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**LA PROPUESTA DECOLONIAL, TRANSCULTURAL Y NEOCULTURAL
EN *LOS CORTEJOS DEL DIABLO* DE GERMÁN ESPINOSA**

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Abstract

Historical novels have played a pivotal role in much of 20th and 21st-century Latin American literature. The issue of grappling with the past, its reconstruction, and transformation into narrative is a central element of *Los cortejos del diablo* (1970) by Germán Espinosa. This research focuses on demonstrating how the Colombian writer, through various technical and thematic processes, utilizes the colonial past as a space to generate knowledge about Latin American identity. This concern for identity extends to how colonial processes deeply impact the ethical and spiritual dimensions of colonized subjects. Consequently, we propose a methodology centered on decolonial theory, shedding light on traditions through concepts such as transculturation and neoculturation, which serve as a theoretical framework for analyzing the new ought to be.

Keywords: Literature, Colony, Colombia, Decolonial, Historical Novel

1 Introduction

Among the numerous literary representations of the colonial period in Latin America, Germán Espinosa's *Los cortejos del diablo* stands out as one of the most intriguing. Set in the 17th century, the Colombian work delves into the portrayal of colonial Cartagena amidst the early libertarian uprisings led by the Maroons. This context serves as a canvas where various characters interact: Juan de Mañozga, Catalina de Alcántara, Bishop Cristobal Pérez de Lazarraga, "the advanced one" Heredia, Pedro Claver, Rosaura García, and Luis Andrea. All accompanied by the choral apparatus hidden beneath the *us* representing the people of Cartagena.

Espinosa leverages the historical moment when different worldviews clash in the pluralistic Cartagena of the Colony, constructing a reflection on the implications of axiological confrontation. The methodology of this research focuses on contemplating different elements: culture, tradition, and the creation of identities. Above all, the unique dynamics in which the intersection of epistemologies aids in the rigorous analysis of complex social concepts: transculturation and neoculturation (Fernando Ortiz; Ángel Rama); and also in the literary realm: History and historiography (Hyden White). Thus, this research aims to answer the question: How does *Los cortejos del diablo* reflect on the processes of transculturation and neoculturation in the context of the Colony?

2 The New Historical Novel and the Decolonial Perspective

In *Los cortejos del diablo*, the relationship between the past, the narration, and the author is marked by the awareness that the past is a problematic space that needs to be revisited and retold. This revision is primarily driven by the understanding that History "It has been constructed as a narrative that was primarily biographical and political at the beginning", later evolving into "The narrative of the past, a treasure of the nation, [was] also tasked with sketching that future and consequently closing the time" (Blanco, 2017, p. 24). In this scenario, the historical novel faces a dilemma: "A historical discourse that narrates¹ and a discourse that narrativeizes, between a discourse that openly adopts a perspective that observes the world and recounts it, and a discourse that pretends to make the world speak for itself and speak as a narrative" (White, 1992, p. 18). Both possibilities represent a particular way of understanding History. The discourse that narrates often views the past as a space for the detailed account of specific events, using a logic of links where each point in the chain is important because it has worked to solidify the present, enabling the arrival of a future of splendor. Such stance, following Moreno Blanco, is called teleological history.

On the other hand, the discourse that narrativizes opposes directly the construction of a chained, institutional, and progressive history, preferring a historiographical perspective in which the past is necessarily an open space ready for multiple revisions and semantic reinvention based on a polyphonic approach. We are not witnessing reproduction but the possibility; the apparent fidelity of teleological reconstruction is contrasted with the verisimilitude of the possible world. This specific way of narrating the past can be called literary historiography. Now, does *Los cortejos del diablo* fall into teleological history or literary historiography? In Espinosa's words: "It

¹The verb narrates is chosen as the translation for the concept of "narrar", as it establishes the discursive vocation of recounting an event. On the other hand, narrativeizes implies narrative choices that determine how the fact is told.

happens that, through literary creation, the historical vision tends to, because that's how art is, become deeper, perhaps truer than that of the historians themselves" (Arango, 2006, p. 2). This is the process that takes place in works like *Memoirs of Hadrian* by Marguerite Yourcenar.

