagery of the new companion's song tells of freedom and happiness, the dawn and fresh dew. Fazzolari points out that the singer tells of the surrounding countryside, "como un sueño de bienaventuranza eterna." It seems as if the second guitarist offers Alberto a second ending. The imagery of the early stage of the journey evokes the hope of eternal life, the halting of Time and a reconciliation with the family tree. Ulloa reveals much about the last few pages of this chapter by comparing them with "Las eras imaginarias: la biblioteca como dragón." Following his example, from detailed study of this essay we find the "Carro del Toldo" image and the auriga who would drive the Emperor along, seated beside or behind him. Since it is the guitarist who sits in the emperor's seat, thus avoiding being killed in the accident, he must represent merely a dream of kingship or the immunity afforded to the poetry. The eucalyptus trees, in their love-making, (barraganaban) seem to be a symbol of the perfect conjunction of Nature in both heaven and earth, once again formed by trees: "troncos que formaban una monarquía absoluta de sombra y de dominio de la extensión estelar" (I, 271). In addition: "reproducida en un espejo donde aparece un oso empujando las constelaciones" (I, 271) probably refers to an idea from "Las
eras imaginarias: la biblioteca como dragón": "la Constelación de la Osa Mayor, donde mora el Augusto de Jade, nombre ya del Gran Uno" (II, 894). This phrase appears in a passage describing Lao-tse, the "viejo-nino-sabio" of Taoism, near death. He is called upon by the "Guardián del desfiladero" to pass on his knowledge and soon disappears to contemplate Unity forever. This is one possible fate for Alberto. The jasmine flowers in Alberto's dream of eternity are guarding the entrance to this very desfiladero. This suggests that Alberto is closely linked with Lao-tse, in the matter of passing on learning, for Lezama describes him in "Las eras imaginarias: la biblioteca como dragón" as the innovator of a great Chinese philosophical and religious movement, preparing the way for later scholars. There is no element of despair in his death. The phrase "carpa del primogénito" refers to Alberto as if he is being offered up on the base of the chariot like a fish on a plate—he is not of course the first-born, but is here in his place. The "carne transparente" of the poplars, the squares of orange groves (four is a sacred number in I, 463) symbolizes the triumph of the spirit over matter. The Christian symbol of the safe journey, St. Christopher, is combined with references to Nature to produce a magnificent picture: "haciendo de cada árbol una almohadón para San Cristóbal, con el clavo de su cayado hundiendo los hongos venosos" (I, 271).

The first warning note follows: "Rueda la hoja al río / y en su engaño se desliza" (I, 272). It recalls the image of the forlorn little leaf lying on the edge of the waning moon (I, 253). It seems as if the leaf represents Alberto falling into the river of Time. Time is indeed the theme of the subsequent images, as the word "eternity" in the song invokes another Taoist symbol from "Las eras imaginarias: la biblioteca como dragón" (II, 922-3), the tortoise. As long as they remain in hibernation, tortoises signify longevity or eternity, yin and yang, the balance of matter and
spirit as symbolised by their bodies and domed shells. Their lettuces ensure that they remain stationary, since they are placed on the shells. The Chinese water them—the fostering of Tao and its concepts of immortality? They are guardians of the tortoises, hence their prompt weeding-out of the second element of discord: "un gusanillo de cuernos malignos para cariar la superficie verdeante" (I, 272), which seems to be an image of doubt, like that felt by Alberto. The presence of the worm heralds the arrival of other bad omens such as the strong wind and the "Grandes bandadas de vultúridos verdes" (I, 272). Alberto is only dreaming of a blessing in place of a curse. Satan's hosts now appear in the previously reassuring song, and Lezama conjures up some of the things capable of withstanding Time: "las plantas que necesitan del fuego para llegar al hombre" and ritual acts such as "un conjuro de procreación estival" (I, 273). Even the much sought-after "expansionarse de la sangre" is shown to be a false hope as it is compared to the speeding up of a stagnant river as it at last approaches the sea. The river is misled by sirenas, a symbol of deception throughout the novel. The manajú is a Cuban tree with medicinal properties, which like a balanced relationship with the Olaya family tree, could save life, Alberto's life. Other trees and plants also appear. There are two images of fire which Fazzolari chooses to see as examples of hellfire "desde este punto, el paisaje se vuelve verdaderamente infernal con sus múltiples alusiones al fuego." However, one may be a symbol of purification (saltpetre) while the fuego may be a symbol of destruction. I suggest this because they are placed in opposition to one another in the passage. The fire seems to be forced to remain below a cliff whereas the salitrera seems to be corrosive rather than all-consuming: "la salitrera se lanza al asalto para quitarle al mismo diablo la suspicaz cita higueral ..." (I, 274).

The last chance for Alberto is expressed in the image of a bird coming
to roost in the antlers (stone tree) of a reindeer, in some vast and lonely waste. It seems to be an image of Alberto's soul returning to the family tree, to the Great Mother and the Unconscious. But this reconciliation is placed out of reach; "allí en otras latitudes donde la soledad se completa" (I, 274). We return abruptly to the guitarist who now sings of Alberto's destruction: "con los molinos de vino / los titanes se hundirán" and then places the whole episode in a ridiculously trivial light: "Naipes en la arenera /fija la noche entera / la eternidad ... y a fumar" (I, 275). Fazzolari decides that this means that even the mediocre can have eternal life, but not those who give in to drink:

La última décima del guitarrista es quizás la mayor prueba de la condenación de Alberto ... que nos dice como la mediocridad y aun la nulidad pueden ser seguros de salvación, mientras que los grandes pueden perderse por el vicio de la bebida. Los tres últimos versos, aunque más oscuros, son los que fijan por una eternidad el destino de Alberto en el fuego del infierno.

It seems paradoxical to say that the mediocre will be saved because a constant theme in Paradiso is that of "intentar lo más difícil" (I, 321). It is significant that Alberto should meet his death in a drink-sodden state which has in fact reduced him to mediocrity. He is a mere shadow of what we were led to believe he might have become. The progress of Alberto towards disaster is actually quite clearly delineated in the novel and drink is merely one aspect of an invisible wasting disease which holds him fast. We have seen his dilemma over whether to return to the comfort of the maternal ouroboros, to the warm, dark, pre-natal world in which he is not required to think for himself, or whether to assert himself as an individual in adolescent sexuality. His dream or hallucination in the school showers reveals the dangers of becoming obsessed with either state to the extent of wishing to live exclusively in one or other. The end result of dwelling too long in either seems to be bloody sacrifice.
Alberto has two chances to escape, with the young, apparently innocent girl (who is brought by him to ruin and a court case, according to Oppiano Licario) and secondly, when it occurs to him, through the good offices of Oppiano Licario who is lejanía, to assert his masculine, individual side and take control of the feminine within so that it can become his guiding anima instead of his foe.

Unable to achieve this transformation, Alberto yields to open rebellion against the authority of his real parents (his father is weak, in any case) and turns to nights on the town and casual relationships. He will never attain any greater or more permanent degree of maturity. He expends all his creative energy in empty conquests. Neumann says of such states, taking examples from myth:

the orgiastic character of the Adonis, Attis and Tammuz cults, not to speak of the Dionysian, is all part of this sexuality. The young lover experiences an orgy of sex and in the orgasm the ego dissolves, is transcended in death. On this level, orgasm and death go together, just as do orgasm and castration.

For the youthful god, with his feebly developed ego, the positive and negative aspects of sexuality are dangerously close to one another. ...I intoxicated, he surrenders his ego and returns to the womb of the Great Mother, regressing to the pre-ego state ..." 28

This is why it is appropriate to sing a verse about the Titans, who were sent to kill Dionysus, the god of wine and of procreation in the orgies devoted to him. Alberto is frequently intoxicated with love and wine, both intense physical states devoted to re-unifying body and spirit; but all to no avail. He makes a sacrifice of himself to the Great Mother, so that he becomes a forty year old mother's boy. His fatal mistake is that he identifies his real mother far too closely with that which he alternately seeks and flees. The feminine side of his own personality is so bound up with his mother's person that news of her imminent death
precipitates his own death, preceded by the dissolution of his personality in a kind of madness wherein death comes to fetch him in his chariot. The description of the death scenes speaks to the reader of suicide. Lezama suggests that the presence of Oppiano Licario, an appreciation of, or faith in, other levels of reality, in life after death or the power of poetry to preserve the life of the spirit, would have saved Alberto.

There is no element of despair in the death scene of the one over whom Alberto has despaired, but she is now strong in the knowledge that Cemi will inherit the positive characteristics of the family. If Alberto is guilty of anything, it is the lack of self-assertion, arrested development at the stage of adolescent initiation and lack of spiritual growth. He embodies some of the dangers which Cemi must face from within his own family because of its preoccupation with the Unconscious. The latter was too powerful for Alberto, but the true poet must be able to visit the depths of the Unconscious and return once more with new knowledge, like Orpheus or Christ Risen.

Initiations

II. The Orgy

El falo, en la culminación de su erección, parecía una vela mayor encendida para un ánima muy pecadora (I, 308).

So vividly illuminated by such votive candles are the central chapters of Paradiso that they have attracted a degree of attention out of all proportion to their role in the novel. Unfortunately few critics have proceeded further than remarking on their dazzling presence, which serves only to fuel the fires of sensationalism. The adventures of Farraluque, Leregas, Godofredo el Diablo and Baena Albornoz are certainly noteworthy but can
only be usefully studied in context. Lezama defines the context:

Paradiso es una totalidad y en este todo está el sexo. Para mí, con la mayor sencillez, el cuerpo humano es una de las más hermosas formas logradas. La cópula es el más apasionado de los diálogos, y desde luego, una forma, un hecho irrecusable. La cópula no es más que el apoyo de la fuerza frente al horror vacui.

While this statement is reassuring in as much as it seems to preclude any sudden descent into gratuitous pornography, it leaves a great deal unsaid; for many of Lezama's descriptions of sexual intercourse are far from beautiful and the "passionate dialogues" take place between increasingly unsavoury bodies in increasingly unsalubrious surroundings. The tone in which these copulations are described is decidedly in contrast to the aura of reverence expressed in the above quotation from one of his interviews. Lezama details each union with an accuracy and precision which are awesome in themselves, drawing our attention to unusual attributes, in a manner guaranteed to halt even the most seasoned student of literature in mid page:

Su lengua tenía el rosado brioso de un perro de aguas. Se podía comparar entonces el tegumento de su glande con el de su cavidad bucal. Ambos ofrecían, desde el punto de vista del color, una rosa violeta, pero el del glande era seco, pulimentado, como un acecho para resistir la dilatación porosa de los momentos de erección: el de la boca abrillantaba sus tonos, reflejados por la saliva ligera, como la penetración de la resaca en un caracol orillero (1, 280).

Such exuberant language appears in Paradiso constantly, as Edmund White has noted: "Lezama's language is reckless, voluptuous, sly and unrelentingly sexual. Those scenes in the book that are literally sexual (and there are many juicy heterosexual and homosexual interludes) are no more charged with bristling erotic energy than any other moment." He concludes that "At every point words are courting or stroking or probing the banal facts of everyday life." 30 Lezama embraces the world, marrying together unusual concepts within his characters; their deepest emotions and even
spiritual experiences are expressed in sexual terms (for example, Cemí's dream of his mother, Alberto's crisis at school, Alberto's letter). His baroque style engulfs his ideas like jungle foliage, no matter what the topic under scrutiny. When the novelist turns his exuberant, vital language to an examination of sex itself, the result is inevitable; he treats it con brio, sparing no blushes.

It is difficult to find any work with which to compare this part of the novel, chiefly because writers of former times would not have seen their work in print if it dealt so explicitly with the subject. The relish with which Lezama elucidates on school boy preoccupations and the humorous and even satirical tone that he adopts towards his characters in this section, the ludicrous situations in which he places them (for example, in a coal cellar) — all these factors might encourage the reader to recall Petronius' Satyricon or certain of the Canterbury Tales with their bawdy medieval humour. The Serranas in the Libro de Buen Amor have a similar type of rustic, whole-hearted enthusiasm but nothing quite equals the grotesque effects achieved when Lezama's imagination runs riot. The comparison of Leregas' penis with his tongue is but one example of how Lezama employs hyperbole, unexpected simile and metaphor to turn his youthful characters into grotesques. They are reminiscent in this respect of some of Quevedo's creations in the Buscón, not in terms of sexual references, but in sheer unremitting detail which is built up, layer upon layer, until the visual impact of a character is almost overwhelming. The descriptions of Leregas call to mind those of Quevedo's boarding school master, Cabra, or perhaps of Don Toribio. Yet all of these writers are models of discretion when compared with Lezama, who leaves nothing unsaid.

Turning to modern writers, we know that Proust includes quite a large number of homosexuals in A la Recherche du Temps Perdu and that homosexuality was a cause célèbre for Gide. Yet Gide's treatment of the homo-
sexual act itself is positively modest, when compared with some episodes in *Paradiso*. In *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*, which is concerned almost exclusively with homosexual relationships, there is no explicit encounter and all the emphasis is placed on motivation, presumably because Gide endorsed such relationships and wished to present them in the best possible light. This does not appear to be the case with Lezama. Homosexuality has not, on the whole, endeared itself as a topic to writers of the "new novel" in Latin America. Certain passages in *Conversación en la catedral* which describe the sexual predilections of Cayo Bermúdez come close to pornography and violent heterosexual encounters are frequent, but to my knowledge apart from *Paradiso*, no other modern Latin American novel, with the exception of Manuel Puig's *El beso de la mujer araña*, has devoted much space to such matters. Puig's novel, published in 1976, purports to be a study, to the extent of having footnotes and references to genuine psychoanalytical texts on homosexuality. We must ask ourselves why Lezama concerns himself with this aspect of sexuality which has been so ignored in works worthy of the denomination "literature". We must also note the tone which he employs and attempt to gauge from it his true opinions on the subject.

A brief survey of the impact of this part of *Paradiso* on the critics will help to define the problems involved. The enthusiasm of Vargas Llosa and Cortázár did much to ease the passage of *Paradiso* from Cuba to the rest of Latin America. However their initial reactions to the novel were quite distinct. Cortázár pounced on Lezama's references to "el Cráter de Yóculo" and "las sombras del Scártarís" (I, 342) in the Albornoz/Leregas episode and used them to introduce his essay on the novel, thus revealing the importance which he placed on the imagery of descent, and in this case on homosexuality:

> la resonancia de la inocente orografía islandesa se vuelve una lasciva circunstancia erótica, y el mensaje de Arne Saknussemm, maravilla de nuestra infancia
He describes the "rituales fálicos de Leregas y Farraluque" as "parodia simiesca," which suggests the aura of the grotesque surrounding them. 32

On the other hand, later in 1967, Vargas Llosa found himself called upon to defend his essay entitled "Una summa poética: una tentativa imposible" against the attacks of Emir Rodríguez Monegal; the latter was incensed because he could not understand how Vargas Llosa's study could ignore entirely the theme of homosexuality. The Peruvian novelist protested that the novel under discussion "puede ser considerada muchas cosas distintas, como toda creación mayor, pero, en ningún caso, un tratado, un manual o una apología del homosexualismo" and he becomes quite vehement: "me indignó mucho la idea de que un libro tan rico, vario y múltiple ... estuviera siendo desnaturalizado, reducido a una sola de sus innumerables caras...." 33 He claims that there are only about forty pages dealing specifically with this theme, which goads Rodríguez Monegal into providing a list of homosexual incidents and imagery which he says form "una buena cuarta parte" of Paradiso, 34 but he concludes that "casi no hay capítulo en que con un motivo u otro, no aparezca muy destacada alguna imagen fálica"; 35 he tempers his observation, saying that "Aunque la novela cubana presenta abundantemente la sodomía, no se preocupa de Gomorra para nada." 36 Rodríguez Monegal returns to Paradiso in his 1968 article, in which he argues for an "anagogic" reading of the text, bearing in mind that "Paradiso no defiende la homosexualidad sino que la discute." 37 He notes that the activities of both hetero- and homosexuals border on perversity but reminds the reader of Lezama's abiding interest in "ese estado anterior a la heterosexualidad en que la naturaleza humana se reproducía por medios similares a los de un árbol que desprende una rama..."
Lezama has described the spiritual rebirth of the Spaniard in Latin America, with connotations of a return to the origins, in José María Cemí's dream of a lamb beneath a tree—it is part of his concept of the first "era imaginaria" described in "A partir de la poesía," (II, 835). Rodríguez Monegal feels that the concept of androgyny plays an important part in the novel and decides in favour of Lezama's higher motives in writing about all kind of sexuality. He favours Cemí's remark to Fronesis: "Los griegos llegaron a la pareja en todas las cosas, pero el cristiano puede decir, desde la flor hasta el falo, este es el dedo de Dios" (I, 425).

Towards the end of 1967, J. R. Ribeyro produced an introductory article which compares Paradiso with parts of A la recherche du temps perdu, particularly the characters of Charlus and Focón, but he notes most important distinctions:

One of the first to comment on Paradiso, César López, remarks that the "retornello fálico de ciertas zonas de la obra descubre una de las obsesiones del cubano que tiene su paralelo secular en antiguas civilizaciones" but he fears that despite great imaginative power, Lezama has fallen into
a trap of his own making by "ponerse el acento, no en el origen del cual se desprende el poeta metafísicamente, ni tampoco en la resurrección final (propuesta en la conjunción estable poeta-hombre) sino en la trayectoria, en ese mismo enemigo rumor, tan lezamiano, que se muestra como resistencia." 41 He feels that Lezama has been waylaid by the very thing he wishes to leave behind, the flesh. We will have to determine whether this is true of the eighth chapter. Meanwhile, critics such as J. C. Ghiano are prepared to forgive Lezama anything because "Todos los temas de Paradiso, hasta los desafortunadamente fálicos, están justificados por la fe de Lezama." 42 However he does not expand on any particular theme in detail. Ortega says of the eighth chapter: "un episodio suscita otro episodio en una sucesiva transformación hiperbólica; así, los episodios eróticos del capítulo VIII, y el mismo episodio del atleta Albornoz, son como prólogos anecdoticos que suscitan la transposición de la anécdota al plano de la poesía." 43 I think that there is much to be said for this view. Finally, there are some, E. Figueroa Amaral amongst them, who find the passages in question most offensive: "Escondida por una multitud de símbolos fálicos refleja una ética sexual de la más austera represión. Ataca las pasiones con humor astringente y los pasajes homossexuales son de sátira cruel." 44 While I do not agree that Lezama is being callous, it seems that he is attacking sexuality in some way. Pérez Firmat, on the other hand, devotes an entire article to proving that Cemí's final acceptance of his own being involves homosexuality, which supercedes his "sexual ambivalence." 45 Each dissertation produced so far has examined the sexual scenes with varying degrees of interest and the debate on Lezama's intentions continues apace.

What is surprising, in retrospect, is that Paradiso survived its first appearance in print in 1966, since it was withdrawn almost immediately by the government censors and only reinstated at the express wish of Fidel
Castro, according to Lezama's friends and relatives in Havana. The most obvious bone of contention, in a country which even in the spring of 1980 classed its homosexuals with the "criminals, lumpen and antisocial elements, loafers and parasites gathered in the grounds of the Peruvian embassy," was the homosexual element in the novel. Fortunately, the authorities seem to have decided that these passages are only a fraction of the total work, but it did not at first find favour in Franco's Spain. Lezama wrote a letter to Juan Goytisolo, whose article, "La metáfora erótica: Góngora, Joaquín Belda y Lezama Lima," attempts to compare the latter with examples of pornographic writing; he says:

nunca he leído esa obra que usted me cita (La coquito), ni creo que sea necesario más para la lectura de ese capítulo VIII, que lo que allí se muestra. Algunos versículos de Las Leyes del Manú y sobre todo el Kamasutra (capítulo dedicado al Opoparika o unión bucal) leídos en la niñez y mantenidos con sensual relieve por la memoria. Los únicos libros de pornografía que he leído son la Biblia (Génesis) y Platón.  

Lezama expresses surprise at the censorship in Spain and remarks "No sé cual es el motivo, su raíz es innegablemente ecuménica, es católica .... Mi obra podrá ser censurada por defectos de estilo, pero jamás por motivos éticos, puesto que su raíz es esencialmente la de un auto sacramental." The chief aim of an auto sacramental was to express religious mysteries in an art form available to the masses and if we take this comment seriously, there can be no question of pornography for its own sake. Eloísa Lezama Lima speaks of her growing concern to clarify his meaning in the face of "más y más empates freudianos arriesgados de críticos epatantes: que si complejo de Edipo, que si homosexual, que si el padre ... Su respuesta era siempre una gran risotada." The consensus of critical opinion, combined with Lezama's own declarations, leads us inevitably to the conviction that, despite the relish with which he writes on sex, Lezama has something in addition to a boisterous celebration of the physical in mind.
The key to an understanding of the adolescent exploits of Farraluque, Leregas and the others lies in our earlier examination of Alberto and José Eugenio, who undergo a crisis of identity in the school showers. We saw that the two boys faced up to the challenge of "otherness" in quite different ways, and that Alberto is very tempted to remain in the warm comfort of the maternal ouroboros, not having to assert himself in any way. He is then seen to swing violently in the opposite direction and is only saved from the homosexuals in the bar by the presence of lejanía, Oppiano Licario. His movement across to the other extreme derives from the desire to break away from the undefined, child-like dependence on the real and symbolic mothers, and to assert the self through sexual experience. Alberto plunges himself into various kinds of intoxication, heterosexual love and drink, because he is still fatally attracted to the maternal ouroboros or the Unconscious; he cannot free himself from the purely phallic stage. The adolescents in the eighth chapter have no Oppiano Licario to pull them back from the brink, and so they unwittingly descend into the depths of the Unconscious by their rebellious sexual behaviour. They regress even further than that stage when they resemble the youthful lovers of the Great Mother whose weak ego is drawn in to the Unconscious once more, becoming one with the pre-natal state even before their sex has been determined; they become androgynes.

If this argument is valid it should be borne out in the imagery of the sexual exploits. If Lezama condemns his characters in these passages, it will be for the same reason that Alberto is carried off by death; they will have sacrificed themselves to the unconscious state from which they were fleeing in their orgies, having stunted their spiritual growth. Farraluque is introduced as a blatant exhibitionist who treats the younger boys to a reciprocal display as they file through the school toilets. He is described as "cruzado de vasco semititánico y de habanera lánguida
que generalmente engendra un leptosomático adolescentario ..." (I, 277), a lineage shared by José Eugenio and expressing the creative power which Lezama has shown that he believes exudes from such unions. It is inevitable that the reader should be reminded of Fibo and Aredo at this stage, although their sexuality was merely latent. Farraluque is possessed by "un demonio priýpico" (I, 277) and dances about like one in a trance, while treating his penis like a little pet, "Se la enroscaba por los dedos, por el antebrazo, hacía como si le pegase, o la mimaba como un niño tragón" (I, 277) in what Lezama describes as a "ceremonia fálica" (I, 277). It is as if the entire school is indulging in phallus worship. His punishment sets him apart from his peers and he adopts "una máscara ceremoniosa" of seriousness. The atmosphere of rite and initiation is built up even more as the passage progresses; Leregas' habits are "otro ritual fálico" (I, 277). There follows the comparison of his face and penis which seem to reflect one another; "La extensión del frenillo se asemejaba a su nariz, la prolongación abultada de la cúpula de la membrana a su frente abombada" (I, 277-8); this comparison continues its development until it culminates in the rather overwhelming description of Leregas' tongue and phallus. No wonder the class is transfixed by the appearance of such a phenomenon which seems to evolve before their very eyes: "impulsada por un viento titánico " (my italics); "su falo no parecía penetrar sino abrazar el otro cuerpo"; "como un remolino que se trueca en columna"; "aquel tenaz cirio"; "un atributo germinativo tan tronitono-nante"; "aquel improvisado Trajano columnario" (I, 278-9) — these are but a few of Lezama's humorous evocations of Leregas' salient feature. His balancing act with some books, surely the ultimate in disrespect for authority, seems like "una fábula hindú sobre el origen de los mundos" (I, 279). Lezama may be thinking of some of the legends in which the world is created in a great out-pouring of sexual energy.
Lezama insists that Farraluque is not guilty of defiance but that "sólo que no hacía el menor esfuerzo de la voluntad por evitarlo" (I, 280) and proceeds to furnish the reader with a striking picture which we will examine presently. Farraluque allows things to happen because he is incapable of an assertion of will. In his later encounters, the other participant calls the tune, as Gimbernat de González notes: "tenemos un término constante y potente, Farraluque, que encuentra el sentido de su función gracias a los otros integrantes del juego, quienes instauran las diferencias." Returning to the striking imagery, it seems to me that the picture evoked—"Su boca era un elemento receptivo de mera pasividad, donde la saliva reemplazaba el agua maternal" (I, 280)—is really that of the Terrible Mother of mythology who has male and female attributes, a long tongue like a phallus, and a vicious "vagina dentata," like Kali. Leregas' mouth is described as a vulva, to all intents and purposes, and Neumann confirms my suspicions when he says that

"the terrible aspect of the Feminine always includes the uroboric snake woman, the woman with the phallus, the unity of child-bearing and begetting, of life and death. The Gorgon is endowed with every male attribute: the snake, the tooth, the boar's tusks, the out-thrust tongue, and sometimes even with a beard."

Leregas, whilst apparently asserting himself against the Unconscious and the Great Mother, has actually become an expression of the "terrible Feminine," the death-ridden side of the concept, which, like the womb of the earth, draws men back into its maw, into the Unconscious, back to the pre-natal state of floating in the "agua maternal." Leregas is an androgyn of sorts: "Parecía que había una enemistad entre esos dos órganos, donde la boca venía a situarse en el polo contrario del glande" (I, 280-1). Although it is an uneasy union of opposites, Lezama recalls Michelangelo's painting of the creation of Man, on the Sistine Chapel ceiling, thus linking the androgynous state with innocence. Leregas contains masculine
and feminine principles, but they are not unified in a whole being.

Farraluque reappears on the scene to take up new adventures. He is well endowed and fully prepared to "explore in indiscriminate and anarchistic fashion all the erotic potentialities of the human body"; for, "in Freudian terms children are polymorphously perverse." 53 He is leaving childhood behind, but it is essentially a childlike curiosity and lack of inhibition that leads him on from initiation to initiation.

Alberto is content with only one night in which to indulge in all his initiatory experiences, but Farraluque is afforded three special days, three Sundays. In encounter one, the youth is finding that time lies heavily on idle hands; he is placed alone in the abandoned school, and the maid comes to fetch him to the sexual feast like Eve and the snake combined. Time ("Cremosa, goteante, interminable crema batida"; I, 281) and emptiness are the chief factors which are relieved by his sexual adventures. We might recall Lezama's comment: "La cópula no es más que el apoyo de la fuerza frente al horror vacui." 54 The nineteen year old "mestiza mamey" (I, 282) who awaits him is notable for her drowsiness, which she shares with all Farraluque's partners: "La continuidad sin sobresaltos de la respiración de la mestiza, evitaba la sospecha del fingimiento" (I, 283). The sexual intercourse of the first encounter is quite ordinary; in the second, the union takes place once more on a comfortable bed ("cuadrado plumoso," I, 283) and the partner, the Spanish maid, is also asleep and soon returns to sleep after her experiences with Farraluque. The latter now involve some technique in order that both participants might achieve orgasm. It is she who explains her wish for "la ondulación permanente" (I, 284) and the positions herself so that his second experience may be per angostam viam to preserve her virginity.

The third encounter, with the director's wife, is marked by an increasing concern with technique and lack of spontaneity, hence her state is not
one of natural sleep: "fingía sin destreza un sueño de modorra sensual" (I, 287). The sleepiness featured in the first two encounters seems to symbolize their naturalness and ritual aspects; also if Farraluque, like Leregas, descends into the Unconscious each time he has an ecstatic experience, it may indicate the motionless "agua maternal" of the Unconscious. As the acts become more conscious and more complex, the participants become increasingly alert to their own pleasure, which blots out anything else. The imagery employed to describe the Spanish maid gives the impression of the male part being swallowed up in the female:

Ese encuentro amoroso recordaba la incorporación de una serpiente muerta por la vencedora silbante. Anillo tras anillo, la otra extensa teoría flácida iba penetrando en el cuerpo de la serpiente vencedora, en aquellos monstruosos organismos que aún recordaban la indistinción de los comienzos del terciario donde la digestión y la reproducción formaban una sola función (I, 284).

Once again the imagery points to a state in which all opposites are dissolved.

The third encounter begins with the ritual gesture made by the older woman who feigns sleep, and it precedes another lesson in specialization: "Sus dos anteriores encuentros sexuales, habían sido bastos y naturalizados, ahora entraba en el reino de la sutileza y de la diabólica especialización" (I, 287-8). The speciality involved is made explicit within the text ("dos de las ocho partes de que consta un opoparika o unión bucal, según los textos sagrados de la India"; I, 287) and Lezama indulges in a minute detailing of the same, which is included in the ninth chapter of the Kamasutra, as he states. It is a "diabólica especialización" because the original purpose of such techniques has been forgotten; in Hindu belief, "every time their love is ecstatically consummated in the act of union, human lovers are transformed into participants in that original 'divine act.'" They become part of the original cosmic creative moment; "The man is assimilated to the male aspect of the creative Deity, the seed of being; the
woman to the Goddess whose fertile womb is the matrix to all form and reality."  

Farraluque’s partner remains, however, "la arrebatada gorgona" (I, 288). Yet the scene implies another return to the origins, if only by default. For the youth, hampered by the "Circe, afanosa de la gruta de la serpiente" (I, 288), the encounter, "tenía algo de morderse la cola" (I, 288). The latter is a most interesting choice of phrase, as it evokes the symbol of the origins, the snake biting its own tail, an image of androgyny and the undifferentiated state.

The youth discovers "como una lejana burla sagrada" (I, 289) the young boy Adolfito, who has the features of the snake woman, once more described: "Enseñaba un incisivo cortado en forma triangular, que al sonreír mostraba la movilidad de la punta de su lengua, como si fuese tan sólo la mitad de la de una serpiente bifida" (I, 289). He too is an image of the ouroboros. The performance of any kind of intercourse is made impossible by the perverse struggling of the partner and the semen is wasted. Obviously, there can be no union with an image of the undifferentiated state because of its very nature; in fact, it cannot be influenced by sex. Or so it seems at this point.

The grand finale of Farraluque’s adventures takes place on the third Sunday. The whole event is shrouded in mystery; the partner’s identity is unknown and he wears a mask, of which Gimbernat de González says, "El antifaz no solo quita la identidad al hombre, sino que al unirse en la conjugación homosexual, involucra a Farraluque, lo desdibuja, lo niega en su rol primero." 56 There are many images of descent into the depths, "un bosque de niebla," the "carbonería" which is lit by a small skylight and has the atmosphere of a prison, or of the womb. The latter is evoked by the fruits of the earth sitting all around, that is, the bags of coal. The whole thing is absolutely ludicrous, but a careful examination of the imagery will guide us to Lezama’s serious intent. The idea of a
rite is established by the phrase; "Como un sacerdote de una hierofanía primaveral, empezó a desnudar al priápico ..." (I, 291). If we combine this knowledge with the simple fact that he is still wearing his socks and shoes, never mind the fact that he is masked, we will have to agree with R. González that "Las situaciones son en extremo grotescas y se colman de detalles ridículos. El colmo de la comedia de burlesco, es el pasaje de la carbonería...." The "priest" is an ugly, fat little man who shows up very white against the black coal sacks. We find again the "incorporación de la serpiente" and the man seems about to "parir un monstruoso animal" (I, 292), while resembling Bafameto, "el diablo andró- gino" (I, 292; my italics). There is little suggestion of an idyllic return to the origins here. Farraluque is joined with nothingness:

... Bafameto, el diablo andrógino, poseído por un cerdo desdentado, rodeada la cintura por una serpiente que se cruza en el sitio del sexo, inexorablemente vacío, mostrando su cabeza la serpiente, flácida, en oscilante suspensión (I, 292).

We have seen elsewhere that Lezama seems to use the pig image in its mythical sense of sacrifice to the Earth Mother, and this one is toothless, a fact that suggests castration, as does the positioning of the snake which also appears in representations of the terrible aspect of the Feminine and the Unconscious. The cellar eventually takes on the characteristics of a coal mine, literally in the depths of the earth; it becomes "as hot as a steamship"; the earth almost swamps the little men showering down the coal dislodged by the vehemence of the older man and they have to flee. It is as if an earthquake has erupted. The choice of a rather unpleasant image reveals that the falling of the coal is a judgement on the men:

El carbón, al chocar con las losetas del suelo, no sonaba en directa relación con su tamaño, sino se
deshacía en un crujido semejante a un perro danés que royese a un ratón blanco (I, 293).

The coal also makes black marks on their white, fleeing bodies.

Farraluque has indulged in sex with both halves of the director's household, with varying pleasure. Lezama drops his mocking tone after this last encounter and turns to descriptions of Cemi and his troubled family, but he ends the chapter with a warning for unwary readers given to an over-fondness for Aristotelian causality of the Squabs variety. It might be applied to those readers who see only the surface layer of Lezama's prose, since it is a moral tale of evil in the eye of the beholder. Godofredo el Diablo loses his "ojo del canón" (I, 302), that is, the eye with which he should be able to discern righteousness, because he has misused it and misinterpreted the evidence with which it had supplied him. He resembles the Devil in more than his name, for he is also handsome; "Su inquieta belleza lo asemejaba a un guerrero griego ..." (I, 302), and he has red hair, like so many of Lezama's angry youths (c.f. Dr. Zunhil, Foción's would-be assassin). It is significant that Fronesis, Cemi's new friend, should tell Godofredo's story as he is always shown to be well aware of ethical principles. Like Foción at a later stage, Godofredo circles the house in which the object of his desires resides. Fileba is a frustrated bride who becomes involved with Padre Eufrasio's obsession with "la cúpula sin placer" (I, 305); she is the perfect helpmate for him and her frequent visits to the priest help him to cultivate "la lejanía del otro cuerpo" (I, 305), which despite its realization in sado-masochistic practices, is not an ignoble aim in itself (Fronesis' hypersensitivity to the presence of body obliterating spirit leads him to make a shield against the body, as we shall see). The left eye that Godofredo puts to a spyhole to see the tortured Fileba and Eufrasio could actually be either eye, since it is his metaphorical sight that is impaired. It is of course Eufrasio's phallus that is "una vela mayor
encendida para un ánima muy pecadora" (1, 308) as it is indeed something of a religious rite as far as he is concerned. He is exorcising his bodily cravings, but that is not what Godofredo sees or relates to the husband, Pablo, who is driven to suicide because he takes a causal view.

Retribution for the suicide of Pablo is swift, being executed by the lianas which scratch a cross on Godofredo's right eye; they seem to be an agent of God. Lezama makes his condemnation even more pronounced here but it is directed not against an act; rather it is a thought that receives his displeasure. When dealing with Farraluque's exploits, he uses a different technique which is aptly described by R. González:

Del realismo ha tomado los detalles que le sirven para exagerarlos y presentarlos ante el lector en un plano mayor del habitual, a la manera de un caricaturista. La secuencia de escenas sexuales de capítulo VIII padece esas observaciones tremendistas: en la exageración encuentra su manera de crítica.

I believe it is a most effective method which ensures enjoyment of Lezama's luxurious style in the full knowledge of his intentions.

Lezama turns once more to the homosexual embrace as a prelude to the lengthy discussions of the same, but that is not the end of sexual unions in Paradiso; Celita and Focion's uncle Juliano, Focion and the "Pelirrojo", Fronesis and Lucía, Daisy, George and Focion—all have a part to play in the sexual symbolism of the novel. The participants here involved are Baena Albornoz, the aggressively macho rowing expert, and Leregas, of phallic notoriety. Albornoz is truly one of the mighty fallen, even more so because Lezama builds up his masculine image, only to bring him, literally, to his knees. He is described as affecting "el gesto de Heracles paseándose por las costas del Mediterráneo con un bastos en la mano" (1, 341) and his sporting comrades are similarly majestic. He is like a mighty Greek god who is soon shown to be Narcissus in disguise, despite his loud protests to the contrary. The ironically named La
Chorrera (The Rapids) has a long staircase which serves admirably as an image of descent to the depths when taken in conjunction with those volcanic reminiscences of *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*, by Jules Verne, "El recuerdo del cráter de Yóculo; las sombras del Scártaris; el cráter de Sneffels," (I, 342). The descent brings with it the androgynous state but the whole scene is tainted with mockery of their fellow athletes not to mention their own shame. Leregas seems to have gone into a decline since his school days and is quite incapable of imagining intercourse with a complete person:

Su Eros reaccionaba reconstruyendo por fragmentos las zonas erógenas. Una vista fija de los glúteos separados de las prolongaciones carioscas de las espaldas. Los muslos enarcaban su sensualidad en la contemplación de una Diana mutilada que expusiese sobre la cama su pierna de yeso. Véa al otro participante del diálogo carnal como una víctima que corría desnuda desde el ara del sacrificio hasta la columna ... (I, 342-3).

Leregas is linked with "el fuego del nacimiento malo, de la esperma derramada sobre el azufre incandescente" (I, 342); the lovers are "los dos condenados" (I, 343); most important of all, the beauty of Baena Albornoz, his manly vigour, is emphasized ("Lucía el atleta toda la perfección de su cuerpo irisado por el eón retrogerminativo;" I, 343) only to be transformed into the behaviour and even appearance of an animal before the astonished onlooker ("El Adonis sucumbía en el éxtasis bajo el colmillo del cerdoso;" I, 343). The two who were standing upright slowly descend to all fours as swine and when they are interrupted by their comrades, Albornoz is gnawing on some wood. His humiliation is complete. Almost as a preface to Cemí's conclusions in the debate on homosexuality, two youths become as animals before our very eyes. Neumann has commented on the kind of extasy described here by Lezama: "In the negative mysteries of drunkenness and stupor the personality and consciousness are 'regressively dissolved'; poisoned by negative orgiastic sexuality, narcotics, or magic.
potions, they succumb to extinction and madness." There is nothing creative in such a union and Albornoz is shown immediately afterwards, in a kind of mad revenge, setting fire to his fellow oarsmen's beds.

