





Many have wanted to establish – in questionable affirmation – that writing must occur from within the nation, something absolutely necessary and essential. But it happens to be that the place where one makes a creation is not relevant. The important thing to consider is the product, the piece of work, the result in and of itself. Anything other than the resulting piece of work is limitation,

scarcity of resources, poorness; regardless of the location.

There is a body of compositions that integrate the *Poesía completa*<sup>2</sup> (“Complete poetry”) pieces of different authors translated and adapted by Baquero. It is dedicated to the writer, researcher and friend Lydia Cabrera, and appears under the title of *Poemas africanos* (“African poems”). The piece *Piano y tambor* (“Piano and drum”), of the author Okara of Nigeria, stands out in the compilation:

And I feel lost in the morning,  
disconcerted in the jungle,  
going from the piano to the drum,  
coming out of a powerful age  
towards the weakest one...

This poem expresses the communion and the juxtaposition of two worlds: the first being the refined and the cultured, and the second being the powerful ancestral voice. The values are universal and particular. They are exquisitely elaborate and they are primitive, pulsating in concert with the subject’s sensitivity which creates a magical, fragile and indestructible ensemble.

In the Cuban cultural panorama (possibly as a resonance of the influence of the black art’s boom in the European life), the duality was posed between the creation of universal character (exposing the values that included themes of greater plurality and richness), and the tendency which the black influence exalted. As expected, not all of the results were similar; that never happens. What did happen was that artistic painting succeeded in integrating and universalizing the aesthetic which came from Africa, such as the case of Wilfredo Lam’s excellent piece of work. In the case of literature (if we can emphasize Fernando Ortiz’s and Lydia Cabrera’s magnificent investigative piece, just like Nicholas Guillen’s

black poetry), there was a marked propensity towards the exaltation of folklore with dangers of localism; limits that endured the anecdotal or common places that were foreseeable.

### *Essayist Baquero*

Baquero cultivated a vast essayist labor. It is very interesting to comment on his book *Indios, blancos y negros en el caldero de América*<sup>3</sup> (“Indians, whites and blacks in the American melting pot”). Before the question, “are there or are there not races?” a wise response recurs: “the purity of blood of the human groups has been lost. Consider that there is no race. What exists is racism contrasted with a supra-racial universal and collective condition: the human condition.”

Racial prejudice is tested when two races inhabit the same region and especially when problems arise regarding unemployment, misery, rivalry regarding work, or opportunities to advance or to secure a position.

In part of his essay, he considers that racism exists as a result of fear; economic fear, fear of hunger. He poses that in the countries where different races integrate, one sees the other as an intruder, a threat because it argues that racism is misery’s child. He stresses that while geographic zones populated by inhabitants that merely earn their daily sustenance exist, it will be impossible to defeat racism.

To assert the non-existence of racial conflicts in Cuba either before or after 1959, constitutes the expression of a utopia. Due to all of the afore-mentioned conditions, racism in the Island is not manifested in verbal maltreatment or in the loss of particular sympathy, but in the imposition of barriers to the aspiration of that social group.

He points to fear as the crux of all struggles, “source of all hatred, war, distrust,” and he adds: “It is necessary for no human – no

ethnicity – to represent a danger of hunger to another.” In his essay, he considers that the fear is originated from a purely economic factor. In other words: racism is misery’s child and the fear of suffering it.

Likewise, Baquero warns that in places where two or more ethnicities are not evident (that is, where there are no visible differences), there are other forms of segregation, independent of whether they dress with regional garb or that of religious fanaticism. In every country there is a need to segregate population groups. Segregation, if there are no external signs that can establish a difference? There is one way: wealthy, middle class and poor.

Every social stratum is placed in its “class.” The segregation is of economic character, which increases the manifestations of racism, exacerbated in crises or in the proximity of crises. Gaston Baquero faces this theme with the same sensitivity with which he offers his poetry. He was a man of words who did not attempt to capture readers through impact or perplexity.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

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