The novelist does nothing more than interpret, through the techniques of their era, a certain number of past events [...] historical fiction, or what can be called so by chance, must unfold in a regained time, the taking possession of an inner world. (Yourcenar, 1982, p. 179)

To inscribe *Los cortejos del diablo* in literary historiography means that the past is a problematic place; it is necessary to revisit it through narration to give it new meaning. Thus, a direct opposition is built to institutional discourse, which, under the slogan of our history, plural and generalizing, hides complex processes of invisibility and exclusion. In contrast, the proposal of the inner world, apparently intimate and unitary, opens up the spectrum to a polyphony in which it is possible to coincide with the *us*.

What was mentioned in the previous paragraph becomes more explicit when we emphasize the historical period of the work: 1640, the military conquest of America has long been established, however, its institutions, politics, religion, education, justice, etc., in the New World fail to consolidate their power indisputably. The novel emerges as an intentional aesthetic quest towards the re-narration of colonial past, allowing the reevaluation of the discursive construction that Spain has built about its presence in America. According to Hyden White, such purposes are common in works like Espinosa's, in which this is

Historical self-awareness, the kind of consciousness capable of imagining the necessity to represent reality as history, can only be conceived in terms of its interest in law, legality, legitimacy, etc. [...] every historical narrative has as its latent or manifest purpose the desire to moralize about the events it deals with. (White, 1992, pp. 28-29).

The moralizing vocation expressed by White is presented in the work at hand through the decolonial proposal.

In *Los cortejos del diablo*, we find the manifestation of a historical revision focused on how the processes of coloniality unfolded in America, placing special emphasis on which values are being represented, transmitted, and perpetuated. In this regard, Edward Said, in *Orientalism*, proposes that the processes of coloniality in the East occur through "A mode of discourse that relies on institutions, a vocabulary, teachings, images, doctrines, and even bureaucracies" (Said, 2002, p. 20). The representation of these aspects is Espinosa's ethical concern, who line by line constructs a revisionist narrative about how the dynamics of the colonizer-colonized relationship underpin what we call *us*. In this new narrative, the past does not function as an element for the establishment of a common tradition; on the contrary, it is observed as a discursive construction that needs to be problematized. Therefore, part of Espinosa's intention is also the commitment to the decolonization of history through literary work. Both topics, of course, appear as complementary in the way they serve as a vehicle to understand which society is being represented in the work and what the perlocutionary goals are regarding the proposal of a new ought to be² for the colonized.

3 The Shadow of the Colonizers

Decolonial processes imply breaking free from the condition of being colonized, a subversion in power roles allowing the subjugated to liberate themselves from oppression. However, it's crucial to understand that these modifications to the status quo don't always manifest as insurrections; they also appear as a gradual event summarized in the internal decline of the representatives of the institutions tasked with sustaining coloniality in its material and epistemic aspects. The case of *Los cortejos del diablo* is an illustration of this representation, where individuals, seen from a symbolic dimension, are perceived as the embodiment of their supposed roles. Thus, the purpose of this second section is to analyze how Espinosa encapsulates a reflection of the general decline of the colonizing discourse, specifically in the decline of Juan de Mañozga, Pedro de Heredia, Fernandez de Amaya, and Cristobal Pérez de Lazárraga.

² In *Nicomachean Ethics* (1985), Aristotle introduces the concepts of being in the world and being well in the world (p. 28-29). These concepts determine the distance between one's own way of living and the correct way of living in society. In this context, being well in the world implies ethically integrating oneself into society. Throughout the rest of the text, we will refer to this condition as the ought to be.

In the work titled *Epistemologías del Sur*, Boaventura de Sousa Santos compiles the practices through which the West imposed its power on the colonies:

The production of inferiority is crucial to sustain imperial discovery, and therefore, it is necessary to resort to multiple strategies of inferiorization [...] war, slavery, genocide, racism, disqualification, the transformation of the other into an object or natural resource, and a vast succession of mechanisms of economic imposition (tributes, colonialism, neocolonialism [...]) political imposition (crusades, empire, colonial state, dictatorship, and finally democracy) and cultural imposition (epistemicide, missions, assimilation, and finally cultural industries and mass culture). (Santos, 1984, p. 214).

Two types of coloniality are presented: one that constrains material possibilities and another that shapes epistemic horizons. Both operate aiming the construction in the other the condition of inferiority that enables the exercise of the colonizer's power. To demonstrate what has been stated, we bring up some excerpts from the text known as *El requerimiento*, written by Juan López de Palacios Rubios under the order of King Philip II of Aragon and used as an ultimatum for non-converted indigenous people from 1513:

If you were to do so [accept the dominion of Spain], you would do well, and that which you are held to and obligated, and Their Highnesses and we in their name, will receive you with all love and charity, and we will leave your wives and children and properties free and without servitude. (Rubio, 1513, p. 6, emphasis added).