Yet Leregas remains unmoved; his weeping is not what it seems: "el llanto que le rodaba por el colmillo, en la transfiguración interrumpida" (I, 344) is a sign of his conquest, not his repentence. R. González says of these youths: "Estos ejemplares de prominentes falos están limitados a esa expresión: su vida transcurre entre la erección y el descanso de sus miembros: son bestias sexuales." Symbols connected with the Great Mother, appearing as Earth Mother in her terrible aspect, such as the pig and the phallic woman, appear constantly in the sexual encounters in which phallus worship is of the greatest importance. It seems that despite all their efforts, the youths are not autonomous because these images keep on reappearing, even when the image of the androgyne is also present.

We may find an explanation of this in myth, where "the phallic-chthonic deities are companions of the Great Mother, not representatives of the specifically masculine. Psychologically, this means that phallic masculinity is still conditioned by the body and thus is under the rule of the Great Mother, whose instrument it remains." So it seems that these boys have followed a path that leads to the edge of a cliff and nothingness. They have proceeded a stage further than Alberto and are a warning to José Cemf. To be a poet, he will have to master these elements; he cannot be submerged in the manner of a Leregas or Farraluque. Neither can he afford to devalue the body as Padre Eufrasio has done. For Gimbertnat de González, the sexual scenes advocate the idea of "volver por medio de estos rituales subterráneos a un estado primigenio de androginía." Ulloa is aware of the symbols of a descent of sorts and decides that the scenes tienen un carácter ritual de iniciación, de descenso a las profundidades, al Caos, a la masa amorfa de lo
I think that his assertion is fundamentally correct since it seems most important that Čemi should learn from the initiations of others into sexual matters because his own initiation took the form of an introduction to "el idioma hecho naturaleza" (I, 237).
Notes

1 A. Álvarez Bravo, ed., "Suma de conversaciones," in LGT, p. 35. [Interview]. "Existe también lo que he llamado el súbito ... Por ejemplo, si un estudioso del alemán se encuentra con la palabra vogel (pájaro), después tropieza con la palabra vogelbaum (jaula para pájaro), y se encuentra después con la palabra vogelon, de súbito, al restallar como un fósforo la causalidad pájaro y jaula para pájaro, se encuentra con el incondicionado vogelon, que le entrega el significado del pájaro penetrando en la jaula, o sea, la cópula."

2 "Interrogando a Lezama Lima," in Recopilación, p. 22.


6 Ibid., p. 341, note 74.


8 "Interrogando a Lezama Lima," in Recopilación, p. 11.

9 José Lezama Lima, "Paradiso (concluye el capítulo cinco)," Orígenes, Year 12, No. 39 (1955), 36.


13 E. Neumann, Origins, p. 45.


15 Origins, pp. 50-1.


17 Ibid.
Neumann, Origins, p. 248.

Fazzolari, "Paradiso y el sistema," p. 83.

E. Gimbernat de González, "Paradiso: 'Aventura sigilosa,'" Ch. 4.


Fazzolari, "Paradiso y el sistema," p. 85.

Ibid., p. 86.

Ibid., p. 82.

Ibid., p. 57.

Ibid., p. 59.

Ibid., p. 60.

Origins, p. 60.


Ibid., p. 75.

Mario Vargas Llosa, "Sobre el Paradiso de Lezama Lima," MN, No. 16 (Oct. 1967), p. 89. (This is a letter printed alongside one from E. Rodríguez Monegal in reply).


Ibid., p. 92.

Ibid., p. 95.


Ibid.,

R. Ribeyro, "Notas sobre Paradiso," in Recopilación, p. 180. (This was first printed in Eco, VII, No. 91, 1967).

Ibid., p. 181.

César López, "Sobre Paradiso," in Recopilación, pp. 189-90. (This was first printed in Unión, 5, No. 2, 1966).

43 J. Ortega, "Paradiso de Lezama Lima," in NHA, p. 64. (This was first printed in Imagen, No. 40 (1st-15th Jan. 1969).

44 E. Figueroa Amaro, "Forma y estilo en Paradiso," RevIb, XXXVII (1972), 433.


49 Ibid., p. 29.


51 Neumann, The Great Mother, Pls. 66 and 67.

52 Ibid., p. 170.

53 Norman O. Brown, Life Against Death, London 1959, p. 27.


58 Ibid., p. 239.

59 The Great Mother, p. 74.

60 "José Lezama Lima, el ingenuo ...," in Recopilación, p. 240.

61 Neumann, Origins, p. 309.


63 "La narrativa," p. 123.
Chapter V

The Adolescent Cemi

I. Foción: Cemi's self-destruction

Cemi's last glimpse of Foción reveals the very image of despair and lunacy. His chosen path in life has led him to this obsessive circling of the tree, the symbol of his yearnings. We have seen Alberto being swept along on a wave of self-pity, hurtling to his death in a drunken stupor; here we have a character who is driven to despair by other demons just as irrevocably. His personal tragedy is intimately related to that of Alberto and his life seems to represent an alternative route in life for Cemi—one that turns out to be a cul-de-sac. Various critics have examined Foción as an entirely separate entity from Cemi; this is useful up to a certain point but I find it more profitable to consider him as one element in the youthful poet's psyche, that aspect of his nature which could mislead and distract Cemi from his creative purpose. Lezama's few remarks on this second section of the novel tend to direct critics towards treating Foción, Fronesis and Cemi as three friends, very closely interconnected, but separate nevertheless. For ease of examination, I shall also treat Foción as a character of his own right, but we shall see that his true value in the text is obscured without constant reappraisal of his relationship...
with Cemí's evolving psyche and the progress of Fronesis. In order to come to terms with Foción's mysterious fate, the reader must trace the gradual downfall across three chapters of Paradiso, in an effort to understand the necessary presence of apparent evil and negativity in Cemí's youthful life. Following the pattern laid down in the novel so far, Lezama subjects Cemí to evil forces by proxy so that he is enabled to remain pure in spirit no matter what experiences lie before him. As A. Valdés has remarked: "la debilidad, el daño, los demonios expulsados a priori de Cemí, y de su figura más venerada, su madre, vuelven a entrar en el texto." 1

We have seen that Alberto's position in the family is ambivalent, as he is a disruptive, although stimulating, influence on Cemí; he it is who initiates the child into the mysteries of language. It is most interesting that a male member of the family should preside over his formal initiation, a ceremony from which the female side of the family is entirely excluded. In view of their previous central role in matters of self-expression, the reader should note their exclusion as the beginning of their withdrawal from centre stage in Paradiso. They belong in the background of what Lezama sees as the second "moment" in Cemí's development: "la salida, su apertura al mundo exterior, en el momento de la amistad, en el momento en que se encuentra Cemí con Fronesis y con Foción." 2 Alberto's tragic death introduces a negative element into Cemí's hitherto unblemished family tree; the extraordinary events of the eighth chapter recall the school days of Alberto and José Eugenio and the problem of personal identity and self-destruction; it is inevitable that the pure female of the early chapters will recede from view, for the world that Cemí has entered is essentially male-orientated. It includes the blessings of true friendship and the horrors of phallus worship, both phenomena being represented in the characters of Fronesis and Foción respectively. As Cemí struggles to find a clear path between varying aspects of his own psyche, the "friends" he
encounters are actually personifications of these aspects or tendencies. They are signposts to alternative routes through a maze – they may lead to a precipice or a hidden treasure, providing no clues as to the correct choice. Lezama uses Fronesis and Foción as illustrations of the choice facing Cemí; we do not really know until the last moment how he chooses, although he is shown to be forming opinions constantly and slowly gravitating towards Fronesis. Neumann has described the process as follows:

The youth group, made up of young men who are all contemporaries, is the place where the male really discovers himself for the first time. When he feels himself a stranger among women and at home among men, we have the sociological situation that corresponds to the self-discovery of ego consciousness.

It is only in the world itself that Cemí will be able to find and take command of himself, defining his own personality by observing its reflection or negation in others. Anything which holds him back from self-discovery will be regarded as evil and must be challenged, to the extent that "estas historias de padres y madres, historias de familias, son reflejos en 'los espejos de sangre humeante a la entrada del Hades'." For a time, then, the female principle is represented as an evil.

Foción might appear initially to be the most puzzling character in the novel but even he follows a distinct pattern in his peculiar conduct. His forerunners are the defiant youths of chapter VIII whose desperate attempts to separate themselves from the demands of their evolving egos plunged them back into the depths of the Unconscious, as bloody sacrifices to the Great Mother of mythical times. Sacrifice took the form of transformation into an animal, usually a boar (Alberto as Aredo's prey; Baena Albornoz on all fours; Leregas as the tusked boar). It represented the loss of human qualities as the price exacted for bestial pursuits; the forfeiture of the individual personality and the penalty of spiritual death. The final penalty, lunacy as the death of the spirit, has not yet been exacted; Alberto
goes to his death in despair, rather than madness, while Godofredo el Diáblo's appearance in a cautionary tale is too fleeting to affect us in the way that Foción's long, inexorable descent into insanity should do.

Foción has been chosen by Lezama to expose the ultimate dangers of retarding the growth of self-consciousness and awareness in vain hope of remaining in the paradisical world of the ouroboros, the Unconscious, in the womb of the Great Mother. Cemi feels certain that the object of Foción's demented circling motion, the poplar tree, is really Fronesis (I, 518). In the sense that Fronesis is worshipped by Foción and desired by him homosexually, this seems accurate. Fronesis, by Lezama's own admission, represents "la éticidad," while Foción embodies chaos; therefore a secondary meaning appears to be the desire to bring order out of chaos, to assimilate qualities that are lacking in Foción and present in Fronesis. On another level of meaning unknown to the unfortunate Foción, the tree which he identifies with Fronesis is clearly revealed as a pillar between Heaven and Earth: Cemi observes it closely, seeing it as "un álamo grande de tronco y de copa, hinchado por la cercanía de las nubes que querían romper sus toneles rodados" (I, 518). In Paradiso, we have seen that the tree connecting the upper and lower levels of reality is the family tree, and in particular its female branches, Rialta, Augusta, Cambita. This tree is intimately linked with the archetypal Feminine and the Unconscious and it is the latter which enslaves Foción, rather than the person of Fronesis. In other words he remains in or returns to a state of chaotic formlessness, despite attempts to impose some sort of order.

However, Foción is not trapped for eternity, thanks to a miraculous flash of lightning which destroys the tree on the eve of Doña Augusta's death. In an interesting introductory study, Souza notes that even in the description of Foción's obsession, there is a hopeful sign:
It is significant that the circle image is combined with the spiral, for the spiral indicates evolution, growth, and the movement from multiplicity to unity. Foción's movement is circular and spiral, suggesting a progression toward a solution to his problems. The bolt of lightning that releases Foción indicates the sudden gaining of an illumination and insight that frees him from his obsessive anguish.

I agree that the phrase "La enorme cuantía de circulos que sumaba durante el día, la abría en espirales ..." (I, 519) suggests a progression upwards. While the lightning may symbolize a flash of insight, it signifies also the precise moment at which the old matriarch and representative of the archetypal Feminine, Doña Augusta, is struck down. Some measure of the close connection between Cemi and Foción may be gauged from the fact that Cemi has just been accepted formally as an individual in a long speech by his grandmother, on her death bed. This conversation effectively frees Cemi to pursue his poetic calling, having graduated from adolescence to manhood. I do not believe, with Ulloa, that Foción "muere enloquecido dando vueltas en torno a un árbol...." 7 since madness is sufficient punishment. With the publication, in 1977, of a sequel to Paradiso, Oppiano Licario, we know now that Foción reappears; this is not conclusive proof that he survives the bolt of lightning since the deceased Oppiano Licario puts in another appearance also. The fact remains that the gift of freedom comes to Cemi and his erstwhile companion, Foción, at the same time; Cemi has learned to control chaotic reality for his own purposes as a poet, and is therefore fully self-aware and no longer entirely dependent on the archetypal Feminine or enveloped in the Unconscious to the exclusion of his own personality. Evidently Foción functions as an element in Cemi's psyche, as a personified concept. He does not really have life outside Cemi's personality.

It may be useful to enumerate some of Focion's principal moves across Lezama's stage in chronological order: he is introduced as a direct result
of the meeting of Cemi and Fronesis at the student riots; Cemi meditates upon the supposedly "Neronian" character of Focion; the latter indulges in intellectual bullying in a Havana bookshop, witnessed by Cemi; his misogyny is directed against Lucia; he faces the condemnation of homosexuality by Cemi quoting from the ancient church fathers; he disappears once more in the direction of renewed rioting. In the following chapter he is to be seen spying on Fronesis and Lucia in a cinema; he relates the story of Fronesis' family circumstances and origins; he seduces the red-haired youth while Fronesis is experiencing his first sexual encounter with Lucia elsewhere in Havana; Focion's origins are described by Fronesis. Finally, Cemi ponders the differences between the two characters; Focion tells the story of George and Daisy in New York and then races off into the chaotic streets again; he faces Fronesis' irate father; Cemi witnesses his decline into insanity which is heralded by drunkenness; Cemi sees him circling the tree in the hospital gardens, where he is freed by a bolt of lightning. Even this simple summary of his actions seems to reveal a rather pathetic, perhaps despicable individual who is amoral and irresponsible. His actions are interwoven intricately with those of Cemi and Fronesis, so much so that Cesar Lopez has said that "no tienden mas que a la unidad, a ser uno solo, a desarrollarse en una trinidad naturalmente misteriosa que se apoya en el verbo." 8 Souza is more expansive:

The friendship that exists between Focion, Fronesis and Jose is related in many ways to creativity. To a certain extent, it is possible to regard each one as a separate phase of the creative process. Focion represents primordial chaos, Fronesis the most elemental imposition of order on formlessness, and Jose the observation and refinement of the first two phases.

If, as is suggested in this thought-provoking statement, Focion has a place in the creative process, his experience of reality must have a direct bearing on the development of the poetic consciousness. He is in fact necessary to Cemi as the means of expanding his horizons (accepting him on the
level of a "real" character) and essential as an embodiment of the darker side of the human psyche, with which the poet must be familiar— he must know himself, above all.

Ulloa has compared Cemí very successfully with Orpheus who descended to the Underworld to rescue Eurydice, in Greek myth:

We have already seen from previous study that Lezama is primarily concerned with spiritual matters and I concur with Ulloa's statement to the effect that the poet (Lezama and Cemí) is always engaged in the "búsqueda de lo desconocido." The desire of such a poet is "abarcar lo solar y lo subterráneo, es decir aunar todas las dualidades bajo el influjo de la poesía." The poet's duty is therefore to open his mind to all influences and allow them to take effect, eventually synthesizing them in a poetic creation, dissolving all barriers to unity. Lezama's splendid essay, "Introducción a los vasos órficos" reveals that he considers the Orphic legend and religion, the Eleusian mysteries, as a most important intermediary between the old nature religions (such as the cult of Dionysus) and the onset of Christianity: "establishía como un círculo entre el dios que desciende y el hombre que asciende como dios" (II, 853). Just as Orpheus must descend into Hell to win back his wife (his female aspect) so must Cemí delve into darkness which may eventually engulf him. He must make the attempt despite all danger, as his mother has advised, so that in the end he may reappear as an integrated personality, prepared for his poetic vocation, which he hopes will lead him to the secret of spiritual resurrection. All the imagery concerned with such a strange journey involves descent into dark-
ness, whether in relation to Orpheus or Cemi. Lezama remarks in his essay on Orpheus that "Todo nuevo saber, utilizando sentencias de los coros eleusinos, ha brotado siempre de la fértil oscuridad" (II, 860). If this journey into the unknown takes place within the poet's mind and is an exploration of the dark recesses of the human psyche, then Foción is most certainly pure concept. The persistent imagery of descent which signifies the return to the maternal ouroboros and even to the androgynous state (Cemi's dream of fish; the androgynes of the eighth chapter) will reappear in the shape of Foción. He embodies the descent into darkness which Lezama evokes so beautifully in this essay in a passage which deserves quotation in full:

De los comienzos del Caos, los abismos del Erebo y el vasto Tártaro, el orfismo ha escogido la Noche, majestuosa guardiana del huevo Órfico o plateado, "fruto del viento." La noche agrandada, húmeda y placentera, desarrolla armonizado el germén. En este huevo plateado pequeño e incesante como un colibrí, se agita un Eros, de doradas alas en los hombros, moviente como los tornillos con sus inapresables traslaticios. [...] Ese huevo, al cascarse, fija al Eros en el Caos alado, engendrando los seres que tripulan la luz, que ascienden, que son dioses (II, 854-5).

Chaos is not an unqualified evil, it would seem, since it is the source of creativity and new life.

Many philosophers have attempted to explain precisely how God formed the world and from what substance, to no avail. Lezama decides in favour of the formlessness of the void, indeed the totality of possibilities, which must surely be Chaos. It is said in the course of the debate on homosexuality that:

la fuga, el desvío y la anormalidad, están también creadas por las fuerzas germinativas, porque si no, tendríamos que hablar de fuga en relación con un centro que todos desconocemos; de desvío en relación con una estructura que se reitera, estructura que no aparece por ninguna parte; de anormalidad cuando sabemos que los excesos de la razón llevan a las aporías y al divertido relativismo de lo verdadero (I, 358).
Lezama is insisting that we cannot fully know Good or Evil without dealing with opposites to explain the concepts. Foción represents the negative elements which are necessary to help us to formulate an accurate world and psychic picture. As Fazzolari has said: "Foción, el más bajo e inmoral de los tres amigos, también contribuye, con sus caóticos impulsos, a la unidad de las tres partes del alma: Cemi, el aspecto solar, Fronesis el lunar, y Foción, el terrestre." 13 Or, to put it in slightly different terms: "Recordemos que Orfeo es, como ya ha indicado Strauss, el conciliador por excelencia del conocimiento radiante solar de Apolo con el sombriamente subterráneo de Dionisio." 14 It is important to note that this concept of descent into the darkness of the mind and imagination must be as old as Man himself, so it is not surprising that it is common to many great poets, as Fina García Marruz points out: "Donde hallamos un poeta con ojo para lo paradisíaco hallaremos también un poeta del descenso a los infiermos. (Ejemplos mayores: Dante, Rimbaud)." 15 In recent times it has been left to the Symbolist poets to plunge themselves in to the morass of sensations, drink, drugs, sexual experience; in fact, those very phenomena of ecstatic trance which Lezama has already defined as potential dangers to the spirit in the lives of Alberto and the schoolboys. He may have condemned their indiscriminate use, but he is fully aware of their fatal attraction. Foción functions in the text as the pure Cemi’s Des Esseintes or Portrait of Dorian Gray and so he is a most ambivalent character because he is quite literally a "necessary evil." Cemi must make a controlled descent and return; speaking of Rimbaud, Douglas Parmée says "the manner in which this descent is to be made is also most original, for merely descending into one's soul is not enough: 'il s'agit de se faire l'âme monstreuse.'" 16 Foción is certainly something of a monster but Cemi manages to keep him under control in his mind with the help of Fronesis (sabiduría; I, 423). Cemi must hope to benefit as follows: "le poète se fait
voyant par un long, immense et raisonné dérèglement de tous les sens. Toutes les formes d'amour, de souffrance, de folie; ... il épuise en lui tous les poisons pour n'en garder que les quintessences." 17 He grapples consciously with evil in order to be fully conversant with the powers of Good. The fact that Foción's character dissolves eventually into madness shows that this path cannot be sustained to its limits without paying a high price, that it must eventually be rejected.

Upsalón is revealed as a huge furnace, "un horno" where "Se transcurría o se conspiraba, se rechazaba el horror vacui o se acariciaba el tedium vitae ..." (I, 310). It is a melting pot of ideas which is only thinly disguised by its exotic name, because its splendid staircase ("La escalera de piedra es el rostro de Upsalón ..."; I, 310) belongs to Havana University. Inevitably, the dish prepared in the university atmosphere is revolution, which Fazzolari has rightly identified "como la orgía, es la vuelta al caos primitivo que hará posible un nuevo renacer tanto en el país como en el individuo." 18 In addition, she points out that the incident in the novel where student riots take place is actually based firstly, on the attempt of Mella, a student activist in the Cuban Communist Party, to dethrone what he believes to be the statue of a false (1920s) hero and secondly, on the demonstration of 1930 led by Rafael Trejo, a student leader against Machado. Lezama was very proud of his participation in this demonstration ("Ningún honor prefiero al que me gané para siempre en la mañana del 30 de septiembre de 1930"). 19 Lezama writes of the rebelling students in heroic terms, for "una figura apollínea" is juxtaposed with "unas capas carmelitas, color de rata vieja, brillantes por la humedad en sus iridiscencias, como la caparazón de las cucarachas" (I, 311). Since the figure leading the demonstration is shown as "un dios en la luz, no vindicativo, no oscuro, no catónico [sic]" (I, 311), I feel that he will be more closely connected with Pronesis,
so I will reserve a detailed examination of the hero of the riots for my study of the latter. It is clear that Lezama sees this upheaval as a moment of great poetic import.

In the discussion of deviation and homosexuality, Foción introduces the Conde de Villamediana as a different kind of perpetual rebel or anti-hero: "Sus contemporáneos le odieron hasta después de su muerte ..." (I, 355) and Quevedo remarked "tuvo su fin más aplauso que misericordia" (I, 356). Foción describes his disgrace as if it were a martyrdom: "fue tendido ante el pueblo de Dios, con los brazos abiertos en cruz, mostrando en su costado tal agujero sanguinolento de ballesta ..." (I, 356). He seems to regard the Conde as a kindred spirit:

fue una energía diabólica utilizada contra la monarquía decadente, por eso este hechizado permanece con los brazos abiertos en cruz ante el desfile del pueblo, en rendimiento a su aliado secreto en la rebeldía, aliado también con los poetas de la rebelión verbal (I, 356).

The Conde's scandalous exploits are interpreted as acts of rebellion against a corrupt society, on the same level as the power of the word. It is noteworthy that in the midst of the chaotic rioting in Havana, that same power tries to win, over and above the shouting and hysteria: "algunos estudiantes querían que sobre el tumulto el verbo de la justicia poética prevaleciese ... hacían esfuerzos de gigantomas por elevarse con la palabra por encima de la gritería" (I, 314). It is all to no avail because of the uproar. We are told of the rebel Conde, "Este hechizado se destruye para destruir" (I, 356). The Conde has made a sacrifice of himself, according to Foción; whatever the historical facts relating to the Conde, it is clear that Lezama sees self-sacrifice as an act of courage and hope.

Everything about the Conde's life and death is unnatural, but at the riots even Nature, represented by the horses, begins to swing to the side of the student heroes: "terminando conque el caballo sudoroso se echaba a
reÍr de las saltantes burlas de los estudiantes" (I, 315). What is against the old order becomes the natural, new order, if only fleetingly. This is yet another sign that Fronesis' type of rebellion is indicated here, but this will only become evident in retrospect. The Conde's life may have some trace of nobility about it but since his motives are unknown his sacrifice (if such it may be termed) is useless, compared to the death of the students.

In the midst of the confusion Cemi is "como en duermevela" (I, 317), "como atolondrado por la sorpresa" (I, 318), "no sabía adónde dirigirse" (I, 318). His rescuer Fronesis beam with him a tenacious shadow which turns out to be Foción, so it seems that "Fronesis, la sabiduría" (I, 423) is closely related to chaos which is two faced—creative and destructive. Foción's uncanny calm ("era de los tres el que estaba más sereno"; I, 318) shows that he is entirely at home and in his element, that is, Chaos, but he may also be held in check by the presence of Reason or Order in the shape of Fronesis. As they flee, they are "como gamos perseguidos por serpientes" (I, 318), a simile which must call to mind the fact that to be engulfed by the chaos is to be swallowed up once more in the ouroboros (symbolized by the serpientes), as a victim of the Terrible Mother. One's identity is lost in a mob situation. Those aspects of Foción which are noted by Cemi do not appeal to him at all: "una sonrisa no muy anchurosa," "donde cabía la burla secreta y la alegría manifestada," "ofrecida con un artificio que se hacía naturaleza, por la facilidad con que se mantenía en su apariencia vivaz" (I, 319). The latter remark reminds the reader of the way in which the unnatural became natural at the student demonstration and riots.

Cemi's mother's speech is carefully positioned to follow his first brush with Foción and danger and she exhorts him to face his challenge, seeming to know that friends such as Fronesis and Foción bring trials of character:
sé que un adolescente tiene que hacer muchas experiencias y no puede rechazar ciertos riesgos que en definitiva enriquecen su gravedad en la vida. Y sé también que esas experiencias hay que hacerlas como una totalidad y no en la dispersión de los puntos de un granero (I, 320).

Rialta is almost exonerating her son in advance for any youthful folly which he may commit. Inspired by her speech, Cemí turns eventually to the events of the day and begins to rationalize them, ordering them in his mind. Hardly surprisingly, he cannot sleep, but he attacks his insomnia by reading Suetonius' chapter on the crazy Emperor Nero, which provides him with a vital clue to the negative nature of Foción: "se presentaban unas máscaras que tapaban unas carcajadas, no un rostro, que miraban unas nalgas agrandadas como las ancas negras de los encapotados en el procesional de los estudiantes" (I, 325). This description bears a striking resemblance to the image of Farraluque having sex with a masked man (I, 292-3). The mask hides an awesome emptiness and sterility which Cemí is soon to observe in Foción, to whom he applies the adjective "Neronian" after witnessing his cruelty to a would-be intellectual in a Havana bookshop. The new word comes to mean "lo coruscante, lo cruel, lo preconcebido actuando sobre lo indefenso, actor espectador" (I, 326). What seems like a quite trivial incident in the bookshop is actually highly significant, but only when taken in conjunction with Cemí's current progress. We should note that he has just undergone a major crisis, the end result of which is his acceptance of a true vocation to poetry and the life of the spirit:

Las palabras que le había oído a su madre, le habían comunicado un alegre orgullo. El orgullo consistente en seguir el misterio de una vocación, la humildad dichosa de seguir en un laberinto como si oyéramos una cantata de gracia, no la voluntad haciendo un ejercicio de soga (I, 325-6).

He is especially prey to the error of pride in his own intellect and will fall by the wayside should he yield. At the bookshop, Foción is to be found engaged in precisely this sin:
Utilizaba su superioridad intelectual, no para ensanchar el mundo de las personas con quienes hablaba, sino para dejar la marca de su persona y de sus caprichos. Si se le aceptaba esa superioridad reaccionaba con sutiles descargas de ironía, si por el contrario se la negaban, mostraba entonces una indiferencia de caracol, tan peligrosa como su ironía (I, 331).

Lezama himself has always been justifiably proud of Orígenes, particularly because it was the product of a unified group sharing ideas and inspiration: "en la raíz del grupo de pintores, músicos, escritores, estaba implícito en todos ellos la tendencia a la universalidad de la cultura, a la búsqueda de nuestro paisaje...." To Lezama, this is the way to employ one's intellect; in personal creation, but also in teaching by example and influence with rich conversation and exchange of ideas. Not so, Foción. Deliberate hoarding of one's gifts will only lead to stagnation. Yet the Foción whom Cemí notices a little later with Fronesis "era otro, menos arrogante, más en personaje secundario" (I, 331). Once again Eticidad prevails over Chaos, suggesting that Cemí will not take the path of Foción.

Not content with his own misery, Foción is a past master at inflicting torture, mental or physical, on others weaker than himself. This is revealed in the episode where he seduces the red-haired youth, the pelirrojo whose squabble with an older man he noticed in a cafe. The older man's motive in offering the Chinese ivory toothbrushes to the young man does not seem particularly insidious ("Se los iba a regalar al pelirrojo para que, vendiéndolos, remediase su miseria ..."; I, 389). He has a vaguely familiar air, a little like Oppiano Licario in his appearance to Alberto in the "Reino de siete meses" bar: "Tenía algo de prestidigitador, de diplomático egipcio" (I, 388). His offer of the ivory toothbrushes is misinterpreted by the youth, who snatches one and runs off before he can be propositioned, as he thinks. This incident may represent a brief glimpse of Oppiano Licario, since the gift would have helped to rid the youth of his dependence
on unscrupulous older men, thus introducing him to another type of causality removed from purely bodily needs. The solidity or permanence of the owner of the Chinese artifact is highlighted in the phrase: "El agua al brúñir el mechón frontal, le dio una contextura de ébano pulimentado como mármol" (I, 389), but unfortunately for the youth he does not recognize the chance of freedom from his old life. He has rejected much, according to his would-be saviour:

Pensar que yo le iba a propiciar que asomase su rostro a un espejo de metal, estilo de los últimos ptolomeos. Y que le iba a regalar todos los cepillos chinos; pero es un niño diablo, y ahora, sentado en el quicio de una esquina, debe de estar dándole vueltas al poliedro (I, 389).

The metal mirror would have shown him the image of his soul, which is at present lost in his body. The Egyptians are mentioned because as we have seen when examining Alberto's first encounter with Oppiano Licario, Lezama considers them to be the first civilization to evolve a method of securing eternal life. The object used to symbolize the gift of eternal life is not important, except for the fact that it is Chinese and made of a substance well suited by its natural qualities to signify permanence. We know that Lezama regards the Chinese with great respect because of their Taoist philosophy which extolls the powers of creativity out of the void. These are the benefits which the youth has unwittingly rejected. He disappears from the narrative while Focín relates Fronesis' family history but is connected most intimately with Focín in his second appearance.

In a way the youth is a younger version of Focín but he is far from being the equal of the latter's sophisticated cynicism. Instead he is angry and bitter at his repeated exploitation and is filled with self-hatred, enough to drive him to attempt to murder Focín. His failure to do so (thanks to his victim's cunning) is inevitable, having been played out in, and prefigured by, the episode with the owner of the Chinese ivory. The
murder of Foción by the youth or alternatively Foción's suicide would each have been self-liberating acts. In this bitter tirade, the youth gives several more hints that the identity of his misunderstood helper is already known to the reader: "con una maleta llena de medallas antiguas" (I, 412) is a forerunner of the pocketful of ancient coins with which Oppiano Licario will approach Cemí on the bus, much later. The coins seem to represent the sum of human wisdom amassed in bygone ages. Foción is unimpressed by the youth's outburst and saves himself with his skilful talk but he is no better off for his night with the youth; as he leaves his flat stealthily next morning to begin his journey to New York, he is confronted with a symbol which means nought to him, yet reveals much to the alert reader. His rebellions have brought him only to this:

Se encaminaba hacia la esquina, pero ya la farola, diluida en la anchurosa claridad del alba, había perdido su presa--go de vultúridos. Su luz inútil tenía algo de naipes arrinconado, su jugada, entre dos serpientes enlazadas por la cola, era ya un vaso de agua volcado (I, 413; my italics).

Here we have the image par excellence of the ouroboros, which shows that Foción's craziest flight away from responsibility and self-determination, his ecstatic sexual experience, has drawn him back into the undifferentiated, egoless state in which his personality is drowned. His descent is also a regression in his development, with a return to the androgynous state which he so desires in his speeches on homosexuality. Yet there is a sense of loss, shown by the image of "un vaso de agua volcado" (I, 413). It reflects the parting gesture of the youth to the older man with the Chinese toothbrush: "Enarbeló un vaso y vació su agua sobre el rostro del triguño" (I, 389). It seems that Foción is likewise guilty of throwing away his opportunities of preserving his soul.

Three keys to Foción's nature stand on his desk in his Miramar house:
These three figurines epitomise Foción's chosen path of descent into the depths. He has taken a rather inverted sense of what the Chinese might mean by the void—instead of considering chaos or emptiness as the sum of possibilities and fruitfulness, he creates deliberately a void of his own by negating positive aspects of life. His ability to love others becomes an introverted self-love of which Narcissus is the most famous example. He justifies this approach by likening himself to Orpheus, who may be represented by the statuette of a novice flautist. Orpheus knows that the key to self-knowledge is the descent into one's own unconscious and the struggle with the Terrible Feminine, but whereas he returns to the surface, Foción does not seem to have any prospect of so doing. His very struggle drags him further down; just why this should happen is explained by Neumann: "The stage of the strugglers marks the separation of the conscious ego from the unconscious, but the ego is not yet stable enough to push on to the separation of the First Parents and the victorious struggle of the hero." 22

The glorious struggle will be left to Fronesis. Neumann's comments on Narcissus are most illuminating: "In the myth of Narcissus, the ego, seeking to break the power of the unconscious through self-reflection, succumbs to a catastrophic self-love. His suicidal death by drowning symbolizes the dissolution of ego-consciousness...." 23 Foción seems to be leaving himself open to a horrible fate in a wilful fashion:

The second stage of mounting resistance corresponds to a narcissistic turning away from the Great Mother, and it is at this point that the passive fate of being castrated and driven mad is superceded by active self-castration and suicide. 24
In Foción's case, active self-castration is probably equivalent to persistence in homosexual relationships and rebellion for its own sake. While in the Havana cinema watching Foción watching Fronesis and Lucía, Cemi marvels at Foción's single-mindedness in pursuing his interests to the bitter end. He realizes to some degree the self-torture of his foolish friend: "Su enferma capacidad de espera, le hacía seguir cualquier laberinto hasta la línea del horizonte, donde un inmenso tedio había bruñido su rostro hasta otorgarle cierta nobleza de lo indiferente, lejano o desdénoso" (I, 384). Fronesis sees him as a pathetic, almost noble figure, yet a fool: "Foción era un enfermo que creía que la normalidad era la enfermedad" (I, 386); "A su manera era un místico, ennoblecido por el ocio voluptuoso, obsesionado por la persecución de un fruto errante en el espacio vacío" (I, 386).

Foción's family circumstances may well leave the reader feeling incredulous but we shall see that his very birth is shrouded in mystery, following strange, mythic patterns. Lezama presents Foción as a misguided fallen hero and as such he has an appropriate birth. He has in fact got two fathers and two mothers, Nicolás and Juliano, Celita and Eudoxia. He is not unique in his parentage. According to Neumann: "The nature of the hero, however, is closely connected with his birth and the problem of his dual parentage," and "The fact that the hero has two fathers or two mothers is a central feature in the canon of the hero myth." 25 Of the hero myth itself he says:

the hero is the archetypal forerunner of mankind in general. His fate is the pattern in accordance with which the masses of humanity must live ... and however short of the ideal man they have fallen, the stages of the hero myth have become constituent elements in the personal development of every individual. 26

Here we have the secret of the fascination of Lezama's most abstract characters. Lezama intends their struggles to be those of every creative individual to assert himself in his own world, expanding his own personality,
hopefully with more success than Foción. His two fathers embody two opposite characters, long before the marriage of Nicolás to Celita; of Nicolás it is said that he is a man of action and few words, while Juliano is a man of even fewer words and no action at all. They are symbolized by the two very different streets on which their house faces: "Su casa, por un lado, daba a una calle de mucho movimiento, desde por la mañana; por la otra esquina a un barrio de un silencio extraño" (I, 439). Lezama leaves us in no doubt that the two men are practically opposite sides of one coin: "Los dos tipos opuestos, que tienden siempre a estar cerca, que tienden también a ser hermanos" (I, 439) and one might take them as two halves of one Being, active and passive, masculine and feminine. For Juliano, who has never had the courage to become a proper suitor, Celita remains a distant ideal. He is soon to be the "esperador eterno," until he is almost completely petrified in his attic room, "envuelto en la masa coral de su somnolencia" (I, 441). The reader may here recall the similar images which Lezama uses to describe immutable Being, the Unconscious, in the manatee episode—it is a Chinaman "sentado en una mecedora de piedra de raspado madreporario" (I, 68). Sure enough, we can tell from his uncanny silence and immobility that Juliano has remained forever in the egoless state, in the Unconscious. Nicolás, on the other hand, is principally an "animal de razón" (I, 442), a practical man without imagination, the antithesis of his brother. Typically it is Celita who seduces Juliano, all but incapable because of his addiction to laudanum. His sleepiness reveals his lack of ego. The confrontation with his long yearned-for ideal proves too much for him, "Vio el rostro ... y ya tenía que morir" (I, 444). This would appear to be the source of Foción's obsession of pursuing absolutes, but it is a dangerous fixation which leads to death. With such a birth, it is no wonder that Foción links sex between men and women with death. Just how far-reaching is this equation will be seen in Foción's participation in the debates on homosexuality. His
conception occurs at the moment of death of one of his possible fathers, he
who is the embodiment of the Unconscious. Naturally, the act of procrea-
tion requires the supreme exertion of the will over the Unconscious. Sin-
ce Juliano embodies that very entity, he is naturally overcome by the sex-
ual ecstasy, returning to the Unconscious, despite the fact that the union
did not take place of his own volition. We have said that Foción has two
possible fathers but in a way he has none, thanks to the death of one and
the insanity of the other. One cannot really say whether Foción was born
of the Unconscious after a supernatural union, or of the man of action.
His physical and spiritual origins are in question, but he is thus in the
company of many Greek heroes of virgin or otherwise miraculous birth. He
has two mothers since Celita is forced to lead a double life for the sake
of the husband whose brain her infidelity has addled. As Fronesis says,
Foción "fue creciendo viendo lo irreal, lo inexistentе ..." (I, 446).