A clear patronage is established, a power relationship in which Spain accepts that the indigenous people remain in the lands that the Pope "As lord of the world, he made a donation of these islands and mainland in the Ocean Sea to the said King and Queen" (Rubio, 1513, p. 4). In case of non-compliance: "I certify to you that with the help of God, we will enter powerfully against you, and we will make war on you in every way and manner that we can, and we will subject you to the yoke and obedience of the Church and of their Majesties" (Rubio, 1513, p. 7). What Sousa Santos presents is fully applicable.

Are these dynamics present in *Los cortejos del diablo*? Yes, in each of its dimensions. Does this mean that Espinosa's work is reduced to the mere representation of the political circumstances of an already studied historical event? The historical sensitivity of the Cartagenaian seems to build the decolonial proposal under the awareness of this process of inferiorization but takes a turn that distances itself from the historical certainty of Sousa Santos and launches it into the literary question: Were the Spaniards representatives of physical, intellectual, moral, or religious superiority? Espinosa constructs a decadent representation of colonial power. To achieve this, he focuses on the Church as a representative, depository, and sustainer of Spanish power, applying a logic of synecdoche in which the whole is defined by its parts; in other words, the institution is defined by the material and symbolic dimensions of those who embody it. In this construct, Juan de Mañozga, Fernández de Amaya, and Cristobal Pérez de Lazárraga become allegorical representations of specific conditions that reverse the process of inferiorization of the colonized: the dying body, the corrupted mind, and the criminal past.

Following the above, the treatment of the body is a constant that goes from the first lines to the last ones, in which the clear relationship between Mañozga's dying body and the agonizing social role of the Church seems evident; a description that contrasts with the vitality, strength, and beauty with which the Buziráquico rites are presented. On the other hand, the excessive sexual appetite of the warden Amaya is the gesturing of thought systems corrupted by hypocrisy, where there is no coherence between saying and doing. This construction concludes with Bishop Pérez, with whom the need to bring up the criminal past that the institution tries to hide in the shadows is observed. Thus, the three characters are a representation of the evident semantic and axiological inconsistencies that will enable the processes of dethronement.

From a second perspective, the same triad appears as a declaration of the seven deadly sins. Juan de Mañozga is the incarnation of pride, wrath, and sloth. In the same logic, Amaya manifests lust and greed: "It happened the next morning, and Fernández de Amaya himself, who already had his penis up and exposed for his daily orgy" (Espinosa, 2003, p. 133). Pérez completes the picture with envy and gluttony: "A chimeric apparition that God placed in his path to curb his increasingly succulent banquets, worthy of cardinal feasts" (Espinosa, 2003, p. 107). What was mentioned in the previous paragraph adds to these considerations to support the idea:

In the dynamic Cartagena of Espinosa, the Inquisitor and the Bishop, men of the empire, are trivialized, reduced to the plain general human condition, and depicted as just another identity rather than as representatives of the most powerful empire in the world (Blanco, 2017, p. 78).

It is not only the disregard for individual power, but the disqualification of the entire apparatus that supports the discourse of inferiorization and, by extension, coloniality.

Moving on to a specific analysis, it seems necessary to make some comments about Juan de Mañozga. The first thing worth mentioning is that the chief inquisitor can be read as the embodiment of the change in the heroic paradigm, a figure expressing the end of Spanish hegemony: "Mañozga is not Mañozga. That is a caricature" (Espinosa, 2003, p. 71). Regarding these processes of dethronement and transformations in the ought to be, Claudio Maíz makes some considerations that shed light on Mañozga's condition, especially how to evaluate his role in this context of axiological confrontations: "The distinction between 'defeated' and 'failed' is crucial for compensation in the face of defeat. Failure equates to 'non-realization' and a complete absence of political anchoring, ultimately, to 'non-realization'" (Maiz, 2013, p. 75). What is found in Mañozga is the condition of the loser, as his situation is the failure that arises from an apparent victory, which, in the long run, leads to an unexpected panorama where "The prevailing senses are not those of melancholy but those of nostalgia" (Maíz, 2013, p. 75).