A certain remark made by Fronesis could give the impression that Foción
is in one way blessed: "rodeado por la locura, creció sin pecado original"
(I, 446). Such an impression is mistaken if we accept Neumann's defini-
tion of Original Sin as the sense of guilt which the newly-formed ego expe-
riences as it rejects the androgynous ouroboros in favour of self-determi-
nation:

the separation of the World Parents is not merely an in-
terruption of the original cohabitation, and a destruction
of the perfect cosmic state symbolized by the ouroboros.
This in itself ... would be enough to induce a feeling
of original guilt, precisely because the ouroboric state
is by nature a state of wholeness, embracing the world
and man. The decisive thing, however, is that this se-
paration is not experienced only as a passive suffering and
loss, but also as an actively destructive deed. 27

Foción may feel no guilt of this sort, but that merely means that he is still
imprisoned in the toils of the ouroboros and the Terrible Mother. Hence we
find that he suffers the horrors of "el complejo de la vagina dentada" (I,
447). To his tortured mind, sex with women equals death and insanity.
His fate would appear to be sealed when Nicolás introduces him to a "cuarentón armado de todas las malicias" (I, 448) and he has little further hope of heroically conquering the Unconscious.

Androgyny is Foción's preferred solution and he imagines that he can turn his fantasy into reality when he "meets" George and Daisy in New York. His unaccustomed desire for the female, Daisy, seems to be his quest for the positive feminine anima within. She is compared with shadows and reflections to such an extent that she becomes part of Foción which he cannot quite reach: "La imagen, llegada como por innumerables reflejos, ninguno de los cuales se precisaba ..." (I, 479); "Aquella Daisy que desde la primera vez que la vi, me huyó sin saberlo, iba a ser en el resto de mis días en esta ciudad, el constante reflejo infernal ..." (I, 480); "Era la inasible ..." (I, 480). She is his glimpse of the intangible, lejanía, indeed she works in a house which could belong to Oppiano Licario for all the reasons that the Chinese ivory toothbrush could have indicated his presence elsewhere: "Trabajaba en la casa de un anticuario de objetos chinos" (I, 481).

If Foción could be at peace with his feminine side, his anima, he would be able to look beyond himself. In his earlier speech on homosexuality he had discussed the predilections of medieval troubadours who courted reluctant ladies but preferred their brothers: "Todo lo que el hermano me niega/me lo regala su hermana" (I, 352). Now he decides to approach the brother since the sister is unobtainable; in other words the action which is required to take possession of the positive anima is too much for him and he turns to another kind of love. His new friendship begins under the auspices of a poet, Hart Crane, whose visit to Cuba is used by Foción as an introduction to Daisy's brother George. Art seems to ease Foción along his chosen path, poetry has been created out of such relationships—Walt Whitman is also invoked in this passage. In the midst of one of Foción's many joyful unions with George, which are quite unlike any previous liaisons he has
experienced in their tenderness, he finds that part of himself which has been so elusive:

— Un día en que el dios Pan sopló con más pathos en nuestros frecuentes diálogos felices, sucedió lo inesperado, del espejo de un escaparate, de la misma extensión de las paredes, como una condensación del polvo de la alfombra, ¿que sé yo! surgió la misma Daisy desnuda (I, 484).

However Foción cannot possess Daisy except when engaged in intercourse with George, that is, he can only approach his feminine side through homosexual relationships and the poetry inspired by them. Daisy, the anima, refuses to be taken by Foción directly. The latter glorifies the union, "diada androginal y diada clitoidea, días par George y días para Daisy" (I, 485) with especial reverence for the act which combines all three: "a unir sol, tierra y luna" (I, 485). Cemí is left to shake his head sadly at the tale, which he finds pitiful, despite Foción's joy at the outcome of his first love affair.

Finally, we must examine Foción's exposition of his ideas on homosexuality and androgyny in debate with Fronesis and Cemí. His preoccupation with the configuration of sex, sin and death is laid bare by his arguments but the implications of the debate cannot be fully appreciated without an awareness of Foción's background which is not revealed until practically the end of his role in the novel. Lezama's technique of withholding information on the family trees of the young men forces the reader to strive to make sense of their almost inexplicable behaviour entirely on his own. Both Fronesis and Foción agree that homosexuality is an imperfect expression of the age old myth of androgyny; they are not violently opposed, rather they take slightly different positions on the same side. To Fronesis, homosexuality seems to indicate a desire to remain as a child:

El niño que después no es adolescente, adulto y maduro, sino que se fija siempre en la niñez, tiene siempre tendencia a la sexualidad semejante, es decir a situar en el
Such an opinion correlates with the examination of self-realization which Lezama is conducting through the characters of Foción, Fronesis and Cemí. The homosexual is seen as the child who is reluctant to take responsibility for his own fate, the development of his ego; he is not prepared to break away from the Unconscious by the procreative act. A certain kind of innocence is preserved: "volver a habitar ese estado de inocencia" (I, 346) is the ideal. We have seen that Foción has been brought up amongst the insane and so has no sense of original sin, in the sense that he has not tried to break away from his spiritual or physical parents. So Fronesis' description fits Foción. It has relevance for someone else also: "pero hoy en día un hombre que sabe aprovechar su lucidez para perseguir ese enemigo y esa finalidad, es decir, un poeta, se siente inocente porque atrae el castigo, se siente creador porque no puede domesticar el contorno ..." (I, 346).

This does not mean that poets are homosexuals, of course, but that they have a common goal in returning to the origins although their methods differ and have contrary chances of conquering time. Only the poet can achieve a complete knowledge of his psyche with all its complex stages; similarly only this knowledge and power for integration will bring true freedom of the self.

Foción is unwilling to accept Fronesis' definition because it is too neat; he does not have a clear understanding of his condition and his introductory remarks all stress the mysterious nature of homosexuality. For example, he says: "ahí arranca un problema que nunca ha concluido, que nunca se podrá cerrar" (I, 347); "un hombre, o lo que sea, nunca podrá justificar por qué es homosexual ..." (I, 347). He despises the saying that "en los puros todo es puro" as patent nonsense since he believes the problem to be "más profundo que toda justificación" (I, 348). His definition recalls
many of the images connected throughout the text with androgyny: "es un bostezo del vacío" (I, 348) evokes the image of the masked lover who is actually a faceless monster. He admires man's perpetual desire for the unseen yet utters a word of caution to the man who achieves his heart's desire at last— he may be remembering the fate of Juliano who died in the embrace of his desire: "El hombre golpea un muro y a alguien le responde; si el muro se derrumba, no sería la felicidad para los efímeros, sería tal vez el fin del género humano" (I, 348). Having recognized the striving of Man for something beyond himself, Foción turns to the philosophers and theologians. He ponders the sincerity of Socrates who admits to homosexual attractions and then rejects them in favour of spiritual love. J. K. Dover's description of Plato's teaching method could almost evoke the debate between these three young men, which is conducted in a similar style:

In two works above all, Symposium and Phaedrus, Plato takes homosexual desire and homosexual love as the starting point from which to develop his metaphysical theory; and it is of particular importance that he regards philosophy not as an activity to be pursued in solitary meditation ... but as a dialectical progress which may well begin in the response of an older male to the stimulus afforded by a younger male who combines bodily beauty with "beauty of the soul."

Fronesis is the younger, beautiful male, but he seems more mature than Foción whose tormented character appears weak by comparison. Nevertheless they indulge in a Socratic dialogue of sorts. His desire for Fronesis is one of Foción's motives in taking part. He finds Socrates' conclusions unhelpful because they are "entre lo estelar y lo terrestre" (I, 349) and leave unanswered the later Catholic concern of "¿el amor es caritas?" (I, 349). Even Foción realises that "la ciencia de lo bello" (I, 349) is by no means such a powerful concept as "poseer lo bueno," for he knows that beauty and goodness are not necessarily synonymous. His feeling of doubt derives from his awareness that man's love is a frail thing compared to the concept of a paternal God's love for man; in the words of T. Gould: "Plato talks about
our surge upward toward an understanding of reality which will fill us with joy; Paul speaks of the overflow of God's goodness which does not deny benevolence to the most wretched of sinners. 29 The juxtaposition of human and divine love in the above statement encapsulates Foción's suspicion that there is something lacking from a human homosexual love which attempts to reach happiness by purifying that love. Lezama's interest in the process of poetic creation, the birth of an effective image, is shown in the manatee image of an earlier chapter. The passage expressed the difficulties inherent in the approach of the fleeting image towards the eternal Being which it hopes to reflect. Here, the question of communication between man and God contains similar problems. Foción comes to no conclusions, merely stating that "en el catolicismo lo bueno es más enigmático que lo bello, la bondad más creadora que la poesía" (I, 349). There is a note of rebellion in his remark, as if his dedication to the descent into darkness prevents him from considering the religious view point in detail.

We have seen that Foción's family circumstances have predisposed him towards the conviction that death of some kind is brought on by sexual intercourse. He discusses this theme at some length before ending his speech with an enumeration of famous homosexuals in history. His "text" comes from Ecclesiastes: "Hay camino que al hombre parece derecho; empero su fin son caminos de muerte" (I, 350) and his rather naïve belief seems to be that intercourse between male and female is all part of some great and terrible misunderstanding: "tal vez el hombre permanece en ese camino de muerte porque ignora cuál es el otro" (I, 350). Both the poet and the homosexual are seeking the perfect time of the origins, before any kind of Fall has occurred; both believe that sex, in its attempts to unite two halves, masculine and feminine, serves mainly to underline and emphasize the loss which Man has suffered. They envy the childhood of others because "Man's original hermaphroditic disposition is still largely conserved in the child." 30
This happy estate is therefore represented in the pre-adolescent stage in which the child has not begun to develop distinct sexual characteristics and is still secure in the warmth of the maternal ouroboros. The painful struggle for self-knowledge is far ahead, out of sight, and the child is content to live as a kind of androgyne, the living example of an ancient golden age. The reluctance of Alberto and others to struggle properly with the androgynous state of the Unconscious leads to their negation as individuals. Fear holds them back from fulfilment; Neumann delineates the uneasy path they ought, but refuse to tread:

The breakdown of the uroboric initial state leads to differentiation in duality, decombination of the original ambivalence, division of the hermaphroditic constitution, and the splitting of the world into subject and object, inside and outside, and to the creation of good and evil, which are only discriminated with the expulsion from the uroboric Garden of Paradise where the opposites lie down together.

Since sexual awakening is the formal end of childhood and a prime example of the exertion of the will, it is not so surprising that the fall from Paradise and the sexual activity of the adult should have become so intertwined in Foción's mind. As we have seen in "A partir de la poesía," Lezama's first era imaginaria is "la filogeneratriz" (II, 835), that is, the age in which procreation was performed without male and female partners: "Se adormece el hombre, es decir, el tiempo se borra, de su costado empieza a crecer un árbol, de sus ramas se desprende la nueva criatura" (II, 835). This image of the androgyne reappears in José María's dream in the first chapter and now we find it as one of Foción's references:

Foción has obviously been reading the kind of material which Lezama has
recommended in the same essay: "estudio de los teólogos heterodoxos que van desde el zapatero Boehme al sueco Swedenborg" (II, 835). The latter philosopher had considerable influence over the Symbolists, many of whose ideas Lezama shares; we are told by Philippe Jullian that his work was known to them "above all through Balzac's novel *Seraphitus Seraphita.*" This novel deals exclusively with the theme of androgyney. Foción takes up briefly such topics as the second creation story in Genesis, of woman as an afterthought, Adam as the first androgyne, the putting of pregnant women to the sword on Judgement Day, in short "se nos revela una situación muy rara en relación con la mujer, en los principios de la no existencia apocalíptica, y al final, su destrucción" (I, 351). His obsession with the return to the origins is nevertheless a negative one, no matter how many historical "causes" he may unearth in his own defence. As Norman O. Brown has said: "one effect of the incapacity to accept separation, individuality and death is to eroticize death— to activate a morbid wish to die, a wish to regress to the prenatal stage before life (and separation) began." Lezama is only too aware of the dangers inherent in the poet's calling and reveals them clearly in the character of Foción. Any weakness will result in the loss of the self to the Unconscious which the poet must explore. It is only too tempting to agree with Foción that:

Todo lo que hoy nos parece desvió sexual, surge en una reminiscencia, ... una hipertelia de la inmortalidad, o sea una busca de la creación, de la sucesión de la criatura, más allá de toda causalidad de la sangre y aun del espíritu, la creación de algo hecho por el hombre, totalmente desconocida aún por la especie. La nueva especie justificaría toda hipertelia de la inmortalidad (I, 351).

As we have seen in Foción's sexual encounters, he is incapable of overcoming his nostalgia for the perfect origins but he is unwilling to give anything of himself to find them.

If Cemí is to remain faithful to his poetic vocation, it is now obvious
that he must reject this life-style as out of the question. He does so gently, in one of the finest speeches in the novel. Lezama's first published poem was entitled "Muerte de Narciso" (I, 652-8) - Cemi's speech heralds that death of Foción in his psyche. Within the context of the plot, it is only Fronesis' absence which makes this direct address by Cemi possible; on the level of the allegory, the wise man and the poet have become one in order to deal effectively with the threat from Foción. It seems from the positioning of the speech that Cemi has been in command of the situation from the first moment of meeting and is forearmed against his wiles. He commences by drawing the distinction between ser and estar, or "el ser esencial o el ser sustancial" (I, 370), insisting that "hay una categoría superior al sexo, que recuerda los mitos androginales o al que se proyecta sobre los misterios complementarios" (I, 370). So much has Foción admitted, with less emphasis on eternal life, but this is Cemi's chief concern and his starting point. The poet allows that there has been a mistake in our sexual conduct, not in the relationship with women as Foción suggested, but in the willingness of some to yield to the fall within the Fall which is a trap for the unwary: "el hombre va a la mujer con concupiscencia, pero el hombre vuelve al hombre por falsa inocencia ..." (I, 372). Foción's argument is turned inside out and further squashed by careful selection of some short passages from St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, both of whom see the return of man to man as the chief symptom of "un amor desordenado de la muerte, un apetito frutivo que excluye la participación en el misterio de la Suprema Forma" (I, 373). These words of St. Thomas seem to me to be an expression on another plane of the idea that the soul which is determined to remain introverted and enveloped in the maternal ouroboros instead of growing to maturity and dying to live again, is lost in a death of its own creation. St. Augustine may be referring to the same phenomenon when he says that "el alma se enferma cuando pierde
el sentimiento del dolor" (I, 373); the soul which refuses to mature, to
assume responsibility for its own ego, does so because it wishes to avoid
the pain involved in its separation from the Unconscious. It obtains
eternal death, not life:

It is this self-inflicted descent which must be condemned.

The mother as an image of the Great Mother and the Unconscious is then
used to show once more the nature of the sin. Cemí relates the story of
Ulysses' descent to Hades to be reunited with his mother, with his own in-
terpretation of the legend. The descent equals an exploration of the
Unconscious and it is clear that the mother would prefer her son's visit to
be as brief as possible, so that he will not become trapped: "Procura vol-
ver lo antes posible a la luz, aprende esas cosas y reláta
alas luego a tu
esposa" (I, 374). In other words, he will find the secret of his feminine
side with the help of his wife, in an enduring relationship; the alternative
is unthinkable: "para verme no te asomes al espejo de la muerte" (I, 374).

No doubt with his own mother's advice in mind, Cemí offers St. Augustine
himself as another example of the son who must flee from his real mother,
however well meaning, in order to establish his own personality (I, 375).

Cemí's final words to Foción sketch out a bleak prospect, although he is
relieved of the burden of the sin of vice. His bestiality will cut him off
from the higher reaches of his own soul and from God; in the end it will
qualify him for a terrible judgement: "Toda materia, nos afirma Santo Tomás,
será restaurada por Dios, luego es posible pensar que los eunucos serán re-
tocados, enderezados y mejorados de voz" (I, 378). Restored to their
former glory, they are fit for their punishment: "Se les restaurará a la
normalidad de la cúpula con mujeres, pero en un lugar donde ya el fornicio
con hembra placentera está abolido. Ese será tal vez su castigo" (I, 378).

Unfortunately for Foción, his punishment begins long before his death,
as insanity sets in. His ramblings about Anubis and the anus contain ima-
ges of his useless struggle against the Great Mother in her terrible aspect
"Fronesís se adelanta con la jabalina," but "¿Y yo? Un puerco en colmillos/
para la trompa de caza" (I, 493). For Foción, Anubis represents "un em-
brión anterior a todo el dualismo sexual" (I, 493) and the red-haired youth
reappears as an alter-ego of himself, "venía huyendo del rechazo que le
daba su madre" (I, 495).

Many of Foción's failings have been revealed: his intellectual pride;
the chaos within, echoed in the student riots and in his admiration for the
perpetual rebel such as the Conde de Villamediana; his ignorance of the oppor-
tunities afforded by looking beyond the self, symbolized by the glimpses of
Oppiano Licario; his evil influence on the young and impressionable; his
narcissistic and androgynous predilections and his tenacity in persisting
therein. We know of his freedom from "Original Sin" and of his confusing
conception; his dual parentage, comprising a rational lunatic, an embodiment
of the Unconscious and a lustful and unfaithful wife with a second identity,
that of assistant to insanity. There is no spiritual guide in such a combi-
nation, no spiritual mother, and so Foción's feverish quest begins. Like
the hero in myth, he has two sets of parents but he is entrapped by them and
can never conquer the Unconscious. His closest approximation to capturing
the feminine half of his psyche comes during his happy love affair with
George but it is not enough to free him, as becomes clear from the line of
debate which he pursues.

The descent proves to have been successful when, shortly before Foción
is carried off to the asylum, we find that:
At last Cemi is fully aware that his path to poetry leads upward, while that of Focion would only draw him down inexorably. It is obvious that Cemi has not won the battle against Focion on his own; his champion has been Fronesis, whose truly heroic struggle we must now unfold.

II. Fronesis: Cemi's Self-preservation

Fronesis and Focion are the base elements from which Cemi must refine the golden spirit of poetry. He cannot expose himself to Focion or Chaos without the assistance of Fronesis, whose task it is to act as a catalyst between the two "perspectivas observables." In his capacity of "el hombre de la responsabilidad ética," Fronesis is a shield against the raw power of Focion which might contaminate Cemi but he is also its direct counterpart.

We have seen that Lezama argues the necessity of Focion's existence in the world when a character declares that "la fuga, el desvío y la anormalidad, están también creadas por las fuerzas germinativas..." (I, 358), and Focion uses the rebellion of the Conde de Villamediana as an example of demonic and yet potentially creative energy. We know that Lezama believes the poet...
must descend to and return from the depths of darkness, his own psyche, in order to encounter and benefit from his feminine half, in the Unconscious. Foción's arguments conspire to convince us that the androgynous state represents innocence, even when achieved through homosexual union. I have mentioned in passing that some of his ideas on androgyny are taken from the writings of the philosophers Boehme and Swedenborg. In my opening quotation Cemi appears to be expressing in his own words one of the essential features of Boehme's doctrine, that is, that "all manifestation involves opposition (that good can only be known through contrast with evil), that existence is a process of conflict between pairs of contrasted principles." 35 Cemi and Foción are not opposites but they are incompatible, whereas Fronesis and Foción are indissolubly linked yet forever separated: "Ustedes son amigos porque en la raíz de esa amistad está lo que destruye, lo incesantemente relacionable, pero que nunca está relacionado." Foción and Fronesis have the ability to destroy one another since the dominance of one has an inevitable tempering effect on the other; a little more order and reason in a given situation will naturally reduce the effect of chaos. On the level of characters in the plot, very close proximity forced upon these two will result in a crisis of identity for one or both. Foción's madness is the final proof of this fact, while Fronesis is scarred by his struggles with his friend/foe. Each has the power of fascination over the other; in the case of Fronesis:

Es un caos, el de Foción, que tú dominas, ordenas, distribuyes. Es un caos que tú necesitas para las hogueras de tu cosmos. Cojes unos cuantos gajos resinosos de Foción, los enciendes y entonces te ves la cara con más claridad en el espejo ...(I, 438).

So that he can be wisdom and reason personified, Fronesis requires Foción as a measure of his success. Similarly, Chaos must needs compare itself with Reason to define itself. Compressing the concepts back into the bodies
of the characters, Fronesis and Focion, we find that Fronesis requires a little of Focion's influence in order to triumph in his struggle with the dragon of the Unconscious and to make the essential break with the old order, symbolized by his own father. Focion's only conception of a tranquil spirit comes from his observation of his friend Fronesis and the latter provides a goal for which to strive. It seems true to say that one is meaningless without the other.

Lezama employs a most appropriate technique to underline the unique relationship between Fronesis and Focion. The three chapters in which both appear are enhanced by the skilful counterpointing of incidents in their lives: the "Neronian" character and intellectual cruelty of Focion are contrasted sharply with Cemi's new sense of vocation inspired by Fronesis and Rialta, and with the literary debate of Cemi and Fronesis on the Quixote. There is the obvious contrast between the ideas of Fronesis and Focion in the debate on homosexuality, and the impressive speech of Cemi to Focion is strengthened by the encouragement given by Fronesis previously. Fronesis' family circumstances are related by Focion, whose secrets are uncovered by Fronesis later on. Focion's adventures with the red-haired youth are juxtaposed with the sexual union of Fronesis with Lucia; and Fronesis' subsequent struggle with the dragon may have parallels with the George and Daisy episode. Focion's madness is matched by Fronesis' departure for foreign lands. Finally, both young men have to face up to Fronesis' father, parental authority.

With such an intricately related pair of opposites, it is hardly surprising that many of the conclusions reached in studying Focion have great relevance to a full understanding of Fronesis' role in the novel. A study of one necessarily defines the nature of the other. The meeting of Cemi with Fronesis on the morning of the riots is not their first, for they have been introduced by their families:
Por primera vez Cemi, en su adolescencia, se sintió llamado y llevado a conversar en un rincón. Sintió como la palabra amistad tomaba carnalidad. Sintió el nacimiento de la amistad. Aquella cita era la plenitud de su adolescencia. Se sintió llamado, buscado por alguien, más allá del dominio familiar (I, 303).

Even at this stage all bodes well for the budding relationship:

Además Fronesis mostraba siempre, junto con una alegría que brotaba de su salud espiritual, una dignidad estoica, que parecía alejarse de las cosas para obtener, paradójamente, su inefable simpatía (I, 303).

It seems that Fronesis has some degree of awareness of the concept of lejanía; a certain restraint keeps him apart from immediate reality, so that he can better appreciate and command it. It is interesting that Cemi makes his acquaintance through family connections because Fronesis bears a notable resemblance to José Eugenio, the Colonel; alegría and mental and physical good health are his salient features until the end and Fronesis shares them. We might think of Fronesis and Foción as the moving spirits of José Eugenio and Alberto, the sources of their alegría and demonismo. The reader is further tempted to regard Fronesis as the Colonel's successor in the role of mentor to his son, by Cemi's confused thoughts during the riots: "intuía que se iba adentrando en un túnel, en una situación en extrema peligrosa, donde por primera vez sentiría la ausencia de la mano de su padre" (I, 317). Almost immediately "sintió que una mano cogía el suyo ..." (I, 318); it is that of his new friend Fronesis. I have enumerated some of José Eugenio's many splendid qualities which he hoped to pass on to his son. The arrival of Fronesis in the guise of father figure reveals that the commonsense and innate goodness of the Colonel, so carefully unfolded by Lezama in earlier chapters, have been stimulated in Cemí at a moment of crisis.

The confrontation of students and police would appear at first sight to be an illustration of chaos at work. While this is true, it is even more important as an example of a controlled descent into chaos for a specific
purpose. The confusion disperses sufficiently for Cemí to become aware that a heroic Apollo is attempting to harness creative energy to overthrow the existing, corrupt order (Machado's government). He seems to orchestrate events, bearing many musical images in his wake. He is described variously as "atento a las vibraciones de la luz" (I, 311); "estudiante que volaba como impulsado por el ritmo de la flauta" (I, 313); "... Apolo, de perfil melodioso" (I, 314); "el que tenía como la luz de Apolo" (I, 317). The rhythm of the flute calls to mind the person of Orpheus, the poet/musician, as much as Apollo, and the image is used to contrast the surface confusion of the riots with the underlying pattern of harmony imposed by the leader. His musical appearances, in which he is aided by his shouting companions who at his command "Como si escalasen rocas se esforzaban en ser oídos ..." (I, 314), are intended to guide their movements in an effective protest. Lezama makes it clear that this Orpheus is a positive force having no connections with evil, chaotic gods of vengeance: "tenía que ser un dios en la luz, no vindicativo, no oscuro, no catónico [sic]" (I, 311). He is the herald of the good news of freedom which is expressed in poetry, words and music that must rise above the baser elements of the protest. He carries no other weapon: "Las detonaciones impedían la llegada del verbo con alas, el que hacía de Apolo, de perfil melodioso, había señalado los distintos lugares en la distancia donde los estudiantes deberían alzarse con la palabra" (I, 314). In these words he becomes Speech personified and is assisted by Nature herself, "La mañana, al saltar del amarillo al verde del berro, cantaba para ensordercer a los jinetes ..." (I, 312) and "El relincho marcial al apagarse en el eco, era devuelto como una risotada amistosa" (I, 315). Even Cemí, although he has so far remained an observer, is moved to participate: "Se ponía el cuenco de la mano, como un caracol, sobre el borde de los labios y lanzaba sus condenaciones" (I, 317).

I have noted Lezama's pride in the small part he played in the 1930s riots at Havana University; he sees them as "el comienzo de la infinita
As a future poet, Cemi must be involved in great movements of the people for change, but like his creator, Lezama, he has no wish to contribute to the struggle with violence; he has the weapon of words, of which he has said elsewhere:

In the student demonstration described in Paradiso, the word of calm and strategy is shouted down by the mob of students and the soldiers alike, as they yield to the chaos of the situation. Yet Lezama has great admiration for any group which can act cohesively in a given situation, believing such entities to embody the poetic spirit. He seems to feel that the body of students forms this kind of group, but only so long as they listen to their inspired leader, the spirit of poetry. The student group seems to be "Un conjunto de hombres que en la victoria o la derrota conseguían una unidad donde la metáfora de sus enlaces lograba la totalidad de una imagen." Lezama continues: "el hombre, el pueblo, distintas situaciones que logran agrupamientos, alcanzan una plenitud poética. Este concepto de la poesía llega a agrupar el reino animal en un ordenamiento de directa poesía en relación con el hombre." Lezama considers any age in which men bind themselves together in some great enterprise as an era imaginaria, a poetic age, and he appears to include the struggle against Machado's dictatorship amongst his eras. He is convinced that the true poet will inevitably be, by virtue of his calling, on the side of change and improvement, although he may express himself on a personal rather than national level: "Creo que un escritor, si sus valores son revolucionarios, es un escritor revolucionario." Fronesis is a vital presence at the demonstration, as Reason and order; it is only through him that the group will be enabled to act effectively and thus allow
the poetic nature of the situation to be expressed. Cemi commits himself to words only after a period of silent observation of the winged Apollo who is a personification of Reason and Wisdom, just as is Fronesis, when he rescues Cemi from the demonstration at the point where it deteriorates into a riot. It is wisdom that prevents Cemi from participating again in demonstrations, which impinge upon the reader's consciousness at intervals in this section of the novel. He will turn inward to discussion and debate in an attempt to rule the Chaos within.

Lezama has some interesting comments to make on the possible causes of demonstrations and civil disorder:

Si trazáramos un círculo momentáneo en torno de aquellos transeúntes matinales, los que salen para su trabajos, o para fabricar un poco de ocio en sus tiernas caseras, penetramos en el secreto de los seres que están en el contorno, estudiantes y soldados, envueltos en torbellinos de piedra y en los reflejos de los planazos sobre aquellos cuerpos que cantan en la gloria (I, 316).

He believes that the clue to the unrest lies in the hearts of ordinary passers-by who do not seem to be implicated at first sight. He traces the growth of the seeds of discontent which eventually burst forth on to the streets: "la estrella se va amortiguando en nuestras apetencias y queda por nuestra subconciencia como estrella invisible, pero que después resurge en el estudiante y el soldado, en unos para matar y en otros para dejarse matar" (I, 316). There are no guiltless persons who may remain beyond the pale of social responsibility and we can assume that this thought will occur to Cemi as he watches on the side lines and at length adds his own jeers. The phenomenon of political unrest involves the entire community, oppressor and victim, in an intensity of activity, albeit divisive, which unites each group below a banner in "una plenitud poética," as Lezama remarks to Álvarez Bravo (above, c.f. note 38). The confrontation takes on the character of an ancient ritual, a duel between youthful vitality and stale authoritarianism which will
also be played out in the lives of individuals such as Cemi, Fronesis and Foción, from their particular symbolic viewpoints. Lezama's description of the student demonstrations provides an illustration of the interplay of order and chaos on a grand scale as a prologue to the three chapters which follow.

Rialta's speech echoes what I consider to be the main theme enveloping Fronesis; that is, the evolution of the generations of Man which supercede one another. She has the insight necessary to recognize that the age-old patterns of life must be allowed to crystalize naturally and she outlines the consequences of forcing Nature's hand:

Un adolescente astuto produce un hombre intranquilo. El egoísmo de los padres hace que muchas veces quisieran que sus hijos adolescentes fueran sus contemporáneos, más que la sucesión, la continuidad de ellos a través de las generaciones, o lo que es aún peor, se dejan arrastrar por sus hijos, y ya están perdidos, pues ninguno de los dos está en su lugar, ninguno representa la fluidez de lo temporal (I, 320).

The old order has to give way before the new, not to disrupt the continuity of Time, but to maintain it by the ritual of separation from parental authority and the establishing of the new law. Whether or not the innovation brings with it real change is not so important as the act of separation itself. In the presence of such a theme, we might well expect to find some image of the voracious Unconscious lurking in the background; we are not to be disappointed: "los hijos, que al no tener qué escoger, se perdían al estar en obscuridad en el estómago de un animal mayor" (I, 320). The sons, identified too closely with the parents, risk returning to the egoless stage which renders them helpless and dependent like the foetus in the womb. They will become perpetual Jonahs, incapable of accepting responsibility for themselves and others. The struggle between the generations is, according to Rialta, essential for the preservation of Self.

It is natural that Cemi's mother, Rialta, his Muse, should be the one
to explain the struggle of the generations to him since as his only parent she will be the influence from which he must simultaneously benefit and withdraw. It is interesting to note that Fronesis (order and Reason, but also the force working for change) makes himself known to Cemí on the occasion of his very first absence from home during the holiday at Dr. Santurce's country house. Although Dr. Santurce has been used as a symbol of overpowering reason attending the downfall of Alberto, it is not inappropriate that he introduce Fronesis to his nephew, Cemí. Taken in the purely metaphorical sense, it seems that Cemí comes to the conclusion in his meditations on his future that he must cultivate his "masculine" faculties such as logic and reason, which are the antithesis of the equally valuable qualities embodied in the person and in his image of his mother. Reason is of course attractive to all and so, "apenas llegado Fronesis, ya tenía en torno un coro de muchachas y amigos. Tenía la facultad de crear coordenadas que convergían hacia él" (I, 333). It rescues Cemí from the chaos of political unrest and personal feelings: "siempre lo vería como esa mano que nos recoge en medio de un tumulto infernal y nos lleva de columna en columna" (I, 333). Fronesis is never far from dissolving into a pure concept, as he does in the next few lines:

"Cuando levantamos la cara, ya no está, está en el turbión de su alegría que nos vuelve a imantar, como el cocuyo, el punto geométrico, los ojos del gato, la mirada de la madre, que llevan en la noche a una convergencia en el árbol, el encerado, el cuarto de dormir y la inmutable aparecida cuando bajamos los párpados" (I, 333; my italics).

The result of a confrontation with Fronesis is a feeling of happiness with which Cemí links various sources of intense mystical or poetic experience. His mother's special look is one aspect of Fronesis, Reason and Wisdom, which leads Cemí to an appreciation of the Unconscious, "la inmutable aparecida." The discussion of the Quixote is made possible by the effect of Fronesis on
his fellow students, that is, their own power of reason takes over where formal teaching ceases. The ideas themselves are interesting: Fronesis sees Don Quijote as a grotesque figure because he is a "mezcla de Simbad sin circunstancia mágica y de San Antonio de Padua sin tentaciones" (I, 336); Cemi despises the literary critics such as Menéndez y Pelayo "que desconoció siempre el barroco, que es lo que interesa de España y de España en América ..." (I, 336), making a plea for enlightened criticism which would employ "la imaginación retrospectiva" (I, 336). This seems to mean study which has an inherent respect for the historic moment which gave birth to a particular work; Cemi preaches what Lezama practices, for the author's extensive borrowing from the literature and philosophy of many ages is guided by his conception of the poetic eras imaginarias and the historical events connected with them. He combines his discernment of the essence of an Age with a sense of "what might have been" using "la imaginación retrospectiva."

The above frank airing of views is in marked contrast to the cynical attitude of Foción at the bookshop, revealed in the preceding passage. Here with the aid of reason, Cemi is enabled to become a focal point in universit y life, giving expression to his ideas and encouraging his contemporaries without personal conceit. Lezama emphasizes the significance of Cemi's choice of direction with a well-worn image; Fronesis experiences "La alegría de saber que una persona que está en nuestro ámbito, que es nuestro amigo, ha ganado también su tiempo, ha hecho también del tiempo un aliado que lo robustece y lo brul ne, como la marea volviendo sobre las hojas del coral" (I, 337; my italics). A comparison of the coral reef image as used here with reference to Cemi and a similar image referring to the man with the Chinese toothbrush ("El agua al brúñir el mechón frontal, le dio una contextura de ébano pulimentado como mármol": I, 389) suggests that Cemi's participation in open debate affords him a glimpse of lejanía. The man with the Chinese toothbrush seemed to be a representation of Foción's chance to reach beyond
himself and he had the look of permanence, of immutability. Cemi acquires that same appearance the instant that he begins to express his ideas; this is a prelude to his career as a poet, since he has already accepted his vocation. As a poet he will conquer Time.

In the course of examining the character of Foción, we have seen that Fronesis regards the aim of the homosexual and the poet as similar, that is, the conquest of Time; the power to stop or turn back the clock is what each is seeking, but the poet takes a positive attitude to his visit to the Unconscious, while the homosexual, at least according to Jungian psychologists such as Neumann, prefers to dwell there permanently as a child in the womb. Having listened to Foción's argument in answer to his opening statement, Fronesis replies at length. His main objection is that Foción's conclusion, that sexual intercourse and procreation make Man vulnerable to death, does not follow from his argument. He attempts to broaden the concept of sexuality by citing examples of clearly heterosexual men who nevertheless do not conform to the accepted customs of heterosexual intercourse since their experience is incomplete without some unusual caress, form of dress or the satisfaction of some other harmless fetish. What these foibles reveal, Fronesis claims, is "la reminiscencia de un menoscabo de la sexualidad" (I, 360), but he does not attempt to define it. Instead he offers three rather intriguing anecdotes taken from the lives of three famous historical figures; Julius Caesar, Benvenuto Cellini and Casanova. Each tale illustrates a different attitude to homosexuality; Caesar is immune to accusations and insinuation thanks to his divinity; Cellini rebuffs his tormentors by expressing the desire to indulge in "tan noble arte" (I, 361), implying that homosexual love is the sport of gods and monarchs; Casanova displays what Lezama considers to be a cynical attitude, denying his half-hidden desires. He says of him: "tanto Casanova como el mismo Gide, usaban la máscara del sincerismo, pero el cinismo en estado puro es tan difícil como el total verbo que
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oculta" (I, 361). Lezama seems to be condemning any frivolous flirtation with the idea of homosexuality, any biased proselytism of the same, because, in Fronesis' words, "Es tan extensa la cantidad de sensaciones que se ocultan detrás del rostro o máscara de la palabra homosexual ..." (I, 362). The diversity of physical manifestations of sexuality is further complicated by a certain understanding of the nature of the body, attributed by Fronesis to the Greeks: "El cuerpo es la permanencia de un oleaje innumerabile, la forma de un recuerdo, es decir, una imagen. En cada hombre esa imagen repta con mutaciones casi inapresables, pero ese inasible tiene la medida de su sexualidad" (I, 362). If one sees the body as fashioned in God's image, sexuality can no longer be discussed in merely physical terms since Man will partake of His spirit. Foción is so startled by this notion that his chaotic thoughts break out in a shout of protest: "en el Evangelio de San Mateo se afirma que también los eunucos pueden estar en el paraíso ..." (I, 363). It is almost a cry of despair and lays the foundation for Cemí's later warning speech to Foción. The exchange of insults at this point seems to draw the two characters both mentally and physically closer. Foción becomes more like his friend by his quite humble apology, whereas Fronesis' rather crude joke and mocking tone ("una cita ... traída en una inscripción grabada a navaja por las posaderas de un eunuco de la dinastía de los Colmenó, en Bizancio"; I, 363) appears to reduce him to Foción's level. The close interaction of the characters at this point may be symbolized in a gesture made by Fronesis towards Foción, which seems to have sexual undertones: "El sudor caliente del cuello de Foción se fue extendiendo como un aguarrás por el cuenco de la mano de Fronesis" (I, 363). The incident, accompanied by an avowal of friendship, does not necessarily imply that on the basic level of the plot the two are lovers. It is rather an indication of a small degree of contact and influence at work between the polar opposites. Yet they remain separate: "eres también mi mejor inasible
y cuanto más te desenmascaras parece que tu inasible va recogiendo todas 
esas máscaras que vas abandonando" (I, 363-4). The forces of Chaos remain 
a mystery to Fronesis.

Warming to his subject despite these interruptions, Fronesis returns 
to the original topic of androgyny; he regards the legend of procreation 
depicted in a Mexican codex as an example of the imaginative powers of an-
cient Man which allowed the primitive to believe in seemingly illogical 
events. It represents faith in the impossible, which Fronesis sees as a 
feature of "esas poéticas regiones de los orígenes" (I, 365). Tertulian's 
phrase "es cierto porque es imposible" (I, 363) is a favourite with Lezama, 
appearing in full in his interview with Álvarez Bravo: "El hijo de Dios fue 
crucificado, no es vergonzoso porque es vergonzoso, y el hijo de Dios murió, 
es todavía más creíble porque es increíble, y después de enterrado resucitó, 
es cierto porque es imposible." In the novel at this point the phrase 
is applied to miraculous forms of conception but Lezama will soon replace 
it in its original context, as Fronesis' speech is a prologue to that of 
Cemí, which is chiefly concerned with resurrection of the body and soul. 
Lezama devotes much space to the role of the poem as a catalyst enabling the 
actual and the invisible to make contact, in such essays as "La dignidad de 
la poesía" and "Preludio a las eras imaginarias." He believes that "Ese 
combate entre la causalidad y lo incondicionado, ofrece un signo, rinde un 
testimonio: el poema" (II, 810) and that "Existe un potens conocido por la 
poesía para que la causalidad actúe sobre lo incondicionado, y otro potens 
que desconocemos, por el que también lo incondicionado actúa sobre la causa-
lidad" (II, 817). Whilst recognizing its great poetic potential, Fronesis 
is determined to prove that the memory of androgyny is no excuse for homo-
sexual tendencies. He is quite willing to admit that the memory is powerful 
but refutes Foción's adoption of it as a raison d'être:
- Es como si ambos - replicó Fronesis -, viéramos en medio del camino un hombre muerto. Usted forma su premisa mayor: todos los hombres son mortales. Yo veo lo mismo, pero mi premisa es: este hombre puede ser inmortal. Usted quiere reemplazar el laberinto contemporáneo por el de los mitos ..." (I, 365-6).

Fronesis seeks the positive alternative in all things. His friend Foción seems to him one of Nature's anachronisms, like the anabas scandens and the gudgeon which have become trapped at some particular stage of evolution. We have seen that Foción is indeed enveloped in a quicksand of his own making, out of the desire to retain his childhood comfort and security, to flee from death. He has allowed himself to be dragged back to the androgynous, Unconscious state. That is the outcome of his struggle against adolescence and adulthood; he has identified himself with a chaotic, formless existence in perpetual rebellion. As Reason personified, Fronesis is empowered to isolate and identify the issues at stake although he may not yet be aware of their significance in his personal life.

Foción seemed to exhibit some of the characteristics of the hero; he is imbued with a certain misplaced bravery and defiance, directed against his own evolution from childhood to adolescence; he chooses a mighty foe, Time, which is bound to conquer him; he has great creative potential, marred by destructive forces; most notably, he has what Neumann calls "dual parentage," yet the spiritual and earthly aspects of human nature which the parents represent fail to coalesce. They are tragically dissolved in madness, instead. The two fathers, Nicolás and Julian, are opposed forever as active and passive, male and female parts of the psyche, while Celita/Eudoxia is a blending of physical and spiritual motherhood which cannot assist Foción: chaos is here born of insanity. Despite some little claim to the title of hero, Foción's birth and upbringing debar him from triumph in the struggle to "become." The configuration of family satellites revolving slowly around Fronesis is complex, but Foción's negative interpretation
of his friend's circumstances does not destroy its benevolent powers. It is inevitable that Focién as Chaos should eventually provide erroneous explanations because his intellect is diseased; Lezama ensures that the reader is guided by the wary Cemí:

- Me ha gustado el relato que me has hecho, pero no las conclusiones que sacas del mismo - le dijo Cemí-. Discrepo de ti en eso, pues en mi opinión la verdadera madre de Fronesis fue María Teresa Sunster ..." (I, 401).

Lezama awards Fronesis hero-status in various ways; his pairs of parents represent a challenge which he has the capacity to overcome; he is a focal point for his peers, "lo inundaba una especie de sufa de esclarecimiento que donde quiera penetraba como una astilla capaz de comunicar una salud y un esplendor ..." (I, 334). He is repeatedly referred to in terms which Neumann notes as typical of the hero: "The hero is always a light-bringer and emissary of light." 42 José Eugenio shares this characteristic, not because he has fought actual battles on the front (he does not really have that opportunity), but because he is a man of action who is almost fully self-aware, freed from the negative aspects of the Unconscious. Since the latter is often symbolized in Paradiso as a dark underworld or the womb, it is only natural that we should speak of the "dawning" of consciousness; religious imagery is inextricably bound up with the imagery of light triumphing over darkness. Cemí admires Fronesis' ability to "situarse en el centro umbilical de las cuestiones" (I, 392), which seems to evoke the question of origins and birth, as if that were the only issue of true significance for Man. It forms the kernel of Lezama's writing as is revealed even in the title of his review, Orígenes. Cemí admires Fronesis' many impressive qualities, stressing certain of them before his listener Focién: "La forma perfecta que se adopta frente a un hecho" (I, 393); "No puede ser sorprendido" (I, 393); "Sabe lo que le falta y lo busca con afán" (I, 393); he does not symbolize Dr. Santurce's type of over-powering reason, but a perfect
balance between logic and intuition with which he is able to single out and
tackle his own weaknesses. He seems to be tuned in to an "inner voice"
from which his wisdom is derived and Neumann tells us that this is not an
unusual phenomenon in relation to the hero: it is "the command of the trans-
personal father or father archetype who wants the world to change...." 43
The parental archetypes in Poción's family did not act as his guide but
Fronesis' birth and dual parentage follows a now traditional pattern:

With the progressive individualization of humanity and
its emergence from the inchoate state of participation
mystique the ego of each man takes on clearer definition;
but in the process, the individual becomes the hero and
has in his turn to exemplify the myth of the dragon fight.

... the mythological fate of the hero portrays the arche-
typal fate of the ego and of all conscious development.
It serves as a model for the subsequent development of the
collective, and its stages are recapitulated in the deve-
lopment of every child. 44

The struggle of Fronesis or the hero to free himself from his archetypal
pair can be seen according to Neumann, in the social and personal history
of every man and woman. No wonder Lezama's character has such a fascination
for the reader despite his unusual lack of "realistic" behaviour. "Él era el
elegido," Lezama warns us, providing the reader with an outline of the kind
of background that a hero ought to have: his father could be "un estoico,
un católico de los primeros tiempos, donde los misterios órficos pasaban al
signo del cordero" while his mother, Cemí imagines, is "austriaca criolla,
trasunto de la nobleza ancestral de la Europa oriental" (I, 393-4). What-
ever Fronesis' true parentage, he has nevertheless received a suitable an-
cestry as a hero. Neumann states that "the hero is the child of aristocra-
tic parents...." 45

The text reveals clearly that Fronesis has had two mothers, one purely
spiritual and the other biological. Not only has María Teresa agreed to
marry her sister's lover and raise their love child as her own, she seems
also to have foregone the physical aspects of motherhood entirely, since
Fronesis is an only child. She is, for all practical purposes, a virgin mother. This situation seems to reflect "the extraordinary circumstances of the hero's birth, the fact that he is begotten by a god and born of a virgin." Fronesis senior has been described as an early Christian from the times when Orphic tradition was giving way to Christ, the most illustrious hero of all; Poción presents him as someone who has failed to live up to his potential because he has fled from the chaos of Diaghilev's passion for him. This attitude is partly the result of Poción's personal bias towards homosexuality. Yet there is sense of failure about Fronesis' father which must be explained somehow. The inevitable fact that sons surpass their fathers contributes much to this impression, for always in myth as in family life: "The virgin mother, connected directly with the god who engenders the new order, but only indirectly with the husband, gives birth to the hero who is destined to bring that new order into being and destroy the old." The theme of the cycle of old and the new is constant in Paradiso. Fronesis senior was "hijo de diplomático, amigo de Hofmannsthal, que sabía hablar de paños de Liverpool ..." (I, 400) and now he is merely "el sesudo abogadote de Cubanacán" (I, 396). Once he embodied qualities which are now to be found in his son: "Esas condiciones que tú sorprendes en Fronesis, estaban sin desarrollar en su padre" (I, 396). The symbolism of the parents is by no means simple for it involves both real, physical parents and archetypes which can work for good or evil through those parents. There is an essential difference between the mother and the father archetypes in Jungian psychology which appears in Paradiso also, expressed in the strange life of Fronesis' parents. We have observed the malevolent aspect of the Great Mother at work in the fates of Alberto, Leregas, Farra-luque, Poción and others, in contrast to the beneficial effects displayed in Rialta's nature. The negative side was exposed in the fiercesome imagery of the tusked boar, the voracious snake and so on, so it is not surprising
that "To the hero, the clutching Earth Mother appears as a dragon to be overcome." The prize is truly great: one's own liberated consciousness, and in addition: "The victorious hero stands for a new beginning, the beginning of creation, but a creation which is the work of man and which we call culture, as opposed to natural creation which is given to man at the outset and overshadows his beginnings." 

The hero's problems are not over even if he conquers the dragon of the Unconscious. Here, Fronesis will make his attempt with Lucía, appropriately named as she may help him to emerge decisively from the darkness. What happens next depends on the father archetype who is much more closely identified with the earthly father than is his female counterpart with the earthly mother. Two distinct stages in Fronesis senior's life illustrate the "personal father ... the father of the carnal lower man" and the "heavenly father who is the father of the heroic part...." Unlike his son who courts Foción or Chaos for the enrichment of character and understanding that he may bring, Fronesis senior is soon filled with a feeling of revulsion towards the forces of chaos which attract and approach him in his youth. His child is borne by a nymphomaniac and he is pursued by a man whose reputation as "un endemoniado pederasta activo" (I, 399) is well established (the latter is afforded several pages in A. L. Rowse's *Homosexuals in History*). However it would be a cruel irony should this be the only reason for remembering Diaghilev and I am convinced that Lezama had a more important reason for choosing him as a key figure in the Fronesis family history. At first, Fronesis senior and Diaghilev take great pleasure in intellectual conversations on a most interesting and relevant topic: "ritmos negroides, tambores yorubas, brujería e invocación de los muertos" (I, 396-7). This fact reminds the reader that the Russian was one of the greatest disseminators of culture that this century has known. He brought the *Ballets Russes* to Paris for the first time in 1909 and engaged a wealth of
artists, dancers, musicians and designers, including Picasso. His influence on European culture was very far-reaching. What possible significance could this have for a minor Cuban diplomat and his family, we may ask? It seems to me that the ballerina's love for Diaghilev is equivalent to a love of her artistic vocation. The passion of the great artistic entrepreneur for the Cuban is actually the desire to learn from and integrate Caribbean culture, its musical rhythms and Negro dances. In this context, Fronesis senior rejects the proposed marriage of cultures because he fears a loss of identity amidst the richness of ancient European artistic values. Instead he takes to his heart that aspect of European culture which he is able to control, breeding and morality, in the shape of María Teresa. She is worthy but decidedly uncreative, barren. She exists on his terms; she is the little piece of Europe which he has captured and borne homewards, where she is now stifled in a parochial atmosphere ("su hastío de Santa Clara"; I, 401). He has not broken with the past in order to create something new and vital. His only moment of creativity is the conception of his son in the spirit of chaos. It will be up to Fronesis junior to resolve this terrible irony.

The benevolent father archetype is not embodied in the ethical, reserved half of the character which is earthly and potentially negative, but in the irresistible attraction of the creative powers of Chaos. Although Fronesis' real father gives him a sense of right and wrong, his powers of reason and his ethical approach of life, there is a danger of these qualities holding the hero back from innovation and change, because "what distinguishes the hero is an active incest, the deliberate conscious exposure of himself to the dangerous influence of the female...." Fronesis' father (in the physical sense) has deliberately withdrawn from the ultimate challenge of the chaotic Unconscious and so no new culture has been created. He has remained part of the status quo which the son will challenge after apparently succeeding in the first stage of the dragon fight, which must be examined very carefully in order to determine Fronesis' fate, hero or fool.
Fronesis' ancestry is explained at a strategic moment in the novel, half way between the initial encounter with Lucía, in which a sense of extreme uneasiness is fostered by some very persistent imagery and the dragon fight with its ambivalent aftermath. Focion is quite truthful when he insists that a knowledge of his friend's background is essential. The reader knows now that the germinative powers of Chaos brought him to birth and were thereafter banished from his life by a rigid adherence to moral principle. Hardly surprising, then, to find that "Sabe lo que falta y lo busca con afán" (I, 393), in the form of Focion, the embodiment of a power he has never experienced. There are many myths relating the adventures of twin brothers, one of whom is immortal and a hero. At first they are totally opposed, like the earthly and spiritual halves of the psyche, but later they merge:

In every case the man-to-man relationship strengthens consciousness and invigorates the ego-principle, no matter whether the alliance appears psychologically as the combination of ego and shadow, or the combination of ego and self.

In a similar way, Fronesis can assimilate Foción, but not vice versa; Chaos is eventually destroyed by Reason but the reverse need not be the case. Even though Lucía seems rather small-minded, there is little justification for Fronesis' alternate physical desire and revulsion, his approaches and withdrawals, unless she is yet another personification of the feminine aspect of the psyche, the area occupied by the Unconscious which must be conquered. Lucía exudes "un tono arielesco" (I, 368), yet she is compared with Circe, who turned Ulysses and his men into swine, animals which are symbolically connected with the terrible aspect of the Great Mother, the devouring Unconscious ("oh, Circe ... me abandono a tu filtro, caigo en tus abismos"; I, 368-9). His attraction to Lucía surrounds Fronesis with images of sleep ("en su respuesta había más de bostezo que de asentimiento"; I,
369), a sign that he is descending into the Unconscious. Another warning is the violent light enveloping the couple: "los dos cuerpos se fueron disgregando en un cono de luz demasiado violento" (I, 369). It seems to make their bodies disintegrate as in a sacrifice to the Great Mother, symbolizing the dissolution of consciousness in the Unconscious. The union in sexual ecstasy of the pair will end in their momentary identification with the androgynous ouroboros, the blending of masculine and feminine in an undifferentiated state of Unconsciousness: "una nube se posó sobre sus cuerpos y su sombra los unió con una manteca de serpiente" (I, 369), the serpent being an age-old symbol of the ouroboros or Unconscious. This rich web of imagery is spun around the first appearance of Lucía which covers only four short paragraphs - the character is burdened with the weight of her own significance.

The second meeting of the couple in a park and in the cinema is treated in similar vein but a mildly humorous note is allowed to creep in. In the park the lovers appear as "dos orugas que se interrogaban con sus cuernecillos, en la notada superficie de una hoja de malanga" (I, 381). Still employing his slightly mocking tone, Lezama places his characters in their respective symbolic positions relative to one another:

La concha primaveral del verde y las fresas de la seda se exhibían en el brazo que se apoyaba en el hombro de Fronesis. Pero mientras el fondo verde del blanco, profundizando en su dimensión de lejanía, parecía ocultar los recursos voluptuosos de aquel brazo recorrido por la untuosa saliva de la oruga, la nariz decidida de Fronesis, la línea que surgía de su frente para formar un irreprochable ángulo recto con la aleta que interpretaba la menor variante de la briza como un gamo, le daba su posible rechazo (I, 381).

Briefly, the green and red strawberry-patterned blouse worn by Lucía denotes her fertility and connections with the Earth Mother who can be either a positive or negative force for the hero. Primaveral suggests new beginnings and creation, perhaps even rebirth (the reader might recall the creative power which was unleashed by the destruction of José Eugenio's strawberry
plants; I, 174-6). Even though the colours have "su dimensión de lejanía" of Fronesis is compelled to reject Lucía's undoubted attractions. As a symbol of the dangerous Unconscious which may trap Fronesis at the stage of the half-formed ego which cannot survive an ecstatic sexual experience, Lucía is a huntress whose prey (gamo) is Fronesis. His Roman nose is a physical manifestation of his strict, classical upbringing which speaks to him on behalf of his earthly father, urging him to morally correct acts only! It expresses his disdain for Lucía, which must be overcome by his yielding to a sexual relationship with her. The rejection is impossible because the hero must accept and conquer, or risk annihilation in the Unconscious because of his lack of courage. Not to attempt the conquest of his feminine half will result in the same fate as would beset the fallen hero. It is the inner voice of his positive, "heavenly" father archetype which will lead him to make the attempt, to identify the long term good. Images of the serpent recur with increasing frequency during the "Isolda" film, which is interesting as a parallel with the Fronesis/Lucía relationship and its possible outcome. The possibility of Fronesis winning the dragon fight is first suggested in the cinema scene where we see "... Fronesis, immutable, cortando con su perfil subrayado, perfil que agudiza tanto sus contornos como un hacha para fragmentar la serpiente" (I, 382). He exerts some power over Lucía, the attraction is mutual, for naturally the Unconscious cannot fulfil its potential without the aid of a strong consciousness which can extract and benefit from its richness. That is why Fronesis does not pursue Lucía until she has stopped pestering him. He sends her away but as soon as she decides to leave, he initiates a second stage in which he will consciously seek her out, on his own terms. In other words, after the youth has entered the adolescent phase, the presence of the Unconscious is no longer all-pervasive and has to be recaptured in some degree. It is at this point that Lezama reveals Fronesis' definitive rejection of Foción, who as
Chaos has no place in his life. This is also another indication that Fronesis is going to win the dragon fight because his total rejection of Chaos takes place just before his proposed assimilation of some degree of chaos through sexual union with Lucía. It will serve its purpose, it will complete Fronesis' character but will not destroy him: "Comprendía la nobleza del laberinto de Foción, pero rehusaba acompañarlo hasta la puerta de salida, puerta donde estaban unas inscripciones y unos símbolos que a él nunca le interesaría descifrar" (I, 386).

The fear of the vagina dentata has rendered Foción impotent as far as females are concerned and I have tried to show that his hatred of sexual intercourse with women is actually a fear of death and the Unconscious. The act implies the end of childhood, innocence and hence eternal life, to his troubled mind. That Fronesis should suffer momentarily from the same delusion is not so surprising when we consider that he is already quite self-aware and any encounter now at close quarters with the feminine Unconscious is tantamount to a regression. The occasion of Fronesis' and Lucía's final meeting is hedged about with images evoking the voracity of the Unconscious; as Neumann points out, "The destructive side of the Feminine, the destructive and deathly womb, appears most frequently in the archetypal form of a mouth bristling with teeth." Some of the imagery is quite startling: "con el sexo acentuado como una enorme tijera de sastre"; "Le parecía ver en el monte venusino una reducción llorosa de la cara de Lucía, otros veces un enorme rostro fetal, deshecho, lleno de cortadas ..."; "la serpiente que no se deja fragmentar por la rueda dentata"; "la camiseta con el círculo que le había sido amputado" (I, 403-5). The emphasis is on slashing and mutilating actions, so closely related to Lucía's person that she is actually in possession of a real pair of scissors which Fronesis borrows to cut out his amuleto (I, 405). The shield of cloth is required so that Fronesis can distance himself from the act. Unfortunately his fear of the female has
been accentuated by the girl's removal of her nether garments as the first stage in undressing. Her action forces all Fronesis' attention on the offending area, to such an extent that he cannot become aroused until "había logrado alejar el cuerpo de la momentánea enemiga ..." (I, 405), until he is able to "convertirla en imagen" (I, 404). The cloth ring which succeeds in transforming the clumsy bodies into an image is a sign that Fronesis is aware of danger. It may symbolize the ouroboros itself, so often represented by the snake biting its tail; on the other hand it suggests to me the completeness of Fronesis' own character as he assimilates the feminine part of his mind. While the sexual encounter seems to have been successful from Fronesis' point of view, there is a marked lack of relief, joy or even pleasure in the purely physical. The aid to intercourse has been discarded in a pathetic heap: "Era un pequeño círculo de lana que había abierto una ruta, pero que ahora se mostraba sombrío como un parche para tapar un ojo. Un parche que había traído claridad a lo oscuro, pero que tapaba con su mancha por la que se ve la luz del éxtasis" (I, 405).

The image of the eye patch seems to imply that although Fronesis has been afforded an insight into the feminine, he is as yet unwilling to accept it. He does not really want to see what he has done, which is a pity for he has achieved much: Neumann states that "Victory over the mother, frequently taking the form of actual entry into her, i.e., incest, brings about a rebirth." 55 The "new-born" Fronesis keeps his eyes tightly shut and his struggles with the feminine, the Unconscious, are far from over, for that very reason. He has successfully transformed a physical experience into an approach towards the infinite, imposing order upon a chaotic experience by means of a perfect circle, rather in the way that the exchange of rings between Rialta and José Eugenio promptly banishes all reference to their sexual union from the text. A ritual act such as marriage, baptism, initiation or funeral provides the framework for contact between earth and
heaven, as it is conceived by the participants. To effect the exchange, Fronesis must impose a distance across which his chosen vehicle of mediation, the circle of cloth, may act. Out of the inevitable gulf between the physical and spiritual worlds, which is so potentially creative, Man fashions an image, a poem. The phenomenon of creation out of the void, which was observed in the manatee's confrontation with the Chinaman (I, 67-75), is here re-enacted. Gimbernat de González points out that "El velo oculta, del mismo modo que la distancia en la pareja Eufrasio/Fileba instauraba la lejanía de los términos que se proponían análogos." What Fronesis must now do is assimilate and internalize his ritual act, becoming fully conscious of the hidden meaning of the dragon fight.

Lezama is not content to have Fronesis re-enter the female, the Unconscious, and survive unscathed. The second stage of his struggle follows the sordid affair of Foción and the reñó haired youth, in which Foción proves unable to reach out beyond his physical desire. The comparison of the discarded amulet with an eye-patch reveals a serious weakness on Fronesis' part, because as Neumann says:

the masculinity and ego of the hero are no longer identical with the phallus and sexuality. On this level, another part of the body erects itself symbolically as the "higher phallus" or the "higher masculinity": the head, symbol of consciousness, with the eye for its ruling organ....

The hero must master his reluctance to leave the past behind, unless he wants to end up like Oedipus who, says Neumann, "has no knowledge of what he has done, and when he finds out, he is unable to look his own deed, the deed of the hero, in the face." The blinding of Oedipus by his own hand is really an act of self-negation and self-castration. There can be little doubt that Fronesis is at risk in a similar way since he is filled with embarrassment and shame: "La lejanía lograda por su parábola seminal, se había cerrado y ahora lo oprimía como los descensos de un techo de pesadilla ...."
Necesitaba de una oscuridad que lo rebasase al arrancarle la imagen opresora" (I, 415). In other words he is almost overwhelmed by a longing to return to the secure darkness of unconsciousness, which is no doubt why he heads straight for the sea, shrouded in the darkness of night. Both sea and night appear in the "hero myths which take the form of sun myths; here the swallowing of the hero by the dragon-night, sea, underworld - corresponds to the sun's nocturnal journey." Of course, the sun always rises again, implying the hero's victory. Fronesis' return to the light does not seem to me to be quite that of a triumphant hero, although he has not been destroyed. Rather, his task has not been completed until he confronts his earthly father. His nocturnal journey is filled with potentially positive and negative symbols and the reader must thread his way around the obstacles and clues which Lezama places in the path to understanding. The sea exerts a calming effect upon the young man as he tries to rationalize his experience with Lucía: "La lentitud del retiramiento del oleaje le iba sacando la inhibición al borrarle la imagen, por estiramiento la imagen se iba a lomo de los corderos espumosos" (I, 415). The last vestiges of the unpleasantness are soothed and banished by the hypnotic movement of the waves. The meaning of this act begins to dawn on him, as the images of the three female influences in his life intermingle in his mind's eye: Lucía's image flickers somewhat uncertainly as "se mantenía en momentáneos círculos de fósforos, desaparecía, se reconstruía ..." (I, 416); the ballerina, "que gemía en persecución de un dios escondido en su pereza fría" (I, 416), makes a brief appearance; but the final image is of Fronesis' spiritual mother who presides over "una mesa de Nochebuena" (I, 416). The ballerina is a symbol of creative chaos and as such relates to Lucía, but order reigns supreme in the person of María Teresa Sunster. She is Fronesis' true guide; she is the virgin mother, a fact which is emphasized by the presence of the Christmas Eve table. It is also suggestive of a rebirth of the offering.
The son is burdened by the weight of his symbolic undershirt (out of which he cuts the circles) and the pressure imposed by the images of the three women which he reads in the waves. All three are part of the feminine and the Unconscious, as he now realizes, but he must continue his flight along the Malecón until he offers the tangible evidence of his sexual experience to the waves: "Extrajo la camiseta y con disimulada impulsi6n la lanzó a la voracidad de las aguas" (I, 417). As soon as he puts aside this symbol of his success and shame, he is able to see more clearly, from his position on the sea wall, which "servía de división entre la luz limitada de los faroles y la oscuridad sin límites de la marina" (I, 417). The sea is identified even more closely with the Unconscious when it receives the offering; it becomes the serpent of the ouroboros, the negation of masculine and feminine, "la gran serpiente marina." The circle of cloth, before being submerged, assumes the same form: "La camiseta misma antes de anegarse, se fue circulizando como una serpiente a la que alguien ha trasmitido la inmortalidad ..." (I, 417). The two are part of the same entity, but the immortality awarded by the ouroboros is illusory, as we have seen in the case of Foción. Its disappearance coincides with the advent of "la serpiente fálica" (I, 417), the power of procreation in mortal man:

era necesario crear al perder precisamente la inmortalidad. Así el hombre fue mortal pero creador y la serpiente fálica se convirtió en un fragmento que debe resurgir. Fronesis sentía que los dos círculos de la camiseta al desaparecer en el oleaje, desaparecerían también de sus terrores para dar paso a la serpiente circuncidada. (I, 417).

"La serpiente circuncidada" is an important choice of phrase because circumcision is used by many races as a rite of passage. It is clear that Fronesis regards himself as a victor, and insofar as the feminine aspect of his trial is concerned, this is true. Yet the problematic imagery continues even after he has come to terms with the unconscious half of his mind.
The god/man who appears next on the scene is most difficult to decipher but he appears to be bisexual: "Una sobrepelliz muy ondulada de ornamentos, le caía sobre la espalda y los pectorales, marcándole la glútea y la vulva verdosa" (I, 418). He wears a tiger skin and bears symbols of the sea; in his left hand are "mosaicos con cinco ángulos" (I, 418) which may be mandalas. In the other hand is "un báculo de catedra episcopal, la serpiente fálica empuñada por el padre" (I, 418). He seems to offer the sum of spiritual knowledge and is a life-giver: "orinaba sangre para reanimar los huesos en el infierno ..." (I, 418). The bishop's crozier may signify the spiritual heritage which is the property of the fathers, who must pass it on to the sons. It is firmly grasped in a father's hand ("empuñada por el padre"), so it may be reluctantly relinquished to the next generation. Yet it can be wielded like a sword, against the ouroboros: "deshilachando la camiseta, hendiéndola, trocándola en un serpentín de hosta donde una vaca hundía una de sus patas creyendo ser anillada por la serpiente que penetra en la imagen de la imagen ..." (I, 418). The image of the image is nothingness; the weapon against it is spiritual knowledge brought by a man/god whom we could identify as Fronesis' inner voice which leads him to full consciousness. The hero was shown to have a virgin and a god for parents; here we meet the god, whose androgyny implies completeness, not annihilation. His presence makes possible a poetic vision, as soon as Fronesis' eyes are opened:

Saltaban peces para morder las puntas de las estrellas puestas casi al nivel del mar. El efecto era que el pez se doraba en ese éxtasis de suspensión. Fronesis ya no podía vislumbrar la camiseta de doble círculo destruida por la serpiente marina. El centinela en la garita, al encender otro cigarrillo, parecía hacer contacto con el pez fuera del agua, estableciendo un momentáneo arco voltaico donde la serpiente fálica mostraba en la sucesión de sus collarines las pulgadas de penetración en las vértebras del ulular protoplásmico (I, 419).
In this passage which is in my opinion one of the most beautiful in *Paradiso*, Lezama gives form to one of his most precious moments. The instant in which the young man (the hero) conquers the negative power of the Unconscious, rediscovering his divine origin, is one of intense creative potential. The ugly memory has faded and the newly formed individual is in tune with the source of his strength. Neumann explains thus: "The slaying of the mother and identification with the father-god go together. If, through active incest, the hero penetrates into the dark, maternal, chthonic side, he can only do so by virtue of his kinship with 'heaven', his filiation to God." 60

The pinpoint of light from a cigar traces patterns on the night sky and out of this simple, realistic movement, Lezama conjures golden fish leaping towards the heavens from the sea, assisted in their soaring by the chance intervention of the glowing cigar, a human element in the vast creative ecstasy of Nature which unites heaven and earth. The phallus has its rightful place in the scene, in the leading role. The golden fish seem to leap out of ordinary Time into a poetic continuum where the moment is forever preserved. They have the power of poetic images and symbols, like the manatee and the game of *yaquis* elsewhere in the novel. All have in common the ability to halt the flow of historical time; Cemi's mother lives for the day when her son "verá, no los peces dentro del fluir, lunarejos en la movilidad, sino los peces en la canasta estelar de la eternidad" (I, 321). Fronesis is privileged to see just such a wonder, thanks to his hero-status; we might say that Cemi-as-Fronesis pursues the poetic ideal which was expressed in Alberto's letter about fish and poetic language. Time has stopped ("ese éxtasis de suspensión" and "estableciendo un momentáneo arco voltaico") to show that the hero has forsaken false ideas of eternal childhood and ensured his true growth to spiritual maturity by conquering the Unconscious. This shoal of golden fish flickers across a black sky which Lezama transforms into a symbol of the Great Mother: "inmensa piel sin ojos, pero ornada de mamas tan numerosas
como las estrellas" (I, 419). However she is now the beneficent nurse of the new-born ego, not its destroyer. Fronesis should be able to draw upon her, the Unconscious, at will, using his independent consciousness. The "embrón de arena" (I, 419) and the "postura de algunas momias del período copto, encontradas con el encogimiento placentario" (I, 420) which Fronesis assumes, are signs of his rebirth, rather than of a return to the ouroboros, because there are no prolonged references to sacrifice and death. On the other hand, the author refers to Fronesis' "mutilación reciente" (I, 419-20) and the passage ends on an ambivalent note: "La luz violenta sobre el rostro de Fronesis adquirió la vibración de un toque de retirada" (I, 420). His mutilation need not mean castration, indeed this is highly unlikely, as most of the imagery to date shows that Fronesis is a hero. It refers, I think, to his final separation from the Unconscious. His grief is reminiscent of the weeping of the new-born child recovering from the trauma of birth itself, rather than a sign of the acceptance of defeat. The sounding of retreat may be the signal to fall back and regroup and need not to imply defeat. It seems to me that Fronesis has to recoup his strength before a final confrontation with his earthly father.

In the meantime, Fronesis begins to assume the role of cultural innovator. Cemi requires a special appreciation of other cultures as a part of his poetic knowledge. It is in Fronesis' struggle that the right to the new knowledge is won, on Cemi's behalf. The dialogues which follow the dragon fight are expression of Cemi's diligent questing and probing of reality, pursued through his adolescence. The sum of human wisdom is naturally passed down from fathers to sons, since ancient times, without perpetual rebellion and confusion of the generations but Neumann tells us of one exception: "the creative individual - the hero" whose duty it is to establish a new order: "This necessarily makes him a breaker of the old law. He is the enemy of the old ruling system, of the old cultural values and the existing
court of conscience, and so he necessarily comes into conflict with the fathers and their spokesman, the personal father."

Every adolescent is bound to challenge his parents for a time, but the creator, (artist, poet, philosopher, and so on) must fashion a new reality of his own. He can draw upon many sources, not least history and memory. Cemi seems to despise the university and its teaching methods; a view of the inferior student population (I, 420-1) is superceded by a vision of Fronesis' face which obliterates the harsh realities of examinations and student life: "Al salir de la fila su mano empuñaba el cuadernillo pero la imagen, más que la marcha, lo iba guiando a la escuela, donde pensaba encontrar Fronesis" (I, 421). It is only logical to expect to find Reason in Cuba's most advanced place of learning and Cemi finds it in the shape of his friend, as usual at the centre of debate. This is Cemi's own position; he and Fronesis do not disagree over any issue and are by now almost one and the same entity. Various of the qualities of Reason are embodied in Fronesis' discourse and mode of delivery: "La astucia innata de su inteligencia, lo llevaba siempre que expresaba alguna idea peligrosa a decirlo con una sencillez no subrayada" (I, 422); he reveals his true parentage, his affinity with his spiritual mother, as he speaks with "la sencillez de un bastardo legalizado entre los señores vieneses" (I, 422); he listens to his inner voice and retains links with its perfection, hearing, "como sus ideas estuviesen subordinadas a un trasfondo ondulante, como un punto de una desconocida esfera inmóvil" (I, 422). Yet Cemi senses that Fronesis is not quite ready to branch out entirely on his own: "- Veo - le contestó Cemi - que todavía sigues dependiendo de tu apellido Fronesis, la sabiduría, el que fluye, el que se mueve; no quieres llamarte Noesis, el deseo de la novedad, lo que deviene sin cesar" (I, 423). This reluctance can be explained when the character of his earthly father is examined. There is another possible interpretation of Cemi's words, that is, as a warning about rebellion against old values for its own sake. His
friend has not apparently succumbed to the danger since his opening comment is a criticism of Nietzsche for a similar failing: "dependiendo más de una reacción que de una acción, de una nueva creación de valores" (I, 422).

What Fronesis and Cemí regard as the unnecessarily negative attitude of the philosopher is defined in by now familiar terms. He creates nothing really fresh because, firstly, "No pudo llegar a la configuración de lo sexual, a la isla" (I, 423) and secondly, "amaba el mar en calma a la manera de los griegos. No tenía espíritu poseedor, no podía ver el padre como Tolstoi ..." (I, 423). The island is that of fully developed consciousness amid the sea of the Unconscious: in order to be able to effect a genuine "transmutación de todos los valores" (I, 422), one must dwell on that island. According to Cemí, Nietzsche does not reach it, he is powerless to expand ideas to their ultimate consequences: "Su vogelfrei, su fuera de ley, no era nunca su vogelon, su acto sexual, su acto en una palabra" (I, 423). The imagery which Lezama places at Cemí's disposal reveals how closely the creative act of the artist or poet/philosopher is identified by him with the procreative act of man and woman. He transforms the word into flesh, giving concepts form and body, allowing his words to embrace in fruitful union. Cemí praises Nietzsche for opposing Hegel's rationalistic theory of "el espíritu objetivo, el absoluto" (I, 424) which he defines as "la gloria de la inmediaticidad" (I, 424), a kind of worship of the present moment which he believes leads to a sorry state of affairs in which Man creates God "y Dios es la criatura" (I, 424) due to a destructive pride which derives from an over-awareness of self, an inflated "conciencia de la identidad" (I, 424). In place of "espíritu objetivo", Cemí offers "Espíritu Santo" (I, 424) which he considers the true inspiration of any creator; and he ends with an oft-quoted phrase: "Los griegos llegaron a la pareja de todas las cosas, pero el cristiano puede decir, desde la flor hasta el falo, este es el dedo de Dios" (I, 425). Only in God, Cemí insists, can all the opposites in life be
resolved. It must be emphasized that although Fronesis fought the dragon, it is Cemi who benefits directly and is enabled to unleash new ideas.

Foción's rejection of adulthood seemed to be based on a flight from suffering and death; Fronesis chooses the theme of compassion with which to continue the debate, introducing it with Nietsche's reaction against "weakness" of this sort. He opposes the theory of the philosopher ("que en el sufrimiento había una raíz de sumisión"; I, 425) with the concept of necessary suffering: "el sufrimiento es promoteico, [que] el hombre sufre porque no puede ser un dios, porque no es inmutable" (I, 426). Lezama shows throughout Paradiso that spiritual growth requires an element of pain and loss; the child forfeits the protection of the womb for his eventual greater good. The poet suffers in order to win knowledge of his inner world and consequently outer reality also. Fronesis then turns to Nietsche's quest for what he calls "loa valores nobles" (I, 426) in the age of the Renaissance. He finds him to be mistaken here too: "Un secuestro con brocados por Olivareto da Fermo, le interesaba más que la Europa en marcha para reconquistar el sepulcro del Resucitado" (I, 427). Lezama's character objects to the philosopher's preference for the artistic refinement of the Renaissance over the spirit of the age of the Crusades, which he idealizes as a more spiritually powerful one. Leaving aside the Borgias and their values, Fronesis turns to the miniatures of the Duc de Berry's Book of Hours (probably begun in 1413) and in particular an illustration for November, featuring a somewhat pompous swineherd with his pigs guzzling acorns in the foreground: "tiene la misma arrogancia de un rey jurando el trono. Ese porquerizo está en la gran tradición clásica ..." (I, 427). This simple man is ennobled in his lowly task by his dignity - he embodies the faith of the humble who "Están siempre en espera de un dios. Son nobles. [...] Esperan al dios invisible y se van convirtiendo en dioses visibles" (I, 427-8). The suffering involved in waiting and searching transforms the faithful -
just like the child who loses tao (an appreciation of lejanía or perhaps the creativity of the Unconscious) but discovers later in life that "su espera creó una imagen y esa imagen va a resultar sorprendentemente creadora en la muerte" (II, 891). Fronesis believes that the rendering of the peasant figure along classical lines, his splendid pose as he raises his staff to beat down the acorns, is a sign of worthier nobility than that of over-refined courtiers.