The above is evident in the relationship with his enemy Luis Andrea. While it is true that Mañozga achieves his goal by killing the *mohán*, it is clear that what ends up happening is a situation where the Inquisitor's desire to eradicate the decolonial rebellion ends with the establishment of Luis Andrea as a hero capable of inscribing "in the collective memory of the group, their reality as an individual subject" (Vernant, 2001, p. 7). The sorcerer achieves victory in death by becoming a model of ought to be; the inquisitor keeps his life to suffer defeat. Thus, the constant "Fool that I am, for one day I saw myself in dreams as the Pope of Rome" (Espinosa, 2003, p. 212) *mañozguino* is the expression of "Empty energies, devoid of meaning, that were directed towards goals which, even those that appeared triumphant, are nothing more than a mask concealing corruption, privilege, the abandonment of ideals" (Maíz, 2013, pp. 75-76).

It is important to comment that there is also an operation of dethronement in Pedro de Heredia, "the advanced one", who serves as an incarnation of civil power. In this case, the dismissal of the subject as a model of ought to be is imposed through the reconstruction that Rosaura García makes of different moments:

Pedro de Heredia was a man of revelry and fine wines [...] he squandered his fortune in ninety-two consecutive nights of revelry and violated the daughter of a shoemaker and that of a scribe, and even that of a commander [...] I knew him quite well since the time he forcibly opened the door of her house in broad daylight and attempted to assault her. (Espinosa, 2003, pp. 89-91).

The choice to portray the founder of Cartagena as a rapist is a semantic gamble by Espinosa that contradicts the official discourse, where: "Heredia was one of the captains who shone the most in the discovery and conquest of the country; a practical warrior in battles with the indigenous people, courageous and of great steadfastness". (Arrubla & Henao, 1911, p. 113). Here, once again, the intention to dismiss the moral superiority of the Spaniards is evident, also denying the entire logic that underpins colonial power.

4 The Decolonial Proposal: Transculturation and Neoculturation

The decolonial proposal in the novel is based on the dismissal of the idea of European superiority. The decline of civil and religious institutions, guarantors of power, is symbolically incorporated into their representatives, who embody clear contradictions between their discourse and practices. This institutional vacuum allows for the emergence of a tumultuous panorama in which Spanish cultural hegemony begins to falter, directly impacting the loss of colonial power, both in its material and epistemic aspects. In this power vacuum, the colonized see the opportunity to finalize the process of dethronement, establishing their own way of being as dominant. While what has been discussed so far has been studied in various articles, the reflection has not yet focused on the possibility that this process only succeeds to the extent that colonizers fail to negotiate the social contract between *us* and the *others*, clinging firmly to the foundations of a culture that does not adapt to survive in a changing world. As Sousa Santos has aptly stated, "Imperial discovery does not recognize equality, rights, or dignity in what it discovers" (Santos, 2004, p. 223), thus accommodating the binary process of stereotyping:

The division of the world into 'us' and 'others' is the stereotype, as a binary mechanism of representing the world that favors the permanence of static boundaries through a series of elementary signs that allow discerning what belongs to the realm of 'us' and what is included in that of the 'others'. (Gustaffson, 2004, p. 5).

Stereotyping is present in various passages of the work where colonizers do not conceive the colonized as individual subjects with specific conditions; instead, their behaviors are shaped by the imaginary they have about them. Jan Gustaffson terms this type of communication closed semiosis: the referents are not updated due to the impossibility of effective communication. The problem is reflected in characters like Friar Luis Ronquillo de Córdoba and Pedro de Heredia, who, faced with incomprehension and the inability to establish relational dynamics with the other's world, seek refuge and escape by returning to Spain. Yet, what happens to those who persist in their desire for domination? If the defeat of the colonizer lies in their inability to form a new us, for Espinosa, the victory of the colonized lies in their ability to transform, recognize, and learn. Anthropologist Fernando Ortiz termed this initial process transculturation and its deepening as neoculturation. Ángel Rama presents it as such in *Transculturación narrativa en América Latina*:

We understand that the term 'transculturation' more accurately expresses the different phases of the transitional process from one culture to another. This is because the process not only involves acquiring a new culture, as the Anglo-American term 'acculturation' strictly implies, but it also necessarily entails the loss or uprooting of a preceding culture, which could be described as a partial "deculturation". Furthermore, it signifies the subsequent creation of new cultural phenomena that could be termed "neoculturation". (Rama, 2008, p. 39).

In *Los cortejos del diablo* the processes of transculturation and neoculturation occur both among the colonized and some colonizers. Before delving into how this happens with characters like Luis Andrea, Rosaura García, and Juan de Mañozga, let us make a comment about the others. The first is Pedro Claver, "The Catalan Jesuit who gathers audiences of Black individuals in the congregation's courtyard and engages in Christianizing them in the squalid barracks" (Espinosa, 2003, p. 108) who can be seen as the direct opposition to the exclusion practiced by the decadent church: "It would be better for you if you are not one, christianizing dogs or lice of dogs, as they have more soul" (Espinosa, 2003, p. 108), says Bishop Pérez de Lazárraga. Through his practices, Father Claver manages to align himself with the logic of accepting the other and integrates into the new us.

It is evident that strong representations of transculturation and neoculturation processes appear in Rosaura García and Luis Andrea. Here, as with the Church and its representatives, we encounter symbolic figures that embody a normative ideal aspiring to become hegemonic. As mentioned before, the murder of the *mohán* responds to Mañozga's desire to halt not only the cult of Buziraco but especially "The rebellious maroons enamored with freedom, with the Luciferian 'Non Serviam'" (Espinosa, 2003, p. 77). However, Espinosa constructs a panorama in which the references of static cultures blur, blend, and update, allowing the emergence of a such a passage as:

The Christ of the Indies had been born, destined to die in the pyre 33 years later without redeeming anyone with his sacrifice. Andrea appealed to the primal rite of life, the one Moses and Aaron had practiced in the desert, to summon around her a force of mystical flame, a flame-of-love-life, directed against the Spanish empire, against Iberian arrogance, and the venomous staleness of a nation that had only brought us aging. (Espinosa, 2003, pp. 173-174).

The new world appropriates the culture of the colonizer to reinvent its normative ideals, consuming the European to expand its epistemic horizons. The operation through which Christ, Buziraco, Moses, Aaron, shamanism, and witchcraft coexist is what Ortiz and Rama call neoculturation; Sousa Santos summarizes it as "New cultural constellations that cannot be reduced to the sum of the different fragments that contributed to them" (Santos, 2009, p. 247). It is impossible not to think of a more poetic sense and find in Espinosa the echo of the words with which the poet Oswald de Andrade shaped his *Manifiesto antropófago* in 1911: "We were never catechized. We live through a somnambulant right. We brought Christ into being in Bahia. Or in Bethlehem of Para" (Andrade, 1928, p. 2).

As history progresses, it is evident that the process deepens; the power vacuum enables the consolidation of the new normative ideal arising from processes of transculturation and neoculturation. Mañozga states:

And it fell to me to witness the maroons transformed into legendary champions, as may not happen again in these lands touched by Sausina's foot. I heard the drums and listened to the invocations. I saw the Spaniards and Creoles tremble at the ensemble of those distant sounds from Africa. (Espinosa, 2003, pp. 120-121).

Once again, we witness the destruction of the inferiority fallacy since, in this case, the colonized would have to be "Far from constituting a civilizational threat" and being "merely the threat of the irrational" (Santos, 1982, p. 218). Espinosa constructs the clash of two civilizations: one dying and one emerging. In such a framework, certainties are lost, and it is possible to observe how the Grand Inquisitor Mañozga becomes a victim of the potency of this new normative ideal:

And that night, I would spend a long time contemplating the stars, questioning them. And, recalling what some erudite abbot had told me about certain ancient heroes, I would believe to see your disheveled hair, Luis Andrea, drawn up there in the constellations. Luis Andrea, I wince at offering you a prayer! (Espinosa, 2003, p. 124).

Mañozga's defeat could also be explained by his inability to accept the new normative ideal by which he has been seduced. Once again, Luis Andrea dies in victory to become a martyr, an affirmation of a new way of life understood as correct for inhabiting the new world. Meanwhile, Mañozga persists to function as a representation of Spanish culture and religiosity "Spanish forces, when faced with the uncontrolled powers that reign in America, either yield, diminish, or internally divide. There is the impression that in the exorcised spiritual confrontation or duel, Spain is the great loser" (Blanco, 2017, p. 80).