The young man began his speech in "acentos agustinianos" (I, 425) and is playfully teased by Cemí for wanting to unite the wisdom of the Greek philosophers and the Church Fathers, as did St. Augustine. Cemí's Ego te absolve shows that he approves of this approach and we are reminded that he resolved Foción's dilemma with the words of this and other great Christian writers. From his Christian viewpoint, Cemí applauds Nietzsche's condemnation of historical time and its ally, the spirit of science, because they explore causality to the exclusion of faith and the miraculous and so cut themselves off from any concept of eternity:

ni lo histórico, ni la futuridad, ni la tradición, despiertan el ejercicio, la conducta del hombre y eso ha sido él el que mejor y más profundamente lo ha visto. Pero el deseo, el deseo que se hace coral, el deseo que al penetrar logra, por la superficie del sueño compartido, elaborar la verdadera urdimbre de lo histórico, eso se le escapó (I, 428).

It is an overwhelming desire to be free which drives the students to demonstrate; the desire to be whole and mature directs Fronesis towards Lucía, just as it impels Cemí towards Fronesis and Foción; desire to achieve an end fills many of Lezama's eras imaginarias, particularly the desire to know God. This creative eros will always lead to action. It inspires Cemí to list some of the new values and areas of knowledge to be explored: these include androgyny as a symbol of perfection, the sphere; the Taoist symbol of the Great Egg, which divided into heaven and earth; virgin birth; the three youths encountered
by Abraham which are reminiscent of Foción, Fronesis and Cemí, blended in the correct proportions to produce "una triada indistinta en su esplendor" (I, 430); the male and female principles of the universe, "El ánima, elemento feminino, aire, ying [sic] recibe la fecundación del eter, elemento masculino, yang, animus, sin necesidad de las antípodas de los reproductores fisiológicos" (I, 430); lastly the pyramid as an instrument designed to destroy Time. All of these themes form the bed rock of Paradiso.

Fronesis and Cemí bring the gift of ancient wisdom and new insight to their peers, a duty that Fronesis as hero must fulfill through the poet, Cemí: "Era la prueba de una recta interpretación del pasado, así como la decisión misteriosa de lanzarse a la incúmnabula ..." (I, 460); they cause a minor sensation within their sphere of influence, for "escandalizaban trayendo los dioses nuevos, la palabra sin cascar, en su puro amarillo yeminal ..." (I, 461). These young heroes are notably more vital than their older university teachers, but they bring only gifts of true value: "Sabían que lo verdadero nuevo es una fatalidad, un irrecusable cumplimiento" (I, 461). Above all, they divine those elements of the past which must be resisted. It seems to me that anyone wishing to determine Cemí/Lezama's political attitude need seek no further than the following:

Sabían que el conformismo en la expresión y en las ideas tomaba en el mundo contemporáneo innumerables variantes y disfraces, pues exigía del intelectual la servidumbre, el mecanismo de un absoluto causal, para que abandonase su posición verdaderamente heroica de ser, como en las grandes épocas, creador de valores, de formas, el saludador de lo viviente creador y acusador de lo amortajado en bloques de hielo, que todavía osa fluir en el río de lo temporal (I, 461).

The intellectual must have complete freedom to be the leader that he is. He should be able to stand outside history if necessary, as Lezama as always done. One of Cemí/Fronesis' first offerings is an enumeration of the magical numbers of Pythagoras, which I will not examine in detail, as they express again most of those themes in Paradiso which Cemí listed above (I, 430). The speech on the dragon and St. George which follows belongs chiefly to Cemí and will be analysed later.
Despite their euphoria, there is still one struggle which the young men must survive. The final break with the past and the old order which must be achieved by the mature consciousness is symbolized in Fronesis' argument with the potentially stifling father. The struggle between excessive authority and Chaos is presented in the confrontation between the father and Foción; the former is surprised by the "animal elástico, que aceptaba el combate" which replaces the opponent he has imagined, "una hiena gemebunda" (I, 488). This signifies his belated realization of the creative, positive powers of Chaos. The father sins against the son by his deceit in reading his letter and threatening Foción, but the price will be high as Foción predicts, "tenga la seguridad de que la reacción de su hijo a su conducta será trágica para su destino y acabará con la última posibilidad de que usted cumpliera el suyo" (I, 490). The tragedy unfolds in the family council brought on by the silence between father and son; it involves a complete divorce between old and new. This is tragic in its completeness. One cannot help sympathizing with the natural dread which fills a father who sees his son apparently embrace his own old sins: "nuestros hijos entreabren delante de nosotros los mismos demonios como si fueran paraguas" (I, 508). Yet a return to the old order now would undo all the efforts of the hero to conquer the negative aspect of Unconscious through the dragon fight. The earthly father, says Neumann, "acts like a spiritual system which, from beyond and above, captures and destroys the son's consciousness." 64

Neumann cites two distinct dangers connected with the earthly father and it is intriguing to note that Lezama's poetic intuition leads him to similar, if not identical conclusions. Fronesis warns his father about the sons who rebel in "no querer ser padres" (I, 509), a more total rebellion than his own. Neumann describes the perpetual rebel as follows: "His refusal to become a father and to assume power seems to him a guarantee of
perpetual youth..."; 65 he is, in fact, Poción. The second danger comes from a total identification with the old order and Fronesis illustrates it with the story of Abraham and Isaac, the latter being so trusting that he would have permitted his father to sacrifice him to God; this is not for Fronesis, who declares, "no tema, padre, que yo no tiraré la manta por su reverso, si oigo alguna voz que en secreto me ordena que lo sacrifique, creeré que es la voz del diablo" (I, 511). He will not play this game, which Neumann also illustrates with this bible story and calls the "Isaac complex." 66 Fronesis knows the true value of Diaghilev as a symbol of creativity, and the meaning of his father's flight from culture, Europe, creativity. Typically, it is the spiritual mother (María Teresa Sunster) who mediates, and then interprets Fronesis' search for his earthly mother, the earthly part of his nature, from which he is almost excluded by his father's moral zeal: he feels "un deseo indetenible de ir en busca de su madre" (I, 514). The reader can rest assured, I think, that Fronesis' basic wisdom is preserved by his journey to seek his earthly mother and by his true allegiance to his spiritual mother: he says "ahora me he visto nacer de nuevo y ahora sí sé que nadie más que usted puede ser mi madre" (I, 515). He is reconciled to his earthly father thanks to her intervention: "lo abrazó sin reservas" (I, 515); he is successful in preserving his newfound Self against the feminine Unconscious in its negative guises of devouring monster and oppressive authority. Fronesis is now filled with creative potential and armed with an independent will to create and innovate. Cemf has fought a battle by proxy for command of the Self.
III. Cemí: Self Discovery

Cemí and the reader of the novel are mesmerized for a time by the intriguing characters, Fronesis and Foción, and all that they symbolize. Yet neither must be permitted to lose himself in the labyrinth created by Lezama; to maintain a balance between Reason and Chaos the author uses the purity of Cemí's mind as a touchstone to the true worth of his friends' exploits. As embodiments of the paths which Cemí must choose to follow and to forego, they provide a multiplicity of viewpoints on their respective fates and on Cemí himself. We uncover the opinions of Cemí, Foción, Fronesis, and the latter's parents on the Fronesis' family circumstances, for instance. However, it is Cemí who, with Fronesis' help, deciphers truth and so we will not have a three dimensional view of his adolescence until his thoughts on his own spiritual growth have been exposed. Lezama achieves the continued education of the reader explicitly, by relating the central character's thoughts; implicitly, by his orchestration of his characters' movements in relation to one another. Having attempted to explain the symbolism of his friends' strange biographies, the reader must reflect upon the effect of the overall pattern on Cemí.

The ninth chapter seems to fall into three broad areas: the first deals with the nature of order and chaos, as encapsulated in the student demonstrations, in which these two are both seen as potentially creative and destructive; The second section presents Rialta's inspiring speech to Cemí, as she fulfills the role of Muse and symbol of the creative Unconscious. Her thoughts on the relationship between the generations will have far-reaching consequences, as will Cemí's acceptance of his vocation. The exhortation to
attempt "siempre lo más difícil" (I, 321) is immediately followed by a minor descent of Cemí into the Unconscious, in a soporific state induced by his asthma remedies; whilst in this drugged condition he accepts his vocation and correctly defines Foción as a "Neronian" character. His temporary loss of consciousness, self-induced, denotes that he has taken his mother's advice to heart, and that he has set off in search of his inner self: "Cuando salía de ese sueño provocado, no obstante la anterior situación dual, se sentía con la alegría de una reconciliación. Por ese artificio iba recuperando su naturaleza" (I, 324). He is regaining not only physical, but spiritual well-being. The strength which he derives from a successful descent and return enables him now to interpret the differing attitudes of Fronesis and Foción to culture, which comprise the third section of the chapter. Foción's intellectual pride and cruelty is contrasted with the good sense and intellectual leadership of Fronesis, as we have seen in the debate on the Quixote, which is representative of Spanish literature at its finest. The rest of the chapter would be dominated by the problem of rampant, ambivalent sexuality, were it not for the splendid speeches of Fronesis and Cemí, who always present the spiritual aspect of any dilemma, once Fronesis has dealt with its ethical side.

Cemí may condemn homosexuality as a flirtation with spiritual death, but that does not banish the subject by any means. His uneasiness throughout the remainder of the chapter is caused by his growing awareness of the two-fold nature of sexuality and chaos, their potential for life and death. Unlike Alberto when approached by an old man (symbol of sexual energy in its negative guise; I, 134), Cemí will have no dealings with the vejete who attempts to entice him with cigarettes in the park (I, 331). Yet he wants desperately to make the acquaintance of Fronesis and Foción: "le confundía ese aislamiento, ese retiro en el confín de la noche, esa imposibilidad, por lo menos él lo interpretó así, de que pudiera llegar un tercero y sentarse
con ellos a conversar" (I, 332). In other words he knows that Reason and Chaos are the elements with which he must contend in his descent and return. Cemí's first sexual vision takes place at the Castillo de la Fuerza, a place with many personal connotations for him, not least his feeling that "Tenía algo de espejo para la configuración de lo invisible" (I, 339) because of its constancy in the face of changing ages. It reminds him of the story about his father's ghost haunting another Havana fortress, El Morro, and it is the scene of an incident which suggests to him the overburgeoning, magical powers of Nature itself. This is symbolized by the horse suffering from tetanus, whose swollen member ("una verga titánica"; I, 338) may serve as a warning to Cemí that totally chaotic sexuality cannot lead to true creativity. The memory of his father recalls his mother's advice: "El recuerdo de su padre hecho visible en la voz de la madre: busca el peligro de lo más difícil" (I, 338). Thus it seems that Cemí's spiritual guidance comes from his earthly parents and that the two halves of his nature are in perfect balance, despite the fact that his father is no longer physically present. Fronesis, who might be seen as Cemí's innate wisdom, nurtured by Rialta, replaces José Eugenio. The Albornoz/Leregas incident reveals that homosexuality as a path to androgyny and unity of the Self leads only to a quagmire, that one must not turn away from the challenge of consciousness, in fear of the pain of loss of childhood security and innocence. Following on from the debate on homosexuality, Lucía's appearance helps further the atmosphere of self-doubt on Fronesis' part, increasing Cemí's puzzlement over the two youths. His new experiences overflow in a vision of the old Roman festivals in which sexuality was celebrated as a gift from bounteous Nature goddesses. Lezama describes similar scenes in "Introducción a los vasos órificos," when discussing the Eleusian mysteries: "El sonriente dios Término muestra su píriapo estival" (II, 859). The enormous phallus on its majestic carriage is a symbol just as much of the rioting
which continues in the background as of the chaotic sexuality of Foción, who is, after all, as Souza has pointed out, "a symbol of primordial chaos, and his bisexual activities reveal the anarchy that precedes the organization of the creative forces." The sexuality expressed here is bound up in the toils of ecstatic experience which entails a loss of consciousness and consequently of the Self; familiar symbols confirm this: "avanzaban protegidos por un palio, sostenido por cuatro lanzas que remedaban serpientes que ascendían entrelazadas para terminar en un rostro que angustiosamente se metamorfoseaba en una punta de falo, partido al centro como una boca" (I, 379). The minotaurs "la carroza estaba tirada por unos toros minotauros"; I, 380 are another reference to the bestial nature of Man, and indeed woman, as indicated by the large black bow covering the vulva in the procession "Un lazo negro, del tamaño de un murciélago gigante, cubría la vulva ..."; I, 380. The very disembodiment of the phallus and vulva in this orgiastic rite shows that their creative potential is wasted due to the idolatry afforded them by the crowd, which is unaware of their true value. The procession represents a stage in human sexuality which Cemí must renounce.

Fronesis' struggle must be victorious if Cemí is to be free to act, to visit the Unconscious without becoming trapped. Foción is present in the background of Fronesis' and Lucía's courtship because that courtship involves Fronesis in a brush with danger, with Chaos itself, in the ecstasy of union with the girl. Cemí is on hand to analyse the movements of Foción and the others, and to act as a point of balance between them, although he is clearly identified with light already: "el azar me une con Foción en el Hades del cine y el azar nos une con Cemí en la luz" (I, 387). The episode of the red-haired youth and the antiquarian with the Chinese artifact is introduced at this point to show that Foción still has a chance to reach beyond himself but his agitation in the absence of Fronesis, who is by now taking his chance for spiritual growth with Lucía, suggests that any opportunity for
Chaos to approach Order has been forfeited in the latter episode. Meanwhile, Lezama sets the scene for Fronesis' trial of strength, in which his will to "become," to reach maturity, may be subverted by Lucía's feminine power. The reader is told of the prospective hero's "desenvoltura en cosas de cultura" (I, 390), "innata superioridad" (I, 390), and of others' reactions to him: "La ausencia de fundamentación, de descenso a las profundidades del Hades o del yo secreto ascendido hasta el sí mismo integrado o unificado en una proyección luminosa, de gran parte de sus contemporáneos, hacía que estos deslizaran los más sombríos puntos de vista ..." (I, 390-1; my italics). Lacking the very qualities which he is risking so much to develop, they are not qualified to judge him, can only misunderstand. Cemí is fortunately more gifted and knows how vital is the friendship:"la única alegría que pesaba en Cemí era su amistad con ellos dos ..." (I, 392), that is, he is entirely devoted to his quest to strike a balance between Order and Chaos. The pain which he feels along with his happiness is a necessary part of his learning process, like the pain of the hero fighting the dragon of the Unconscious:

Dentro de esa alegría, a veces, Cemí sentía el dolor de la adquisición de cosas esenciales, pues en toda amistad por quiditaria, por apegada que sea, hay siempre el dolor de la cosa perecedera y la falsa alegría de lo concupiscible, el dolor de las adquisiciones hechas por los sentidos transfigurados (I, 392).

Certain things are lost to him but the gains are immense. The story of Fronesis' background, with its basic misunderstanding of the symbolism of Diaghilev, assists the reader in identifying the treasure to be obtained. It is the treasure of the world's cultures and the power of innovation in those cultures, available only to he who attains the treasure of self-possession—of anima and soul.

Fronesis and Cemí must be kept separate but also retain a close connection throughout the dragon fight, that is, the sexual intercourse with Lucía, followed by the spiritual trial down by the sea on the Malecón. Cemí is
still hovering between his two friends: "Es asmático, su incorporación anormal del aire lo mantiene siempre tenso, como en sobreaviso, tiende a colocarlo todo en la escala de Jacob, entre cielo y tierra, como los semidioses" (I, 407). His judgement is becoming increasingly sound as the spiritual struggle approaches and the apparently physical ordeal has passed. Foción and his friends evoke a possible source of Cemí's inner strength: José Eugenio is remembered as "el hombre de más fuerza expansiva que ha conocido, que tenía la facultad por dondequiera que pasaba, de construir, de modificar la circunstancia" (I, 407). His death causes "la ruina por la frustración de un destino familiar, y entonces, a buscar otro destino" (I, 407). The new destiny must be discovered by Cemí, once he has discovered himself. Foción and the red-haired youth provide the antithesis of Fronesis' first victory and the arrangement of objects on Foción's desk anticipates the poetic arrangement of objects on Cemí's desk. It is not until Fronesis survives the second trial by the sea that he becomes an ever-present image for Cemí. It is the victory over the dragon of the Unconscious which finally unites these two friends and excludes Foción, save for the memory of Chaos as a fertilizing principle in the poet's mind: "La retirada de Foción hacía imprescindible a Fronesis" (I, 421). Now, with free access to Reason and Wisdom, Cemí embarks on a search for specifically spiritual knowledge which will transform the values of culture as we know it. Hence the discussion between Fronesis and Cemí at this point revolves around the theme of innovation, as if Cemí were a latter-day Prometheus bringing the gifts of the gods to Man. His choice of new subjects for research includes the essential mysteries of the masculine and feminine principles, the unity of the Self and of creation, and most important, the concept of an eternity outside Time. Lezama emphasizes that Cemí knows which questions to ask, thanks to: "su Eros, deseoso fanatismo de conocimiento que era la sombra del árbol de la vida, no en las antípodas del árbol del conocimiento, sino en la
sombra que une el cielo silencioso de los taoístas con el verbo que fecunda
la ciudad como sobrenaturaleza" (I, 431). The tree of life reaches from
heaven down to earth and is life-giving, enabling the poet to create from
his fund of revealed wisdom. It is quite unlike the tree of the knowledge
of good and evil sought by Adam and Eve, who met their downfall due to their
pride and disobedience to God. We are thus reassured that Cemi's quest is
untainted with worldly motives, especially since his inspiration comes from
a higher source, "el cielo silencioso de los taoístas" (I, 431) which Lezama
sees (in "Las eras imaginarias: la biblioteca como dragón") as one of two
opposing principles: "Lao-tse se ve obligado ya a hablar del Gran Uno en
términos de ying [sic] y yang, de lo creador y lo recipendario, del cielo y
la tierra" (II, 892). The word which fertilizes the earth is passed on
through the poet, while the city to which he ministers is a symbol of another
man-made wonder, culture itself. The benevolent influence of the heavens
turns the manufactured article into Nature, into a new truth, fulfilling one
of Lezama's favourite quotations from Pascal: "como la verdadera naturaleza
se ha perdido, todo puede ser naturaleza ..." 68 The imagery of the family
tree is now coming to maturity: its branches stretched up towards the heavens
which reach down at last to the most recent twig, Cemi.

Frónesis has become the hero in the struggle for independence of will
and the right to knowledge, but only the appearance of a Cemi imbued with the
spirit of poetry will prove him victorious in every respect. If Cemi has
survived his intimacy with Chaos and Reason, self-knowledge will force him
to recognize and accept his true vocation. In fact, this seems to be exactly
what happens almost at once. The two young men break off their conversa-
tion about the new culture and Cemi wanders down to his regular haunt, the
bars on San Lázaro; his preference is most interesting, since it shows that
he is engaged in learning from his surroundings, the "bodegas grandes a la
española, muy acudidas por todas las menudencias de la vecinería" (I, 431),
where "Siempre había un tipo de excepción ..." (I, 431). The guitarist who he meets on this occasion is a very different character to the sinister angel of death who once sang to Alberto. He is a warm-voiced Cuban countryman, as opposed to a bespangled cowboy from Mexico, a place always used by Lezama as a symbol of death and the underworld. The guajiro is not addressing Cemí directly but his words are for him alone: "Estoy como lo soñó Martí, la poesía sabrosa, sacada de la guitarra con azúcar, con el lazo azul que le puso mi chiquita" (I, 431) and "nací poeta" (I, 432). He heralds Cemí's rebirth as a poet with his cheerful words which evoke the essence of Cuba; music, the cane fields and love. Lezama considers the separatist leader José Martí, who was killed in 1895, as the father of twentieth century, independent Cuba and as an image of his last era imaginaria, which is "la posibilidad infinita, que entre nosotros la acompaña José Martí" (II, 838). The influence of his brief life and extensive writings has pervaded the century until the present day when his name is still a by-word for political self-determination and victory over impossible odds. To Lezama, he is the leader of a group of people inspired to act as one to bring about change and, as such, he is a poetic image. At the precise moment when he hears the singer's words, Cemí experiences a fresh insight into reality which Lezama believes to be one privilege of the poet:

... Cemí pudo de un reojo unir el amarillo chispeante de la cerveza con el amarillo ensalivado del diente de oro del cantor, con el amarillo más noble, surcido de un verde creador, de una boñiga que ya, por lo menos, comenzaba por alegrar a un moscardón con un precioso collarín escarlata (I, 432).

For an instant every aspect of Nature is golden and united by the poet's gaze: all elements are isolated for a moment outside Time; Lezama chooses his colours most carefully since he knows that the Chinese alchemists sought to "lograr con el oro un elixir de inmortalidad" (II, 897) and that later as he describes in "Las eras imaginarias: la biblioteca como dragón" : "La
búsqueda de la gota de oro, del licor de la inmortalidad, se hacía equivalente con el concepto de lejanía, llegar a la isla poblada por los inmortales" (II, 898). In other words they wished to halt historical Time, just as Lezama wishes the poetic image to do. The whole spectrum of Nature right down to the fly on the cow pat is embraced by Cemi.

Cemi's new-found insight extends to an understanding of the clash of personalities in his family which threatens to make Doña Augusta's remaining weeks of life a misery. He is only too aware of "la serpentina del histéricismo familiar" (I, 434) but he is endowed with sufficient moral fibre and self-assurance to exert his will against it, with a few well chosen words: "lo menos que se puede hacer es que cada cual margine su pequeño egoísmo y su cantaleta" (I, 435). He has now become his mother's protector, realizing the great sacrifices she has made for her children since José Eugenio's death. Rialta has been absent from the scene for some considerable time by now and it should be noted that she reappears only after Fronesis' triumph which is also that of Cemi over any negative hold which the predominantly positive Unconscious (symbolized by Lucía and Rialta) may have on him. The story of Foción's family, related by Fronesis, intervenes before we discover that Rialta has been operated upon successfully from the removal of a potentially cancerous fibroma, probably a fibroid or cyst. Foción's tragic history - the misguided actions of his four possible parents, physical and spiritual, his fear of the vagina dentata arising from the desire, albeit mistaken, to preserve the childhood Self - these factors combine to provide a striking contrast between the ancestry of the true hero and that of the fraud. The theme of an experience of evil which must be assimilated is once more examined in Lezama's detailed description of the cyst removed from Rialta's body, and it is intimately linked with Cemi's observations of Fronesis and Foción. The medical details of the growth are quite possibly untenable, but Lezama is only interested in it as a poetic image, as we
shall see. One phrase in particular is of paramount importance:

Aquellas insesibles fibras parecían, dentro de la vasija de cristal, un dragón atravesado por una lanza, por un rayo de luz, por una hebra de energía capaz de destruir esas minas de cartón y de carbón, extendiéndose por sus galerías como una mano que se va abriendo hasta dejar inscripciones indescifrables en paredones oscilantes ...

(I, 452; my italics).

The sight of an evil, foreign body which has dwelt alongside the heart of his adored spiritual guide helps Cemí to understand the potential of feminine influence in his life for good and evil. He could have chosen to be either Pronesis or Foción, but the guidance of his own mother, her ability to express patriarchal wisdom in the absence of José Eugenio, has saved him from self-negation. The evil has been defeated as surely as by a blow from St. George's lance; it has been resisted by the light of understanding ("por un rayo de luz; I, 452) enabling Cemí to be inspired by his own mother without being suffocated by her archetypal aspect which threatens engulfment in the Unconscious. Both possibilities have been present in Rialta, the archetypal feminine.

Lezama expounds upon the assimilation of the growth by the otherwise healthy body, drawing a direct analogy with the development of consciousness in the individual:

De la misma manera, en los cuerpos que logra la imaginación, hay que destruir el elemento serpiente para dar paso al elemento dragón, un organismo que está hecho para devorarse en el círculo, tiene que destruirse para que irrumpa una nueva bestia ...

(I, 453).

Here, Lezama presents a succession of images which he uses repeatedly in the novel; the fight with the dragon destroys the power of the ouroboros, traditionally depicted as a serpent eating its own tail, so that consciousness can come to birth. Rialta's body has accommodated the growth, but only by "destruir el desarrollo normal, la simple estabilidad vital, de las más
impotentes vísceras" (I, 452). In these exceptional circumstances, the cyst "tenía así que existir como una monstruosidad que lograba en el organismo nuevos medios de asimilación de aquella sorpresa, buscando un equilibrio más alto y más tenso" (I, 453). In a similar way Cemí has had to incorporate into his experience his potentially weak side, embodied in Foción, in order to achieve greater inner strength. He has found it necessary to run the gauntlet of the Unconscious in its negative manifestation which could keep him in the unformed, egoless state, or in a state of perpetual rebellion, in pointless, uncreative sexual activity. The tenth chapter ends with a virtual reunion between Rialta and Cemí, who are almost as one in the looks they exchange: Rialta's eyes "le acercaban lo lejano, le alejaban lo cercano. Borraban para él lo inmediato y lo distante, para lograr el apego tierno, la compañía omnicomprensiva" (I, 454). He has attained union with his anima and so is a kind of spiritual androgyne, very different to the being envisaged by Foción as a result of his unformed ego. Access to the Unconscious aids Cemí to see beyond immediate causality and reality and to stand outside Time, like mothers, who "miran para ver el nacimiento y la muerte, algo que es la unidad de un gran sufrimiento con la epifanía de la criatura" (I, 454). The spray of flowers sent by Fronesis to Cemí's mother is a sign of Cemí's own realization of his debt to her, as friend and, especially, as spiritual guide: "Era esa la forma de sabiduría que deseaba que lo acompañase siempre" (I, 455).

As symbols of ancient wisdom and cultural innovation, Rialta and Fronesis share the ability to re-define reality with a look: Fronesis has "unos ojos sorprendentes en su reposo, ojos que permanecían después que la neblina de lo circunstancial se escurriía, mirada que igualaba lo lejano con lo cercano ..." (I, 457). Cemí begins to see with their eyes: "Le parecía que se acercaba a los innumerables espejos que pueblan el universo, cada uno con un nombre distinto ... y que a cada uno de esos espejos asomaba su rostro, devolviéndole
invariablemente el rostro de Ricardo Fronesis" (I, 455). He is becoming indistinguishable from his friend, assuming his identity as an essential part of himself. He is empowered to see reality and its hidden meanings. Now that Rialta and Fronesis are so closely linked, Fronesis can be regarded as a personification of wisdom, rather than mere reason. Instead of incorporating everything into his view of reality in order to learn, Cemí is required to choose and act: "la amistad de Fronesis le hacía rechazar muchas cosas ..." (I, 457). He is no longer at the mercy of historical Time since his experience of the Unconscious convinces him of the necessity of a different rhythm in the universe:

Andando el tiempo, todos los que habían conocido a Cemí estaban convencidos de que era el hombre que mejor había dominado el tiempo, un tiempo tan difícil como el tropical - donde Saturno siempre decapita a Cronos - que le había profundizado más misteriosos sembradíos, que había esperado la furia mortal de ese tiempo con más robusta confianza ... (I, 458).

As we have seen, one of the events which gives him a different understanding of Time is José Eugenio's death: "Esa visibilidad de la ausencia, ese dominio de la ausencia, era el más fuerte signo de Cemí" (I, 459). His ancestry is briefly sketched once more (I, 459) and explained as "la fuerza potencial que latía en las profundidades de aquella ausencia" (I, 459). In the absence of his own father, Cemí has cultivated the memory of his forefathers and will draw upon the benevolent influence of their blood in his veins.

A second great influence upon Cemí is his reading of the Greek philosophers. Like Lezama, he is self-educated, partly due to the prolonged closure of the university, having furnished himself with a knowledge of ancient writings worthy of a medieval scholar. We are informed of some of the works he values most, and of their significance to his development: from Plato's *Phaedrus* he learns of the evocative connections between love and death; from
the Parmenides, the mystic relationship of creator and created and "conven-
cimiento de la existencia de una médula universal que rige las series y las
excepciones" (I, 460); from the Charmides, the links between memory and wis-
dom; from the Timaeus, the mystique of the Pythagorean symbolism of numbers;
finally, from the Symposium, the concept of androgyny as "la búsqueda de la
imagen en la reproducción y en los complementarios sexuales de la Topos
Urano y la Venus celeste" (I, 460). From his reading, Cemí acquires a sort
of cultural pedigree. His immediate reaction to another meeting with
Fronesis (symbolic of the knowledge gained from private study) is to share
his joy in his discoveries with those around him. There follows the expo-
sition of the meaning of the first seven numbers according to Pythagoras, in
a dialogue between Fronesis and Cemí which develops into a credo chanted
for the benefit of "el coro de los estudiantes" (I, 464) surrounding Cemí.
He has become a transmitter of culture, ready to take the short step to inno-
vation. His friendship with Fronesis, his insight, leads him to ponder the
responsibilities of the cultural innovator in relation to his peer group.
He feels that the group is incapable of recognizing its true guide, the
poet: "El coro que discutía, que murmuraba, cuya voz se alzaba a los grandes
lamentos, defendiendo y protegiendo a su héroe, languidece en su función de
aplaudir" (I, 465). The group lacks unity and the will to act: "tiene la
obligación impuesta de no rebelarse, de no participar ..." (I, 465). The
poet is no longer revered as the shaman of society, to its cost. Society
not only ignores the poet but tries to engulf and silence him: "ha venido a
reemplazar a los antiguos dragones, cuya sola función era engullir doncellas
y héroes" (I, 465). It has the same negative power as the Unconscious, for
the crowd can drag down its spokesmen into murky silence. The poet is a
latter-day St. George (not St. Michael from Rev. 12: v 7) facing a hostile
people which will make of him a martyr: "Su destino es el más risueño de la
naturaleza ... " (I, 466), because he dies proclaiming a true, yet unaccept-
able message.
What kind of message could so incense his public? It is the old news of death as a path to life more abundant, of "el malcomo un momentáneo aventurarse en la noche, enriqueciéndose con las suntuosas lecciones de sus caprichos" (I, 467), the felix culpa. The price of each individual's maturity is the death of the childish idyll of a womb-like existence. Lezama expands his vision of this fact to embrace the concept of life-from-death which the Christian inherits from the Greeks, the Egyptians and numerous nature religions. Part of the price of spiritual life is physical death; in this Lezama seems to follow centuries of Christian tradition. Thanks to its refusal to accept even a fruitful death, the crowd identifies itself with matter and the tree of death. Cemf takes the pregnant women and nursing mothers as a supreme example of the inability to come to terms with death as a liberator. It is implied in the New Testament—(Matt 24 : v. 19) (Mark 13 : v.v. 14-23) and (Luke 21 : v.v. 20-24) that they will be put to the sword on Judgement Day and Cemf explains that the women's difficulty stems from their faulty reasoning, which relies on normal causality. They will be tempted to "save" their children's lives at all costs, defying God's plan for the world: "Desesperadas las madres de no poder amparar a sus hijos lactantes en ese día de la Resurrección, comenzarán a oír el diablo ..." (I, 470). All they have to save themselves from this terrible mistake is "una dialéctica amaestrada en el racionalismo tomista, que les demostrará según razón y no según imagen, que la Resurrección era el único final que se podía esperar" (I, 468-9). The poet/shaman's task is to reveal truths "según imagen", in faith. Once again in Paradiso, excessive rationality is equated with death, In this confusion, the crowd will believe mistakenly that the devil (their own clinging to physical existence) offers a better chance than does Christ (death in order to gain life) but the victory of the devil and death will be momentary and immediately superceded by "la Resurrección de sus sobrecuerpos en el Valle de la Gloria" (I. 468), as described in the Book
of Revelation. Although there may be a struggle, the outcome of the battle for those unfettered by rationality is never in doubt.

The poem awarded as a garland by Fronesis after Cemí's description of the last judgement reveals that Cemí has gained sufficient self-knowledge to begin communicating his discoveries and beliefs. It is a contribution to a new culture. Cemí's worthiness of spirit is emphasized in the line "No libró ningún combate ..." (I, 473); his descent is acknowledged, "Fue fiel a Orfeo y a Proserpina" (I, 474); and the two poles of his experience are uncovered, "El arte lo acompañó todos los días/ la naturaleza le regaló su calma y su fiebre" (I, 474). What Cemí learns in chaos, in his asthmatic losses of consciousness, will later be turned to profit: "Así todo lo que creyó en la fiebre/ lo comprendió después calmamente" (I, 474). Fronesis disappears from this moment on because he is now synonymous with Cemí, who must bid farewell to Foción also, once he has taken advantage of him as "el único puente ... para llegar a la región donde se podía verificar una probable aproximación de Fronesis" (I, 477). Cemí's penultimate meeting with Foción is a final test which proves that Fronesis is present with him, as part of his nature. The story of Daisy and George shows, as we have seen, that Foción is unable to capture his intuitive, feminine side, his anima, save through relationships which limit the development of his ego. The fact that Cemí faces him alone indicates that he is aware of the limitations of the choice Foción symbolizes and rejects it. The effect of Fronesis senior's attack on the Fronesis/Foción friendship is to cause a serious setback in Cemí's development, in that the innovator is condemned by the society which produces him and hampered by its conventions and traditions. That part of Cemí (his reason and wisdom) embodied in Fronesis resists the attack in the full knowledge of what it means. Fronesis is reconciled with his parents in the end, but is compelled to make a journey to the source of his wisdom, his spiritual origins. In other words, Cemí is imbued with
wisdom beyond his years and observing the gulf which this creates between himself and others, he must set about examining its purpose. Fully equipped with an active consciousness, Cemi must rationalize (in a positive sense) his emotional and sensory experiences into a systematic frame of reference for poetic creativity.

Cemi discovers before long that it is not so easy to seek his old friends out, once they have disappeared: "Causaron al principio de su trato, la impresión de que eran una compañía para siempre, cuando despertamos ay, ya no están, se sumergieron en una fluencia indetenible ..." (I, 496). It is one thing to experience intuitively the creative potential of a triumph over the Unconscious, but to re-visit it to gain inspiration for the creative act, in cold blood as it were, is quite another matter. The knowledge Cemi has gained from his friendship with Reason and Chaos personified may have to lie dormant until he understands a little more of the creative process itself. The foundations of his art have been laid by family memories and influences but Cemi must learn how to tap their power. Words will be his tools and he is fascinated by them:

He notes their positions relative to one another, their independent nature and individual personalities, their capacity to convey secret, mystical knowledge and inspiration. He seems to feel the shape and volume of words: "parecía que llegaba a tocar su formas ..." (I, 497) which come to exist in essence, so to speak. They are more fully themselves and they occupy "el espacio gnóstico" (I, 497) which appears to be the same as "la ocupati0n de los estoicos, es decir la total ocupación de un cuerpo." Man, with his gift of insight, orders reality by placing some of its elements in new
configurations; he becomes "el punto medio entre naturaleza y sobrenatu-
raleza" (I, 497), the sage and seer of his community. The phrase "La gracia
de la mirada" (I, 497) is evocative both of the seer's perception and the
e benevolence of Nature which permits it to exist. The discriminating gaze
of the poet is "aliada como la cantidad encarnada en el tiempo" (I, 497) in
a single instant; the result is "Una evaporación coincidente, ascendente tam-
bién, como si le llevarase un homenaje al cielo paternal" (I, 497). The image
which the poet isolates in Time is able to communicate with the heavens, it
becomes part of the sum of Man's wisdom forever.

Having described the phenomenon, Lezama proceeds to illustrate it.
Cemi selects small objects of interest while window-shopping: "su mirada lo
distingúa y lo aislaba del resto de los objetos ..." (I, 497), just as in
life some aspect of reality catches the poet's eye. Yet the chosen objects
have little life of their own, they are waiting for someone: "Estaban en se-
creto como impulsadas por el viento de emigración, esperaban tal vez una voz
..." (I, 498), the voice of the poet. The two statuettes which Cemi favours
are full of movement; the bacchante has been caught in the midst of the re-
vels, "el pie alzado con dócil voluptuosidad, en cada mano un címbalo" (I,
498). Even the goatskin carelessly cast about the body suggests movement:
"viéndose al aire los cascos del chivo" (I, 498). Presumably he is attrac-
ted to the cupid for similar reasons, for it too has tensed muscles and a
certain vitality: "la tensión de todo el cuerpo por el esfuerzo de disparar el arco" (I, 499). The poet chooses objects which by their nature approach
him. During my visit to Havana in Spring 1980 I was intrigued to observe
two statuettes fitting this description in Trocadero 162, the house in which
Lezama spend most of his life and where his wife, the late María Luisa Bauti-
sta de Lezama then resided. Cemi and the author share the details of their
poetic development very closely at this point. The "viento de emigración"
(I, 498) comes in the form of a large electric fan in Cemi's room which
propels its blast of air at the seemingly startled little deer ("la piel le temblaba"; I, 499). Thus Cemi's poetic imagination creates interactions between previously unrelated objects, just as it would in order to create new similes and metaphors. The wind can be seen as the poet's inspiration which drives dissimilar objects and ideas together into fruitful union, to produce lo incondicionado. The deer seems apprehensive and the cupid and bacchante seem to frolic around a large silver goblet, according to their relative positions on the table. Cemi is rewarded with a sense of achievement when the groupings are evocative ("Cemi se notaba alegre sin jactancias"; I, 500) but this is marred slightly by the misunderstanding of others, the chorus which does not applaud its poet.

Cemi is compelled to analyse the process further until he realises that the coincidence of objects in a meaningful exchange is temporal, not merely spatial:

Pudo precisar que esos agrupamientos eran de raíz temporal, que no tenían nada que ver con los agrupamientos espaciales, que son siempre una naturaleza muerta; para el espectador la fluencia del tiempo convertía esas ciudades espaciales en figuras, por las que el tiempo al pasar y repasar, como los trabajos de la mareas en las plataformas coralinas, formaba como un eterno retorno de las figuras que por estar situadas en la lejanía eran un permanente embrión (I, 501).

In the most Cuban of similes, Lezama compares the eternal power of the image with the permanence of coral reefs before the onslaught of the oceans. Time can weather but not destroy them, so that the images of one age may still have life in later times. This is the basis of Lezama's eras imaginarias. The instant in which an observer receives their emanations is an eternal one. The image is forever potent because it spans an implacable void. It is "sanguijuela sin boca" (I, 501), leaving visible evidence of the invisible; it reveals our attempts to describe the indescribable: "la ausencia bucal se niega por las flotaciones violáceas, coléricas como ronchas, bien visibles
en la piel ..." (I, 501). Cemí has been marked by the evidence of the invisible since his first appearance in the novel, his red blotches. They are a blessing in disguise, a sign of his rare gift which he accepts although he is still trying to understand it: "Vio primero su terror, después con una cotidiana alegría, la coincidencia de su ombligo, de su omphalos, con el centro de un dolmen universal fálico" (I, 503). Cemí realises that he is a creator whose imagination will embrace the natural world and whose fruit will be "animales de imágenes duracionables, que acercaban su cuerpo a la tierra para que él pudiera cabalgarlos" (I, 503). This child-like wonder pervades much of Lezama's poetic imagery. Cemí plays with words, such as the Coptic tamiela. It is like a new toy with endless connotations and is described in a manner reminiscent of the image of "becoming", the manatee of the Michelena orgies: "Numerosas escamas fabricadas formaban los reflejos de ese cuerpo verbal nadador" (I, 504). It is like a frolicking mermaid, shedding scales of light as it is used in its many different contexts. The word takes on form, lending itself to the poet.

The difficulty which Cemí experiences in recapturing the wisdom brought by Foción and Fronesis continues only until he renounces his quest for them. Seated in the Law offices at Upsalón, he is suddenly inspired to declare "las leyes de las cosas perdidas" (I, 505), of which the most important is that "si esperamos calmamente, el gnomo trae de nuevo el papel al sitio donde se perdió ..." (I, 505). Inspiration returns when Cemí ceases to search feverishly for it and he hears Fronesis' laugh as a sign of its homecoming. Yet he must continues to be patient. The coincidence of the death of the matriarch, Doña Augusta and the disappearance of Foción suggest that Cemí is completely autonomous from this moment. Events come full circle when the matriarch recognises Cemí as her voice: "yo también observo que tú eres de nuestra familia ..." (I, 517). She implies that her life was necessary in
order to bring forth his poetic voice. Insofar as Doña Augusta symbolizes
the Unconscious out of which Cemí's consciousness grows, this is perfectly
ture: "Hemos sido dictados, es decir, éramos necesarios para que el cumpli-
miento de una voz superior tocase orilla ..." (I, 518). Cemí has reached
the shore safely, as is illustrated by the eventual release of Foción from
his circling of a tree. Cemí seems at first to be a stunted offshoot from
the family tree, but he becomes its most splendid fruit, ready to cast his
seed before us.
Notes

5. J. Santana, "Lezama Lima: el mundo de la imagen," *Cuba Internacional*, 3, No. 18 (Jan. 1971), 73. "Focicit, que es la autodestrucción; Fronesis, que es la eticidad, el hombre de la responsabilidad ética." [Interview].
11. Ibid., p. 141.
12. Ibid., p. 143.
22 Origins, p. 96.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid., pp. 178-9.
25 Ibid., p. 132.
26 Ibid., p. 131.
27 Ibid., pp. 120-1.
30 Neumann, Origins, p. 112.
31 Ibid., p. 122.
34 Santana, "Lezama Lima: el mundo ...," p. 73.
37 Ibid., p. 15.
41 Neumann, Origins, p. 132.
42 Ibid., p. 160.
43 Ibid., p. 174.
44 Neumann, Origins, p. 150.
46 Neumann, Origins, p. 175.
47 Ibid., p. 175.
48 Neumann, Origins, p. 164.
49 Ibid., pp. 124-5.
50 Ibid., p. 149.
53 Ibid., p. 181.
57 *Origins*, p. 156.
58 Ibid., p. 163.
59 Ibid., pp. 154-5.
60 Ibid., p. 165.
61 Neumann, *The Great Mother*, pl. 35: Diana of Ephesus.
64 *Origins*, pp. 186-7.
65 Ibid., p. 190.
66 Ibid., p. 189.
69 Ibid., p. 34.
Chapter VI

Cemi's Quest: a Novel within a Novel (Paradiso: Ch. XII)

Before embarking on a detailed study of the meaning of the final meeting between Oppiano Licario and Cemi, I propose to examine the cluster of apparently minor characters which spring up in a most unexpected fashion in the twelfth and thirteenth chapters, seemingly as stumbling blocks in the way of our understanding of the last pages of Paradiso. In fact all are relevant in their own special ways to Cemi's final journey. Of the last three chapters of Paradiso Cortazar has remarked: "Hacia el final ... Lezama intercala un extenso relato que llena todo el capítulo XII y no tiene nada que ver con el cuerpo de la novela, aunque su atmósfera y potencias sean las mismas. Incluso los dos capítulos finales ... tienen algo de apéndices, de surplus." ¹ The reader could be forgiven for assuming this to be the case when Lezama suddenly confronts him with characters hitherto undreamt of at such a late stage in the novel. Not only brand new characters, as in the twelfth chapter but also others of brief acquaintance from the second, now just barely recognizable on the old bus of the thirteenth chapter. We may believe we have a right to feel confused. However, as is usual in Paradiso, there is logic behind Lezama's structuring of his novel. As Cortazar hints, the contents of the twelfth chapter share a certain atmosphere with those preceding it; it is the atmosphere of the quest and the desire to conquer Time. For Ortega, "el capítulo XII parece ser una alegoría de la poética que Cemi empieza a formular [... ] posibles ejercicios literarios del propio Cemi .... Estas historias parecen
Another critic who concludes that the chapter is intimately linked with Cemí's newly-formed view of reality is Mendell, who says that it is "en realidad un volver sobre los mismos temas: la imagen frente al tiempo y la niñez como período germinativo." Fazzolari believes that the division of character of the previous chapters must now be resolved: "El hombre tripartito no puede llegar a la poesía, primero tiene que reconquistar la unidad perdida." The necessity for union is also emphasized by César López who (as noted previously) insists that "... Cemí, Fronesis y Foción no tienden más que a la unidad...." and adds:

Cada uno aporta su fundamentación a la integración del ente final (ente es lo que ha sido) que bajo el hombre común de José Cemí pasa, en la tercera fase, a buscar su destino. A la manera de Jung, el héroe (en una especie de ascensión simbólica a la poesía) trata de llegar a la mismidad integrando la voz de los arquetipos, moviéndose hacia los imagos parentales.

My examination of the three friends seems to bear out the truth of César López's suggestions about Cemí's progress. Fronesis has won a treasure from the dragon, apparently on Cemí's behalf, while Foción has been transformed into a conquered aspect of Cemí's psyche. Cemí does not yet seem to have a treasure of his own; he will not attain the gift of infinite knowledge and wisdom until Oppiano Licario's death. Fronesis' union with Lucía (who is at once dragon and captive) suggests the enormity of the struggle to overcome the negative power of the Unconscious, while his interview with his father reveals that he all but loses his new-found sense of responsibility and identity in the face of parental disapproval. Nevertheless, we are left with the impression that he has succeeded against the dragon and bears the seed of success with him on his enforced travels. Lucía has been subdued to the status of beneficent anima to Fronesis and meanwhile Cemí has been enabled to free himself from the feminine side of his family and to be
simultaneously accepted as its spokesman, the poet of the Unconscious. Yet we feel that Cemi's hour has still not arrived; we do not know quite what his prize may be, only that he has the means to win it now that he has free access to his intuitive nature, his female anima, which has so far been bound up exclusively with the person of Rialta. Neumann tells us that "the hero's rescue of the captive corresponds to the discovery of a psychic world [...] the world of Eros, embracing everything that man has ever done for woman .... The world of art, of epic deeds, poesy, and song...." 6 Cemi will not enter this world until Oppiano Licario lies on his funeral couch and the twelfth chapter is an attempt to explain in a finely structured allegory the reasons for the conjunction of these two facts.

None of the characters of this chapter (Atrio Flaminio, Juan Longo, the wanderer, the child, the grandmother) has made a previous appearance in the novel. Nevertheless, there seems to be something familiar about them. Mendell seems to have deciphered the connections:

Lezama has conveyed his ideas in two main ways in the novel so far: firstly by expanding his relatives and parents into archetypes; secondly by compressing abstract concepts into human form, such as Fronesis and Oppiano Licario. Both methods have produced characters of great richness whose movements in relation to one another have allowed Lezama to weave a dense tapestry of personified ideas around the semi-autobiographical Cemi. Here he creates an allegory within the allegory of Cemi's spiritual journey, in an effort to provide a parallel text for his creation. Lezama's creative reaction
to his father's death leads ultimately to the novel, *Paradiso*, and it seems quite likely that, as Ortega implies, the maturing of Cemi's poetic insight results in the miniature *Paradiso* of this isolated chapter. Every section of the chapter is introduced in a perfect matter-of-fact tone: "Desde que Atrio Flaminio, capitán de legiones, se había iniciado en el estudio del arte de la guerra, la paz octaviana se había extendido por el orbe ..." (I, 520); then, "Había llegado del Canadá a los Trópicos ..." (I, 521); followed by "—Compadre, no lo quisiera contar, pero mire usted que lo invisible se mostró ridículo aquella noche" (I, 523); and lastly, "Juan Longo era un crítico musical que en su edad mayor había quedado viudo ..." (I, 525). The effect of such an abrupt change of tone and content immediately following on from Doña Augusta's death and the fate of Foción is indeed dramatic. The reader feels that he must have picked up the wrong book from his table. Suddenly he finds himself among strangers in four quite separate places and times, each pursuing individual goals. However it will slowly become clear that all are connected. In "La biblioteca de José Cemi" 8 Ortega draws some interesting parallels between the thinking of Lezama and that of Novalis and while I do not wish to compare texts as such, I find it noteworthy that in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* the German writer interrupts his hero's story of growth towards poetry to insert an allegory of the poetic process, complete with personifications of abstract concepts. 9 The twelfth chapter is a necessary stage in Cemi's development where he transforms his quest into a literary adventure in which he is enabled to come to terms consciously with that quest. If he is to be the "actively contemplative" poet, he must be aware of his searching, not blindly walking through experience in the steps of fragmented alter-egos such as Frónesis and Foción. The characters in the four interwoven sections maintain a certain amount of interest in that each little plot has movement and tension. Will the Roman soldier beat his enemies and conquer death? Who breaks the vase and what will become of the child? What is the man seeking in his midnight wanderings and what
part does the invisible play? Will the music critic's wife preserve both him and her secret? What is really intriguing, however, is trying to establish the connections with the rest of the novel, with the result that the reader expends double the usual effort in deciphering the text, which Lezama hopes will reflect back on to the novel so far.

Leaving aside Atrio Flaminio and Juan Longo for the present, we must examine the night wanderer and the child who remind one most of Lezama and Cemi. In Lezama's ordering of his chapter, the characters appear one after another in the following pattern: Atrio Flaminio, the child, the wanderer and the music critic, Juan Longo. The central pair are the most closely linked, and in fact the two characters become synonymous as the chapter progresses. The child resembles Cemi in the early chapters as an exile returning to his grandmother's house, as "garzón mimado" (I, 521) whose grandmother cooks "algún plato especial" (I, 521) as Doña Augusta would, and as the recipient of a gift from her. We know that the great matriarch has bequeathed her wisdom and poetic powers to Cemi: here the gift takes the form of a multi-coloured rubber ball which is, significantly, "grabada como por un humo de los más diversos colores que se deslizaban en espirales como en el orígen del mundo" (I, 521). The gift of looking in wonder at the world draws the child to explore the house, the patio and the library (which was so important in Cemi's house — and in Lezama's first home, described in "Confluencias"— "la casa ofrecía no tan solo esa esperada metamorfosis, sino una continuada maravilla oculta. El cuarto de estudio del Coronel"; II, 1222). When the child loses the ball temporarily after bouncing it off the spines of the books, his grandmother returns it and he becomes self-absorbed. This may mean that he begins to ponder the contents of the books and to be overwhelmed by the amount of information they contain. The switching of his attention from the ball to the jarra danesa seems to suggest the introduction of an image of the outside world. The number of
pictures on the vase seems to imply that it is enormous; it bears symbols of China which reveals that it is very precious and may represent secret knowledge, like Oppiano Licario's coins or the Chinese brush: "Las murallas que cifran las plazas y el palacio real, con el burgomaestre recibiendo una comisión de estudiantes chinos, que le muestran una colección de estampas de la China de las montañas y los lagos" (I, 522). The mountains and lakes are one of the main topics of Taoist painting, expressing the concept of creative voids and open spaces, and Lezama studies this at some length in "Las eras imaginarias: la biblioteca como dragón," concluding that in Chinese painting "La contemplación y la meditación les otorgaba una imagen, siempre la imagen derivándose del cielo silencioso, que después comprobaban en la naturaleza engendrando otra imagen más creadora" (II, 902). The jar seems to represent the precious faculty of looking beyond into a magical world of the imagination and by implication, the Unconscious, to which the child was introduced by the grandmother. It is not clear who breaks the vase at this point: the child "Reintegra la jarra al sitio de su costumbre, pero ahora un manotazo la derrumba, la vuelve fragmentos ..." (I, 522). The fact that the grandmother treasures the pieces indicates that she hopes they can be preserved and saved for the child. The arrival of the parents seems to herald danger. If we consider the vase as a symbol of childhood and its innocent wonder and faith, then the parents seem to threaten this, rather in the way that Fronesis' parents almost prevent him from maturing properly because they cannot see beyond immediate reality. The grandmother's wisdom seems greater than that of the parents.

The above events are followed by our first encounter with the night wanderer who relates his story apparently in conversation, in a rather abashed tone, "no lo quisiera contar ..." (I, 523). He is a little indignant about his experience: "A veces lo invisible, que tiene una pesada graviación, y en eso se diferencia de lo irreal, que tiende más bien a levitar,
se muestra limitado, reiterado, con lamentable tendencia al lugar común" (I, 523). There are two important points to note; firstly the invisible is accepted as fact and secondly it manifests itself in the most everyday occurrences. He is unalarmed when he sees the chair rocking by itself and even derives a new sense of well-being from the sleep which ensues. It may symbolize a descent into the Unconscious to come to terms with a growing sense of the invisible: in any case, it has a benevolent influence—

"Al despertarme sentí que la otra mitad de mi cuerpo se había añadido a la otra mitad desconocida, que al despertarme en la medianoche ya lucía descansada y plena dentro de una melodiosa circulación ..." (I, 523). The laughter which issues from the chair on the second night is half expected but the night wanderer is now alert and driven by "las habituales grandes carcajadas, las de un bajo ruso en una canción popular" (I, 524) to ponder over events. After only two hours sleep, another element attracts his attention: "esta vez al sillón y a las carcajadas se añadió un tercer instrumento, la puerta del cuarto ..." (I, 524), apparently with the purpose of leading him out to the empty patio: "guiado por el improvisado trío" (I, 524) until "comencé a fijarme, con exasperada lentitud, en el patio" (I, 525). At this point the reader may well recall the creative power of the empty space such as a patio, in which the image of José Eugenio appeared mysteriously during the game of yaquis (I, 224-7). Another example of the power of the patio as an open space occurs when Cemí accompanies his uncle Demétrio to his house where the youth is impressed by the configuration of objects but concludes that the empty space is the most important factor:

Cemí percibió que la fascinación de aquella casona no se debía a ninguna presencia contingente.... Era, todo lo contrario, como si uno se abandonase al sueño, a los nacimientos, alórias navideñas o agónicas- visiones. El gran patio en el centro. El vacío y a su alrededor la sala ... (I, 232).

This older man is, it seems, an older version of Cemí/Lezama who is beginning
to meditate upon his childhood experiences such as his father's death, in an attempt to recapture a lost article or belief.

On returning to the tale of the broken vase, we may be surprised by the brusque change of tense. Without warning we are being addressed directly by the child: "Al despertar, la jarra danesa me pareció más importante que el astro de la mañana" (I, 529), an image which evokes the aura of the origins, the time of perfect innocence represented by the child who breaks the vase. The appearance of the first person narrator is fleeting but serves to forge a link between Lezama, Cemi and this unnamed character. The child (presumably now a little older) asks whether the pieces of the vase (his childhood and all its wonder) have been preserved, but he is superceded at once by the third person narrator who describes the child as fearful of leaving the grandmother, who feels that it is now a matter of urgency that the child break the vase. The first person narrator feels able to approach the vase "sin intranquilidad" (I, 530) but it is somehow too late: "Me pareció que se había desaparecido un encantamiento" (I, 530). The child is already losing his child's mind and is unable to break the vase, an act that would seem to unleash the power of its pictures. The grandmother is almost desperate to effect the breakage but the child refuses to cooperate: "el niño no modificó su indiferencia" (I, 530). Paradoxically, the wise grandmother fears the loss of the child ("la abuela apretó al niño contra su pecho, como si alguien lo fuera a robar"; I, 531) because he will not destroy the perfect image of his childhood. This fact is borne out in those areas of Paradiso dealing with Focisìn's problems which arise from a desire to remain in childhood, in the Unconscious. A quotation already used to introduce my study of the trauma of "The Childhood of José Cemi" may prove helpful at this stage. It seems to present in miniature much of interest from the twelfth chapter:
I submit that it is this process which Lezama dramatizes in the story of the child and the vase when combined with that of the night wanderer.

Contemplation of the empty patio calls the man to dress and go out to wander about the streets in the middle of the night. The laughter which he hears could be a reminder of the emptiness felt by Cemí when all he has left is Fronesis' laughter: "ahora, en la medianoche, el recuerdo de aquella carcajada, de aquella única respuesta, lo enristecía hasta la misma desesperación" (I, 506). It is the challenge of the invisible, which is also expressed by the patio: "El vacío del patio de una casa es su fragmento más hablador" (I, 531). Fazzolari thinks that "el desvelado nocturno puede ser identificable con Cemí, el hombre de nuestra época que se pasea por las calles de la Habana descubriendo imágenes, el poeta que ha de vencer el tiempo." 10 Throughout this section there is a complicated blending of first and second person narrators which tends to combine Lezama, Cemí and the wanderer. During his walk through various Havana streets, two protectors seem to attend him; one is his mother, whom the reader will tend to identify with Rialta as the poetic Muse; the other is more mysterious as "una divinidad propicia, un geniecillo parecía que guiaba su camino, iluminándolo con chispas, con una claridad que giraba como una rueda" (I, 532). It appears in "Genios" street and I take it to be the dawning of the man's poetic insight into the invisible, with its unusual qualities of light denoting its alliance with Oppiano Licario and the lighted house of the fourteenth chapter.

The night wanderer proceeds through a symbolic landscape which is quite
difficult to interpret. He makes his way to a space which is "un vacío tan impelente como el patio de su casa," "un anfiteatro" (I, 532). It would appear to the site of special rituals and the meeting with the owner of the "anacrónico sombrero de castor, de ala tan ligera que parecía que con el impulso del viento se echaría a caminar" (I, 533) insulates the wanderer against the violent scenes which he witnesses later at the port ("Los perros portuarios comenzaron a lamer los coágulos de sangre ..."; I, 535). The man with the flimsy hat looks like a rather ghostly eccentric and may have something to do with Oppiano Licario because of his breathing rhythm and his smile: "su exagerada benevola sonrisa tenía algo del jarabe bronquial" (I, 533). His activity of sewing is creative: "Entre su índice y el pulgar estaba lo que le daba peso a la madera y seguridad a las puntadas que daba el hombre vestido de carmelita ... Me dijo: es un huevo de marfil" (I, 533). What provides him with a firm basis for his needlework (poetic creation) is the egg made of marble, symbolizing eternity and permanence. That which is permanent is also a symbol of creation and potential for life, therefore the marble egg is here a sign of eternal life. In order to found his endeavours on truth, the poet must look afresh at his past, his origins. Only then will his work have life. The second encounter is not so harmonious and provides the reverse side of the coin. It is a picture of senseless chaos: the drinkers do not know what they are doing, "Cuando salían del bar no estaban alegres ni gemebundos, daban un salto como un ánade ..." (I, 534). The murder is attended by serpents, often a sign of evil and chaos in Paradiso, "se acercó al marinero hasta verle las sierpes tatuadas que se le enroscaban en el cuello" (I, 535); in other words the murdered man has been marked with a sign of death. These are some of the characters who are by the wayside and must be left behind on the journey towards Oppiano Licario. Souza emphasises that "The dying sailor, however, is a victim of a knife wound, indicating the unleashing of primary and instinctive forces that are destructive and not under control."
The story of the vase takes a new turn when the maid dusts it off its shelf and it is broken. There is a sense of inevitability about this breakage which seems to be the result of circumstances, such as time passing and the child maturing: "Esa mañana sí fue cierto ..." (I, 541). It falls "como si alguien la hubiera soplado" (I, 541) but its fall is propitious: "aquel roto pareció que abría timbres y campanillas" (I, 542). The broken vase is a sign of new beginnings as is shown in the child's behaviour: "El nieto parecía aquella mañana muy seguro en sus movimientos. Dominaba el patio [...] en el sitio donde había estado la jarra pasó varias veces con suavidad la palma de la mano" (I, 542). The grandmother is quick to note the change in the child who feels able to explore and to act for himself: she is "como en éxtasis" (I, 542) when he enters the patio, "Esa mañana el garzón hizo el descubrimiento del pequeño traspatio" (I, 542). He acts in a way which is reminiscent of Cemí at the beginning of the second chapter, in that he takes a piece of coal and "lo extendió por la pared, quedó una raya negra" (I, 543), just as Cemí "apoyó la tiza como si conversase con el paredón" (I, 29). He makes his mark, asserting his budding personality. This can only happen once the child has broken away from his childhood, smashed the vase and lost his awareness of tao and it is a miniature version of Fronesis' struggles to escape or conquer the Unconscious in later life. The maid and the grandmother seem to work in conjunction as benevolent female influences which lead the infant towards wisdom, his inner voice, in fact.

Meanwhile the insomniac finds himself wandering along Carlos III Avenue at the command of the invisible. The early morning markets have a dreamlike quality, "todas las luces ... encendidas, semejantes a un hombre que durmiese con los ojos abiertos" (I, 544) as if the wanderer is in a trance. Indeed the main topic of the passage is the dream of an old blind man, whom the wanderer meets. The blind man's wife contributes to the market by making tasteful arrangements of fruit: "Como la señora en ese momento situaba
Her art from "no se vende" (I, 544) and so it is pure. The old couple share a strange dream which only serves to make them content with their lot; the hidden meaning of this strange passage may be that man is unable to create anything lasting in the arts without the assistance and inspiration of his female half, his anima. She is as a guide to the blind man and will lead the wanderer safely back to his childhood from which he will draw new inspiration. In the dream the old man has regained his sight but the female in the dream is now a treacherous young girl: "saltaba de insecto del diablo a puro ángel en un vaivén de hamaca" (I, 546). She is not the source of true feminine intuition and creative power.

The wanderer gains a flash of insight almost at once when he peers into a pit and sees "un niño como de tres o cuatro años" (I, 547) whose clothes reveal him as the child of the second section. Yet they cannot meet: "cuanto más se acercaba al niño del ropón, más lejos se situaba este en la visión" (I, 547). The older man lacks the means to approach the child.

In the final pages of the chapter the man and the child are permitted to meet in the same section, thanks to the guidance of the invisible: "aquella medianoche parecía que veía delante de sí una larga línea que después iba corriendo ..." (I, 556). He is led "sin la menor confusión" (I, 557) to a potters' workshop and he sets about cleaning a new vase to be delivered to the child: "se sentó con los artesanos ... parecía que aquel puesto le estaba reservado, todos lo miraban con ojos conocidos. Era como un premio que se recibía ..." (I, 557). It is the reward of the poet who contemplates the invisible, the creative void. The paper covered with spirals indicates that there is a movement upwards, a progression, as does the "composición en espiral" (I, 557) of the vase design. The threads of the two tales begin to draw together when the wanderer sees that the child who answers his knock is "el mismo que había entrevisto, que ahora se mostraba en su plenitud, en la verja que rodeaba el foso" (I, 577-8). By presenting the child with
the vase, the wanderer has freed both himself and his past. As Mendell says:

Los momentos iniciales de la vida imaginativa se colocan en la niñez. Todas las experiencias, el aprendizaje, el imaginar constante de esa edad son un rico depósito en espera del adulto que debe volver al pasado - al fosfo - y traer al niño a la luz. Si bien el niño es padre del adulto, porque en él está la posibilidad de la obra futura, el adulto debe liberar primero a su propia niñez [...] el obstáculo es el tiempo.

The concept of tao symbolized by the vase has been recaptured. It seems from this study that two characters at least from this chapter are recognizable after all. Lezama chooses to review the major themes of Paradiso in this little allegory of man and boy, but others invade the final scene in which they meet.

Having handed over the gift to the child, the wanderer feels in command of himself in new ways: "Sentía que la fuerza impelente del patio de su casa se había extinguido en él, pero que al mismo tiempo había nacido, para reemplazar a la anterior, una fuerza de absorción, especialmente constituida para atraerlo a su centro absorbente" (I, 558). He hopes to find in the night "su destino, su ananké, huevo cascado, fruta abierta" (I, 558) and the author promises him just that: "Y al final, todavía no lo sabía, se encontrará con una ecuación, una urna de cristal" (I, 559). Both Atrio Flamínto and Juan Longo have also been trying to avoid death (as opposed to the loss of childhood) and it is in Juan Longo's urn that he discovers the image of the child, himself: "Le llegó su turno y asomó la cara con natural indiferencia. Un lento escalofrío lo petrificó, lo recorrió como un relámpago que se extendiese por todo su árbol nervioso. Vio al garzón que le había abierto la puerta, recogiendo la jarra danesa" (I, 559). The sight of the dead child may shock him, but it also affords him even greater liberation:

la noche astillada mostraba su absorción en la otra ribera del río. Pudo llegar a la otra margen, dando saltos de
De la piedra en piedra. Una inmensa estepa de nieve con sus márgenes azuladas lo esperaba con una hoguera crepitante. En aquella hoguera comenzó, lentamente, a calentarse las manos (I, 560).

Death unleashes the potential of vast tracks of space, the beyond, while igniting the fires of poetic inspiration.

What of Atrio Flaminio and Juan Longo, however? Their lives are completely separate, yet both are seen by different people in the glass urn or coffin. Of this chapter Lezama has said, in "Confluencias":

Capítulo XII, negación del tiempo, detrás de la urna de cristal cambian incesantemente sus rostros el garzón y el centurión muertos, solamente que en el capítulo XIV, ya al final, el que aparece detrás de la urna es el mismo Oppiano Licario. Negación del tiempo lograda en el sueño, donde no solamente el tiempo sino la dimensión desaparecen. Muevo la enormidad de un hacha, logro velocidades infinitas, veo los ciegos en los mercados nocturnos conversando sobre la calidad plástica de las fresas, al final, los soldados romanos, jugando a la taba entre las ruinas, logro la tetractis, el cuatro, dios (II, 1217-8).

In order for Cemí to be completely freed from his past so that he can tap its creative potential, he must go through a similar process to the one we have just uncovered. Since Oppiano Licario represents the deaths in Cemí's family history which inspired him to look into the void, the invisible beyond, only a meeting of these two will allow Cemí to come to terms with his past: in the words of Ortega, "Oppiano es también ... una alegoría del propio Cemí, una proyección suya hacia el pasado." 13

Atrio Flaminio embodies a certain aspect of Cemí's past in that he is a warrior who dies of disease, not in combat; he is a splendid figure admired by his troops; he tries to fool death; he reminds the reader of some of José Eugenio's attributes, as Mendell has stated. She includes also "los poderes mágicos que persiguen a la figura herédica." 14 Flaminio is interested in "los ejercicios de respiración perfeccionados por los grandes fundadores de religiones de la China y la India ..." (I, 520), a sign that he is interested in preserving the body. His men believe him to be
invincible: "Nada más que sabemos vencer, desconocemos a la muerte ..." (I, 527) and in this sense he is the burlador of death. He is full of nobility of spirit; his fame reaches vast proportions: "Su fama iba ya adquiriendo esa resonancia que no se deriva de la realidad de un hecho dominado, sino de la tradición oral que regala una indetenible progresión ..." (I, 538) but the danger to his life increases. The fact that he is attacked by magical forces suggests that the power of death has risen up to prevent his fame becoming everlasting. Nevertheless, Atrio Flaminio outwits the spirits which hope to carry him off, with the help of the oracle and his inner wisdom: "Había entrado en aquella región con un poliedro cuya iridiscencia lo cegaba" (I, 540). The solution to the problem is ingenious and infuriates the invisible foes: "Temblaban de furor aquellos ectoplasmas cuando querían levantar el peso de uno de aquellos soldados, y se atolondraban por la profundidad de la piedra" (I, 541). The soldiers manage to cling to the earth and their success increases the leader's fame still further: "pasaba a ser el general supremo de la expedición" (I, 541). In Larisa, the troops meet a new danger in that their bodies are to be pillaged for spare parts: "Las legiones de la tenebrosa Hera, salidas por algún agujero de la tierra, buscaban en lo más ardido del encuentro los cadáveres romanos para mutilarlos y añadirlos a los cuerpos incompletos de los escapados del infierno" (I, 553). Having clung to Earth, they now face disintegration. Although Atrio Flaminio issues orders to prevent this fate, he cannot escape illness, just like José Eugenio. The image of Atrio Flaminio inspires his troops to win the battle at Capadocia, as his officers preserve his body and withhold news of his death. In a sense, therefore, he triumphs over death and acts beyond the grave. For this reason his face appears in the cristal urn: "el rostro de un general romano que gemía inmovilizado al borrarse para él la posibilidad de alcanzar la muerte en el remolino de las batallas" (I, 563).
Why might Lezama have chosen a music critic and a Roman soldier to symbolize the effort to halt time? In "Confluencias" he remarks that

El acto del hombre puede reproducir el germen en la naturaleza, y hacer permanente la poesía por una secreta relación entre el germen y el acto [...] la respuesta permanente de la orquesta en el tiempo, los guerreros a la sombra de los muros de Ilión, la grande armée, lo que he llamado las eras imaginarias y también la sobrenaturaleza, forman por un entrelazamiento de germen, acto y potencia, nuevos y desconocidos gérmenes, actos y potencias (II, 1216).

The great endeavours of the eras imaginarias will live forever because they possess poetic power and Lezama includes music and battle as having very special qualities. The tale of Juan Longo is quite amusing and the character of his wife is somewhat grotesque but it is his urn in which all the various faces appear; the personal triumph of man and child is accompanied by the apparent failure of history and fame on the one hand, and culture on the other. It seems to me that here the experiences involved in history and culture have to be internalized and made personal before they become meaningful. Juan Longo does not seem to suffer delusions about achieving eternal life in the present, but his female half (his Unconscious) is determined to keep him alive by means of "la teofanía egipcia" (I, 527).

Flaminio wanted to ignore Time but Longo's wife wishes to control it: Lezama goes into great detail as to her methods of turning her husband into a living corpse, almost as if he were writing a textbook. Her purpose is clear: "No se trataba de provocar un primer estado cataléptico, de llevar el sujeto al sueño, sino, por el contrario, ya en el sueño, prolongarlo indefinidamente, prolongarlo hasta regiones bien diferenciadas de la muerte" (I, 537). Sleep represents a return to the Unconscious which is doomed to failure: "El tiempo destruido sólo mostraba el sueño y la locura" (I, 548).

The proposed visit of fellow critics and admirers catapults the crazy wife into a series of farcical quick changes. The critics are ridiculed,
"la habitualidad de sus temas sólo les arranca un bostezo" (I, 548), in a way that implies that Lezama believes their methods of keeping culture alive to be useless, as are those of Juan Longo's wife. Longo gains added appeal because of his immense age (114 years) rather as newly rediscovered ancient manuscripts might do. His utterances on "la sonoridad completiva" (I, 551) are accepted by the critics like manna from heaven: "se asombraron viendo como el tiempo transcurrido había enriquecido lo que ellos llamaban su imagen de concepto" (I, 551).

So impressed by his babblings are two of his former colleagues that their return to his side uncovers the truth about his state and the placing of the urn in the Auditorium is described in a somewhat mock heroic tone, complete with its "guardia permanente de críticos musicales" (I, 552). The wanderer witnesses the speech of an old man beside the urn, in which Longo's achievement is assessed: the critic has set himself outside Time in a sort of dream-like limbo where "cada instante es la eternidad y el propio instante" (I, 560), and he possesses "un ser como imagen del tiempo" (I, 560) because "alcanzó la eternidad sin devenir ..." (I, 561). He lives forever in the eternal present, since in sleep time is banished. His gem of wisdom is concerned with "la sonoridad como imagen del vacío" (I, 561) which is also appropriate to the wanderer's search for tao. When the deranged wife looks into the glass coffin she expects to see that embodiment of culture which she has nurtured for so long. The sight of "el rostro de un guerrero romano, crispado en un gesto de infinita desesperación" (I, 563) is the direct cause of the critic's death, for the wife's piercing shriek pitches him into oblivion. She sees a piece of dead history, while the wanderer perceives himself as a child. Longo's real triumph comes with death when he enters "lo eterno, donde ya el tiempo no se deja vencer ..." (I, 563); similarly the wanderer is only completely freed after seeing the dead child in the coffin. Lezama seems to be saying that art and history can be revived and renewed, but only through the personal view of the poet who
masters his own past.

Lezama's skilfully matched stories are finished off with what Gimbert de González refers to as a coda, a seemingly unrelated postscript to the main work. In a magical space, occupied by a ruined Christian temple and an academy belonging to pagan philosophers, the four tales are drawn together. In answer to the question "¿Qué es la sobrenaturaleza?" Lezama says that "la penetración de la imagen en la naturaleza engendra la sobrenaturaleza": he proceeds to describe the ideal landscape for such a conjunction, referring to a little known painting by Goya, La gruta; in it he sees "un coliseo en ruinas, una plaza deshabitada, ala derrumbada de un convento [...]. Es un espacio desconocido y un tiempo errante ..." (II, 1213). He continues, "Sin embargo, paseamos en ese aquí y transcurrimos en ese ahora, y logramos a reconstruir una imagen. Es la sobrenaturaleza" (II, 1213).

The twelfth chapter ends in just such a mystical spot, where image and reality fuse into new configurations. The centurions come from Atrio Flamínio's times to play dice in a place outside Time; the bust of the geometrician wielding a compass is a symbol of the power to connect diverse points (as does the poet metaphorical language); the first two throws of the dice produce a two and a three, which seem to have no significance. However, when the compass crashes down and moves the second die, the magical number four is produced; that is, taking the assorted facts from a poetic viewpoint, hidden meanings can be revealed and new patterns established. This is an indication of how we are to interpret the whole chapter. Once the dice are matched, in what Lezama has called "El cuaternario ... el tetractus, el Nombre Inefable, 'la fuente de la naturaleza que fluye siempre, Dios'" (I, 463), Time is abolished in the reader's flash of insight.

Unity receives the final emphasis here: "los dos dados, uno al lado del otro, como si las dos superficies hubiesen unido sus aguas" (I, 564), and "Los dos centuriones se cubrieron con una sola capota ... " (I, 564) so that they are metamorphosed into an animal which is a symbol of combined opposites
("la tortuga es cielo y tierra," II, 922): "del cuello surgía como una cabeza de tortuga grande ..." (I, 564).

Those characters who fall by the wayside in this chapter (Atrio Flaminio, Juan Longo and his wife) do so because, in Souza's words "they mistakenly regard death as their enemy, when in reality it is their passport to eternity." 16 Cemí will encounter some more characters who could provide false paths leading away from Oppiano Licario before his journey's end.
Notes


4 M. J. Fazzolari, "Paradiso y el sistema," p. 120.


6 E. Neumann, Origins, p. 204.

7 "Analisis," p. 139.


9 Novalis, Heinrich von Ofterdingen, Ch. 9 (First published in 1799).

10 "Paradiso y el sistema," p. 121.


12 "Analisis," p. 133.


16 "The Sensorial World of José Lezama Lima," in MCN, p. 70.
Chapter VII

Oppiano Licario: Estilo sistáltico and Estilo hesicástico.

With these few phrases, Oppiano Licario reappears in José Cemí’s life to fulfil his promises to José Eugenio Cemí and to banish the memory of his failure to save Alberto Olaya from despair and death. In the twenty years which have elapsed we know that Cemí has matured to the point where he has identified himself with the values of Fronesis and totally rejected those of Foción. He has followed his mother’s advice to seek out and meet all challenges, but he has not yet become a fully-fledged poet secure in his own powers. We have seen that, as Rodríguez Monegal has said, Oppiano Licario "actúa por su presencia en una escena en que otro es el protagonista pero su presencia tiene un valor catalítico ..." and that "Es el sacerdote de los ritos fundamentales de la vida humana. Asiste al padre a morir; asiste al tío en la hora de la iniciación sexual." ¹ E. Guillermo and J. A. Hernández believe that Oppiano Licario "es principalmente el testigo. Este es quizá su rol más significativo: haber sido testigo de hechos en los que Cemí no estuvo presente y que tienen excepcional importancia en su vida." ² They note that Cemí has been called to be a witness to his father’s death, "llamado a dar testimonio del destino familiar" ³ so that it is fitting that there is a second witness in his absence. As we have seen, Alberto's...
adolescent dilemmas are important to the family history because he has potential as a poetic visionary, yet he turns away from both homosexuality and his poetic destiny to rampant sexuality. This seems to contribute to the despair that assails him at the news of his mother's death. He is so closely bound up with his real mother, rather than with the "feminine" qualities of poetic inspiration that he cannot live without her and he cannot envisage her life after death. His lack of hope drives Oppiano Licario away just as surely as Cemi's bravery draws him near to José Eugenio's bedside. It is the inner, spiritual strength of a particular character which evokes the mysterious presence; the traumatic experience of death or of dawning sexuality presents the individual with a choice. Faith in the unseen life of the spirit (something which Lezama sees as the poet's duty) and in the creative possibilities of the void caused by death is the only acceptable route.