What begins with Luis Andrea is an example of how, in Espinosa's work, there is a "The reiterated passion for addressing 'hybridity' as a thematic element in their texts, the vicissitudes of their formation, and their aftermath, with all their implications in the sociopolitical order" (Arango, 2006, p. 111). If Luis Andrea is the Christ who died to establish the new Latin American normative ideal, Rosaura García is the apostle in charge of his consecration. The following passage summarizes the essence of recognizing the other as the focus of the decolonial proposition: "Catalina moved into the outer room, where Rosaura's countless relatives were engaged in all kinds of activities. There were whites, blacks, mulattos, Indians, mestizos, zambos, and quarterons among them" (Espinosa, 2003, p. 103). Is this multiethnic family the representation of transcultural processes that will enable the emergence of neoculturation? Are we witnessing the foundation of a Latin American being born in recognition, learning, and transformation around the other, supported by the accompaniment of an ancestral tradition? It seems so, but Rosaura García is also presented as a character with knowledge that dates back to "The years when Cartagena was merely a provisional settlement from which groups of conquerors often set out in search of another location better endowed with potable water to establish the maritime port" (Espinosa, 2003, p.88). She emerges as a witness of the period in which the war has favored the Spanish, marking the beginning of the Colony.

Now, how does Rosaura relate to the process of neo and transculturation? Her presence in the work is marked by the need to preserve the memory of the atrocities committed by the early Spaniards. However, her purpose is not limited to individualizing the atrocities; it extends to the reminder that what happens there is the struggle between two worlds: "against the Spanish empire, against Iberian arrogance, and the venomous staleness of a nation that had only brought us aging" (Espinosa, 2003, p. 173-174). Being the guardian of this tradition allows her to present herself as the driving force behind the process of dethroning colonial power. The witch says: "That's why she thought of enlightening the world about the importance and necessity of witchcraft. To spread, before her inevitable death, the voice of clairvoyance to the four winds. To release her premonition in the public squares" (Espinosa, 2003, p. 171).

In the same line of thought as the previous paragraph: "She glimpsed in magic the fundamental principle of human dynamics, the most active engine of crowds, and therefore, the most direct means to affirm individual and collective freedom: the Buziráquic Non Serviam" (Espinosa, 2003, p. 173). The constant connections that the work makes between witchcraft and the cimarrons allow us to infer that behind the cult lies, indeed, the germ of the independence processes. In this sense, the carnival of the witches led by Rosaura is the symbolic move to initiate the process of liberation in America: "A search for resilient values, capable of confronting the deteriorations of transculturation, which can also be seen as an inventive task, as a part of neoculturation" (Rama, 2008, p. 47). Here again, the anthropophagic proposal resonates: "We were never catechized. What we did was Carnival. The Indian dressed as a senator of the Empire" (Andrade, 1928, p. 2). The process is successful, of course, considering that "The body of Mañozga, like the entire Tribunal, is corrupt, and all that remains to be expected is the moment when it breathes its last" (Rey, s.f, p. 36). An event that happens soon: "The ecclesiastical judge understood that this was the carnival-like funeral of his public life" (Espinosa 2003, p. 200), thus enabling the establishment of a new culture.

The process of neo and transculturation concludes when the new society visibly rises to occupy the space left by the colonizer. With the notion of inferiority destroyed, Espinosa dares to construct a historical panorama in which the vanquished redeems themselves through learning, achieving processes of dethronement and axiological modifications where the power vacuum is seized to establish a new ought to be for the new world. It is essential not to see this as the mere consecration of the desire for an early independence

process; it is necessary to assume it in all its dimensions: In *Los cortejos del diablo* a decolonial proposal is built, grounded in the construction of a new Latin American ought to be.

5 Conclusions

The analysis of *Los cortejos del diablo* has allowed us to understand how different technical choices and thematic situations can come together to produce a work rich in perlocutionary components. Placing the novel within the framework of literary historiography revealed that Espinosa's concern is not the factual reconstruction of past actions. On the contrary, we can assert that his interest lies in the symbolic representation of a specific socio-historical panorama aimed at revaluing different discursive elements that have become part of tradition and axiology over time. Within this panorama, we could perceive how the revisiting of the past is motivated by a decolonial consciousness, seeking to problematize the concepts of the *other* and the *us*, aiming at the disqualification of the idea of European superiority. Different characters serve as the materialization of the decline of Spanish dominance in Cartagena, creating the institutional vacuum that shakes the Spanish cultural hegemony. In this way. The colonized take advantage of the power vacuum to consummate the dethronement process, establishing their ought to be as the dominant force. These affirmations allow us to conclude that, in *Los cortejos del diablo* by Germán Espinosa, processes of neo and transculturation take place, underpinning a decolonial proposal aimed at shaping an entire project of a new Latin American ought to be.

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