Similarly the only safe path to maturity begins with an acceptance of the passing of childhood; Alberto finds it difficult to assume his new identity as an adolescent but triumphs with Oppiano Licario's assistance; I have shown that Foción is also offered the chance to turn away from homosexuality, seen by Lezama as an image of the overwhelming desire to regress to childhood innocence. His last opportunity is actually played out by the red-haired youth and the owner of the Chinese toothbrush who has that air of the "diplomático egipcio" (I, 388) which distinguished Oppiano Licario at the "Reino de siete meses" bar (I, 137). The refusal of the red-haired youth to accept the gift symbolizing escape from his hopeless existence (the concept of tao or lejanía - the creative potential of the void and of eternal Being - are often introduced by persons or objects of Chinese origin, e.g., the Chinaman in the Michelena episode) is immediately followed by his complete degradation in union with Foción.

We have seen that the old self must give way to the birth of the new
being in order to truly grow to maturity, as in the case with Fronesis.
It would appear, therefore, that Oppiano Licario makes himself known fully
only to those who are able to look beyond ordinary causality, beyond death
and beyond the end of childhood innocence, those who realize that from death
of a certain kind comes abundant life. Both Cemi and Fronesis possess
this special knowledge, as their extensive speeches on the struggle between
St. George and the dragon reveal. The flight from childhood is an attempt
to escape from suffering and death, as is the horror of the nursing mothers
on Judgement Day; it results from a lack of understanding of the true mean-
ing of death, its creativity. The poet must be one who can faces the los-
es in life and turn them to his own purposes, as Lezama has done with his
own father's death. Oppiano Licario, as a symbol of the deepest meaning
of life and death, is in great demand amongst all manner of men. Many
seek him, but most look in the wrong places and become entrapped within the
means they have chosen for their search. We have seen that in the twelfth
chapter the search for Oppiano Licario, in the preservation of life through
fame and culture, is useless without the personal experience of the questing
spirit which wishes to integrate itself in an understanding of past and pre-
sent, life, death and rebirth. For Lezama the rebirth of Self and soul
seem to be intimately related in a complex process of growth, over which
Oppiano Licario presides. He is at once life and death.

The thirteenth chapter is an important prelude to the final mystical
experience of Cemi, since it is full of signposts and false paths. Like
the twelfth, it is divorced from normal causality, forming a little allego-
ry which is nevertheless entirely relevant to the main body of the work.
Another most surprisingly unfamiliar group of characters gathers here around
Cemi and Oppiano Licario. The reader must resist his immediate desire to
reject the reappearance of Adalberto Kuller, Martincillo, Vivo, Lupita and
Tranquilo, all hailing from the second chapter, as an insult to his intelli-
gence; instead these transformed beings require re-identification in their new roles. Only through an understanding of their presence on the mysterious bus can the reader discover something more about the criteria by which Cemi is Oppiano Licario's "chosen one"; and hence about the character and symbolism of Oppiano Licario himself. They cannot be studied in isolation from Cemi and his new spiritual guide since all encounter both figures on the bus and forfeit by their attitude the opportunity to benefit from ancient wisdom. Oppiano Licario could have affected each of these individuals had they been receptive; each almost grasps the elusive treasure at some stage on the bus journey. They seem to represent all that Cemi must reject, before he may become one with Oppiano Licario. Mendell makes a most important point when she states that "una vez realizado el encuentro y con él la mágica transferencia de ese tesoro que salvaguarda Licario, su destino se ha completado y puede morir porque ha sido incorporado por Cemi, que es entonces también Licario." In the meeting of Oppiano Licario and Cemi, a process of rediscovery takes place as symbolized in the tale of the night wanderer and the child of the twelfth chapter. Many aspects of the life of Oppiano Licario as revealed in the last chapter are reminiscent of Lezama/Cemi's personal circumstances: he works in a notary's office (I, 590); he is at that oft-mentioned stage of life - about forty years old - at which a certain unease is felt ("Al llegar a la desdichada página cuarenta de esa colección de otoños, los recuerdos perdían sus afiladuras, las sensaciones se relían de sus sucesiones y el carrusel dejaba de ser cortado por su mirada ..."). In fact it is most interesting to note that parts of Lezama's essay collections and chapters of Paradiso began appearing in Orígenes in the early 1950s, when he himself would have been in his forties (b. 1910). In particular, the major part of the fourteenth chapter (I, 589-633), omitting the final revelation of Cemi, was first published in 1954. Lezama had already published much poetry by then but it seems that the
deeper understanding of his life's purpose only becomes clear to him as he begins to bear witness to his family's past in these later writings. Like Lezama/Cemí, Oppiano Licario lives with his devoted sister and mother, who try to protect him from the philistines who surround him: the women are "criollas trigueñas y sabias," while he is merely "empleado cuarentón" (I, 591); the symbolically named Doña Engracia, his mother, resembles Rialta in "una graciosa robustez madura que espera siempre lo mejor" (I, 591). It seems that Oppiano Licario's women folk embody the poetic Muse, the Great Mother, just as Rialta does for Cemí. They both admire and fear for him, for reasons which will become clear presently.

The place in which the group assembles with Oppiano Licario and Cemí is truly remarkable, containing only a select band of occupants each of whom "se mantiene más jerarquizado, como si en una forma inconsciente despreciese a los tripulantes oficiosos de otras horas, que aquél estima inno-bles" (I, 565). The time is the potentially mysterious hour of dusk. Passengers are not startled by their new surroundings "las soportaban sin exceso de asombro ..." (I, 565) which may be a sign of their mediocrity since Cemí "vio con extrañeza el ómnibus detenido" (I, 581). An air of exclusivity is established even before the rather surreal episode of the bull's head takes place. The passengers are trapped in time and space, as Lezama admits in "Confluencias":

La liberación del tiempo es la constante más tenaz de la sobrenaturaleza. Oppiano Licario quiere provocar la sobrenaturaleza .... El capítulo XIII intenta mostrar un perpetum mobile, para liberarse del condicionante espacial. La cabeza del carnero, rotando en un piñón, logra esa liberación, en esa dimensión de Oppiano Licario, de la sobrenaturaleza, las figuras del pasado infantil vuelven a reaparecer (II, 1217-8).

The reader has already crossed the barriers of Time in the preceding chapter and is now captured in a seemingly ordinary Havana bus (known as guagua) which has nevertheless a most unusual power source:
A la derecha del timón, un círculo de acero brumido giraba sus piñones guiados por la testa decapitada de un toro. Giraba la testa cuando alcanzaba el omnibus mayor velocidad, los cuernos se a brillantaban como un fósforo que inauguraba su energía. De pronto, la testa esbozó una nota roja, el cansancio le hacía asomar la punta de la lengua y el fósforo irritado de los cuernos comenzó a palidecer (I, 565).

The reason given for the power failure suggests that over-use is at fault:

"Es un descuido suyo, no vio que la cabeza rotaba más de dos horas en el mismo sentido" (I, 566). I agree with Fazzolari that "Como esas barcas míticas que transportaban a los muertos a la otra orilla, el omnibus mágico lleva a los poetas a la ribera de la poesía" and that "De tanto surcar caminos trillados la poesía se ha paralizado," with reference to the bull's head. Everything about the bus before Oppiano Licario ascends is weary and worn, but it is not until José Cemí boards the magical bus that our attention is drawn to "la testa fresca, sonriente, del toro decapitado, las oleadas que le invadían al rotar en el círculo aceitado, suave por el pulimento caricioso de la inauguración de la fuerza" (I, 581). We have seen that the bull has been regarded as a symbol of personal power in Lezama's description of José María Cemí and its meaning is basically the same here. Cemí's presence in the bus is about to re-vitalize a certain enclosed world.

Lezama chooses to make it very clear that the moment of the unveiling of the treasure-bearer has arrived, in the form of the first person to board the bus. Although he is not named as Oppiano Licario there are many clues for the observant reader: he is "un señor alto, de piel cansada, con una mirada que al llegar al objeto parecía transparentarlo. Ligero transparente, eran las primeras palabras que se levantaban en nosotros al mirarlo" (I, 566). He has a certain ghostly appearance, he has that special piercing look, and gives the impression of great age because of his skin. Most of all, he appears to be one of an elite: "como quien sabe el valor de lo que oculta" (I, 567). His is an inner knowledge of great truths. His discernment
of genuine worth is applied to "unas monedas griegas" (I, 566) which he views at "El Tesoro, casa de antiguedades" (I, 566; my italics). The coins, like various Chinese artifacts strewn about the novel, are a symbol of the treasure saved up for Cemí, if he can contrive to be in the proper place at the precise time. The genuine coins bear on one face Minerva and on the other Pegasus, beings from mythology which can be taken to signify wisdom and the flight of the poetic imagination. They are mutually dependent.

The candidates for the treasure present problems for the critic because they are not only re-introduced unexpectedly but transformed. Both Fazzolari and Gimbernat de González have some useful points to make on these minor characters. Each examines the opening incident of the second chapter in which Cemí was found idly drawing a piece of chalk along a wall on his way home from school at the age of ten years; they choose this event because it precedes the very brief appearances of the mystery characters. For Fazzolari, "El capítulo dos es, en parte, una burla del mundo literario cubano...." 7 The fuss caused by those who discover Cemí writing on the wall is encapsulated, as Fazzolari shows, in these accusations by an onlooker:

Éste es - continuaba - el que pinta el paredón. Éste es - decía mintiendo - el que le tira piedras a la tortuga que está en lo alto del paredón y que nos sirve para marcar las horas, pues sólo camina buscando la sombra. Éste nos ha dejado sin hora y ha escrito cosas en el muro que trastornan a los viejos en sus relaciones con los jóvenes (I, 30).

She concludes that the passage may be a reference to "el escándalo producido por una literatura hermética y novedosa, la de Lezama, en un país acostumbrado al más pedestre de los realismos," followed immediately by "una serie de rápidos bosquejos individuales que deben ser caricaturas de distintos escritores de su época, probablemente de colaboradores de la Revista..."
The victims of this satire reappear in the thirteenth chapter, she claims, as "los jóvenes poetas de Orígenes que reavivaron el fuego de la poesía en Cuba, que yacía apagado, con la ayuda de Oppiano, el Ícaro." However, I find identification of these feckless characters with the Orígenes group rather dubious, particularly in the thirteenth chapter, where I believe they are shown to be unacceptable to Oppiano Licario, Lezama's idea of pure poetry. One could take this as a sign of the author's arrogance, of course, but this label sits uneasily with one who has preached against the "Neronian" attitudes of Foción. I suspect that Cemi and Oppiano Licario symbolize the Orígenes group, while the others are definitely excluded.

Gimbernat de González discusses the same early incidents (I, 28; 36) in conjunction with those of the thirteenth chapter. Having examined in detail Cemi's discoveries about objects and relationships in space and time, (I, 496-503), she decides that this penultimate chapter is an example of just such a skilful arrangement of objects or persons. Lezama achieves on paper what Cemi effects with his unifying mirada (also possessed by Oppiano Licario, as we have just seen):

This chapter is seen, therefore, as an allegory of the poet's selective powers, which come into full play with the presence of Licario. These originally very minor characters are enriched by recycling them from Cemi's childhood at the military camp to his adult imagination. Rather than identifying them closely with a particular group, I would prefer, with Gimbernat de González, to emphasize the very fact of their reappearance.
Lezama's working method of transforming the known into familiar yet intriguing entities for his own purposes. This critic notes the accusations hurled at the child by faceless inquisitors: "Su acusación: el tiempo confundido, el tiempo del pasado y del futuro enemistados, el tiempo simultáneo, 'sin hora'" 11 The child carries a piece of chalk, obviously a symbol of his vocation; he challenges the group with his writings and finds himself in the centre of an empty space, filled with people who are the potential for that writing: "El conjunto va a lograr su condensación de ese entretejido de historias como resultado de las relaciones entre los vecinos." 12 In other words, Lezama/Cemi draws inspiration from his immediate surroundings which are filled with rather colourful personages.

Cemi's accusers perform very different roles - a few phrases would sum up each appearance in the second chapter: Tránsulo "había domado potros ..." (I, 31) and was pursued by Luba (I, 36-7); Vivo "era perezoso y siempre estaba escapado. Su acción adquiera siempre el relieve de la fuga" (I, 31); Adalberto Kuller was a "caricaturista de cafetines", spent much time at home with his Austrian mother and during sexual intercourse "se extasiaba" by secretly looking at a photograph of his parents (I, 33); Martincillo, el flautista, was variously known as La Monja or La margarita tibetana because of his sexual preferences and had an "afán filisteo de codearse con escritores y artistas" (I, 33). This latter character is also noted for his gluttony, described in unpleasant terms: "semejante a la hinchazón de uno de los anillos de la serpiente cuando deshuesa un cabrito" (I, 34). Lastly, "la cuarentona Lupita" indulged in sexual encounters with an oriental gentleman with particular needs (I, 35) while Mamita, the aged mother figure, presided over all. The descriptions, however brief, almost exclusively involve sexual preferences which we have seen to be very closely linked with creativity and poetry. All seem rather confused and unproductive here. Gimbernat de González points out that there is an actual event amid these
descriptive paragraphs, one which will connect Vivo, Adalberto and Martincillo: "Se acordaron para dibujar y poner una inscripción alusiva a las secretas galerías de mosaicos pompeyanos" which "iba a sobresaltar a la vecinería" (I, 36). This results in a most embarassing event:

Una mañana, la puerta del flautista escandalizaba con un cilindro y dos ruedecillas. Y al pie se leía esta enigmática inscripción egipcia: "Pon las manos en la columna de Luxor/y su fundamento en dos ovoides./Pon las manos en larga vara de almendro/donde dos campanas van" (I, 36).

Already, we see that these cameo parts are filled by persons with sexual, that is, creative problems, which will become more important in the thirteenth chapter. In this respect, I do not agree with Gimbernat de González when she says that "entre los participantes del viaje en ómnibus y aquellos del capítulo II, descubrimos que solo hay un punto de recurrencia: los nombres." 13

It is quite true to say that "los nombres propios concurren en el ómnibus llenos del sentido que las historias inmediatas anteriores les dan, además de ofrecer un falso pasado conocido, que les da una profundidad y una riqueza como personajes, que no tienen." 14 However, I suspect that the main point here in common with later events is their disordered passions.

In the thirteenth chapter, Martincillo is a craftsman (a carpenter), suffers from the absence of both wife and lover at Christmas time and seems to be a man of the senses. Any artistic pretensions are defeated by his gluttony and sexual appetite. We might take the lack of feminine presence in his life as a sign that he is not in control of himself through being cut off from his anima and therefore the creative power of the Unconscious.

For this reason his eating and his painting are confused: "Como había estado contorneado el frustrado esbozo de un gamo, tenía aún en la saliva el sabor de los colores utilizados, de tal manera que su saliva era como la del gamo fatigado en una venatoria ..." (I, 568-9). He is the prey of
disordered passions and so the sign "Todo muy barato" (I, 569) becomes for him "Todo es nada" (I, 570) at that most creative of times, the Christmas season, when the signpost to the ultimate goal (Resurrection) first appears. Seated on the bus next to Oppiano Licario "el veneno de sentirse artista le levantó el desdén para el vecino"; on the other hand, "el anticuario, mucho más valioso que el mueblero temeroso, no le precisó su llegada" (I, 570). They are incompatible.

Adalberto, in this later chapter, "se preocupaba en la poesía más de la voluptuosidad que del aliento ..." (I, 570); we are thus instantly warned that he too is unacceptable. He yearns for what all other men seem to possess already, Roxana, who refuses her favours to him but is a "peach" who "mostraba tendencia a dejarse morder ..." (I, 571). While appearing highly desireable and precious, she is fact common property: "fácil para los indiferentes" (I, 571). At first it seems Roxana represents the difficulties of poetic creation: "aquel cuerpo maldito y delicioso, se le escabullía, se le enredaban innumerables dificultades ..." (I, 571). The many flowers in her garden could be seen as the products of her devoted admirers, or of her traffic with them. When he finally decides to buy her favours he is amazed by his success: "le doy cien pesos por una de su noches" (I, 573), but finds that the product of his night of bliss is a packet of pesticide for killing the aphids on Roxana's beloved and obscenely luscious flower garden: Adalberto has already felt "turbado por la reminiscencia sexual de los estambres y los pistilos" (I, 572). He flees towards the bus in horror, perhaps realizing that he has courted the whore of easy fame, not the princess of poetry.

Vivo does not appear to have pretensions to poetry but he is in danger of being swallowed up in the Unconscious embodied in Lupita who befriends him upon his mother's death ("Mamita se había ido a su eternal sombreado"; I, 574). Tired of the uncreative oriental love, Lupita manages to over-
whelm Vivo with her power and appetite for ecstasy: "se liberó de toda la influencia taoísta, el 'no hacer' quedó pulverizado en innumerables fragmentos deseados" (I, 575). There are echoes of Juan Longo's wife who also encourages her husband to "rendirse al sueño" (I, 576). Even his neighbours notice his drugged and drowsy state, for "Salía del sueño, la Lupita lo tironeaba para apoderarse de su energía sin descanso, y volvía de nuevo al sueño" (I, 576). Here we have a symbolic representation of someone who revisits the Unconscious (previously embodied in Mamita, the representative of the Great Mother) without any protection against its power. The remedy is found by Tránquilo, appropriately because he is aggressively active ("había domado potros"; I, 31) and can withstand the negative power of the Unconscious. The restoration of masculinity is achieved through breathing or movement of air, perhaps signifying oriental meditation and foetal breathing: "Vete a casa de tu hermano [Tránquilo] por la mañana, te desnuda y empieza a abrir y cerrar el acordeón" (I, 577). The remedial instrument is to be acquired from an antiquarian, which reminds one at once of Oppiano Licario. Vivo will slowly recover, but he is unfit for the meeting in the bus, as he still needs to balance his inner rhythms.

Finally, the true heir to the treasure appears. Chacha, the spiritualist, whom Cemí has consulted, is clearly a symbol of the positive powers of the Unconscious: "Su rostro era el de una vieja que ya no distingue entre sus hijos y el resto de la humanidad" (I, 579). Cemí is consciously searching, but for part of himself, Oppiano Licario. The two painters are puzzling but "el pintor amigo del pintor muerto" (I, 579) may reveal indirectly how Cemí feels about his past and future works. The dead painter has been prolific: "llenó sus libretas con sus indecisiones poderosas ..." (I, 578). The remaining painter, "que lo era de oficio, pintaba poco" (I, 578) and Cemí wants to unite the two, so that a kind of cross-fertilization may take place. Chacha reassures him that the dead painter, his past which
may enrich the future, will reappear: the three deaths which the latter painter is said to have witnessed are those of Alberto, José Eugenio and Doffa Augusta. He shares his witness with Oppiano Licario: "Las tres muertes que tuvo le preludieron el camino. Se ve que estaba muy amigado con la muerte." (I, 580) The novia of the dead painter is probably Cemi's anima or Muse, Rialta. He is therefore on the right track, as is shown by his mood; seated opposite to Oppiano Licario on the bus he is

momentáneamente indescifrable por el regreso del otro mundo, por el recuerdo de la cara de Chacha, madre serenísima, la madre que había reconocido tan pronto en la fragancia limpida del aire, a la amistad invocada, a un Eros que se movía entre la figura y la temblorosa imagen del recuerdo, que había sabido soplar lo preciso para estremecernos (I, 581).

Cemi has successfully identified his Muse, the creative power of his memory and of his unconscious mind and seems self-absorbed because he is just emerging from an exploration of these truths in the depths of his psyche.

Of course the treasure must rest finally with Cemi, despite its theft by Martincillo (for the sake of personal pleasure—the birthday of his queridita; I, 581). Martincillo cannot tell its worth: what he rejects is "el refinamiento de la aristía [sic] de la protección minervina en medio del remolino de la pelea" (I, 585). Like Fazzolari, the reader must turn to Lezama's "La dignidad de la poesía" to gain some insight into the reference to aristía and Minervan protection. In his essay Lezama juxtaposes areteia ("el destino y la sabiduría por la sangre"; I, 782) with aristía ("en el remolino la protección de Pallas Atenea"; II, 782). Fazzolari explains that areteia was the ancient belief that "sólo puede poetizar aquél a quien la sangre le ha dado la rica sabiduría, pero esa nobleza no es un privilegio gratuito, sino un deber de inmolarse en aras del bien común...." 15 Meanwhile, in Lezama's words:
es en la poesía de Baudelaire, liberada de la fatalidad de la sabiduría por la sangre, donde reaparece la nueva aristia. [...]. Con él la poesía pasó de un destino como clase sacerdotal a un castigo o maldición en la persona, a un suplico en la lentitud de las aproximaciones a la infinitud de la ausencia (II, 782).

**Aristía** is the curse or gift of the gods to the poet, his personal anguish or joy from which he will be inspired to create despite himself, in the search for answers to the mysteries of life:

pues es innegable que en cada remolino donde el hombre participa como metáfora, surge en él, tanto por ascen-

ción faústica, como por súbito mágico, el deseo, lentamente trágico, enloquecedor, fascinante, de apoderarse de una totalidad, a través de la poesía .... (II, 786).

It is most important to note that Lezama does not believe that the modern poets, amongst whom Cemí must be numbered, remain at the **aristía** stage, but that some sort of amalgam between poetic shaman and questing spirit should be formed:

La gran poesía no estaba en los poetas, sino en la última manifestación del período sacerdotal en Julio César. Al extinguirse el período etrusco y cumplimentarse el primer gran momento de la alabanza del salterio de David, y vol-
carse los símbolos de la revelación en el órgano aristo-
télico de la poesía de Dante, tenía en los últimos cien años, después de haber alcanzado en la aristía de Baude-
laire su primera fusión de gracia y conocimiento, que volverse de nuevo sobre la búsqueda de la areteia, para inmolarse en persecución de la nueva sustancia, de la plenitud temporal (II, 791).

In effect, Martincillo is unable to join this illustrious line of artistic forebears committed to the life of the spirit. Cemí qualifies for the posi-
tion because of his awareness of **lejanía**, of his own powers and because he rises above his personal suffering.

The coins slip out of the folds of Vivo's accordion ("un nuevo traque-
teo del omnibus, impulsado por el fuelle, hizo saltar las monedas, como una cosecha puesta a flotar por la llegada no avisada del aquilón"); I, 585), in
just such a manner as Vivo's acts of meditation may founder without real
foundation. They slip past Adalberto's outflung arms and into his pocket
so that he is ironically unaware of what he momentarily possesses: "... Adalberto habría alzado los brazos como un implorante ..." (I, 586). Vivo,
Martincillo and Adalberto are all those types which Cemi cannot be, if he
is to come into his inheritance. I do not agree with Fazzolari when she
suggests that those who handle the coins are "los elegidos," for it seems
to me that only Cemi is chosen. To save the situation, Cemi acts in
precisely the manner recommended by Oppiano Licario to some other passengers:
"Cada instante lleva un pez fuera del agua y lo único que me interesa es a-
traparlo" (I, 582), that is, he seizes the opportunity to return the coins
discreetly and restore order. It is his visit to Chacha, or the Unconscious,
which leads Lezama/Cemi to recognize himself and to begin to form his credo,
which will eventually lead to the creation of Paradiso. Oppiano Licario
voices the first principle of Lezama's imagery and symbolism:

La vida es una red de situaciones indeterminadas, cada
coincidencia es algo que quiere hablar a nuestro lado,
si la interpretamos incorporamos una forma, dominamos
una transparencia[
]. Lo único que puede interesarme
es la coincidencia de mi yo en la diversidad de las si-
tuaciones. Si dejo pasar esas coincidencias, me siento
morir cuando las interpreto, soy el artífice de un mi-
gro, he dominado el acto informe de la naturaleza (I, 582).

The phrase "me siento morir cuando las interpreto" implies, in my opinion,
that Oppiano Licario/Cemi draws nearer to life-giving death, nearer to a
higher order of reality, to lo incondicionado, when such opportunities are
taken up. He becomes part of sobrenaturaleza, crystalizing a precious mo-
ment, bringing about la plenitud temporal (II, 791, as above). His silo-
gística poética follows basically the same principle, as we shall see.

Cemi's acceptance of his Muse, his contact with the treasure, and the
moment of recognition with Oppiano Licario are really instantaneous; when
Cemi extracts his watch and sees his own initials, realization of his own
identity comes to him although it is expressed in the form of his alter-ego, Licario: "Extrajo ese pulso unas iniciales: J. C. Un escalofrío lo recorrió, se acababa de verificar silenciosamente algo que venía a ser un complementario tan forzado como prodigioso en su vida. Ya no se moriría intranquilo, incompleto" (I, 583). The religious overtones of the initials are most important, as is the date, Christmas. The reader is witnessing the beginning of Lezama/Cemi's conscious rebirth. As I have already stated, the possession of Self seems to be the initial step towards creation and resurrection. The initials reveal Cemi's personal relationship with Christ, in the sense that he can seek resurrection, like everyman; they show that he has been chosen for his poetic vocation; they reveal the extent of his self-knowledge, in that Christ's death is the perfect example of a conscious descent into the Unconscious and return to the light; they remind us of Lezama the poet's almost mystical reverence for the image, the incarnate Word. Cemi's sense of triumph, once he has held the treasure and replaced it, emphasizes that he has broken through all barriers to creativity: "Parecía como si hubiera roto todas las causalidades, o mejor, como si todas las causalidades hubiesen coincidido en su bolsillo tintineantes ..." (I, 586).

Now, anything is possible - all power is his to claim.

Guillermo and Hernández have noted the most appropriate meeting place chosen by Licario: his house which symbolizes all Cemi's most creative memories is Espada 615, which "los viejos habaneros podrían identificar dentro de la zona en que se encontraba el antiguo Cementerio Espada, de la época colonial...." There, as Oppiano Licario admits in his note "ya yo me puedo morir" (I, 587), meaning that he will hand over his task of witness to the new bearer of culture, Cemi. The meeting is arranged secretly, yet Cemi finds himself observing a motley crowd at first, on the seventh floor. In effect, his lofty position distorts his view of events in a lower room, where, as Souza remarks, he observes Martincillo, Adalberto and
Vivino involved in a strange game involving many of the arts." It is conducted by Oppiano Licario, dressed in yellow and white gymnast's attire; this suggests to me the earthbound nature of the activities, as does the imagery of the serpent which springs to Cemí's mind ("Tuvo como la sensación de una nebulosa ... que se convertía en serpiente ..."; I, 587). Earlier in the novel, Lezama quotes Cicero's remark that "el siete es el ruido de todo lo que existe" (I, 464). This statement was not made in negative sense in the original context (Lezama includes it in Fronesis' and Cemí's exposition of the Pythagorean number symbolism), but if we consider that the lift-man admits that he has brought Cemí to Urbano Vicario "by mistake", we can see that the lack of discrimination and the disorder of the totality of creation prevent Cemí from seeing clearly, on the seventh floor. The scene there is not for him:

Most people progress no further than this chaos:

This is the route which Cemí has followed through Foción and Fronesis and to begin to learn true wisdom he must return to the ground floor, to the number one, which symbolizes "la moneda" (I, 462), or the treasure: "El señor Licario parece que hay que subirlo de una mina" (I, 589), he is warned.

In fact, Oppiano Licario is ready and waiting; Cemí "No tuvo ni que tocar
"el timbre" (I, 589). All is now clear, the room uncluttered and the colouring of Oppiano Licario's clothes seems to symbolize harmony, as Souza explains:

Black represents the chaos that precedes organized creativity, that is, the initial stage of the creative process. And white can be the purification of these forces through the imposition of guidance and form. The two colours form a quality in which white (the shirt) is the upper and superior force.

The new rhythm which sounds is for Cemí alone: estilo hesicástico, that is, "equilibrio anímico" (I, 589), in place of estilo sistáltico or "las pasiones tumultuosas" (I, 589). Yet the actual initiation of Cemí does not immediately follow the words "entonces, podemos ya empezar" (I, 589).

Lezama is careful to explain the esoteric musical terms as used in his own context but draws a veil over Cemí's further development—at least, this seems to be the case when the thirteenth chapter ends so abruptly. Various curious characters have been included to show how Cemí makes his choices and discovers his vocation, virtually becoming Oppiano Licario.

Estilo sistáltico has finally been discarded and Oppiano Licario and Cemí may now draw ever closer together. They do not fuse entirely until the last few pages of the novel, but I believe we can take the Oppiano Licario of time tricks and systems of ideas as Lezama/Cemí. We have seen that his domestic circumstances are those of Lezama; his little word games reflect Alberto's early dabblings in language, but are much more sophisticated, a sign of hidden gifts: his mother knows that they are "la única alegría que él se había conquistado" (I, 591). He entertains his mother and sister with strange quotations: "En el momento en que le sirvieron agua exclamó: Aguada de pasajeros. La madre pensó: si además de pedir agua nos evoca un pueblo, nos da una alegría. Quizá, pensó la hermana, la criada no lo entienda y su única reacción cuando se irrita es que ensordece por tres días" (I, 592). This incident reveals the hidden dangers of Oppiano Licario's
virtuosity. He may be treated as a babbling eccentric, as his mother fears: "—Ha llegado a tener tal perfección —dijo la madre— en esa manera, no digo método, porque desconozco totalmente su finalidad, que me atemoriza si todas esas adecuaciones, ahora que ha llegado a los cuarenta años no logra aclararlas en un sentido final" (I, 594). Should he fail to express in some coherent form his accumulated ideas, all may result in "una benevolia locura" (I, 594) in which the world would cease to see him as "un estoico persiguiendo lo que él ha creído que es el soberano bien de su vida ..." (I, 594-5) and regard him instead as "un energúmeno que aulla inconexas sentencias zoroastricas ..." (I, 595). The "piedra filosofal" (I, 594) required is in fact the writing of Paradiso, in which Lezama's system of thought is exposed in living form. The concern of the women can be taken as Lezama/Oppiano Licario/Cemi's guiding Muse, his desire to live out his gift to the full. He does not want to end up as "una víctima de la alta cultura" (I, 595).

Oppiano Licario's personal danger is inscribed in his very name: "Fijemos ahora el inocente terrorismo nominalista. Oppiano, de Oppiano Claudius, senador estoico; Licario, el Ícaro, en el esplendor cognoscente de su orgullo, sin comenzar, goteante, a fundirse)" (I, 609). He is prepared to give all for an unknown gain, to complete his system of thought. His task appears impossible but it must be attempted nevertheless. Elsewhere Lezama has described his character in greater detail:

Oppiano Licario, que es una especie de doctor Fausto, de ente tibetano, el hombre que vive en la ciudad de estalactita, que significa el "Eros de la absoluta lejanía" donde se confunden lo real y lo irreal en ideal lontananza [...] que salta en la lejanía de la ruina tibetana, como una ciudad donde ya el hombre ha roto los límites de su frontera corporal, y lo que fluye en él es un ente de la libertad, un elfo, una especie de hijo de Helena de Troya y el doctor Fausto, una especie de "euforia"...  

His relationship with lejanía is already clear, but the Tibetan ruins are less easily explained until we turn to "Confluencias" where "la ciudad
tibetana" is synonymous with "la nueva causalidad" (II, 1217). Oppiano Licario's questing thoughts could indeed be compared with the systems of ancient religions which looked beyond ordinary causality. The euforion creature from Goethe's Faust (Part II, Act III) is another expression of the fate of Icarus, since he also falls to his death from great heights. Guillermo and Hernández conclude from their reading of Faust that "Oppiano viene a resultar así una síntesis, mezcla sutil del ideal de belleza clásica, representado por Helena de Troya, y el espíritu romántico-medieval de Fausto....", he will also have "algo de la temperancia y la resistencia estoicas": finally they emphasize that for Goethe, Euforion "es un símbolo de la poesía moderna, hija de la unión de lo clásico y lo romántico." 21 If the encounter and fusion of Cemi and Oppiano Licario is to have any meaning, it must produce a new culture, a new poetry, and so I find these comments relevant, although I prefer to draw no close comparisons between the two works. Licario embodies the personal past of Cemi and past culture and poetry, from which he learns. Fortunately for Oppiano Licario and Cemi, Lezama finds in Paradiso that their union is possible in the formation of his poetic system which appears in various forms in the fourteenth chapter. As Rodríguez Monegal points out:

Si al lector le está prohibido el acceso a la ceremonia iniciática misma, si el rito sólo aparece como ausencia, el vaciado de la forma, y no la forma misma, hay suficientes claves en el texto de Paradiso para poder reconstruir la poética que subyace ese rito de Oppiano Licario. 22

The principles upon which Paradiso is founded and the basic ideas expressed in many of Lezama's essays are examined once more as Oppiano Licario's beliefs.

The first example of how the system operates appears when Oppiano Licario manages to connect a dish of pheasant with the work of Kafka, in a conversation with his sister (I, 592-3). He deals with the unexpected:
"Licario había acabado de hablar con su hermana, con un silogismo de sobresalto, con lo que era una de sus más reiteradas delicias, demostrar, hacer visible algo que fuera inaceptable para el espectador ..." (I, 593). A first reading of Paradiso, for example, would be full of apparent non sequiturs which startle the reader out of complacency. Lezama's most concise rendering of the vivencia oblicua appears in an interview with Álvarez Bravo, in which he remarks that "es como si un hombre, sin saberlo desde luego, al darle la vuelta al conmutador de su cuarto inaugurase una cascada en el Ontario." 23 The second requirement is a true source of inspiration which the sister recognizes as the positive powers of the feminine Unconscious, embodied in the mother figure: "cuando él la llama a usted 'la sombra de mi extensión', nos da a comprender que su evidencia, su más descansada visualidad es el espacio que usted cifre como naturaleza ..." (I, 595). She is complete as her son's image of his Muse and so represents in a way "la ocupatio de los estoicos, es decir la total ocupación de un cuerpo." 24 She is the archetype. Thirdly, the stories of Oppiano Licario's apparent omniscience from childhood show that he is indeed "el conocimiento infinito." 25 He can see questions and their answers simultaneously and is indefatigable. The queries range from the sublime to the ridiculous and he is shown to be far superior to his tradition-bound teachers. This knowledge is of a higher order and frightens the onlookers, for it is another form of lejanía. It seems that Oppiano Licario represents implacable truth; he might be seen to embody some of Lezama's favourite phrases: "Charitas omnia credit"; "Lo imposible creible. Es decir, el hombre por el hecho de ser creyente, de habitar el mundo de la caridad, de creerlo todo, llega a un mundo sobrenatural pleno de gravitaciones." 26 He explains these, taken from St. Paul and Juan Bautista Vico, to Álvarez Bravo, apparently to show the importance of faith to the poet.

Oppiano Licario's most important tool, however, is his Sílogística poética (I, 603) upon which Paradiso is built:
Partía de la cartesiana progresión matemática. La analogía de los términos de la progresión desarrollaban una tercera progresión o marcha hasta abarcar el tercer punto de desconocimiento. En los dos primeros pervivía aún mucha nostalga de la sustancia extensible. Era el hallazgo del tercer punto desconocido, al tiempo de recobrar, el que visualizaba y extraña lentamente de la extensión la analogía de los dos primeros móviles. El ente cognoscente lograba su esfera siempre en relación con el tercer móvil errante, desconocido, dado hasta ese momento por las disfrazadas mutaciones de la evocación ancestral (I, 603).

Lezama propone expandir el concepto de metáfora de (A es B) a (A es B es X) para que haya un salto al desconocido. Todos los términos serían enriquecedores mutuos en estos syllogismas que Rodríguez Monegal describe como: "el método de una dialéctica similar a la socrática en su finalidad y hasta en su raíz pero opuesta por la vía elegida. En vez del pensamiento racional (el silogismo lógico), Oppiano Licario practica un pensamiento mágico (el silogismo del sobresalto)." 27 Él es empoderado para hacer conexiones a su antojo, lo que es por qué su libro se llama Súmula, nunca infusa, de excepciones morfológicas. Es un manual de lógica, en el que sólo el imprevisto se incluye ("nunca infusa"), así que hasta su encabezado es autónomano. Los lazos mágicos son efectos de las instantáneas realizaciones del observador, a través lo súbito, el flash de la visión, "opuesta a la ocupatio de los estoicos" porque es el opuesto de la permanencia y la inmovilidad. 28 Para Oppiano Licario, un silogismo poético saltará sobre las barreras causales contra las que lucha Lezama en Paradiso, juntando elementos distintos para crear una nueva realidad: "Así, en la intersección de ese ordenamiento espacial de los dos puntos de analogía, con el temporal móvil desconocido, situaba Licario lo que él llamaba la Sílogística poética" (I, 603). Él construye su idea a partir de la preposición menor de uno de los silogismos de Dante De Monarchia: "Todos los gramáticos corren" (I, 603), lo que invita especulación acerca de la preposición mayor y la deducción. Esta especulación conduce a diferentes inicios; en este caso la preposición menor será resuelta "en dos puntos
emparejados de una realidad gravitada como conclusión" (I, 603). Sometimes the mysterious third point gains some independence: "enclavado en su propia identidad, lograba crear una evidencia reaparecida, distanciada las más de las veces de la primera naturaleza en su realidad" (I, 603).

Most interesting of all are those occasions on which the unknown point, the deduction:

revela a través de la ofuscadora seguridad de una forma, aparentemente dominada por las mallas de la analogía, su conversión en un cuerpo no subordinado a los tres puntos anteriores, pues aquella inicial morfología iba a la zaga de una esencia esperada, quando de pronto el resultado fue la presencia de otro neuma que aseguró su forma misteriosamente (I, 604).

This is the precious moment in which the poet/shaman/hero is enabled to touch the beyond, the moment of lejanía or sobrenaturaleza. It is the climax of "el camino o método hipertélico, es decir, lo que va siempre más allá de su finalidad venciendo todo determinismo." Paradiso is one long illustration of the method since the blending of the two disparate elements to produce a third, allegorical meaning, is a constant feature of the novel. It is perhaps for this reason that Rodríguez Monegal has recommended an analogic reading of the novel, basing his suggestion on Dante's definition in Il Convivio (II, 1):

conviene empezar por la exposición literal: es decir, el estudio de "la bella mentira"... La segunda exposición es la alegórica, la que busca la verdad escondida .... La tercera es la que deduce la moral de la historia .... Y la cuarta y última es la análogica, la que revela "las cosas sublimes"...

Oppiano Licario and Lezama are searching for "las cosas sublimes" through language, and large tracts of Paradiso could appear barren of meaning unless we bear in mind this purpose behind Lezama's allegory. Otherwise passages such as the game of yaquis, José María Cemí's dream, Dr. Selmo Copek, Doña Cambita's death, the Michelenas episode, Alberto's meetings with Oppiano
Licario and Death, Foción's encounter with Daisy and George, Fronesis' behaviour on the Malecón, some of Cemi's visions, chapters XII and XIII and Oppiano Licario himself might seem nonsensical. Just as in the Silogística poética, we must always look beyond ordinary causality to find poetic truths. As R. González has pointed out: [Lezama] "No crea una ilusión de la realidad, que considera como irrespetuosa. Se trata de una novela, de personajes, es una invención. Los personajes no hablarán con amaneramientos o toques pintorescos. Son arquetípos, piezas que el autor mueve y utiliza." 

They are like Alberto's chess pieces, or the various premises of a syllogism, manipulated as necessary to the overall pattern. Ortega goes so far as to say that "la tríada de elementos parece ser la forma metódica de esta novela..." with particular reference to the characters: "los hechos y los personajes se desenvuelven por acción de un tercer elemento, sugiriendo así que el tercer término de la figura deduce un destino." Examples would be Alberto leading José Eugenio to Rialta, or Fronesis, Foción and Cemi.

It is most important to bear in mind the religious significance of the number three for Lezama: "En los misterios: el Padre, el Verbo y el Espíritu Santo" (I, 463); and four: "la fuente de la naturaleza que fluye siempre, Dios" (I, 463). The elements of the poetic syllogism are endowed, therefore, with an almost mystical power.

Naturally, Oppiano Licario is interested in eras imaginarias, which we have seen used elsewhere in the text; the phenomenon is described as follows:

Las situaciones históricas eran para Licario una concur- rencia fijada en la temporalidad, pero que seguían en sus nuevas posibles combinatorias su ofrecimiento de perenne surgimiento en el tiempo. Las concurrencias históricas eran válidas para él, cuando ofrecían en el temporal persecución de su relieve, un formarse y deshacerse, como si en el cambio espacial de las figuras recibiesen nuevas corrientes o desfiles ... (I, 605).

His infinite knowledge enables Licario to have a heightened degree of awareness of Time at Jorge Cochrane's party where he is called upon to relate
Time and poetry in a game of chance as an "excelente medidor del tiempo" (I, 608). The reader is reminded here of Cemi's fame as "el hombre que mejor había dominado el tiempo" (I, 458). This power comes from a command of self, an inner unity. Yet a certain confusion of historical moments arises in the everyday life of Oppiano Licario, whose memories of the Sorbonne become involved with Parisian revolutionary activity and his job at the office in Havana: the turmoil there causes "un trastrueque de vivencias" (I, 610). His customers become the Paris mob, and "Fue arrastrado, se abandonó, gozó en perderse y en rendirse a las arenas donde nacía algún río" (I, 610). It is as if he is able to tap the collective memory of the very streets with his powerful imagination. He spans many eras, his own and that of the sans-culottes who burst into Baron de Rothschild's palace. Back in the twentieth century Paris, Licario manages to evoke the history of a non-existent exhibit in that very place: "se sentó frente a una vitrina vacía, donde rezaba la misteriosa inscripción: Piezas de la vajilla de trifolium de cerezos, de la familia imperial del Japón, desaparecida en vida del barón" (I, 611). Employing the principle of the silogística poética and spanning the ages, Oppiano Licario is able either to fabricate or recreate the history and loss of the exhibit. This is an example of the evocative power of ausencia at work to lead the poet to some new fact or truth. The beautiful service has been destroyed due to the fear that it is no longer unique, indeed Licario can reproduce it by imagination.

Oppiano Licario's Parisian adventures may represent to some extent Cemi's apprenticeship to European culture as well as being a demonstration of the synchronicity of events in Lezama's poetic system. They are preceded by Licario's vision of a senator's murder, whilst reading a newspaper "que lo mismo podía ser La Gaceta veneciana, de 1524, o una Recopilación de avisos para mercaderes de Amsterdam, de la misma fecha" (I, 616). The topic of his reading is the murder of a senator, but all the events are
reflected through his mind in slow-motion, to emphasize the inevitability of death: there is a multiplicity of assassins who "eran lentes y parecían llegar nadando por debajo del mar. Los cambios en las situaciones se logran en la misma unidad temporal, pues el aumento de las figuras apenas podía ser señalado al apresurar la velocidad su carrusel en el terror" (I, 617-8). Mendell believes that the Gaceta found by the senator's body belongs to Licario and is a sign that "también Licario, el destructor del tiempo, el adepto medidor de lo temporal ... debe morir." I find this plausible since the interlude involving Logakón and Oppiano Licario seems to suggest the latter's slow decline. Following on from this apparent premonition of death, we find Oppiano Licario attending an ordinary performance of Faust in Paris; even here "sentía que cada una de las porciones del tiempo que confluyan en la ópera, le producían la sensación de una gran piel en la que podía penetrar o tironear de ella, para en su flaccidez apoderarse de algunos de sus nuevos rejuegos de cono de cristal en la visión" (I, 618). His powers seem to be waning and he is haunted by a phrase: "a su lado, a la izquierda" (I, 619) over a period of several days. In this haunting he is similar to the night wanderer of the twelfth chapter and when a stranger arrives to take up position on the left "parecía llegado de la eternidad" (I, 619). Is he death, or the herald of Cemí's approach?

The phrase having changed to "el cuarto de la izquierda" (I, 620), Oppiano Licario's landlady goads him into investigating the place: "-Toma la llave y reconstruye lo que allí puede haber pasado -" (I, 620). He is invited to create an event, as he created anew the story of the Japanese dishes. The complete emptiness of the room "tenía la fuerza impulsiva de un colchón de circo" (I, 621), haunting him as did the phrase. Emptiness, a void, is all around him: "vío la mesa a su alcance vacía ..." (I, 621), "La mesa olía ya a vaciedad ..." (I, 622). Out of the void erupts a shooting in the opera house, during which "Licario sintió a su izquierda un
estremecimiento trepando por propia escalerilla" (I, 622). It is almost as if Oppiano Licario has caused the death by the power of his imagination, mixing his fiction with that of Faust. The date is noteworthy as being very close to Lezama's birthday (19th December, 1910), the crime being committed on 19th June, 1910. The crime enacted, Licario's mind returns to his lodgings, Gay Lussac, where he reconstructs the plotting of the conspirators in the room on the left. Logakón is chosen as the assassin; he has "ojos bondadosos pero implacables" (I, 623) and is "el escogido, el preexistido, para llevar esas afinaciones contra el Destructivo ..." (I, 623). He is predestined to perform an act against evil and destruction but it is at first difficult to see what the enemy may be, unless it is outworn culture (Faust) or death itself. He is filled with doubts which almost render him impotent: "las afinaciones contra el blanco eran conciencia medular de visibilidad, y esa misma conciencia lo ofuscaba y le impedía, lo aclaraba tanto que le servía de límite y ahí estaba" (I, 623). Logakón is left with a choice between the dark world of the conspirators and the temptation offered by the landlady's niece. If we take the niece as a symbol of the benevolent Unconscious, a possible anima or Muse for Logakón, and the Destructivo as Death, we can see that Logakón is trapped by the Earth Mother, the negative enveloping side of the Unconscious and is a reluctant rebel: the landlady says that she knows "jamás mirarás a mi sobrina, el misterio de su crecimiento te parece menos misterioso que ir contra el Destructivo" (I, 624) and Logakón expresses only a token interest in the landlady's offer, thinking "Quizá haya querido ponerme entre dos imanes para inmovilizarme ..." (I, 625). More seriously still, he begins to compare himself with Oedipus (I, 625) who suffered spiritual and then actual blindness; he forsakes the path of the true hero and refuses the help of an anima, unlike Fronesis whose route to creativity depends on this: Logakón "no supo desenredar la madeja y tuvo que asesinar" (I, 627) and "No pudo ni enamorarse de mi sobrina,
ni ser su amigo, las dos fuerzas que lo podían haber salvado" (I, 627). He cannot make of the conquered feminine either a physical or spiritual partner, and so is linked with death; he is unable to make that "tremendous step forward when a feminine, 'sisterly' element ... can be added to the masculine ego consciousness as 'my beloved' or 'my soul,'" as Neumann put it. 34

The name "Logakón" may come from logos, meaning "word" in Greek, or from logikos, the science of reason. If Logakón follows ordinary causality he is automatically debarred from further progress in Lezama's system. Planting himself feet first in the earth (the Unconscious) is quite unsuccessful ("Cuando se adormecía se le caían las raíces y perdía los regalados parapetos de la altura"; I, 628). I can only guess that this fails because it represents an unthinking approach to the source of his inspiration. Head-down burial is equally disastrous, despite the fact that it must symbolize a conscious descent, and is shown to be more viable to the rechristening of Logakón as "Logakón Posible". The experience concludes in the words of the first person narrator so that the sufferings are more personal and the character become more closely identified with Oppiano Licario and Lezama. The task of delving into Mother Earth is hazardous and there is always the danger of becoming trapped, whatever treasures may meanwhile emerge. It is a task suitable for Icarus, for Cerberus (guardian of Hades) attacks the roots and Logakón Posible cannot win: "si salvaba las raíces, inutilizaba el crecimiento de penetración de mis nuevos ramajes en el aire, y si, por el contrario, reforzaba los delicados brotes hojosos, el can se ensañaba con mis raíces" (I, 630).

Oppiano Licario slips into decline after the death of the woman who represents his Muse, Doña Engracia de Sotomayor, a fact which must be connected with the relationship of Cemí and Rialta and is perhaps prophetic of Lezama's personal grief over his mother's death in 1964, two years before the publication of Paradiso. Doña Engracia dies "cuando Licario había
refinado su técnica de medición temporal" (I, 630) as if she is no longer needed; we know that Alberto's and Doña Augusta's deaths are intimately connected, but that of Oppiano Licario is by no means final. The older Cemi (Oppiano Licario) is saved by creative childhood memories which lead to the completion of a great work, in this case _Paradiso_. Life comes from death once again. The inspiration, the childhood sense of _lejanía_ (tao) is rediscovered when the final meeting takes place. The spirit of Oppiano Licario is resurrected in _Oppiano Licario_ (published in 1977 and beyond the scope of the present study). The deaths of poet and Muse do not signify that of poetry itself, which is to find its new champion in Cemi who comes to life at the moment when Lezama begins his novel. Like the man who realizes later in life that the experience of waiting for inspiration has re-created it for him, Oppiano Licario begins to return to childhood before death: "el exquisito animal para lo temporal había regresado al virtuosismo infantil ..." (I, 630), recalling games which "le presagiaba desde temprano las sublimaciones de _El ícaro_"; these memories seem to swallow him up: "Se sentía por esos días como unos apresuramientos de la sangre y en la mente un anublamiento de instantes ..." (I, 631). Time appears to be conquering him and in his dream of Icarus in the waves he is seen by the fisherman as one of those undesirable "monstruos de tierra" (I, 632), a sign of his fall back to Earth and death.

Oppiano Licario's last words, "Davum, davum esse, non Oedipum" (I, 632), have caused much controversy. Lezama attributes them originally to Descartes, which Fazzolari accepts, interpreting Davum as the name of a slave and deciding that:

Hay, pues, una declaración y un rechazo. La declaración es: el hombre es un esclavo en la tierra ... el rechazo puede que sea ... un adiós a la materia, ya que Edipo es el hombre casado con su madre, esto es, con la materia. Con estas palabras Oppiano Licario nos quiere decir: somos esclavos de la materia; al morir nos liberamos y podemos llegar a la visión de la gloria y al conocimiento infinito.
Santi attributes the phrase to a slave reconciled to his master in Terence's *Andria*, as a commonplace of fidelity. He finds it misquoted also in the *Objections et réponses aux Méditations de Première Philosophie* (1641), a collection of refutations of Descartes' theories of first causes, forming an appendix to the *Méditations*. In the mouth of Catero, it becomes "Davus est Davus et non Oedipus"; here, according to Santi, "sirve como prueba de la inutilidad del causalismo." Santi's conclusion is that what Cemi learns from Licario's apparently whimsical quoting is "el arte de citar mal, de repetir el original con cambios, de cuestionar la autoridad y la anterioridad sin remordimientos: de ser Edipo sin complejo." While I find both interpretations most interesting, I would put a slightly different emphasis on Oppiano Licario's phrase, his last "Non Oedipum, Non Oedipum," because it implies above all that although he may be a slave (of the earth? of the Unconscious?), he is not spiritually blind, that his descent has been deliberate and purposeful, full of hope of a noble ascent which is yet doomed, like that of Icarus.

Cemi's troubled thoughts heralding his sudden reappearance in the novel reveal that he is struggling to maintain a balance between opposites, despite the reader's earlier assumption that he has conquered *estilo hesicástico*: "¿Se había despedido de Fronesis? ¿Se volvería a encontrar en el puente Rialto en el absorto producido por la misma canción? ¿Cerca estaría Foción en acecho?" (I, 633). Cemi will be guided around these by now familiar symbolic personages by the brilliance of the moon, which is itself a symbol of female mysteries and renewal. By her light, Cemi divines two nights: "una, la que sus ojos miraban avanzando a su lado. Otra, la que trazaba cordeles y laberintos entre sus piernas" (I, 634). The first "seguía los dictados lunares" and "era la noche estelar que descendía con el rocío" (I, 634) while the second leads him towards "las entrañas terrenales" and "era la noche subterránea, que ascendía como un árbol, que sostenía el
misterio de la entrada en la ciudad ..." (I, 634). Cemí differentiates between them but does not choose one or other. Both seem to have potential for fruitfulness until he visits the "casa lucifega" (I, 636); just as he cannot discern the conversations therein, Cemí notes that "la casa lucifega iluminada y el halo lunar que la envolvía le hizo detener la marcha, pero sin precisar detalles ..." (I, 635; my italics). In other words he does not recognize Oppiano Licario's last abode, filled with light from above ("el halo lunar"), light which is a gentle opalescence reminding Ulloa of "la que perciben los taoístas en su búsqueda de la inmortalidad." 38 Cemí is almost blinded and cannot decipher any hidden meanings in the place, as yet; meanwhile the reader may recognize elements from Cemí's past, the verse from Alberto's death scene (I, 273-4), even the comparison of light and water ("Chorreaba la luz en los tres pisos"; I, 635) which this episode shares with the Micheletena orgy, both placed in potentially fruitful night settings.

Although unable to assimilate the light (the inherited wisdom of his ancestors?) Cemí continues to benefit from its presence: "Cemí adelantó la cabeza, después la echó atrás, como quien quiere cristalizar la luz. Pero lo seguía acompañando con gran nitidez ese cuadrado de luz" (I, 636). We have seen the effect of his parents' guidance continually. Mendell, noting the "efecto de un ascendit!" (I, 635) afforded by the house, explains that "esta luz es el arma necesaria para que Cemí, como Orfeo, descienda a los infiernos y rescate a sus muertos"; as to its source, she emphasizes quite rightly that "Licario, foco que irradiía esta luz, está ya muerto; la muerte, una vez más, impulsa a Cemí hacia el encuentro con la imagen." 39 It is Cemí's fearless gaze into lejanía, in which death is the ultimate ausencia, which protects him on his journey. On his way he encounters a children's playground and another house which is like "un bosque en la sobrenaturaleza" (I, 639). Taking the three places together, Fazzolari finds that they
represent "la naturaleza perdida (la casa iliminada); la naturaleza caída (el tiovivo), y la sobrenaturaleza (la casa del bosque), que es el claro-osuro o la unión de los contrarios." 40 This view matches the concept of tao lost and regained which I have previously uncovered; the final pages enact the essential meeting of the twelfth chapter. 41 Aided by the light from the first house, Cemi is not misled by the musiquilla, the tunes of the fairground which seem to be innocuous at first. He senses the sinister nature of the old care-taker who recalls a similar symbol of rampant sexuality met by Alberto (I, 333 6); Cemi feels no desire to remain nearby, despite the difficulty of withdrawing: "Cada vez que daba un paso le parecía que tenía que extraer los pies de una tembladera" (I, 637-8). It is his inner voice of wisdom which saves Cemi from the merry-go-round of mediocrity, for although the wood of adolescence is confusing, natural forces are at work and "sintió como un llamado, como si alguien hubiese comenzado a cantar .... Era un ruido inaudible, la parábola de una pistola de agua ..." (I, 638). Reassured by this voice, Cemi is "obligado a mirar hacia atrás" (I, 638), but now childhood pleasures become nightmares: the caretaker resembles a long-nosed fiend, rather like some representations of the negative Earth Mother ("Cemi pudo percibir en aquel rostro una espinilla negra, a la que la prolongación de la blancura daba como el tamaño de una lengua que resbalara a lo largo de la nariz"; I, 638). He also has "el aspecto del timonel de una máquina infernal" (I, 638). This is Cemi's moment of realization that childhood must be forsaken for the sake of true creativity.

Nature, sexuality, both are transformed into supernature in the next stage, as they were in Cemi's meditations on poetry and in chapters XII and XIII. The "llave de excesiva dimensiones, como para abrir el portón de un castillo" (I, 639) emphasizes the effort and perhaps greatness of spirit required to open the door to poetry. I feel that the symbolism of the Great Mother, of the intuitive, feminine Unconscious is still at work when we
consider that the corridor is "aclarado por la blancura lunar" and that its shape is reminiscent of a tunnel, "era todo de ladrillos y su techo una semicircunferencia de ladrillos rojos" (I, 639), almost like a vagina. Could Cemi's infant dream have become an adult vision of the wholeness derived from a return to the womb, to the Unconscious? Many symbols of the quest "lanzas, llaves, espadas y cálices del Santo Grial" (I, 639) give way to one image of perfect unity which is essential to ParadiSO: "Una guirnalda entrelazaba el Eros y el Tánatos, el sumergimiento en la vulva era la resurrección en el valle del esplendor" (I, 639); life from death, possession of self and soul. The terrace at the end of the corridor may be the womb, the Unconscious, but the image of "un dios Término" which there resides is no longer threatening: "su graciosa cara era en extremo socarraona ... " and "La carcajada que rezumaba el rostro del Término, era de la misma índole que la alegría que ordenaba su gajo estival" (I, 640). Cemi is able to approach without danger, "Fue calmosamente a la esquina del dios ... " (I, 641). Sexual energy is transposed into poetic creativity which is enveloped in images of eternity; of the house itself it is said, "En lo alto de sus columnas chorreaban calamares, los que se retorcían a cada interpretación marina para receptor los consejos lunares" (I, 640). The squid spreads its ink at the bidding of that great image of the female, the sea: "Una mezcla de pulpo y estalactita [symbolic of permanence and eternity] trepaba por aquellas columnas ... " (I, 640). The house is empty or the inhabitants are asleep but meanwhile images of eternity are slowly formed: "Mientras duraban sus sueños, iban uniéndose la gota de agua que forma la estalactita y la gota de la tinta del calammar, ablandando una piedra que repta y asciende en la medianoche" (I, 640). Something of permanent value is offered skywards by the union of the poet and his unconscious mind in an act of creation.

Beside the controlled Término, a game of chess between two scarecrows disguised as clowns seems to be performed in slow-motion until "los dos
bufones, rendidos al sueño, doblaron sus cuerpos y se abandonaron al éxtasis del lagarto..."; they have become transfixed "como si sobre sus cabezas hubiera caído la gota de agua que forman las estalactitas, unida a la gota de tinta del calamar" (I, 641). A simple recollection sends Cemi off on the trail to poetry again: "en francés los alfiles son llamados fous, locos" and "están disfrazados de bufones" (I, 641). A quotation scrawled on the chess table completes the connections: "Les fous sont aux échecs, les plus proches des rois" (I, 641). As Fazzolari has succinctly said, "El espantapájaros es el alfil, el loco, el poeta que intenta lo imposible, la imagen de la resurrección, por eso es el que está más cerca del rey —¿Dios?" 42 Cemi must accept his vocation as God's fool. He is then immune to all past evil influence such as the caretaker who is seen for the beast he is: "la espinilla negra era su cuerno" (I, 641).

Visiting the lighted house again, at Oppiano Licario's wake, Cemi recognizes and is received by his teacher's deputy, his sister Ynaca Eco, whose name suggests her close identity with him. The new feminine presence which she brings implies the renewal of the anima or Muse and is simultaneous with Cemi's realization that his path was predestined: "comprendí de súbito..." (I, 642). He recalls various images of death from his childhood, especially his father's rhyme about death, in the phrase "andar por el otro camino" (I, 643), from (I, 201), which urges him to fight death with poetic imagery. A vision of Oppiano Licario alone in the bus encourages Cemi to take up his place and the ritual viewing of the corpse reveals to him all that was Oppiano Licario: "la radiación de las ideas, la columna de autodestrucción del conocimiento" (I, 644). Now, "rendía la llave y el espejo" (I, 644), but Cemi must also inherit "una total confianza religiosa en sí misma" (I, 643), for his own peace of mind. Oppiano Licario remains true to his nature until the last, for in the chapel the most impressive aspect is "la ausencia de respuesta" (I, 644); nevertheless he has the last
word, both in his poem bequeathed to Cemi, and in the last event in the novel. Various lines draw the two characters together: "No lo llamo, porque él viene"; "Yo estuve pero él estará"; others emphasize the immortality of Oppiano Licario who, as a symbol of the poet's desire to create images of the unknown, will last forever. Such lines are "en el egipcio paño de lino me envolverá" and "La araña y la imagen por el cuerpo / no puede ser, no estoy muerto" (I, 644). As part of Cemi's past and inspiration ("Vi morir a tu padre"; I, 644) he will be present as long as Cemi keeps faith in him: "ahora, Cemi, tropieza" (I, 644). 43

Cemi is catapulted into a strange vision by Oppiano Licario's poem, into "el inmenso desierto de la somnolencia" (I, 645). Before leaving the poem, I would like to return to the verse,

Yo estuve, pero él estará,
cuando yo sea el puro conocimiento,
la piedra traída en el viento,
en el egipcio paño de lino me envolverá. (I, 644; my italics)

Neumann's description of a third type of hero, who is just as valid as the active extravert and the introverted culture-bringer (José Eugenio and Fronesis), may help to explain the final mystery of Cemi's transformation and the frequent identification of Oppiano Licario with Osiris (for example, at the "Reino de siete meses" bar; I, 138). The third type, according to Neumann, is "the creative individual as the hero, who in the name of the collective — even when he is a lonely figure standing out against it — molds it into shape by molding himself." 44a This process is called "centroversion" and we are told that its fundamental trend " — the conquest of death through everlastingness — finds its mythological and religious symbol in Osiris. Mummification, the preservation for all eternity of the body's shape, as the outward and visible sign of its unity." 44b Neumann claims also that:
In alchemy, from which the term "ouroboros" is borrowed, we discover all the archetypal stages and their symbolism ... even the symbol of Osiris as the basic symbol of the arcane substance, so that the whole process of alchemical change and sublimation can be interpreted as a transformation of Osiris.

Cemí and Oppiano Licario have become one upon the death of the latter; Cemí's final transformation in which all opposites meet is described in terms of Chinese alchemical processes, as Lezama interprets them in "Las eras imaginarias: la biblioteca como dragón". He assumes the qualities of Oppiano/Osiris which lead to centroversion, "the innate tendency of a whole to create unity within its parts ...." 44d **Ritmo hesicástico**, involving internal balance, is attained through a process of purification and two critics have interpreted the complicated detail of the penultimate paragraph in slightly different ways, yet the consensus of opinion is that Cemí triumphs. C. J. Waller, relying heavily upon entries in G. A. Gaskell's *Dictionary of All Scriptures and Myths*, sees the "llamitas fluctuantes de las ánimas en pena" (I, 645) as "the spiritual energy of Buddhi consuming the lower qualities of the astral plane"; she continues, "the flames (souls) reach for the 'embrión celestial' ... the ideal or innermost state of existence pertaining to the Buddhic and Atmic planes"; the white tiger becomes the guardian of the West Quarter which "symbolizes the Buddhic plane," the *médula* is "the innermost spiritual nature of the soul" which "merges in a symbolic contact with the Buddhic plane, represented by the white tiger"; meanwhile the mirror is the "immortal soul as a reflector of the atma-buddhi," the fountain is "a manifestation of Truth, eternal reality, and source of Life"; finally "as the water carries the tiger to the angles of the mirror, he abandons it, strangling himself with his tail, apparently signifying the removal of the guard of the Buddhic plane and complete manifestation of the Atma-Buddhi." 45 I must emphasize that the relevant symbolism in Lezama's essay refers always to Taoism, not Buddhism.
Although I find Pérez Firmat's explanation of homosexuality in the novel unacceptable, his description of "Cemi's transfiguration into an androgyne" is perfectly plausible. From various sources Pérez Firmat determines that the white tiger and blue dragon symbolize the female and male principles respectively, that the embryo and medulla are symbols of cosmic unity and that "the mirror is a Taoist metaphor for the mind of the Holy Man who has become one with Tao." Here then are terms familiar from other parts of Paradiso, especially union with the Tao. Hence, with the fire representing the dragon, "The tiger revolving around the fire represents the fusion of the female and male principles..." with "each aspiring toward the One: the flames reach towards the celestial embryo; the tiger licks the medulla. Once the fusion has been achieved, Cemi's mind becomes the mirror of the Taoists in which the distinction male-female is obliterated." This is shown by the fountain quenching the fire and the tiger being strangled by its own tail. In my view, Cemi's glimpse of the purgados and ánimas en pena is a reference to purification of the soul, which grows through hell and purgatory to "llamaradas que querían tocar el embrión celeste" (I, 645). However the symbol of the white tiger requires some clarification to reveal the nature of the final transformation. In "Las eras imaginarias: la biblioteca como dragón," it is synonymous with "el número cuatro, al metal, al oeste, al blanco" (II, 894); then in Chinese alchemy "El tigre blanco ... todos esos colores comienzan a hervir, subramos que no son sustancias, son colores sometidos al fuego de cocción" (II, 897), for the purpose of "la fluencia, la enloquecedora riqueza de las mutaciones" (II, 897) to find "la gota de oro, del licor de la inmortalidad" (II, 898). The tiger is very important because white immediately precedes the perfect yellow, but after a time the processes are internalized: cinnabar becomes semen which "pasa al cerebro y al vientre .... En esos campos de cinabrio, el cerebro y el vientre, aparece el embrión de la inmortalidad"
El dragón es el mercurio. Es semen y sangre .... El tigre es el plomo. Es hálito y fuerza corporal. Sale del espíritu y es conservado en los pulmones .... Para ello el taoísmo estableció lo que ellos llaman la respiración embrionaria, que trataba de imitar la respiración del feto en el vientre maternal (II, 899).

Finally, the white tiger represents "comienzo de todas las mutaciones, región en la que penetra Lao-tse sobre su búfalo, en el vacío embrionario" (II, 906). The tiger licking the "médula de sauco" (I, 645) is indeed a sign that Cemi's troubled breathing and inner conflict are being eased by the essence of Taoism. Inspiration follows true self-knowledge, in the form of the fountain, since sexual energy is transmuted into poetic creation. The circular movement of the tiger ("un tigre blanco que daba vueltas circulizadas en torno a las llamas ..." I, 645) is a sign of the alchemical or spiritual process of union of opposites and the mirror being a sign of its successful completion, the tiger ceases to breathe outwardly: "llevara al tigre por los ángulos del espejo, lo abandonaba, ya muy mareado, con el rabo enroscado al cuello" (I, 645). Cemi has recovered foetal breathing, the inspiration of the maternal Unconscious and Tao. He is the puer senex (II, 890).

Cemi is now prepared to "descender a las profundidades, al centro de la Tierra donde se encontraría con Onesspiegel sonriente" (I, 645). The latter entity comes from the German ohne (without) and spiegel (mirror), according to Waller, who concludes that Cemi is "without reflection (without ego)," hence Onesspiegel "symbolizes the realization of Cemi's spiritual resurrection." 49 I believe that it reveals that he is completely at one with himself, since as Neumann has said, "Centroversion persistently strives to ensure that the ego shall not remain an organ of the unconscious but shall become more and more the representative of wholeness." 50 He has moulded himself, with Oppiano Licario's help, into a very special kind
of creator. As the new rhythm takes hold of Cemí, attended by another sign of balance ("Un negro, uniformado de blanco"; I, 645), the words take on their full meaning: "Era la misma voz, pero modulada en otro registro. Volvía a oir de nuevo: ritmo hesicástico, podemos empezar" (I, 645). As with so many characters in Paradiso, we have begun examining a stranger to the text, Oppiano Licario, and have then come full circle to José Cemí.
Notes


3 Ibid., p. 245.


5 José Lezama Lima, "Oppiano Licario," Orígenes, Year 10, No. 34, (1953), 18-46.


7 Ibid., p. 71.

8 Ibid., p. 71 and p. 72.

9 Ibid., p. 124.


11 Ibid., p. 122.

12 Ibid., p. 123.

13 Ibid., p. 126.

14 Ibid., p. 127.


16 Ibid., p. 125.

17 "Paradiso, culminación ...," p. 242.


19 Ibid., pp. 73-4.


21 "Paradiso, culminación ...," pp. 246-7.

22 "Paradiso: una silogística ...," p. 528.

24 Ibid., p. 34.


27 "Paradiso: una silogística ...," p. 528.

28 "Suma de conversaciones," in LGT, p. 35.

29 Ibid.


32 J. Ortega, "La biblioteca de José Cemí," Eco, XXVI (1973), 323.


34 E. Neumann, Origins, p. 204.

35 "Paradiso y el sistema," p. 129.


37 Textos, p. 108.


40 "Paradiso y el sistema," p. 130.

41 G. Pérez Firmat, in "Descent into Paradiso: a Study of Heaven and Homosexuality," HBalt., LIX (1976) states that there is a "point by point correspondence [in chapter XIV] with some of the salient features of Dante's traverse through the Other World" and so for him "the house [...] is a symbol of Paradise and the amusement park and the forest, of Hell and Purgatory respectively," p. 249.

42 "Paradiso y el sistema," p. 133.

43 Pérez Firmat, in "Descent into Paradiso ...," compares Virgil and Oppiano Licario as father figures and guides for Dante and Cemí, having likened Beatrice to Rialta convincingly. Dante and Cemí have in common a spiritual journey; Virgil and Oppiano Licario represent the Poet's quest and past poetry, but in addition Licario symbolizes Cemí's most personal experience of death. Pérez Firmat concludes, mistakenly in my opinion,
that, "his Dantean ascent not withstanding, Cemi is the focal point of this network of geotropic imagery, by which his homosexuality becomes evident," p. 251.

44 Origins, a) p. 221; b) p. 228; c) p. 255; d) p. 286.

45 C. J. Waller, "José Lezama Lima's Paradiso: the Theme of Light and Resurrection," HBalt, LVI (1973), 281. Her one source is G. A. Gaskell's Dictionary of All Scriptures and Myths, (New York: Jullian Press, 1960), which she consults for the meanings of "fires of hell" (p. 275), embriden (p. 242), celestial (p. 144), "West Quarter" (p. 810), "marrow" (p. 483), "mirror" (p. 503), and "fountain" (p. 804).

46 "Descent into Paradiso ...," p. 255.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

49 "José Lezama Lima's Paradiso: the Theme of Light ...," p. 281.

50 Origins, p. 298.
Conclusion

The characters with whom Lezama peoples the void, his masked images variably attired in elaborate symbolic costume, whom he saw as anxious to reveal their secret identities at the end of the Ball, are all attuned to the same melody which echoes through the pages of Paradiso. All revolve ceaselessly around the lonely central figure of José Cemi, whose task it is to unleash and harness the flow of creative potential within, to attempt the impossible without being engulfed and submerged. Through his alter-ego, José Cemi, Lezama leads the reader on a spiritual journey, progressing through various stages; the legendary family history of the hero, immortalized in the memories of his most venerable relatives, followed by a period of apprenticeship under the tutelage of various relatives embodying the active driving force in life, female intuition, fecundity and the contemplative side of life, and misguided creative energy. The conflicts and dilemmas of adolescence give way to the tranquility of victory over the Self and the gradual dawn of understanding which heralds the final acceptance by the hero of his vocation, poetry.

The challenge of the void, hurled at Lezama by his father's death and his mother's desire to make sense of the family's great loss, fills him with poetic inspiration, culminating eventually in Paradiso. Cemi's career as a poet/writer begins where the novel ends: "Estilo hesicástico, podemos empezar" (I, 645). Symbolic characters imbued with archetypal attributes act as signposts for Cemi on his marvellous journey, some helpful and others deliberately misleading, designed to tempt him away from the treasure he seeks. In struggling to comprehend personal tragedy his appreciation of
the need to seek answers is awakened; he is compelled to form an image to fill the void left by death and so realizes that in this way, as in Taoist philosophy, creative potential "issues" from the void. Cemi seeks the means of becoming actively contemplative so that he can come to terms with death, ausencia and lejanía, and from them draw inspiration, attaining lo incondicionado and abandoning sterile rationality. He is the new son/lover of the eternal Great Goddess, striving towards the Spring of poetic creation through the Winter of personal tragedy.

The transformed and expanded biographical personages taken from the family circle are superceded by broad concepts such as Reason, Primordial Chaos and Infinite Knowledge. Untamed natural forces compressed into struggling bodies leave the hero unsullied as he continues in his quest. Personified aspects of his nature buffet and wash over the central rock of his inner voice which comes from his Muse. She helps him to choose correctly between subjection to the terrible aspect of the feminine in his psyche and triumph over it, leading to assimilation of its intuitive inspirational powers. Complementary scenes and minor characters form parallels and contrasts with stages of the quest, providing a whole range of shading in the background. All opposites are reconciled at last in José Cemi who is then empowered to act as a mature being on the level of ritmo hesicástico (I, 645). The very close interrelationship of the characters revolving around Cemi facilitates this final resolution of opposites in harmony.

The pattern of the heroic quest which emerges in Paradiso is an ancient formula pertaining to legend, yet it is eminently suitable as a framework for Cemi's successful quest. Lezama conducts us on a marvellous journey through a spiritual world of heroes and dragons of the psyche. Paradiso is above all a novel about Lezama the poet, detailing the stages in his development which he has discerned after much meditation. It is interesting to compare his quest with that of the traditional hero, as Lezama himself
appears to have done. The result is a finely structured novel, given precise form through its characters.

To produce such a novel peopled by segments of one's own psyche requires a degree of self-awareness which most people would find intolerable. Lezama demands that the poet be conscious of unconscious thought processes, in order to attain ultimate knowledge. The poet is the aristocrat amongst thinking men, the Icarus who risks madness for his presumption, striving still to attain self-perfection.

Lezama may have been disappointed at the initially lukewarm reception of Paradiso by the public. He often referred to a proposed sequel under various titles; perhaps he suspected that his novel might not, after all, unmask his imagery, his sistema poético, and wished to emphasize still further the theme of creativity arising from sterility and death. Oppiano Licario was published posthumously in 1977 from Lezama's papers, in rather unsatisfactory and incomplete form. Many characters from Paradiso are re-introduced in new and surprising scenarios, far beyond Cuban shores. However, it seems unfair and lies beyond the scope of this study to pass judgement on a work which is unlikely to have appeared in quite the form intended by the author. Completely new characters become involved with certain others already known to us in a complex web of situations designed to emphasize and underline Cemí's assimilation of Reason and Chaos and his union with Oppiano Licario, demonstrated in his relationship with the latter's sister, Ynaca Eco Licario. It seems to me that the same patterns of ideas are being re-worked in Oppiano Licario in an attempt to make them clearer for those who seem to have misunderstood Paradiso. I consider that Paradiso alone, interpreted thematically through its characters, emerges as a unified and self-contained work, fulfilling Lezama's declared intention of "ir de una summa a una totalidad."
CUADRO DE LA FAMILIA DE LEZAMA, REMONTÁNDOSE A LOS ABUELOS *

José María Lezama de Tapia
M.
Eloísa Rodda Menendez

Andrés Lima Padilla
M.
Celia Rosado Aybar

José María Lezama Rodda
M.
Rosa Lima Rosado

Antonio Bustillo Ventura
M.
Rosa Lezama Lima

José Lezama Lima
M.
María Bautista Trevino

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